



# Annual Conference 2024

Motions for priority voting

Assessment,  
curriculum, and  
accountability

## **1. Value early years**

Conference notes that:

1. Investing in high quality early years (EY) care and education not only benefits children's development but also has positive socio-economic benefits
2. The lack of funding across early years has led to a decline in provision, recruitment and retention and closure of providers including maintained nursery schools
3. Funding and provision for early intervention for children with SEND and those at risk falls short of what is required to meet children's needs
4. Early years workplaces have low membership density and the workforce is underrepresented within unions.

Conference believes that:

- i. The long-established values of quality early years practice are being eroded by a Government intent on pushing its flawed ideological view of education, including restrictions on the advocacy of Birth to Five Matters
- ii. Experienced practitioners are leaving the profession, and salaries are too low to recruit and train more educators
- iii. We are most powerful when we work together with early years organisations and parents. The Early Education and Childcare Coalition is a positive step towards addressing the issues faced by the sector
- iv. High levels of staff-to-child ratios keep children safe, workload manageable and increase learning opportunities.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Incorporate 'Value Early Years' within the VE:VE campaign with appropriate allocation of resources and staffing**
- b. Work with parents and early years organisations to organise a national conference and demonstration to fight to save early years provision across all sectors and campaign for adequate early years funding and staffing**
- c. Work with these allies to develop a vision for early years curriculum and pedagogy which values child-led, evidence based, learning through play**
- d. Create a recruitment campaign for early years' workers with dedicated resources to organise in the early years sector**
- e. Support branches to elect an early years officer and establish links with early years members in their local areas**
- f. Ask local, regional and national structures to encourage all EY members to join the Early Years Reference Group.**

*Newham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Camden, Central Bedfordshire, Tower Hamlets and the City North Somerset, Tower Hamlets and the City, Hackney, Northumberland, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire General, Cambridgeshire*

## 2. Value education in the early years

Conference notes:

1. The 2016 Childcare Act ended the childcare and education distinction, threatening the concept of early years education (EY)
2. Research indicates Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS) provide young children with the best educational start
3. MNS have pupil admission policies; QTS teachers and headteachers, they use LA pay scales, Green and Burgundy Book rules
4. 52 MNS have been closed since 2009. In 2023 there are only 385 MNS left (64% outstanding, 35% good)
5. 84% of England's childcare sector is for profit (NEF 2018) compared with just 3% in Germany and 4% in France
6. Many academies remove qualified teachers from nursery classes
7. Conference previously reaffirmed the need for properly funded provision with QTS staff: an essential building block in our youngest children's development.

Conference believes:

- i. In explicitly campaigning for education in the early years sector
- ii. The 2019 conference commitments to the Save our Maintained Nursery Schools campaign must be central in all union EY campaigns
- iii. In the importance of the qualified teacher role in early education
- iv. All young children including those in areas of deprivation and with SEND should be able to access the highest quality early education, with the most qualified staff
- v. Hedge funds and large businesses seek to maximise control of England's Early Years sector: Not For Profit (NFP) settings are now disappearing (-29% since 2018)

Conference instructs the executive to:

- a. **Explicitly reference the union's commitment to education via the maintained sector, MNS and nursery/reception classes in all early years campaigns and wider sector work, emphasising the role of QTS/highly qualified staff as the most effective educational provision for young children**
- b. **Campaign for double lock against MNS closure, asking for consultations to go to Government levels, holding decision makers to account**
- c. **Further develop a specific campaign group for Maintained Nursery Schools with MNS staff and leaders represented**
- d. **Retain the union's core beliefs in Education for Early Years, explicitly referencing the maintained sector and the language of education, schools, teachers in early years groups, defending early years children's right to access education.**

*Warwickshire*

### **3. Stop toxic testing, we need collective action**

Conference supports:

1. The abolition of Baseline and all high-stakes summative testing in primary schools
2. The replacement of GCSEs and A Levels with wider ranging, more flexible curricula
3. The radical transformation of A Levels and post-16 qualifications
4. Nationalisation, amalgamation, and rationalisation of the work of the exam boards.

Conference notes:

- i. The union's role in establishing the Independent Assessment Commission alongside academics, parents, students, the CBI and others on the production of their interim report
- ii. There are now statutory assessments in reception, year one, year four, and year six of primary school
- iii. The ongoing and escalating mental health crisis in our children and young people
- iv. The on-going funding crisis in schools
- v. The outcry about the KS2 SATs reading paper in May 2023
- vi. The Government's proposal of a new educational qualification for England combining A-Levels and T-levels for all students to sit.

Conference believes:

- a. Most primary schools now run SATs style assessments at least three times a year. These tests have a huge cost both financially and educationally despite strong policy and lobbying by our union, the burden of toxic testing is increasing year upon year
- b. That the outcry about the SATs reading paper in 2023 gave an opportunity for us to seize the initiative, however, without any mandate, we were unable to act
- c. That the only way to stop this is through effective collective action.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- I. Intensify our campaigning around the issues above, with other education unions and politicians**
- II. Ballot all primary school members to boycott statutory high stakes testing in their schools for the school year 2024/25. The ballot should allow for disaggregation of regions and districts based on the results of the indicative ballot, in consultation with the appropriate lay bodies in the area.**

*East Riding*

#### **4. Abolish Ofsted**

Conference reaffirms the Ofsted resolution adopted in 2022 and further, believes that:

1. The education workforce has no faith in Ofsted
2. The fear caused by Ofsted inspections continues to drive teachers and support staff out of education
3. Ofsted's negative influence is a significant factor in the recruitment and retention crisis in schools
4. Ofsted inspections, mock inspections and the "Ofsted-ready" culture in schools and colleges generate unmanageable workload, stress and anxiety. This does nothing but damage the education chances of our pupils.

Conference notes that Ofsted has been cited in coroners' reports on the deaths of 10 teachers in the past 25 years.

Conference welcomes the union's ongoing campaign to replace Ofsted, including the commissioning of the Beyond Ofsted Inquiry. Conference believes that Ofsted should be replaced by a system which:

- i. Is based on self-evaluation, support and collaboration between schools, and overseen locally
- ii. Restores professional autonomy and trust in the education workforce
- iii. Promotes cooperation rather than competition between schools
- iv. Provides support that benefits education workers and the children and young people we teach.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Lobby political parties and parliamentary candidates ahead of the next general election to endorse the union's campaign to replace Ofsted**
- b. Consider the recommendations from the Beyond Ofsted Inquiry to develop a viable alternative to school accountability**
- c. Support members in balloting for, and taking, strike action where 'mocksteds', deep-dives and excessive workload have arisen through Ofsted pressures.**

*Rochdale, Oldham, Kirklees*

## **5. An inclusive curriculum for all**

Conference notes:

1. The dearth of research and information on the contributions, recognition and appreciation of global cultures in the British curriculum
2. The Welsh Government have completed a curriculum review, titled 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities Contributions and Cynefin Framework in the New Curriculum Working Group', but this has not happened in England
3. The Hamilton Commission said "The current national curriculum fails to reflect important aspects of young Black students' histories and cultures." It also encouraged all schools to use the NEU Anti-Racist Framework.

Conference believes:

- i. The school curriculum does not reflect the diversity of children's backgrounds
- ii. The aims and scope of education, embracing culturally inclusive classrooms, should reflect all our children's backgrounds equally
- iii. In the holistic inclusion of Black perspectives in the whole curriculum, and not just some aspects of history
- iv. The union is best placed to provide directions for development and implementation.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Prioritise a campaign for curriculum review in England with a specific report on Black perspectives, as the one from Wales**
- b. Campaign for examination bodies to develop an alternative assessment that values contributions to society, building on the work of the independent assessment commission and its findings published in February 2022**
- c. Fund research into education that provides universal access relating to the global cultural roots and the values of all students**
- d. Create a task group forum for related organisations to work together to build a union funded repository/electronic portal/microsite for Black curriculum resources**
- e. Lobby the Government to make it mandatory for all schools to use materials and resources that respect the holistic nature of Black contribution to society.**

*Torfaen, Hertfordshire General*

## **6. Creativity in the curriculum**

Conference notes:

1. The work of the union in bringing together other trade unions, arts activists and organisations to promote the arts and creativity in the curriculum following the instruction of Conference 2022
2. The report published by the Art Now Inquiry outlining the devastating impact of Government intervention in education since 2010 on arts subjects in our schools
3. The Arts in Schools report highlighting the disproportionate impact of those changes on the most disadvantaged children and the call within that report for wider system change in education.

Conference believes:

- i. That as the largest education union in the UK, we are well-placed to lead the conversation on education reform
- ii. The proposed introduction of the Advanced British Standard will further erode curriculum breadth, limit student choice and curtail opportunities for students to study creative subjects
- iii. That limiting opportunities for creativity has a negative impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children
- iv. That opportunities for creativity in the curriculum are being lost due to the accountability measures imposed by ever-increasing Government control
- v. That we have reached a crisis point in education which requires drastic change to reverse the negative impact on children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Call for a sector-wide conversation on system reform in education**
- b. Explore opportunities for joint work across the sector to begin to address the damage caused by Government intervention since 2010**
- c. Identify the loss of arts resources from our schools and what funding is required to replace them.**

*Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northumberland, Sheffield, Stockport*



## **7. Drama, the forgotten art**

Conference notes that:

1. Drama is not on the national curriculum as a discrete subject at KS1, 2 or 3
2. The number of schools delivering Drama courses at KS3 and KS4 has continued to decline in state funded schools; this is due to funding issues as well as a Government and Ofsted push to focus on English Baccalaureate subjects
3. The number of students taking GCSE Drama has fallen by a third since 2015, and 7.3% since 2022
4. Many drama schools charge for auditions, which can put off young hopefuls
5. Drama is, increasingly, becoming the preserve of independent schools and the well off
6. The union sponsors the Youth Proms every year to raise the profile of music for young people
7. There are organisations, such as Drama & Theatre Education Alliance (DTEA) working to promote drama in schools.

Conference believes that:

- i. Drama should be included in the national curriculum alongside art and music
- ii. Drama is essential for giving students the confidence to speak and present in public as well as allowing them space to explore big ideas and concepts
- iii. Drama is essential in helping to build creativity in our students
- iv. Funding needs to be provided to schools to rebuild the many courses that have been shut down due to budget constraints
- v. Drama schools should abolish, or assist with, audition fees to encourage students from deprived backgrounds to pursue drama.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Conduct a survey of members regarding the status of Drama in state schools**
- b. Campaign for Drama to be included as a discrete subject on the national curriculum**
- c. Look to work with organisations, such as Drama & Theatre Education Alliance to promote drama for young people nationally**
- d. Work with higher education unions to put pressure on drama schools to abolish, or help with, audition fees.**

*Hammersmith and Fulham*

## 8. GCSEs and A Levels

Conference notes:

1. The significant increase in grade boundaries across GCSEs and A Levels in the summer of 2023
2. The increasing calls by a wide range of people for the scrapping of GCSEs and A Levels and their replacement with a different system of assessment.

Conference believes that:

- i. Last year's arbitrary increase in grade boundaries exposes the norm referencing basis of the entire secondary exam system by which a pre-determined proportion of students are allowed to achieve particular grades
- ii. Such norm referencing has no place in a proper assessment system
- iii. GCSEs and A Levels reward rote learning, and do nothing to encourage the critical and original thinking, communication and collaborative problem solving that are needed in the modern world and fail to represent the diverse society we live
- iv. The rigid dependence on end of course exams fails to account for a variety of learning styles and can penalise SEND and disabled students
- i. One possible starting point, though not the only one, for a different system of secondary assessment could be the 2004 Tomlinson report.

Conference supports calls for GCSEs and A Levels to be scrapped and replaced with a better system of secondary assessment.

**Conference instructs the executive:**

- a. **To draw up urgent plans to work with whoever is willing to campaign to achieve a change in secondary assessment, including parents and subject associations**
- b. **To seek members' views of how they see the current assessment regime and how it should change**
- c. **To set up working groups in districts and regions, made up of reps and other members, to discuss current assessments in schools with a view to shaping the vision for future assessments.**

*Halton, North Somerset, Tower Hamlets and the City, Lambeth, Stockport*

## **9. SATS – bad for children, time for a change**

Conference notes:

1. According to research in 2022, 60% of Year 6 children were worried about SATs. One in ten said they were not sleeping
2. 83% of heads said SATs had a negative impact on pupil well-being
3. Parents, heads, school staff and parents overwhelmingly agree that SATs are not a useful or accurate way of assessing what children can do at the end of their primary education.

Conference further notes the ICAPE (Independent Commission on Assessment in Primary Education) report of 2022, a comprehensive and in-depth review of primary assessment, concluded with these recommendations:

- i. Assessments for monitoring standards of education over time are based on a new system of nationally representative sampling of schools and pupils
- ii. That SATs and other high stakes assessments are phased out and their replacement place more emphasis on learning
- iii. Holistic assessment of each pupil's learning in primary school is captured in a profile of evidence
- iv. Years 1 + 4 are points for key summative assessments
- v. Professional learning opportunities are provided to support formative and summative assessment
- vi. New, more appropriate and more supportive ways of monitoring the quality of schools and teachers are developed
- vii. Local authorities are empowered to support and monitor the quality of education
- viii. Consideration is given to participation in the PISA assessments of creative thinking.

Conference also notes the union conducted an indicative ballot on a boycott of SATs in June 2019 but did not meet the turnout that would be required in a formal ballot.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Prioritise the assessment campaign, along with campaigning on pay and funding**
- b. Continue to build the More Than A Score campaign**
- c. Run training sessions in all regions for primary members on education without teaching to the test**
- d. Approach the new Government, after the general election, to press for an urgent review of the assessment system as outlined in the ICAPE report.**

*North Somerset, Lambeth, Ealing, Sheffield, Stockport*

# Workforce, bargaining and negotiations

## **10. Working conditions in adverse heat - COMPOSITE**

Conference notes:

1. In July 2021 the UK experienced its highest ever recorded temperature of 40.2°C
2. In August 2023 the Office of National Statistics released a report stating that June 2023 was confirmed as the hottest June in the UK since records began in 1884
3. Changes to working conditions for educators in adverse heat have so far been advisory and left to the discretion of individual workplaces
4. The TUC has called for a maximum room temperature of 30°C (27°C for those doing strenuous work)
5. Playgrounds can reach unsafe temperatures for pupils to be in at break and lunch time
6. Many European countries have maximum working temperatures.

Conference believes:

- i. Climate change is happening now, with workers across the world already losing lives, livelihoods, food, access to water, homes, facing unbearable working conditions and forced migration
- ii. This has had a detrimental impact on the working conditions of educators
- iii. This has had a detrimental impact on the learning conditions of pupils
- iv. In some cases, this has presented a risk to the health of educators and pupils
- v. Parents of pupils have been faced with the possibility of a fine for not sending their children to school in these conditions
- vi. Schools and colleges are not equipped for extremes temperatures, with little shade, large glass south facing windows and a lack of air conditioning and ventilation.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Work with districts and reps, as well as other unions in creating a policy for working conditions in adverse heat, applying existing guidelines from the TUC on working conditions in temperatures considered unreasonable (above 30°C) and the World Health Organisation's guidelines on working conditions in temperatures considered uncomfortable (above 24°C)**
- b. Encourage districts and reps to refer to existing policies for working conditions in adverse heat implemented by trade unions**
- c. Encourage districts to work with local authorities, child protection services and employers for the implementation of a policy for indoor and outdoor working conditions in adverse heat**
- d. Encourage schools to adopt a policy for working conditions in adverse heat as advised by their respective district**
- e. Direct districts to work with unions with existing policies in lobbying local councillors and MPs in a campaign for a legal maximum working temperature**
- f. Direct green reps to conduct research in their district that supports the rationale for a campaign for a maximum legal working temperature.**

*Ealing, Richmond, South Kent, Hertfordshire General, Harrow, East Riding*

## **11. Covid infection and the school environment.**

Conference recognises

1. The world has lived through a pandemic called Covid 19
2. Worldwide, millions have died and many millions more have been left with permanent disabilities because of the virus
3. We now have evidence that the virus weakens the immune system, and, for some people, immune dysfunction can persist for months after infection
4. Every new exposure for these people is likely to lead to further adverse effects
5. A study has shown the impact of long Covid can be “as severe as the long-term effects of traumatic brain injury.” Yet, three years after the pandemic began, the Government has done almost nothing to make schools safe
6. The extra costs of healthcare caused by repeated waves of infections greatly outweighs the cost of investment in clean air
7. The virus thrives in badly ventilated, shared spaces – especially classrooms. A study found that mechanical ventilation systems in classrooms reduce the infection risk by 74%.

**Conference instructs the executive to initiate a campaign to raise awareness amongst members of the importance of clean air in every classroom and to lobby every local authority and academy provider to:**

- i. **Ensure universal standards of clean air in all schools by, where necessary, providing the funding needed to install mechanical ventilation systems in every classroom where such measures are not already in place**
- ii. **Ensure that all new build schools have automatic ventilation systems that will prevent the atmosphere in any classroom having more than 800 ppm of carbon dioxide.**

*Tawe Afan Nedd*

## 12. Workplace suicides

Conference notes:

1. Current RIDDOR regulations under the Health & Safety at Work Act require employers to record, report and evaluate risks and incidents at work, and will hold them accountable, but the law itself cannot cover every eventuality
2. There is growing evidence of the connections between work-related factors, such as stress, sexual harassment, intimidation, and workplace bullying that leads to suicide
3. That stress related conditions are categorised as those that result from a prolonged period of pressure, often from many factors, not just one distinct event under the regulations
4. No data is collected on suicides that occur in the workplace or can be identified as work-related, so, no work-place improvement or guidance for improvement is made or enforced.

Conference believes the HSE's failure to recognise that work-related stress can result from single incidents, such as Ofsted inspections will mean work-related suicide occurrences will continue, and preventative measures will not be put in place.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. **Campaign to persuade the HSE to acknowledge the effects of work-related stress on health, safety and well-being**
- ii. **Lobby the HSE to make changes within the RIDDOR guidance to ensure work-related suicides are reported and investigated, with recommendations of good practice**
- iii. **Approach other unions and the TUC to request they join the NEU in this lobbying**
- iv. **Campaign to have HSE and the Government agree that Ofsted is a discrete, identifiable incident, a stressor that has been a considerable factor in work-related suicide**
- v. **Continue to put pressure on the Government to abolish Ofsted.**

*Oxfordshire, South Derbyshire, Buckinghamshire, North Yorkshire, West Sussex:*

### **13. Funded pay rises for all**

Conference notes:

1. An increasing number of schools have reported funding difficulties relating to support staff pay increases
2. Some districts have reported increasing numbers of redundancies linked to unfunded pay rises for support staff.

Conference believes:

- i. That support staff are an essential part of schools and colleges, and redundancies due to a lack of funding rather than a lack of need, should be highlighted and fought
- ii. Support staff pay rises for members who are working in educational establishments should be funded directly by the Government to avoid the burden of pay rises impacting upon the educational provision children receive, and not come from our already stretched school budgets.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. **Survey members to evaluate the extent of redundancies. Consider whether this has increased over the last 3 years and look at whether unfunded support staff pay rises are impacting on this**
- b. **Working with sister unions, members, families and other stakeholders, launch a campaign to ensure all support staff pay rises are funded directly by the Government.**

*County Durham*



#### **14. Pay parity across the nations in the UK**

Conference notes that:

1. The disparity in pay across all the nations in the United Kingdom has increased this academic year
2. The starting salary for a teacher varies by nation:

Northern Ireland	£24,137
England (exc London)	£30,000
Wales	£30,742
Scotland	£32,217

Conference believes that:

- i. This is causing a deterioration in educational provision and an unnecessary divide in the value status of a teacher
- ii. Recruitment and retention of teachers is exacerbated by the differences in pay from nation to nation.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. **Working alongside other education unions and politicians, intensify our pay campaign around the issue of fair pay, ensuring pay parity across all nations of the United Kingdom is core**
- b. **Continue with the VE:VE Campaign nationally and include pay parity as a fundamental indicator of true teacher worth.**

*Northern Ireland*

## **15. A national campaign for support staff pay and equal rights**

Conference notes that:

1. Many support staff are reliant on universal credit, and second jobs
2. Most support staff are subject to term-time only contracts, which means losing seven weeks of pay every year
3. The funding crisis leaves support staff vulnerable to redundancies and restructuring
4. Labour is considering establishing a School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB).

Conference further notes that:

- i. Support staff is the fastest growing section of membership
- ii. Education has a recruitment and retention crisis
- iii. Education has many non-unionised, low paid workers who need defence, union recognition and collective action to fight for decent pay and conditions
- iv. Conference 2023 agreed to seek, at the earliest opportunity, recognition and negotiating rights for our support staff members.

