

Motions to Conference

(To be read in conjunction with report produced for Feb Branch Meeting by Ian Lorimer)

1 This conference notes that around 11% of all households in the UK live in fuel poverty. This amounts to around 2.4 million households and 1.4 million older people in England alone. In addition, almost one in three older people live in homes with inadequate heating or insulation making their homes more difficult to heat and/or keep warm. In total, this therefore accounts for around 3.5 million older people at risk or suffering from fuel poverty.

The Conference agrees the real problem is the lack of an active policy to tackle fuel poverty whilst we facing ever increasing energy costs. In 2016, the average dual fuel bill reached £1,135. Compared to in 2004 when an average home paid £565. This absorbs nearly 14% of the income of a single pensioner dependent on the Pension Credit guarantee.

This is also highlighted by the Office for National Statistics that provides data on the number of excess winter deaths. (Deaths occurring in December to March) minus the average of non-winter deaths (April to July of the current year and August to November of the previous year). In the winter period (December to March) of 2016/17 there were an estimated 34,300 more deaths in England and Wales, compared with the average for the non-winter period. The overall figure represents a 39.5% increase on the previous year's figure and is the second highest in the last five years. It represents a death rate of 285 people a day during the 4-month period in question, or 11 deaths an hour.

Britain also has a significant number of homes which are energy inefficient, and in urgent need of improvement. This could help not only the fuel poor, but the economy as well with the creation of thousands of green jobs, as well as helping meet our climate change commitments.

This conference therefore agrees that the RMAC to work with the NEC in conjunction with other supportive campaigning bodies to campaign that the government carry out the following urgent programme of action:

Introduce a national programme to improve the heating and insulation standards of existing homes so that they reach the standards of new homes built today. In particular, the homes of all low income and fuel poor households should be improved to the standard by 2020.

Legislate to oblige all fuel companies to provide an industry-wide 'social tariff' to low income and fuel poor consumers – that offers a better deal than tariffs offered to more financially secure consumers.

Ensure that energy companies are obliged to offer payment packages to offline customers that are equal to those available online.

Many older people assume their loyalty for sticking with their energy provider is rewarded, when in reality those that do not switch are punished for inactivity with higher prices. Competition and choice have clearly failed the poorest customers and it is now time to introduce a real price cap on energy bills that benefits all customers, especially the poorest.

End the use of pre-payment meters. Provide an annual fuel allowance to all vulnerable, older and low income households set initially at £500 which keeps pace with annual increases in average energy bills.

Retired Members Advisory Committee

2 This Conference, aware of the rising level cold related pensioner deaths, (over 34,000 in England and Wales during the Winter of 2016/17) instructs the RMAC to raise the profile of this issue to the National Executive Committee and to encourage the NEC to support the National Pensioners' Convention's call for the government to establish a Fuel Poverty Commission so that the causal factors of poor insulation and inadequate heating can be addressed along with a substantial increase to the Winter Fuel Allowance for pensioner households.

North West Regional Retired Members Committee

3 Conference notes the ongoing major crisis developing in the NHS affecting all of those in need of health care and recognising that the elderly and pensioners are massively affected by these cuts.

Conference agrees that a major campaign is required to stop the continuation of privatisation in the health service and for the service to be reinvigorated with the required funding to meet the needs of all.

a) Conference calls on the RMAC in conjunction with the NEC to

b) Call on the TUC to organise a national demonstration calling for an end to privatisation in health and social care and against continued austerity. Campaign for a Labour government to end PFI in the health service and to bring health and social care back into public ownership and for funding to end the crisis.

Coventry

4 That this conference notes that the First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet office, Damian Green, has announced that the government will publish a green paper on care and support for older people in England by Summer 2018. The paper will set out plans for how government proposes to improve care and support for older people and tackle the challenge of an ageing population.

This conference instructs the RMAC to work with other organisations, including the NPC, NFOP and the TUC to monitor the progress of this green paper, and respond to the Public consultation that is to be held once the bill is published.

