

TUC Trades Councils

Programme of Work 2018-19

The Trades Councils Programme of Work is a guide to trades councils on the current priorities as established at both TUC Congress and the Trades Councils Annual Conference. The Programme of Work outlines those priorities and identifies specific actions for both trades councils and the TUCJCC.

The TUC's campaign plan sets out what our movement will do together, over the coming year. It's our manifesto for working people. It complements the campaigns and industrial priorities of individual unions, and offers a platform for members of different unions to work together on campaigns locally, through trades councils, regionally and nationally.

As you plan for the coming year, think about the practical actions your branch, trades council or region can take to promote our common priorities, show practical solidarity to workers in dispute and lend our support to wider campaigns that share our values. Whether it be at Workers' Memorial Day, May Day, heartunions week, Durham Miners' Gala, International Women's Day, Black History Month or Tolpuddle, trade unionists stand up for equality, justice and working people all year round. And throughout the year to come, there will be tools and resources to support you at tuc.org.uk.

Winning more for workers. We will:

- complete the pilot of WorkSmart, our job progression app, and WorkSmart Extra, our programme to get young workers into unions, and decide whether to roll them out
- set out what a new government needs to do to help unions organise and bring about a resurgence in collective bargaining
- explore how unions can co-ordinate our campaigns and demands to maximise our collective power
- use digital campaigning tools on Going to Work to support union campaigns to reach new audiences and enlist customers to support our actions
- help unions get better at reaching new audiences – like younger workers – and organising them
- champion the use of digital to transform how unions engage with our members
- campaign for online balloting and for the repeal of the 2016 Trade Union Act
- build the skills of union reps to advocate for their members in a changing world of work
- help grow the trade union movement worldwide.

A new deal for working people. We will:

- advocate for working people at the sharp end of new workplace technology, helping unions bargain on how technology is used at work, how we reskill workers and create

new good jobs for those at risk from automation and AI, and how we ensure a just transition where the gains are fairly shared

- campaign for good jobs and against insecure work – for a ban on zero-hours contracts, an end to the Swedish derogation, and to enforce the rules that protect working people from bogus self-employment and other abuses
- fight for a national minimum wage of £10 per hour as soon as possible, for decent pensions and for fair pay settlements for public sector workers
- stand up for equality and fair treatment at work for women, BME workers, LGBT+ workers and disabled workers, and help unions use collective bargaining to fight discrimination at work
- work with regional and local political leaders to push for more great jobs in their areas
- help more than 250,000 workers access basic skills training and further education through unionlearn.

Rebuilding a UK that works for working people after Brexit. We will:

- advocate for a Brexit deal that puts jobs and rights first and protects the Good Friday Agreement, with the UK a member of the single market and customs union, and a meaningful national debate on the final deal
- campaign for an industrial strategy that delivers sustainable jobs with decent pay, in all parts of the country
- set out the case for how reforms to how businesses are run can deliver higher productivity and better jobs
- bring together campaigners and unions to present a united opposition to the far right
- argue for an investment-first economy in the UK and internationally, where the ability to deliver great jobs and decent pay is the test of economic success
- campaign for proper funding and investment in our public services
- promote public ownership where it is the best way to provide high quality public services for users, protect employment standards and provide value for taxpayers.

A full copy of the Campaign Plan can be found at the following link;

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/tuc-campaign-plan-2018%E2%80%9319>

Resolutions agreed from the Annual Conference of Trades Councils

NHS

The trades councils conference debated many aspects of campaigning on issues related to the NHS, including the ongoing implementation of Sustainability and Transformation Plans despite much opposition, and the threat posed by the introduction of Accountable Care Organisations.

The Government's 'Five Year Forward View' plan mandates the introduction of Accountable Care Systems (ACS) now rebranded 'Integrated Care Systems' (ICS) based on the USA's Medicare/Medicaid model providing "managed care" to the elderly and people without health insurance and allowing insurance companies to price-limit the care clinicians can offer. They are based on 'capitated budgets' with fixed payments covering the whole population regardless of actual healthcare needs increasing pressures to restrict access to elective care and accelerating the development of a two-tier health system where those that can afford it go private and the rest are left with limited care.

The publication of a new edition of 'In Place of Austerity', the programme of the People's Assembly is a useful tool in providing arguments to campaign on NHS issues along with Health Campaigns Together newsletters.

