

YELLOW PAGES

Annual Conference 2024 WEDNESDAY 25.09.24

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Justice for Grenfell! Make every home safe

Labour Party Conference unanimously passed a motion demanding urgent government action to tackle the building safety crisis in the wake of the damning Grenfell Tower Inquiry report. The motion, submitted by my union, the Fire Brigades Union, condemns deregulation and austerity as central causes of the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

Still, seven years after the Grenfell Tower fire, half of the 4,600 known buildings of 11 metres or more with unsafe cladding have not started remediation work. No.10 wouldn't have this cladding on its exterior and neither should anyone else's home or workplace.

Behind all of this, we've seen decades of government failure on building and public safety. The mantra was to cut red tape. That meant cutting safety, and that has to end. The regulatory system failed, and that paved the way for the disaster of Grenfell Tower.

The privatisation of the Building

**By Matt Wrack
General Secretary FBU**

Research Establishment has been an utter disaster and has introduced commercial interests that should not have existed.

We will not resolve the cladding scandal, which continues to affect millions of people, unless we invest. We will not address the causes of the Grenfell Tower fire unless we can repair our public services.

Measures outlined in the motion include investing in local government and fire and rescue services, including fire inspectors; ending the privatisation of building control, fire testing and research; and establishing a statutory advisory body, including the FBU, to oversee fire safety policy, research, training and guidance.

These are all demands that my union is expecting to be delivered. Justice delayed is justice denied. We cannot wait around for justice; so in

the memory of the 72 lives lost in Grenfell the Labour Government must begin implementing urgent measures to ensure all homes are safe. Justice for Grenfell must be delivered and those found guilty of breaching the law should swiftly face justice for their crimes. Firefighters stand with the bereaved, survivors, residents and all those demanding justice and accountability.

Must do better

After 14 years of Tory horrors – under-investment and unwelcome meddling, with workers, children, students and experts ignored – it is welcome to have an Education Secretary who appears to genuinely care about getting things right for our children and has given school teachers a pay rise, albeit an insufficient one.

It's a good start, but it will not be enough. Delegates may wish to raise issues of academisation and restoration of local accountability to schools; the need to support public ownership in early years; the crisis in tertiary education – in particular the decimation of the arts; the lack of pay rises for workers in higher education; and the rising, deeply unfair student debt, with lack of maintenance support leading to inequitable experiences and outcomes. Another issue to raise is free school meals, following yesterday's excellent demonstration.

Labour must listen to education unions and students so we can rebuild the education sector we need.

Say "no" to a two-tier NHS

The SHA is one of several CLPs and affiliates whose motions on the NHS have been excluded from today's debate.

For the second year running the priorities ballot has been gerrymandered by the splitting of NHS motions into artificial subcategories, thus ensuring they are not prioritised. Our motion on physician associates was put in a single-motion category called Patient Safety, even though it was about workforce planning and the emergence of a two tier NHS.

The massive increase of physician associates, which has caused avoidable

**By the Socialist Health
Association (SHA)**

deaths and other harms, is part of the 20-year Americanisation of England's NHS which culminated in the Health and Care Act 2022. The Act created the mistitled "integrated care systems" that have fragmented and dismantled England's NHS into 42 legally autonomous public-private partnerships. We call for reversal and elimination of the 2022 Act and the reinstatement of a universal, comprehensive and crucially, publicly provided NHS. Please call for this if you speak in the Health debate.

To succeed – change direction

Conference has rightly celebrated the election of our government. However, because of manipulation in the way motions are allocated to subjects, we have not discussed vital policies necessary to tackle the problems the government confronts.

Instead, many of the platform speakers and motions discussed extolled a lacklustre policy framework, only marginally different from the previous Government's austerity now renamed "tough choices". Similarities are growing: the poorest are attacked; there's more money for wars, but public in-

vestment is falling: plus a turn towards scapegoating immigration.

The trade unions saw some progressive policies adopted, but the Leadership says it will ignore Conference if we vote today to retain the universal Winter Fuel Allowance.

Party democracy is treated with disdain. When rule changes were discussed, the leadership opposed any attempt to restrict its internal factionalism.

The platform has spun complacent myths about the General Election. But this was no glowing endorsement: our vote actually fell, and we

won so many seats because the Tory vote collapsed. Labour's vote fell from 10.30 million in 2019 to 9.71m – a loss of 0.59m. The Tory vote fell from 13.97m to 6.83m – a loss of 7.14m.

Already, initial government actions are reducing our support, ministers' integrity is under fire over sleaze and a £4 million hedge fund donation is raising concerns about what influence that buys.

The Government needs to change direction. If it does not, it risks failure, and that could bring to office a far worse Tory Party.

Money for war, but not for much else

As revelations of a black hole in public finances and chaotic Tory mismanagement emerge, one policy commitment remains absolved from scrutiny: Labour's pledge to "find a path to raising military spending to 2.5% GDP".

The Strategic Defence Review is now underway, with the aim of fulfilling the Government's only uncosted and unfunded policy promise. Defence Secretary John Healey will report the results to Parliament in the first half of 2025.

A study in June by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, based on Tory plans for the new Parliament, suggests raising military spending to 2.5%

By Carol Turner, Labour CND

would mean other budgets could take a hit of between 1.9% and 3.5%. The MoD's budget already exceeds the NATO spending guideline for member states, set at 2% of national GDP. Britain has the second largest military spending in NATO, after the USA, with only the fourth biggest population. Britain's military spending in 2023 increased by 7.9% more than inflation, higher than some of the largest NATO members including the US.

Military spending is a political choice like any other – increasing it even further is not the right choice

Restore the Whip to the 7 MPs who opposed the Two-Child Limit

Scrapping the two-child limit is a move which would immediately lift 300,000 children out of poverty.

In July, seven Labour MPs had the parliamentary party whip suspended because they voted to scrap the cruel two-child limit: Apsana Begum, Richard Burgon, Ian Byrne, Imran Hussain, Rebecca Long-Bailey, John McDonnell and Zarah Sultana. They have received solidarity from across our movement, including from union

leaders. The CWU's Dave Ward urged that the whip be restored, saying, "To see Labour suspending MPs who are fighting to end child poverty is completely wrong. This isn't party management; it's over-the-top diktat."

●A petition has been launched in support of the seven, calling on Keir Starmer to restore the whip. Please join the over 11,000 others and add your name in support at:

<https://bit.ly/standwiththe7>

Stand up to racism: London 26 October

The far-right is mobilising again. Tommy Robinson and his fascist allies will be in **London** on **Saturday 26 October**, promoting racism and Islamophobia. The labour and anti-racist movements will be demonstrating against them. Local Labour Parties are encouraged to participate.

●For further details see:
www.standuptoracism.org.uk



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