

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Cyllid](#) ar [Cyllideb Ddrafft Llywodraeth Cymru 2025-26](#).

This response was submitted to the [Finance Committee](#) consultation on the [Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025-26](#).

WGDB25-26 (6) 68: Ymateb gan: TUC Cymru | Response from: TUC Cymru



TUC Cymru response to the consultation on Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2025-26

TUC Cymru is the voice of Wales at work. We are creating a Wales where everyone has a voice through their union and an income they can build a life on. We believe that every worker has the right to be safe, valued and respected.

When workers act collectively, we have the power to create positive change in society. We bring workers together through 48 unions to fight for better jobs and a more equal and prosperous country.

We welcome the opportunity to submit to this consultation. The response below is primarily based on the policies agreed at our 2024 Congress, and we have also attached the full set of resolutions agreed at this.

General comments

Our 2024 Congress agreed that the Barnett formula should be replaced with a needs-based redistribution system that recognises the true extent of deprivation and poverty in Wales and the requirement for well-funded, high-quality public services.

More recently, Welsh Government matched the UK Government's pay awards for the NHS, civil service and teachers in September 2024, but the six-week gap between the UK Government responding to the Pay Review Bodies' (PRBs) recommendations and the announcement of the Civil Service Pay Remit Guidance, and the Welsh Government's publication of their response to the relevant PRBs did cause some uncertainty for workers. The wait for a response was significantly longer for teacher's pay, where the review body is wholly devolved.

The UK Government's intention to "consider options to reform the timetable for responding to the Pay Review Bodies in the future," is likely to have implications for devolved decision making. The TUC has highlighted how "*the piecemeal approach to devolution and lack of synchronisation between devolved funding decisions and the PRB timetable has complicated pay determination in devolved nations*" in its Budget submission to UK Government. We have urged Welsh Government to reflect on the UK Government's ambition so that workers in Wales do not face additional uncertainty.

Public services

Congress recognised that public service workers had faced years of underfunding, service cuts, reduction in headcount and real terms pay cuts. For the **NHS**, it called for:

- Investment in staffing to address current vacancy levels
- Adequate protected time for CPD

- A meaningful, restorative and sustainable pay rise to address the years of shortfall and to retain our dedicated NHS staff into the future.

It also agreed that the Welsh and UK Governments should work together to address years of neglect, underfunding, cuts and erosion of standards in the **Fire and Rescue Service**.

It acknowledged the crucial role that **Policy Community Support Officers** play in community safety, and that Welsh Government have already allocated resources for additional PCSOs in Wales, Congress called for an increase in funding for PCSOs.

Congress agreed that **schools** need more funding, noting that additional learning needs reform has seen significant levels of extra responsibilities for schools, attendance remains a concern, behaviour is a challenge, and that Estyn is increasing inspections, whilst budgets are shrinking. In **colleges**, significant cuts are having an impact, including to the apprenticeship programme.

There were also a number of more specific policy positions agreed in relation to education:

- Parity for **Educational and Child Psychologists** trainees' bursaries with England.
- An increase in long-term funding for the **National Music Service** from 2025/26 onwards, when the first three years of funding end, so that local authorities can maintain and, as much as possible, increase their support for music education and music services.
- A fully-funded programme for **universal free school meals** for all children in primary and secondary education, available regardless of a pupil's immigration status.

And as a cross-public sector policy, Congress called for 12 months of full **maternity pay** for all public service workers, and for the Welsh public sector to follow the lead of NHS England by providing up to 10 days paid **leave for women experiencing miscarriage** within 24 weeks, with partners offered up to 5 days.

Social care

Congress agreed that profit must be entirely removed from social care and that Wales needs a publicly-delivered, publicly-funded and publicly-accountable **National Care Service**. Employment conditions in the sector evidence a clear need for additional investment to improve workers' conditions and for resource to be available to bring services in-house.

Public transport

Congress agreed that there should be increased investment and expansion of capacity in **rail services**, while protecting infrastructure jobs and skills.

It also called for investment to provide well-resourced publicly-owned **bus services** and to protect jobs and conditions of all bus workers, with a vision to expand local bus services

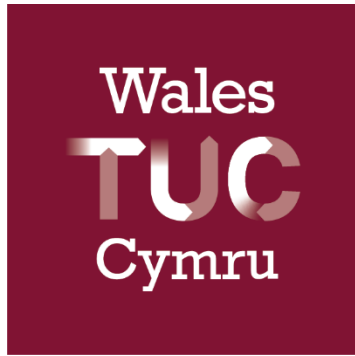
Funding for heritage, culture and the arts

Our Congress agreed resolutions that highlighted the significant cuts which have faced Welsh Government's **heritage, culture and arts budgets**, and the impact this has had on groups of workers. Not only does undermine efforts to make these sectors more diverse and viable places for people to work regardless of their background or where they live in Wales, it also has economic consequences and links to wider government objectives about culture and well-being.

Since Congress, there has been industrial action at the Welsh National Opera and protests about the closure of local venues. The cuts to key funders in the sector have been severe – for example, Arts Council of Wales has had a 40% reduction in their budget since 2010. This has had consequences for the workforce, industrial relations and communities, and government needs to work with unions in these sectors to determine what funding is required to ensure sustainable jobs and growth.

Beyond sector-specific asks, our 2024 Congress agreed the need for:

- An **industrial strategy** with investment in the creation of new industries of the future, long-term contingency planning to defend jobs and communities and continued development of skills and apprenticeships to meet technological changes. [this will now need to reference the UK industrial strategy]
- Investment in **community banking** across Wales.
- Consistent and sustainable funding for **local authorities** so they can invest in their local economy, transport networks and high streets, and fundamental reform of business rates to level the playing field between online and bricks and mortar retailers.
- A campaign of mass **council house building** to deliver the commitment to build 20,000 new homes by 2026, for councils to take over the 20,000 properties in Wales that have lain empty for over six months – refurbishing where necessary and making them available for rent, and calls for rent controls, with participation from local authority trade unions in setting affordable rent levels.