Trades Councils:

- are urged to meet and use the PA publication to educate and inform NHS campaigns.
- are encouraged to subscribe to the Health Campaigns Together newsletter.
- are asked to work with TUC affiliates and others to campaign against ACOs and ICSs and support the campaigning activity of Keep Our NHS Public, Defend our NHS, 999 Call for the NHS and Health Campaigns Together.
- to support the wider defence and reinstatement of the NHS as a health service which is universal, comprehensive, publicly provided, publicly accountable, publicly run, adequately funded through general taxation, free at the point of delivery, with decisions on treatment taken by NHS clinical staff on the basis of clinical need.

Useful contacts:

The People's Assembly

office@thepeoplesassembly.org.uk

Phone: 020 8525 6988 - office hours 10am - 6pm

The People's Assembly, 52 Beachy Road, London E3 2NS

<http://www.thepeoplesassembly.org.uk/>

Keep Our NHS Public © 2015 – 2018

Unit 12-13, Springfield House
5 Tyssen Street
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Telephone 020 7241 4443, ext. 210
Email nationaladmin@keepournhspublic.com

<https://keepournhspublic.com/>

Health Campaigns Together

<https://www.healthcampaignstogether.com/>

999 call for the NHS

<http://999callfornhs.org.uk/>

Local Government

Since 2010 we have seen a concerted attempt to destroy local government by the Tories, aided and abetted by their Lib Dem stooges. Thousands of council workers have lost their jobs, vulnerable people have lost access to vital services and millions of pounds worth of contracts have been outsourced. We as trade unionists must be prepared to build a real fight back against this assault on our local democracy and services. As trades councils we have a particularly important role to play in building resistance to Tory cuts.

As unions in the community we have a responsibility to bring together Labour councillors, local community groups and trade union branches, to build real resistance. We must seek to mobilise in every ward to build awareness of the damage done to our communities and that it does not have to be this way. We in the Labour and trade union movement have the policies to build a better future for working class communities. We must build campaigns for the resources our cities need for an end to the ruinous practice of privatisation and outsourcing and to bring services back in house.

Trades councils are encouraged to:

- Reach out to all Labour Councillors and council candidates stating our clear commitment to campaign jointly with them against further local government cuts and asking them to commit to a joint campaign of publicly opposing the cuts from Central government.
- Encourage all our delegates who are members of the Labour Party to raise these issues at ward and constituency level and to stand as constituency delegates within the Labour Party.

- campaign for an end to all outsourcing and privatisation of local government services.
- bring together trade unions, councillors and community groups to campaign for the resources our towns and cities actually need including public meetings, press releases and social media.

Transport

The Labour Party's commitment to bringing our railways back to public ownership is welcome, it remains critical that trade unions are recognised as the best way of engaging employees and the public in the governance of railways.

The threat of embedding marketisation and privatisation of remains within the European Union's 4th Railway Package proposals, due to complete in December 2019. Rail unions across Europe continue to campaign against these measures.

New procedures that reflect the best interests of management and staff including consultation and negotiating machinery should be considered, including meaningful trade union and passenger representation, with a focus on improving services, creating a greater understanding that it is people who own our railways, and that public ownership is not simply an arm of the state.

It is noted that the East Coast rail franchise operated successfully under public ownership.

Trades councils are called upon to:

- campaign for its immediate return to public ownership through the lobbying of all local authorities and Members of Parliament concerned.

Housing

Lack of access to secure, good quality housing for people on low and average incomes has become a national crisis. The horrific fire in Grenfell Tower is an example of that crisis. A multicultural and low-income group of tenants were housed in a dangerous building with appalling consequences, their block managed by a Tory council which held them in contempt, yet there lived in the same borough some of the wealthiest people in the country.

The number of council homes in England has fallen from 2.8 million in 2001 to 1.6 million in 2016. Over 1.2 million people are on waiting lists for council housing and the number of privately-rented homes has more than doubled since 1999. Almost 30 percent of privately rented homes are not in a decent condition. Yet rents have risen by over 10% nationally since 2011 and by over 20% in London. The average deposit nationally is over £1,000.

Almost 80,000 homeless households are living in temporary accommodation, including 128,000 children.

The Labour Party commitment in the 2017 General Election manifesto to build 100,000 new social housing homes per year by the end of a Labour government is welcome, as well as the promise to reduce eviction powers for private landlords, including “no fault” evictions.