Conference believes that:

- a. We must fight to unionise the lowest paid workers in education and put an end to exploitative pay and conditions
- b. All members of the union are equal, we understand the value of the work support staff do
- c. We must fight to end term time only pay whilst ensuring no detriment to all year-round workers and flexible working
- d. If it is established, the union must be part of the SSSNB
- e. Feedback to support staff national council must happen at every SSNC meeting to keep members informed of any developments in respect of negotiations with our sister unions regarding recognition; negotiating rights; recruitment; as well as to end the undertaking 'not to actively or knowingly recruit support staff'
- f. Conference policy must be seen as the democratic will of our members and reported on regularly to the relevant executive committees.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- I. Launch a national campaign for support staff pay and conditions**
- II. Report progress to the support staff national council**
- III. Ensure support staff recognition and negotiating rights are a standing order of business for the executive**
- IV. Continue to liaise with local government unions to make clear our desire to work with them to improve effectiveness , as well as increase union density amongst support staff.**

*Bristol*

## 16. Performance Related Pay

Conference notes that:

1. The union has consistently called on the Government to withdraw performance-related pay (PRP) from the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document
2. Increasing numbers of academies and academy trusts have removed the link between teachers' appraisal and pay in recent years, whilst maintained schools have been denied this opportunity
3. The STRB Report 2023 states "The existing obligation on schools to operate performance related pay progression should be withdrawn".

The Secretary of State has accepted the STRB Report and its recommendations in full. However, the STPCD 2023 states that "schools must determine – in accordance with their own pay policy – how to take account of the uplift to the national framework in making individual pay progression decisions." These provisions require that teachers should meet relevant performance criteria for progression on their pay scale.

Conference believes PRP:

- i. Is unfair and hinders pay progression, costing many teachers £10K's in lost earnings
- ii. Contributes to inequalities in pay, including on grounds of gender and disability
- iii. Is ineffective and based on appraisal objectives beyond a teacher's control
- iv. Does nothing to improve performance or education outcomes
- v. Increases teacher workload and stress and contributes to the teacher retention crisis.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Lobby political parties and parliamentary candidates ahead of the next general election to commit to the wholesale withdrawal of teachers' PRP**
- b. Collaborate with other education unions to campaign for its withdrawal from the STPCD**
- c. Issue renewed guidance and resources to workplace reps and branch officers to support negotiations with employers**
- d. Support workplaces in taking collective industrial action, including strike action, where employers fail to withdraw PRP for teachers.**

*Oldham, Rochdale*

## **17. Pay restoration must be our goal**

Conference notes:

1. The well-supported strike action that teachers and support staff took in the 2022-2023 academic year
2. That this strike action won a significantly improved pay offer of 6.5% for teachers
3. Support staff received a flat £1,925
4. That this settlement still represented a significant further real-term pay cut for both teachers and support staff
5. That, after the acceptance of this offer, the Government announced a further cut to school funding despite its promises to the contrary
6. That school funding, teacher pay and support staff pay are too low to ensure a consistent professional educational experience for our children
7. That we have, so far, yet to have any significant communication from our executive about a strategy for pay restoration moving forward.

Conference believes:

- i. That our central demand should be for a fully funded pay offer that restores wages to at least 2010 levels for both teachers and support staff
- ii. That only with a robust campaign to support this demand can we aim to reverse the recruitment and retention crisis
- iii. That the executive should lay out a credible campaign strategy to win this demand, so that it can be discussed throughout the membership
- iv. That support staff pay rates should be set by the DfE, in line with teacher pay. The union should seek to win a single pay spine for all school staff.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Organise a pay campaign where our demand must be for pay restoration to 2010 levels that is fully funded**
- b. Explore the possibility of the DfE setting pay rates for support staff.**

*South West Lancashire*

## **18. A fair day's work for a fair day's pay in the independent sector**

Conference notes:

1. The NEU is the leading union in the independent sector representing over 33,000 teaching and support staff members across 1700 establishments
2. Working conditions, especially regarding directed time, vary immensely with too many employers offering poor and disappointing working conditions
3. Many independent schools rely on archaic employment practices with no set working hours, and one-sided contractual clauses requiring teachers to work "any such times that the head deems reasonable"
4. Workload is often excessive and remuneration poor
5. Low pay for support staff is compounded by the widespread use of term-time only contracts leaving many members' annual pay lower than working in a supermarket
6. The union is campaigning for fair pay, it also needs to highlight what a fair day's work looks like for members
7. There is increased concern that some independent schools are in breach of the 1998 Working Time Regulations by requiring staff to work evenings, overnight and weekends, without adequate rest periods. Such practice breaches the employer's duty of care to its employees, putting at risk both their physical and mental health and ultimately the wellbeing of their pupils.

Conference believes the union should play a leading role in campaigning for improved working conditions in the independent sector.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. **Initiate a campaign targeted at reducing the workload of teachers and support staff in independent schools and the setting of reasonable working hours**
- ii. **Campaign to ensure that support staff who work more than their set hours are paid overtime or given time off in lieu**
- iii. **Identify key factors impacting on workload through consultation and engagement with members, developing systems designed to reduce workload**
- iv. **Raise awareness of the 1998 Working Time Regulations among members**
- v. **Promote and support workplace campaigns to ensure that all independent school employers comply with the Working Time Regulations**
- vi. **Pursue cases and take legal action against independent schools that attempt to avoid working time legislation**
- vii. **Seek to co-ordinate regionally and nationally**
- viii. **Provide the necessary resources to support the above work.**

*Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northumberland*

## **19. Support staff pay**

Conference notes that:

1. Schools rely on the professional input and expertise of a range of staff, and 'support staff' which is a generic title for all non-teaching staff
2. Some support staff work alongside teachers and some work behind the scenes to ensure there is an efficient infrastructure within which effective teaching and learning can take place
3. There is substantial evidence that support staff (directly or indirectly) play a vital role in improving educational outcomes for children and young people.

Conference further notes with alarm that:

- i. Support staff are now routinely working record levels of unpaid hours
- ii. As jobs are cut in schools, many are picking up additional work. One recent survey showed that around three-quarters of support staff were doing work previously done by staff at a higher grade, and most had not been trained to do it
- iii. A national survey found the system is divisive and unfair, and that many support staff are on term-time only contracts of around 44 weeks a year while teachers are paid on 52-week contracts. Historically, support staff in maintained schools were employed on 52-week contracts before large numbers were moved on to term-time only contracts, when Local Authorities acted to make savings.

Conference believes that term-time only contracts also penalise a predominantly female workforce and worsen the problems of low pay.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. **Campaign for a retention of (where they still remain) and a return to (where they don't) 52-week contracts for support staff**
- b. **Campaign to prevent support staff salaries going below the living wage when schools restructure and they are paid term time only.**

*Brent*

## **20. Pay**

Conference notes:

1. That even with the 6.5% pay deal last year, educators - both teachers and support staff - are still over 20% worse off in real terms than in 2010
2. That the lesson of last year's pay fight is that strikes are effective and work in shifting the Government, and in making some gains for our members
3. That our schools and colleges are experiencing increasing cuts, which threaten both jobs and the quality of education and support we can offer to our students.

Conference believes:

- i. That we need to fight for an above inflation pay rise next year which begins the process of restoring pay levels to those of 2010
- ii. That such a pay rise must be fully funded
- iii. That the fight for increased funding needs to be at the centre of our campaign for increased pay
- iv. That we need to take national strike action to achieve these aims.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Start immediately any necessary preparations and indicative ballots, and then an action ballot aimed at delivering national strike action to achieve the aims above on the quickest possible timescale**
- b. If the ballot is successful, begin the strike campaign with staggered action: one strike day in week one, and then two days the following week and 3 day strike the week after that, and if needed a further escalating programme of further strikes.**

*Waltham Forest*

## **21. STRB timescale modification**

The School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) makes recommendations on the pay, professional duties and working time of schoolteachers in England and reports to the Secretary of State for Education and the Prime Minister.

Conference notes that:

1. The STRB received a remit letter from the Secretary of State on 15 November 2022
2. The remit letter requested a report from the STRB in May 2023.
3. The STRB invited their statutory consultees to submit initial written representations and evidence by 27 January 2023
4. The DfE subsequently informed the STRB that it would be unable to meet this deadline
5. Notwithstanding this delay in evidence submissions, the STRB report was submitted to the Secretary of State and Prime Minister in May 2023, as requested
6. The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Education published the STRB report to Parliament on 13 July 2023.

Conference believes:

- i. The current STRB timetable does not run in sufficient alignment with the academic year
- ii. School leaders and business managers are increasingly required to plan budgets for September without clarification of pay scales.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Work in collaboration with our sister unions to campaign for the Secretary of State for Education to create a statutory timeframe for reporting the STRB recommendations to Parliament**
- b. Campaign to ensure this framework is established to enable school leaders to have sufficient time to prepare budgets for September that incorporate STRB recommended pay increases**
- c. Campaign to ensure that the STRB report be published in full, and ratified by Parliament, no later than 30 June each year.**

*Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Central Bedfordshire, Staffordshire, North Yorkshire, Reading*



## **22. Workload**

Conference notes that excessive workload is cited as a major reason for teachers leaving the profession and that previous initiatives have been unsuccessful in reducing this.

**Conference instructs the executive to seek to negotiate a change to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) which limits work outside directed time to a maximum of an additional ten hours per week and, if necessary, ballot the membership for industrial action up to and including strike action to achieve this maximum.**

*West Sussex*

### **23. Igniting the campaign around workload and wellbeing**

Conference notes:

1. The union's April 2023 survey, 'State of Education: Workload and Well-being,' reported that 48% of staff consider their workload "unmanageable," and over two-thirds of teachers and support staff experience this feeling more than 60% of the time
2. Due to pressure from the union, the DfE commissioned an independent report (July 2023) to assess the impact of their 'reduction in workload toolkit.' This indicates that the government is beginning to acknowledge the issue
3. A DfE survey (June 2023) revealed that approximately 40,000, 9% of the workforce, left state schools in 2021-22 before retirement. Teachers are experiencing burnout and leaving the profession.

Conference believes:

- i. The 6.5% pay agreement has only served to mask the underlying workload issues in schools
- ii. Excessive workload remains the primary factor affecting the health and well-being of both teachers and support staff
- iii. Workload is the predominant cause of the recruitment and retention crisis in the education sector
- iv. Government and school leaders across all sectors need a clearer understanding of how excessive workload negatively impacts the well-being and mental health of education professionals
- v. School leaders often disregard guidance from both the union and the DfE on workload reduction
- vi. The 2023 conference motion, 'Workload – Building a National Campaign,' fell short at the local and national levels.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Encourage branch officers and representatives to advocate for the implementation of a workload responsibility role within local schools**
- b. Encourage branches to create a branch-based workload officer position to spearhead and provide support for local awareness campaigns**
- c. Support and encourage school representatives to conduct surveys among their members to identify workload and well-being concerns within their respective schools. In cases of significant concerns that remain unaddressed, support in facilitating local discussions and industrial action, if necessary**
- d. Intensify campaigning directed at the Government on the workload issue and develop comprehensive plans for sustained localised and national action.**

*Central Essex*

## **24. Workload – building a national campaign**

Conference notes:

1. The continued high level of workload facing education staff, and the ongoing recruitment and retention problems arising from it
2. That high workload and high turnover damages not only the health, safety, and wellbeing of staff, but education too
3. Last year's action was a successful launch of a fightback against the Government's successive attacks on pay, but we now need to fight on workload.

Conference believes that:

- i. Our campaign of national action on pay has shown that, with a clear national lead and determined organisation by workplace reps and local officers, the union is able to go beyond workplace disputes to build unified campaigns aimed at winning unified gains for our members
- ii. The union should now put in place an industrial action strategy to win our policy for the "Government to negotiate a 'National Contract for Education', binding on all employers", including removing the clause in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), that "a teacher must work such reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable effective discharge of a teacher's professional duties".

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Launch an immediate campaign to highlight the intolerable conditions that school staff are working under, the damage that is causing education, and the consequent need for a National Contract, binding on all employers**
- b. Write to the Government and employers to seek negotiations on such a binding contract, as well as highlighting the need for both improved pay and improved working conditions in our evidence to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB)**
- c. Draw up and enact a plan to build for national ballots for industrial action to win a National Contract, drawing on the lessons from the 2022/23 pay campaign**
- d. Approach other unions, particularly the NASUWT, but also NAHT, ASCL, UNISON and GMB to seek their support for this campaign**
- e. Prepare a timetable for action, aimed at winning a new National Contract for Education by September 2025.**

*Newham, Norfolk, Coventry, East Riding, Worcestershire*

## **25. The failure to recruit and retain teachers**

Conference notes:

1. That the Government missed its target for recruitment of new secondary school teachers by 41% and by 11% for primary school teachers in 2023, and there has also been a fall of 23% in trainee teachers
2. One in four teachers leave the profession within two years of qualification; a third within five years, and nearly one third of the teachers who qualified in the last decade have quit
3. 13% of secondary schools currently report having unfilled vacancies within their subject departments and 9% of primary schools report having unfilled positions in their schools
4. The largest cohort to leave education were women aged 30-39, many of whom are new mothers
5. Women suffer from a gender pay gap of 18.1%
6. There are significant increases in the gender pay gap in education between the ages of 35-39, from classroom teacher to headship level.

Conference believes:

- i. Students and schools benefit from both the long-term retention of experienced teachers and from the ideas and enthusiasm of newer educators
- ii. Schools are experiencing a crisis in the recruitment and retention of teachers, due to a variety of factors, including low pay, increasing workload, oppressive management and teachers' lack of autonomy, the enforcement of prescriptive pedagogy, discriminatory treatment and inadequate support for educators.
- iii. All educators, including ECTS, should be entitled to appropriate mentoring and CPD, which affords them professional choice and autonomy.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- I. Continue to campaign for adequate pay for educators and for an increase in funding**
- II. Undertake and publicise research, including a survey of members, into the reasons for the failure to retain, and call upon branches to investigate retention issues locally, including those arising from lack of equality**
- III. Review the current teacher training model and mentoring schemes and campaign for a programme that's fit for purpose**
- IV. Survey ECTs on their experience of the programme**
- V. Build the VE:VE campaign to ensure all educators are valued and adequately rewarded throughout their career.**

*Denbighshire, Luton, Halton, Birmingham, City of Derby, Staffordshire, Vale of Glamorgan, , Lewes Eastbourne and Wealden, Devon*

## **26. Expansion of the UPS pay scale – rewarding experience**

Conference notes:

1. In England and Wales, UPS3 for 2023 maximum pay is £46,525 and £47,340 respectively
2. In Scotland M5 (England and Wales equivalent of Main Pay Scale 6) pay is £47,565
3. Workload, class sizes, administrative tasks and all-round pastoral care has significantly increased in magnitude for all teachers, yet they are not rewarded adequately
4. There is currently no pay progression for staff on the highest pay scale other than moving onto the leadership scales.

Conference believes that:

- i. There are many experienced teachers who have no desire to move onto the leadership pay scales, they just want to be a well paid classroom teacher
- ii. Experienced teachers are essential for an effective education system and the current pay structures do not allow schools to adequately reward experienced teachers
- iii. There should be some mechanism to enable schools to reward these teachers for their experience and expertise beyond UPS3 but not requiring a move onto the leadership pay spine
- iv. Allowing pay progression beyond UPS3 will enable more experienced teachers to stay in classroom teaching roles.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Campaign for an expansion of the UPS pay scale to reward experienced teachers**
- b. Approach the DfE to explore ways in which schools can reward experienced teachers at UPS3.**

*Telford and Wrekin*

## **27. Boycotting exam marking for fair pay**

Conference notes:

1. The critical role played by examiners in maintaining the integrity and fairness of educational assessments conducted by exam boards such as AQA, Edexcel, WJEC, OCR, and others
2. The commitment of examiners to uphold the educational standards of our nation, often working tirelessly under immense pressure during the exam seasons.

However, conference is deeply concerned about the low pay and inadequate compensation for examiners, which has persisted for far too long. This low pay has resulted in:

- i. A decrease in the quality and consistency of exam marking
- ii. Diminished morale among dedicated examiners
- iii. The recruitment and retention of qualified examiners becoming increasingly challenging.

Conference recognises the standard of exam marking has been under pressure due to the increased pressure from exam boards to meet deadlines and maintain a sufficient pool of examiners, which is directly linked to the low pay issue.

Conference believes it is essential to take action to address this issue and secure fair compensation for examiners to ensure the continued quality and fairness of our examination system.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Collaborate with the NASUWT to co-ordinate a nationwide boycott of exam marking to draw attention to the issue of low pay and demand fair compensation for examiners**
- b. Launch a comprehensive campaign calling for higher pay for examiners, reflecting the critical role they play in our education system and acknowledging the increased workload and responsibilities they bear**
- c. Call on the Government to make exam marking income tax-free for examiners to alleviate the financial burden and attract more qualified individuals to participate**
- d. Work with all stakeholders in the education system, including government bodies, exam boards, and teacher unions, to work together to address this critical issue, ensuring our examination system maintains its integrity, fairness, and high standards.**

*Hertfordshire General*

## **28. Science technicians**

Conference notes:

1. The third report from the Science and Technology Commission session 2001 - 02 states that studies have recognised the need for the role of science technicians to develop a proper career structure for a service where 'teachers could not cope without them'
2. Since then, rather than improvement, we have seen continued reduction in hours, real terms pay, and working conditions often in breach of schools own risk assessments; set out in Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Services (CLEAPSS) guidance.

Conference believes:

- i. The deterioration of science technician terms and conditions must be reversed. For the sake of those members in the role as well as those science teachers and students who rely so heavily on that service being safely and expertly delivered
- ii. Current levels of technician service levels; technician's hours divided by teaching hours, are too low and must be remedied in line with CLEAPSS guidelines.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Work with Unite, GMB, and Unison to push for all schools to meet CLEAPSS guidelines on technician hours per science teaching hour**
- b. Push for schools to increase expected hours of work from Term Time Only +5 to TTO +10 as a minimum (this to complete legal requirements of the role safely.)**
- c. Request that Unite, GMB, and Unison push to increase science technician banding on pay points to better represent the levels of technical and health and safety knowledge necessary for the role.**

*County Durham*

## **29. Creating a stronger challenge for flexible working.**

Conference notes:

1. Through interactions with members during casework, it is apparent that refusal to grant flexible working requests is unfair and widespread
2. There are many reasons for a request for flexible working, including childcare issues, other caring responsibilities, health and wellbeing and members moving towards a phased retirement
3. Many women members are disproportionately affected by a culture of paying lip-service to flexible working requests
4. There is no effective and fair mechanism to challenge such refusals, as the appeal process is tokenistic.

Conference believes approval of flexible working requests will have a positive impact on recruitment, retention and wellbeing as well as the quality of learning for our students.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. Undertake analysis of a member survey for us to clearly determine the impact of these refusals**
- ii. Call upon districts and branches to engage with schools and colleges, local authorities and MATs to promote the benefits of flexible working and to provide relevant data**
- iii. Develop guidelines for flexible working employment practices, including for part-time staff.**

*East Kent*



### **30. Job quality in teaching**

Recent research from Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) suggests that “workload intensity” is increasing and “task discretion” is declining, and both contribute to a malaise in the attractiveness of teaching as a profession.

Conference notes:

1. Members report their job requires them to work excessively. In the latest survey April 2023, around 48% of teachers said that workload is unmanageable, either most of the time or all the time
2. Stress levels are high, with more than a third of teachers saying they are stressed 80% or more of the time. Two-thirds of teachers say they feel this way more than 60% of the time
3. One of the DfE’s published study shows that full-time teachers and middle leaders in England’s state schools work an average of 52.9 hours per week. This is above the 48 hours stipulated by the UK’s Working Time Regulations and extends well beyond classroom hours
4. There has been a distinct increase in the work intensity of teachers with spending per pupil declining. In 2017, evidence showed the work intensity of teachers had become higher than any other major occupation in Britain
5. Research shows that whilst work intensity was increasing, the level of task discretion was declining. In 1992 some 73% of teachers reported that they had a great deal of influence over how they performed their tasks; by 2017, this proportion had come down to 36%. In short, teachers’ sense of control over their work has diminished, significantly more than in other professions.

Conference believes:

- i. Having both high workload intensity and reduced control or influence over your work indicates high strain in a job, a classic source of stress
- ii. Reduced micromanagement would aid in improving the health and well-being of staff.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Develop methodologies to undertake regular research on job quality amongst members and teachers generally**
- b. Continue to campaign nationally and seek the support of other education unions, to consider job-quality as a campaigning issue**
- c. Campaign for employers to prioritize the health and wellbeing of all staff by reducing their workload to manageable proportions.**

*Northern Ireland*

### **31. TLRs in primary schools**

Conference notes:

1. Since the introduction of the Ofsted framework in 2019, there is now considerable and growing pressure on all primary school subject leaders
2. The deep dive approach of Ofsted is seeing our primary school subject leaders held to an extremely high level of external accountability for the subject that they lead
3. The pressure on subject leaders in primary schools is now on every subject across the school and not just on those responsible for the previous “core” subjects
4. That in far too many schools, subject leaders in primary schools aren’t receiving a TLR payment
5. That union policy and the STPCD make it clear that significant subject responsibility should attract a TLR payment.

