



Our Rights Our Future

Organising for change

Northern Ireland Committee
Irish Congress of Trade Unions

**Biennial Delegate
Conference**
25-26 March 2020

Our Rights **Our Future** *Organising for change*

Biennial Delegate Conference 2020

Killyhevlin Hotel, Fermanagh

25th-26th March 2020

Membership of the Northern Ireland Committee 2018-20

Chairperson	G Murphy	INTO
Vice-Chairperson	A Millar	NIPSA
Members	J Pollock	UNITE
	D Harte	Craigavon Trades Council
	J White	UTU
	D Kennedy	CWU
	K Clarke	UCU
	P Wolfe	PCS
	D Walker	GMB
	A Speed	UNISON
	P McKeown	UNISON
	N McNally	SIPTU
	P Mackel	GMB
	J McCamphill	NASUWT
	M Lafferty	USDAW
	T Trainor	UNITE
	J Quinn	FBU
	M Morgan	NIPSA
Ex-Officio	S Nunan	President ICTU (July 17 to 2019)
	P King	General Secretary ICTU
	O Reidy	Asst. General Secretary
Observers	M Galloway	Retired Workers Committee
	S Harvey	Youth Committee

Attendance At Meetings

At the time of preparing this report 20 meetings were held during the 2018-20 period. The following is the attendance record of the NIC members:

J Pollock	3	M Morgan	12	K Clarke	9
D Kennedy	8	N McNally	16	P Mackel	17
A Millar	17	J Quinn	3	J McCamphill	17
P Wolfe	9	M Lafferty	14	A Speed	20
T Trainor	19	J White	13	P McKeown	16
G Murphy	19	D Harte	16	D Walker	13

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Timetable

Wednesday 25th March 2020

SESSION 1: 10.30am – 1pm

Fraternal Greetings

Fermanagh Council of Trade Unions

Conference Opening

Chair of Fermanagh Council

Conference Arrangements Committee

Report no 1 (circulated)

Conference Arrangements Committee

Report No. 2 (to be circulated if appropriate)

Appointment of tellers and scrutineers

President of ICTU and Chairperson of NIC Address Gerry Murphy

General Secretary's Address Patricia King

Section A of BDC Report Section B 2018 Conference Resolutions

Political Situation

Motion 1 Trade Union Relations with Devolved Stormont Institutions
NIC

Motion 2 Congress Input into EU/UK Future Relationship
UNISON

Motion 3 Working Without Fear or Threats
NUJ

Motion 4 Age Discrimination Legislation

NIC (for Retired Workers Committee)

Motion 5 New Decade New Approach
PCS

Motion 6 New Decade must have genuinely New Approach
UNISON

Motion 7 New Decade New Approach
Belfast & District Trade Union Council

Guest Speaker

Deputy First Minister Address

Together with Sections C and E of the Report

Lunch: 1pm – 2.15pm

Fringe Meetings

(refreshments available)

1. 'Everyone Out' – the right to strike as a tool for industrial action.
2. A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland – where to now?

SESSION 2: 2.15pm – 5.30pm

Employment Rights

Motion 8 Minimum Wage Differentials
UNITE

Motion 9 Repeal Anti Trade Union Laws
Derry Council of Trades Unions

Motion 10 Employment Rights
PCS

Motion 11 Maintaining and
improving workers' entitlements
and the right to strike
NIC

Fraternal Greetings from Wales
TUC

Motions on Employment Rights
cont.

Motion 12 Industrial Relations in
Further Education
UCU

Motion 13 Retired Workers
Fermanagh Council of Trade
Unions

Motion 14 Exploitation of Seafarers
RMT

Motion 15 Right to Disconnect
FSU

Motion 16 Sexual Harassment
NASUWT

Motion 17 Tackling Sexual
Harassment in the Workplace
GMB

Motion 18 New Technology in the
Retail Sector
USDAW

Assistant General Secretary's
Address
Owen Reidy

Motions on Health

Motion 19 Better Mental Health
Awareness and Support for Trade
Union Representatives
SOR

Motion 20 Suicide Prevention
Fermanagh Council of Trades
unions

Motion 21 Challenging the Mental
Health and Suicide Crisis
UNISON

Motion 22 Closing the Gap in the
Provision of Perinatal Mental Health
Services
RCM

Together with sections H and I of
the Report

Conference adjourns

Timetable

Thursday 26th March 2020

Session 3: 9.30am – 1pm

Education

Motion 23 Safe Staffing
INTO

Motion 24 Fair Employment for Teachers
NASUWT

Motion 25 School Funding
UTU

Motion 26 Tuition Fees
UCU

Guest Speaker

ICTU Vice President Kevin Callinan

Economic and Social Rights

Motion 27 Public Sector
UNITE

Motion 28 Climate Change
NIPSA

Motion 29 Industrial Relations in the Energy Sector/Just Transition
Prospect

Motion 30 Just Transition
UNITE

Guest Speaker

Professor John Barry

Together with section D of the Report

Lunch: 1pm – 2.15pm

Fringe meetings:

Trade Union Friends of Palestine
Just Transition, Nevin Economic Research Institute.

Session 4: 2.15pm – 5.30pm

Economic and Social Rights contd.

Motion 31 Support Community Campaigns
Craigavon Trades Council

Motion 32 Housing
Belfast and District Trades Council

Motion 33 Automation
SIPTU

Motion 34 Universal Credit for Self Employed Workers
Equity

Motion 35 Public Sector Pay
NIPSA

Fraternal Greetings from STUC

Motion 36 Public Service Broadcasting
NUJ

Motion 37 Water Charges
Fermanagh Trades Council

Motion 38 Christmas and New Year Working
USDAW

Together with sections F and G of the Report

Any remaining motions, which have not been taken elsewhere, will be taken, providing time allows.

Section **A**

Introduction

Section A Introduction

Introduction



May Day 2018 (This, and most photos, by Kevin Cooper/ Photoline)

This report outlines the work of the Northern Ireland Committee of the ICTU from April 2018 to March 2020. The period has been marked by one of flux and change. In 2018 it looked likely that the UK would find itself crashing out of the EU. Locally in Northern Ireland, things looked bleak with little prospect of a return to devolution with politics becoming more frayed and divided with each election. Workers were also entering their 8th year of Tory austerity with little respite in both the public and the private sector. Northern Ireland, its economy and society was in a state of stagnation and drift.

Now as we enter the spring of 2020, the UK has regrettably left the EU albeit with an agreement and not, at this point at least, a crash out. We in the trade union movement have sought to build alliances not just in Northern Ireland with other groups in civic society but also nationally and internationally to seek to ensure that **workers do not pay the price of Brexit**. We reluctantly supported the latest Withdrawal Agreement even though it was somewhat inferior to the original Withdrawal Agreement that the House of Commons rejected. We have been clear from the start that we want to see no hardening of the border on the island of Ireland, no border within the

UK and no economic border between these islands. In many ways the can has merely been kicked down the road until December 2020. But we have made it clear should there be a no tariff, no quotas agreement between the EU and the UK there must also be a watertight no social dumping clause in such an agreement.

2019 and 2020 has seen significant and necessary industrial action in both the public and private sector where workers have stood up and said enough is enough and have defended their jobs and sought to reclaim decent living standards. The Harland and Wolff occupation struck a chord with workers in Northern Ireland and internationally. The leadership from the shop stewards and their unions Unite and GMB combined with the widespread solidarity from the entire trade union movement showed the best of us and showed what is possible. The workers in Wrightbus and their union Unite also displayed a level of grit and determination and never gave up and with a new owner their stand has been vindicated. Right across the public service in health, education the civil service and higher education we have seen unprecedented and well organised industrial action that is winning decent pay increases and terms and conditions for workers. It demonstrates quite clearly to those workers not yet in a union what is possible. That is with good organisation, strong and courageous leadership and a good strategy and by demonstrating solidarity when workers have a go and strike, we can and do win.

As we proceed into 2020 devolution has made a welcome return. We have always supported devolution and the spirit and text of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. Of course a return of devolution is not the panacea to all our problems. But having a locally elected government accountable to the people is essential for any democracy. It should also be noted that for a democracy to truly flourish the power has to be shared vertically as well as horizontally. That is why we have through our **Better Work Better Lives** campaign been advocating for a Forum for Social Dialogue for Northern Ireland whereby we and others can make sure the voice of workers is not just heard but heeded.

Finally, I want to thank all affiliate unions, all NIC members, the Chair (and President) Gerry Murphy (INTO) and Vice Chair, Alison Millar (NIPSA) and all of the NIC-ICTU staff for their work and commitment over the last two years. We need to keep our focus and now make sure that some of the quite positive things around workers' rights and employment rights cited in the **New Decade New Approach** document is developed and becomes a reality so that working people in Northern Ireland have the right to organise and make their full contribution in work and society and claim their rightful fair share whereby we can make Northern Ireland a **Fair Work** state.

Section **B**

**Conference
Resolutions**

Section B Conference Resolutions

B1 Introduction

The June 2018 meeting of the Northern Ireland Committee gave consideration to a paper containing recommendations for progressing resolutions adopted at the April 2018 BDC.

As in previous years, the NIC has pursued a wide range of actions in relation to the Resolutions. The following provides a broad outline of the actions taken. More detail is contained in the body of the Report.

B2 Resolutions

Resolutions 1&2

Better Work Better Lives

Core work of NIC and ICTU Secretariat. Full updates published via BWBL website and policy documents.

- Resolution 3
Decent Pay and Collective Bargaining

Protecting and defending the NHS, including pay and terms and conditions, is a core part of the BWBL campaign.

- Resolution 4
Precarious Working

Campaigning to improve and protect employment rights is core part of NIC work.

- Resolution 5
Technology and Robotics for BWBL

NERI has produced research into the effect of automation and robotics on the decent work agenda which continues to inform the work of Congress.



Delegates voting at BDC 2018



Delegates voting at BDC 2018

- Resolutions 6
Delivering the Promise of the
Good Friday Agreement

Core work of the NIC. NIC and Congress continue to engage with all parties with an emphasis on the protection and implementation of the Belfast/GFA.

- Resolution 7
Equality and Inequality in the
Workplace

As part of BWBL, produced a policy paper on childcare and gender equality. This has formed the basis of bilateral meetings with all political parties as well as statutory organisations including the Equality Commission NI.

The Secretariat continue to engage in a wide variety of equality issues and these are led by the Equality Committees incl the Women's Committee and the Disability Committee.

- Resolution 8
Implementing the Joint
Declaration of Protection

Congress continues to engage with the LRA Roundtable and use every opportunity to disseminate the Joint Declaration to employers.

- Resolution 9 & 10
Reproductive Rights

Congress has been part of the campaign to reform abortion legislation working with affiliates and civil society campaign groups including Alliance for Choice.

Congress has facilitated the dissemination of the recommendations contained in the Abortion as a Workplace Issue report including with political parties and statutory organisations at Women's Committee seminars and conferences.

- Resolution 11
Martin O'Hagan

Little progress has been made on the specific case of Martin O'Hagan, mainly due to the absence of a devolved Justice Minister. However, the NIC has taken a prominent role in the defence of press freedom, in particular in support of Barry McCaffrey and Trevor Bernie.

- Resolution 12
50 Years of Civil Rights Campaign

Congress supported an event and publication from Belfast & District Trades Council. The NIC also supported a series of Labour History Seminars hosted by the Messines Fellowship and the Irish Labour History Society.

- Resolution 13
Warm Homes Discount

The Retired Workers Committee continue to play an active role in this and other campaigns, in their own unions and in both the National Pensioners Convention and the Age Sector Platform.

- Resolution 14&15
Sexual Harassment

The Women's Committee has prioritised the issue of sexual harassment in its work programme and initiated and presented a survey on sexual harassment in work in work which has formed the basis of a platform for action.

- Resolution 16
Bullying, in the entertainment industry and the impact on freelancers

The NIC has supported the Prospect campaign to introduce important protections for freelance workers.

- Resolution 17
Facility Time

The NIC has supported the NIPSA campaign to protect facility time.

- Motion 18 & 19
Safer Workplaces

The Education Trade Union Group has highlighted a number of health and safety issues within education and has co-operated with the Health and Safety Committee in relation to this.



The ETUG undertook a major survey on violence within educational settings within this period. The results of the survey were widely reported.

- Resolution 20
Maritime Industry

The NIC has supported the RMT campaign for decent work, pay and conditions in the maritime industry.

- Resolution 21
Protecting the Peace and
Challenging a Hard Brexit

Congress continues to robustly campaign against the catastrophic effects of Brexit and No Deal. This has included articulating our support for the Belfast/GFA and protection of the peace process.

- Resolution 22
Devolution

A core demand of BWBL is the establishment of a forum for social dialogue and this has been articulated at all meetings with political parties, with NGOs and in public discussions, meetings etc.

The ICTU Executive Council issued a detailed response to the New Decade New Approach deal and is fully participating with the restored institutions of the Belfast Agreement, while continuing to deepen and improve rights and fair pay for workers.

- Resolutions 23 - 25
Brexit

As per motion 21, this has formed a core part of the NIC agenda and Officers of the NIC together with the ICTU GS and AGS have campaigned robustly to ensure that workers do not pay the price of Brexit.

- Resolution 26
Pay

The NIC has supported affiliate action in relation to pay. This has included organising briefings on public sector pay, demonstrating cross movement support at demos, rallies and strike action. The NIC remains a forum for sharing best practice and success.

- Resolution 27
Urban Renewal

Little progress on this matter due to indecision by Belfast City Council and the Department of Infrastructure.

- Resolution 28
The Future of the Retail Sector

The NIC has supported USDAW campaigns to protect and defend the retail sector and it's workers, including their right not to work on Sunday mornings.

- Resolution 29
Arts and Cultural Workers

The NIC has consistently articulated the importance of the arts and cultural sectors to the NI economy. As part of any development of an industrial strategy, this will be reflected.



Delegates voting at BDC 2018

- Resolutions 30 & 31
Industrial and Manufacturing
Strategy

Congress has worked with NERI and affiliates to produce research and information on manufacturing and in relation to a real industrial strategy for NI.

- Resolution 32
Public Services

The NIC has consistently defended the budget and has argued the need for it to be increased to tackle the years of Tory imposed austerity and attacks of the welfare system.

- Resolution 33
Privatisation and Public Services

The NIC has argued for social clauses to be included in any public procurement exercise and has also lobbied for the recommendations from the NI Human Rights Commission and the ECNI to be fully implemented in relation to public procurement.

- Resolution 34
Transport

The NIC supports UNITE's campaign to protect public transport and demand proper investment in the sector.

- Motion 35
NHS

This motion was defeated.

- Resolutions 36 & 37
Mental Health

Highlighting the importance of workplace mental health is on the agenda of the NIC as well as ICTU Committees including the Disability Committee. Congress has also worked with a wide range of organisations including the ECNI to promote practical tools to protect workers' mental health.

- Resolution 38
Green Spaces

The NIC supported the Save our City Park campaign.

Section **C**

**Trade Union
Organisation**

Section C Trade Union Organisation

C1 Officers of the Northern Ireland Committee 2018-20

At its meeting held in April 2018, the Committee elected the following Officers: Gerry Murphy, (Chair), Alison Millar (Vice-Chair).



Chairperson:
Gerry Murphy (INTO)



General Secretary:
Patricia King

C2 Staff

The following refers to the staff in the Northern Ireland Office during 2018-20.

Assistant General Secretary

Owen Reidy

Education, Training & Lifelong Learning

Kevin Doherty

Finance & Programme Manager

Gillian Allen

Equality & Social Affairs

Clare Moore

Policy & Communications

John O'Farrell

Project Officers

Julie Gorman

Administrative Staff

Tony Gallagher

Eileen Gorman (Retired 2019)

C3 Women's Committee

The work of the Women's Committee is contained in Section G of this report, along with the other equality committees.

C4 Youth Committee

The Youth Committee remains a vital part of the work and organisation of Congress and has played an active role in the anti-cuts campaign and most recently in the Better Work, Better Lives campaign. The committee has also been active in addressing a variety of social and economic issues facing young people in Northern Ireland. The committee Chair is Steven Harvey (NIPSA).

Given the decline in young trade union membership of recent years, recruitment remains a priority in the youth committees work and a point which is enshrined within their strategic planning document published in 2017.

The committee has maintained a high attendance record at various, rallies, demonstrations and events to

protest attacks on public services, job losses and low pay. The committee was also active in support of various industrial disputes.

Chair

Steven Harvey – NIPSA

V.Chair

Mike Hamilton – NIPSA

Secretary

Emma Cunningham – USDAW

Asst Sec

Adam Murray – B&DTUC

Ashton Shield – USDAW

Karen Burch – North Down & Ards TC

Liz Nelson - SIPTU

Mark Johnston - FSU

Kieran McCann - FSU

Paddy Mackel - CWU

Sean Burns - UNITE

Christopher McCullough - UNITE

Brendan O'Reilly - NIPSA



Brendan O'Reilly spoke for the Youth Committee at the 2019 Age Seminar on intergenerational Solidarity

C5 Global Solidarity

The NI Global Solidarity Committee have been involved in raising public awareness around, notably human trafficking, the human rights situation in Columbia and the political and humanitarian crisis in Palestine.

The following affiliates are represented: INTO, UTU, NASUWT, Unison, NIPSA, Prospect, Unite, Equity, Congress Youth committee, with nominations from other affiliates who were unable to attend in person. Since 2018, the chair has been Kevin Daly (INTO) with Paddy Mackel (Belfast Trades Council) as vice-Chair.

A renewed Terms of Reference was drafted after intense consultations with the ICTU Global Solidarity Committee, which is aimed at improving participation and co-operation between the two Global Solidarity Committees operating in the two jurisdictions.

The Global Solidarity Committee was approached by climate activists and NGOs for practical advice and assistance with the School Strike for Climate Action in November 2019, which involved street protests and a larger than expected march through Belfast and rally at Belfast City Hall.



Global Solidarity Summer School opened by Wexford Deputy Mayor Maura Bell

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

NIC-ICTU are represented on the Steering Committee of Belfast City of Sanctuary, whose work welcoming refugees and asylum seekers has been supported by many affiliates. Many Global Solidarity activists promoted solidarity events with migrants after the EU membership referendum, alongside such initiatives as '1 Day Without Us' and the annual Refugee Picnic on Ormeau Park. Workshops on Employment Rights for refugees have also been delivered.

Global Solidarity Summer School

The 2018 Global Solidarity Summer School took place in Derry in July 2018 and was themed around 'Organising for Solidarity', including presentations by the ITUC organising academy, and Coalition 2030 on the high level political forum at the UN (where the Irish Government had recently reported on its implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals).

Other speakers included representatives of the Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland and Belfast City of Sanctuary, along with a particularly powerful address

Delegates at Global Solidarity Summer School





GSSS support for Hong Kong trade unionists

from Dr. Mona El-Farra, Director of Gaza Projects of the Middle East Children's Alliance, whose work with children damaged by a lifetimes war and besiegement is supported by several Irish trade unions.

The 2019 Global Solidarity Summer School took place in Wexford and was opened by ICTU President Gerry Murphy. The main theme was marking the ILO Centenary and the first session heard inputs from David Joyce from Congress and Siobhan O'Carroll from the Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation. David reflected on the history of the Workers Group in the ILO and the recent achievements at this year's International Labour Conference – the ILO Declaration on the Future of Work and a new ILO Convention and Recommendation on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work.

There was also a video link to Elizabeth Tang in the Hong Kong Council of Trade Unions and delegates also posed for a solidarity photo. Congress also wrote to the

Chinese Embassy in relation to Hong Kong.

A session on Organising against Discrimination and Exclusion followed and included:

- A presentation in relation to the Irish Government is presenting its joint Fifth, Sixth and Seventh State Report to the CERD (Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) in Geneva in November 2019.
- Makhosi Sigabade, from the Housing 4 All group spoke about "A prison without Walls" a publication by the group campaigning to ensure that all people seeking asylum are given the opportunity to lead dignified and secure lives.

On Friday 23 August, Alison Tate, ITUC spoke to delegates about ITUC Frontline Campaigns and strategic priorities and plans including the four pillars of Peace, Democracy and Rights; Regulating Economic Power; Global Shifts - Just Transitions; and Equality.

C6 Trade Union Friends of Palestine

TUFP was established in Belfast with the support of Congress in 2006 in order to promote the implementation of Congress solidarity policy on Palestine. A 2007 ICTU BDC motion, which led to the adoption of the policy of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), also mandated congress to establish TUFP in the south.

In the north TUFP holds open meetings for trade union activists on a bi-monthly basis in Belfast with the northern committee meeting on alternate months. TUFP has a very active network of trade union activists who contribute to the work of TUFP by organising within their affiliate organisation and their local areas.

TUFP distributes frequent reports and articles on the situation in Palestine and on developments in the Palestinian civil society Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign. It has hosted numerous fringe meetings and stalls at union conferences, and has organised several major conferences with the aim of promoting BDS in the trade union movement, and an awareness of the conditions of occupation, colonialism and apartheid endured by the Palestinian people.

Palestinian Children Conference

– This major conference held in Dublin on the 22-23rd November 2019 was organised by TUFP with the support of the ICTU affiliates - INTO, ASTI, TUI, INMO, UNISON, FÓRSA, MANDATE, CWU, UNITE,



Support for Palestinian rights from Unison

NIPSA, ESU, UCU, UTU, CONNECT, OPATSI, ICTU. Kairos Palestine, Academics for Palestine and IPSC also supported.

The main theme of this well attended conference was that the trauma endured by Palestinian children, including psychological trauma, is not a by-product of the occupation but is a deliberate policy of the Israeli occupying authorities.

International guest speakers included Dr. Samah Jabr, Head of the Mental Health Unit, Palestinian Ministry of Health; Khaled Quzmar, General Director, Defence of Children International-Palestine; Dr. Mona El-Farra, Director of Middle East Children's Alliance, Gaza, Dina Nasser from the Augusta Victoria Hospital Jerusalem and trade unionist Mais Jamleh. Israeli Human Rights lawyer Nery Ramati; and award winning Israeli human rights author and journalist Gideon Levy also spoke. Victoria Brittain, former associate foreign editor of The Guardian and founder of Action for Palestinian Children also addressed the conference as well as trauma specialists Arlene Healey, Martin Kemp and Eamon McMahon. There was a particularly warm welcome for Palestinian child ex-detainee Ahmed Alsoos and his father Sobhi Alsoos. The Israeli authorities prevented one keynote speaker from leaving Gaza to speak at the event, Dr. Yasser Abujaime, Director, Gaza Community Mental Health Programme.

