

Unison Conference Report
Local Government Conference/National Delegates Conference
17th-22nd June 2018

This year's conferences focused on a number of key issues affecting working people from across the country. The highlights which I feel the branch should be aware of, and potentially be working to support are contained below.

- **National Assessment & Accreditation system of Social Workers** - requiring children's social workers to complete an additional regular assessment via a private company who have no experience of children's social work. This is at an initial cost of £3.6 million pounds.
- **Ethical Care Charter** – Branches required to check if their local agencies have put this initiative in place, and encourage them to do so, if they have not.
- **Asylum seekers** – noted that social workers are not agents for the Immigration services and this should not be part of their assessments that are carried out. Some young people are being denied services, and others are potentially being denied their rights as a direct result of the actions of some Local Authorities. Noted that UNISON Scotland have produced a guide which assists social workers in this regard. The issues around Employment and the inability of this group of people to work was also highlighted, and the need to change this policy.
- **Windrush:** National Delegates Conference agreed a number of actions in relation to how they might support individuals and challenge the Government in relation to the experiences being felt through the Home Office Immigration Practices.
- **Local Government Apprentices** – looked at the growth of apprentices across all age groups and reminding branches that there is a Charter available to assist. Social Work Apprenticeships are due to start in certain location in September 2018.
- **Housing & Grenfell** – tributes were paid to those affected by the fire disaster in 2017. Noted that the issues around homelessness, benefit changes, rise in use of food banks, and the need to meet individual and family need which was placing strain on workers and local people alike. Concern raised around Fire Fighters being blamed for the tragedy through the on-going inquiry.
- **Mental Health & Stress in the workplace** – discussed through a number of motions and highlighted the pressure that staff members can often be under in their work places. Calls upon branches
- **Trans equality** – there is a Guide and Model Policy, alongside the Unisons Trans worker's rights factsheet. A motion was defeated around having a designated female place on the NEC rather than general places. This would have resulted in the only Black Male place being deleted which was not agreed.
- **Rule changes** – a number of rule changes were put forward. However the Review of Unison was defeated on the grounds that branches needed to be secure about their funding going forward
- **Branch Donations** – there were a few motions requesting donations from branches including strike action areas/teams, international union work. It would therefore be helpful if the branch were able to confirm which activities or campaigns it has contributed to so that members of aware of these, and can suggest areas for possible support if required.

Veronica Price-Job
Delegate
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