Trades Councils are urged to campaign for:

- A programme of council house building rising to 100,000 new homes per year
- Council rents to be genuinely affordable and pegged to inflation
- Council home building and repair services to be brought back in-house, where they can be delivered on a non-profit basis
- Local councils to have and use the power to take over homes empty for more than six months
- The reintroduction of private sector rent controls
- The extension of rights for private tenants, including an end to “no fault” evictions
- To demand that all tower blocks be fitted with sprinkler systems and that an urgent review is held into building standards and management by ALMO’s (Arms-Length Management Organisations) of high rise buildings to avoid another tragedy like Grenfell Tower

Energy and Environment

Trade Union Councils in Yorkshire and Humber TUC Region have been working together with the Regional TUC to develop a Low Carbon Regional Strategy due to the high concentration of Carbon-intensive industries. These industries include steel, chemicals, glass, cement which are strongly unionised and provide thousands of much needed good quality jobs.

Yorkshire and Humber TUC is committed to working with all competent actors to find environmentally sustainable solutions that can ensure the continued operation of these essential industries and protect the jobs they provide. This includes working with our trade union partners including shop stewards and activists employed in these industries as well as LEAPs, local authorities, environmental groups and relevant civil society organisations to develop a sustainable strategy for a Yorkshire and Humber Low Carbon Region.

Some of the solutions must include Carbon Capture and Storage technology, new technology and modernised industrial processes that reduce carbon gas emissions, recycling, combating waste, and other “green” solutions and, importantly, collective bargaining agreements between unions and employers to achieve change whilst protecting jobs (including retraining where necessary) and a just transition for workers so that no-one is left behind as industry and commerce adjusts to a low carbon future.

Trades Councils are encouraged to:

- work with their Regional TUC to develop appropriate Low Carbon Regional Strategies, taking into account the particular carbon footprint applicable in their area.
- campaign to put the fight against climate change at the heart of our campaign strategy, and urge Trade Unions and shop stewards and activists to give it their full support.

Fracking

The TUC General Council Report of 2015 stated that the TUC should “...set out the need to support an approach to shale gas exploration based on the “precautionary principle” [and] mindful of the occupational, environmental and regulatory issues involved as well as unions’ efforts to organise and represent members’ interests in the energy sector.”

The “precautionary principle” was defined by the 2012 Congress on the basis that “...the health of people and the environment should be put before profit... The fracking method of gas extraction should be condemned unless proven harmless for people and the environment. This type of energy production is not sustainable as it relies on a limited resource.”

Trades councils are urged to campaign to:

- prevent any exploratory drilling, fracking or coal-bed extraction on land they own or control.

- oppose strongly any attempt to weaken or override their powers as a planning authority when considering any applications for fracking.
- consult with local communities on any planning applications related to fracking received for their area.
- encourage authorities to take steps within their statutory powers to work to harness sustainable and renewable energy resources available locally such as wind and river weirs, and aim to work towards becoming fossil-free by 2025.

The TUC are urged to call on the Secretary of State for Energy & Climate Change to reconsider the Government's reversal of the scrapping of clean energy subsidies, to reintroduce rules on zero-carbon housing and tax incentives on 'green' cars and to reinstate the energy efficiency budget, increasing investment in renewables in a bid to reduce carbon emissions.

Blacklisting and other dodgy employment practices

Blacklisting and government/state involvement in it, including the use of undercover police spies, has a long history. Despite the demise of the infamous Consulting Association, and despite a number of out-of-court settlements with blacklisting employers, the practice continues to this day, and has spread out of the construction sector, although most likely operating via telephone calls and the unofficial use of 'vetting'.

Blacklisting has been most prevalent in the private-sector construction industry, owing to the widespread use of agency subcontracting and bogus self-employment, which have made trade union organisation particularly difficult. However, the spread of such dodgy employment practices, plus zero-hours contracts into manufacturing, distribution, education and what has been called the 'gig economy' increases the risk of workers being 'fingering' simply for being 'bolshie', and it thus drives down terms and conditions.

The super-exploitation of workers at Sports Direct and Amazon is well known. But conditions on the mail order delivery side have not received the same publicity. Drivers there are often self-employed, have to use and insure their own vehicles, and at busy periods like the run-up to Christmas are working till quite late in the evening to complete their rounds.

Workers and their unions are congratulated for their firm stance against the practice of blacklisting and won some victories and we welcome the Labour Party's commitment to release the papers relating to the Shrewsbury 24 and the 37 Cammell Laird workers, and to hold public enquires into blacklisting and Orgreave. Unions are making some progress in seeking to organise in the 'gig' economy.