TUFP Ambassadors - TUFP has prioritised the formation of a cohort of trade union 'ambassadors' who are sponsored by their union

organisation to participate in TUFP organised delegations to the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Unions are asked to nominate officials or activists to become a TUFP ambassador, and to take the lead in their organisation in developing solidarity work. 16 delegates from a range of unions participated in the winter 2018 delegation, and 17 took part, including the Presidents of INTO and NIPSA, in the 2017 visit. TUFP delegations are now organised on a yearly basis, and it has proved to be one of the most effective ways to develop solidarity work within unions. Delegates to BDC are invited to consider participating in the 2020 group due to depart later this year.

European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine (ETUN) –

TUFP has worked with European trade union colleagues to establish this network whose aim is to mobilise the European trade union movement to challenge EU complicity, corporate complicity and the arms trade with Israel. Over 30 European trade union organisations have now endorsed this campaign, including ICTU and a number of affiliates. ETUN have already played a key role in advancing ETUC and EPSU policy on Palestine. ETUN have also commissioned and published a major report on the impact of the occupation on workers' rights in Palestine. This report was launched in the EU Parliament in December 2019. ETUN held its second European conference in Barcelona in May 2018, with a number of Irish trade union represented. The third ETUN conference will take place in

Oslo on June 12-13th 2020 and we would encourage representation from all ICTU affiliates. Further information regarding these developments is available on the ETUI web-site: <http://www.etun-palestine.org/site/>

Kairos Ireland – In 2009 a call went out from Palestinian Christians to people of faith and people of conscience around the world to take action, including BDS action, to challenge the human rights violations and oppression of Palestinians by the Israeli occupation. The Kairos Palestine call replicated a similar call from South African Christians during the apartheid era. Together with some northern ICTU affiliates TUIP facilitated a response from Ireland to the Palestine call and Kairos Ireland was established in December 2018. TUIP recognises that working in faith communities here is an important way to broaden support and to address a misconceived sectarian framing of the Palestine question.

As well as producing an important pamphlet Kairos Ireland organised a very successful tour to Dublin and Belfast of three leading international advocates for Kairos Palestine – Rifat Kassis a Lutheran Protestant, co-author of Kairos Palestine and founder of Defence of Children International – Palestine, Mark Braverman, a Jewish writer and Director of Kairos USA, and the Rev. Brian Brown, a human rights activist who endured 13 years of house arrest in apartheid South Africa. During this tour a presentation was given to NIC-ICTU.

For more information see: <https://kairosireland.org/>

Gaza – Through 2018 and 2019 TUIP have led the organisation of the protests and marches that took place in Belfast to demonstrate solidarity with the Great March of Return – the demand by Palestinians to end the siege of Gaza and to return to the homes from which they were ethnically cleansed in 1948. Well over 200 innocent civilians have been slaughtered by Israeli snipers as they engaged in mass protests against the inhumane siege, itself a war crime. The dead have included paramedics and reporters as well as dozens of children.

Attempts to suppress Palestine solidarity - The success of the BDS movement has led to intensive efforts by the Israeli and other governments to suppress and to criminalise the BDS movement, including smearing the campaign as anti-Semitic. TUIP alongside other solidarity organisations has recognised the need to campaign to defend the non-violent BDS campaign, which itself is grounded on human rights principles.

TUIP Solidarity - It is now very clear that the Israeli Zionist project, supported by the USA, is to make a Palestinian state impossible, to annex the majority of the West Bank, and to corral Palestinians into isolated bantustans. More than ever the trade union movement needs to mobilise against this new form of apartheid. In our solidarity work TUIP emphasises a strong distinction between humanitarian

support, which doesn't address the underlying causes of Palestinian suffering, and active campaigning to promote and support non-violent resistance, especially in the Palestinian trade union movement. We have adopted the slogan of our Norwegian trade union colleagues: 'Our solidarity is with the struggle, not with the suffering.'

TUFP extends an invitation to all trade union activists to become involved in the campaign and to ensure a TUFP presence in branches and at conferences. TUFP is also active on social media and has a Facebook and Twitter account. TUFP have also set up a standing order facility for members who wish to contribute to our solidarity work.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1434904630117100/>

Twitter: TUFPA@TUFPApalestine

Contact: TUFP secretary:

eamonmcmahon@hotmail.co.uk



Childrens Conference



Gaza protest in 2019 at Belfast City Hall



In November 2019, TUFFP hosted a major Palestinian Children Conference, featuring international speakers and opened by ICTU President Gerry Murphy





Dooley Harte, who represents Trades Councils on the NIC

C7 Trades Council Consultative Committee

Trades Councils

Trades Union Councils bring together union activists and members to work and campaign around issues affecting working people in their local workplaces and communities. They have been the backbone of, and at times the instigators of, many trade union campaigns that have sought to unite affiliates and communities behind common issues.

The Trades Councils have assisted the Northern Ireland Committee by campaigning on a range of issues. These issues have covered:

- The impact of Austerity policies.
- Campaigns against cuts in services.

- **Better Work Better Lives** campaign.
- Welfare Reform.
- Supporting BME migrant workers and challenging racism.

Currently there are active trades' councils in Ballymena and Antrim, Belfast, Craigavon, Derry, Fermanagh, Newry, North Down and Ards, Mid Ulster, and Omagh.

Examples of some of the activities trades' councils include:

Ballymena and Antrim Trades Union Council utilised the BWBL campaign in their work to reduce racial tensions in the Ballymena area and in lobbying politicians around local cuts to services and job losses.

Campaigning, culture and education have been among the priorities for the Belfast & District Trades Union Council with their support for the

Alliance for Choice campaign, hosting a performance of The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists, and an activist's education programme, which included the republication of We Shall Overcome - A History of NICRA.

Craigavon Trades Council has been working closely with the ICTU Migrant Workers Support Unit (MWSU) to support migrant workers in their area to organise in trade unions and build community relations.

Opposition to Welfare Reform has been an important aspect of the work of the Derry Trades Council along with organising of a Workers Rights and Social Justice Week.

Celebrations to mark the centenary of Fermanagh Trades Council included an exhibition in the Enniskillen Castle entitled, Struggling Workers: A History of Fermanagh Trade Unionism, and the launch of Labouring Near Lough Erne – a Study of the Fermanagh Labour Movement 1826 -1932.

Other issues Trades Councils have worked on include: providing solidarity to workers engaged in industrial action; supporting trade union recruitment campaigns; engaging with local media; campaigning against social and economic deprivation in local communities.

The Councils come together quarterly at the Trades Councils Consultative Committee (TCCC) to share information and initiatives, and to develop and coordinate joint campaigns. The TCCC also organise joint seminars for trades' councils. In

March 2019 the TCCC, along with the ICTU Migrant Worker Support Unite, ran a seminar for trades' council activists on tackling racism, prejudice and the rise of right wing populism.

To maintain and develop this work the TCCC appeals to unions to ensure that they affiliate to, and encourage their members and activists to engage with trades councils in their local areas or to contact the Congress Belfast office if they are interested in establishing a new local Trades Council.

C8 Retired Workers' Committee

The Retired Workers' Committee (RWC) continues to forge ahead with an ambitious agenda under the chair of Margaret Galloway. The Committee is actively represented on the National Pensioners Parliament at a regional and UK-wide level, and its members are also active in many different arenas, including the Age Sector Platform.

This involved campaigning on key issues, such as the state pension, the winter fuel grant, improved access to social and long-term care. Work is ongoing with the Retired Workers Committee from the Republic on a number of joint strategic initiatives and the north-south Age Seminar, first held in Dublin in February 2016 has become an annual fixture, alternating between Belfast and Dublin. The Seminar is addressed by trade union leaders, academics and age activists from the NPC, ASP and the NI Older People's Commissioner, Eddie Lynch.



Eddie Lynch, NI Commissioner for Older People



NIC-ICTU RWC at the 2019 Age Seminar



RWC vice-chair Hugh Rafferty with Unite colleague Taryn Trainor



Owen Reidy welcomes retired activists to the 2019 Age Seminar



Unison's Victor Murphy makes his point

C9 May Festival

Working with the Belfast Working with the Belfast Trades Council and the NIC-ICTU Youth Committee, a vibrant programme was presented for May Day 2018 and 2019 which included a range of events such as

concerts, talks and debates. Several thousand joined in the largest non-sectarian public procession in Northern Ireland and the biggest May Day event on the island.



Pipers lead the NIPSA marchers



Bombardier workers make their case



Belfast & District Trades Council



NIC member Justin McCamphill (NASUWT)



The NIC banner nears parade's end



Speakers before the march sets off



The Parade paused at Belfast City Hall to applaud the legacy of Lyra McKee, whose family marched with the NUJ

Section **D**

**Trade Union Education,
Training and Lifelong Learning**

Section D Trade Union Education, Training and Lifelong Learning

D1 The Trade Union Education Programme

The NIC ICTU Education Programme is a vital resource for all trade union officials, representatives and members. It provides a forum for trade unionists to come together to develop their knowledge and skills, and to learn from the experiences of others. Over one thousand learners participate in the training and seminars offered by NIC ICTU each year.

The programme contains progression pathways for union officials, union representatives, health and safety representatives, equality representatives, union learning representatives. All courses are accredited through Open College Network (OCN). On successful completion learners will obtain level 2, or 3 Awards, Certificates, or Diplomas. The courses are free and are run mainly on a day release basis over 3, 5, 10 or 32 days depending on the level of qualification attached to the course.



Trade Unions Rep course

The programme is delivered in partnership with the South Eastern Regional College (SERC) and our courses are open to all affiliates of ICTU.

The NIC ICTU Education Department also designs and delivers bespoke courses to meet the needs of affiliates which can be run in affiliates offices, the workplace and other locations. Please contact the NIC ICTU Education Officer for further details.

The NIC ICTU Education Programme continues to develop with a number of new courses added to the programme reflecting demand from affiliates and changes in the workplace and society. The Programme is flexible and includes bespoke courses tailored to the needs of individual affiliates.

The NIC ICTU TU Education Programme offers the following courses:

- Core Skills
- Trade Union Reps Stage 1
- Trade Union Reps Stage 2
- Certificate in Employment Law
- Health and Safety Stage 1
- Health and Safety Stage 2
- Union Learning Reps Stage 1
- Union Learning Reps Stage 2
- Negotiation and Communication Skills

Pay and Bargaining

Handling Grievance and Disciplines

Social Media for Trade Union Reps

Dealing with Redundancies

Public Sector Pensions

In addition to the core courses the programme also offers:

Taking a case to Tribunals

Mental health Awareness

Discrimination and Equality Law

Women in Leadership

Dealing with Stress, Bullying and Intimidating Behaviour in the Workplace

Disability Champions

Equality Reps in the Workplace

Tackling Prejudice and Discrimination

Trade Unions and Globalisation

Confidence in the Workplace

Introduction to Economics for Trade Unionists

Diploma Equalities (32 Week Course)

Diploma in Employment Law (32 Week Course)

Diploma in Health & Safety (32 Week Course)

NIC ICTU also runs a variety of unaccredited seminars with the Labour Relations Agency and the Equality Commissions as and when required on various employment related issues including:

Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace

Early Conciliation

Bullying and Harassment

Redundancy

Employment Law NI and GB - The Differences

Trade Unions - Legal Framework and Case Law Update

Annual Review of Employment Law

Introduction to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Introduction to the employment anti-discrimination laws

Expecting Equality - A short seminar examining the rights of employees who are pregnant or who are new mothers

An Introduction to the Industrial Tribunal System

Further information regarding the above courses can be found on the NIC ICTU website at <https://www.ictuni.org/educationtraining/>

D2 Union Learning

Union Learning

NIC ICTU continues to have full responsibility for the administrative and financial management of the Union Learning Fund. The Union Learning Fund currently supports the following 11 projects:

NIPSA

BFAWU

UNITE Construction

UNITE – Learn with Unite

USDAW

AEGIS

INTO

FSU

GMB

UNISON

FBU



Dwyer Henderson NIPSA - Union Learning Representative of the Year 2018

During the 2017 – 2019 reporting period, 1051 students completed Essential Skills courses in Literacy, Numeracy or Information Technology (IT). A further 2018 students completed other accredited courses, such as British Sign Language, NVQ's, ESOL, ILM, CMI and Open University modules.

Union Learn Conference

In March 2018, the annual Union Learning Conference was held in Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey. Over 90 Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) attended and heard from key speakers addressing the theme of Better Skills, Better Work, Better Lives.

Jackie Pollock, Regional Secretary, Unite the Union, opened conference and presented awards to:

- **Dwyer Henderson, NIPSA** - Union Learning Representative of the Year 2018
- **Mark McClean, NIPSA** - Essential Skills Trade Union Learner of the Year 2018
- **Laura Boyles, FSU** - The Open University Trade Union Learner of the Year 2018



Laura Boyles FSU - The Open University Trade Union Learner of the Year 2018



Mark McClean NIPSA - Essential Skills Trade Union Learner of the Year 2018



Iulia Pavel USDAW – Union Learning Rep of the Year 2019



Jamie Doherty USDAW – Essential Skills Trade Union Learner of the Year 2019

In March 2019, the conference addressed the theme, Impacting Lives Through Learning.

Terry Park, Head of Further Education Delivery from the Department for the Economy, opened conference and presented awards to;

- **Iulia Pavel, USDAW** – Union Learning Rep of the Year 2019
- **Jamie Doherty, USDAW** – Essential Skills Trade Union Learner of the Year 2019.

Gerry Murphy, Chair of the NIC, presented the inaugural, Lukasz Karpinski Educational Bursary to Steven Harvey, NIPSA.

The conference heard first hand from learners and ULRs who have participated in Union Learning projects and in particular, the impact it has had on their work and lives.



ICTU President presents the Lukasz Karpinski Educational Bursary to Steven Harvey NIPSA

Section **E**

**Political & Economic
Report**

Section E: Political & Economic Report

This report on the Economic and Political activities of the past two years was dominated by Brexit and the workplace issues identified as priority concerns through the focused campaigning of the **Better Work Better Lives** campaign. With the Restoration of the Stormont Institutions, a new phase of campaigning is developing and will carry forward on the mandate of the motions passed at the 2020 BDC and the incoming NI Committee.

E1 The **Better Work Better Lives** campaign

The **Better Work Better Lives** campaign has been active during the years 2018-20. The purpose of the campaign was threefold.

- Bind both public and private sector affiliates together on key issues that they can collaborate, campaign on and work together on.
- To seek to involve activists from a range of affiliates in various elements of the campaign.
- To have an ongoing series of activities that are somewhat interlinked, a process not a series of one off events.

The specific objectives of the campaign were to seek to address,

1. The scourge of **low pay and insecure work** across Northern Ireland
2. To challenge the **declining levels of public investment** which is impacting on all citizens
3. To demand an **end to the 1% pay cap** afflicting public service workers.

We highlighted 14 key areas which we felt were critical in addressing the above.

1. Restoring the cuts to the block grant
2. Strengthening and improving employment law
3. Changing the minimum wage settings
4. The development of an industrial strategy that puts innovation at its core
5. Boosting productivity for all
6. Addressing the skills deficit
7. Apprenticeships for this century
8. Promoting Collective Bargaining
9. Investment in Childcare
10. Welfare Reform
11. Better Trade union and workers' rights
12. Ending the 1% pay cap
13. Equality in the Labour Market
14. Tackling the housing crisis

The campaign wanted to build a consensus on the setting up of a Forum for Social Dialogue in Northern Ireland which could address these issues and which would be comprised of the key 4 representative pillars, namely the trade union movement, the employers, the community and voluntary sector and the farming



NERI Economist Lisa Wilson with a delegation of low-paid workers giving evidence to the Low Pay Commission

community. Such a forum could be modelled on the Welsh **Council for Economic Development**. Obviously the government of the day would also be a participant. We believe such a forum could be,

1. Formal and in time being underpinned on a statutory basis
2. At least tripartite, (the trade union movement, employers and government) but ideally the community and voluntary sector and the farming community.
3. It would deal with some key social and economic issues facing NI, (see our 14 priority policy areas).
4. It would be advisory and consultative in nature, it would not be involved in collective bargaining on pay and terms and conditions of employment of workers.
5. It would be permanent and not ad hoc.

Campaign Activity 2018-20

Since the commencement of the campaign in 2018 we have been involved in over 30 distinct initiatives to promote the objectives and interests of the campaign. The form of such initiatives has included **lobbying, seminars, conferences, rallies, protests, demonstrations, educational, and meetings**. These initiatives have included the ICTU secretariat, members of the NIC and other affiliate unions and activists from various affiliate unions to varying degrees. They include the following,

1. Launch and training session with over 100 activists.
2. The campaign addressed a number of affiliated regional/ executive committees to promote the ambition of the campaign within the ranks of affiliate senior lay leadership.
3. Published a detailed policy paper ***Better Work Better Lives - the trade union campaign for a fair share for all.***
4. Established bespoke website www.betterworkbetterlives.org as a campaign and information tool.
5. Activist meetings in the majority of Westminster political constituencies.
6. Members of the ICTU secretariat bring the campaign and its ambition to the attention of all educational courses taking place in the ICTU premises.



BWBL rally at Stormont

7. Engagement at constituency level with over 63 MLAs/MPs including members of the ICTU secretariat, NIC members and affiliate activists.
8. Met with a number of Trade Councils and the NI Trade Councils consultative body to promote the campaign.
9. Met with over 20 representative bodies/other stakeholders seeking support for our call for a forum for Social Dialogue, including for example the CBI, UFU, NICVA, the Equality Commission, the IOD, Retail NI etc.
10. All island disability seminar conference had **Better Work Better Lives** for people with disability as the theme.
11. All island Women's Conference had **Better Work Better Lives** campaign as theme of their conference.
12. Representatives of the NIC-ICTU leadership met with the Shadow Secretaries of State for NI, Owen Smith MP and Tony Lloyd MP on a number of occasions to outline and get support for the ambition of the campaign.
13. Campaign supported UCU pension dispute at rallies and on the picket line.
14. 2018 NI BDC adopted the campaign as the theme of the conference.
15. Met with the then Prime Minister, Teresa May.
16. Union Learn Conference theme, **Better Skills Better Work Better Lives** promoted the campaign to over 90 ULR's.



Sheila Nunan, ICTU President (2017-19) at the last NIC-ICTU BDC

Patricia McKeown Past President of ICTU at the launch of the BWBL Childcare proposals



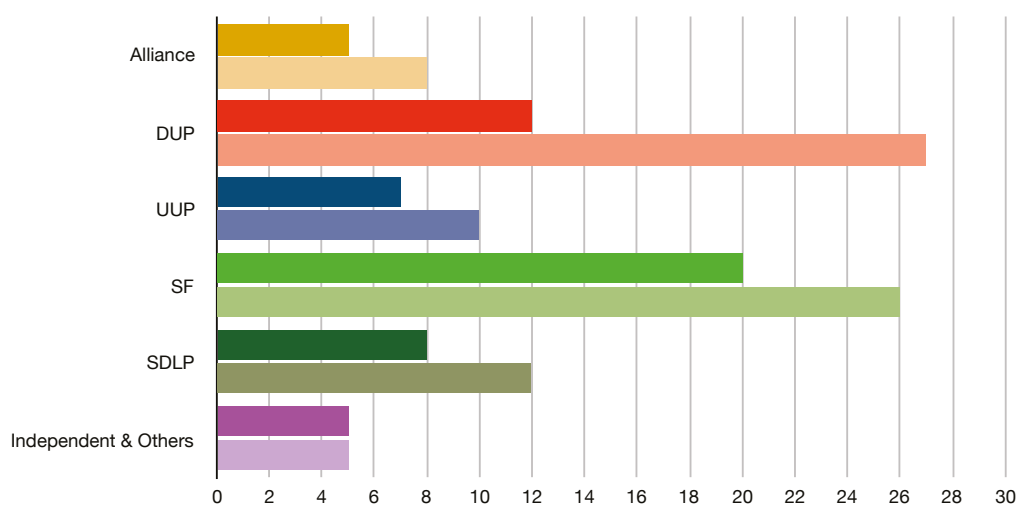
17. The campaign had a protest outside Derry city EA to demand no cuts to special education, with associated local media coverage.
18. AGS addressed a number of union conferences including the INTO (NI), the FSU and the Welsh TUC outlining the purpose of the **Better Work Better Lives** campaign and seeking to widen support within the movement for it.
19. The Secretariat have presented and promoted the campaign at a range of third party seminars to which the ICTU have been invited to participate in.
20. We have engaged with the Lord Mayor of Belfast and have ensured that better trade union rights and rights to collective bargaining was included in the Rights for all charter.
21. The theme of Mayday Rally 2018 was **Better Work Better Lives**.
22. We have promoted the campaign through a number of media platforms with opinion pieces in the Belfast Newsletter, the Belfast Telegraph, the Irish News, on local radio including BBCs' 'Good Morning Ulster' and the drive time show 'Evening Extra' as well as U105 and BBC NI TV.
23. The NIC leadership met with Jeremy Corbyn MP and Leader of the UK Labour Party to outline the campaign and seek his support.
24. The NIC's Health committee organised a very successful demonstration in Belfast celebrating 70 years of the NHS whilst also demanding more resources for our public health system.
25. Representative of the NIC met with both the Irish Minister for Finance, Paschal Donohoe and the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney outlining why Northern Ireland needs a forum for Social Dialogue.
26. Representatives from the NIC met with the Secretary of State to outline to requirement for a forum for Social Dialogue for NI.
27. Representatives met with the Permanent Secretary Andrew Mc Cormick in the context of the issue of Brexit and its implications and outlined why a forum for Social Dialogue is necessary for Northern Ireland.
28. The campaign met intermittently with a number of affiliate Regional/Executive committees to outline the progress and the work to date with the purpose of re engaging affiliates.
29. Met the majority of Northern Irelands local government District Councils seeking support for the campaign.
30. The campaign support and participated in a protest and rally around Stop Neighbourhood Renewal Budget cuts.