Retired Members Advisory Committee

5 This conference is extremely disappointed at the delay in dealing with Motion 29 from General Conference 2017. This was a Motion in the name of the NEC that called for a report to Branches by the end of September 2017.

With the issue of LTB 653/17 on the 4th December 2017 the issue is going to drag on until at least February 2018 before the NEC make recommendations to Branches.

This is inconsistent with the Conference Motion instructions and this is not acceptable.

The RMAC is therefore instructed, as a matter of urgency, to enter dialog with the NEC to put on hold the additional paragraph to the Model Branch Constitution contained in LTB 664/16 until a report is issued that is acceptable to Branches and their Retired Members' Sections.

Midland Regional Retired Members Committee

6 This Conference instructs the RMAC to request the NEC to explain why the instructions clearly contained in Motion 35 which was carried at General Conference 2017 have not been complied with.

Midland No.1

7 COMPOSITE MOTION This Conference agrees that the new Retired Members Web page is not fit for purpose, in that it does not provide the facility for the publication of reports and articles that are relevant to the retired members of this Union.

The RMAC is instructed to work with the National Executive Council and the Communications Department to restore the facilities that were previously available to retired members.

South East No.5 South East Regional Retired Members Committee

8 Conference agrees that the timing of the Retired Members Conference specifically being held in the depths of winter, with many aged and infirm members having to travel distances at this time of year. It would be better suited to be held in the autumn period possibly around the time of the other equality conferences before the weather takes a hold.

Therefore the RMAC is instructed to work and advise the NEC to seek an autumn venue in time for the next Retired Members Conference.

Greater Mersey and SW Lancs

9 This conference recognises that the content of the course titled “Retired Members Weekend” is no longer fit for purpose for retired members.

This conference instructs the Retired Members Advisory Committee in conjunction with the NEC to work with the CWU Education Department to review the content of this course as part of the Re-Design Project.

The content of the course as a minimum should reflect the variations of legislation within the UK & include at a minimum awareness state pension entitlement and also care and dementia awareness. The course should continue to be available to all retired members. South East Wales Amal

MOTIONS NOT ADMITTED TO THE AGENDA

10 Conference agrees with the carriage of Motion 29 at Annual Conference 2017 and the paragraph with reference voting rights for retired members, therefore the NEC are instructed to publish their decision and reasons with reference to this paragraph to the RMAC and in a LTB.

South West Regional Retired Members Committee

11 This conference notes that there are no cohesive communication channels within the Retired Members Section of the CWU.

This issue needs to be address as a matter of urgency by the establishment of a Working Group consisting of representatives of the RMAC, the Regional Committees and Branches, the SDGS Dep’t and the Communications Dep’t in order to make best practice and use of Communication facilities.

Eastern Regional Retired Members Committee

12 Conference agrees that retired members attending meetings should not be classed as ‘business use’ in terms of insurance cover, if this cannot be changed in rule in relation to retired members, the NEC is instructed to place a rule amendment to the rules revision conference which will allow CWU Branches to fund any extra cost incurred in gaining business use insurance for retired member’s representatives only when using personal vehicles.

North East Region Retired Members Committee

13 Conference recognises the increase in the numbers of UK citizens living in poverty and homelessness. Conference agrees. That the Labour Party and other affiliated Trades Unions, take away for examination and consultation, the means to alleviate poverty and homelessness in the UK. Any subsequent agreements will then become part of the Labour Party manifesto in preparation for the next General Election.

Eastern No.5

14 Conference agrees that motions carried at TUC Pensioners Conferences in England that go to the national TUC are only taken forward at the discretion of the Chair. Conference recognises here must be a more robust attitude to these motions carried at the Pensioners Conference and for the TUC to assist in ensuring they are actioned.

Therefore this conference agrees that the RMAC and the NEC are instructed to work together with a view to encourage other unions to put pressure on the TUC to change this situation.

Retired Members Advisory Committee