Conference believes:

- i. Every subject leader in primary schools should be in receipt of a TLR payment
- ii. Where heads and governing bodies refuse to pay subject leaders for the job that they do, the union should support members in seeking a ballot for sustained strike action
- iii. Being on the Upper Pay Range does not mean that you need to take on a subject responsibility
- iv. Members have the right to say no if they do not want to lead a subject.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Write to every head teacher reminding them of both the STPCD requirements and the NEU policy that substantial responsibilities should attract a TLR payment**
- b. Survey all primary subject leaders to get a clearer picture of the problem**
- c. Support school groups in moving towards strike action to achieve the aim of all subject leaders being paid a TLR payment**
- d. Seek to coordinate strike action across local areas, as well as nationally where possible.**

*Lambeth*

### **32. No probationary periods for qualified teachers - COMPOSITE**

Conference notes that

1. Some multi-academy trusts are using six or even twelve-month probation periods for qualified teachers starting a new job in one of their schools
2. These probation periods can have as short a notice period of seven days and no means of appeal
3. Members often leave rather than face having a failed probation period on their personnel file
4. This dismissal period undermines the provisions for notice in the Burgundy Book 2023 and is thus an erosion of teachers' conditions of employment, and puts excessive power in the hands of the employer
5. Teachers' pay and conditions are the result of many years of union intervention. Our hard-fought pay and conditions are being eroded by this practice
6. The unions have worked with schools to produce sound policies that address matters of capability that protect members. Probation periods are not needed.

Conference believes:

- i. Probationary periods are open to abuse
- ii. Allowing dismissal without reason creates opportunities for discrimination both within the terms of the Equality Act and more broadly creating space for petty grievances and personality conflicts to become causes for dismissal
- iii. There is a risk that anti-union employers may also use this measure to victimise trade unionists for legitimate trade union activities
- iv. Trusts use probation periods to exploit members. Anyone who dares question why their probation period needs to be extended often find themselves as failing and being dismissed.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Conduct research into the extent to which probationary periods are being used in the academy and independent sector**
- b. Produce materials to brief reps on the union's opposition to probationary periods and how to support members to take action to oppose such policies**
- c. Develop training for local officers on how to approach the issue of probationary policies with employers and obtain their removal from employment policies**
- d. Campaign towards discouraging the use of probation periods before they become more widespread and are used in local authority schools.**

*City of Derby, South Derbyshire*

### **33. Educators need a better work-life balance: exploring the four-day week in schools**

Conference notes:

1. According to the UK's Health and Safety Executive, teaching staff report the highest rates of work-related stress, depression, and anxiety in Britain
2. 69% of teachers surveyed by Survation said that fewer working hours would make them more likely to stay in the profession
3. In Finland teaching work weeks average at 34 hours
4. The world's largest four-day week trial took place in the UK and was hugely successful, with 92% of participating organisations continuing with a 4-day week after the trial ended
5. Nearly 900 school districts in the United States use a four-day weekly academic schedule
6. Several schools in the UK have already implemented a shorter teaching week.

Conference believes:

- i. As long as plans to reduce hours are adapted carefully, a shorter week should be as viable for educators as it is for graphic designers, video game producers, or anyone else
- ii. With ongoing crises regarding workload, recruitment and retention, a shorter working week could make a big difference
- iii. There is ample legal latitude for forward thinking headteachers, SLTs and governing bodies across the UK to trial shortened working weeks in their schools
- iv. A four-day week should never include a reduction in pay.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. **Publicly support the campaign for a four-day working week**
- b. **Consider the best path to achieve a shorter working week in schools**
- c. **Collate information from schools that have implemented a shorter working week to use as a template going forward**
- d. **Work with reps and leadership members to identify a school or schools where a shorter working week could be trialled.**

*Newham*

### **34. Academy strategy – STPCD, Burgundy and Green Book recognition in all schools**

Conference notes that:

1. Over 50% of schools are now academies or free schools
2. The rise of free schools and academy trusts has fragmented the education landscape and eroded local accountability
3. The academy and free schools project has failed to address the recruitment and retention crisis, and cannot show any positive impact on education
4. Teachers and support staff in academies often suffer from reduced rights and collective bargaining powers
5. Many academy trusts and free schools have had rapid increases in management pay.

Conference believes:

- i. Deregulation of employment rights creates a hostile environment for workers
- ii. All teachers and support staff are entitled to fair pay and conditions
- iii. These should be consistent across the sector and be negotiated at national level by education trade unions
- iv. Improved conditions for staff help recruitment, retention and long-term pupil outcomes.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. **Create a national campaign that effectively communicates our demand that all academies and free schools sign-up to Standard Teachers Pay and Conditions (STPCD), Burgundy and Green Book rules**
- b. **Create a clear database accessible on the website showing which academies and free schools do and don't abide by STPCD, Burgundy and Green Book rules**
- c. **Create a national academies strategy to ensure at least 90% of academies are signed-up to STPCD and Burgundy and Green Book rules by 2030**
- d. **Pursue action across the sector until all trusts, academies and free schools recognise the STPCD, Burgundy and Green Book rules as minimum standards for their staff.**

*Newham*

### 35. London and fringe weighting

A teacher shortage in 1970s London, caused by increasing living costs and low pay, meant that over 30,000 children were being sent home from school each week. One of our predecessor unions, National Union of Teachers (NUT) took extensive strike action which ultimately led to the establishment of the three-tier, geographically based, London Allowance. This system is currently enshrined in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) and a similar system is in place for other education staff via the local government pay spine and the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service (the Green Book).

Conference notes that in September 2023 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported that:

1. Home rental prices had increased by 5.7% in the calendar year, the highest rise since the measure was first reported in 2016
2. 43% of adults in the UK reported difficulties paying their rent or mortgage in the calendar year
3. A home is only considered 'broadly affordable' if it costs 5 year's income or less.

Conference further notes that:

- i. In August 2023, the UK House Price Index England showed the average house price in England was £310,000. This is approximately eight times the average teacher salary and sixteen and a half times the average TA salary
- ii. The current average TA salary does not cover 'broadly affordable' housing anywhere in England.

Conference believes:

- a. Current pay structures do not consider current housing market conditions
- b. Three-tier London Allowance structures do not consider regional variations in housing costs
- c. Teachers and TAs are being driven from their jobs by unaffordable housing costs.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- I. Campaign with sister unions for a reassessment of the geographical three-tier London Allowance system to take in other authority areas where housing costs are comparably high**
- II. Campaign for better conditions for public sector workers in privately rented properties, including rental caps and secure tenancies**
- III. Campaign for an above-inflation pay rise for all education workers.**

*Reading*

## **36. Pensions**

Conference values retired members, recognising the contribution they make to the work of the union at many levels and the contribution many made to the work of the union during the 2023 Pay Campaign.

Conference expresses its support for all members campaigning on pensions and congratulates the members in the Girls' Day School Trust (GSDT) who successfully defended their pension rights.

Conference recognises that:

1. Many teachers will not have a full-service record because of breaks in service for caring responsibilities and that this will mainly affect women
2. There are educators who are union members who are not in the Teachers' Pension scheme.

Conference further recognises the importance of the state pension for all members and expresses its full support for the maintenance of the Triple Lock and calls on all political parties standing in the General Election to commit to its retention.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. **Write to all members approaching retirement to thank them for their service and encourage them to retain their membership and put them in touch with retired member groups in their area**
- b. **Include an information booklet about how they might continue to contribute to the work of the union as well as guidance on pensions and information on how to seek advice should they need it**
- c. **Confirm that the union will provide appropriate support in the event of issues arising from the period when they were in full employment and full membership of the union such as "historic" cases relating to asbestos.**

**And further to:**

- d. **Work with other unions and organisations campaigning to oppose fire and rehire tactics wherever they are used to attack workers terms and conditions**
- e. **Campaign, alongside other organisations including the National Pensioners Convention, to protect members' pensions and the value of the state pension and to call for the protection of the Triple Lock**
- f. **Support the WASPI Campaign seeking justice for 1950s-born women.**

*Denbighshire, Camden, Flintshire, Vale of Glamorgan, Kirklees, West Sussex, Reading*

### **37. National Where to Teach and Teacher Pay Check websites**

Conference notes the NEU is not only the largest teaching union but the expert on all things education. We have demonstrated this with our successful pay campaign, resources for pupils and strike ballots, and we must now lead on day-to-day school well-being; the pressures of diminishing pay and attacks on our national agreements. At the same time, we have an opportunity to strengthen our democratically elected secretaries and reps in their organising and negotiating roles.

With school funding cuts, we face the real threat of schools and academies looking to save money where they can. This could be done by diluting national pay recommendations and dismantling conditions of service for teachers.

Conference is aware of the recruitment crisis facing schools. Teachers are in a strong position when choosing a school. The union should be the expert voice in helping teachers decide which school to choose. There are some brilliant schools that work hard to recruit and retain their teaching staff through favourable conditions of service and pay.

Norfolk district have used their website [www.wheretoteach.co.uk](http://www.wheretoteach.co.uk) and [www.teacherpaycheck.co.uk](http://www.teacherpaycheck.co.uk) to promote 'good' employers and highlight those we would not recommend. It has also been an effective negotiating tool to prevent a race to the bottom for teacher pay and conditions. By highlighting employers with poor pay and conditions, the websites are useful tools in helping to organise members around the issues that matter most

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- 1. Create a website that shares and ranks the pay and conditions for every school**
- 2. Review the [www.wheretoteach.org.uk](http://www.wheretoteach.org.uk) and [www.teacherpaycheck.co.uk](http://www.teacherpaycheck.co.uk) websites created by Norfolk and test for compatibility to use as a national model**
- 3. Fund the creation of a database and web team**
- 4. Assist local officers in sharing gathered data with employers ensuring data is accurate**
- 5. Support district and branch secretaries, reps and members in challenging schools that score poorly and promote employers that score favourably.**

*Luton, Norfolk, Central Bedfordshire, Lewisham*



### **38. The safety of our schools**

Conference notes our schools have recently been hit by a wave of serious safety concerns:

1. Crumbling RAAC
2. Asbestos
3. Heatwaves
4. Floods
5. Air pollution

Conference believes:

- i. The link between all these is the Government's failure to invest properly in education and ensure our school buildings are fit for purpose and climate resilient
- ii. That, as extreme weather events worsen and their frequency increases, those on the lowest incomes will be disproportionately impacted by these effects.

Conference condemns the Government's hypocrisy in criticising the union for its successful campaigning to save lives during the pandemic whilst being responsible for:

- a. Cancelling the £27bn funding for Labour's "Building Schools for the Future" (BSF) programme in 2010. 700 school building projects were cancelled.
- b. Refusing to rebuild 400 schools which were 'critical risk to life'
- c. Refusing to act on two occasions when a previous Education Secretary was officially told 300 schools were an immediate 'risk to life'
- d. Failing to properly survey free schools buildings on conversion, putting children and staff at risk.

Conference reaffirms its support for individual members to use the 1996 Employment Rights Act (Section 44) where appropriate to 'withdraw from and to refuse to return to a workplace that is unsafe' when in 'serious and imminent danger'.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- I. Integrate the role of green rep into health & safety rep to create a "health, safety & environment rep" by extending the existing H&S rep training to incorporate environment rep training, combined with a comprehensive recruitment drive. This integration into HS&E reps must ensure that existing legal H&S rights are maintained**
- II. Campaign for the Government and future Governments to invest in our school estates significantly more than Labour's BSF for retrofitting, asbestos and RAAC removal, climate resilient buildings and healthier air in our schools. All our schools and public buildings must be safe havens for their communities during extreme weather events**
- III. Continue to campaign to restore the right of local authorities to build new local authority schools that are fit for purpose and climate resilient.**

*Brent, South Derbyshire, Buckinghamshire, Stockport*

### **39. The risk to health from airborne diseases, pollution and hay fever**

Conference notes:

1. The extremely high rates of infection of school populations throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and the disproportionately high numbers of education sector staff contracting Long Covid
2. The high risk to our members of contracting airborne diseases in UK schools, which are the most crowded in Europe
3. That a quarter of UK pupils attend schools where air pollution is over WHO limit and that pollution particles, called PM2.5, are particularly dangerous as they not only harm the lungs but can pass into the bloodstream and affect many other parts of the body
4. That many school children suffer from hay fever, particularly in exam season, with potentially negative effects on their exam performance.

Conference believes:

- i. All the risk factors listed above can be significantly reduced by the installation of HEPA filters, which clean allergens, pollution and pathogens from the air
- ii. These systems have been scientifically proven to significantly reduce rates of infection from the Sars-COV-2-virus, influenza, and all other known viruses. They also significantly reduce pollution and pollen particles
- iii. The cost of installing one HEPA filter in a classroom is approximately the same as the cost of a cover-teacher for 4 days. Installation would reduce absence due to sickness, and long-term sickness thus reducing education lost, improving attendance records and results.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Campaign to install HEPA filters in all classrooms**
- b. Ensure all school leaders, business managers, school governors and local government and trust members understand the benefits of HEPA filters**
- c. Mount a high-profile campaign to lobby the Government to make adequate ventilation and air-cleaning systems a statutory requirement in all state schools.**

*Oxfordshire*

#### **40. Crumbling buildings – the dangers of asbestos exposure increases**

Conference condemns the Government's scandalous complacency over the very poor fabric of school buildings. The increased dangers of asbestos exposure must be met with a properly funded and systematic rebuilding programme of schools with reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) and asbestos. Our children should not be educated in potentially lethal buildings.

Conference congratulates the strong stance the union has taken over this, including bringing a legal action to have asbestos removed from schools.

Conference further congratulates the Sunday Times in its campaign for the removal of asbestos from school buildings.

Conference notes with the gravest concern that:

1. Schools containing RAAC are presumed by the HSE to contain asbestos as this was used as a building material in system-built schools over the same period. If buildings collapse, then it is most likely that asbestos fibres will be released
2. With the UK having the highest rate of mesothelioma in the world, it is estimated that 9,000 pupils and 1,000 staff have died from mesothelioma (1980 – 2017) because they were exposed to asbestos in their former schools prior to 1980.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. **Ensure that the FOIs or environmental FOIs are followed up in all schools and colleges to properly establish the facts and dangers regarding asbestos in schools**
- ii. **Launch a campaign of action with our sister unions to call for the fully funded removal of all asbestos and RAAC material from our schools, starting with the most dangerous first**
- iii. **Mount a publicity campaign working together with all education unions, and campaigning media who are willing to work with us, to expose the vital need to have safe places to educate our children.**

*Torfaen, Portsmouth, Norfolk, Brent, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, North Yorkshire*

#### **41. The dangers to educational professionals of wearing lanyards whilst driving**

Conference notes with alarm:

1. The frequently overlooked dangers that education professionals face when wearing lanyards while driving
2. That wearing lanyards while driving can result in severe injuries during a road crash; attached keys or passes may cause harm, especially at high speeds, or be compressed by an airbag, exacerbating injuries
3. That in the unfortunate event of a collision while wearing a lanyard, the primary liability typically rests with the party causing the crash. However, the employee or the employer may also face claims of contributory negligence for failing to remove the lanyard.

Conference further notes:

- i. In 2019, a 34-year-old teacher from Edinburgh suffered severe injuries after a road crash while wearing a lanyard with a security pass, resulting in internal bleeding and organ damage
- ii. In 2020, a 28-year-old teacher from Birmingham experienced life-threatening injuries, including a severed artery, when a lanyard with a key ring became a projectile during a car collision
- iii. In 2021, a 42-year-old teacher from London sustained a spinal cord injury and a paralyzed arm after a truck rear-ended her when she was wearing a lanyard with a USB stick.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. **Inform members through Educate and other publications of the dangers of driving whilst wearing a lanyard**
- b. **Lobby the DfE to take action to reduce the risks of educationalists wearing lanyards when driving**
- c. **Encourage employers to take proactive measures to educate their employees about the hazards of wearing lanyards while driving, and to encourage them to remove them before getting behind the wheel**
- d. **Further encourage employers to implement and monitor policies that enforce the removal of lanyards while driving. Regular reminders and checks can contribute to safer practices. Other simple safety measures should also be promoted to reduce the risks while driving.**

*Wiltshire*

## **42. Leadership - COMPOSITE**

Conference notes:

1. The recruitment and retention crisis of education workers is affecting all areas of the profession, including at headteacher level
2. Retaining experienced staff is critical for all schools and colleges
3. Education workers' pay and terms and conditions, including pension, have been eroded since 2010
4. Without proper pay and incentives teachers and other education staff will continue to leave their jobs leading to a crisis in education in England and Wales.

Conference further notes that:

- i. The latest school workforce census figures show 1,615 headteachers left the profession in 2021-22 for reasons other than retirement or death
- ii. This represents more than 1 in 20 schools where the headteacher has left the profession (other than for retirement)
- iii. In 2018-19, the last academic year before the pandemic, 976 heads left. In 2010-11, the earliest year for which data is available, the number was 438.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Work with other leadership unions to assess the scale of the problem**
- b. Survey members (both leadership and standard) to better understand the issue as it affects schools and colleges**
- c. Present the findings of the survey to the government as evidence and work with the department for education to find a way to resolve this issue.**

*Wiltshire, North Yorkshire, Telford and Wrekin*

# Education policy and funding

### 43. High needs funding costs

Conference notes:

Warwickshire CC is one of 55 LAs who are part of a DfE commitment to reduce High Needs Funding (HNF) costs. In September the Government signed a contract targeting 20% cuts in the number of new EHCPs being issued to reduce costs. To access specialist provision, pupils need an EHCP. These cuts will mean more pupils in mainstream schools are without support, increasing stress on all staff and increasing exclusions. The impact is potentially, in Warwickshire, that more EHCP requests will be denied needs assessment (currently we rank 3rd worst in England with over 40% of initial requests being denied), this also increases costs where families go to tribunals.

Conference believes the current proposals to reduce the number of EHCPs:

1. Will adversely affect pupil outcomes, teacher wellbeing and parental confidence in the education system
2. Will lead to more young people being out of education
3. Do nothing to tackle the causes of poor mental health in young people
4. Will not reduce pressure on the High Needs funding budget as they will delay support for pupils resulting in a requirement for more specialist input

Conference is concerned that this move will exacerbate teacher workload, further stretch school budgets, increase the number of teaching and support staff leaving the profession and lead to an increase in pupil exclusions.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. **Commission research into the number of EHCP needs assessments going to tribunal and subsequently being agreed**
- ii. **Commission research into the number of pupils being excluded or home educated due to Education, Health and Care Needs (EHCNA) being denied**
- iii. **Work with other unions to fight for an increase in the high needs budget**
- iv. **Defend the right to an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum that meets individual needs; recognising that this may not be part of the 'normal' offer within a given setting**
- v. **Encourage districts to support schools to create supportive networks of staff experienced in delivering alternative curriculums**
- vi. **Commission research into the number of specialist teachers working within LAs, their role and skills so that we can promote good practice through Educate.**

*Warwickshire*

#### **44. SEND**

Conference condemns:

1. The Government's lack of planning to meet the needs of children with special educational needs (SEND), and those who have the support of an Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs)
2. Failure of consecutive budgets to fund schools sufficiently to meet increased need at all levels of SEND support
3. Plans to support councils in bringing down their SEND budget deficits, by achieving a 20% reduction in new EHCPs being issued
4. Failure to provide special school places to meet the need of pupils, even when a panel confirms this provision is needed. There are currently 195 awaiting a place in Cambridgeshire alone
5. The impact on workload for teachers trying to meet the needs of children who previously would be supported through local authority systems
6. Inadequate provision of specialist teachers, educational psychologists and community paediatricians to support schools in delivering quality support for children with SEND.

Conference notes:

- i. The Government has pledged to spend more than £2.6bn to build more special schools, but there is significant pressure on schools to deliver education for children waiting for these spaces now, without the correct level of funding
- ii. Nine out of ten special schools and alternative providers are forecasting a deficit budget by January 2024, and inclusive education in mainstream provision is also threatened by cuts in school funding.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Call for significantly increased funding for SEND**
- b. Request a review of the current systems for SEND support**
- c. Engage with schools with above national averages of EHCP, identify issues and use their suggested mechanisms to improve provision**
- d. Call upon districts to lobby for increased funding, appropriate provision, and to support members in working with parents**
- e. Campaign for children awaiting specialist school places to be given equivalent funding so providers are more able to meet their needs**
- f. Consider the high impact of SEND needs on workload in small primaries**
- g. Consider the impact of poor/brief teacher training on the quality of SEND provision in schools.**

*Cambridgeshire*



#### **45. Ensuring adequate funding for special educational needs in state schools – COMPOSITE**

Conference notes:

1. Following the passing of Motion 11 at conference last year, the SEND crisis has only deepened
2. Increasing challenges faced by educators due to insufficient resources for effective SEND education
3. The pivotal role of funding in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment
4. Lack of access to support organisations such as Children and Adolescents' Mental Health Service (CAMHs), loss of skilled staff combined with increasing numbers of pupils with SEND and the onus now being placed on underfunded mainstream schools, has led to the creation of myriad expensive Alternative Provision (AP), unaffordable in the current financial climate.