Local Northern Ireland political meetings

Support for Forum for Social Dialogue

Politician	Party	Constituency	Yes	No	Maybe
D Beattie	UUP	Upper Bann	•		
J Allister	TUV	N Antrim	•		
P Frew	DUP	N Antrim			•
P Bradshaw	Alliance	S Belfast			•
M O'Muilleoir	SF	S Belfast	•		
C McGrath	SDLP	S Down			•
C Lyttle	Alliance	E Belfast	•		
M O'Neill	SF	M Ulster	•		
S Dickson	Alliance	E Antrim	•		
P Bradley	DUP	N Belfast	•		
S Agnew	Greens	N Down	•		
F McCann	SF	W Belfast	•		
O Flynn	SF	W Belfast	•		
P Maskey MP	SF	W Belfast	•		
C Murphy	SF	Newry/Armagh	•		
M Brady MP	SF	Newry/Armagh	•		
C Hanna	SDLP	S Belfast	•		
C Stalford	DUP	S Belfast			•
S Lynch	SF	F/S Tyrone	•		
C Gildernew	SF	F/S Tyrone	•		
J Dolan	SF	F/S Tyrone	•		
J Buckley	DUP	Upper Bann			•
J McNulty	SDLP	Newry/Armagh	•		
G Carroll	PBP	W Belfast	•		
R Beggs	UUP	E Antrim			•
S Farry	Alliance	N Down	•		
D Kelly	SDLP	Upper Bann			•
M Nesbit	UUP	Strangford	•		
M Storey	DUP	N Antrim	•		
R Barton	UUP	F/S Tyrone	•		
R Newton	DUP	E Belfast	•		
J Stewart	UUP	E Antrim	*		
R Swann	UUP	N Antrim	•		
T Buchanan	DUP	W Tyrone			•
N Mallon	SDLP	N Belfast	•		
C Sugden	Ind U	E Londonderry	•		
P McGuigan	SF	N Antrim	•		

Politician	Party	Constituency	Yes	No	Maybe
C Lockhart	DUP	U Bann			•
J Bunting	DUP	E Belfast			•
D McCrossan	SDLP	W Tyrone	•		
M Boyle	SF	W Tyrone	•		
D McAleer	SF	W Tyrone	•		
C Kelly	SF	W Tyrone	•		
G Lyons	DUP	E Antrim			•
D Hilditch	DUP	E Antrim			•
C Archibald	SF	E Londonderry	•		
S Bradley	SDLP	S Down	•		
J Wells	Ind U	S Down	•		
K Mullan	SF	Foyle	•		
R McCartney	SF	Foyle	•		
P Cagney	SDLP	Lagan Valley	•		
A Allen	UUP	E Belfast	•		
I Milne	SF	M Ulster	•		
A Maskey	SF	W Belfast	•		
K Armstrong	Alliance	Strangford	•		
T Lunn	Alliance	Lagan Valley	•		
N Long	Alliance	E Belfast	•		
J Blair	Alliance	E Belfast	•		
D Hargey	SF	S Belfast	•		







The campaign also launched a **Better Work Better Lives** policy paper entitled *Childcare in Northern Ireland, Cost, Care and Gender Equality* in April 2019. The paper analysis the current inadequate childcare provision in Northern Ireland and recommended policy options to improve the situation for working parents, children and childcare workers. We have met with a range of political party spokespersons, the Department of Education and a range of other key stakeholders to seek to build support for our policy.

Conclusion

With the welcome return of devolved government, we note that there are a number of key provisions in the New Decade New Approach document which the five participating government parties and both the Irish and UK government have signed up to, which reflect progress on much of the work the **Better Work Better Lives** campaign has been about.



Mary Caddell (RCM) welcomes Childcare proposals

On the issue of Social Dialogue, we note the following,

- P.17 under Sustainability of the Institutions it states, "the parties also agree to introduce reformed measures to put civic engagement and public consultation at the heart of policy making, recognising the vital role that wider society plays in supporting effective and accountable government.
- P.14 under Programme for Government states, "the parties agree that the principles of,..... co design will be a key part of the development of the PfG and its supporting strategies." It also states, "by April 2020, informed by detailed stakeholder engagement the Executive will



Childcare launch

publish a new strategic level outcomes based PfG.”

- P.23 refers to the setting up of a Compact Civic Advisory Panel recognising that civic society groups have a role in assisting government from time to time to resolve complex issues.
- P.29 references, “Engagement with civic society and the principles of co-design and co-production must underpin the development of the PfG, budget and strategies.”

All of these references provide scope and an opportunity for the trade union movement to insist that we have a structured and more purposeful vehicle whereby we can seek to address the interests of workers. This work has commenced and we must insist that government honour its commitments in full.

We are also conscious that the agreement very clearly answers some of the key demands of the **Better Work Better Lives** campaign around the issue of workers’ rights and precarious work. On P.41 it states, “the Executive should move to ban zero hours contracts.” P.44 on Workers’ Rights states, “There will be an enhanced focus within the PfG on creating good jobs and protecting workers’ rights. The parties agree that access to good jobs, where workers have a voice that provides a level of autonomy, a decent income, security of tenure, satisfying work in the right quantities and decent working conditions, should be integral to public policy given how this contributes to better health and well-being by tackling

inequalities, building self-efficacy and combating poverty.”

These sections provide us with a critical road map to improve workers’ in Northern Ireland. We will seek to ensure that these aspirations become policies and the government honours these definitive and positive policy commitments.

With this BDC this campaign concludes. The NIC will review the campaign and analyse in detail, the things we achieved and the mistakes we made, so that with any future campaign we can learn and improve. What is clear is that with the new government the specific provisions in the New Decade New Approach agreement we have created the context whereby we must now seek to make Northern Ireland a Fair Work region with all of the associated rights and entitlements for workers that this entails. This is the key challenge for the next two years and beyond.



NERI Special Report on Low Pay

The **Better Work Better Lives** Campaign was helped considerably by the excellent and influential research of the Nevin Economic Research Institute.



Paul MacFlynn NERI

This **Research report** presents evidence on the extent of low pay in Northern Ireland. It shows that low pay is a prominent feature of the labour market, with more than 1 in 4 earning below the Real Living Wage. Addressing these statistics, from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), and the lived reality of working people ought to be a key priority of the restored NI Executive and Assembly. The lead author for this research is Lisa Wilson.

- **Key Facts that drove this campaign were that in 2018:**
 - 28% or just over 219,000 employees earned below the Real Living Wage of £8.75 per hour.
 - 10% or just over 78,000 employees earned below the National Living Wage of £7.83 per hour.
 - 23% or 180,000 employees earned below two-thirds of the UK median hourly pay excluding overtime of £8.49 per hour.
- **Some workers are more likely to be low paid than others with concentrations of low paying jobs found in particular occupations and industries and among workers with particular characteristics.**
- **The occupations with the highest proportion of low paid workers include those in Sales & Customer service and Elementary occupations. Some 70% of these workers earned below the Real Living Wage, whilst 30% of workers in Elementary occupations and 20% of workers in Sales & Customer service occupations earned below the National Living Wage.**
- **Younger workers, part-time workers, and female workers had a higher likelihood of being low paid than others. That said, low pay is a particular issue for male workers who are employed on a part-time basis.**

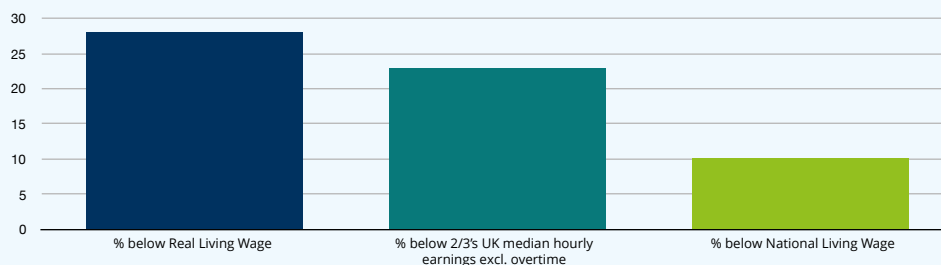
What is low pay?

There are a number of different ways in which 'low pay' can be defined. The most commonly utilised measure of low-pay in the European context defines low wage earners as those who have an hourly wage which is less than two thirds of the median gross hourly wage (Eurostat, 2015). In 2018 two-thirds of the UK median gross hourly wage excluding overtime was £8.49, and so by this measure all workers earning below this level would be classified as low paid.

Another method of assessing the extent of low pay is to examine the percentage of workers who earn below what is termed the 'Real Living Wage'. The Real Living Wage is calculated by the Living Wage Foundation and takes account of both increases in the cost of living, and applies to all workers over 18, in recognition that young people face the same living costs as everyone else.

The Real Living Wage is based on the cost of a basket of household goods and services considered by the public as necessary to obtain a minimum acceptable standard of living with many analysts agreeing that this is a much more robust indicator of low pay. The Living Wage Foundation put the Real Living Wage at £8.75 in 2018 and at £9 in 2019.

Figure 1: Percentage of all employees below selected low pay thresholds, 2018



Another way in which we can assess the extent of low pay is to examine the percentage of workers who earn at or below the 'National Living Wage'. The 'National Living Wage' was introduced in the 2015 Summer Budget, as the new national minimum wage rate for workers over the age of 25. The introduction of the National Living Wage represented a significant shift in policy in terms of how the legal wage floor was defined and implemented. When implemented the Government set a starting wage of £7.20 and an objective for the National Living Wage to reach 60 per cent of a typical (over-25) worker's hourly wage excluding overtime by 2020. This goal was subject to account being taken of how increases to the level of the wage floor affect economic growth, employment and unemployment levels. In 2018 the National Living Wage rate was set at £7.83.

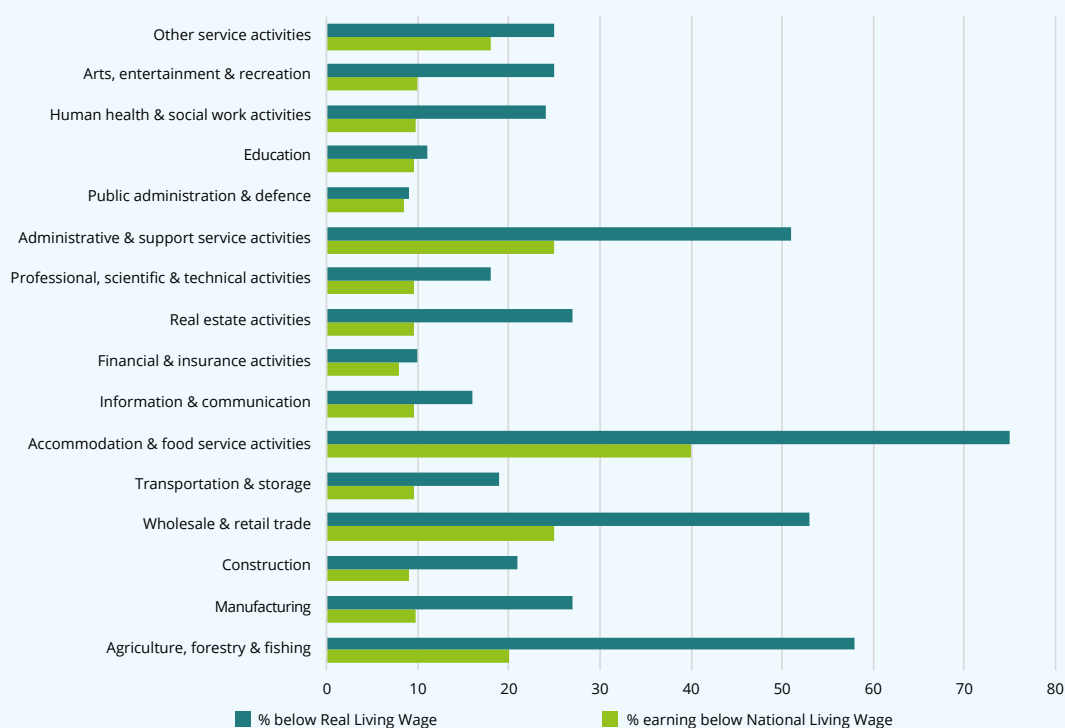
The extent of low pay

In Figure 1 below we present the percentage of all employees who can be classified as being in low-paid employment using the various different measures of low-pay. From this we see that irrespective of which measure is utilised low-pay is a reality for a significant proportion of workers in Northern Ireland: 28% of employees earn below the Real Living wage; 23% earn below two-thirds of UK median hourly earnings excluding overtime; 10% earn below the National Living Wage - these include those exempted by the structure of the minimum wage including workers aged under 25 years old and apprentices.

Who are the low paid?

Some workers are more likely to be low paid than others and concentrations of low paying jobs are found in particular occupations and industries.

Figure 2: Percentage of employees below selected low pay thresholds, by sector, 2018



Examination of the sectoral breakdown of low pay shows that the problem of low pay is persistent across almost all sectors, with workers in some sectors at an increasingly higher risk of being low paid. For example, as shown in Figure 2 above, 75% of workers in the accommodation and food sector were paid below the real living wage, and 40% below the national living wage. Other sectors where there is a

particular prevalence of low pay include the wholesale and retail trade sector and the administrative and support service sector. 53% earned below the Real Living Wage and 25% earned below the National Living Wage in the wholesale and retail trade sector. 51% in the administrative and support services sector earned below the Real Living Wage and 25% earned below the National Living Wage.

In terms of occupation, as shown in Figure 3 the occupations with the highest proportion of low paid workers include those in Sales & Customer service and Elementary occupations. Some 70% of these workers earned below the Real Living Wage, whilst 30% of workers in Elementary occupations and 20% of workers in Sales & Customer service occupations earned below the National Living Wage.

Figure 3: Percentage below selected low pay thresholds, by occupation, 2018

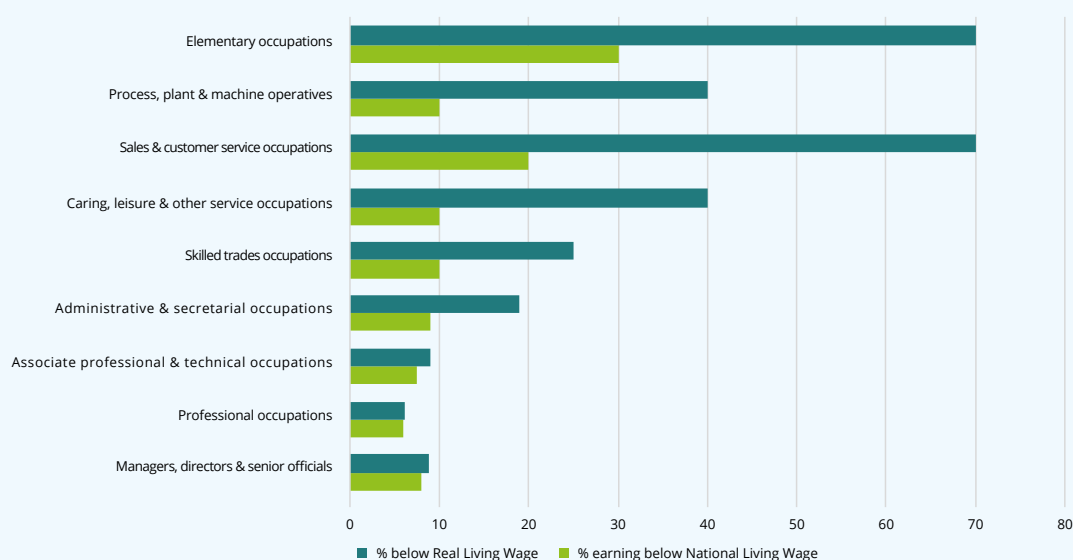


Table 1 overleaf presents the risk of workers with different characteristics experiencing low pay. From this we see that the risk of being low paid declines with age, with 60% of all workers aged between 18-21 earning below the National Living Wage and 80% earning below the Real Living Wage. Whilst middle aged workers are among the least likely to be low paid, around 1 in 5 earn below the Real Living Wage.

Table 1: Percentage below selected low paid threshold, by workers characteristics, 2018

	% earning below National Living Wage	% below Real Living Wage
Age		
Age 18-21	60	80
Age 22-29	10	35
Age 30-39	9	21
Age 40-49	8	17
Age 50-59	9	20
Age 60+	10	26
Gender		
Male	10	23
Female	10	30
Full-time/Part-time		
Full-time	10	17
Part-time	25	51
Gender * Full-time/ Part-time		
Male full-time	9.7	17
Male part-time	30	52
Female full-time	9.7	18
Female part-time	20	45

Part-time workers face a much greater risk of being low-paid, than full-time workers with large proportions of part-time workers low-paid. Specifically, 1 in 4 part-time workers earn below the National Living Wage and just over 1 in 2 earn below the Real Living Wage. Full-time work is not a guaranteed escape from low pay however with 1 in 10 earning below the National Living Wage and close to 1 in 5 earning below the Real Living Wage.

Of all male employees, 23% are low paid when judged against the Real Living Wage threshold. The risk is higher for female employees with 30% earning below this threshold. That said, males who are employed on a part-time basis face a higher likelihood than females who are part-time employed of being low paid. Indeed, 30% males who are part-time employed earn below the National Living Wage, and 52% earn below the Real Living Wage. This compares to 20% and 45% of females respectively.

How should policy respond?

Policies directed at increasing the wage levels of those groups of workers who are most likely to be low paid will be particularly beneficial to ensuring that work pays. Legal wage floors do provide one valuable tool for protecting and sustaining the wages of some of the most vulnerable workers. That said, more needs to be done to tackle the problem of low pay.

In particular, efforts must be made to reduce the proportion of workers earning below the Real Living Wage. Moreover, serious consideration needs to be given to using collective bargaining agreements and sectoral orders set through a forum for social dialogue as an avenue to ensure decent pay for all workers.

More editions of this series are available on the institute's website www.NERInstitute.net

The Nevin Economic Research Institute, with offices in Dublin and Belfast, is a research organisation which, at its core, has a vision of the achievement of a better, fairer society.

It aims, through the provision of world-class research and analysis, to contribute towards the construction of alternative perspectives and possibilities that will lead to the creation of a sustainable and inclusive economy that works for everyone in society. It is supported by the unions affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

The remit of the Institute is to:

- advance knowledge and understanding of economics and the social sciences, with particular reference to the economic and social conditions in or affecting the island of Ireland;
- undertake, to the benefit of the public, research and analysis on the impact of economic policy development and its effects towards the attainment of a more equitable and just society;

- publish and promote research findings in order to advance awareness and comprehension of economic theory;
- undertake activities to ensure a broad dissemination of the research and analysis; and
- provide education, training and capacity building programmes to increase understanding of economic and social science policy among the general public.



NERI Economist Lisa Wilson



Owen Reidy welcomes Jeremy Corbyn to NIC-ICTU office

E2 Brexit

The challenging issue of Brexit and its consequences for workers across Northern Ireland and these island has consumed much of the last two years. We took the clear view at the outset that if Brexit had to happen it must be the softest possible Brexit with,

- No hardening of the border on the island of Ireland
- No border within the UK between Northern Ireland and Britain
- No economic border between Ireland and Britain

We are clearly of the view that Brexit and its long term implications are negative not just for the people of the island of Ireland but of these



Tánaiste Simon Coveney was hosted at the NIC-ICTU Belfast office for talks on Brexit

islands and it must be remembered the people of Northern Ireland voted clearly to remain.

We have during the course of the last two years, in conjunction with our colleagues in the Republic of Ireland, published four papers addressing the consequences of Brexit and demanding certain actions to protect our society and our economy to make sure that workers don't bear the brunt of Brexit.

The fact that we have been without a locally devolved NI Assembly and Executive was clearly a setback in the context of Brexit, as the voice of Northern Ireland was not represented coherently by a local government. In August 2016 the then First and Deputy First Minister wrote to the then Prime Minister Teresa May outlining the interests of Northern Ireland. However, with the collapse of Stormont and the subsequent position of the DUP in the confidence and supply agreement with the Tories, political fragmentation in Northern Ireland over Brexit became the reality.

The trade union movement working alongside others representing the agricultural community, business interests and the community and voluntary sector worked together to seek to raise the interests and voice of the entire community in Northern Ireland when it came to the negotiations on the Withdrawal Agreement.

We have been extremely active seeking to ensure that the interests of workers were articulated and heard.

- NIC-ICTU met with all of the Northern Ireland parties on several of occasions.
- We hosted both Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the British Labour Party, and the former Tánaiste of the Republic of Ireland in our offices in Belfast outlining our approach to Brexit and seeking to influence the agenda.
- We also met with the then Prime Minister Teresa May and former Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland.
- We attended a number of cross party MP meetings in the House of Commons.
- Finally, we had a number of engagements with Michel Barnier and his team in Brussels.
- Through our work in the Equality Coalition the ICTU also met with senior Congressmen and Congresswomen in Washington DC, to ensure that the spirit and letter of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement is maintained and defended.

The voice of workers has been heard loud and clear and heeded in many instances. Unfortunately, it has not been heeded by the Tory government.

We took the view that the original Withdrawal Agreement brokered under Teresa Mays' stewardship should be supported. We did this, notwithstanding Brexit being damaging as this version would do less damage to the island of Ireland and all,... workers irrespective of their geography and their

national identity. The alternative crash-out no-deal would have been unthinkable. Regrettably, this version of the WA was rejected on several occasions by the House of Commons. The subsequent adjustments to this WA took place under Boris Johnson's premiership. They unfortunately took the entire UK out of the customs union in the event of the backstop kicking in, but aligned Northern Ireland to EU Single Market to avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland while keeping Northern Ireland as part of the UK customs union, and creating some additional checks in the Irish Sea.

We have met with the EU Trade Commissioner, Phil Hogan along with our colleagues from the TUC supporting the contention that

the EU and UK should indeed do a free trade deal but on the basis of no quotas, no tariffs and no social dumping. We will continue to liaise with the Northern Ireland Executive, the Irish and British government, as well as the EU institutions through our active membership of the ETUC.