Trades councils are urged to:

- offer assistance to unions organising precarious workers
- campaign to end to 'bogus' self-employment and agency contracting for core workers.

- campaign for day one equal rights and pay for directly employed and agency workers.
- support campaigns for the right of candidates for job interviews to see the markings and comments of the interview panels.

Refugee and Asylum Seeker Rights

The UN reports that 65.6 million people had been forcibly displaced worldwide by the end of 2016. Nearly 22.5 million are now refugees, 80% of whom remain within their country of origin or in neighbouring ones. Those who reach Britain often find themselves in dire circumstances. It can take years to be recognised officially as a refugee or asylum seeker, years of stressful, complicated screening, often with inadequate representation/translation facilities.

Thousands of children seeking asylum in the UK are denied access to education. Refugees and asylum seekers are denied the right to work, surviving on a £5/day allowance. This forces them to look for alternative sources of income, making them vulnerable to extreme exploitation by bosses who employ them illegally, typically on as little as £3/hour.

In UK immigration detention centres, asylum seekers can work – for £1/hour!
The vast majority of these workers are outside the organised trade union movement.

The Refugee Rights campaign was set up by refugees and asylum seekers who came together to organise and fight for their rights. Refugee Rights sees the trade union movement – with its emphasis on defending workers’ rights and its proud record of international solidarity – as a natural ally.

In 2017, Refugee Rights participated in numerous national demonstrations, including the UN’s Anti-Racism Day, United for Education, May Day events, as well as protests calling for the closure of the notorious Yarl’s Wood Immigration Removal Centre. Refugee Rights organises free legal advice for refugees and asylum seekers.

Refugee Rights calls for:
The right to work
The right to join a trade union
£10/hour minimum wage
Access to education, health and other public services
The closure of detention centres

Trade union councils are encouraged to:

- affiliate to the Refugee Rights Campaign.

Contacts

<http://refugeerightscampaign.org/>

Address 51 Drayton Road, London, E11 4AR.

Justice against spying and Infiltration

Since the 1960s, police have infiltrated trade unions and groups campaigning for social justice and environmental issues. Over 100 individuals and organisations have been spied upon including the FBU, UCATT and the NUM. Individuals have been tricked into having sexual relationships with SpyCops, causing psychological damage to young women.

Others have been blacklisted from working in certain industries. Many SpyCops have been uncovered by the hard work of the Undercover Police Researchers. COPS (Campaign Opposing Police Surveillance) and PSOOL (Police Spies Out of Lives) are campaigning for the Mitting (previously Pitchford) Inquiry to be an open and transparent process. However, the inquiry has granted anonymity to SpyCops.

Trades Union Councils are asked to consider:

- Affiliating to COPS
- Supporting core participants in the Mitting Inquiry
- Inviting women from PSOOL to speak about their experiences at public meetings
- Urging the Home Secretary to conclude the inquiry as quickly as possible and to remove the anonymity granted to SpyCops

Contacts

Police Spies Out of Lives, c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1 7QX
General Email: contact@policespiesoutoflives.org.uk

<https://policespiesoutoflives.org.uk/>

Football Lads Alliance

The Football Lads Alliance held a march in central London on Saturday 7 October that was several thousand strong. It is clear that the FLA demonstration attracted a big racist and far right presence. Former leader of the fascist English Defence League, Tommy Robinson, led the demonstration as it set off from Park Lane.

The anti-racist and anti-fascist movement has a proud tradition in Britain of pushing the racists and fascists back. The trade-union movement has always been at the centre of that. Over the last decade the fascist BNP and EDL have both been driven back to the point of extinction.

One look across Europe should send us a stark warning. The breakthrough of the Alternative for Germany (AFD) with 93 MPs, the expected entrance into Government in Italy of an openly fascist party, the success of the right wing conservative Austrian People's Party, the far right Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD) arrival in the Czech Republic's Parliament and of course the growth of the National Front (FN) in France.

Fascists can use vehicles like the FLA to grow. The FLA leadership is failing to respond to the concerns raised by Stand Up to Racism about the far right and those with racist and Islamophobic views who are hitching themselves onto the project.

Trades councils are urged to:

- support future Stand Up to Racism initiatives that seek to further expose and undermine racist and fascist elements of the FLA.
- support Stand Up to Racism, Show Racism the Red Card and other fan-based anti-racist initiatives which aim to take the fight against racism to the clubs and football grounds.
- be vigilant in opposing racist anti-immigrant groupings such as FLA and to coordinate our campaigning work accordingly.
- work with other community bodies and organisations to combat racism, including developing a local 'Statement Against Racism, Fascism and Islamophobia' to be signed, amongst others, by MPs, civic, community and religious leaders.