Conference believes:

- i. Every child deserves an inclusive, high-quality education
- ii. Inadequate funding hampers schools' ability to meet diverse SEND requirements
- iii. There is an urgent need for increased investment in SEND provision
- iv. The situation is fast becoming critical. Children and their families are being let down by a system which is seemingly blind to the impact on future generations.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Lobby the Government for increased and sustained funding for SEND provision and emphasise the importance of ring-fenced funding for SEND, specifically allocated for diverse needs**
- b. Call on Government to look again at the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan (SAPIP), and act swiftly and realistically in consultation with those who work within the sector, as well as parents, to ensure a safe and secure future for our SEND pupils**
- c. Call for a comprehensive review of the current SEND funding model, with consideration for increasing demands**
- d. Collaborate with other education unions, parent groups, and advocacy organisations**
- e. Explore additional avenues for raising awareness, including media campaigns and community outreach.**

*Wiltshire, Reading, Bradford, South Derbyshire, North Yorkshire, Sheffield, West Sussex, Hertfordshire General*

## 46. SEND in crisis – COMPOSITE

Conference condemns:

1. The Government's lack of understanding of SEND and the need for education health care plans (EHCPs), and its failure to adequately fund them
2. Plans to support councils in bringing down their SEND budget deficits, by achieving a 20% reduction in new EHCPs being issued, through the delivering better value in SEND (DBV) programme, which cost £19.5m in June 2022.

Conference notes:

- i. A record number of complaints in 2023 regarding SEND provision which were upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman
- ii. An increase in the number of SEND students being without a school placement for more than a year and forced to home-school
- iii. Funding is wasted through the use of expensive private sector settings
- iv. A shortage in educational psychologists to support and diagnose students with SEND
- v. Long waits for support from CAMHS through under-funding and lack of staffing
- vi. The Government has pledged to spend more than £2.6bn to build more special schools, but the measures will not be rolled out until at least 2025
- vii. Nine out of ten special schools and alternative providers are forecasting a deficit budget by January 2024, and inclusive education in mainstream provision is also threatened by cuts in school funding.

Conference believes:

- a. The DBV programme for reducing permanent exclusions and for teaching more SEND students via mainstream settings is not fit for purpose
- b. Parents can feel excluded from the educational process despite being the expert in their own child and their needs

**Conference instructs the executive to produce guidance on supporting and working with parents, including working with parents' organisations and consider CPD provision for educators, and call for:**

- I. **Significantly increased funding for SEND, including CAMHS, to reduce waiting times for assessments and diagnoses, and provide support for students as part of our national campaign**
- II. **Districts to lobby councils to increase funding, provide appropriate provision, and to support members in working with parents**
  - I. **LAs to record those home educated due to lack of suitable provision**
  - II. **The implementation of accessibility for all schools in 10 years**
- III. **Proper training and enforcement on the reasonable adjustment duty for all schools.**
- IV. **A massive increase in staff training on teaching students with neurodiversity, mental health issues and other fast-growing forms of impairment.**

*Redbridge, Croydon, Oxfordshire, Camden, Tower Hamlets and the City, Ealing, Hackney, Nottingham, Sheffield, Stockport*

#### **47. Policing our students: zero-tolerance behaviour and uniform**

Conference affirms that students and educators in schools and colleges are entitled to work and learn in a safe environment, free from the threat of violence or harassment and to have their background, cultures, and beliefs respected.

Conference applauds those students who have protested against unjust and discriminatory treatment by schools.

Conference believes:

1. The continuing failure by the Government to fund schools properly has led to a fall in support for students with challenging behaviour who struggle to adapt to schools' expectations and who are experiencing issues with mental health.
2. The inadequate funding allocated to post-Covid recovery failed to support students experiencing difficulties in re-adjusting to schools' restrictive expectations and has left them and their educators at risk.

Conference expresses its concern over the promotion of 'zero-tolerance' behaviour strategies and rigid approaches to uniform, and the excessive and sometimes discriminatory sanctions, used to enforce them, which can lead to students being isolated or excluded from school over minor infringements, with negative impact on their education.

Conference further believes that:

- i. These approaches are inhumane and promote surface level compliance without addressing the needs underlying challenging behaviour or supporting students in learning to control themselves autonomously
- ii. School uniforms can be expensive and can reinforce gender stereotypes
- iii. Uniforms can be used to demean students, for example, through inspections of skirt lengths, banning of 'inappropriate' hairstyles and a failure to acknowledge issues for SEND students.

**Conference calls on the executive to:**

- a. **Promote behaviour policies that are clear, humane and inclusive, and respect the rights of the child and publicise and challenge the discriminatory and harmful effects of zero-tolerance behaviour policies**
- b. **Promote CPD nationally on such approaches to behaviour management and encourage districts to initiate such training locally**
- c. **Highlight the impact of restrictive uniform policies on SEND children or those from poorer families, and how they can reinforce gender and racial stereotyping and call for bringing an end to branded uniforms**
- d. **Survey members on their attitudes to uniforms and zero-tolerance behaviour policies.**

*Wakefield, Hackney, Bradford*

#### **48. Improved funding, pay and conditions for school counsellors**

Conference notes the union's survey, State of Education: Mental Health (April '23) highlighted problems in accessing help for pupils and school staff trying to support children and families with new and complex mental health needs.

Conference believes:

1. The current Mental Health in Schools Teams initiative does not meet the needs of young people who have moderate need of mental health support and are not able to access CAHMS
2. School Counsellors can offer counselling to pupils, support staff and parents, contribute to the pastoral ethos and help develop a well-being curriculum, thus greatly contributing to the whole school approach to mental health. Yet, Public Health England states that only 46% of state schools in England have school counselling provision
3. School counselling is often ad hoc and dependent on precarious funding. It remains a marginalised service with many counsellors often having no permanent contracts of employment. Pay rates are substantially lower than counsellors employed in the NHS or college and university sector, although their training is considered senior level in the counselling profession.

Conference welcomes

- i. Recommendations for school counselling provision in the *Mentally Healthier Nation Report*, Barnardo's Report, *It's Hard to Listen* (November 22) and Centre for Mental Health and Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition's *Time for Action* Report
- ii. The cross-party debates in November 21 and March 23 on the value of school counselling and the need for Government funding.

**Conference instructs the executive to**

- a. **Support the ongoing national campaign of Citizens UK supported by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, NASUWT and the Psychotherapy and Counselling Union to make access to a paid counsellor in schools a statutory requirement**
- b. **Make representation to the DfE and the Skills Funding Agency to fund and employ school counsellors on professional pay and conditions as part of mainstream mental health provision in education.**

*Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole*

## **49. Military influence in schools**

Conference notes:

1. Every year the armed forces make thousands of visits to schools to promote military careers and the armed forces
2. Since 2012, 'military ethos' has been promoted in schools, particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, initiated and supported by the DfE and the Ministry of Defence (MOD). The Cadet Expansion Programme and 'alternative provision with a military ethos' have developed significantly
3. The armed forces and defence industry provide extensive curriculum resources and sponsorship within education.

Conference believes:

- i. These developments raise concerns around marketing and recruitment activities by military interests within the education system
- ii. The MOD's engagement with schools is designed to influence future decision-makers towards the military and its operations, and to encourage young people to enlist. A growing body of research suggests encouraging recruitment at an early age is not in the best interests of young people
- iii. Significant, growing military influence in schools could be detrimental to the educational imperative of balanced learning which is not unduly influenced by outside agendas.

**Conference instructs the executive to call for:**

- a. Oversight and regulation of military activities in schools, including for careers and curriculum purposes**
- b. Military-themed activities or perspectives to be balanced by activities focusing on peace and human rights.**

*Reading, Sheffield*

## 50. Lose the booths

Schools across the country use isolation booths to punish children. These booths are a means of sensory deprivation.

Conference notes that:

1. The British Psychological Society has said the use of isolation booths is not backed by evidence and has been proven not to be effective. It adds that such approaches to children's behaviour are overly simplistic and "run counter to the understanding of child development"
2. Government advice to headteachers and school staff does not currently include a time limit on how long school students should be placed in isolation as punishment
3. Alex Sobel MP has said "This form of punishment disproportionately affects the most vulnerable students in our schools, notably SEN and BAME pupils. Our schools are facing a mental health crisis and isolation as punishment is making the situation much worse for many children."
4. While the DfE collects and annually publishes national data on exclusions, there is no equivalent data set for restraint and seclusion. Currently, schools are not formally required to record details of their use of these interventions
5. There are some extremely successful schools working in challenging circumstances who have no isolation booths and manage behaviour superbly
6. Freedom of Information requests by the BBC show that in 500 schools using isolation booths 200 children had spent more than 5 consecutive days in isolation in the past year.

Conference believes:

- i. isolation booths are a breach of the UN charter on the rights of the child, disproportionate and unnecessary
- ii. There is no evidence that booths or extended isolation have any positive effect on behaviour. There is a great deal of evidence to the contrary and currently, the use of isolation booths across the UK is unregulated and unreported. We have no real understanding of the harm they are causing in either the short or the long term.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Work with the Lose the Booths campaign to demand that such interventions are formally recorded**
- b. Demand a ban on the use of isolation booths, as a means of punishment.**

*Reading*

## 51. Prioritise mental health and wellbeing

Conference notes that:

1. The total related cost of mental ill health is £105bn a year
2. 20% of pupils wait more than six months to receive care
3. 52% of teachers felt their mental health and wellbeing has suffered; emphasising the need to protect staff and students
4. 7% of children have attempted suicide by the age of 17, one in four self-harms
5. Seven school staff a day are judged to be at risk of suicide

Conference believes:

- i. Mental health is influenced by the relationship between the individual, the nature of their work and their work environment. Work environments that place high demands on individuals without enough control and support pose risks for mental health
- ii. The mental health of teachers and support staff has been impacted by increased workload and a punitive, unforgiving, inspection regime, based on a result driven, top-down culture, conflicting with the student-centred approach of staff
- iii. Support staff are essential. Cuts have left learners at risk with increased stress for teachers who must accept additional roles due to the evisceration of support and social services including CAMHS
- iv. Reduced funding has made it difficult to ensure workload is acceptable, and that appropriate support is provided
- v. Valuing teachers and support staff is essential, so pay awards must be honoured
- vi. 45% of survey respondents said preparation for Ofsted inspections caused significant stress. The current minimum of 10% PPA time is insufficient.

Conference instructs the executive to:

- a. **Lobby the Government to fully fund mental health support for teachers, support staff and students with a focus on the prevention of problems rather than the promotion of positive mental health. Include individual-level approaches to help teachers and support staff cope with stressors in their work environment as opposed to strategies at an organisational level**
- b. **Work with other unions to challenge punitive management cultures in schools and colleges and the pernicious nature of Ofsted inspections**
- c. **Support campaigns to maintain SEND support**
- d. **Support action to ensure future pay awards for teachers and support staff.**

*Warwickshire*

## **52. The expectations placed upon education staff**

Conference notes:

1. With the reduction in outside services available due to lack of funding, there are more expectations on education staff to not only educate children but also be: social workers, mental health professionals, carers and to take on many more duties
2. Education staff receive limited or no training in any of these extra tasks
3. The mental health of our students has been severely impacted by various unprecedented circumstances such as Covid, and the need for services is ever increasing.

Conference believes:

- i. The need for these external services has never been so essential to the well-being of our young people
- ii. Education staff are not adequately trained in these extra tasks.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. **Work alongside sister unions, families and stakeholders to challenge the poor funding of essential services needed for the wellbeing of students**
- b. **Encourage schools to employ, as part of essential staff, early help co-ordinators, school counsellors etc**
- c. **Develop VE:VE action points on tackling workload action points associated with these issues.**

*County Durham*



### 53. Early Careers Teachers

Conference is concerned by the experience of Early Careers Teachers (ECTs):

1. Caseworker officers are too often called upon to support ECT members because of poor management practice and a lack of understanding about their induction
2. Too many schools are taking on ECTs as a cheaper alternative to more experienced teachers and then failing to offer the right support in taking them through their challenging first steps in teaching
3. ECT mentors complain about the lack of time in an already busy timetable to adequately support their mentees
4. Moreover, the ECT can find themselves isolated, stressed and anxious to seek support from over stretched work colleagues
5. Many ECTs are thrown in at the deep end, and the pressure they endure is making many decide not to continue in the profession
6. The lack of communication with the ECTs in school in some instances is appalling. On more than one occasion ECTs have found themselves being told in the last term of their induction that they are likely to fail to meet the standards. This shouldn't come to light in the last term of a two-year cycle
7. The stress and anxiety this is causing is unacceptable.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. Make representation to the awarding bodies and hold them to account on the experience of ECT's which in many cases is negative**
- ii. Carry out a survey of the experience of ECTs and report back to conference**
- iii. Provide detailed information to all reps and officers of the rights ECTs have**
- iv. Research how many ECTs are failing to complete their ECT induction and how many are leaving the profession in the first or second year of qualification**
- v. Support reps with materials for them to meet ECTs to explain their rights**
- vi. Lobby Government to review the scheme and identify specific responsibilities for the ECT, as it lacks clarity and is resulting in a burdensome workload.**

*Solihull*

## 54. Crisis in school funding 2024

### Conference notes:

1. The crisis in school funding is deepening. A recent NFER report underlined the effects of the cost-of-living pressures schools face
2. The NFER also reports that half of primary and special schools and an overwhelming number of secondary schools are moving into deficit
3. Whilst the Government has pledged more money for schools it does not match the increase in the RPI, and amounts to a real cut in funding
4. Compounding funding problems is the revelation that thousands of schools have RAAC and contain asbestos. The National Audit Office stated that to maintain the school estate the Government needs to spend £5bn a year. It has only spent a third of this amount.

### Conference believes:

- i. The Government misled the public about a 2.7% increase in funding up to 2025 and that the real value of the rise is only 1.9%. This followed, what it has called the miscalculation of a £370m cut in school funding
- ii. This miscalculation equates to a reduction of £50 funding per pupil and thus fewer teachers in school
- iii. This is the result of years of deregulation, privatisation, and cuts in spending. The education system is in a critical condition.

### Conference instructs the executive to:

- a. **Demand a fully funded publicly owned education system**
- b. **Campaign for the removal of all private sector involvement in state education**
- c. **Campaign for a comprehensive rebuilding programme of the school estate**
- d. **Pressurise the Government to fund all extra costs incurred by schools caused by closures created through the neglect of buildings**
- e. **Pressurise the Government to stop wasting money on academisation and free schools, and return all schools to democratic local authority control**
- f. **Organise a coordinated campaign involving other unions, parents, union reps. school staff, students, politicians and the community for funding that meets the needs of all.**

*Bradford, Kirklees*

## 55. Privatisation

### Conference Notes:

1. The Government has outsourced numerous education services to the private sector including the Free School Meals voucher scheme, National Tutoring Programme and reviews of SEND provision.
2. The delivery of services under the Private Finance Initiative cost schools up to 40% more than those delivered by publicly financed schemes.

### Conference believes:

- i. The Government has prioritised the academies and free school programme, a form of quasi-privatisation, as its flagship education policy throughout its 13 years in power, without being able to offer any conclusive evidence of its educational benefit
- ii. Privatisation of public services is bad for workers and service users as the interests of shareholders and executives take precedence. Privatisation has been a disaster for a range of our public services including rail, utilities and the NHS
- iii. Billions of pounds that should be paying for frontline services that benefit our students are being transferred to the bank accounts of large corporations and wealthy individuals
- iv. That the Government using the Swedish and US education systems as models for many of its policies is a stark indicator that a longer-term aim is to enable a fully marketized system, profit-making 'state' schools, or the rollout of a voucher programme.

### Conference instructs the executive to:

- a. **Organise a one-day conference on privatisation in education where strategies, resources and case studies can be shared between campaigners**
- b. **Campaign for the renationalisation of all private services within the state sector and the return of all schools to local authority oversight and control**
- c. **Give unwavering support to members taking action to stop academisation**
- d. **Call for and take steps towards a union led public inquiry into education spending since 2010**
- e. **Call on the TUC to launch a major national campaign against further privatisation and for the renationalisation of our public services.**

*Lewisham*

## 56. Eton in Oldham

Conference notes:

1. The intention of Eton and the Star Academies Trust to open a selective sixth form 'free school' in the Oldham area
2. Eton's intention to open similar establishments in Dudley and Middlesborough
3. Oldham has not at any point identified the need for a selective post-16 institution in the borough
4. Oldham has not been given the choice; the free school programme is centrally controlled without any local democratic decision-making.

Conference believes:

- i. Oldham's sixth form provision is a strength within the local education system
- ii. The root of this problem is the centrally controlled and ideologically driven free schools programme and the ban on local councils from opening new schools
- iii. The proposed new sixth form may well do more harm than good for local sixth form provision, and will have repercussions on neighbouring boroughs in Greater Manchester
- iv. Selective education entrenches inequality.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Support members in Oldham, Dudley and Middlesborough and any other areas affected in campaigning against the imposition of these "elite" colleges**
- b. Demand the Government undertake an urgent evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of free schools currently operating**
- c. Continue dialogue with the Government and provide evidence-based arguments against the setting up of any more free schools**
- d. Continue to campaign for a properly funded education system responsive to local need, including local democratic planning for education provision and oversight of performance.**

*Oldham*

## **57. Health and safety in practical subjects in secondary schools**

Conference notes that:

1. In England and Wales, the maximum class size in primary schools is limited by law to 30 pupils
2. The maximum class sizes in secondary schools for practical subjects (design and technology, art, engineering, food, etc.) are set out in BS4163.2021 (Health and safety for design and technology in schools and similar establishments – Code of practice) but are only recommendations
3. Limits here are 20 pupils at KS3 and 18 at KS4; reduced if there are significant behaviour concerns
4. In Scotland the maximum class sizes for practical subjects is limited by law to 20 pupils
5. Class sizes in secondary schools have significantly increased in recent years with many teachers having to teach classes of up to 30 pupils in practical subjects
6. Many schools in England and Wales are choosing to ignore the recommendations in BS4163.2021 because it is 'only guidance'.

Conference believes that:

- i. A large class size in practical subjects does not allow pupils to learn effectively
- ii. Large practical classes can lead to increased teacher stress and excessive workload
- iii. Class sizes above the recommended maximums greatly increase the risk of an accident to a pupil or staff
- iv. All schools in England and Wales should have class sizes in practical subjects limited by law to those numbers recommended by BS4163.2021
- v. Having smaller class sizes in practical subjects will increase safety, reduce stress and workload for teachers and lead to better outcomes for pupils, especially at KS4.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Campaign for smaller class sizes in practical subjects in England and Wales**
- b. Lobby Government to make it a legal requirement for schools to implement the guidance in BS4163.2021 regarding class sizes in practical subjects.**

*Telford and Wrekin*

## 58. Post-Covid

Conference notes:

1. The Covid pandemic and lockdowns had a long-lasting impact on education and young people
2. Young people missed out on social and enrichment activities such as music, art, drama, sport and many others for at least 18 months
3. Schools and colleges are struggling to support students to recover from the effects of being isolated from their peers
4. In some cases, schools and colleges have withdrawn the need for those suffering from Covid to isolate
5. The pandemic caused a backlog in referrals and appointments for emotional, health and well-being services, which is still impacting young people now
6. The Government promised an additional £1.8 billion to schools and colleges for post-Covid recovery, which was significantly less than the Government's own advisor said was needed.

Conference believes the Government:

- i. Refuses to accept the ongoing emotional, health and well-being difficulties experienced by students
- ii. Has slashed NHS funding to a level where there are many areas that do not have adequate health care professionals such as, CAMHS school nurses or speech and language therapists
- iii. Has returned to business as normal with no acknowledgement or understanding of the lasting effects of Covid on young people, their health and well-being and their education.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Complete a survey of members to ascertain the ongoing impact of Covid in schools and colleges**
- b. Encourage districts and branches to support members where schools have withdrawn isolation periods for students and staff with Covid, and if necessary, call for strike action**
- c. Approach NHS unions to launch a joint union campaign to ensure every child has timely access to a school nurse, speech and language therapist and other universal services**
- d. Call on the Government to increase funding for community-based arts and sports projects for young people**
- e. Highlight examples of post-Covid education projects in other countries that have prioritised young people's health and well-being and use them to develop a toolkit for members to use to support young people's post-Covid recovery.**

*Wakefield, Stockport*

## **59. End school attendance awards**

Conference notes:

1. School attendance has declined in recent years, with many contributing factors such as Covid and the pressures on children and on families including poverty and concerns about mental health
2. School leaders are under increasing pressure from the Government to raise their attendance figures and many schools use 100% attendance awards
3. Transmissible infections can be deadly and we have a duty to safeguard the health of our schools and wider communities
4. According to a 2020 Lancet study, schools are an “excellent environment for the spread of respiratory infections through high-frequency and close contacts in often poorly ventilated environments”
5. The UK sits at the bottom of the global league table for sick pay with some of the lowest rates of sickness absence in the developed world.