E3 Political Engagement

During the last two years the NIC-ICTU has sought to leverage its interest for workers on a range of matters notwithstanding the fact that until late January 2020 we did not have a local devolved government. We have engaged with all of the political parties on a range of matters bilaterally, particularly on policy motions agreed at BDC 2018. A report on the progress of these resolutions is elsewhere in this report.

In the absence of devolution, we have also sought to ensure that we could raise matters directly with both the UK government and political parties as well as the Irish government. During this time, we had meetings with the various Secretaries of State, the Prime Minister, the leader of the opposition and Shadow Secretary of State and Brexit Shadow Secretary. Congress also took the opportunity to appraise the Taoiseach of Ireland of our concerns at the regular LEEF (Labour Employer Economic Forum) meetings in Dublin and have engaged with the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Finance. The Trade Union Movement also sought to build alliances and coalitions on issues with other groups seeking



the widest possible support for our issues.

At the time of writing Stormont is back and power sharing is back. We cannot spend three years asking our politicians to compromise and when they take the proper decision to share power again criticise them. Nor should this important point be seen as giving our politicians a free pass either. Politicians here need to operate like politicians in any normal democracy and we need to play our part in making this place a more normal functioning democracy. This means politicians being prepared to change and to share power vertically as well as horizontally by developing robust meaningful forms of social dialogue with those of us that represent large sections of the community.

We welcome the return of power sharing. The **New Decade New Approach** document is a compromise, it had to be. There is something in it for everyone, but not everything in it will be agreeable to everyone. Unions must insist that the progressive and meaningful commitments on employment rights and workers' rights now become a meaningful and practical reality. The trade union movement has a vital and central role to play and we must hold the Executive to account on these issues. Other commitments to the long awaited Bill of Rights are also very important and we need to see resolved action once and for all to ensure we have a robust Bill of Rights that is true to the origins envisaged in the Belfast/ Good Friday Agreement.

NIC-ICTU has sought to engage with The Executive Office on the above important issues and to ensure we have a meaningful bilateral process. The NIC has also sought direct and continue engagement with each of the other participants in government and the UK and Irish governments as they have a shared responsibility in ensuring that the provisions in the **New Decade New Approach** document are also honoured. One way the UK government in particular can ensure that this happens is to once and for all properly fund Northern Ireland so we can have good government for all of the people of Northern Ireland.

Public Sector Pensions

Since the passing into law of the Public Sector Pensions (NI) Act in 2014 by the devolved NI Assembly, the Collective Consultation Working Group (CCWG) provides an arena for engagement between Management Side and a composite representation of Trades Union Sides, under the auspices of NIC-ICTU, for the purpose of information sharing and formal consultation on matters of public service pensions policy, including new policy requirements as a consequence of the in the 2014 Act.

The CCWG consists of not more than ten members nominated by Management Side and ten members nominated by Trades union sides, representing employees affected by the 2014 Act under the auspices of the composite TUS grouping of 'NIC-ICTU'.

Since December 2018 the Court of Appeal in England and Wales upheld claims brought by some Firefighters and Judges that the transitional protections afforded to older members of those schemes were unlawfully age discriminatory. On 27 June 2019 the UK Supreme Court refused permission for a further appeal on that ruling.

Although devolved, this judgement has far-reaching implications for every public sector pension, as reformed public service schemes in Northern Ireland incorporate similar age-based transitional protections, therefore it is appropriate that this discrimination is removed from public service schemes made under the Public Service Pensions Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The UK Government has confirmed that any necessary changes to pension arrangements will also apply to all public service scheme pension members with relevant service, not just those who have lodged legal claims. However, given that some members will be better off in the old schemes, and some better off in the new schemes, it is not as simple as putting everyone back in the old schemes. The solution will need to ensure members can keep their accrued rights. The same complexities exist in Northern Ireland schemes as those in England and Wales.

Technical discussions are underway at the CCWG forum to take initial views on proposals for required scheme changes. The scope of these discussions is intended to cover scheme changes addressing

the discrimination dating back to 2015. They will allow member representatives to share their views at an early policy development stage helping to inform the proposals. A formal public consultation will then follow in due course. Although proposals to address the discrimination are at an early stage, it is confirmed that members who were subject to the discrimination will be within scope of changes made to public service schemes, whether they are deferred, pensioner or active members.

It is anticipated that it could take some time, to fully implement the commitment to remove the discrimination from all public service pension schemes, whilst also ensuring that members can keep benefits that they have earned to date. It will require changes in legislation and complex changes to administrative processes.

The Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland), or NILGOSC, contains different transitional protection provisions and is being considered separately.

The work of the CCWG has been focused on resolving these complications as they arise, while keeping members of the various schemes informed. More detailed information at scheme level will be issued to members when further information becomes available.

Welfare 'Reform'

The NIC spent considerable resources campaigning on Welfare Cuts, since the radical reform of the welfare system was imposed.

Working closely with NIPSA, the NIC campaigned and highlighted the harmful cuts that would be imposed on working class families in NI if the Welfare Reform Bill was to be introduced here, and as a result NI was saved for four years from the worst of the Social Security cuts that has savaged communities across Britain. When the Fresh Start Agreement enacted the NI Welfare Reform Act, NIC lobbying resulted in the mitigations package that is now protecting families in NI. Work continues on this with the aim of ensuring that the mitigations are kept in place after April 2020, with the ultimate aim of devising a humane, inclusive and effective welfare system.

E4 Education Trade Union Group

The ETUG is made up of teaching and support staff unions organising in the education sectors.

It meets bi-monthly and has a wide and varied programme of work. Denise Walker (GMB) is currently the Chair of the ETUG and Maxine Murphy-Higgins (NASUWT) is vice Chair.

The ETUG shares information and develops a common strategic approach to issues affecting teaching and support staff unions and works on the implementation of relevant motions from the NIC ICTU BDC.

During the period under review, the ETUG met with civil servants in relation to the impact of proposed reforms on the education

system, and has two seats on the Department of Education's Transformation Advisory Group, while pursuing deeper involvement in the transformation process to ensure that education workers are adequately represented.

Both teaching and support service staff have been responding to the relatively new structures being established by the Education Authority, with serious concerns raised about changes to terms and conditions, pensions, outsourcing, funding and safe workplaces.

Working across the ten affiliates representing teaching and support staff, the ETUG conducted a survey in relation to levels of violence in schools in early 2019.

1427 members of ICTU affiliated unions in Northern Ireland responded to the survey. 1133 were members of teaching unions and 294 members of support staff unions.

Among the findings of the survey were that:

- 1 in 3 education workers experience physical abuse annually
- 1 on 5 receive physical abuse once a week
- 83% have been verbally abused in the classroom
- 45% of verbal abusers are parents

Some education workers receive far more abuse than others.

- 88% of Special Education teachers have received verbal or physical abuse

- 95% of support staff, such as classroom assistants, have been assaulted.

The consistent view of all unions representing education workers is that it is a reasonable expectation that schools should be safe places with robust mechanisms to protect all students and those working with them – teachers and support staff.

Denise Walker commented that *"Everyone expects and is entitled to go to work free from the threat of physical violence but if you work in one of Northern Ireland's schools in a support role, you could be one of the 51% who have been subjected to a physical incident at work. 43% of whom reported having been a victim of physical violence weekly."*

"With only 34% of victims receiving any form of support and action taken in only 22% of incidents, our support staff are feeling exposed and unsupported. Classroom assistants and support staff work in schools helping some of the most vulnerable pupils, yet they receive little or no support when they need it most. Over 54% of teaching staff felt supported after reporting similar incidents and while this is still too low, it demonstrates that the support structures are just not being applied adequately or equally. This is totally unacceptable."

"The Education Authority and Department of Education must act now to eradicate the threat of violence in our schools. It's time they take responsibility and ensure they carry out the duty of care that the staff they employ deserve."

Vice-chair of NIC-ICTU Education Group Maxine Murphy-Higgins added that *"the figures in this survey are truly shocking. Just over 55% of primary school teachers have been assaulted at work while almost 90% of special school teachers have been assaulted."*

"But any discussion of violent and disruptive behaviour in schools has to be put in the context of the budget cuts that are happening in Northern Ireland. Schools are losing the specialist support that they did have to work with vulnerable younger people, class sizes are getting bigger and there are not enough resources being put into supporting pupils with special educational needs (SEN)."

"In many schools, teachers and support staff receive little or no support when they are assaulted and in a minority of schools the first reaction of management is to blame the staff member for the assault. Attitudes like this lead to under-reporting of incidents of management and heighten the risk of more serious assaults in future."

"The Department of Education as a matter of priority must ensure that all schools are meeting their statutory obligations to maintain a safe working environment for all staff."

The survey and its findings shocked many observers and received extensive coverage in the press, including a dramatic front page in the Daily Mirror. (see image).



The appointment of new EA Directors leading on Children and Young People's services, Finance, Operations, Education and Human Resources is changing how trade unions will engage in collective bargaining with the EA. All Directors have accountability on policy strategy and budgets and already we see the impact of the crisis in the Education budget evolving in these new structures. The ETUG continues to be an important

policy advisory committee where support services and teaching staff jointly plan trade union policy and strategy responses on all major developments.

Indeed, immediately after the conclusion of the 2018 BDC, trade unions held a protest at the Derry office of the Education Authority to highlight their common concerns over Special Educational Needs provision. The protest was timed to coincide with the monthly board meeting of the EA.

The Education Authority NI had published a consultation 'Future Provision for Children in the Early Years with Special Educational Needs (SEN)'. In addition, material appeared in the local media in March 2018 concerning a plan, allegedly being developed by EA, to completely re-organise the special education school provision in the Belfast area.

Speaking on behalf of the NIC-ICTU Education Trade Union Group, its outgoing chair Gerry Murphy noted: "These two issues are related and are a matter of great concern to both the schools communities directly affected and the trade union movement. The children and young people concerned have a right to be heard on this issue. The teachers, classroom assistants, medical personnel, therapists, bus drivers and administrative staff employed in the schools under threat along with their colleagues involved in pre-school provision are equally concerned for the children and young people and their own employment.

Strike rally outside Education Authority HQ



"As trade unionists, we are dissatisfied with the nature of the consultation. The proposal itself is clearly incomplete and vague, lacking any financial planning or detail on how the existing relationships with the various Health Trusts will be adjusted to meet the proposed changed provision."

Since 2018, there has been a series of ballots in support of industrial action, following the failure to offer teachers in NI a pay deal similar to that available in Scotland, Wales and England.

At the time of writing, the re-established Stormont Executive means that there are ministers for Education and Finance and an expressed willingness to meet the

demands of teachers for decent wages. The situation remains unresolved.

In Further and Higher Education, there have been a series of disputes, most notably in the university sector, where UCU members took two periods of strike action to defend their pension scheme, facing the sort of 'reforms' which leave workers working longer before receiving a diminished pension.

There are also significant concerns across third-level education about the precarious status of 'younger' academics, being denied tenure for years as employers save on the cost of employing them full-time with proper contracts and secondary benefits, such as paid holidays.



Mirav Amir from UCU at Queen's University



Concerns are being highlighted around the nature of contracts and working conditions in the FE sector. Other issues affecting education workers include:

- Action on class sizes so each child can reach their potential;
- Support for children with Special Educational Needs, and a sustainable budget to meet these needs;
- Retaining teachers and support services staff, not making them redundant;
- Raising the cost of getting to schools with charges for school transport;
- Introducing charges for music education;
- Hikes in the cost of nutritious school meals;
- Closing several outdoor education centres;
- Institutionalising the selection of pupils by social class at 10 years of age.

E5 Health Committee

The Health Committee continues to provide guidance and make recommendations to the NIC on matter of development in health policy and strategies within the Department of Health, the Health Trusts, HSCB and arms-length bodies. Anne Speed (Unison) is the current Chair of the Health Committee, with Claire Ronald (CSP) as vice Chair.

The present mandate of the committee started with organising a large and expansive party in the Belfast sunshine as unions and the wider public celebrated the 70th birthday of the NHS. Belfast City Hall was specially illuminated and its workforce's efforts appreciated. Anne Speed commented that:

"We represent the thousands of dedicated women and men who deliver healthcare to all of the people. This only works because it



Belfast Mayor launches NHS 70 Birthday events

is a universal public service which provides the same level of care and healing to the rich and the poor alike. Illness and misfortune should not bankrupt anyone, and the best way to ensure that our system remains more just and fair than in many other countries is to keep the NHS in the care of the people. We all own it, and we should celebrate it."

That message of a health service owned by and accountable to all of the people was tested by the increasing involvement of private companies seeking a slice of the public's money, by pursuing contracts to deliver NHS services and cream off substantial

commissions. These commissions were invariably at the cost of the workforce, with TUPE arrangements undermined or ignored, leading to a series of scandals exposed in some Residential care homes for the elderly and vulnerable. A powerful presentation on one such are home in Dunmurry was made to the NIC by Eddie Lynch, the Commissioner for Older People who led the investigation into appalling failures for very vulnerable elderly people.

Unions also opposed plans in late 2018 by a consortium of private equity funds and property developers to 'reconfigure' GP services in south Belfast, and succeeded for a while in getting



Health workers celebrate to NHS 70th Birthday

Belfast City Councillors to block the planning application (after working closely with a health journalist) until solemn pledges were made in a document implying legal action against the Belfast Telegraph that: *"The proposed King's Hall Primary Care Centre redevelopment will create modern healthcare accommodation, but no private healthcare provider will be involved in the delivery of services."*

The Health Committee will watch with interest this development, if it emerges and can be profitably run by the 'Charity' lined up to manage the King's Hall site. Anne Speed pointed out the contradiction:

"The plans for the proposed healthcare campus include a large care home to be run by Abbeyfield, which is a registered charity despite being one of the UK's largest social care chains. The trade unions have

consistently argued that both the taxpayer and the workers providing these services are always better off in the public sector, as workers are properly paid and treated well, all due taxes are paid and where patients and their families have avenues of accountability which are absent across too much of the private care sector, charitable or not.

"The very business model of the proposed development is not to add value to patients or taxpayers, but to cream off the already tightened budgets of the NHS. The business plan for this site seems to depend upon the taxpayer at every stage. Creaming off the waiting lists of our underfunded health service, and then charging an inflated rate to the NHS in the ultimate false economy for the taxpayer. The medics providing these services will be trained or already employed by the public health service.

"The trade unions do not think or assert that anything illegal is occurring. Nor are we ascribing anything but honest intentions to Abbeyfield, or Benmore, or Octopus. They are merely playing the cards which they have been dealt by the rules of the game. The problem we have is with those very rules. We think the game is rigged."

In January 2016, the then Health Minister Simon Hamilton commissioned a review on the reconfiguration of the health service which led to the Bengoa report. The committee, alongside several affiliates, made submissions to Professor Bengoa's panel emphasising the need to sustain

a publicly funded and publicly delivered health service model based on the founding principles of the NHS. The Bengoa report was reviewed by the subsequent Health Minister Michelle O'Neill, who produced a plan with a time scale of ten years for implementation – 'Delivering Together' – based on the principles of co-design and co-production with representatives of the workforce at a professional and trade union level.

The committee made further detailed submissions on Delivering Together. New oversight structures on policy and implementation strategies were established within the Department and led by the minister. The Health committee



ICTU Vice-President Alison Millar at the NHS celebration



Pickets outside Royal Victoria Hospital



Pickets at Beech Hall



Support for NHS strikers from all unions

succeeded in securing a place at the policy table and participates in the Transformation Advisory Board (TAB) which strategically oversees the

activities of over 30 'Transformation Implementation Groups (TIGs)'. The committee is represented on most of the TIGs and its TAB envoy, John-Patrick Clayton, provides regular updates to affiliates.

The committee led a campaign to re-establish the Health Partnership Forum which had been collapsed by earlier Ministerial and Departmental diktat. Minister O'Neill responded and before her departure with the suspension of Stormont, re-established the Forum which was warmly welcomed by employers and unions alike. The Health committee has called for this Forum to continue to meet, which happened intermittently - a situation which the committee is keen to resolve now that there is an accountable Health Minister in situ.



Pickets at Mater Hospital

The committee also vigorously lobbied on the issues of workforce planning. For the previous two years, Health unions had warned the lack of focused and resourced workforce planning would lead to staff shortages which have now detrimentally impacted on delivery of service. The current, and in particular nursing staff and AHP shortages, have clearly evidenced health unions' concerns.

Aside from related crises exacerbated by years of underfunding and recruitment problems, the most severe industrial relations issue was pay, in particular the dislocation from the wages paid to equivalent colleagues in other parts of the UK.

After years of talks crippled by the lack of a minister of Health to lobby a minister for Finance to approve just pay settlements, the late autumn of 2019 saw a wave of strikes and action short of strikes which was unprecedented in the history of the Health Service in Northern Ireland. A photo-essay accompanying this illustrates the scale of the industrial action which included most of the NIC-ICTU's affiliates in the NHS, with some balloting for the first time ever. Even the (non-affiliated) Royal College of Nursing took strike action for the first time in over a century.

The wave of public and political support acted as the final straw which broke open the stalled talks at Stormont. Resolving the NHS

pay issue was the expressed top priority for the NI Executive to settle upon resuming devolved powers. At the time of writing, Health unions are consulting members with the dramatically improved offer, although there are many remaining issues to resolve for the workforce in our largest employer.

The Health Committee worked closely with affiliates whose members would be directly affected by the welcome and belated decriminalisation of abortion services, and also took guidance from colleagues across the border where similar legal changes happened. These consultations with the INMO and also with the NIC-ICTU Women's Committee and like-minded campaigners such as Alliance4Choice informed a detailed response to the NIO consultation on abortion guidelines, and a direct meeting in Stormont House with officials guiding the legal process of decriminalisation.

Plans for a Mental Health Seminar were at an advanced stage but it was decided to postpone the planned one-day event for senior officials, shop stewards, reps and expert professionals in the field of mental health impacts on trade union activists. This will happen when the ongoing pay disputes have been resolved, hopefully by summer 2020.



Gerry Murphy accepts the ICTU Presidency at the 2019 ICTU BDC in Dublin

E6 The ICTU North/South Committee

North/South Committee

The North/South Committee comprises members of the Executive Council and the Northern Ireland Committee. The membership is in the process of being replenished with new members to progress the contributions from:

L Broderick (FSU), K Callinan (Fórsa), S Cody (Fórsa), J Cunningham (SIPTU), J Douglas (MANDATE), D Kennedy (CWU UK), M Lafferty (USDAW), P Mackel (NIPSA), P McKeown (UNISON), A Millar (NIPSA), M Morgan (NIPSA), G Murphy (INTO), S Nunan (INTO), A Speed (UNISON)

The purpose of the committee is to develop key North/South initiatives in developing all-island socio-economic initiatives and influence, where possible, the policies originating from all six cross-border bodies under the auspices of the N/S Ministerial Council.

Crucial to the work of the committee is the pursuance of the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland and the Charter of Rights for the Republic, as set out in the Good Friday Agreement (GFA).



NIPSA delegate and Youth Committee observer to NIC Steven Harvey



ICTU General Secretary Patricia King responds to Taoiseach Leo Varadkar



Delegates from UTU with NIC member Jacqui White



Delegates paid tribute to Lyra McKee



NIC member Paul Wolfe with PCS colleague Gayle Matthews



Paddy Mackel from Belfast & District Trades Council



UCU delegate and NIC member Katharine Clarke



USDAW's Michala Lafferty



Unite's Jackie Pollock



Unison's Anne Speed

It is most disappointing that these elements of the GFA have not been introduced in both jurisdictions despite being components of an international agreement. The N/S Committee members had a meeting with the Joint Oireachtas Working Group on the Implementation of the GFA, which has members from the Oireachtas, Stormont and Westminster.

E7 The Trade Union Council of the Isles

The Council of the Isles is the annual meeting of the leadership of the trade union centres on these islands. It comprises the Trade Union Congress (TUC) of England, the Scottish TUC, the Welsh TUC, and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. The Council of the Isles originated from Strand 3 of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and

discusses issues of mutual concern and examines areas of potential cooperation.

Meeting in London 15/16 March 2018

TUC Frances O'Grady – General Secretary
Mary Bousted – Former President
Kevin Rowan – Head of Organisation and Services
STUC Graham Smith – General Secretary
Satnam Ner – President
WTUC Martin Mansfield – General Secretary
ICTU Patricia King – General Secretary
Owen Reidy – Assistant General Secretary

Issues discussed included Brexit, precarious work, campaigns in each jurisdiction and why the trade union movement needs to embrace technology in how it communicates with members.



Owen Reidy and Frances O'Grady with President and Sabrina Higgins at the opening of the Connolly Centre in Belfast in 2019



Owen Reidy and Frances O'Grady at the opening of the Connolly Centre in Belfast in 2019

Council of the Isles 2019

Dublin was the venue for the Council of the Isles on the 16th and 17th May 2019. Those in attendance included,

Patricia King, General Secretary, Owen Reidy, Assistant General Secretary and Alison Millar, Vice President of the ICTU.

Frances O'Grady, General Secretary and Kevin Rowan, Head of Administration of the TUC.

Grahame Smith, General Secretary and Jackson Cullinane, President of the STUC.

Martin Mansfield, General Secretary and Shavanah Taj, President of the WTUC.

The issues discussed at the 2019 sessions including Brexit and Collective Bargaining along with the various active campaigns taking place in each jurisdiction.

The 2020 Council of the Isles will be hosted by the STUC.

E8 Lyra McKee

2019's Mayday celebration in Belfast was made all the more poignant soon after the callous murder of Lyra McKee, a young worker, a journalist, a proud NUJ member, and an LGBT activist. Her pointless murder is a reminder that we cannot take the peace process for granted and her life and murder must not be in vain. It also motivates us in

the trade union movement, as the largest truly cross community civic society group in Northern Ireland, to stand up for peace, pluralism and diversity and all that is good about our society. Trades Councils marked their abhorrence in cities across the island, and Lyra's NUJ comrades led NIC-ICTU's commemoration to her life and work: "It won't always be like this. It's going to get better."