Resolutions

As agreed by TUC Cymru Congress 2024

Contents

General Council Statement: New Deal for Working People.....	4
General Council Statement: Trade Union Education in Wales	5
General Council Statement: WULF now and for the future	6
Emergency Resolution 1: The future of Port Talbot	7
Resolution i: Supporting children with Additional Learning Needs	8
Resolution iii: Welsh Government Cultural Strategy / Fair Work & Good Mental Health & Wellbeing in the Creative Industries	9
Resolution iv: ‘No more P&Os’ Outlaw Fire and Rehire	11
Resolution 3: AI and Technology in the Workplace	12
Resolution 5: Music education in Wales: funding, access, and pay and conditions	14
Resolution 6: School leaders wellbeing and conditions of service	15
Resolution 8: Protecting Education Workers from the Abuse of Safeguarding Procedures ...	16
Resolution 9: Social Partnership in Schools.....	17
Resolution 11: Invest in Education	18
Resolution 12: Withdraw plans to change the structure of the school year	19
Resolution 13: Public Interest Journalism and media in Wales	20
Resolution 15: Funding for Heritage	21
Resolution 16: Free school meals for all	22
Resolution 17: A better railway for Wales.....	23
Resolution 21: An Industrial Strategy for Wales.....	24
Resolution 22: Bank Branch Closures and Access to Cash.....	25
Resolution 23: Challenges Facing Retail and the High Street	26
Resolution 24: Organising for the Future.....	27
Resolution 25: Barnett funding.....	28
Resolution v: Further Devolution and Workplace Rights, including Devolution of the Criminal Justice System	29
Resolution 26: Opposing MSLs in Wales	30
Resolution 27: Valuing the NHS Team in Wales.....	31
Resolution 28: Tackling the Housing Crisis	32
Resolution 29: Bus services	33

Resolution 31: Supporting International Recruits	34
Resolution 32: Firefighters' Manifesto	35
Resolution 33: Police Community Support Officer Role.....	36
Resolution 39: A public campaign to remove all profit from social care.....	37
Resolution 40: Social Partnership	38
Resolution ii: Rights and recognition for unpaid carers in the workplace	39
Resolution vi: 'Cynnig Cymraeg': supporting and organising Welsh-speaking workers	41
Resolution 42: Gender Pay Gap.....	42
Resolution 43: 'Fight for 52'	43
Resolution 46: Midwifery Career.....	44
Resolution 47: The Menopause Lottery: Women's Pain and Misdiagnosis	45
Resolution 48: Equality for parents experiencing miscarriage	46
Resolution 49: Black Activists Development Programme	47
Resolution 50: Closing the Disability Employment Gap	48
Resolution 54: Charting a Just Transition	49

General Council Statement: New Deal for Working People

As the Wales TUC marks 50 years since its first Congress, and the establishment of the Senedd 25 years ago, we are proud of how our movement has shaped devolution.

General Council notes that the New Deal for Working People green paper (as previously published) sets out an ambitious legislative and policy platform to improve workers' lives across the UK, pledging to deliver new rights for working people in an employment bill in its first 100 days including:

- Banning zero-hours contracts.
- Giving all workers day one rights on the job.
- Ensuring all workers get reasonable notice of any change in shifts or working time, with compensation that is proportionate to the notice given for any shifts cancelled or curtailed.
- Strengthening enforcement by making sure the labour market enforcement bodies have the powers they need to undertake targeted and proactive enforcement work.
- Introducing disability and ethnicity pay gap reporting.

It also recognises that some aspects of the New Deal for Working People overlap with areas of devolved policy, like the ambition to see the greatest wave of insourcing for a generation and proposals for a Fair Pay Agreement for social care.

General Council notes the work which has already taken place in Wales in some of the areas this applies to, including work by the Social Care Fair Work Forum to establish a process for sector bargaining in the outsourced social care sector.

It believes that Congress, the TUC and workers would want any new UK Government initiatives to benefit workers as swiftly as possible, for there to be no detriment to workers in Wales, and for devolution to be considered and respected from the outset of policy development.

We therefore call on the Wales TUC to coordinate work with affiliated trades unions, Welsh Government, the TUC and others to ensure that possible implications of the New Deal for Working People are recognised as a formative stage and that any corresponding policy upholds the principles of devolution and achieves the best possible outcomes for workers in Wales and the rest of the UK.

General Council Statement: Trade Union Education in Wales

The Wales TUC General Council recognises that we are very fortunate that in Wales, the value of trade union education is recognised by the Welsh Government through the provision of funding for reps' courses. This means that we have not suffered from the postcode lottery of funding that has impacted on trade union education provision in some areas of England.

Since the last Congress, Wales TUC Education has provided training and briefings to 3609 reps. Training is available both in person and online, to suit reps' needs. General Council would like to recognise the work of the dedicated, knowledgeable and professional staff and tutors in both the trade union education centres at Coleg Gwent and Adult Learning Wales who have helped make this happen.

Thanks to the work of our trade union studies centres and through the support of Welsh Government funding, we have been able to maintain consistent, high quality, accredited provision that supports the vital work of union reps, health and safety reps and learning reps at workplaces across the whole of Wales. We have also been able to develop new training pathways for roles such as trade union green reps.

General Council notes that TUC Cymru has recently commissioned a major update of its course materials to reflect the 21st century challenges facing reps in our workplaces. This update will also ensure all course materials are contextualised to reflect the changing landscape of devolution in Wales.

However, trade union education is still facing significant challenges from reductions in funding over the coming year. This means that there will be an increase in the minimum number of reps required per course to make courses cost effective and ensure that our trade union studies centres remain economically viable in the longer term.