Conference believes attendance awards:

- i. Are discriminatory and do not promote school as being a welcoming place of safety where all pupils are valued
- ii. Promote a toxic message that students who are not able to attend school every day can be vilified, humiliated and marginalised.

Conference further believes:

- a. The DfE's push on attendance is to prepare the workforce to work when sick
- b. Recent comments from Government ministers regarding children attending school even when unwell are irresponsible and potentially dangerous
- c. Parents are often pressured into sending unwell children to school due to a hostile attitude towards sick pay and leave from many employers.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- I. Campaign against the use of attendance awards in schools**
- II. Lobby the Government for better attendance support for schools, with sufficient funding provided**
- III. Continue to push for universal free school meals and the introduction of breakfast clubs to improve attendance**
- IV. Encourage districts to support schools to work with students, parents and carers to improve attendance in a positive and enduring way**
- V. Develop more appropriate resources to support educators when promoting school attendance.**

*Coventry, Birmingham*

## **60. Youth services**

Conference recognises the disestablishment of Youth Services across the country and the effect on Youth Work as an educational profession and its relationship to teaching in particular.

**Conference instructs the executive to call for the re-establishment of the Probationary Year for Youth Work Qualification and for the Register of Joint Negotiating Committee Qualified Youth Workers to be held by and returned to the DfE.**

*Lincolnshire*



## **61. Artificial intelligence and shaping what it means for education - COMPOSITE**

Conference recognises the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED) connects to the wider political, social and economic context and that the union must actively seek to shape both.

Conference notes:

1. That the development of large language models and generative AI signals a qualitative jump in AI and, potentially, AIED
2. An estimated \$6bn globally will be spent on AIED applications in 2024
3. the potential deployment of AIED may result in depleting professional autonomy and a devaluation of the work of educators

Conference further notes:

- i. Claims by Government and commercial developers that the use of AIED will reduce staff workload and raise educational quality
- ii. The risks identified by Education International that AIED could add to the pressure on the planet's scarce resources, enable management surveillance of teachers, increase central control of the curriculum, narrow educational experience and poses a risk to jobs and conditions
- iii. In October 2023, 'AI in Education', a cross-sector grouping aimed at maximising the potential of Artificial Intelligence for everyone involved in education was launched and is led by the head of Epsom College and the CEO of a multi academy trust
- iv. AI has the potential to improve greatly education for young people and transform educators' working lives, but it also poses serious challenges for trade unions to grapple with
- v. Whilst this is a relatively new area of work and we are unable to predict its exact development, we can establish some basic principles for our approach in relation to AI. These should include:
  - a. AI should be incorporated into a fully funded, public education system and we should oppose private enterprise profiting from our state education system
  - b. The use of AI should be underpinned by a commitment to protecting and improving the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff
  - c. That education is fundamentally social and AI should be used to enhance and not replace the role of skilled and trained educational professionals

Conference calls on the executive to work in coalition with sister unions in the UK and internationally, to shape the context within which AIED is developed; and to campaign to assert professional control of its development and use.

**Conference instructs the executive to campaign for:**

- I. Recognition of professional autonomy and teacher agency as central in the effective facilitation of the positive opportunities AI presents as a pedagogical tool for enhancing teaching and learning**
- II. Substantial teacher voice in determining, through negotiation with Government, employers and school managers the selection, use and deployment of AI tools**
- III. Effective CPD and resources for educators to leverage AI as facilitators of dialogic and holistic learning**
- IV. Accountability mechanisms that hold Government, educational institutions and AI providers responsible for the outcomes of AI implementation**
- V. Inclusive design principles that consider inequality of access, ethics, diverse student populations and learning needs, addressing any cultural bias, inaccuracies and discrimination in AI tools**
- VI. A context where AI tools support, complement and enhance teaching and assessment and do not direct teachers, replace their professional judgements or drive weak pedagogy and greater standardisation**

- VII. Protections so teachers are not burdened with further administrative or monitoring/surveillance tasks related to AI systems**
- VIII. Fair compensation, recognition and limitation of work associated with implementing and using AI tools.**

**Conference further instructs the executive to:**

- A. Develop a national charter for AI in education**
- B. Train reps and branches in AI techniques and how to bargain effectively over AI**
- C. Provide advice, training and support for all members on AI as a professional and trade union issue.**

*Executive, Lewisham*

## **62. SEND reforms**

Conference believes:

1. Despite the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision improvement plan published, March 2023, SEND provision is at the brink of collapse
2. The Government is failing to provide the right support to SEND pupils. There are increasing numbers of SEND pupils who are without a suitable named educational setting, not attending school, receiving fixed term or permanent exclusion, being told that their preferred educational setting cannot meet their needs, being told that their preferred educational setting is already full, or having to travel outside their local area to access education
3. Each child and young person deserves to attend school in their locality as this is the right place for them to learn and become full members of their community
4. By establishing inclusion hubs for each of the four areas of need within clusters of schools, more SEND pupils will go to school within their own local community
5. That every teacher should feel confident & be committed as teachers of special needs
6. That by allowing professionals the freedom to teach according to need, rather than driven by test results, schools will be able to meet the needs of pupils with SEND more effectively
7. That traded-service SLAs are a financial barrier to getting advice, assessments and building capacity
8. That access to professional development for SEND should be provided by the Government
9. That every pupil with SEND deserves to be supported and taught by suitably qualified and experienced professionals
10. With improved funding all schools will have the expertise and resources to meet the needs of SEND pupils
11. That the bureaucracy surrounding access to SEND banding and high-needs funding is excessive.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. **Pressure the Government to increase funding to adequate levels for SEND in all parts of the country**
- b. **Further pressure the Government to work with professionals, parents and local government to implement the SEND reforms through cross-party working as matter of urgency.**

*Oldham*

# Equalities and social justice

### 63. The rise of far-right rhetoric

Conference notes that:

1. Tory party members have confused cabinet colleagues with similar racial characteristics saying "They all look the same to me"
2. A former Conservative mayor shared a joke online comparing Asian people to dogs, suggesting that benefits could be given to a dog who is "brown, stinks and has never worked a day in his life"
3. Even former Tory Prime Ministers admit creating a 'hostile environment policy' for immigrants, and have called Muslim women with burkas, letterboxes
4. Ministers believe they have the right to ask for sacred attire to be removed for their convenience
5. A Tory councillor said that Romanians would "stick a knife in you as soon as look at you"
6. A previous Home Secretary echoed the infamous words of Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech with her "Hurricanes of migrants" address to last year's Conservative Party Conference.

Conference believes:

- i. The idea of race is not modern, however, the global majority suffers endemic, uninhibited and prolonged racist treatment
- ii. These behaviours are associated with the disgusting and outrageous comments narrated by right-wing members of the Tory Government. Narratives by Home Secretaries, Prime Ministers and senior Tory sympathisers have all fuelled an unacceptable rise in racist attacks on the global majority.

Conference confirms that it is now time to call the abhorrent racism out and to make a stand.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Lobby for anti-racist awareness to be a mandatory part of safeguarding training in all schools**
- b. Campaign for the union's anti-racist charter to be implemented in all schools**
- c. Use the union's political fund to campaign against and challenge all political parties on their racist policies and rhetoric in the run up to, and during, the next general election**
- d. Set up a political cross-party working group, that includes union lay members, to develop a decolonised and anti-racist curriculum for all statutory and non-statutory learners including those under the Equalities Act 2010.**

*Croydon, Bromley, City of Derby*

NB: the implementation of any decision by conference on the motion could only be in accordance with the rules of the political fund.
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#### **64. Prevent (no thought police in schools)**

Conference notes the findings of the Amnesty Report into Prevent from November 2023 that found:

1. A pattern of racial discrimination and stigmatisation of Muslim students in 'Prevent' referrals
2. That children under 15 account for nearly a third (29%) of Prevent referrals
3. There is a high incidence of neurodiversity among those referred to Prevent, with those diagnosed as autistic being the highest of all.

Conference believes that Amnesty is right to conclude that Prevent has a chilling effect, encouraging dangerous self-censorship, which may include:

- i. Refraining from involvement in climate activism due to logos associated with groups campaigning on this issue appearing in Prevent training, as well as perceiving that the Government views some of these groups as "extremist"
- ii. Being reticent about sharing opinions that are deriving from socialist, communist or anti-capitalist standpoints because these are also referred to in Prevent training and educational resources
- iii. Avoiding expressing views supportive of Palestine for fear of being seen as an extremist or terrorist sympathiser.

Conference believes our schools must be safe spaces for children to raise and discuss political issues that affect them. Without such provision, children are put at risk since they have nowhere in school to access guidance and support.

**Conference instructs the Executive to:**

- a. **Regularly update union guidance materials/resources relating to dealing with political issues in our schools**
- b. **Actively campaign for Prevent's abolition and for its replacement with a system which allows teachers and other professionals involved in education, safeguarding and social work to engage effectively with children.**

*Redbridge, Coventry, Staffordshire*

## 65. Anti-racism

Conference notes that Black and Asian educators:

1. Continue to be under-represented in the teaching workforce, with only 4.7% of teachers being Asian and 2.3% Black African/Caribbean
2. Are not always encouraged to apply for promotion, or to move from a support role into teaching and continue to be under-represented at senior management level in schools and colleges, despite the evidence that this can support parents and students: 1.6% of headteachers are Asian and 1.6% Black
3. Continue to report discrimination when applying for promotion or for moving up the pay scales, and are often made to feel they are 'the problem' when raising an issue
4. Are disproportionately the target of disciplinary procedures, which can lead to a loss of employment or recourse to tribunal.

Conference further notes that students and educators:

- i. Suffer from over-policing of hair, dress and behaviour and face ongoing micro-aggressions and accusations of 'being aggressive' when raising an issue
- ii. Experience a lack of understanding of cultural diversity from some schools and colleges.

**Conference calls on the executive to:**

- a. **Survey Black members on experiences of discrimination in pay, promotion and micro-aggressions and actively publicise to the government, the DFE and headteachers**
- b. **Ensure that where Black members are experiencing disciplinary measures, including the threat of dismissal, that they are fully involved, with local officers as well as union staff, in discussing the way forward**
- c. **Call upon districts and branches to campaign actively for all schools and colleges, both in local authorities and in a MAT, to monitor pay progression, promotion and the use of disciplinary measures, to ensure compliance with the Equalities Act.**

*Redbridge, Lambeth*

## **66. Defend migrants, defend multiculturalism**

Conference notes:

1. The UN Refugee Convention of 1951, as amended by the 1967 Protocol, and the European Court of Human Rights was set up in the wake of the Holocaust, and whatever its failings, has formed the bedrock of international law pertaining to the humane treatment of refugees and asylum seekers
2. The impact of war, climate chaos and deepening poverty worsened by neo-liberal economic policy and the failure to make reparations to those countries damaged by colonialism are driving migration across the world
3. Migrants continue to die in the English Channel and elsewhere and are denied safe legal means to enter this country.

Conference condemns:

- i. The barbarous treatment and scapegoating of refugees and asylum seekers by this Government, including the threat of deportation, warehousing in inadequate and dangerous accommodation, the use of inflammatory, racist language and its failure to expedite the processing of asylum seekers
- ii. Statements by a Home Secretary and others calling for withdrawal from The UN Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights and suggestions that women and LGBT+ people suffering persecution and discrimination should not qualify for international refugee protection

Conference further condemns a Home Secretary's attack on "multiculturalism" and affirms that our society and our union have been immeasurably enriched by migrants economically and culturally, and notes that such attacks and scapegoating put communities and individuals at risk.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. **Call upon a future Labour Government to affirm its support for the UN Refugee Convention of 1951 and the European Convention on Human Rights, and to ensure safe, legal means of entering this country are introduced**
- b. **Encourage districts to support campaigns, petitions and other activities that reaffirm opposition to the scapegoating of migrants**
- c. **Support the production of materials nationally and at district level that continue to develop an anti-racist curriculum and that include discussion of reparations**
- d. **Call upon districts and branches to support local refugee groups and to work with local communities to counter protests around hotels and hostels organised by the far right.**

*Denbighshire, Redbridge, Luton, Halton, Lambeth, Vale of Glamorgan, Bradford, Cambridgeshire*



## **67. The climate crisis is a class issue**

Conference recognises that:

1. Climate change is happening now, with workers across the world already losing lives, livelihoods, food, access to water and homes, as well as facing unbearable working conditions and forced migration
2. The International Energy Agency states that keeping below an increase of 1.5°C will only be possible if wealthy countries like the UK step up their ambition and action, with no room for new fossil fuel development
3. Labour's ambition to ramp up to investing £28bn a year in the transition to Net Zero needs planning across government and to be driven by unions and communities
4. Transition to a decarbonised economy and society must be led by state investment and the costs must fall on those most able to pay, through a fair and progressive tax system.

Conference condemns:

- i. The Government's retreat from climate plans already ruled inadequate in court to meet Net Zero targets, and its commitment to further extraction of oil, which puts our future and that of our students at risk
- ii. The Government's pro-motorist policy, which will increase air pollution, and threaten initiatives such as school streets.

**Conference instructs the executive to call upon districts to establish local versions of this structure and to work with sustainability leads to build Teach the Future Curriculum for a Changing Climate into long term planning**

**Conference further instructs the executive to campaign for:**

- a. **No new fossil fuel exploration**
- b. **A national climate service to oversee national planning and just transition bodies in every sector, including retraining workers in contracting sectors, guaranteeing union rights in expanding sectors, promoting direct labour organisations, public and community ownership, and coordinating across government a huge public education campaign to fulfil Article 12 of the Paris Agreement**
- c. **A specific just transition body within the education sector both to facilitate that campaign and oversee plans to retrofit every school, college and university to zero carbon standard by 2030, with an aim of becoming net energy generators.**

*Waltham Forest, Redbridge, Halton, Birmingham, City of Derby, Wakefield. Tower Hamlets and the City, South Derbyshire, Buckinghamshire*

## **68. Championing equality in education**

Conference recognises that:

1. There are an overwhelmingly upsetting number of equalities issues affecting our children and young people in our educational establishments every single day, covering all the Equalities Act 2010 protected characteristics
2. There is a huge number of under-reported and unrecorded discrimination incidents occurring to our children and young people
3. There is a wealth of excellent practice that needs to be shared so that staff are as skilled and knowledgeable as possible to be able to support and champion them, and not add to the discrimination
4. The curriculum content quality in our schools varies enormously and as a result many children and young people are not receiving a balanced view of our world; past and present.

Conference believes that:

- i. Introducing an equalities lead into every educational establishment, similar to a DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and SENDCo (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator) will raise accountability for our children and young people's rights
- ii. There is a need for a much more significant statutory equalities policy, including mandatory annual equalities training for all staff, detailed reporting procedures, inclusive curriculum resources, best practice case studies and how to provide spaces, such as LGBT+ clubs.
- iii. It is imperative for societal coherence that as many children and young people receive a rich and diverse education from as young an age as possible.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Campaign to the Government for the role of equalities Lead, to cover all protected characteristics, to be part of statutory policy and procedure in every educational establishment**
- b. Work with the Government and other bodies of expertise, such as the All-Party Political Group on Race and Equality, Disability Rights UK, UK Feminista and The Kite Trust, to design statutory training for the Equalities Lead role**
- c. Work with the Government to design annual equalities training updates for staff**
- d. Inform policy, procedures and training through researching best practice in our educational establishments.**

*Cambridgeshire*

## 69. Protect trans and non-binary students – COMPOSITE

Conference notes:

1. November 2023 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the repeal of Section 28
2. The Government have repeatedly delayed their proposed guidance for schools in England on supporting trans students. The Government's own lawyers believe the proposed guidelines are illegal
3. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) states “The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT+ is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm,” and “all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.” (DfE, 2023)
4. The escalating hostility towards the LGBT+ community both socially, economically and politically.

Conference believes:

- i. Political leaders are increasingly targeting trans and non-binary communities to fuel a right-wing ‘culture wars’ rhetoric, and continue to use the vocabulary of division and fear, scapegoating the LGBT+ community
- ii. The tragic killing of Brianna Ghey in February 2023 highlights a very real risk to our trans and non-binary students
- iii. LGBT+ young people belong in our schools. They should have safe spaces to be themselves, have their identities recognised, and be afforded the autonomy to come out at their own pace
- iv. Those education establishments with robust policies on inclusivity achieve positive outcomes for LGBT+ students and staff
- v. LGBT+ staff and students should not be subjected to intrusive and intimidating questioning under the guise of 'genuine concerns'
- vi. It is the duty of the union to ensure that all members are informed of the facts concerning the LGBT+ community with particular reference to trans and non-binary students and staff
- vii. That schools, colleges, and external providers should not change or remove LGBT+ inclusive policies or curriculum content as a 'knee-jerk' response to political rhetoric, in a step back towards Section 28
- viii. That the union continues to grow and build its support for LGBT+ staff and students.

Conference instructs the executive to:

- a. **Strongly reaffirm the union’s position in support of trans and non-binary identities, and their place in our schools as part of a fully LGBT+ inclusive curriculum, including RSHE**
- b. **Campaign to oppose both a ban on any aspect of social transitioning in schools, and the compulsory ‘outing’ of students to parents/carers**
- c. **Strongly and frequently utilise the full range of the union’s media and social media presence to reaffirm the above, and the union’s position in support of:**
  - I. **Trans and non-binary identities and self-identification.**
  - II. **LGBT+ inclusive RSE, and LGBT+ inclusion in the wider curriculum.**
- d. **In consultation with LGBT+ members:**
  - A. **Urgently review, update and circulate union guidance for supporting trans and non-binary students, and guidance for members involved in teaching RSE. Include both, alongside other union LGBT+ guidance, as part of an “NEU LGBT+ Inclusion Toolkit”**
  - B. **Support districts to deliver training locally to implement this toolkit and update members as changes occur**
  - C. **Develop the equivalent of at least one full day’s training around supporting LGBT+ students. Deliver regularly as part of the union’s CPD programme, including training to support trans and non-binary students**
  - D. **Produce resources and use CPD opportunities to build confidence and strengthen unity in the battle against homophobia and transphobia**

- E. Produce guidance for union reps on whole school issues regarding LGBT+ staff and students with reference to the experience of trans and non-binary staff and students.**

*Birmingham, County Durham, Hammersmith and Fulham, Telford and Wrekin*

## **70. 'Just like us' – ensuring LGBT+ visibility in schools**

Conference notes that LGBT+ inclusion is listed as part of the national curriculum framework for SRE at all key stages and phases.

Conference believes:

1. Only half of LGBT+ young people feel safe in school
2. Only a third of pupils currently attend a school with a clear process for reporting anti-LGBT+ bullying in their school
3. Positive messages about being LGBT+ improve the mental health of all students, not just those who are LGBT+
4. Most young people support transgender rights but do not think their teachers do
5. Some schools already celebrate Schools Diversity Week, with positive outcomes noted in independent research
6. All students deserve to go to a school that will support them and make them feel safe
7. This is especially important for students who possess one or more of the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act
8. Visible support for LGBT+ staff and students help improve outcomes for all, and leads to a positive culture of inclusion
9. LGBT+ events and celebrations should be embedded within school calendars.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Affiliate with 'Just Like Us' as a supporting organisation**
- b. Actively promote the celebration of Schools Diversity Week in every workplace through creation and dissemination of resources and promotional materials**
- c. Develop member training in conjunction with 'Just Like Us' and the union's LGBT+ Network so that every member feels confident to take the lead in hosting 'Schools Diversity Week' within their workplace.**

*Hounslow*

## **71. 'Looks like me' campaign - representation in schools**

Conference notes:

1. The excellent work already achieved by the union in developing, promoting and distributing the 'Anti Racism Framework' in schools; as well as the published report into the 'Adultification of Black Girls'
2. The under-representation of Black educators within schools in England, equating to only 11.3% of the teachers in England
3. That only 18% of Black educators were in leadership positions
4. That less than 7.5% of headteachers identified as Black.

Conference believes:

- i. All children need to have an increased experience of people who look like them in a variety of positions within their educational setting. They need to be able to say they 'Look Like Me' and have a sense of pride, empowerment and increased confidence. Children need an inspirational role model that looks like them
- ii. By increasing the diversity of the school workforce, we can promote equality, support social justice and provide inspirational role models for all children
- iii. It is proven by research that learning and progress is significantly increased when learners have positive representations around them.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Launch a campaign called 'Looks Like Me' to support the increase of diversity within the school workforce and ensure there is an increased representation of Black educators**
- b. Engage directly with local authorities and MATs to implement this campaign and develop strategies**
- c. Organise regular 'unconscious bias' training for school leaders and governors to improve the recruitment process for Black educators**
- d. Produce media and publications to promote the 'Looks Like Me' campaign**
- e. Develop and distribute 'Looks Like Me' information materials for schools aimed at the recruitment process in schools to improve representation of Black educators**
- f. Create and promote 'Looks Like Me' educational resources for schools to support teaching and learning, especially where there is a lack of Black educators represented in the school community.**

*Southwark*

## **72. Anti-sexism and the rise of online misogyny**

Conference believes:

1. That despite work being done to promote gender equality and to prevent sexism and sexual harassment, these issues remain a serious problem in society, schools and colleges, and within workplaces and trade unions
2. The continued rise in online sexism, misogyny, and bullying through social media and online 'influencers' presents a real challenge to those committed to promoting gender equality
3. The positive contribution the union has achieved to promote anti-sexism through the resources available including the 'It's Not OK' toolkit
4. The grassroots #MeTU campaign are working to challenge sexual harassment in the trade union movement and ensure women and non-binary workers have a safe space to speak out.