Delegates to ICTU BDC 2019 pay silent tribute to Lyra McKee



Unveiling the May Day Banner in honour of Lyra McKee

Section **F**

**Migrant
Workers**



SEUPB Peace IV 'Crossing Borders Breaking Boundaries' workshops brought together local and Black and Minority Ethnic Migrant workers in the Portadown area

Section F: Migrant Workers

BME Migrant Workers Project

The NIC ICTU Migrant Workers Support Unit (MWSU) was established in 2007 through funding from the Department for the Economy. The Unit's main aim is to pursue the implementation of Congress policies by working towards the elimination of racism, discrimination, exploitation and barriers in accessing services for migrant workers.

The Belfast office operated a permanent Migrant Workers Employment Rights Centre as well as providing outreach clinics in other locations. The unit directly supported over 400 people per year and also ran advice centres, clinics and information sessions. From the initial contact with our

organisation, migrant workers have been encouraged to join a trade union and a number of successful union organising campaigns had their origins in contact through the MWSU.

A range of publications and training sessions helped to challenge racist attitudes and break down barriers between migrant and other workers.

The MWSU had strategic responsibilities of policy development and promoting protections for migrant workers. It lobbied government and was invited to participate in NGOs and state sponsored sub groups. The Unit worked with partners both locally and internationally in support of equality for migrant and minority ethnic workers.



In 2018 the MWSU was relaunched when NIC ICTU, in partnership with Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, Ulster University and Community Intercultural Programme, successfully applied for Peace IV funding to run a project to develop a new model of labour market integration aimed at BME migrant workers that will build positive relations with people from different communities and backgrounds.

This new project Crossing Borders, Breaking Boundaries, funded under the European Regional Development Fund of the EU and managed by the SEUPB, embraces many of the activities of the MWSU and also aims to build positive relations with people from different communities and backgrounds.

The Project will produce research on the profile, cross border dynamics, issues impeding labour market integration of BME workers mainly in the agricultural, food processing and services sectors in NI and the border area.

A new model of labour market integration has been developed and delivered in six border counties increasing capacity of 1,025 BME workers to secure their labour rights, enhanced capacity and leadership skills of 200 BMEs and on-going and 9 specific opportunities for meaningful and sustained contact between 200 BMEs and 140-200 people from PULCRN communities.

The workshops tackle myths that exist around migration, cultural competency and community relations



Dissemination of the model at a local, regional, National and EU level to over 5,000 people through effective communication, networking, seminars and an all Island conference will be achieved.

The Project is developing a charter for fair treatment at work for migrant and other ethnic minorities in Northern Ireland and will be lobbying politicians and others on this charter and to seek a tightening of employment protection legislation to protect BME migrant and other vulnerable workers.

A range of activities are being carried out by a team of Project Development Workers to deliver outreach, advocacy, case work, collective community meetings, workshops, leadership training and the establishment of a Workers Action Group involving BME migrant and other workers.

As challenging exploitation of BME migrant and other vulnerable workers in the workplace must begin with workers joining trade unions the Project is working with affiliates to organise BME migrant workers in a number of workplaces. The Project has also assisted affiliates in reaching out to BME migrant workers and helped with initiatives to bring migrant and other union members together.

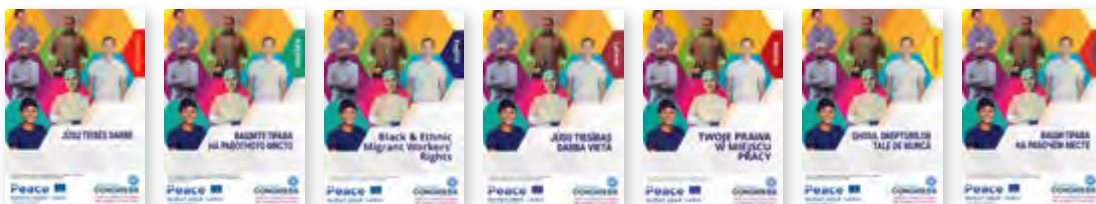
The Project has had to use novel approaches to gain the



Kevin Doherty at a workshop for BME migrant workers

trust of vulnerable BME migrant worker communities. Once trust is established the Project has deepened engagement with them by providing ESOL courses, information sessions and linkages with local government and NGO's who can provide support to BME migrant worker communities. The Project also works to establish BME migrant community groups and encourage interaction between communities.

The Project intervened effectively with the assistance of the Ballymena and Antrim Trades Council and other local trade unionists to help reduce racial tensions in that area in late 2018 that were being whipped by a far Right political



group. Through working with local trade unionists, employers, community groups, the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and other politicians the Project helped reduce the myths that fuelled the racial tensions and to de-escalate the situation.

The Project would like to thank local trade's councils, including the Belfast, Ballymena and Antrim,

and Craigavon councils, the Traces Council Consultative Committee, other trade union activists and affiliates who have participated in the Project's activities and would welcome the involvement of others to help break down barriers between communities. This work is essential to defeating the growth in prejudice, racial tensions and challenging exploitation of workers.



ESOL class for Migrant Workers in Lurgan



ICTU's Kevin Doherty and Tony Gallagher with Stephen Bloomer, Andrew McCreery, Development Worker (CIP project partner), and Stephen Smith, CEO CIP



Employment Rights Seminar for BME Migrant



Trades Council Consultative Committee seminar on 'Tackling Prejudice' in 2019, facilitated by Mel Corry of TradeMark and Craigavon TC

Section **G**

**Equality and
Human Rights**

Section G: Equality and Human Rights

G1 Introduction

The following is a report on the work of Congress and the Equality Committees in pursuit of our objectives for a fairer and more equal society.

EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS SUB-GROUP (EHRSG)

The EHRSG is a sub-committee of the NI Committee which extends it's membership to the chairs of the NIC's self-organised groups, equality officers of affiliated unions and trade unionists on the enforcement bodies. The EHRSG's function is to develop on behalf of the Northern Ireland Committee a strategy on equality and human rights, and to co-ordinate ICTU's lobbies, relations and negotiations with Governments, enforcement

agencies and others on equality and human rights issues.

Human Rights Consortium

Congress is a member of the Human Rights Consortium which brings together nearly 200 NGO's, trade unions and other groups to campaign for the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, in particular for a strong and inclusive a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

The Human Rights Consortium meets on a bi-monthly basis.

Equality Coalition

Congress is a member of the Equality Coalition which is a broad alliance of non-governmental organisations whose members cover all the categories listed in



Trade Unions support journalists Barry McCaffrey and Trevor Bernie at Belfast High Court

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 ('s75'), as well as other equality strands. It was founded in 1996 by community and voluntary sector organisations and trade unions.

The Equality Coalition continues to provide a forum for unity between all sectors when campaigning for equality, while allowing for the diversity of its members' work and views. It has regular engagements with government and the enforcement bodies.

Both the Human Rights consortium and the Equality coalition have established relations with the Equality and Human Rights alliance in the Republic.

G2 Women's Committee

The Officers of the NI Women's Committee during the period covered by the report:

Chairperson –
Geraldine Alexander (NIPSA)

Vice Chairperson
Margaret McKee (UNISON)

Secretary
Eileen Gorman (FSU)

The Women's Committee is one of the longest standing formal committees of Congress and has an important to play in identifying issues that are a priority for working women across all sectors and in so doing makes a positive contribution to Congress policy.

The constitution of the Committee sets out the functions to be:

the co-ordination of policy or action by affiliated organisations catering for women workers on matters relating to the interests of women; the investigation of problems arising from the employment of women in industry, services and the professions; the preparation of reports on aspects of women's employment, conditions of work, remuneration etc.

A Work programme based on the motions that were passed at the 2018 Women's Conference, the 2018 NIC ICTU Biennial Conference and the 2019 ICTU Biennial conference was adopted by the committee.

Priority issues were identified as:

1. Highlighting the issues affecting women in the workplace including insecure work, gender pay gap, workplace harassment
2. Tackling violence against women, including domestic violence and abuse, human trafficking and combatting sexual harassment at work.
3. Campaigning for reform of legislation on reproductive rights, including abortion
4. Highlighting the disproportionate impact of austerity on women and supporting gender budgeting.
5. Campaigning for a comprehensive, affordable childcare strategy.



ICTU Women's Committee Chair J White and Ailbhe Smyth

The major initiatives of the Women's Committee during the period were the organisation of a National Women's Conference in 2018 and National Women's Seminar in 2019 as well as participation in the Women's Council of the Isles, an initiative that brings together the TUC, STUC, WTUC and ICTU Women's Committees on an annual basis.

The Women's Conference 2018

The Women's Conference took place in Enniskillen in June 2018 and had the theme of **Better Work Better Lives** for Women Workers.

Some 170 delegates gathered to debate 21 motions relating to Women and Work, Women in Unions and Women in Society. Guest speakers included Dr Caitriona Crowe who spoke about the Centenary of the Representation of the People Act which extended the vote to include some women. Fringe meetings were held on topics including Women and Precarious Work, Abortion as a Workplace



Standing ovation for Repeal the 8th campaign co-ordinator Ailbhe Smyth

Issue, Sling the Mesh and the Women's Pledge.

The Women's Seminar 2019

The Seminar took place in Newcastle, Co Down in March 2019. The theme of the seminar was Women's Leadership in work and in society – challenges and opportunities.

Some 150 delegates gathered to listen to keynote speakers including Chidi King, Director of Equality at the ITUC and Esther Lynch, Confederal Secretary with the ETUC.



Esther Lynch at the ETUC Women's Committee

Women's Council of the Isles

Members of the Committee participated in the Women's Council of the Isles meetings in 2018 and 2019.

In 2018, the Council of the Isles took place in Dublin and presentations included from the ICTU Assistant General Secretary on Brexit, from the TUC on stereotyping and violence in work, from the Wales TUC on hidden disabilities and gender and from the ICTU on the gender pay gap and abortion as a workplace issue.

In 2019, the Council of the Isles took place in London and discussions centred around the rise of the far right, a delegation of trade union women who visited Palestine as well as focusing on the significant equality and human rights victories gained in Northern Ireland. Delegates also discussed the landmark ILO convention on protection against Violence and Harassment at work, particularly focusing on ratification by the UK and Irish Governments.

Reform of Abortion Legislation

It has been a momentous year for reproductive rights and justice in Northern Ireland. After decades of campaigning, the speed with which the necessary legislation to bring about both equal marriage and the decriminalisation of abortion NI came about, was almost difficult to comprehend.

For the past 50 years, women in Northern Ireland have had to travel (mainly to England) to have safe, legal abortions. This has been a

huge burden financially, emotionally and logistically for those women. We know that some people have been forced to continue unwanted, or even medically unviable pregnancies, because they haven't been able to travel.

Since 2009 the Abortion Support Network has helped women with travel costs, abortion costs and logistics; even putting women up in volunteers' homes when necessary. Following years of campaigning, a high profile court case, and a brilliant political manoeuvre by Stella Creasy MP, abortions in England for women from Northern Ireland are now paid for by the NHS, along with some travel costs. However, for some people travelling is not an option, for asylum seekers and others without the right papers, for those trapped in domestic violence situations, for the disabled and for those (often the young) without family or partner support, travel has sometimes been impossible.

Many of those without medical complications and still early in pregnancy have opted to buy abortion medication online but taking it or providing it in Northern Ireland was illegal and resulted in prosecutions until 22nd October.

Credit must go to the grassroots campaigners in Northern Ireland, who have been advocating for abortion rights consistently, loudly and courageously for decades. Alliance for Choice has led powerful campaigns in Northern Ireland and Westminster, drawing on medical evidence, research, women's stories, and health and human



rights arguments to make their case. Credit must also go to the trade union movement. For years, trade union members have raised the issue of reform of abortion legislation within their unions – not always a popular subject. Motions have been brought to affiliate conferences and to ICTU Biennial Delegate Conferences and trade union activists and the ICTU Women's Committee have been stalwarts in their support of the campaign.

It once seemed impossible that abortion would be realised in NI with the draconian and archaic 1861 the Offences Against the Person Act firmly in place in NI. The 1967 Abortion Act never applied to Northern Ireland, so abortion in Northern Ireland has been illegal except in exceptional circumstances right up until the 22nd October 2019.

Getting safe, legal, local abortion up and running in Northern Ireland will not happen overnight. We'll keep supporting our friends in Alliance for Choice to keep up the pressure. But for the year that's in it let's mark this historic moment and celebrate toast the tenacity of the campaign and those who fought so hard to achieve it.

Tackling Sexual Harassment at work

The rise of the #MeToo movement has put a global spotlight on the issue of violence against women and sexual harassment. However, despite considerable media attention and continued activism by women and others, the issue of sexual harassment continues to be persistent in the workplace.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland reported in 2017

that discrimination on the grounds of Gender is the second most reported form of discrimination overall to their legal advice team, and within that, harassment at work is the second most common complaint. Numbers of complaints have risen by 31% over the last five years.

As part of the Committees action for International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Congress issued a survey to find out more about trade union members

experiences of sexual harassment.

The opinion poll surveyed union members with experience of sexual harassment at work and was conducted online between 01 and 14 November. The survey focused exclusively on people's experience of sexual harassment in the workplace, rather than measuring the scale of the problem.

Congress wanted to gain a deeper understanding of workers' experience of sexual harassment at work - the types of incidents

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

An anonymous Survey

STRONGER TOGETHER
CONGRESS
Northern Ireland Committee
Irish Congress of Trade Unions



Members of the NIC ICTU Women's Committee mark International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

experienced, the perpetrators and location, the barriers to reporting, and the impact sexual harassment has on the lives of those affected.

Of all the alarming statistics thrown up by the polling, perhaps the most alarming one was the unacceptably high levels of under-reporting and dissatisfaction with their employer's action among those who had reported sexual harassment.

Key results from the survey included:

Northern Ireland

- 75% of workers experiencing sexual harassment at work do not report the incident to their employer
- 3 out of 4 (75 %) of respondents did not report the unwanted sexual behaviour to their employer, while of those who did report 62% felt that it was not dealt with satisfactorily and in some instances reported that they had been treated less favourably as a result of reporting sexual harassment.
- 29% reported their most recent experience of sexual harassment had taken place at a work-related social event; while a sizeable minority reported being harassed by phone or text (11%) or by email, online or via social media (9%).

Menopause and the Workplace

The Women's Committee devised a survey on the effects of the menopause on the workplace. The survey was circulated to all affiliated unions in Northern Ireland and nearly 2,500 responses were made.

Key findings from the survey included:

- 49% of respondents said that the menopause had been treated as a joke in their workplace;
- 28% said that the menopause had been treated negatively.

Congress is now working with the Labour Relations Agency and the Equality Commission to draft guidance which can be used by unions and employers. As part of this work, consideration will also be given to pilot training.



Campaigning for universal, affordable childcare.

As part of the **Better Work Better Lives** campaign, the Northern Ireland Committee prioritised a number of policy areas. This included the issue of gender equality in the workplace and the provision of properly funded and accessible childcare in Northern Ireland.

Childcare became the subject of the first BWBL policy paper and Childcare in Northern Ireland: Cost, Care and Gender Equality was launched in June 2019 to a full room in the MAC theatre, Belfast.

The paper examined a number of issues connected with the issue of childcare including how childcare is organised in Northern Ireland, both household and public spend on childcare, issues for the childcare workforce, how the issue of having children impacts on men and women differently and recommendations for policy interventions. Since the launch of the paper, Congress staff have held bilateral meetings with all political parties in Northern Ireland as well as meeting with statutory bodies including the Equality Commission, NGOs and others.

Policy interventions included:

- Rolling out access to 30 hours free childcare, as in the rest of the UK; making clear that this must be properly funded.
- Public spend on childcare should be redirected away from individual subsidisation of childcare supply to investment in childcare services and infrastructure.
- Drastic improvement in the pay and conditions of the childcare workforce. Our analysis showed that almost half of the childcare workforce earn below the real living wage – this is not acceptable nor sustainable.
- Unionisation and collective bargaining or a system of sectoral agreements is urgently needed to address levels of pay and terms and conditions.
- The urgent need to review and update parental leave systems. Our policy document urged provision of properly remunerated parental leave reserved for both parents – a ‘use it or lose it’ system.



These measures, together with proper flexible leave entitlements, could go some way to addressing the problem whereby women with dependent children are over represented in part-time employment, more likely to be in temporary employment and much less likely to be self-employed than men with dependent children.

See www.ictuni.org for full report.

Congress is supporting a major civil society campaign, Childcare for All which brings together NGOs, childcare organisations together with women's organisations and trade unions to campaign for accessible, flexible and high quality childcare.

G3 Disability Committee

Officers:

Chairperson:

Paul Cobain, NIPSA

Vice Chairperson:

Vivien Holding, CWU

Secretary:

Sally McKee, UTU.

The Committee is represented on various external groups including:

- The All Party Group on Disability at the NI Assembly
- The Employment for People with Disabilities Advisory Group convened by the Department for Employment and Learning
- The Welfare Reform Group convened by the Law Centre NI
- The Trade Union Disability Alliance (TUDA).



Disability Committee Chair Paul Cobain with Belfast Lord Mayor and Paul Oakes, Equality Commission NI

The Committee has jointly organised seminars in Belfast (2019) and in Portlaoise (2018).

The seminars and the committee meetings have been addressed by a number of high profile speakers who have dealt with topics which have included, the UN Convention on Persons with Disabilities, autism awareness as well as working to ensure that people who are disabled can access decent jobs and careers.

In relation to attacks to the social security system imposed by the Westminster Government, the committee has raised serious concerns over the issue of the 'universal credit', and new regulations around Incapacity Benefit and the removal of those who have previously been awarded the benefit.

In 2019, the seminar focused on the theme of Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace. Guest speakers included the Equality Commission, Advice NI, the Department for Communities and others.

Congress responded to a number of consultations during this period with input from the Disability Committee. These included:

- Improving the job prospects and working careers of people with disabilities in Northern Ireland
- Developing an Accessible Transport strategy 2025

In relation to the employment strategy, we welcomed the supported employment approach to securing and maintaining employment and welcomed the adoption of this model.

However, we expressed our concern that changes to the welfare and social security system will impact disproportionately on disabled people and their families. Congress urged the Department to ensure that the work opportunities available for disabled people have the flexibilities built into them that allow people to work without it affecting their benefit – for example the 16-hour rule.



Philip McTaggart delivered a session on suicide awareness to the ICTU Disability Committee



Disability Committee with ICTU Education tutors discussed issues about workplace mental health

G4 LGBT Committee

Members of the Committee continue to:

- Take part in the annual Pride events in Belfast, Foyle, Newry and Dublin;
- attend Outburst Queer Arts Festivals;
- take part in the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) week;

Members of the Committee are represented on the LGBT Consultative Forum, the Trans Forum, and IDAHOT Planning Committee cementing the links between the Trade Union movement and the LGBT Sector organisations.



ICTU participated in Foyle Pride



ICTU LGBT banner at Belfast pride

The Committee continues to help develop relationships within and between affiliates and organisations within the LGBT community and has worked hard to raise awareness and effect change for all LGBT members.

Campaign for Marriage Equality

'All love is equal' – one of the straplines of Love Equality, the campaign for marriage equality in Northern Ireland. When Love Equality was established by six organisations (including the Rainbow Project, HereNI, Cara Friend, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Amnesty International and NUS USI) to lead the fight to deliver marriage equality to Northern Ireland, one thing was patently clear. In Northern Ireland, all love was not equal.

For unique in the UK and Ireland, LGBT+ people in Northern Ireland could not marry the person they loved. And should they choose to marry elsewhere, their marriage



Sarah Canning and friends lead the Love Equality march in Belfast in 2019.

would only be recognised as a civil partnership on their return.

The first Love Equality rally on June 2015 saw 20,000 pour onto the streets in Belfast and such was the popular support that it seemed inconceivable that LGBT+ people would continue to be discriminated against. Despite this growing popular and political support, moves to have Marriage Equality delivered by the Northern Ireland Assembly were frustrated by the DUP's continued use of the Petition of Concern. Attempts to introduce Marriage Equality by a cross party Private Members Bill were derailed when the Assembly collapsed in 2017.

And so the Love Equality campaign began to focus on Westminster as the only way to deliver equality.

Four years after that first rally, an amendment to a Westminster bill largely intended to extend the period for NI Ministers to be appointed became the somewhat unlikely mechanism to deliver same sex marriage to Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland (Executive Formation) Bill (the Bill) was introduced in the House of Commons on 4 July 2019. Its

purpose was to extend the period for Northern Ireland Ministers to be appointed, following the Assembly election held on 2 March 2017, to 21 October 2019; and to impose a duty on the Secretary of State to report on progress towards the formation of an Executive in Northern Ireland.

The Bill was amended by both Houses of Parliament and became the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc.) Act 2019 (the Act) by Royal Assent on 24 July 2019. Clause 8 was introduced to the Bill via an amendment tabled in the Commons by Conor McGinn MP and co-sponsored by members from a range of parties. It was passed into the Bill on Tuesday 8 July by a landslide vote in the Commons.

Section 8, Same sex marriage and opposite sex civil partnership, came into force on 22 October, requiring the Secretary of State to make regulations, to come into force on or before 13 January 2020, to provide that, in Northern Ireland, same sex couples are eligible to marry, and opposite sex couples are eligible to register a civil partnership.

The tabling of the amendment by Conor McGinn came after many months of behind the scenes work by Love Equality to find a suitable vehicle for the introduction of marriage equality with both MPs and Peers including Conor and Lord Robert Hayward deserving special credit.

As of 13 January 2020, couples wishing to enter into a new marriage could register their intent with a civil registrar with



the first marriages due to take place from February. However, as of writing this report, there are still some anomalies to the law. The regulations brought in by the Secretary of State did not allow for either faith based marriages or conversions of existing civil partnerships to marriages. Love Equality has registered dismay at these gaps and has pressed the Northern Ireland Office to rectify this situation as soon as possible. A consultation on both matters was launched in January 2020, with regulations expected to be brought in April 2020 for faith based marriages and shortly thereafter for conversions.

Marriage Equality in Northern Ireland is often characterised as a controversial issue. Love Equality begs to differ. In our opinion, the only controversial thing about it will be how long it has taken to get here.