Close coordination between affiliate unions, TUC Cymru and its trade union education providers is vital to help to secure the future of trade union education provision. Working together as a movement will provide opportunities to improve course recruitment and ensure equality of access for all reps. General Council notes the particular challenges facing recruitment to the multi-union programme in recent years and recognises the importance of mobilising support for these courses, to ensure that all reps, including those from smaller unions, have equal and timely access to the training they need for their roles.

TUC Cymru plans to build on its successful initiatives such as the Black Activist Development Programme and Young Activists Development Programme and will launch a new Women Activists Development Programme later this year. These initiatives are welcomed by the General Council, which recognises the role of all affiliates in supporting efforts to increase the number reps and activists from under-represented groups attending trade union education courses. General Council commits to working jointly across the movement in an effort to increase the number of women, Black activists and young activists coming through the trade union education programme in the coming year.

General Council Statement: WULF now and for the future

In September we will celebrate 25 years of the Wales Union Learning Fund. It may prove to be one of the most enduring funds from Welsh Government, helping unions across Wales source quality learning and training opportunities for union members and non-members alike.

We have a lot to celebrate. Over the last quarter century WULF funds have paid for 221 projects, working to provide opportunities to improve employability skills, digital and IT knowledge, essential maths and language skills and improve workplace health and wellbeing, alongside signposting members to myriad Welsh Government offers such as Personal Learning Accounts (PLAs), the apprenticeship scheme and where necessary, ReAct+, to support workers facing redundancy.

Since its inception in 1999, WULF has:

- Directly funded 35,000+ learners
- Helped 15,500 learners gain Essential Skills qualifications (Maths, English, ICT)
- Engaged with over 1,200 employers

The delivery of this fund has never been easy, however, this year WULF projects have faced extra difficulties. In December 2023 WG announced sweeping cuts to many funding streams across Wales, and WULF projects were not exempt. For the financial year 2024-25 WULF project managers were forced to find savings equating to 13% of their overall budgets.

As we have come to expect from the union staff involved in WULF, this was accepted with pragmatism and a sense of collectivism, but it was an incredibly difficult ask. Promotional and event budgets were slashed, and in some cases learning provision pots had to be reduced. Every project continues to deliver for its learners and project managers are collaborating share best practice and get the best value they can from their funding.

But now is the time to look to the future. Welsh Government have confirmed their commitment to WULF, and plans for the 2025-2028 round are underway. Wales TUC staff are meeting officials regularly to discuss what the next round might look like, as we seek to address developing themes around the future of work. This includes AI and its impact on workers, and ensuring the adjustment to net zero is a process done with, rather than to, workers in Wales. We will also continue to deliver on the health and wellbeing agenda; a topic which became particularly prevalent during the pandemic and has continued to have a powerful impact across Welsh workplaces.

The full WULF agenda will be negotiated and agreed by a formal task and finish group set up through Wales TUC's Skills and Learning committee, in collaboration with Welsh Government officials.

Emergency Resolution 1: The future of Port Talbot

Congress notes Tata Steel has rejected the unions' alternative plans for the future of Port Talbot and are instead planning to continue with their unforgivable plans to make thousands of steelworkers redundant.

Congress further notes that talks between the unions and Tata Steel have now broken down as Tata has failed to engage in meaningful negotiations, seeking instead to maximise business profits and completely disregarding the impact on our members, their families and their communities.

Congress believes we cannot and will not accept the decimation of our proud steel industry and notes the devastating impact Tata's bad deal for steel would have on our local communities, social services and economies.

Congress believes the unacceptable blackmail by Tata Steel during the dispute and the derogation of their responsibility to their loyal workforce Tata Steel has been disgraceful.

Congress notes all unions have completed, or are in the process of balloting for industrial action and are urging Tata to come back to the table with better alternatives for the future of Port Talbot steelworks.

Congress calls on the WTUC to:

- Call for transparency of the remit the transition board has been given, including how the £100m investment will be spent, the conditions and full details on how it will support the locality.
- Work with Welsh Government and wider trade unions to support the workforce at Tata and surrounding communities and map the impact on the supply chain.

Community

GMB

Unite

Resolution i: Supporting children with Additional Learning Needs

Congress is concerned about the ongoing impact on children of the post-pandemic and cost of living crisis. The public services that support children have been eroded.

The new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system in Cymru/Wales has several positive aspects, such as the new Individual Development Plans (IDPs), and Congress supports the ambitions of the new Welsh Government legislation to support children and young people with ALN.

However, the failure to properly cost and fund the major reform introduced by the Welsh government in 2021, has created a system that is currently failing many pupils, families and schools.

Schools are struggling to deliver due to the complexity of the requirements. Local Authorities are issuing their own guidance on the code to cover all bases, as there is concern about the risk of tribunals for failing children. However, this is putting immense pressure on schools, particularly Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinators (ALNCos).

Congress calls on Welsh Government to amend the ALN code and base legislation to better reflect what schools can achieve and provide the much-needed cash investment to deliver on the demands of the code as it stands. Children are being failed and we cannot sit back and let this happen.

Congress also recognises the important role of Educational and Child Psychologists (ECPs) in supporting children; we note the recruitment and retention crisis in the profession. It calls on the department of education in Welsh Government to double the places on the Cardiff ECP Training Course, designated for Welsh medium candidates (from 1 to 2) and to establish a second Educational and Child Psychology training course for North and mid-Wales.

We further call on the Welsh Government to create parity for bursary arrangements for Trainees in Cymru/Wales with those in England, in terms of the equity of the award, so that they can afford basic living expenses and thus increase equality of access to the course. Also, to follow this up by enabling the employment of Trainee Educational Psychologists by Local Authorities, so that they have the best possible working conditions and contribute to solving the recruitment crisis in the profession.

