



DOCTORS IN UNITE

Motions to DiU conference 18 January 2020

Call for activism in the face of the result of the General Election

Jackie Applebee and Ron Singer

This conference is horrified by the results of the General Election 2019.

Conference is adamant that we cannot sit back and wait for the next general election in five years, before campaigning on issues that affect the people's health status.

Five more years of unchallenged Tory rule will see: potentially fatal attacks on the NHS; the inexorable rise of racism which directly affects health workers and patients as the Tories impose more restrictions on freedom of movement and ramp up the hostile environment; further increases in mortality as austerity is extended and cuts get worse; attacks on workers' rights as further anti trade union laws are nodded through Parliament and by no means least; the headlong gallop into irreversible climate change.

This conference believes that we cannot rely on Parliament and elections to introduce the changes needed bring about socialism, a better society and guarantee a future for our planet. This conference acknowledges that we need resistance from below, be that as protests, demonstrations, occupations or strikes.

Doctors in Unite resolve to:

- A) Build and take part in climate action in our workplaces and communities
- B) Affiliate to the campaign against climate change and XR
- C) Call upon Unite to put on trains to the protests at the Glasgow COP talks in December 2020.

Oppose attacks on Trade Union rights and exhort our Trade Union leaders to stop any new anti-trade union laws by any means necessary including strike action and to start to push back against current anti trade union laws.

- A) Campaign for an end to the hostile environment and build and campaign against racism at work and in our local areas.
- B) Affiliate to Stand up to Racism

Through our local trades councils or similar local vehicles to campaign against cuts and to lobby Labour councils to set no cuts budgets.

Last but by no means least to continue to campaign for the reinstatement of the NHS as a comprehensive health service, publicly funded, publicly provided body, free at the point of delivery.

Escalation of tensions in the Middle East

Ron Singer and Jackie Applebee

This conference is appalled by the assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani

Conference believes that this will further destabilise the Middle East and will set off a chain of tit for tat actions that will lead to the deaths of countless innocent people and lead to a worsening of the misery in which many people live in countries such as Iraq and Syria. In the UK it will create fear and further divisions in society.

Doctors in Unite stands with the anti-war movement across the world and condemns this act of aggression and escalation.

Doctors in Unite commit to building and attending anti-war protests and demonstrations and will take part in any lobbying efforts to prevent further escalation of conflict.

Increases in the State Pension Age

David Blane and Ron Singer

This AGM is concerned about the possible health effects of raising the state pension age, a change which will affect every sector of UNITE membership. We suggest that UNITE prepares to support members who want to extend their employers' Duty of Care and Occupational Health remits to include the physical, mental and social realities of extending the years of working life into older ages. In pursuit of this initiative and within its modest resources, Doctors in UNITE will provide speakers to brief relevant officers and members.

Nuclear Weapons

Thabo Miller

This conference believes that the damage to health from possession or use of nuclear weapons outweighs any economic or military benefit they may have. We therefore call for:

- i) The Trident weapon system to not be renewed
- ii) Unite the Union to campaign for UK unilateral nuclear disarmament as a first step to a nuclear weapon free world
- iii) Alternative and equivalent employment for UK workers currently employed in the UK nuclear weapons programme
- iv) Unite the Union to affiliate to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
- v) The Medical Practitioners Union/Doctors in Unite to affiliate to [the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament].

Motion to affiliate Doctors in Unite with Liberty

Tom Riddington

Since 1934 Liberty has challenged injustice, defended freedom and campaigned to make sure everyone in the UK is treated fairly.

Individuals can join Liberty, and organisations can formally affiliate with them.

Many Unite branches are already affiliated with Liberty, including branches representing Brighton & Sussex University NHS Trust, Dartford and North Kent, and the Tyne & Wear Voluntary Sector.

Affiliating would publicly demonstrate our unwavering support for the right to equality, justice, and due process for all under the rule of law. There is great overlap between our work and that of Liberty - many of our patients have been subject to the indignity of the bedroom tax, or the farce of privatised social care. In politically uncertain times, solidarity with likeminded organisations is vital.

Liberty's current campaigns include fighting against criminalising poverty, opposing indefinite detention, and challenging 'hostile environment' data sharing (where immigration enforcement can access personal details collected by the NHS).

Affiliating would only cost Doctors In Unite £50 per year. It would give us a vote and a seat at Liberty's AGM.

It would also be an opportunity to promote our shared values through a press release and on social media.