Section **H**

**Industrial
Relations**

Section H: Industrial Relations

H1 Industrial Relations

The NIC has responded to a range of consultations issued by the Department for Employment & Learning, in particular the substantial two stage 'Review of Employment Law.' As the laws in the GB are being changed for the worse, the NIC decided that protecting the status of working people in Northern Ireland was a priority. A hopeful sign was the establishment by the Labour Relations Agency (LRA) of the NI Employment Relations Roundtable. The Bill passed the final stage with a number of positive amendments, on zero hour contracts, requirements on employers to disclose information on pay by gender and develop actions plans with a view to closing the gender pay gap. Workers in NI are now significantly better off than other workers in GB in terms of employment rights.

The NI Employment Relations Roundtable comprises a representative of the four lead employer organisations (Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of British Industry, Federation of Small Businesses and Institute of Directors) and four representatives from NIC ICTU, Patricia McKeown, Alison Millar, Jackie Pollock and Kevin Doherty. It is hosted and facilitated by the LRA.

The Roundtable seeks to engage, advise and influence government, principally through the Department for the Economy (DfE), on all

matters relating to employment/ industrial relations.

It meets to develop, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, including DfE, an Employment Relations strategy that is consistent with the Programme for Government, especially after the restoration of the Institutions at Stormont.

While the main focus of the Roundtable's work was around the Review of Employment Law the Roundtable is also working on developing a new NI dispute resolution system and also a '**Joint Declaration of Protection**' for the workplace.



The original joint declaration, signed in 1993, was between the CBI and NIC ICTU and focused on sectarianism. The updated declaration takes account of the significant changes in the workforce since then and covers racism and mistreatment on other grounds, as reflected in Section 75 of the Belfast Agreement. The Declaration has been promoted across all sectors of the economy, and has been incorporated into Trade Union Education Courses.

The Joint Declaration has also been utilised in interactions with Migrant Workers and Refugees, such as the PEACE IV Crossing Borders Project and the publication developed with the Belfast City of Sanctuary, 'A Part of Belfast Now'.

2019/20 saw unprecedented but necessary and very timely industrial action and strike action across the public and private sectors. After nearly a decade of austerity our public sector unions in health, education, the Northern Ireland Civil Service and in Higher Education were forced to take industrial action and in some instances strike action to seek pay justice and the defence of their terms and conditions of employment. Many of our public sector trade unions have demonstrated just what can be achieved with the correct strategy and leverage. We are conscious that at the time of going to print a number of these disputes remain unresolved while some are the subject of consideration of proposals that have been hard won through negotiations. We will continue to support in whatever way we can all our public service unions involved in

lawful industrial action whereby they are standing up for their members and the services they deliver for the public.

2019 also witnessed an excellent industrial campaign that achieved international trade union support at Harland and Wolff. The workers led by their shop stewards and their unions Unite and GMB decided that they would not be another redundancy statistic and took over their yard to defend the jobs and conditions of employment they had. They waged an excellent campaign which brought the entire trade union movement together and had significant media exposure whereby the cause of the Harland and Wolff workers became the cause of all workers. After several months on the picket line and incredibly strong lobbying from Unite and GMB a new owner took over the business and the workers proudly went back to work. We also witnessed an excellent union campaign by Unite in Wrigbus where they worked assiduously to seek an alternative owner and ended up protecting many of the jobs.

All of the above necessary industrial action must demonstrate to the workers in both the public and private sectors just what can be achieved when workers come together, organise themselves collectively in strong unions that are ambitious, courageous and pursue strategic industrial action where workers can win.

H2 Industrial Disputes

The NIC supported and assisted affiliates in a range of industrial disputes and redundancy or outsourcing situations. Many affiliates have undertaken industrial action, and strike action for the first time in many years. These included:

- Royal Mail
- Post Office
- HMRC
- NI Civil Service
- DVLNI

- Hovis
- Queen's, Open & Ulster Universities
- Allied Bakeries
- Bombardier
- Harland & Woolf
- NHS
- Primary & Secondary Schools (Teachers, support staff & Principals)
- SONI
- Glen Dimplex
- Irwin's Bakery
- FE Colleges
- Asda
- Balcas
- Moy Park
- District Councils
- McDonalds
- Wrightbus
- ABP Meats



McDonalds strike



Denise Walker, GMB



The longer the picket, the shorter the strike!



Health Service strikers December 2019

Harland & Wolff dispute



Joe Passmore. Pic by Bobbie Hanvey



Matt Wrack, FBU leader, spoke at a support rally at the H&W gates



NIC Chair and ICTU President sends solidarity from the entire trade union movement



There was support from Trades Councils across NI



Susan Fitzgerald, UNITE



Those who work on ships backed those who built them

Group of Workers and retired Workers who came back to the yard to show solidarity





Section **I**

Health and Safety

Section I: Health and Safety

Health & Safety

The Health and Safety Committee continues to engage in a varied work programme including responding to consultations, organizing events, supporting safety representatives and campaigning for safer workplaces.

Committee & Officers

Geraldine Alexander (NIPSA) was re-elected as Chairperson of the NIC Health & Safety Committee at the reconstitution in 2018, Aidan McDonnell (Belfast and District Trade's Council) was elected as Vice Chair, Ray Rafferty (UNISON) was elected as Secretary.

Workers Memorial Day

Workers Memorial Day held all over the world on 28 April, is intended to remember all those killed at or by work, and to strengthen our resolve to reduce risks and protect people from injury in the workplace.



H&S Chair Geraldine Alexander during Workers Memorial Day

In 2018 and 2019, the Committee was joined by trade unionists, politicians and bereaved family members to lay a wreath at the WMD Tree in the grounds of Stormont Estate.

Recent research from the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland has indicated that workplace ill health is estimated to be costing the Northern Ireland economy over £238 million per year.

In Northern Ireland alone it is estimated that 395 people die each year due to work-related disease. Many other occupational ill health conditions have a serious impact upon an individual's quality of life and that of their family.

According to the HSENI, recent statistical estimates, based on GB figures, suggest 15,000 cases of work related stress, anxiety and depression in Northern Ireland each year. Work-related stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work.

At the WMD event held in 2019, Principal Inspector Kyle Carrick talked about HSENI's focus on occupational health priority areas including:

- occupational lung diseases
- occupational cancers
- musculoskeletal disorders & work-related stress

The Health and Safety Committee, together with the ICTU Disability Committee and the Health Committee will be jointly considering how to support union representatives who are increasingly dealing with issues relating to stress and mental ill health in the workplace.

Joint Work

The Officers of the Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland Committees met to discuss areas of collaboration including holding a reps survey to inform future workplans as well as sharing information about priority issues for affiliates and safety reps.

Relationship with Key Strategic Bodies

The Health and Safety Committee continues to have regular meetings with the Health and Safety Executive NI.

Safety Rep Award

ICTU continues to partner with the HSENI to present the Safety Rep Award. In 2019 this was presented to Siobhan Duncan from NIPSA with commended certificates awarded to Paul Turner, NIPSA and Emma Jane Cullen, UNISON. The event was addressed by HSENI CEO Robert Kidd and ICTU Vice President Alison Millar.



Safety rep award winner Siobhan Duncan with HSENI CEO Robert Kidd and ICTU Vice President Alison Millar.

Health and Safety Diploma class together with NIC ICTU Chair Gerry Murphy, Education Officer Kevin Doherty and ICTU tutor Barbara Martin



Appendix **1**

Standing Orders

Appendix 1: Standing Orders

1. Northern Ireland Conference

- 1.1 The Northern Ireland Conference shall meet biennially. The place and date shall be decided by the Northern Ireland Committee, subject to the approval of the Executive Council.
- 1.2 The Chairperson for the Sessions of the Conference shall be the Chairperson of the outgoing Northern Ireland Committee.
- 1.3 A Conference Arrangements Committee of five persons and two substitutes, elected at the previous Northern Ireland Conference, shall be responsible for the arrangements of the business of Conference, and generally take charge of the meeting place.

2. Representation

Only bona fide members or full-time officials who are members of an affiliated trade union and resident in Ireland may be appointed as delegates in accordance with the following scales:

- a. Trade unions with an affiliated membership in Northern Ireland of less than 1000 members = one delegate

Trade unions having an affiliated membership in Northern Ireland of:-

1000	members but less than	2000	=	2	delegates
2000	"	"	"	3000	= 3 "
3000	"	"	"	4000	= 4 "
4000	"	"	"	5000	= 5 "
5000	"	"	"	6000	= 6 "
6000	"	"	"	7000	= 7 "
7000	"	"	"	8000	= 8 "
8000	"	"	"	9000	= 9 "
9000	"	"	"	10000	= 10 "
10000	"	"	"	11000	= 11 "
11000	"	"	"	12000	= 12 "
12000	"	"	"	13500	= 13 "

13500	"	"	"	15000	=	14	"
15000	"	"	"	16500	=	15	"
16500	"	"	"	18000	=	16	"
18000	"	"	"	19500	=	17	"
19500	"	"	"	21000	=	18	"
21000	"	"	"	22500	=	19	"
22500	"	"	"	24000	=	20	"
24000	"	"	"	25500	=	21	"
25500	"	"	"	27000	=	22	"
27000	"	"	"	29000	=	23	"
29000	"	"	"	31000	=	24	"
31000	"	"	"	33000	=	25	"
33000	"	"	"	35000	=	26	"
35000	"	"	"	37000	=	27	"
37000	"	"	"	39000	=	28	"
39000	"	"	"	42000	=	29	"
42000	"	"	"	45000	=	30	"

and one delegate for each 3000 members above 45000 and up to 75000 and thereafter in accordance with Paragraph 37 of the Constitution of Congress.

Trade Unions must include women delegates in their delegation in accordance with the following scale:

- b. Trade Unions having an affiliated membership in Northern Ireland of more than 500 but less than 1000 women shall appoint at least one woman delegate.

Trade Unions having in Northern Ireland:-

Women Membership	Women Delegates
1000 but less than 5000 at least	2
5000 but less than 10000 "	3
10000 but less than 15000 "	4
15000 but less than 20000 "	5

and at least one woman delegate for each 5000 women members above 20,000.

- c. Local Councils of Trade Unions may appoint delegates (who must be members of affiliated trade unions) to the Conference in accordance with the following scale:-

Up to 6500 affiliated membership 1 delegate

Over 6500 affiliated membership 2 delegates

3. Motions

- 3.1 Affiliated organisations may submit up to three motions for the Conference Agenda. Motions must be signed by the authorised official of the organisation and forwarded to Congress not later than the date specified in the notice to organisations.
- 3.2 The Northern Ireland Committee may submit up to three motions for the Conference Agenda.
- 3.3 Motions must be within the scope of the Objects of Congress as set out in the Constitution. They must relate to the matters provided for in Paragraph 37 of the Constitution, viz "matters relating to the internal, industrial, economic and political conditions of Northern Ireland, and of direct concern to Northern Ireland members only". The Executive Council shall determine whether motions submitted are in order and its decision shall be final.

4. Business of Conference

The business of Conference may include the following items:

- a. The Report of the Northern Ireland Committee
- b. Special Reports from the Northern Ireland Committee
- c. Motions from affiliated organisations and the Northern Ireland Committee
- d. Guest speaker/s invited by the Northern Ireland Committee

5. Election of Northern Ireland Committee and Conference Arrangements Committee

The election of the Northern Ireland Committee (NIC) will be conducted using the single transferable vote system. The Congress Constitution provides that the election of the Northern Ireland Committee must result in the election of at least four women.

In the event that only four women are nominated for election to the Northern Ireland Committee, prior to the vote commencing these candidates will be declared elected and an election will be held to elect a further 14 members of the committee using the single transferable vote system.

In the event that there are more than four women nominated for election to the Northern Ireland Committee a single election will be held using the single transferable vote system. If the outcome of the election of the Northern Ireland Committee results in less than four women being elected then the following procedure should apply. The last man to be elected amongst the 18 should be replaced by the last woman to be eliminated. In the event that this does not result in four women being elected then the second last man to be elected shall be replaced by the second last women to be eliminated and so on until the minimum requirement of four women is met.

Nominations of persons for election as members of the Northern Ireland Committee (18 members, including four Reserved Seats for Women and one Reserved Seat for Councils of Trade Unions) and of the Conference Arrangements Committee (5 members plus 2 substitutes) may be made by any affiliated trade union entitled to representation at the Conference. Each nomination must be signed by the authorised official of the nominating union and must be forwarded so as to reach Congress not later than four weeks prior to the date of Conference. Nominations must be confined to persons who are delegates to Conference. A nomination shall not be made without the expressed consent of the person nominated.

Nominations for the Conference Arrangements Committee must be persons who are delegates to Conference, and may not be a member of the incoming Northern Ireland Committee.

A list of persons nominated as members of the Northern Ireland Committee and of the Conference Arrangements Committee will be sent to each affiliated organisation and to delegates not later than two weeks prior to the date of Conference.

6. Methods of Voting on Motions and Reports

Voting at Conference shall be confined to delegates and be by a show of hands, each delegate having one vote. Four delegates shall be appointed as Tellers.

7. Limitation of Speeches

The Conference Arrangements Committee shall make recommendations to Conference on time limits of speeches. No speaker shall speak more than once on the same question except the mover of a motion replying to the discussion.

8. Executive Council

Executive Council members and Congress Officials are entitled to attend Conference. Officials may speak as appropriate on motions or reports.

9. Other Matters

Matters not covered by these Standing Orders in principle shall be dealt with in accordance with the Standing Orders of Congress.

Appendix **2**

Motions by Section

Appendix 2: BDC 2020 Motions by Section

Political Situation

Motion 1 – NIC

Trade Union Relations with Devolved Stormont Institutions

Conference welcomes the return of devolution at Stormont and power sharing involving all five major NI parties, and also notes the positive provisions and acceptance of the principles of co-design and co-production in 'New Decade New Approach' which could have a lasting impact on industrial relations in Northern Ireland.

Conference also notes that the trade union movement has campaigned for better more inclusive civic engagement and social dialogue over the last two years through our Better Work Better Lives campaign and clearly several sections of the New Decade New Approach document (17, 23, sections 3.8 and 3.9 along with section 4.6.10) provide scope for the trade union movement and others to develop engagement with The Executive Office to develop these ideas further to enhance capacity for meaningful social dialogue and meaningful engagement.

Having campaigned for this opportunity, we must seize the initiative and ensure that the voice of working people is not marginalised in the corridors of power. There are proposed structures for Structured Civic Engagement which ought

to be developed into a body close to our conception of a Forum for Social Dialogue in Northern Ireland which would be comprised of the key 4 representative pillars, namely the trade union movement, employers, community and voluntary sector and farming community. It would deal with some key social and economic issues facing NI, such as our 14 priority policy areas outlined in Better Work Better Lives. It would be advisory and consultative in nature as we do not envisage it being involved in collective bargaining on pay and terms and conditions of employment of workers. It would be permanent and not ad hoc.

The trade union movement gained support and goodwill from the public and then the political parties with its responsible and justified campaigns of industrial action in the past year, and that public support has been instrumental in delivering just pay settlements for workers in many areas. Conference recognises that the industrial action taken by health and social services workers across a number of affiliates was a major catalyst in the return of devolved Government.

'New Decade New Approach' refers to a range of other important rights and equality strategies that will be developed including in relation to gender, disability, racial equality, sexual orientation and anti-poverty. Congress is clear that we want to see all of these strategies developed. Congress is committed to play

our part in their co-design and are equally determined to see them delivered in a way that genuinely promotes equality of opportunity and realises people's rights. We remain ready and willing to play a meaningful and constructive role with others to make those just aims a reality.

Conference calls on the NI Executive Office to establish a structured Forum for Social Dialogue, as laid out by the trade union movement. Conference further calls for the restoration of regular meetings of the Bi-Lateral Forum, to ensure that issues important to the workforce are heard and acted upon at the highest level of governance in Northern Ireland.

Motion 2 – UNISON

Congress input to EU/UK future relationship

Conference notes that ICTU, in partnership with affiliates and allies across civic society, has campaigned tirelessly since the result of the EU Referendum in June 2016 to protect workers North and South.

Conference notes that the UK has left the EU from 31st January and is now in a transition period during which the EU and UK will negotiate their future relationship.

Conference believes that the UK exit from the EU will have and has already had negative impacts on our members, their families, their communities and on the wider

peace process. Conference agrees that Congress must remain focused on countering and mitigating these negative impacts.

Conference is concerned that whilst the UK/EU Withdrawal Agreement contains measures to avoid a border on the island of Ireland via aligning Northern Ireland with EU rules on customs and goods, it will cause barriers to trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. Conference notes that these arrangements will remain uncertain well into the future, subject to the consent of the Northern Ireland Assembly on an ongoing basis.

Conference is further concerned that the ability of the arrangements outlined within the Protocol to prevent the diminution of rights in Northern Ireland is untested, with significant issues remaining to be resolved. Conference calls on Congress to continue to engage with both the UK and Irish Governments to ensure that outstanding issues around the protection of rights are dealt with via effective mechanisms.

Conference believes it is vital in defending the interests of our members that Congress actively influences the course of the negotiations on the EU/UK future relationship. Conference agrees that the key objectives of Congress during this process must remain:

- Protecting the rights of our members from any attempt by the UK to race to the bottom;
- Protecting the wider peace process;

- Maintaining an open border on the island of Ireland.

Conference is also mindful that the UK is seeking to enter into Free Trade Agreements with non-EU member states, particularly the United States of America. Conference notes that Congressional leaders, including Speaker Nancy Pelosi, have been clear that they will not allow a free trade deal with the UK that compromises the Good Friday Agreement.

Conference supports the Joint Delegation representing trade unions, rights activists and business from Northern Ireland that has already engaged with US Congressional leaders. Conference calls for this engagement to be intensified with the clear objective of protecting the Good Friday Agreement, our NHS and our rights.

Conference therefore calls on ICTU to:

- Undertake a full analysis of the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration on the Future Relationship and produce an updated policy position paper which outlines the key issues for all our members across the island of Ireland;
- Use these documents to form the basis for renewed campaigning by ICTU on the future EU/UK relationship and on any free trade negotiations with non-EU member states, in order to ensure that our members North and South do not pay the price of exit;

- Gain support from the trade union movement across the UK (TUC, STUC, Wales TUC), ETUC and ITUC for these updated positions.

Motion 3 – NUJ

Working Without Fear & Threats

Conference strongly condemns the ongoing intimidation of journalists in Northern Ireland, including the vile graffiti directed at Leona O'Neill in the Creggan on 5th February 2020.

The failure of the PSNI to bring to justice the murderers of Martin O'Hagan, the killing of Lyra McKee in the Creggan on 18th April 2019 and the recent attempt to silence journalists by threats and intimidation serve to undermine journalism and the right to freedom of expression in Northern Ireland.

The NUJ has been dealing with a disturbingly high level of threats against journalists. Women journalists have been the target of especially vicious abuse.

Conference acknowledges with admiration all who stood up to those responsible for the murder of Lyra McKee.

Conference commends in particular the trade union and community activists who organised vigils and protests in the wake of the murder. Many of those who did so have themselves endured threats and intimidation.

Conference acknowledges with pride the dignified manner in which Lyra's murder was marked at May

Day 2019 events in Belfast, Derry and other locations.

Conference calls on trade unions and the Northern Ireland Committee of ICTU to continue to offer support and solidarity to those who encounter threats for defending their right to live in peace without fear or intimidation and extends solidarity to media workers targeted for carrying out their professional work.

Motion 4 – NIC (on behalf of the Retired Workers Committee)

Age discrimination legislation

Delegates will recall that in 2016 this conference passed a motion calling on the NI Executive and Assembly to complete the legislation designed to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of age a requirement under the 1998 Belfast Agreement and the subject of equivalent legislation in England, Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland.

The legislation was almost ready to be passed when the institutions of the Belfast Agreement collapsed in January 2017, but there is an opportunity again to finally complete this unfinished business. This is not a tokenistic concession to the lobbying and campaigning power of older people. Rather, it's fulfilment would be a suitable tribute to our citizens who refuse to fade away from public life upon retirement, many of whom are trade union activists of long standing, still active in their unions, in the National Pensioners' Convention and the NI Age Sector

Platform, which ceased operations this year.

It is appropriate that the pledge in New Decade New Approach to include this issue as a 'priority concern' in its Programme for Government, and doubly so in the section devoted to improving Employment Rights.

The proposed legislation presented in 2015 for consultation from OFMDFM (now The Executive Office) is far from perfect but it represents an important first step.

Conference believes that age discrimination legislation in relation to goods facilities and services must:

- Be framed with a strong purpose clause containing a series of clearly articulated goals;
- Include the public, private and voluntary sector in its scope;
- Include strong protections for older people across all areas of goods facilities and services, in particular health and social care and financial services;
- Include people of all ages in the scope of the legislation

This Conference therefore calls on the NI Executive to take steps to introduce legislation to address this issue without further delay. Our older citizens do not have the time to wait.

Motion 5 – PCS

New Decade New Approach

The first paper from the reformed NI Executive promises much, but the real question is how can they fund the delivery? The recent strike action over pay, of health care workers, civil servants, teachers etc. was dominated by discussion on where would the money come from to pay fair wages and how would that impact other funding?

With NI budgets and spending being primarily dictated by the Barnett Formula and with limited means to raise revenue in NI, the general answer is we must cut and reduce spending to stay within the Barnett bucket.

We know that monies allocated to NI could be significantly higher if the UK government would clamp down on tax evasion and avoidance. The Tax Justice Network research findings show that the world's wealthiest hide no less than US\$21 trillion in tax havens. If the income from this wealth was charged to tax in the country of origin there would be additional tax revenue of US\$190-280 billion annually to fund public services.

The NI Executive and MLA's must demand action on tax justice, evasion & avoidance measures and revenue collection from the UK Government. This Conference instructs the incoming NIC to work with affiliates to lobby all parties, MLA's and MP's on tax justice.

Motion 6 – UNISON

New Decade must have genuinely New Approach

Conference notes the recent return of devolved Government under the 'New Decade, New Approach' agreement. Conference pays tribute to the courageous stand of health workers whose sustained industrial action also played a major part in the return of devolved Government.