Resolution iii: Welsh Government Cultural Strategy / Fair Work & Good Mental Health & Wellbeing in the Creative Industries

The Creative Industries contribute over 5% to Welsh GDP, exhibiting accelerated growth post-pandemic, faster than the overall Welsh economy. Despite this headline success, financial challenges pervade the sector, particularly in arts and music, and screen, and there are serious concerns around the poor treatment of the workforce.

The impending Welsh Government Culture Strategy presents an opportunity to tackle these issues. However, the current draft lacks ambition. Rather, it chooses to maintain a broad narrative, aspiring only to ensure these sectors are "great places to work and volunteer".

Given the current climate, this strategy is not fit for purpose, especially considering the language tying employment and volunteering against the backdrop of budget cuts imposed on Arts Council Wales and the subsequent effect on employment opportunities for our members.

Acknowledging that the Culture Sector has by no means been singled out, the current cuts will however be felt by our members and organisations across Wales, and by all who benefit from their work. The predominantly freelance workers already grapple with the perception that their career path is impractical and unsustainable, leading to many leaving the industry.

The Senedd's Culture, Communications & Welsh Language Committee produced a report 'Behind the scenes - The creative industries workforce' October 2023. Recommendations include a genuine Social Partnership / Ethical Procurement approach that highlights the importance of the Welsh Government engaging with the creative unions and employers to ensure that workers are able to work in an environment free from discrimination, bullying and harassment, and free from the threats of disadvantage for asserting their rights.

Congress believes that the principles of Fair Work & Good Mental Health & Wellbeing should be key components of any workplace in Wales in particular when employing vulnerable workers including freelancers, casuals, new entrants and those from under-represented groups. It is important, therefore, for Welsh Government strategy to continue to focus on skills alongside new provisions on fair pay and working conditions on union agreements to protect the professionalism of our members and the continued exploration of a basic income for the arts,

This Congress asks TUC Cymru to work with the Creative Unions in urging the Welsh Government to create a transformative Culture Strategy, grounded in social partnership principles and union engagement, which provides tangible support to struggling sectors and a meaningful narrative for developing and sustaining the workforce. This must also be underpinned by strategic increases in funding for culture and the creative industries as soon as possible.

Congress also instructs the Wales TUC to campaign alongside the Creative Unions to work with the public sector and employers to:

- Discuss, share & implement best practice in terms of Fair Work and Good Mental Health & Wellbeing.

- Ensure that all public funding applications (including the Arts Council of Wales, Books Council of Wales and Local Authorities) include a clause around supporting Fair Work and Good Mental Health & Wellbeing of the workforce (that is effectively monitored)
- Provide support, advice and guidance to employers to support them to meet their legal and ethical duty of care to the workforce
- To support the workforce in understanding their rights at work including the role of trade unions & in safeguarding their mental health and wellbeing.

Resolution iv: ‘No more P&Os’ Outlaw Fire and Rehire

Congress notes that it is over two years since P&O Ferries unlawfully dismissed 786 UK seafarers replacing them with agency crew largely recruited from overseas. Conference condemns the Conservative Government in Westminster for failing to punish P&O.

This Congress notes with concern that the pernicious practice of dismissal and reengagement, or fire and rehire, is increasingly being utilized as a first approach by unscrupulous employers to force fundamental changes to terms and conditions of employment. It observes the wholly inadequate “statutory code” proposed by the Westminster government and considers it to be derisory as a means of protecting workers. Further noting that this “statutory code”, ostensibly produced in response to the actions of P&O Ferries, would not prevent such actions from occurring.

This congress knows well the additional vulnerabilities of the Maritime workforce, often disparately treated and often employed offshore, which further weakens employment protections. It congratulates the efforts of unions in resisting such attempts and notes successes of maritime affiliates in resisting fire and rehire attempts that would impact Welsh maritime professionals, as well as maritime professionals based elsewhere.

Congress believes the continued failure to introduce strong mandatory employment conditions and legal protections in the ferry sector means there is the ever-present threat of “another P&O.” This lack of action also allows the continuation of outrageous employment practices in the sector, including Irish Ferries using hundreds of international agency crew on below minimum wage voyage contracts for two months working 12 hour days at sea with minimal employment rights or shore leave on routes from ports in Wales.

Congress also believes that to prevent another P&O, maritime jobs on ferry and shipping services from ports in Wales should be covered by sectoral collective bargaining rights through Fair Pay Agreements, including at Fishguard and those in the Holyhead and Celtic Freeports.

Congress welcomes the TUC’s initiative with the maritime affiliates to campaign to improve conditions in the ferry sector and commits to campaign for new legal protections for seafarers and mandatory fair pay agreements, as envisaged in the New Deal for Working People, to include the ferry sector and to seek the support of the Welsh Government for this objective. Congress believes such mandatory fair pay agreements would reverse the decline in jobs, training, employment and safety standards in the Irish Sea and grow the maritime economy in Wales.

Congress resolves to campaign to outlaw fire and rehire and commits to supporting all affiliates who are facing threats by employers to fire and rehire those they represent, standing in solidarity with workers who are facing ever more callous employers seeking to drive down terms and conditions in Wales and elsewhere.

GC Qualification: General Council supports the composite in full, but with the explanation that the power to outlaw fire and hire sits with Westminster, not the Senedd. Wales TUC will promote this policy position in a devolved setting and encourage Welsh Government to lobby for this in their interactions with UK Government too, as well as campaign with the TUC to see fire and rehire banned.

Resolution 3: AI and Technology in the Workplace

This Congress notes the accelerated pace of developments in artificial intelligence (AI) and the range of issues this creates for workers and wider society, and welcomes the work to date by the Wales TUC and the production of the Wales TUC “A Snapshot of Workers in Wales Understanding of AI.”

Surveillance technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) are being rapidly expanded and used to exacerbate workplace inequalities, create pressure on staff and in some cases, create an unsafe work environment.