Contacts

Show Racism the Red Card

The Linskill Centre
North Shields
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Tel: 0191 257 8519

<http://www.theredcard.org/>

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Mental Health and Trade Union Activists

Trades councils will note the increased attention being paid by unions to the mental health of their members. We remain concerned that trades union activists are a group which may have particular mental health and stress related issues arising from their TU roles.

The General Council are called upon to work with affiliated unions to provide for trade union activists faced with these issues, including helplines as well as training.

Yemen

Trades councils are deeply concerned about the oppression and violence in Yemen.

Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the world. It has been suffering from famine for 50 years. The only source for food and medicine is from abroad. Two and a half years of fighting has devastated the country. Tens of thousands were killed, the majority being civilians and millions of people are suffering from diseases and hunger.

This country is under siege from the Saudi coalition pretending to sort out what is an internal issue for a sovereign country. Meanwhile thousands are dying from hunger, disease and air bombardment.

Trades councils call on the TUC to call on the UK government to end the British government's supply of arms to Saudi Arabia and to campaign to end the blockade on Yemen and allow humanitarian aid to enter the country under the supervision of the UN and secure the total stoppage of any hostility against civilians.

'Heart Unions' week

Trades councils recognises the importance of celebrating and promoting the achievements and potential of the trade union movement in Britain and that a national awareness week, such as Heart Unions Week in England and Wales, can play a very significant part, both in our workplaces and communities, in raising the level of consciousness of what individual unions and unions working together can accomplish and in raising levels of public support for union and trades council campaigns and activities.

Trades councils are encouraged to:

- fully participate in future heart union activities.

Trades councils call on the TUC general council to ensure there is clarity of purpose for future Heart Unions Weeks and communicate this to all unions and to trades union councils well in advance of the event; involve trade unions and trades councils in the planning and development of the week, ensuring that there is a proper build-up with adequate time

allowed for information to be shared between union branches and trades councils and joint initiatives to be planned and implemented by activists with communities in each locality; look for a more meaningful name for Heart Unions Week, which better conveys its aims and intentions to the labour movement and public alike.

The TUCJCC will write to the General Council to seek action.

Defending and Advancing Employment Rights and Collective Bargaining

The austerity cuts have not been proportionate across all employment sectors with many in the private sector successfully resisting deep cuts in their living standards. The cuts and Pay Caps are disproportionately hurting public sector workers. However, all workers in both public and private sectors are experiencing a prolonged and ongoing attack on their terms and conditions of employment.

Recently this was highlighted at Airedale Hospital where NHS posts were transferred to an arms-length management company. Terms and conditions of employment, whilst initially protected under T.U.P.E for existing workers, were reduced for new starters thus producing a two-tier workforce and within weeks there was dispute over porting staff's overtime. There is also a major issue of the new company not being liable for V.A.T. If this is not rescinded it is likely that this model will be rolled out in other NHS trusts.

Following the success of other regional and local campaigns we call upon the TUCJCC to seek sufficient resources from Congress and affiliated unions to fund local and regional campaigning to address these important local issues. The Trade Council network can assist in taking these campaigns into the heart of every major city and town in the regions.

TUCJCC to ensure as much campaign resource as practicable is allocated to trades councils.

Deaf workers and trades union councils

Trades unions do much to ensure that deaf trade unionists can become active in their unions. Often, this means that BSL interpreters are available for national and regional trade union conferences, and national and regional trade union disability conferences.

At national TUC level, it has long been the case that deaf delegates have been able to play a full part in national TUC events, particularly the national TUC Disability Conference.

However, at the local level, the best funded trade union branches can struggle to afford BSL interpreters for any deaf workers: costs for an evening meeting can approach £200 plus mileage for a two-hour meeting, and some signers ask for a co-signer after one hour. For

trades union councils supporting a deaf trades unionist who has been elected as a trades council delegate can use up a full year's affiliation fees in a few months.

Trades councils call upon the TUC General Council, and its disability committee to identify the barriers to accessibility and therefore the involvement of deaf trades unionists, and report back to National Trades Councils' Conference 2019 with practical suggestions to enable more deaf trades unionists to become trades council delegates.

The TUCJCC will write to the General Council to progress action.