Conference is disturbed by the failure of the UK Government to clearly support the new institutions with the significant funding and investment in public services that is required.

Conference acknowledges that a significant factor in the previous collapse of our devolved Government was the failure to implement key rights and equality measures. Conference repeats our demands for the full implementation of all rights and equality commitments. Conference agrees, in line with the motion carried by ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference 2019, that Congress should continue to hold Government to account in line with the measures outlined within the Equality Coalition 'Manifesto for a Rights Based Return to Power Sharing' (2019).

Conference agrees, further to the strategy already pursued through the 'Better Work, Better Lives' campaign, that we must seek a bi-lateral relationship with all parts of the Executive by which we can significantly influence the direction of the key economic and social policies.

Conference therefore calls on the Northern Ireland Committee to engage with the newly formed institutions and UK Government on the following terms:

- Calling on the UK Government to honour its commitments and make the necessary resources available for our public services;
- Calling on all parties in the Executive to genuinely share power and deliver rights and equality for all within society in line with the Equality Coalition 'Manifesto for a Rights Based Return to Power Sharing';
- Demanding that all parts of the Executive develop bi-lateral relationships with ICTU.

Motion 7 – Belfast and District Trade Union Council

New Decade New Approach

Conference is deeply concerned that the funding from the UK Government accompanying the 'New Decade, New Approach' agreement is vastly insufficient to address even the most pressing social and economic needs in NI.

As the UK is the sixth-largest national economy in the world, the failure to provide adequate funding to NI, Scotland and Wales is purely a matter of political will.

Conference notes the wide-ranging evidence which suggests that the UK almost certainly has one of the highest levels of regional inequality of any large wealthy country in the world.

Conference also notes that in 2009, the House of Lords Select Committee on the Barnett Formula concluded that "the Barnett Formula should no longer be used to determine annual increases in the block grant for the United Kingdom's devolved administrations... A new system which allocates resources to the devolved administrations based on an explicit assessment of their relative needs should be introduced."

It is the normal practice of all developed countries to redistribute wealth from richer to poorer regions to meet the needs of their population. The UK government must be reminded unequivocally of its obligations in this regard, particularly to the people in NI.

Conference calls on the NIC to work towards building a widely supported call for the allocation by the London government of sufficient financial resources to begin to tackle the many issues blighting our local economy and society.

Conference also calls on the NIC to challenge the narrative originating from the London-centric politicians and media that speaks of 'hand-outs' when it comes to requests for proper levels of funding to poorer regions.

Employment Rights

Motion 8 – UNITE

Minimum Wage Differentials

It is a central tenet of trade unionism that workers seek a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. That means workers should receive basic pay equality regardless of their gender, ethnicity or age.

At present it is legal for employers to pay younger workers significantly less for performing the exact same work at that performed by those only months older than them. In 2020 while the minimum legal threshold for pay per hour is £8.72 for those aged 25 and over – it is only £8.20 for those aged 21 to 24, £6.45 for those aged between 18 and 20, and a mere £4.55 per hour for those below 18. Apprentices are subject to even lower pay rates.

This is totally unacceptable and must be challenged by the trade union movement. Particularly in light of commitments under the draft priority actions for a future Programme for Government agreed by the parties for "An age, goods and facilities and services bill should also be brought forward by the Executive as a basis for ensuring that no one is discriminated against because of their age".

Conference mandates the incoming NI committee to fully resource and deliver a campaign to end age differentials in relation to the legal minimum threshold for workers' pay. There is equality at all if there is not equality for all!

Motion 9 – Derry Trades Council

Repeal Anti TU Laws

This conference calls on Congress to campaign for the NI Assembly to repeal anti-union legislation and to give trade unionists back the rights they had under the 1906 Trade Union Act.

Motion 10 – PCS

Employment Rights

Conference notes with concern, the removal of the clauses which would protect EU derived worker's rights, from the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill 2019-20. The prospect of a Tory Government Employment Law Bill, does not bode well for workers or the trade union movement in GB. Our position is clear; the trade union movement will not accept any attempts to lessen worker's rights in N Ireland.

NI workers were saved from the horrors of the Trade Union Act 2016, by effective lobbying of ICTU and affiliates of Stormont ministers and parties, which was a major victory. However we still have significant anti-trade union legislation in place, in the Trade Union and Labour Relations (NI) Order 1995 and the Industrial Relations (NI) Order 1992, Employment Relations (NI) Order 1999 as amended and others.

This Conference instructs the incoming NIC, to campaign for the repeal of all anti-trade union legislation and the introduction on new legislation to enhance workers' rights.

Motion 11 – NIC

Maintaining and improving workers' entitlements, and the right to strike

Conference notes the series of industrial actions, protests, occupations, rallies and strikes which have marked the period since the 2018 BDC, across the private and public sectors.

Conference congratulates those unions in the private and public sectors who exhibited remarkable patience and fortitude in negotiations and then, with no options left, balloted and gained the large and solid mandates for strike action and/or actions short of strike action.

Conference adds its fulsome praise to those officials and lay representatives who formulated innovative ways of exercising their mandates, ensuring the maximum impact of those actions while protecting as far as possible their membership and those service users who would have been vulnerable to a less carefully targeted approach.

Conference congratulates workers in health, education and the civil service for their respective industrial action campaigns and demands that the NI Executive resolve the current civil service and teachers' pay disputes. In particular Conference pays tribute to the sustained industrial action of health workers and their unions which received unprecedented levels of public support and reflected the deep frustration of the public at the failure of political parties to collectively serve all of the people. This action resulted in the first joint

agreement between all five major political parties in over 3 years that the workers' cause was just and was a major factor in the restoration of devolved Government. Conference believes that this proves that significant industrial action by our members can result in major positive change for all the people.

Conference, however, also notes that despite ongoing industrial action in other sectors the same political pressure has not been forthcoming in seeking to urgently resolve the dispute in education and the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Conference reiterates its support to all affiliates to ensure that urgent and acceptable resolutions are found for all workers who have been engaged in significant and sustained action over the previous 12 months.

Conference remembers its commitments made at past BDCs to the development of a sustainable industrial strategy, and expects that unions across all sectors of the economy will have their rightful place at the tables where relevant decisions are being taken which will impact on the lives of our members and our families. No worker will be left behind.

Conference welcomes the commitment in 'New Decade New Approach' to "enhanced focus within the Programme for Government on creating good jobs and protecting workers' rights."

Conference agrees fully that: "...access to good jobs, where workers have a voice that provides a level of autonomy, a decent income, security of tenure, satisfying work in the right

quantities and decent working conditions, should be integral to public policy given how this contributes to better health and wellbeing by tackling inequalities, building self-efficacy and combating poverty.”

Conference calls on the restored NI Executive and the NI Assembly to ensure that workers’ rights are protected and enhanced, that the devolved status of Employment Law be defended in order to protect the NI workforce from any race to the bottom which may be attempted by the UK government in Westminster in post-Brexit GB, that improvements to workers’ rights in the EU be dynamically aligned with in NI and that the succession of Tory anti-trade union acts passed in Westminster since the 1980s be repealed and reversed.

Motion 12 – UCU

Industrial Relations in Further Education

Conference congratulates all those workers across a range of employment areas who have been involved in strike action and industrial action over the last few months in pursuit of decent pay rises, protection of terms and conditions, fair pension contributions, safe staffing and pay justice and equality. In particular, Conference applauds those UCU members in Queens, Ulster University, St Mary’s College and the Open University who participated in 8 consecutive days of strike action at the end of 2019, followed

by the more recent 14 days strike action in a concerted effort to force employers to make a realistic offer to resolve these pay, terms and conditions and pension disputes.

Conference also notes with dismay the ongoing deterioration of industrial relations in the Further Education (FE) Sector where workers continue their fight for a decent pay rise from 2019, with industrial action in early spring-time increasingly likely.

Conference condemns the actions of FE employers to link a decent pay rise with attempts to force through detrimental changes to a range of terms and conditions and working hours, as well as withdrawing access to the Labour Relations Agency (LRA) for Independent Appeals. Given the recent changes to employment legislation which now obliges workers to go through a conciliation process with the LRA before they are able to lodge an Industrial Tribunal complaint, it is shocking that Further Education Colleges are now trying to remove the contractual right of members to have access to an Independent Appeal process, facilitated by the LRA.

Conference fully supports the actions of UCU members to date on all of these matters and affirms its continued commitment to the use of the LRA Independent Appeal process for workers.

Motion 13 – Fermanagh TC Retired members

Retired Workers

Conference welcomes the adoption and overwhelming support for motion 33 of the 2019 Biennial Delegate Conference.

This commitment to improve and develop the active participation of the ICTU Retired Workers Committees, in the decision-making and other processes of Congress, can only advance our stated Objects in respect of equality, inclusiveness and rights.

Conference further welcomes the commitment of the Executive Council to advance the goals contained in the motion and Conference hopes that they can open early discussions with its Retired Workers Committees, to seek and ensure a positive outcome.

Conference instructs the NIC to fully support the aspirations contained in BDC motion 33 and hopes it can support and work closely with Congress in achieving these going forward.

Motion 14 – RMT

Exploitation of seafarers

Conference is appalled that it remains lawful to pay crews below the National Minimum wage on both sides of the Irish Sea and nationality pay discrimination is legally permissible as well.

For example, an inspection of the Cyprus registered MV Maris carried out by the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) found Filipino Ordinary Seafarers (Ratings)

employed on a contract for up to ten months for basic pay of \$2.12 per hour and an overtime rate of \$3.73 per hour. The MV Maris was chartered to work on a route calling at Warrenpoint in Northern Ireland.

Conference also notes the effect that this exploitation has on major employers in the Irish Sea, by competitors' low-cost crewing practices, particularly on international routes which continue to go unchallenged by Governments.

Conference notes that as result of RMT campaigning the UK government committed in 2019 to introduce legislation which would apply and enforce the National Minimum Wage on ships working between UK ports and from UK ports to offshore energy installations on the UK Continental Shelf.

Conference is concerned however that this legislation has still not been introduced in the UK Parliament and calls for this to happen as soon as possible. Conference is further concerned that this legislation would still not cover routes between the UK and the continent.

Therefore, conference also continues to wholeheartedly reiterate its support for the RMT's SOS 2020 campaign, particularly the following aims.

1. Equal rights in employment, equality and immigration law for domestic seafarers.
2. 'Cabotage' (transport between domestic ports) protections for domestic crew

Motion 15 – Finance Service Union**Right to Disconnect**

Securing decent jobs in the financial services is the core aim of FSU. To build a better future for all we need to win fairly paid finance jobs across all of the sector. To do this we need to campaign and organise.

We call on affiliate unions and Congress to support FSU's campaigns in the financial services sector to ensure decent secure employment for working people and their families in this sector. In particular, we call out our 'right to disconnect' campaign which aims to provide protection for workers from the 'always on' culture. We also note that many workers in the private sector in Northern Ireland suffer wages lower than their counterparts in the Republic of Ireland and/or the island of Britain. This is best addressed by strengthening the role of trade unions in wage setting in workplaces.

The digital revolution is dramatically changing the business environment in Northern Ireland. While digitalisation will potentially bring employers vast new profits in the form of reduced costs, global labour arbitrage and commodification of data, for workers it threatens to bring redundancies, job insecurity, job precarity, workplace monitoring and surveillance, increased work intensification and 'techno stress'. Conference supports ICTU and affiliate unions in their work to protect workers from the negative impacts of future technology on work, which includes legislation to provide workers for the right to disconnect and to end the informal

extension of the working week and the over-use of technology for work purposes.

We also call on affiliates to change the rules by which we organise workers. We are calling for legislative changes to provide for:

1. The right to access and organise working people in their workplace;
2. The right to take meaningful industrial action quickly and effectively if it is required to pursue the interests of our members; and
3. That where a company has received any state support/contract that a condition of that support be union recognition.

These changes would greatly enhance the ability of unions to organise and therefore to win greater job security, pay and conditions for workers and their families. They would raise the standard for all workers and transform the economy in Northern Ireland.

Motion 16 – NASUWT**Sexual Harassment**

Conference is deeply concerned by the compelling evidence of the increasing incidence of sexual harassment in the workplace, including sexist 'jokes' and 'banter', unwanted touching and the growing objectification of women and girls.

Congress notes that the NASUWT's research indicates that one in five members has experienced sexual harassment in the workplace by a colleague, manager, parent or pupil since becoming a teacher.

Conference is concerned by the widespread reluctance among teachers and other staff to report harassment for fear of not being believed by employers and that even when this abuse is reported, in the majority of cases, little or no effective action is taken to by employers to address the harassment.

Conference asserts that this is not only having a damaging impact on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of women teachers, but is also creating a climate of premature sexualisation of children, and in particular young girls.

Conference affirms that schools should be places of safety and must be supported in tackling the problem of sexual harassment or violence towards either pupils or staff.

Conference therefore calls upon the ICTU to campaign for:

- (i) a mandatory requirement on employers to record and report incidents of sexual harassment and abuse against staff in schools;
- (ii) schools to foster an environment in which individuals can be confident that when reporting incidents of sexual harassment, such complaints will be taken seriously and acted upon;

- (iii) increased awareness among employers that sexual harassment can intersect with other forms of prejudice and discrimination, including on grounds of age, class, community background, disability, gender identity, race/ethnicity, religion/belief or sexuality;
- (iv) affiliates to work with other civil society organisations to end sexual harassment in the workplace and wider society and
- (v) the introduction of legislation to give wider protection from third party harassment to all employees with protected characteristics.

Motion 17 – GMB

Tackling Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

This congress congratulates the ICTU Women's committee for their excellent research into Sexual Harassment at work in 2019.

The findings of this research have indicated that Sexual Harassment is still an ongoing issue that impacts on trade union members at work. Over 75% of those who experienced this harassment did not report it and 67% of those who did report felt that it had not been dealt with satisfactorily.

Sexual Harassment has and is having a negative impact on the members we represent with some 33% stating that the harassment impacted on their mental health

and 13% reporting an impact on their physical health.

We cannot ignore the data and we must act as a trade union movement to tackle this grotesque harassment. We therefore call upon Congress to launch a comprehensive campaign in conjunction with the Women's committee to address the root causes of sexual harassment that includes;

- Ensuring that the Northern Ireland Executive produces a robust Gender Equality Strategy which tackles gender related workplace issues, including sexual harassment.
- Ensure the UK Government ratifies the ILO Convention 190 which mandates government to take proactive steps to address violence against women including in the world of work.
- Campaign for the introduction of proactive duties on employers, supported by a Code of Practice which outlines employer responsibility to ensure that workplaces are harassment free zones. To include, among other areas of action, mandatory and comprehensive training for all staff, particularly managers and Human Resource personnel.
- Develop and deliver effective trade union training for reps to equip them tackling sexual harassment in the workplace and an understanding of the impacts on victims.

Motion 18 – USDAW

New Technology in the Retail Sector

Congress notes that the rapid deployment of workplace technology is a cause of concern for retail workers in Northern Ireland.

All too often, new workplace technology is being introduced without appropriate consultation or consideration of the impact on customers. Where technology is implemented without consultation, this can bring about fears of job insecurity, significant changes to individual job roles and requirements for new digital skills.

At the same time, customers lose out on human contact, feeling forced to use systems such as self-service checkouts or scan and go options, where they would prefer to see more cashier operated tills available. Congress wholeheartedly supports the positive interaction between retail staff and customers and therefore believes that employers should not introduce technology such as self-service checkouts in an attempt to cut staffing hours.

Congress acknowledges that technology can, if used correctly, enhance productivity and contribute to better job design. However, without proper consultation, investment in skills and training and full consideration of the impact on consumers, new technology can bring about detrimental impacts for the workforce and consumers.

Conference calls on the ICTU to campaign for:

- Enhanced rights to ensure that employers must consult the workforce on the implementation of new technology in the workplace.
- Long-term investment in skills through union learning and high quality apprenticeships.
- All workers to be entitled to fully funded digital skills training, up to and including Level 2, ensuring that the workforce can access the benefits of new technology.

Health

Motion 19 – Society of Radiographers

Better Mental Health Awareness and Support for Trade Union Representatives

Conference recognises that mental health problems are becoming more prevalent in society. The statistics are shocking; 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem in their lifetime and over the past 20 years, suicide has killed more people than the troubles in Northern Ireland. Workplace stress, which can lead to mental health problems, is also on the rise.

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland estimates, based on GB figures, that there are 15,000 cases of work related stress, anxiety and depression in Northern Ireland each year. While a 2018 UK-wide report from Investors in People (IIP)

highlighted the Northern Ireland region as having the greatest percentage of employees who are experiencing stress as a result of work, with 85% saying they have felt stress while at work.

Trade union representatives and Officers are dealing with more members than ever before who have mental health problems which may be further exacerbated by employment issues and processes such as workplace investigations, disciplinary processes and stressful or traumatic events at work.

Conference asks: Who and what is there to help our trade union representatives and officers in Northern Ireland?

We want to ensure that our trade union and health and safety representatives feel confident and at ease helping and supporting members with a mental health problem, and that they can also identify where to signpost members for further support. This not only protects the representative but also the member.

We must also remember that under health and safety legislation, employers have a duty of care to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of their workforce is protected. This must include risk assessments to identify health and safety hazards, including factors which give rise to workplace stress.

We request as a collective trade union movement that more support and care is provided for our representatives, who themselves may have mental health issues

that could be triggered by dealing with member cases. We need to be proactive rather than reactive in protecting our representatives.

We call on conference to:

- Ensure that workplace stress and managing mental health is highlighted to the Northern Ireland Executive in the context of the new Mental Health strategy;
- review what is in place for trade union representatives regarding managing stress at work and mental health awareness and support;
- provide sufficient resources to the NIC-ICTU Health Committee, working in collaboration with the NIC ICTU Health and Safety Committee, to organise seminars on workplace stress and mental health for representatives. Seminars should include employer involvement and draw on best practice from statutory bodies including the HSENI and the Equality Commission.

Motion 20 – Fermanagh Trades Council

Suicide Prevention

That this conference expresses its sorrow and concern over the worrying increase in the numbers of people, of all walks of life and ages, who take their own lives in Ireland, north and south.

While suicide does not respect any distinctions, it is an undeniable fact that the proportions of victims in

deprived areas – both urban and rural – is very significantly higher than that in more affluent districts. And while it can affect all age groups, it is particularly concerning to see the large numbers of young people who lose their lives by their own hand.

We acknowledge that there are a range of services and supports available to those with suicidal tendencies, most obviously the Samaritans, Child line and the likes of Papyrus.

Government must do more to deal with this rising social problem. It is a complex area and requires a multi-faceted approach. Conference mandates NIC-ICTU and its affiliates to resource a campaign to ensure the Northern Ireland Executive brings forward a Suicide Prevention Strategy, which should include, at a minimum, the following elements:

- An anti-poverty strategy including the target of sufficient wealth redistribution fiscal policies to end absolute poverty which is leaving working-class people in a situation of hopelessness;
- Measures to compensate claimants for the impact of the Tory 'benefit reform' policy, the inadequate Executive mitigations package notwithstanding;
- A properly-funded initiative involving the police, judiciary and probation services, etc. to work in genuine partnership with local communities to tackle the supply, consumption and promotion of drugs, both legal and illegal, and excessive alcohol consumption;

- The establishment of a Northern Ireland-wide investigation into child sexual abuse as the failure to properly deal with this major issue has left many victims isolated and struggling to cope;
- Funding for local councils to bring forward outreach services to meet the needs of those living on the streets or in housing need, and their dependants, as a result of drink or drug dependencies;
- Legislation to mandate employers to bring forward workplace suicide prevention policies – including mandatory measures to provide workers with a work-life balance and a living income (both a living wage and living hours);
- Ring-fenced mental health funding adequate to meet rising need – including the provision of mental health services and supporting living options for those presenting with suicidal feelings;
- A study of the options to mainstream the promotion of good mental health and suicide awareness in the secondary school curriculum.

Motion 21 – UNISON

Challenging the mental health and suicide crisis

Conference notes with deep concern the ongoing public health crisis of poor mental health, suicide and self-harm in Northern Ireland. It is unacceptable that more people have taken their own lives since the Good Friday Agreement than were

killed during the conflict itself. It is estimated that incidences of poor mental health in Northern Ireland are 25% higher than in England.

Rates of suicide and self-harm are three and half times higher in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived areas, with people in those communities that experienced the worst of the conflict suffering from trans-generational trauma. Conference agrees that sustained austerity and underfunding and a lack of adequate supports are further driving this crisis.

Conference is particularly aware that within our own movement protecting the mental health and wellbeing of our own members must be a key priority. Our members are expected to work under sustained stress and pressure, often to care for others suffering from a mental health crisis. Our activists regularly support members through their own trauma, but this experience is taking an increasing toll on them.

Conference believes that in the face of this sustained crisis the Northern Ireland Committee should:

- Campaign in conjunction with our allies across civic society (such as the PPR 123 GP campaign) for increased funding for suicide prevention measures, counselling, early intervention and prevention measures;
- Ensure that all Congress campaigns, such as Better Work, Better Lives and against welfare cuts highlight the negative

impact that low pay and poverty can have on mental health outcomes;

- Plan a series of initiatives and programmes for trade union activists through which they can receive practical advice on supporting workers with mental health issues in the workplace, and through which they can be supported to protect their own mental health.

Motion 22 – Royal College of Midwives

Closing the gap in the provision of perinatal mental health services

Conference, on the 9th May 2019 the Maternal Mental Health Alliance published a ground-breaking Consensus Statement. All the political parties in Northern Ireland have co-signed the statement committing to close the gap in specialist mental health provision for women during pregnancy and the first year after giving birth.

Confidential enquires in maternal mortality have, for over 20 years, identified maternal mental illness as a significant cause of mortality and have clearly identified learning which must be applied to improve maternal outcomes. The most recent MBRRACE report, released in November 2018, tragically identifies that suicide remains a leading cause of maternal deaths. The latest report identifies the widespread development of specialist perinatal mental health services in England and Wales, new perinatal mental

health networks in Scotland and a new model of care for Ireland. However, in Northern Ireland women who require these services still face unacceptable inequality within our health and social care services.