AI development is driven by private corporations whose work is subject to minimal public oversight.

The Creative industries have a specific cause for concern with writers, reporters, photographers, videographers, musicians and actors finding their work and likeness being stolen and used without consent.

Employers in journalism are seeking to utilise generative AI in reporting and content creation, perpetuating biases and misinformation embedded within data.

Congress believes that as these technologies are introduced in our workplaces without consultation and agreement, it will result in a degradation of pay, terms and conditions and infringe on our basic human rights.

Congress believes the labour movement must improve the knowledge and policy of AI development and provide resources to confront the inappropriate use of these technologies in the workplace.

Congress believes a legal right to consultation must be introduced.

Congress resolves:

- a) Work with the Welsh Labour Party and the Welsh Government to ensure that consultation with trade unions on the introduction of new technologies is part of the Fair Work policy.
- b) Lobby for AI regulation nationally and internationally, for instance, amendments to the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Equality Act to guard against discriminatory algorithms.
- c) Campaign to:
 - Provide funding for the reskilling and retraining of workers at risk of being replaced by AI, including the right to a human connection when decisions are being made about an individual and their job..
 - Introduce safeguarding policies to support workers in the new AI driven workplace.
 - Promote the adoption of Equality Impact Assessments across Wales, with a framework promoting employer action on the findings.
 - Ensure the use of AI in workplaces is not without explicit collective agreement.
 - Produce model workers’ demands for AI to improve working conditions and services including:
 - Reduction mundane tasks
 - Improvements to job design

- Utilising skills of workforce better
- Improving quality services to the public whilst maintaining accessibility
- Shorten working week with no loss of pay

Resolution 5: Music education in Wales: funding, access, and pay and conditions

Congress notes that:

- UK Music found that music contributed £6.7bn (GVA) to the UK economy in 2022;
- Music education is a vital part of a full and rounded education for children and young people;
- Music education is essential for developing the professional musicians and audiences of the future but there have been cuts to, and problems with, music education in Wales for many years;
- The introduction of the National Plan for Music Education and funding for the National Music Service by the Welsh Government in 2022 was a major step forwards;
- There has been progress since then but more must be done to ensure that all children across Wales can access high quality music education;
- Increased long-term funding beyond the first three years of the National Plan is crucial for the sustainability of music services and access to music education for all children and young people across Wales;
- The work of visiting music teachers is vital to achieving that goal, as is employers, public bodies, and trade unions working together in social partnership.

Congress asks TUC Cymru and its affiliates to call and campaign for:

- Local authorities to maintain and, as much as possible, increase their support for music education and music services;
- Welsh Government to complete the review of music teachers' pay and conditions and build on it with specific improvements from 2025/26 onwards - ensuring the safeguarding of those music teachers currently employed under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document;
- Welsh Government to provide an increase in long-term funding for the National Music Service from 2025/26 onwards, when the first three years of funding end.

Resolution 6: School leaders wellbeing and conditions of service

Putting school leaders' mental health and wellbeing was at the forefront of NAHT Cymru's industrial action. For too long our members had taken on additional responsibilities with no reward; been subject to overly burdensome bureaucratic processes and spent too much time on administration tasks than leading teaching and learning. Through negotiations during industrial action, NAHT Cymru has successfully put conditions of service for school leaders at the top of the agenda and it now forms a key part of the remit for the IWPRB for 2024.

NAHT Cymru now calls on congress to support improved conditions of service of school leaders, including a provision for protected leave and reasonable working hours. School leaders are being exploited and education will suffer if this continues.

Resolution 8: Protecting Education Workers from the Abuse of Safeguarding Procedures

Congress notes that school staff have the legal power to use reasonable force to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others.

Congress is concerned that this protection relies upon the interpretation of the word 'reasonable' and notes that 53% of teaching assistants experienced physical violence in the last year.

Congress believes that those who judge what is 'reasonable' in Local Authorities on the whole are out of touch with teachers and education workers and have no understanding of, and no intention of engaging with, the realities of the modern classroom.

Congress calls on the General Council to lobby Local Authorities in Wales to ensure that Safeguarding procedures are fair and transparent by including the following:

- i. Appropriate Trade Union involvement at all information gathering stages;
- ii. Recognised Union representation at Strategy Meetings;
- iii. A determination to deal with facts rather than gossip and;
- iv. Improved appointment of Safeguarding Officers to ensure that they have recent and relevant education experience;

whilst acknowledging fundamental change is required in Schools to prevent violence and aggression protecting the education workforce.

Resolution 9: Social Partnership in Schools

Congress welcomes the promise of Social Partnership for Public Sector Workers in Wales brought into law through the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act.

Congress commends the Welsh Government for continuing to engage with partner organisations to promote Social Partnership in all workplaces in Wales.

However, Congress is concerned that, because of Local Management of Schools, the education workforce are excluded from the benefits of the Social Partnership Duty.

Congress calls on the General Council to:

- i. lobby the Welsh Government to look at ways of establishing meaningful Social Partnership at school level in Wales;
- ii. lobby the Welsh Government to work with Education Unions and Local Authorities to strengthen Social Partnership at Local Authority level and;
- iii. lobby the Welsh Government to revisit the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to look into increasing the powers of Local Authority rights of intervention to include ensuring that schools engage in meaningful social partnership.

Resolution 11: Invest in Education

Congress believes that a strong education service is crucial for a strong economy and a happy and productive people.

Congress therefore calls upon the Welsh Government to get a grip on the challenges that face the education service in Wales.

On pay, teachers expect that the settlement for the next financial year will not address the detriment which has been experienced in real terms since 2010.

Schools need more funding. Additional learning needs reform has seen significant levels of extra responsibilities for schools, attendance remains a concern, behaviour is a challenge, Estyn is increasing inspections, whilst budgets are shrinking.