Conference further believes:

- i. As a union with a majority female membership, we must make anti-sexism and the prevention of sexual harassment a priority
- ii. Educators are ideally placed to support young people to understand gender inequality and provide them with skills to challenge sexism and misogyny
- iii. It is the responsibility of everyone within the trade union movement to call out sexism, misogyny and bullying and not be afraid to challenge sexist views in education establishments, workplaces and the trade union movement
- iv. The union's 'It's Not OK' toolkit and resources are not being used as widely as they should be within schools and colleges.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Continue the positive work of the 'It's Not OK' campaign and ensure resources are promoted widely across the union**
- b. Explore ways to make the toolkit more accessible for members, and easier to navigate, including the possibility of an app format**
- c. Call upon districts to share the 'It's not OK' toolkit with their members, work with school leaders and organise training to give members the confidence to implement the toolkit within their school or college**
- d. Promote the #MeTU campaign by encouraging districts to join the campaign and actively challenge and confront sexual harassment, bullying and sexism in the trade union movement and its structures.**

*Oxfordshire, Birmingham, North Somerset, Wakefield, Tower Hamlets and the City, Ealing, Vale of Glamorgan*

### **73. The implementation of the 2021 School Uniform Law in the UK**

Conference believes:

1. The 2021 School Uniform Law in the United Kingdom represented a significant step to promoting equality, inclusivity, and belonging by emphasising affordable, gender-neutral uniforms for all students, regardless of socio-economic background or gender identity, to ensure access to suitable and comfortable clothing for their education
2. Despite the statutory guidance many schools have failed to reduce the number of branded items and uniforms remain prohibitively expensive
3. Implementation of this law can represent a collective step towards building a more equitable and inclusive educational system, one where every child can thrive without facing the barriers of financial inequality or gender bias.

Conference further believes:

- i. Implementing the 2021 School Uniform Law will promote equality among students, eliminating the financial burden on parents and guardians by ensuring affordable uniform options for all
- ii. A uniform policy that is gender-neutral and inclusive of diverse identities fosters a more accepting and supportive school environment. It sends a powerful message that every student is valued and respected for who they are
- iii. When students are not preoccupied with the stigma of inappropriate or ill-fitting uniforms, they can focus better on their studies and personal development, leading to improved overall academic performance
- iv. That by implementing progressive policies like the 2021 School Uniform Law, educational institutions prepare students to be open-minded and accepting individuals, promoting social harmony and understanding in society.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Express its strong support for the implementation of the 2021 School Uniform Law in the United Kingdom, recognizing its role in promoting equality, inclusivity, and a positive learning environment for all students**
- b. Mount a vigorous campaign calling upon educational authorities, institutions, and policymakers to actively enforce and monitor the implementation of the law, ensuring its benefits reach every student**
- c. Encourage members to spread awareness about the importance of the law, and advocate for its implementation within their respective communities and networks.**

*Cheshire East*



#### **74. Abolish the Education Health Standards Regulations (England 2003/Wales 2004)**

Conference notes that Disabled educators have a protected characteristic and a right to reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Conference believes:

- i. Disabled educators including Disabled trainees face a discriminatory barrier when they are regularly asked intrusive and pointless questions at interview and furthermore such individuals are often managed out of our profession
- ii. It is important to have a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the general population and the pupils we teach
- iii. That such medical screening or testing for health conditions serves no purpose in predicting an individual's competency. Further it serves to create a hostile environment for Disabled educators.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. **Liaise with other education unions, particularly NAHT and ASCL, to develop an understanding of the issue and the need for change**
- b. **Lobby the current, plus any future Government to abolish the education health standards regulations and replace them with a system based upon competency to do the job**
- c. **Create a short resource to share with branch officers and reps which explains the issue and creates an impetus for change.**

*Waltham Forest, Hackney, Nottingham, Worcestershire*

## **75. Maternity**

Conference notes:

1. In 2023, there was a large body of approval for the maternity motion which highlighted a need for better support for working parents
2. Since 2023, there have been some small improvements in the offering from the Government such as plans to introduce further funded places at nurseries to be rolled out from Easter 2024.

Conference believes:

- i. The Government's proposed improvements are still insufficient and are likely to fail many working parents, due to inadequate planning, leading to inadequate resources and the lack of availability of childcare places
- ii. Early years settings are already under immense pressure in terms of the reality that funded places often fail to cover the running costs of nurseries
- iii. The childcare crisis prohibits many educators from continuing to work and contributes to the teacher shortage with the exit of working parents, who are disproportionately female, from schools.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Establish a working party of early years' educators and educator parents to explore ways to address the childcare crisis and to work closely with the 'Pregnant then Screwed' campaign to propose solutions**
- b. Produce a list of recommendations for the Government on how the childcare crisis can be solved.**

*Portsmouth*

## **76. Support for the family in crisis**

Conference believes:

1. The family is in crisis, especially following the impact of Covid that isolated parents from education, services, support and from each other
2. There is a huge rise in physical, social, emotional, mental health and behavioural needs of children and young people, such as toilet training, attachment, speech, language and communication
3. Government policies, such as those encouraging both parents back to full time work, are centred around what is best for increasing revenue gained from taxes, not what is best for the child, the family or therefore the future of society for all.

Conference further believes:

- i. By supporting all families, we are supporting all members. We know from the Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education Project that the home learning environment has significant positive effects on life outcomes
- ii. There are excellent resources that support families, but many are not accessible for all, especially the disadvantaged, due to cost
- iii. There is significant concern of the impact the increased amount of time babies and young children spending away from their main carer(s) is having on their attachment needs.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Ensure parents have an informed choice about how they decide to parent/work by sharing best practice and case studies, such as shared parental leave and flexible working**
- b. Share research with parents about attachment needs and why this is vital to children's development and what is important to consider in their decisions**
- c. Collaborate with Maternity Teacher Paternity Teacher, Flexible Teacher Talent, and Maternity Action to support and resource branch and district-based events**
- d. Work with professionals, experts, companies and services to collate a free union platform to enable members to support families with webinars, professional advice and resources, then conduct research on its impact and present to the Government to increase pressure for public spending to increase for family services**
- e. Collaborate with organisations such as Early Education to research exemplary subsidised childcare and parental leave systems from other countries to develop an alternative vision for early education.**

*Cambridgeshire*

# Union strength

## **77. Support staff 1**

Conference notes:

- 1 The huge increase in membership amongst support staff has raised our profile across hundreds more schools
- 2 The support these members have shown for our latest industrial action, with many attending picket lines as well as local, regional and national protests in solidarity
- 3 Our failure to reach the desired threshold for action amongst our support staff members, which was in part as a result of the pay settlement already reached on behalf of our teacher members in the early Summer of 2023
- 4 Our members were only able to secure below inflation pay increases negotiated by our sister education unions as part of the National Joint Council (NJC) negotiating forum from which the NEU is still excluded
- 5 That some support staff members continue to be paid in term time only which effectively reduces their annual pay by an average of 20%.

Conference believes:

- i. Some support staff members continue to suffer disproportionately in the poor funding arrangements for schools and too often will be the first in line for redundancy or reductions in contracted hours
- ii. Support staff pay and conditions must be a top priority
- iii. The union must be part of the NJC to be able to influence national pay bargaining
- iv. The union must prioritise the training and recruitment of support staff reps in all our schools
- v. A national campaign is required to recognise and rectify the inequality our support staff members suffer.

**Conference instructs the executive to**

- a. Directly approach the NJC education unions to ensure the union secures recognition at the earliest opportunity**
- b. Launch a national campaign to, and a charter which, demands an end to temporary contracts, term time pay, and the abuse of our members by expecting them to routinely cover teachers' lessons without proper remuneration**
- c. Report back on progress to next year's annual conference.**

*Kirklees*

## **78. Support staff 2**

Conference notes:

1. The steady increase in support staff membership since the inception of the NEU, which grew rapidly around the pay and funding campaign in 2023
2. The high levels of support from support colleagues during the teachers' strikes with many refusing to cross picket lines
3. That the latest national ballot of support members had the potential to beat the required turnout thresholds when the dispute was settled
4. That branches have conducted local disputes in schools in defence of support staff members
5. The TUC decision to penalise the union over aspects of our support staff work
6. That positive meetings have now taken place with some local government unions on joint work around support staff terms and conditions.

Conference believes:

- i. The priority for the union is improving support staff terms and conditions and that we should continue to represent support staff and conduct battles as necessary to win such improvements
- ii. That our aim should be to secure full negotiating rights for our support staff members on all matters including pay and conditions
- iii. This aim is made more difficult by the attitude of local government unions and the TUC
- iv. Despite this, we should seek to work with other unions to find a way forward, including possible joint membership schemes, which allow our aim of full recognition to be secured.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Approach local government unions to work on joint campaigns that would improve support staff pay and conditions**
- b. Seek to build on the outcomes of the recent TUC disputes procedure that required the local government unions to consult with us over national negotiations**
- c. Seek close working and if possible joint membership arrangements with the currently recognised unions which meet our aim of securing full negotiating rights on all matters affecting support staff**
- d. Make clear to the Labour Party that the level of our support membership warrants our inclusion in any new negotiating body and seek to build support for this position.**

*North Somerset, Camden, Tower Hamlets and the City, , Lewes Eastbourne and Wealden*

## **79. Endometriosis – the hidden disease affecting one in ten women**

Conference notes that:

1. Teaching is a predominantly female profession, with 75.5% of teachers being women
2. 1 in 10 women in the UK are affected by endometriosis
3. Symptoms include – chronic and often persistent, debilitating and excruciating pain; an increased risk of depression; increased anxiety; and chronic fatigue - all impacting on a woman's ability to fulfil work commitments. Stress from external factors can also exacerbate the symptoms hugely
4. Endometriosis significantly affects the ability to conceive, and many sufferers must undergo IVF
5. It can take up to 8 years for a diagnosis with many women having their concerns and suffering dismissed by the medical profession
6. There is no cure; medical interventions are based around pain management, and little is done to support the management of stress and anxiety that makes symptoms so much worse.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. **Offer training to all officers and caseworkers on endometriosis**
- ii. **Include a full and comprehensive advice and support section on the website**
- iii. **Provide regional or national training for all members, with dates offered across the year**
- iv. **Provide a model endometriosis policy for schools.**

*Rotherham, North Yorkshire*

## **80. Total Eclipse of The Sun**

Conference notes:

1. The Hillsborough disaster on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1989, led to the death of 97 Liverpool football fans
2. That the police and other authorities attempted to lay the blame for the disaster on Liverpool fans
3. That central to these attempts was the disgraceful coverage in The Sun newspaper 4 days after the disaster with the notorious headline "The Truth" peddling lies about the conduct of Liverpool fans
4. That The Sun has been boycotted on Merseyside ever since
5. That other unions including the CWU have joined the boycott of The Sun
6. That the second inquest completely exonerated fans of blame for the disaster and apportioned blame to the police handling of the match.

Conference believes:

- i. That The Sun's story continues to influence opinion today with a recent rise in opposition fans singing Hillsborough songs at Liverpool matches
- ii. The union should support the boycott of The Sun.

**Conferences instructs the executive to support the boycott of The Sun by:**

- a. **Ensuring that The Sun newspaper is not available at venues holding union events**
- b. **Denying journalists from The Sun accreditation to attend union conferences and events**
- c. **Refusing to be interviewed by Sun journalists or give comments to articles in The Sun**
- d. **Send a message of support to Total Eclipse of The Sun campaign.**

*Liverpool*



## **81. Review of membership fees for those members experiencing hardship**

Conference believes specific minority member groups:

- Disabled members
- Single parent members
- Members of a sole income and dual headed household with dependents
- Members in receipt of certain benefits (not just child benefit)

are experiencing some of the worse financial hardship, because of the cost-of-living crisis and inflation rates, with some educational professionals having to use food banks.

Inept fiscal management by the Government is at the root of the problem and as a campaigning union we continue to campaign and try to hold the Government accountable.

Conference recognises that in our schools and colleges financial hardship is known to impact upon the recruitment and retention of membership.

Data analysis of the specific minority members indicated, ascertaining the patterns of recruitment and retention of these members, is a way forward. Districts can support reps to identify at risk members within their workplace, and where appropriate direct them to the Hardship Fund or the Trust Fund.

Conference believes the most at risk members' voices, regardless of costs, should also be heard within the union and that, with affordable membership, inclusive representation can be achieved.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

1. **Survey and recognise the proportion of members who are experiencing financial hardship because of the cost-of-living crisis and the rise in inflation rates, as well as those who are in receipt of benefits**
2. **Undertake a review of the membership and the subscription fees**
3. **Implement a reduction in fees in recognition of the cost-of-living crisis and rise in inflation rates, and the impact this has on specific minority member groups (disabled, single parents, carers, sole wage earner in a dual headed household with dependents, those in receipt of benefits).**

*West Sussex*

## **82. Fair membership rates for all education workers**

Conference believes the subscription rate that members pay should be fair and equitable.

Conference notes that currently:

1. There are low paid education workers who are the sole, or main earners in their household, and unable to afford union subs
2. There is inequity between rates paid by leadership members in small primary schools and non-leadership members who hold TLRs in large high schools

Conference believes subscription rates should be linked to income, rather than position and that the union should make membership accessible for the very lowest paid education workers.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. **Look at ways of making subscription rates fairer**
- ii. **Consider setting subscription rates on a continuum**
- iii. **Change rates so there are no separate rates for leadership, support staff, or teachers and make the lowest contribution more affordable than it is now.**

*Leeds*

### **83. Workplace representatives**

Conference notes:

1. The success of the pay campaign in terms of record workplace rep recruitment
2. Increasing rep density increases our ability to win victories in schools and national campaigns
3. Turnout in schools with reps was over 50% higher in the rebalot
4. During the last academic year, we trained more than double the number of reps compared to the last pre-covid year; up from 445 to 1045
5. Whilst some reps receive facility time within schools for their union work, there are many who don't receive this basic legal entitlement.

Conference believes:

- i. Reps are the backbone of the union and are crucial to delivering support and gaining collective victories for members
- ii. Reps visibly winning on issues in schools helps to build strong union groups and active members.
- iii. Workplace reps need as much support from the union nationally, regionally and locally as possible
- iv. Many reps take on casework at a school level and we should encourage this, with appropriate support and training
- v. Increasing the amount of casework taken on at school level will ease the workload of branch officers and allow them to focus more on organising within the union.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Work with branches and districts to prioritise rep development including casework support to produce case studies, guidance and advice for publication**
- b. Produce and publish specific rep guidance on collectivising issues, running disputes and balloting in schools**
- c. Conduct research to determine what percentage of our reps get school-based facility time**
- d. Produce guidance and provide support for reps and branches to negotiate facility time for reps**
- e. Publicise and highlight the role that MAT lead reps do in the union and encourage districts and regions to target recruitment and training of lead reps in trusts**
- f. Provide branches with tools and guidance to ensure that institutions not contributing to local facilities agreements are pressured to adopt institution-wide facility agreements or local buy-in**
- g. Ensure branches and regions include maximising rep facility time in all annual development plans.**

*Waltham Forest, Norfolk, Coventry, Ealing, Hackney, Nottingham, Cambridgeshire, Lewes Eastbourne and Wealden, Devon*

#### **84. Seeking local victories: training reps to win**

Conference notes that the union achieved huge successes in 2022/23:

1. Delivering massive turnouts in successive national ballots
2. Surpassing anti trade union legislation thresholds
3. Delivering eight very successful national strike days.

Conference believes:

- i. The union's ability to deliver meaningful gains for members depends on building workplace power and strong union groups
- ii. The pay campaign won a larger pay upgrade for all teachers and more funding for all schools, but also led to other gains such as more workplaces with trained Reps, more workplace groups meeting regularly and more active picket lines developing workplace strength.

Conference further notes:

- a. The calls from the union leadership to 'light fires' in our workplaces, to prioritise organising collectively to deliver victories for our members through disputes
- b. Districts actively seeking and linking up disputes have seen increased activism and victories for members
- c. The increasing use of district wide rep training days
- d. That reps developing plans together at such events has built their confidence and ability to fight for improved conditions and developed stronger union groups
- e. Developing workplace militancy and actively seeking opportunities to collectivise disputes builds our ability to win in schools and deliver national ballots
- f. That strikes and victories in workplaces gives confidence to other groups to fight for better conditions.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- I. Task all districts to plan and hold reps training days annually from 2024/25**
- II. Work with districts to collate resources, advice and sample materials for them to hold such training days, to ensure release of representatives and share best practices**
- III. Ensure that reps' training days are written into all district development plans and where necessary, that regional officers support in enabling delivery**
- IV. Explore and develop ways that reps and officers can use technology to populate databases of conditions such as the bargaining database**
- V. Actively use data and stories from workplace disputes to seek out further disputes where issues exist**
- VI. Produce and publish specific guidance for reps and branches to encourage collectivising issues, running disputes and balloting in schools.**

*Waltham Forest, Norfolk, Coventry*

## **85. Industrial unionism**

Conference notes that:

1. 2023's conference motion 25 cemented our commitment to industrial unionism
2. In practice, this means the amalgamation of all unions in the education sector
3. Many of the most effective global unions in the education sector organise and recruit from all grades of staff, such as the Chicago Teachers' Union with its belief that 'if you're in the building you're in the union'
4. The NEU is currently the only union seeking to represent the interests of all education workers.

Conference believes that:

- i. One union for all education workers is the best way to build the strongest possible unionism in the sector
- ii. The NEU should set as a priority goal, the creation of one single education workers union
- iii. Such a union must ensure, through its structures and policies, that the interests of all staff categories are properly represented
- iv. The development of a single education workers' union is more important than the territorial interests of existing craft unions.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. **Replace the current professional unity committee of the executive with an industrial unionism committee**
- b. **Establish a representative body for all categories of staff (teachers, leaders, support staff) to consider the next steps in developing an industrial union, including how to work with other unions**
- c. **Ensure this committee comprises at least one teacher and one support staff member from each region (proportionate to membership density), two nominees from the leadership council and five executive members to include the chair of the industrial unionism committee**
- d. **Direct these committees to consider alternative models and strategies for developing industrial unionism, such as amalgamations, dual membership and combine committees**
- e. **Direct these committees to submit reports to the executive for discussion and inclusion in the Executive Report to Conference**
- f. **Actively attempt to recruit all workers in the building: from cleaners and caterers to members of school leaderships.**

*Hounslow, Leeds, Hammersmith and Fulham*

## **86. Working together, organising together**

Conference notes:

1. The role of organising forums and national councils is partly to facilitate opportunities for collaboration, wider engagement from lay members of the union and to aid regional and national coordination
2. Both organising forums and national councils play key roles in ensuring the union promotes the voices and experiences of a wide range of lay members.

Conference believes:

- i. That by providing further opportunities for collaboration, the union can support OF and NC members to share ideas more effectively and plan ways to work together to support the aims of the union at all levels
- ii. Encouraging wider collaboration could offer further support to newer activists undertaking OF and NC roles and encourage greater understanding of issues affecting members from other sections and sectors.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Ensure that at least once a year all OF and NC meetings are arranged to take place in the same venue, at the same time**
- b. Add an additional session to the agenda on the combined meeting day described above during which all OFs and NCs are supported to work together in regional groups to share issues, ideas and suggest actions to be taken back to regional councils and local branch and districts.**

*County Durham*

## **87. Ensuring all equalities members can access equality conferences**

Conference believes that:

1. In recent years, equalities and sector conferences have grown in popularity, meaning that higher numbers of members wish to attend these events
2. Equalities conferences are often the one safe place an individual can network and discuss issues with likeminded trade unionists
3. Positive steps have been taken to ensure all members can access conferences such as central applications and pooled expenses
4. For many members, their first experience of union activity is an equalities conference.