On principle this is the right thing for us to do, and in practice it is a cost effective way to publicise our values and strengthen our voice. Please vote for the motion.

Gender Inequality

Steve Watkins

This AGM notes that the book "Invisible Women" by Caroline Criado Perez contains a well-documented account of failure to take account of gender differences in a wide range of issues including statistical analysis, medical treatment, safety engineering, and service planning. This AGM resolves to examine these issues, insofar as they are relevant to health or health services. This should commence with a discussion at our April branch meeting. We should aim to identify the implications for the medical profession, health services, the trade union movement and health campaigners.

Functioning as a Trade Union

Steve Watkins

This AGM resolves to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the BMA/MPU agreement in December 2020 and to use the celebration to publicise DiU's current and past contribution to the negotiating machinery. In preparation for this there should be a review of ways to improve the effectiveness of our current contribution and of our trade union service to members. This should commence with a discussion at our April branch meeting.

Joint campaigning with health campaigns to resist the ongoing threat to the NHS

Jackie Grunsell

This Union Branch/Health campaign group notes that:

The ongoing crisis in the NHS continues to worsen due to chronic underfunding leading to cuts, closures and huge staff shortages.

This year's Winter Crisis is the worst yet on record and set to continue.

In the recent General Election, all the political parties made the NHS a big priority.

The ongoing and well supported strike by nursing staff in Northern Ireland who are fighting to rectify an appalling pay anomaly.

The looming threat of a US Trade Deal which could open up our NHS to further damaging private sector deals.

We recognise that it will require a huge coordinated and sustained campaign effort to secure the necessary funding to reverse the cuts to NHS funding and to hold off any more Private Sector deals. We resolve to do all in our power to join with other campaign groups and trade unions to begin the coordinated resistance which is now required. To that end we demand that our Union leaders and Health Campaign Groups urgently meet together to draw up a coordinated plan of action.

In particular, we welcome the ongoing discussions in KONP and HCT to call for local protests in February highlighting the Winter Crisis and for a National Demonstration in early Spring as the springboard for a mass mobilisation to save our NHS. We remain confident that such a call will receive massive support and once again force the NHS back onto the political and industrial agenda. We call on KONP and HCT to urgently name the day for a Spring demonstration and to include and involve all campaign groups, political parties, and trade unions to ensure this is a huge show of strength.

Motion on Tackling Alcohol Harm

Anna Livingstone, Ruth de Plessis

This conference notes, with concern, the substantial impact that alcohol has on the health and wellbeing of the UK, with over 80 alcohol-related deaths every day. Alcohol is associated with well over a million hospital admissions every year, contributes to around 40% of violent crime, and uses up half of police time. In England, alcohol is the leading cause of ill-health, disability, and death amongst those aged 15-49 and alcohol or drugs are involved in more than three in five applications for children to be taken into care. Yet only one in five people who could benefit from treatment are in specialist care. When someone is harmed by alcohol this also harms their family, their children, their colleagues, and society at large.

While alcohol harm effects our whole society, its impact is not felt equally by all. Despite, on average consuming less alcohol, those with greater socio-economic disadvantage experience more alcohol-related harm. As a society, we need to recognise this inequality and stand shoulder to shoulder with everyone whose life has been impacted by alcohol harm, and take meaningful, non-stigmatising steps to both prevent alcohol harm and provide treatment to those in need.

This conference acknowledges that alcohol production and consumption is an established part of the United Kingdom's economy and society; however, it notes that there are proportionate and substantive steps available to tackle the harm it causes. The World Health Organisation recommends tackling the key drivers of alcohol harm, which are price, promotion, and availability. Policies that address these three areas yield the greatest benefit for the lowest costs. This can be achieved by: targeting the cheapest, strongest alcohol that causes the most harm; protecting children from exposure to alcohol advertising; and empowering local communities to make decisions about alcohol licensing.

This conference calls on

UNITE the UNION to campaign to reduce alcohol harm, by supporting evidence-based policies locally and nationally and calling for adequate investment in treatment services and to work with those in the Labour movement and wider society to ensure that reasonable, proportionate, and society-wide solutions to alcohol harm remain on the political agenda.

UNITE the UNION to call on industries (from manufacturing, distribution to sales of alcoholic drinks including hospitality) to address their responsibilities for diversification and reduction of alcohol harm, and support members in the workforce during this transition

UNITE the UNION to review its policies and practice to reduce the risk of alcohol related harm, in relation to events, and conferences, staff and members.