In our colleges, significant cuts are having an impact, including to the apprenticeship programme.

Enough is enough. We must invest in education and prioritise our education workforce, in order that they are equipped to support our children and young people in their learning.

We ask that Congress helps ensure that the Welsh Government prioritises:

- wellbeing support for education professionals and tackling workload, with meaningful changes in the classroom.
- funding, training, and time outside the classroom for Additional Learning Needs Coordinators to allow them to do their jobs.
- support for every teacher in Wales to help them create an inclusive curriculum.
- improving school and college funding.
- assessment arrangements which deliver support for learners to show what they can do, whilst not increasing workload for teachers.
- the need for Estyn to undertake a mental health and wellbeing impact assessment of staff, and not increase the number of visits.

GC Qualification: General Council supports the motion, and recognises that Estyn have introduced a set of support arrangements for inspections and worked closely with education unions on workload and wellbeing. It welcomes the constructive engagement by Estyn and the education unions on the wellbeing and workload task groups and supporting the development of Welsh Government's workload impact assessment, and notes that Estyn have said they will use the impact assessment, once finalised, to consider the impact of their inspection arrangements. It has clarified that the motion is calling for no increase in the number of core inspections.

Resolution 12: Withdraw plans to change the structure of the school year

Congress notes that at this time the education workforce has been put under enormous strain to deliver the new curriculum, there is significant challenges in terms of behaviour and attendance, additional learning needs reform has led to significant workload implications, and funding and pay are under pressure.

The Welsh Government has not listened to calls for proper consultation with the education trade unions, whose members will be most impacted by the planned changes. This was an opportunity for Welsh Government to show their commitment to proper trade union consultation – and outlines why we are in need of formal collective bargaining mechanisms in the education sector in Wales.

Welsh Government have ignored our calls for a clear evidence base, instead relying heavily on consumer-style surveys. The summer holidays are amongst the shortest in Europe, with countries who have longer summer breaks doing better than Wales in the most recent PISA results. Thus, undermining claims about learning loss and achievement, linked to our holidays.

We ask that Congress lobbies the Welsh Government to withdraw the proposals to change the structure of the school year.

Resolution 13: Public Interest Journalism and media in Wales

This Congress welcomes the report and recommendations of the Welsh government's tripartite public interest journalism (PIJ) working group, Of and For Wales: towards a sustainable future for public interest journalism. Its key recommendation is for public interest journalism in Wales to be considered a public service and for it to be funded by public money to ensure a plurality of media and a more diverse workforce.

The media industry in Wales is contracting as journalists are made redundant, local offices sold, and newspapers close. This is of concern to the trade union movement because the life and struggles of the people of Wales are not properly reported, nor is power fully held to account.

Journalism needs to reflect the society it operates in and increasing the diversity of people becoming journalists will help ensure that life across Wales is reported. The trade union movement will also recognise the importance to a democratic society that industrial issues and trade union campaigns locally and nationally are reported.

The trial of a publicly funded Senedd reporter has been successful and shows the model of public money being used to place journalists in areas where there is little or no media coverage would benefit the life and culture of Wales.

This Congress agrees to fully support the proposals in Of and For Wales and calls on the general council and the wider trade union movement in Wales to campaign and pressure the WG to enact the proposals.

Resolution 15: Funding for Heritage

Conference notes:

- I. The 2024-25 Welsh Government Budget imposes cuts of 10% for the National Museum of Wales and National Library of Wales and 22% for the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales;
- II. This £4.7m cut represents less than 0.02% of the Welsh Government Budget.
- III. Efforts by some Welsh Government sponsored bodies to circumvent the agreed partnership agreements and negotiating arrangements with recognised trades unions,
- IV. The heritage sector is a good financial investment returning £5 into the economy for each £1 invested (Prospect High 5 campaign)
- V. Cultural institutions in Scotland in 2024-25 will see an increase in funding

Conference believes that:

- a. Cultural heritage is an essential part of who we are, fundamental to wellbeing and should be funded properly;
- b. These cuts endanger our national cultural assets and risks institutional failure;
- c. The loss of staff with specialist knowledge has a permanent damaging effect on the sustainability of the sector;
- d. Cuts to heritage budgets will damage Wales' economy,
- e. Charging for access to museums and library services is contrary to the spirit of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

Conference resolves to:

1. Condemn any efforts to undermine agreed partnership agreements and negotiating arrangements with unions and to call on Welsh Government to raise this as a matter of urgency with all affected sponsored bodies;
2. Call on the Welsh Government to acknowledge the value of the heritage sector, reverse the cuts to the sector made in the March 2024 budget, and establish a sustainable funding model for the sector to provide sufficient funding to ensure its long-term stability.

Resolution 16: Free school meals for all

Congress notes:

- The findings of the Bevan Foundation report 'What am I supposed to do? Living with No Recourse to Public Funds in the Nation of 'Sanctuary'.
- That most local authorities in Wales exclude children from free school meals because of their immigration status. Some local authorities that offer free school meals to children affected by No Recourse to Public Funds have application forms and assessment processes which make it impossible for parents to apply.

Congress welcomes:

- the introduction of free school meals in primary schools in Wales.

Congress believes:

- that hunger does not stop at primary school age, and therefore free school meals should be available to all pupils in secondary schools.
- Universal free school meals are a way in which children can have an equal opportunity to participate in education.

Congress calls on:

- The Welsh Government to introduce universal free school meals for all children in primary and secondary education. This must be fully-funded by Welsh Government to protect the already strained and under-funded budgets of the schools in Wales.
- On public bodies in Wales to ensure free school meals for pupils regardless of their immigration status.
- Local authorities to develop accessible and NRPF-friendly application processes for free school meals.

Resolution 17: A better railway for Wales

Congress recognises rail is a sustainable form of travel and properly staffed rail networks with a well maintained and high-quality infrastructure are essential for making the railway safe, secure and accessible for all.