Despite positive steps to ensure members are included in their equalities sector conferences, conference notes with concern that:

- i. Some districts are underrepresented at conferences
- ii. The number of delegates is also restricted by the financial commitments of the district
- iii. Districts will often need to make tough decisions between potential delegates due to financial commitments.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. **Replace existing financial arrangements for equalities conferences (Black, LGBT+, Disabled) with a system whereby all districts equally pay a portion of the cost, rather than a per delegate fee, meaning there is no detriment to allowing interested delegates to attend a conference**
- b. **After trialling this with equalities conferences, if successful, look to roll this out to all national sector conferences to ensure that widening participation is the focus of these conferences**
- c. **Continue to consider actively ways to increase the capacity of these events to ensure that all members who wish to attend can.**

*Oldham*

## **88. Accessible training**

Training for workplace representatives and officers is currently offered in person. This training is to a very high standard and is commendable. However, it is noted that some members find it difficult to attend in-person meetings due to caring responsibilities, time-limited health-issues, disabilities, lack of suitable transport or through geographical limitations.

Conference believes:

1. Attendance at events is essential for wider representation of members
2. The gold standard for training is networking in-person, but this may have practical limitations
3. As the leading education union, we recognise the important role parents have in the upbringing of their children
4. Due to the large geographical area and rural nature of some districts/regions, and the lack of public transport routes, travelling to in-person meetings and training can be challenging
5. Travelling by car to training has a significant environmental impact
6. Training is essential to promote activism, it should be accessible for all
7. Training is invariably during volunteers' own time, which can have significant impact on family life or the ability to fulfil secondary job roles (such as tutoring)
8. Some officer roles need specialised training, such as the role of treasurer, membership secretary and branch & district secretaries
9. During the Covid-19 pandemic, training was successfully delivered online as face-to-face events were not permitted
10. Hiring of venues and catering costs to facilitate in-person meetings impacts on regional and national budgets; this expenditure has seen a large increase since the beginning of the cost of living crisis
11. The union does provide reasonable expenses, with receipts, for members who need to pay for care to attend training and events.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. **Facilitate a hybrid training schedule with some events being in-person, others being available online and some being combined to ensure quorate voting/wider representation of equality groups**
- ii. **To adjust rep foundation training and any training involving overnight stays to also be available annually online, in addition to in-person meetings to encourage more activists to take up roles**
- iii. **Invest in equipment to facilitate hybrid meetings.**

*Central Bedfordshire*



## **89. The case for professional unity must be taken forward**

Conference congratulates the general secretary and the executive for their work with our sister unions related to the school buildings' crisis and the continuing campaign to restore teachers' pay and improve working conditions.

Conference believes that for a stronger trade union future there needs to be an end to divisive competitive recruitment. Sectoral unionism also needs to be promoted by the union in the TUC.

### **Conference instructs the executive to:**

- 1. Take a motion, or amendment to another motion, to the TUC Congress in September 2024 that promotes a move to sectoral unions and increases the industrial strength within each sector, by calling for a working party to report on progress by the following TUC Congress**
- 2. Organise a conference before the next annual conference with other unions to seek ways for greater co-operation and to discuss the future of education trade unionism**
- 3. Seek to initiate meetings, on or off the record, with individual education unions to seek closer working and acting together leading to the possibility of amalgamation.**

*Portsmouth, Brent, Hammersmith and Fulham, Buckinghamshire*

# Member defence

## 90. Maternity rights - COMPOSITE

Conference notes:

1. The difficulty of accessing flexible working time for mothers returning to work after maternity leave is causing serious concerns among members
2. Flexible working requests are a legal right applying to all employees (with at least 26 weeks service) regardless of whether they have children
3. Flexible working requests are most common among parents returning from maternity or adoption leave
4. Flexible working time is given on the discretion of the headteacher
5. Within education, such requests are often refused on the grounds of lack of teaching and support staff
6. The charity Maternity Teacher Paternity Teacher (MTPT)'s 8th report highlighted that women aged 30-39 are the largest demographic leaving the teaching profession; often because the job seems incompatible with their role as a parent due to:
  - i. Excessive workload
  - ii. Lack of flexible working, 'life friendly' culture and policies
  - iii. Poor parental leave packages (NASUWT found '90% of flexible working requests were made by women teachers', most aged 30-40 with '25% of requests for childcare support.')
7. The profession faces a recruitment and retention crisis; NFER shows teacher vacancies rose 93% in a year
8. Members who are pregnant or on maternity leave are protected by Equality Act 2010, section 18. However, 'Pregnant then Screwed' found 54,000 new mothers felt they had to leave their job, most commonly because they felt unsupported by their employer.

Conference believes

- a. The legal position of flexible working is currently untenable
- b. Women fear to request flexible working, even delaying pregnancy, in case it is refused
- c. This significantly reduces the number of experienced teachers
- d. For many women, the only alternative to a refusal is to return prematurely or quit which could lead to hardship
- e. Pregnancy and maternity-related discrimination is widespread in our schools, and current support often means members aren't aware of their rights and cannot seek advice when they need it
- f. Regional representatives may not have the expertise to fully advise members on best options for their families; many teachers can utilise Shared Parental Leave, which isn't currently promoted on the England and Wales sections of the union's website
- g. The lack of 'life-friendly' policies and flexible-working options directly influences the attrition of women aged 30-39 from the profession, contributes to gender disparity in senior leaders and enforces the 'motherhood penalty' in education.

Conference instructs the executive to:

- a. **Examine the legislation, publish guidance and campaign for flexible working in the education sector**
- b. **Continue to work with The MTPT Project to support members on parental leave via funded access to workshops and coaching**
- c. **Continue to expand training for district officers and reps on maternity and pregnancy related matters**
- d. **Work with NEU Parents to formalise national provision of regular forums covering pregnancy and maternity issues.**
- e. **Ensure effective promotion of maternity rights packs, including automatic distribution of materials as soon as members inform the union of parental leave**

- f. Work with NEU Parents to implement their 'Life-friendly schools' accreditation celebrating schools demonstrating best practice re: flexible working, maternity and pregnancy provisions**
- g. Provide a dedicated maternity and pregnancy advice line for members.**

*Sutton, Hillingdon*

## 91. Menopause

Conference notes:

1. Education is a profession dominated by people that experience the menopause
2. The majority of people affected by the menopause will be women, but those who are trans or non-binary may also experience the menopause or menopause-type symptoms
3. A 2016 TUC survey found that nearly 9 out of 10 workers with direct experience felt that the menopause affected their working life. It is clearly a workplace issue
4. According to the TUC website women have reported that employers were often not tackling problems in ways that helped workers. Managers rarely received training in matters relating to the menopause, leaving many unaware of the issues involved. More worryingly, there were some matters which were being ignored or dismissed completely. These left women being disciplined on competency grounds for an issue that merely required simple adjustments to working conditions
5. A previous survey of teachers revealed that women teachers over the age of 50 are most likely to face capability procedures
6. Older staff are at greater risk of capability procedures despite their experience in the classroom
7. The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination on the basis of sex, disability and age.

Conference believes

- i. We need to break the silence on menopause and educate the public, as often women are not aware that they are experiencing menopause. GPs are also often not knowledgeable enough
- ii. We need to make employers and employees aware that menopause is a whole workplace issue
- iii. Workplaces should identify adjustments that can be made for all workers as well as individual reasonable adjustments
- iv. Policies should be designed to meet the above aims for all affected colleagues.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Expand training for reps around perimenopause and menopause symptoms and workers' rights around this issue in the workplace**
- b. Lobby for menopause training to be made mandatory for the leadership workforce**
- c. Push for menopause policy to be made mandatory in every school and college**
- d. Introduce policies designed to meet the above aims for all affected colleagues, including those who are trans and non-binary.**

*Hounslow*

## **92. 'Our bodies, our choices, our union' - abortion rights**

Conference notes:

1. There has been an increase in the number of pregnant women and pregnant people seeking abortions across all age ranges in the last decade
2. In 2021 it was reported that approximately 25% of all pregnancies ended in abortion
3. The increase in abortion rates has been attributed to the cost-of-living crisis
4. Some companies have successfully introduced paid leave specifically for workers who have experienced pregnancy loss (including through abortion)
5. During 2023's annual conference the union committed to continuing to campaign for access to abortions and reproductive healthcare
6. The website currently contains some information related to termination/abortion.

Conference believes:

- i. There is a culture of secrecy and stigma around abortion
- ii. Abortion can be a positive step for pregnant women and pregnant people, but can simultaneously be traumatic, both physically and mentally
- iii. Stigma and workplace policies such as sickness and management of absence can make it difficult for pregnant women and pregnant people to access reproductive care/abortions, or the resultant follow ups needed post termination such as counselling
- iv. School HR departments are often unsure how to respond to workers disclosing that they have had a termination
- v. Pregnant women and pregnant people seeking an abortion can often struggle with knowing where to go, what to do and who can help.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Create a model policy for school around abortion care/leave for staff**
- b. Encourage schools and empower reps to adopt this model policy in settings for the next academic year**
- c. Invest in training for reps around bargaining for abortion policies in school and supporting members who have experienced an abortion**
- d. Work with an abortion support charity (such as the British Pregnancy Advisory Service) to enhance the existing union guidance to further support pregnant workers.**

*Hounslow*

### **93. The right to be safe at work and free from abuse or threats online and in the workplace**

Conference notes:

1. There has been a notable rise of negative critique with regards to the professional decisions made by support staff, teachers, and educational leaders both in person and through online platforms. Increasingly, this includes verbal and online abuse from parents and others in the school community
2. A survey of teachers by the insurance firm Ecclesiastical found that more than a third of those contacted by parents on social media had received criticism or abuse
3. There is little practical support, advice, or guidance from the DfE on how to how to deal with physical and verbal aggression and violence.

Conference believes that:

- i. All educators have the right to be safe in their workplace and be free from threatening, abusive or aggressive behaviour, whether conducted in person or online
- ii. Such behaviour has a significant and detrimental impact on the mental health and professional reputations of support staff, teachers, and educational leaders
- iii. Such behaviours undermine their confidence and ability to perform their duties effectively.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Promote the responsibility of governors and MAT boards in ensuring their employees are safe at work through risk assessments and appropriate record keeping and reporting of incidents**
- b. Seek clear and consistent guidance for headteachers and governing bodies from the DfE on how to deal with incidents of violence and aggression against school staff, and to provide better safeguards against online harassment and professional damage**
- c. Produce a comprehensive toolkit for schools to train staff on how to deal with physical and verbal aggression and violence**
- d. Provide posters and model communications for schools including guidance on warning letters, advice on when it is appropriate to issue such letters, and how to review the ongoing behaviour of those entering school premises, including when and how it might be appropriate to ban a person from school premises**
- e. Call for increased awareness campaigns in schools to highlight the importance of respect and appreciation for the work of educational staff, fostering a positive and supportive school community.**

*Cheshire East*

#### **94. Anti-strike legislation**

The Government anti-strike legislation calling for minimum service levels is a direct attack on the democratic rights of workers to protest and withdraw their labour when in disagreement with employers.

Conference believes:

1. The bill is designed to make industrial action ineffective and to curb the actions that unions and workers can legally take in order to win fair pay and conditions
2. There is no detail on the limit to these 'service levels', which means that Government can impose conditions without recourse to negotiation with unions
3. The bill would force workers to attend work against their will
4. The introduction of 'work notices' means there will be no time for employers, employees and unions to have meaningful discussion around proposals before strike action. This ultimately forces unions to break their own strike
5. This is especially unacceptable when public services and teaching in particular are facing the greatest workforce crisis in living memory.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. **Work with other unions across all sectors, to support the TUC in opposing and calling for the repeal of this bill**
- ii. **Agree to reject any calls to cooperate with this bill and back all members in their right to take industrial action**
- iii. **Support any members who do not comply with the bill including supporting them financially and legally should they be dismissed by their employer for this failure to comply**
- iv. **Actively engage in opposing this bill by working alongside other unions in rejecting an imposed code of practice that does not allow all workers to take industrial action in professions where lives are not at risk by that action.**

*Warwickshire*



## 95. Minimum service levels

Conference notes that:

1. The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023 became law in July, following a lengthy fight in the House of Lords, and having been subject to significant national and international criticism
2. This follows a long history of attacks on the labour movement through anti-democratic anti-trade union laws from governments of all stripes, with the International Labour Organisation condemning the UK anti-union laws on a regular basis since 1989
3. The Secretary of State for Education is seeking to enforce Minimum Service Levels in schools and colleges during strike action.

Conference further notes that:

- i. The Act allows Government ministers unilateral power to fix the minimum service levels in each of the six sectors covered and puts the burden of organising the minimum service on unions themselves
- ii. In a future strike, if work notices were served by an employer, our union would have to instruct some members to go to work during a strike
- iii. Members under a work notice who refuse to cross picket lines would have their protection from unfair dismissal removed.

Conference believes that the right to strike is a fundamental human right and one of the core principles of a functioning democratic society.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Organise events and produce briefing notes for reps to explore options for noncompliance and resistance to the Act, following the special TUC Congress on the issue**
- b. Seek guarantees from employers not to issue work notices during future industrial action**
- c. Inform employers of our commitment to balloting members for action in any workplace where members were threatened with dismissal or victimisation for failure to attend work under the Minimum Service Levels legislation**
- d. Support demonstrations and the TUC's planned national march opposing the legislation and calling for repeal of the anti-union laws**
- e. Campaign with our sister unions for the repeal of all current anti-trade union legislation, including lobbying the Labour party to commit to repeal all anti-trade union laws within 12 months of gaining office after a general election.**

*Halton, Croydon, Oxfordshire, Birmingham, North Somerset, Wakefield, Staffordshire, Bradford, Northumberland, , Lewes Eastbourne and Wealden*

## 96. Scrap the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act

Conference notes the passing of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act.

Conference believes:

- i. The law further restricts our already constrained right to strike
- ii. There is no case for keeping schools partially open during strikes
- iii. Moreover, to do so may be less safe and less beneficial to children and parents than fully closing schools
- iv. The Tory government does not care about levels of service to children; if it did, it would resource schools and treat school workers better.

Conference welcomes the policy passed at TUC congress calling for ‘mass opposition to the MSLS laws, up to and including a strategy of non-compliance and non-co-operation to make them unworkable, including industrial action.’ and congress’s call for ‘the next Labour Government to immediately repeal MSLS, the Trades Union Act 2016 and take urgent steps to remove other anti-trades union laws.’

Conference notes and endorses the call from many trade unions for a mass campaign of non-compliance, a national demonstration to demand the repeal of the law, and an emergency labour-movement conference to discuss and organise defiance.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. Support and initiate demonstrations for the repeal of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act and all anti-union laws**
- ii. Campaign for employers not to issue work notices when our union strikes, and to commit in advance that they will not issue such work notices**
- iii. Refuse to comply with the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act, including refusing to instruct the union’s members to comply with work notices**
- iv. Support the work of the Free Our Unions campaign.**

*Rochdale, Lewisham*

NB: the implementation of any decision by conference on this motion could only be in accordance with the law
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## **97. Holding the line on workload stress and accountability**

In an NEU survey:

1. 48% of teachers said workload was unmanageable
2. 18,000 teachers and support staff said workload and stress were major issues
3. Two-thirds of teachers were worried about wellbeing.

Conference believes:

- i. The excessive workload of teachers and support staff due to pressure to meet standards and being on the receiving end of capability and disciplinary procedures are a consequence of reduced funding which has made it difficult to meet expectations
- ii. Teacher wellbeing, mental health, and career security has been impacted by workload and an unforgiving, results driven, top-down culture. Inclusivity is not as it should be, and disabled teachers are at risk of discrimination
- iii. Recruitment and retention failings, of both teachers and support staff, has further increased stress for teachers who must fill the gaps, and this has generated further pressure for them to perform above and beyond, and led to higher levels of accountability
- iv. There should be a union led legal challenge against both discrimination towards teachers and support staff, and circumstances when capability and disciplinary procedure are used in a punitive manner
- v. Teachers and support staff need to feel valued and respected, so pay awards must be honoured
- vi. The use of capability and disciplinary action to target staff increases stress. This targets costly staff disproportionately, affecting older staff
- vii. There is discrimination by managers. Disabled teachers remain 'on the margins' of inclusivity. Disabled teachers experience discrimination because of the pressure on schools. Disabled people are underrepresented in teaching with just 2% of teachers self-reporting as disabled, in contrast to 16% of working age disabled adults in the population
- viii. Teachers are turning to antidepressants.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Work with other unions to challenge pernicious management culture**
- b. Support action in schools and colleges where staff have been discriminated against**
- c. Support campaigns to facilitate taking employers to tribunals when the cause is righteous**
- d. Remove the system where members can only access legal representation after the union has obtained advice as to whether their case is viable**
- e. Lobby the Government to fully fund welfare provision**
- f. Support action in schools and colleges where pay awards are not honoured.**

*Warwickshire*

## **98. Supply educators matter**

Conference recognises:

1. The inequalities in treatment of supply staff through agencies, particularly in relation to fees charged by these agencies
2. That supply workers' rights are all workers' rights. Fair treatment of supply workers is in everyone's best interests as the profit made by agencies is taken from public funding.

Conference believes the upskilling of supply workers within the union can help empower and support members further. Supply educators should have the same access to pay when attending union meetings and training as members employed permanently when these occur during working hours.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. **Submit a freedom of information request to all supply agencies requesting a breakdown of finances around agency workers' wages and the fees collected by the agencies**
- ii. **Submit a freedom of information request to all schools for their annual budgets containing a breakdown of the daily rate of pay to all agencies, based on supply teachers, cover supervisors and support staff**
- iii. **Survey all supply members on their daily/hourly rate of pay and which agency this is paid from**
- iv. **Create publicity around the agencies' exploitation of supply educators and schools**
- v. **Sign up to the national register**
- vi. **Facilitate payment for the loss of earnings to supply teachers when they attend a union training event or meeting held during the working week.**

*Nottingham, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kirklees, Devon*

## **99. The union's national disciplinary procedures**

Conference notes that:

1. Making a complaint or being in receipt of a complaint under the current disciplinary procedures can result in extended distress to members
2. The burden of proof falls on the member themselves which can be difficult
3. Witnesses cannot be protected by anonymity so may be fearful to come forward.

Conference believes the union should examine its procedures and take feedback from members who have been parties to the current procedures.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. **Examine the time, which is over a year in some cases, it currently takes for cases to go through the disciplinary procedure and make appropriate changes to the policy to significantly reduce this period, including if needed, enlarging the number of members elected to serve on the National Disciplinary Committee (NDC) panels**
- ii. **Appoint an independent investigating officer for complaints received, who can, if necessary, gather evidence and speak with both parties prior to any formal hearing**
- iii. **Provide individual members with access to confidential support services, emotional well-being providers and a contact member of staff independent of the case who can provide appropriate support throughout the disciplinary process**
- iv. **Allow witnesses who are fearful of repercussions to speak freely. Their identity can be confirmed and kept confidential by the investigating officer, to maintain their anonymity from the complainant or respondent in the investigators' written report**
- v. **Consider how interactions at union events and training can be managed sensitively so that members involved in an active disciplinary process are not placed at risk of additional stress**
- vi. **Take steps, where appropriate, to ensure the involvement of external agencies is declared to all members involved in any disciplinary procedure.**

*Surrey*

## **100. Investigations following an allegation**

Conference believes the damage done by unnecessary or badly handled investigations can adversely affect the mental health of education staff. Many become very ill, and some leave the profession as a result.

Conference recognises that, too often, investigations are:

1. Lengthy: some members endure many months awaiting news from the Local Authority Designated Officer(LADO) or for the investigation to commence. This can affect work attendance, increase anxiety, and restricts staff from working with children outside their employment
2. Non-supportive: some schools do not allocate a suitable well-being contact for a member to have a regular check-in with, don't keep members up to date with progress, or suspend without explanation of what that entails
3. Unfair: some investigating officers aren't trained, so investigations don't follow the ACAS Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures. LADO's are unaccountable and their decisions not always consistent
4. False or malicious: when found to be untrue, too often there are no fair adjustments made or pupil accountability, leaving members feeling vulnerable and sometimes students go on to make further false allegations.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. **Survey members, as well as caseworkers, to find out:**
  - a. **their experience of timelines compared to DfE guidance**
  - b. **whether they received adequate support, explanation of suspension, and well-being checks**
  - c. **whether due process and guidelines were followed**
  - d. **where false accusations were made, whether adjustments or consequences took place**
- ii. **Put in a Freedom of Information request in each local authority to find out the numbers of referrals; the wait times and regularity of multi-agency meetings; the length of time education employees have to wait for cases to be referred back to school or closed.**
- iii. **Use the data from i and ii to:**
  - i. **Produce a model policy for caseworkers to lobby for improved workplace policies in Joint Consultative Negotiating Committee meetings, which aims to combat the issues raised above**
  - ii. **Lobby local authorities to communicate reasonable timelines for multi-agency meetings and outcomes**
  - iii. **Create up-to-date guidance for members as to what records will be kept**
  - iv. **Create and deliver quality training for caseworkers.**

*Peterborough, Luton, Central Bedfordshire*

# General purposes

## **101. Transphobia**

Conference notes that the union has introduced policy to make space for religious observances in events and buildings, setting precedent for making change.