Conference, for the last two decades there has been a robust call for the development of specialist perinatal mental health services in Northern Ireland. Despite this there has been a lack of any meaningful investment or progress. In the rest of the United Kingdom and Ireland significant financial investment and service development has occurred, meaning that women and their family's lives have been changed.

All political parties in Northern Ireland have now officially signed the consensus statement agreeing to work together to change things.

Conference therefore calls on the NI executive to identify and release the funds needed to establish specialist community perinatal mental health services in every Health Trust along with a Mother and Baby unit for Northern Ireland as a matter of urgency.

Education

Motion 23 – INTO

Safe Staffing

Conference notes with concern the lack of adequate cover available to schools when support staff are absent due to illness or other reasons.

Conference calls on NIC to work with those unions involved in Education and the Education Authority to create a database, similar to that used to employ substitute teaching staff on a daily basis (NISTR), that would facilitate the appointment of support staff on a temporary/daily basis to cover staffing absences, to ensure the safe running of schools and that the needs of pupils are fully catered for.

Motion 24 – NASUWT

Fair Employment for Teachers

Conference notes that there is comprehensive legislation in Northern Ireland governing discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, special educational needs (SEN) and disability, sexual orientation, age, religious belief and political opinion.

One of the most important pieces of equalities legislation in Northern Ireland is the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order (FETO) 1998. However, the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order (FETO) 1998 Article 71 provides an exemption for the employment of teachers in schools in relation to equality of opportunity and fair participation in employment for members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities in Northern Ireland. The practical outworking of this is that it is not unlawful to discriminate against someone in an appointment process on the basis of their religious belief.

Conference believes that Article 71 of the Fair Employment and

Treatment (NI) Order (FETO) 1998 is outdated and needs to be removed.

Conference calls on the ICTU to lobby whichever administration is in place to remove Article 71 of the Employment and Treatment (NI) Order (FETO) 1998 and ensure that every teacher has equality of opportunity.

Motion 25 – UTU

School Funding

Congress is well aware of the current ongoing crisis in education in Northern Ireland in terms of funding and resources.

Congress is also well aware of the impact that this situation is having on our most vulnerable children and the staff in our schools who strive to provide adequate education and support to them.

The recently-appointed Minister for Education has, in his early engagement with various stakeholders, highlighted his wish to address the huge issues which currently exist in the provision of support for children with Special Educational Needs and mental health concerns.

Securing appropriate support for these children in our schools in terms of adequate provision of external support, proper levels of staffing and appropriate and accessible training for these members of staff would have a huge beneficial impact not only on the children who would receive such support, but also for teaching

and support staff who are suffering great detriment in terms of their own health by being deprived of the resources and support to make the education process relevant and productive for those in their care.

Congress calls on ICTU to use all means possible to keep the issues of SEN and mental health at the top of the lobbying agenda moving forward into the New Decade. Proper and appropriate funding and resources in these areas for our children and young people not only leads to Better Work Better Lives for our young people as they move forward to take their place in society, but also for all of our education workers as they strive to support them in doing so

Motion 26 – UCU

Tuition Fees

Conference notes that one of the great benefits of devolution in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has been the ability to improve access to third level education. In this, Scotland led the way by abolishing student fees, something which UCU fully supports for all regions. Here in Northern Ireland, proposals to remove the cap on student fees were resisted by UCU Branches at the two universities and Training Colleges and rejected by an independent inquiry in 2010. UCU, along with NUS/USI and the students' unions in both Universities led the successful campaign to 'keep the Cap on fees'.

Conference welcomes the return of devolved government at Stormont after a three-year hiatus but is disappointed by the First Minister's unilateral and unprompted suggestion that higher tuition fees should once again be on the agenda for debate. Student fees are currently £4,275 per annum. Conference notes that students borrowing money to pay these fees have interest added from day one. Once the student graduates and earns about 2/3 of the median full-time wage, that loan has be paid back at the rate of 9% of income above the threshold.

Conference agrees that lifting or abolishing the cap on tuition fees is not a fair way to fund university education and any proposal to raise fees will make things worse for existing and prospective students. Conference notes the numerous reports over recent years which have highlighted the fact that the introduction of tuition fees discourages young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds and those from marginalised communities and areas of multiple deprivation. Research has also demonstrated the growing problem of educational underachievement of working class protestant boys. Any attempt to raise tuition fees will only add a further financial obstacle against attempts to reach out to everyone across the whole community, regardless of their background. Third level education should never be the preserve of the elite.

Conference notes that the industrial base that once sustained employment for many in Northern Ireland is largely gone. If we want to construct a shared and prosperous future for young people we must equip them with the education and skills they need without crippling them with debt. Compared to other European countries, fees in Northern Ireland are already high. Conference accepts that the largely English system of lending students relatively large amounts of money to pay high fees is neither fair nor efficient, and seeks only to create the space for private 'for profit' providers who care little about the educational welfare or achievement of young people and students.

Conference applauds the work undertaken to date by the NUS/USI and others, including UCU, to protect access to university education for all and fully supports the ongoing campaign to resist any attempts by the Assembly to impose greater financial burden on students through abolishing the cap on tuition fees.

Conference reiterates its support for free third level education for all.

Economic and Social Rights

Motion 27 – UNITE

Public Sector

Congress notes with concern the moves for public services to be outsourced to private sector providers

– whether that by Government Departments, local authorities or public bodies. In recent years we have witnessed the transfer of leisure centres by Belfast City Council to Greenwich Leisure Limited resulting in a sharp increase to prices charged to the public for access, the establishment of a two-tier workforce and increased pressures on the remaining workforce.

Similarly, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council have increasingly handed over to private sector providers a range of waste collection streams – resulting in the undermining of service quality, health and safety and workers' pay and conditions. Other local councils are considering their options for similar moves.

The trade union movement has had to mobilise to defeat moves to hand over control over leisure services at Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council but the fears that the council could reverse course remains.

In many Departments, public services have been handed over to private agencies, businesses and many facilities have been effectively transferred over to the private sector through Private-Finance Initiative and Public-Private Partnerships where profits are clearly sought through attacking members' pay and conditions, and rationing access to vital public services.

Conference calls on the incoming Northern Ireland committee of the ICTU to properly resource and deliver a campaign to demand the handing back of public services to

the public sector and the ending of the outsourcing agenda. The private sector has no role to play in the delivery of core public services which should be provided to all equally on the basis of full democratic accountability and participation.

Motion 28 – NIPSA

Climate Change

Every Congress agenda is full of motions demanding action on a hugely diverse range of issues. While there will always be debate about how best to prioritise resources in order to meet key objectives on these subjects, in terms of both scale and importance, the question of action on climate change and how its needs must shape all policy has to top any priority list. How could it not when it has to address the long-term political failure at a global level that has led us to a crisis involving no less than the extinction of species, including our own, and the survival of the planet on which we exist? This priority is spelt out by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reporting the catastrophic consequences of a failure to impose a 1.5°C limit to global warming by 2050.

The fact that the current US Government has withdrawn from the Paris Climate Agreement targets (on carbon emission reduction) emphasises that the need to take strategic action to deal with this crisis must be international and will involve challenging the nature and tactics of the corporate interests

that thwart such attempts. This has ranged from the US-led military interventions of the "wars for oil" to the funding of climate change denying think tanks that oppose any state imposed limitations on their transnational "profit at any cost" neo-liberal policies that have driven the planet to this cliff-edge.

Of course, as a movement we demand a "just and fair transition" to a "green" economy but this cannot be about mere tinkering. We have to recognise that by strategically addressing the climate crisis we pose a direct challenge to the very economic, militaristic and neo-imperialist model that has created it. As a consequence, it is imperative Congress bring in the measures detailed in order to affect change for the scale of intervention – democratically accountable public ownership, planning and long-term investment that will be required to avert this catastrophe.

Motion 29 – Prospect

Industrial Relations in the Energy Sector/Just Transition

Prospect notes the excellent ongoing work of ICTU and NERI to date, on promoting and securing a Just Transition for workers as move towards a low carbon economy.

Prospect calls on ICTU NIC to:

- lobby both energy Regulators, in conjunction with relevant trade unions, to establish and maintain regular forums for unions to engage with them on this issue concerning their members

- ahead of decision making which may impact them;
- to raise awareness with politicians, in conjunction with relevant trade unions, regarding the issue within the sector, and the impact on our members;
- utilise a permanent and appropriate ICTU forum, approved at ICTU BDC 2019 to consider this issue and support the work of trade unions moving forward in this area, on an all-Ireland basis.

Motion 30 – UNITE

Just Transition

Awareness of the scale and urgency of the climate crisis and the wider environmental threats faced as a result of unsustainable capitalist economics is growing among all sections of the community, most especially the young.

Trade unionists have joined and been inspired by the vigorous approach adopted by young Climate Strike protesters. The role of the trade union movement in securing real movement by governments both domestically and globally is a vital one.

Workers need to be empowered in the process of change that is needed to transition to a sustainable, post-carbon economy. There are huge opportunities – in terms of jobs and skills from such a transition – but there are also huge risks and threats.

The recent historic struggles by workers in Harland & Wolff and

Wrightbus demonstrated the way in which the fight for jobs, skills and investment is increasingly tied to the demand for a sustainable economy that meets the needs of working-class people. Workers cannot be sidelined from shaping the economic transition, instead they must play a central and deciding role. It is vital that the trade union movement, in particular those representing the trade unions representing workers in industries which will face the greatest change, is centrally involved in securing a truly Just Transition.

Workers cannot and will not bear the cost of climate change or regressive taxes which are driven in the interests of the few but justified on their environmental necessity. Real environmental and economic change must start with a recognition of the role of the rapacious and inherently chaotic capitalist economy on a global scale as a driver of unsustainable exploitation of both nature and workers.

Conference mandates the incoming NI committee to bring forward a #JustTransition campaign to engage politicians, academics and decision-makers at all levels to demand a seat for workers and their trade unions at every table where decisions are being made affecting workers or delivering the new economy.

Motion 31 – Craigavon Trades Council

Support Community Campaigns

Conference notes that there are numerous community-led

campaigns opposing fracking, gold-mining and oil exploration as well as campaigns to protect access to local nature and historic sites such as Save the Craigavon City Park and Save Knock Iveagh. Conference calls on the incoming NI Committee, affiliate unions and trades councils to engage with these campaigns and offer whatever support possible. These campaigns work to protect local working class communities and publicly owned resources from exploitation and we should both promote and support them through our union structures.

Motion 32 – B&DTC

Housing

Conference notes the return of the Stormont Assembly and Executive and welcomes the opportunity this provides for accountable government and enhances the ability of Trade Unions and society generally to scrutinise decisions taken and to hold Ministers to account for their decisions.

Conference agrees that one of the areas which requires immediate attention is housing, an area which has been neglected for many years, even before the collapse of the Assembly in early 2017. The number of people registered as homeless, or in housing stress, continues to grow and will continue to do so unless a fundamental change of direction is implemented which puts the interests of citizens and tenants at its core, and not property developers. It is well documented that a safe home, built to a decent

standard, with affordable rents and security of tenure has significant benefits to tenants and families. This goes far beyond having a roof over your head, but has an impact of better health outcomes, in terms of both physical and mental health, better educational attainment for children and young people and creating the conditions for better prospect of employment for many people. The corollary is of course also the case.

Conference welcomes the success of NIPSA's campaign since the last BDC, through working directly with local residents and local activists in defeating the now failed and much discredited Stock Transfer Programme. This sent a clear message to government that when the union movement works with others it can affect significant change. However, it is also accepted that this victory is but one in a wider much broader assault in the provision of social housing for citizens.

In addition, Conference acknowledges the changes announced recently by the new Minister in respect of ameliorations regarding the imposition of Bedroom Tax and urges her to introduce urgent legislation to ensure that the other mitigations will be maintained indefinitely beyond 31st March 2020.

Conference reiterates its public commitment to campaign to fight for the retention of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) as the sole publicly owned, controlled and accountable housing authority in this jurisdiction. Conference

acknowledges that with the retention of the NIHE comes the necessity to ensure that it can once again be provided with the right and the means to borrow against its assets to enable it to commence a comprehensive and ambitious programme of new builds and upgrades to existing homes. Such a programme would create thousands of much needed construction jobs and hundreds of apprenticeships for young people. In doing so Conference accepts that the proposals contained in the draft Programme for Government (PfG), published in late 2016, are not sufficient to tackle this growing housing emergency and that the PfG therefore needs to be radically reviewed and revised to meet the needs of citizens.

Conference recognises that in order to tackle this complex issues around the provision of public housing there is a need to be mindful of the close linkages which exist with a wide range of housing related reviews undertaken by government in recent times and which remain outstanding, including the Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations, the Definition of Affordable Housing, the Stock Transfer Programme, the Review of the Private Rental sector and the Reclassification of Housing Associations. In addition, government must bring forward proposals on how to release public land for public house building, which will assist in tackling the scandalous number of people who are declared homeless, currently in excess of 13,000.

Conference accepts that the Minister for Communities must now undertake a fundamental review of all aspects of Housing and revisit the previous Social Housing Reform Programme to ensure that the provision of Social Housing remains in public hands, is open to scrutiny and continues to be a matter of public accountability to the Minister and Assembly. This society suffered for too long through, sectarianism at the heart of allocation of housing, the efforts over many years to undo the good work of the Housing Executive and downright bad ideologically driven decisions by previous ministers and government around dismantling the Housing Executive and attempts to privatise social housing. It is important that provision of public housing remains the responsibility of government and not some other "not for profit", mutual or housing association type model. Experience in England and elsewhere has clearly demonstrated that all of these models are driven by market forces and profit making for an unaccountable elite, much removed from the needs of tenants and their families.

As was demonstrated more than a decade ago when this movement brought unions and wider society together in the Water coalition to defeat attempts to privatise water provision and impose separate water charges, Conference recognises that the same victory and outcome can be achieved by working with other to save the Housing Executive and keep public housing provision in public ownership. There is power in the union.

Motion 33 – SIPTU**Automation**

Automation is not a new challenge to the Trade Union movement, however, the pace of change posed by new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) & digitalisation is staggering with some estimates putting jobs effected as high as 35% in the UK and 47% in the US. This has radical and long reaching consequences for the world of work, TU members and communities.

Northern Ireland is particularly at risk from the adverse effects of new technologies, such as automation, due to its reliance on service sector jobs, those sectors deemed to be most affected by replacement and displacement of existing jobs. Of course, its effects will be felt across all sectors with transport, retail and finance being the at the cutting edge of change at present, however, all occupations and sectors will be impacted.

We should also recognise that new technologies also present us with opportunities to organise and gain real benefits for workers. Key to this will be our ability to collectively organise and bargain, without changes to legislation and a campaign of renewal in the TU's, workers voice in the new technological transition will be lost, in the parlance of the time collective bargaining is key to any just transition. AI and respective technologies have the capacity to make workers lives better, we must ensure that large swathes of citizens are not left behind.

In a world where technology creates few jobs but enormous wealth (the period of AI has become one of labour replacement), the challenge is a distributional one. Regardless of what the future of technology holds, it is up to us in the trade union movement to shape its economic and societal impact. It is for our movement to make technology enabling for workers and their families and for this technological advance not to be exploited in the interests of employers.

We must demand a fair share in the form of higher wages, decent jobs, less time at work and most importantly that those most affected by technological change should be the ones that benefit most from it.

Conference calls on NIC-ICTU:

- To explore and map out potential areas of risk posed by new technologies across sectors.
- This should also include new jobs, activities and areas of production which would enable the creation of decent job growth and job options new technologies may enable. This should be carried out on an NI and all island basis, especially in the context of Brexit.
- Lobbying for new legislation to protect workers faced with technological displacement/ replacement.
- To lobby the NI Assembly to form an institutional framework to assist workers displaced by digitalisation/automation which would give intensive support and training to workers. To

seek best practice and models in an international context e.g. Swedish "Job Security Councils", which include employers and unions. This model sees over 90% of those affected by technological displacement return to employment within 12 months. NIC-ICTU could progress via Better Work Better Lives Campaign.

- Increased rights to Collectively Bargain & Organise as any just transition posed by automation is meaningless without workers voice within that process. Collective bargaining will be central to bargaining for job security and new technology agreements.
- 4 day working week with no loss of pay, along with worker friendly flexible working arrangements via any productivity gains which new technologies engender.
- Education and training in skills needed for the future, including quality apprenticeship schemes.

Motion 34 – Equity

Universal Credit for Self Employed Workers

Despite many trade unions across the UK already campaigning for the abolition of Universal Credit, the UK Government continue to roll it out across the country. Roughly one sixth of the UK's workforce are registered as self-employed & pay their taxes annually. Self-employed workers UK-wide are unable to rely on Universal Credit in times of need

causing many to struggle below the poverty line & forced further into financial debt.

This motion calls for the ICTU to acknowledge that Universal Credit does not function as a benefit system for self-employed workers. We call on The Northern Ireland Assembly to push for further devolution of Social Security powers in relation to Universal Credit overall and in the interim to commission an independent report on the effects of Universal Credit in Northern Ireland including the impact of the benefit cap; the two child limit; the 5 week wait and the effect of the minimum income floor on self-employed workers.

People in need of Universal Credit deserve to be treated with dignity & support, not ignored.

Motion 35 – NIPSA

Public Sector Pay

Congress notes that pay in the public sector has been stagnant since 2010 and members pay has fallen in real terms by between 15-20% during that period. It is not acceptable that public sector workers have borne the brunt of austerity with no or very minimal increases over the past 10 years. The Teachers Dispute has been running for many years and in the past year we have had the majority of public sector workers on industrial action.

January 13, saw the publication of the New Decade, New Approach and the restoration of the NI

Assembly. It is regrettable that while reference was made to the Health Workers Dispute and the Teachers Dispute no reference was made to the dispute which had been ongoing since July 2019 for civil servants and their colleagues on civil service terms and conditions working in Arms Length Bodies. It is important that all workers, whether that be public or private sector do not continue to suffer at the hands of the austerity agenda and the restored NI Executive and Assembly treat all workers with the respect they deserve to ensure they receive a decent pay rise and income for them and their families.

It is appalling that thousands of public sector workers have to rely on state handouts to 'top up' their income. Surely it is not too much to expect that Government workers should set the example to all employers and that their staff should receive enough income that they do not have to rely on state benefits.

For too long now the trade union movement has stayed silent on this issue. The recent disputes have shown that workers whether they be public or private have had enough and demand they receive a decent pay increase after 10 years of austerity.

Congress calls on the Trade Union Movement to unite against any further attacks on workers, both public and private and pursue through industrial action strategies a just outcome for all.

Motion 36 – NUJ

Public Service Broadcasting

Conference notes with concern the threat to public service broadcasting in Northern Ireland.

Media plurality is of vital importance of democracy. The existence of public service broadcasting is especially important in reflecting the complex economic, social, cultural and economic diversity of Northern Ireland.

Conference views with alarm the threat posed by the British Prime Minister and his government to the funding of the BBC.

The decision to open a consultation process on the decriminalisation of evasion of the BBC TV licence, just five years after a similar inquiry, headed by David Perry QC, concluded the current regime represented a "broadly fair and proportionate response" to the problem of evasion and provided good value for money for licence fee payers and taxpayers is political motivated and reflects a hostility towards the BBC and the principles of public service broadcasting.

Conference is alarmed at the proposed cut of 500 jobs in the BBC announced in January 2020 and supports the strong stand taken by ICTU affiliates in opposing these measures.

Conference calls on the ICTU Executive Council to work with affiliate unions and, as appropriate with the British TUC in opposing

threats to the viability of the BBC, including measures aimed at undermining the financial position of the Corporation.

Motion 37 – Fermanagh Trades Council

Water Charges

That this conference notes that it has been 17 years since the last time the threat of water charges was raised and defeated by the trades union movement but it has recently reappeared as a serious suggestion as a consequence of the way the New Decade, New Approach agreement was adopted.

We express our disappointment that the political parties could sign up to a deal crafted by the Conservative party and Fine Gael without any hard and fast guarantees on funding for public services or the range of commitments which were included in the document.

This situation has led to the government of Boris Johnson pressurising the newly established Executive to raise additional funds from the populace of Northern Ireland, despite the fact that we have objectively higher need and lower incomes and therefore cannot afford to pay on an equal basis with residents in other UK regions.

This conference categorically expresses its opposition to the threat to impose water charges in Northern Ireland. Ratepayers in Northern Ireland already pay for water through the domestic rates – we will not be paying twice!

Seventeen years ago, trade unionists built a strong and cross-community grassroots campaign which forced a U-turn from the then Stormont Ministers who were promoting this as necessary. Unfortunately, conference notes that in the intervening period that water meters have been included by stealth in new builds indicating the long-term plans for the return of this tax.

Should any moves be made to introduce water charges, conference mandates NIC-ICTU, and its affiliate unions, to properly resource a people-power campaign to defeat the introduction of this highly regressive and unfair double taxation. No way, we won't pay!

Motion 38 – USDAW

Christmas and New Year Working

Congress is concerned that many workers in a wide range of different sectors are not receiving a decent break from work over the Christmas and New Year holiday period.

Congress notes the results of the Christmas and New Year working surveys by Usdaw, which show that in Northern Ireland, 80% of respondents said that they spend too little time at Christmas with family and friends.

Christmas Day trading legislation means that nearly all shops do not trade on Christmas Day. However, many retail workers report that for them, Christmas is just a day off, not a holiday. Long hours in the run-up to Christmas and shops re-opening early on Boxing Day leaves many retail workers too exhausted and

with insufficient time off to enjoy the Christmas holiday.

Congress is clear that there is no need for excessive working hours in retail over the festive period. Usdaw's survey showed that over half of retail workers in Northern Ireland who worked on Boxing Day reported that their store was either fairly or very quiet.

Congress commits to supporting Usdaw's campaign to allow retail workers to have quality time with family and enjoy the benefit of the break in the way so many of us do rather than use Christmas Day as a day of recuperation. This campaign is calling for:

- Early closure on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.
- Closure on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.
- No loss of pay for retail workers when stores are closed.



45-47 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2FG, Northern Ireland

Tel: 028 9024 7940 Email: info@ictuni.org

www.ictuni.org