Congress believes that as well as privatisation and lack of sufficient investment the biggest barrier to a better railway has been the fragmentation of the network, with the damaging separation of operations and infrastructure and staff being employed by a multitude of companies, including through outsourcing and sub – contracting.

Whilst Congress welcomes the UK Labour Party commitment to bring the railways back into public ownership under a unified structure and also the decision of the Welsh Government to nationalise Transport for Wales Rail services Congress believes we will have to fight to realise our objective of a wholly integrated GB railway in public ownership.

Therefore, noting that 2024 is a General Election year and 2026 the Senedd elections, Congress agrees to campaign for the following rail objectives over the coming period.

1. A single, unified, nationally integrated GB rail network, with significantly enhanced powers for the Senedd and Welsh Government over Welsh rail services
2. End outsourcing / sub – contracting.
3. Increased investment and expansion of capacity, also ensuring the protection of infrastructure jobs and skills.
4. No driver only operation, no ticket office closures or cuts. Increase staff on stations and trains, including catering staff.
5. Real action and legislation to reduce assaults on staff, with tougher penalties for those who assault transport workers.

Resolution 21: An Industrial Strategy for Wales

Conference recognises the need for an Industrial Strategy for Wales which demands bold and long-term thinking.

Conference welcomed Welsh Government's recently published Economic Mission and its reference to 'active industrial policy'. Conference notes that 2035 will be a major milestone date for Wales's transition to net zero. An Industrial Strategy should focus on, but not be limited to, new investment, industries of the future, critical mineral supply and skills development.

Conference further notes the impact of recent closures of workplaces in Wales, such as Ford Bridgend, and is concerned for the future of steel in Wales. An Industrial Strategy should aim to make Wales a world leader in green steel, protecting jobs and expanding opportunities for generations to come. It must focus on investment which grows and improves the economy and is tied to job creation.

Conference is aware of the investment in two freeports in Wales and agrees that freeports cannot be a way to attack workers rights, allow undercutting of conditions or pay, divide regions or industrial sectors.

Conference calls on the Wales TUC to work with affiliated trade unions on an Industrial Strategy for Wales and consider the following:

- Investment in the creation of new industries of the future.
- Provide long-term contingency planning to defend jobs and communities.
- Develop a critical mineral supply strategy for Wales.
- Continue to develop skills and apprenticeships to meet technological changes.
- Liaise with Welsh Government to ensure that workers and communities benefit from freeports and not just boardrooms and shareholders.

Resolution 22: Bank Branch Closures and Access to Cash

Conference notes that workers in the financial services industry provide a vital service to customers, communities and small businesses.

Conference is aware that the closure of bank branches over the last decade in Wales has resulted in a marked decline in access to cash for many people. It is reported that Lloyds, Halifax, Barclays and Nat West will close more bank branches across Wales in 2024.

Conference understands the loss of cash facilities costs customers directly. Whilst the profit-making finance companies save money, customers have to absorb the costs to travel farther, including time implications, particularly in rural areas. Local communities have been decimated by the closure of bank branches. Bank hubs or post offices do not provide the range of financial services or support that local bank branches and workers are able to provide.

Conference notes that as we move towards a cashless society, bank workers, those working in the design, print and production of bank notes and coins, and the maintenance of ATMs could now be at risk of job losses. Conference also notes that the push for online financial transactions has led to heightened concern over fraudulent activity, however digital exclusion continues to impact many in Wales.

Conference is disappointed that the plan for a Community Bank for Wales has not yet succeeded.

Conference is calling on the Wales TUC to set up a working group, which should include the voice of those who work in the sector, to find solutions to this growing and complex issue.

GC Qualification: General Council supports the motion but also recognises that the powers of Welsh Government and the Senedd are limited in this area. We therefore support this motion with the explanation that the working group will focus on the work the Welsh Government and Senedd has done in this area, such as the financial inclusion agenda, and work with the TUC to lobby for change at a UK level.

Resolution 23: Challenges Facing Retail and the High Street

Congress is deeply concerned about the challenges facing retail and high streets in Wales, and notes that last year several major national retailers permanently closed stores and cut jobs.

Congress recognises the actions already taken by the Welsh Government to help the sector, including last year's launch of the Retail Action Plan, and the more recent decision to cap the business rates multiplier. While this support is welcome, figures from the Welsh Retail Consortium show that over one in six shops in Wales are empty, with Wales reporting the second highest number of vacant shops in the UK.

Congress notes that the retail sector is the largest private sector employer in Wales, providing 139,000 jobs.

Congress calls upon Wales TUC to campaign for:

- A new deal for workers so that retail jobs are treated as proper jobs.
- Sustained investment in skills for retail workers to help meet the challenges of new technology and automation, including lobbying Westminster for fundamental reform of the Apprenticeship Levy.
- A comprehensive review of rents and lease arrangements to ensure the right measures are in place to support a collaborative relationship between landlords and retailers.
- Urgent Government action to help address the challenges facing the sector, including fundamental reform of business rates to level the playing field between online and bricks and mortar retailers.
- Consistent and sustainable funding for local authorities so they can invest in their local economy, transport networks and high streets.

Resolution 24: Organising for the Future

Congress notes that the proportion of UK workers who are trade union members fell again in 2022, this included a fall of 4.2% in Wales. The drop was partly driven by the decrease in private sector members.

Whilst membership levels have fallen, research commissioned by Wales TUC shows approval levels of unions in Wales stands at 57% with disapproval at just 7% – an 8:1 ratio in support. These figures show that working people in Wales back unions to fight and win on their behalf, but our movement is only as strong as its members. To be as effective a voice as possible for working people in Wales, we need to redouble our efforts to increase membership and ensure we have a strong presence in workplaces throughout the country.