Conference believes:

1. The current policy to promote and empower women is positive and must continue
2. Unfortunately, transphobia is ingrained and existing within the NEU
3. The union has the facility to make changes and to continue some of the equalities work agreed at conference 2023.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. **Make all union spaces inclusive to all identities, including the provision of gender-neutral toilets, which was not the case at conference 2023, nor in some regional offices**
- ii. **Make union spaces inclusive holistically, such as including a field for pronouns on registration forms for all events and displaying pronouns on badges for delegates**
- iii. **Ensure speaker priority at conference pertains to the motion being debated, so members from that sector are able to speak first to their motion. However, within this, the existing structure to prioritise women should remain**
- iv. **Redevelop speaker cards at conference to allow members to indicate their belonging to equalities sectors/OFs, to inform priority speaking.**

*Doncaster*



## **102. Rule change: Rule 3.10**

Conference notes that retired members, who have often given many years of service to the union:

1. Find themselves unable to stand for election to certain district officer positions
2. Are unable to carry the votes of their district members at annual conference, despite being able to attend in the capacity of a district delegate.

Conference believes:

- i. This is against the union's principles of inclusion
- ii. It represents discrimination against a valued sector of the membership
- iii. The union needs to re-evaluate the membership rules to value the contribution that retired members can and do make.

**Conference instructs the executive to change Rule 3.10:**

- a. Delete the words "but from the third annual conference will not be allowed to carry the votes of the members of the Local district" and "but excluding the position of secretary"
- b. The new rule will read:

**Retired membership is only available for those members who are no longer eligible for standard membership because they have left employment in education and that they are also in receipt of their occupational pension. Retired members shall not hold elected office as officers of the union or membership of the executive. They may attend the annual conference as local district representatives. They may hold local district office within the union. Only existing members of the union are eligible to transfer to retired membership, this rate is not available for those who wish to join the union. Terms and benefits of retired membership shall be determined by the executive.**

*Southampton*

### **103. Rule change - Rule 12**

Conference notes that:

1. Women make up 79% of the union's membership
2. Women are as much an equality group as Black, LGBT+ and Disabled sections
3. There are many rules in the union concerning the representation and participation of women

Conference believes these rules have a positive effect.

However, conference is dismayed that despite being a majority women union, debate in annual conference is often moved on when we try to discuss specific women's issues.

Conference believes a space is needed where women can meet, have necessary discussions, and be represented in the same way as the other equality sections.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. **Add "women" to rule 12:  
Equalities Sections (Black, LGBT+, Disabled and Women)**
- ii. **Add "women" to 12.4  
The LGBT+, Disabled and Women's section conferences will each elect 6 delegates to annual conference**
- iii. **Ensure the women's section conference is chaired by the current chair of the women's OF.**

*Denbighshire, Walsall, Flintshire, Staffordshire, Torfaen, Vale of Glamorgan*

## **104. New Professionals and Young Workers**

Conference notes:

1. The union's New Professionals and Young Workers (NPYW) National Council is there to represent members in their first 3 years as education workers, or who are aged 35 and under
2. The NEU is one of the most youthful unions in the TUC (39% are 35 and under)
3. The NPYW National Council is not currently recognised in the rule book alongside other National Councils.

Conference believes:

- i. With recruitment and retention an ongoing issue that we face as a profession, the absence of NPYW participation in union activity is alarming
- ii. Members under the age of 36 remain significantly underrepresented
- iii. We need to find and mentor talent to grow the future of the union and do our utmost to enable active participation
- iv. Better national representation will create and reinforce improved regional and district representation
- v. The NPYW National Council should have parity with other national councils and be able to send six delegates and a motion to annual conference.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. **Change the title of Section 11 in the union rules from 'Independent Schools, Post 16 Establishments and Support Staff Sections' to Independent Schools, Post 16 Establishments, Support Staff, and New Professionals and Young Workers Sections'**
- b. **Change rule 11.1 "In addition to being members of Local Districts, members employed in the Independent schools and Post 16 establishments, and those employed as support staff, will be organised in sector specific sections" to "In addition to being members of Local Districts, members employed in the Independent schools and Post 16 establishments, members who are in the first 3 years of their career and/or 35 years of age and under (New Professionals and Young Workers) and those employed as support staff, will be organised in sector specific sections" in order to make point 11.3 also apply to the NPYW National Council ("Each section will elect 6 delegates to annual conference. Each section conference will be able to submit a motion to annual conference, on particular policy areas relevant to that section, in addition to those submitted via local districts, and equality conferences and the Executive.").**

*Luton, Hackney, South Kent, Nottingham, South Derbyshire, Hertfordshire General, County Durham, South Gloucestershire*

**105. Election of union officials**

**Conference instructs the executive to bring a rule change to Conference 2025 which will enable members to elect senior union officials.**

*Croydon, West Sussex*

# International

## **106. Stop the war in Sudan – refugees welcome**

Conference notes:

1. The devastation caused by war in Sudan
2. The support that NEU International has provided to Sudan solidarity initiatives, working with MENA Solidarity (Middle East and North Africa Solidarity), other trade unions and Sudanese organisations including the Sudanese Teachers Committee.

Conference believes:

- i. That civilians, including school students and educators, are paying the price for the military struggle to control the country's government and resources
- ii. Foreign powers, including the British Government, contributed to this conflict by pressing Sudanese democratic forces to negotiate power-sharing agreements with the warring military and militia generals
- iii. Regional states allied to Britain, including Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Israel have fuelled the crisis through support to the combatants
- iv. The British Government must stop fuelling the conflict through arms sales and diplomatic support.

Conference further believes:

- a. That Britain has an obligation to provide safe, legal routes for Sudanese citizens to seek asylum in Britain and notes that any British citizens of Sudanese origin have faced the agony of seeing family members trapped by this conflict
- b. In the right to safe passage and support for refugees arriving in the UK on the same basis as that offered to Ukrainians fleeing war.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- I. Host a solidarity event in 2024**
- II. Work with others to organise a lobby of Parliament and lobbies of their own MPs**
- III. Encourage districts to affiliate to MENA and to publicise to members**
- IV. Support the production and dissemination of educational materials on Sudan nationally and by districts and branches.**

*Newham, Brent*

## **107. Palestine**

Conference notes:

1. The eruption of deadly violence between the Israeli state and Hamas in October 2023
2. Israel's devastating military assault on Gaza, leading to thousands of Palestinian deaths, and the siege that has destroyed vital infrastructure
3. The huge number of children among the fatalities in Gaza, the widespread trauma, and the massive disruption to education caused by war and siege
4. The loyal and strong support of the UK Government for Israel's war on Gaza and its total blockade of the occupied territory
5. The efforts by the UK Government to criminalise peaceful tactics of boycott, divestment and sanctions promoted by the global Palestine solidarity movement, and to stigmatise solidarity with Palestinians.

Conference believes:

- i. Civilian deaths due to violence in Palestine and Israel are deplorable and preventable
- ii. The siege of Gaza, and the collective punishment of its people, must end immediately
- iii. Israel's current hard-right, racist government is the main driver of conflict, violence and war in Palestine and Israel
- iv. Israel is guilty of apartheid policies under international law, as documented by human rights organisations, and this underpins the ongoing deadly conflict in Palestine and Israel
- v. Justice, equality and freedom for the Palestinians, with the rights of everyone in the region respected, is the only long-term guarantee of peace
- vi. The UK Government must stop being an enabler of Israel's apartheid policies, violence and anti-Palestinian racism.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Reaffirm support for the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and Stop the War Coalition in their efforts to campaign for peace and justice in Palestine and Israel**
- b. Encourage districts to affiliate to PSC and work with its local branches on campaigns and initiatives**
- c. Coordinate trade union solidarity efforts for Palestine with other trade unions in the UK and internationally**
- d. Publish and circulate educational resources that members can use to increase understanding of Palestine and Israel**
- e. Support PSC's campaigning to defend the right to pursue boycott, divestment and sanctions tactics.**

*Denbighshire, Waltham Forest, Redbridge, Halton, Croydon, Oxfordshire, Norfolk, Coventry, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Oldham, Camden, Lambeth, Ealing, Vale of Glamorgan, Nottingham, Northumberland*

## 108. Israel-Palestine

### Conference notes

1. The air strikes, bombing and the ground invasion of Gaza which has resulted in many thousands of deaths and injuries, and expresses its solidarity with Palestinian and Israeli civilians impacted by the ongoing events in Israel-Palestine. In particular we condemn the suffering of children and the destruction of schools
2. The Government's attempt to limit peaceful protests and free speech on this issue
3. Attempts by employers, academic and educational institutions to ban campaigning against the slaughter
4. The UK Government's encouragement of the Israeli government to act with impunity and oppose any military assistance or aid given for this war.

### Conference believes:

- i. Prior to this escalation, 2023 had already been one of the deadliest years for Palestinians living under occupation in the West Bank, with increased settler violence against Palestinians, increased administrative detentions and home evictions
- ii. Educational institutions within Israel expelling Palestinian students and anti-war activists from their courses is unacceptable
- iii. The fight for Palestinian liberation does not equate to support for Hamas or for violence against Israeli civilians or Jewish people here in Britain. We strongly oppose and condemn anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and all forms of racism
- iv. That we must support the international call on 16 October from Palestinian trade union organisations to oppose the Israeli war machine
- v. We must stand for self-determination of all national groupings, Palestinian and Israeli and fight for the end to the occupation, siege, oppression and exploitation and in support of equality, rights, peace, education and security for all.

### Conference instructs the executive to:

- a. **Publicise and call on members to join protests in solidarity with the Palestinian people, against the war, occupation, siege of Gaza and further escalation**
- b. **Publicise the call from trade union organisations in Palestine to oppose and campaign against the Israeli war machine**
- c. **Ensure employers are supporting our members impacted by the crisis**
- d. **Step up our solidarity work on this issue by circulating union educational material to our districts, members, activists and reps.**

*Kirklees*



## **109. Solidarity with Ukraine**

Conference supports:

1. The Ukrainian people's right to self-determination
2. The right to a peaceful education for Ukrainian children and young people free from the threat of war
3. The efforts of our fellow educationalists in the Ukraine to continue providing an education service under such difficult and dangerous conditions
4. Russian withdrawal from all Ukrainian territory
5. The right of Ukraine to self-defence and to resist Putin's war
6. The right of Ukraine to seek arms from other states to defend itself
7. Russian anti-war protesters and anti-conscription resisters.
8. Cancelling Ukraine's foreign debt.

Conference opposes:

- i. Russia's invasion of Ukraine
- ii. The destruction of hundreds of schools, colleges and cultural buildings by Russian artillery and missile strikes
- iii. The mass torture, murder, looting, sexual assaults and other war crimes by Russian troops in Ukraine
- iv. The deliberate targeting by Russia of civilians and Ukrainian infrastructure
- v. The environmental threat posed by Russia to Ukraine's nuclear power plants, their destruction of the Kakhova dam and massive land mining of Ukrainian territories
- vi. Russia's dislocation of world food production and threat of famine in Africa
- vii. Putin's referenda in occupied Ukrainian territories and their annexation.

Conference also supports:

- viii. The Ukrainian trade union movement's steadfast backing of Ukraine's war of self-defence
- ix. Ukrainian union campaigns to defend workers' rights and living standards in Ukraine
- x. Ukrainian and Russian refugees and their right to come and live in the UK.

Conference also notes the potential impact on children in our schools arising from the invasion, particularly refugees and those of Ukrainian or eastern European heritage.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- 1. Send messages offering solidarity and practical support to the Trades Union of Education and Science Workers of Ukraine (TUESWU) and the Free Trade Union of Education and Science of Ukraine (VPONU)**
- 2. Support districts making direct links with trades unionists in Ukraine, including Ukraine trades union speakers for local meetings**
- 3. Call on all school employers to ensure suitable guidance is in place for school staff managing children's distress and/or difficult conversations arising from the above.**

*Luton, City of York, Wiltshire, Torfaen, Leeds, Hammersmith and Fulham, Buckinghamshire*

## **110. Educating for peace**

Conference notes that:

1. Over the last few years there has been increasing levels of violence across the world including in Sudan, Afghanistan, Iran, Ukraine and Palestine
2. In its UN75 report 2020 the United Nations reported that 'conflict and violence are currently on the rise' and that in 2016 more countries experienced violent conflict than at any point in almost 30 years.

Conference further notes that, during conflict:

- i. The people who suffer most are women and children
- ii. Education is disrupted generally, affecting girls the most, and can include them being denied their right to education
- iii. Violence and discrimination force people to flee from their homes and countries adding to the refugee crisis.

Conference condemns any proposed increase in UK military spending particularly when workers' wages continue to be held below inflation, energy prices are rocketing and there is a cost-of-living crisis.

Conference believes:

- a. That trade unionists have no interest in war and every effort should be made to pursue peaceful relations between countries through negotiations and disarmament
- b. Where war/conflict occur, we should be calling for immediate ceasefire and a negotiated and lasting peace.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- I. Stand in solidarity with trade unionists and workers in all countries opposing war and wasteful, environmentally harmful, military spending**
- II. Work with partner organisations to develop and share materials and resources to support members in school in educating for peace**
- III. Create a network of Educators for Peace.**

*Croydon, Brent, Bradford*

# Equality and sector conferences

These motions are included for information only.

They are guaranteed to be debated so cannot be prioritised. This is why they have not been given motion numbers.

**LGBT+ Conference: to follow**

The LGBT+ conference will be held on 3-4 February.

The motion chosen by the conference will be included in the list of prioritised motions sent to districts for amendments.

## **Black educators' conference: Democracy in our union**

Conference believes:

1. Our union has taken many progressive steps to involve its members from the different constituent groups, often led by members themselves. Examples include the Black Educators' Conference (BEC), the Black Member Constituency Seat, and taking a motion from the BEC to the agenda of Annual Conference. All these arose from Black members' activism and have also benefited other groups across the union. Members bring a huge wealth of lived experience and expertise to the union
2. There has been growing concern over recent years whereby the role and involvement of lay members has been significantly reduced and decisions are being made on behalf of Black members without consulting them, even those who have been elected to roles such as the constituency seat holder and members who have been elected onto the BEC steering committee and the organising forum. This worrying development not only sidelines members but is also undemocratic, particularly in a union that has the mantra that we are 'lay led'.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. **Ensure members of the BEC steering committee are fully involved in all aspects of the organisation and decision-making process of the BEC, to enable it to update Black members and seek their views on matters relating to it**
- ii. **Ensure steering committee members have an involvement in deciding/agreeing the criteria for Black member attendance at BEC**
- iii. **Take appropriate steps to increase the BEC capacity to accommodate at least 600 participants**
- iv. **Review the BEC remit to allow for the annual election of an equal number of SC members from the BOF (5) and members attending the BEC (5), 10 in total plus the CSH Chair. In addition, to ensure parity, BOF members to decide from which group (BOF or BEC) to register their nomination**
- v. **Produce an annual written report to be distributed with all future BEC programme notes, that outlines the implementation/progress of the previous year's motion, as carried at Annual Conference**
- vi. **Produce a report for annual conference 2024, outlining the implementation/progress of motions carried at BEC 2020, BEC 2021, subsequently carried at annual conference 2021 and 2022.**

## **Disabled members' conference: Promoting Disabled people's rights**

Conference notes that the union regularly issues press releases on important issues such as Black Lives Matter, Trans Pride and Mothers in Prison but rarely if ever, in support of Disabled People's rights. This, despite the fact we have a vibrant disabled members' section.

Conference further notes:

1. Many disabled members experience shared barriers such as restricted access, lack of adjustments and negative attitudes
2. Some of our members are in receipt of Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and are therefore at the centre of a war of attrition with the Government
3. The government published The National Disability Strategy where it consulted with charities rather than disabled people's organisations
4. The Disability Advisory Committee has been dismissed from the Equality and Human Rights Commission
5. We are keen to promote all disabled members' rights as enshrined in the social model of disability.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. **Ensure that matters affecting disabled people are highlighted in the union's public statements and press releases**
- ii. **Create a resource for KS2 on the demonstration for accessible transport which shows disabled people as strong, determined, and organised**
- iii. **Organise a national bank of educator led guidance and resources for disability equality to be taught across the curriculum at secondary schools**
- iv. **Create a resource for all educators which illustrates how to apply the social model of disability rather than the medical model of disability to workplace situations**
- v. **Advise districts regarding what constitutes an accessible venue for meetings to encourage disabled members into attendance and activism**
- vi. **Produce clear guidance and advice regarding remote access to meetings for disabled members who have difficulty travelling long distances or who are struggling at times with their impairments.**

## **Post-16 conference: Beyond breaking point**

Conference notes that:

1. 31% of 16–24-year-olds reported depression or anxiety in 2017-18, even before the pandemic. In a 2021 Association of Colleges survey, 94% of colleges had to deal with attempted suicide in the last year. 36% of all education staff reported mental health issues in 2022. In a University and College Union survey 82% said increased workload had damaged their mental health
2. In a recent UNISON survey, 79.7% of FE staff reported shortages in support staff and 36% said this impacted on learners with additional or special needs.

Conference believes:

- i. There is a clash between the business-driven approach of senior further education (FE) managers and the student-centred pedagogical practices of teachers
- ii. The replacement of Business and Technology Education Council qualifications (BTECs) with T Levels has reduced the opportunities available to learners. The deteriorating mental health of young people is multi-factorial. The pandemic, dire warnings of the climate emergency and the cost-of-living crisis are all contributory factors. Reduced FE funding has made it increasingly difficult to provide appropriate support
- iii. Staff mental health has been impacted by increased workload and an unforgiving, results driven, top-down culture, which is at odds with the student-centred approach of teaching staff
- iv. Support staff are essential in colleges. Staff cuts have left vulnerable learners at risk and increased stress for teachers who must fill the gaps
- v. The 16-19 curriculum should be broad and provide courses that are accessible to all learners
- vi. It is essential for staff to feel valued, so pay awards must be honoured.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- a. Lobby the Government to fund mental health support for both students and staff in all colleges, which could include on-site counselling and off-timetable mental health days**
- b. Work with other unions to challenge the pernicious management culture in colleges**
- c. Support action in colleges where support staff redundancies are threatened, whether they are members or not**
- d. Support campaigns to maintain BTEC provision**
- e. Support action in any college where agreed pay awards are not honoured.**

## **Independent schools' conference: Winning for support staff in independent schools**

Conference notes that:

1. Support staff are the backbone of any school. From SEN departments to maintenance, catering to office staff, IT support to technicians, our schools would simply not function without these colleagues
2. Support staff are absolutely committed to creating thriving learning environments for young people, going above and beyond in their roles, facilitating brilliant learning and playing a vital role in safeguarding
3. These members of staff are often those with the least favourable pay and conditions
4. They are often fewer in number than teaching members and so they're even more vulnerable
5. There are no restrictions on the active recruitment of support staff members in the independent sector
6. Actively fighting and winning campaigns for support staff helps to drive up membership within the independent sector
7. There have been notable successes where members have raised concerns in relation to support staff pay and conditions.

**Conference instructs the executive to:**

- i. Build a national campaign focussed on improving the pay and conditions for support staff members in the independent sector**
- ii. Support local campaigns on pay and conditions for support staff members in the independent sector, up to and including industrial action where necessary**
- iii. Offer further training to support reps to organise and recruit support staff members in the workplace**
- iv. Conduct a survey of support staff members in the independent sector to inform reps and officers about the challenges they face.**



## **Support staff conference: justice and equality for support staff in the union**

Conference notes that:

1. Union membership costs just £1 for teachers in the first year after qualifying
2. Union membership is FREE for student teachers and school-based trainees
3. There is currently no such introductory offer for support staff members
4. Conference 2023 instructed the executive to end the agreement not to knowingly or actively recruit support staff
5. Support staff are overwhelmingly on lower pay than teachers, and this is exacerbated by pro-rata Term Time Only (TTO) contracts, meaning that, unlike teachers, most support staff must accept several weeks of unpaid leave every year
6. Labour has committed to re-establishing the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB).

Conference believes:

- i. The start-of-career membership offers for teachers have made, and continue to make, a huge impact on our recruitment of teachers
- ii. Once members are in the union and see the benefits of collective power, the vast majority continue membership, going on to pay their full fees
- iii. As support staff members are the lowest paid members of the union, the cost of union dues is a big initial obstacle for recruitment, especially for those on TTO contracts
- iv. The fact that most support staff in the UK have no union membership desperately needs addressing, and the union should do all it can to address this. This should include an introductory offer for support staff.
- v. The NEU must be part of the SSSNB.

**Conference instructs the Executive to:**

- a. Consider implementing a “£1 for the first year of membership” offer similar to the one for ECTs**
- b. Formulate, agree and implement, in consultation with the Support Staff National Council (SSNC), an appropriate, discounted, introductory membership offer for support staff members**
- c. Actively pursue methods for increasing support staff membership in line with the commitment to actively recruit support staff as agreed in motion 36 from Conference 2023**
- d. Ensure we retain support staff members, post-introductory offer, by campaigning for improved support staff pay, for nationally agreed terms and conditions for all support staff, and for the NEU to be officially involved in SSSNB negotiations.**