Congress notes that there is significant under-representation of groups such as Black workers and young workers within the Trade Union Movement and believes that this must be addressed so that our movement is fully representative of modern Wales. Engaging all under-represented groups in our work has never been more important at a time of such challenges. Therefore, Congress wishes to commend the Wales TUC for its first Black Activist Development Programme which aimed to increase the representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds in leadership and senior roles.

Congress calls on Wales TUC to:

- Develop a national strategy for increasing union membership, especially in the private sector, in consultation with affiliated unions.
- Work with affiliated unions to support greater involvement of union members from under-represented groups in union structures/activities.
- Involve and engage young workers in specific work around the recruitment and development of other young workers and reps.

Resolution 25: Barnett funding

Congress recognises the funding crisis currently faced by public services in Wales results from the policies of the Westminster Government, its handling of the economy and its attitude to public spending. The options open to Welsh Government, the Local Authorities, Health Boards and other public service bodies in Wales are curtailed and hamstrung by the current Barnett funding formula that sees Westminster policy dictating the scope and potential of capital and revenue funds in Wales.

We recognise that the Welsh Government has some revenue raising powers but that the potential these have fall well short of the funding requirement necessary to deliver high quality public services in Wales.

Congress commits to campaigning to replace the Barnett formula with a needs based redistribution system that recognises the true extent of deprivation and poverty in Wales and the requirement for well funded high quality public services.

We demand that the next UK government reverses the disastrous Tory austerity policies forced on Wales and the Welsh government campaigning for a restoration of funding to make use of reserves, prudential borrowing and other measures such as capitalising eligible general fund expenditure to set legal, no-cuts budgets."

Resolution v: Further Devolution and Workplace Rights, including Devolution of the Criminal Justice System

Congress welcomes the publication of Prof. Jean Jenkins' report on the Future of Work and Devolution in Wales and of the report of the Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales.

Congress believes these two documents make an important contribution to the debate on the limits of our current governmental arrangements and the scope for an alternative in which people are empowered, as citizens and workers.

Congress recalls that, during the 1980s and 1990s, the trade union movement recognised that the absence of democratic devolution in Wales had left the country particularly vulnerable to the Tory onslaught on our jobs, communities and trade unions; on that basis, unions helped to make the case for an Assembly, contributing significantly to the 'yes' vote in the 1997 referendum.

Congress believes that, with a Westminster government once again attacking workers' interests and trade union rights, there is a strong case for further devolution to bolster the interests of working people and to limit the powers of the Westminster government to impose anti-union legislation, like the current Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act, on Wales.

Congress therefore:

- commends the General Council for agreeing to establish a working group to explore these issues and calls on this group to look positively at the scope for further devolution to enhance workplace rights.
- instructs the General Council to develop a campaign on winning improved workplace rights in Wales, along with clear enforcement rights for devolved regulatory bodies responsible for health and safety and wellbeing at work.
- instructs the Welsh Government to recognise the need to formulate and produce a comprehensive plan for a fully integrated devolved criminal justice system for Wales.

GC Qualification: General Council supports the composite with the clarification that the working group will not determine Wales TUC's position on devolution of further employment rights. The power to do that will remain with Wales Congress.

Resolution 26: Opposing MSLs in Wales

Congress welcomed the Welsh Government's public opposition to the introduction and implementation of Minimum Service Levels (MSLs). In Wales the Labour run government has been clear on the need to work with trade unions rather than against them and to this end congress welcomes the Social Partnership Council.

Whilst the Welsh Government may refuse to issue work notices there are workers living in Wales who may have their right to strike removed through the implementation of MSLs. This could particularly be the case for any citizens that work for an employer based in England such as those on the railways working on cross border services.

This could lead to a situation where people in Wales living in the same constituency and working in the same industry could face differing impinges on their right to strike by virtue of whether their employer is based in England or under the direction of the Westminster government.

Congress notes that the British Labour Party has committed to repealing MSL legislation within 100 days of government and with an upcoming Westminster general election it is imperative that those representing Welsh constituencies also oppose MSLs.

Therefore, Congress calls on the General Council to:

- Name and shame any employer which implements an MSL in Wales
- Continue to lobby the Welsh Government to stick to their commitment to oppose MSLs
- Lobby all Senedd Members, MPs and parliamentary candidates in Wales to commit to supporting non-implementation of MSLs and the repeal of MSLs.

The Welsh government to ensure Transport for Wales do not use the MSL legislation and for the Welsh government to use all options to challenge any attempts to use the MSL legislation on Network Rail and cross border rail services.

GC Qualification: General Council notes the TUC Special Congress statement of December 2023, which did not call on employers to adopt a policy of non-implementation because this could put employers at risk of a legal challenge.

General Council therefore adds the clarification that 'non-implementation' only means that employers should explore every possible option to avert any prospect of work notices being issued, respecting the mandate and authority that TUC has on this matter.

Resolution 27: Valuing the NHS Team in Wales

Congress welcomes the publication of the Welsh Government National Workforce Implementation Plan in February 2023. However, whilst there has been notable progress made in addressing NHS workforce issues since the COVID-19 pandemic, there is still much to be done.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the skill, compassion, versatility and commitment of everyone in the NHS team placing them under huge amounts of pressure, leaving many exhausted, traumatized and struggling with their mental health.

Audit Wales published their NHS Workforce Data Briefing in September last year which shows that:

- There were 6,800 vacancies across all staff groups at the end of March 2022.
- More staff are leaving the NHS than at any other time in the last five years.
- Overall levels of sickness absence have grown and equated to an estimated 1.4 million working days in 2022-23.
- There is a continued and growing reliance on agency staff which represented 5.5% of the overall NHS workforce in 2022-23, at a cost of £325 million.

Congress believes that in order to make these values meaningful for all then there must be a recognition by the Welsh government of the dire crisis facing the NHS in Wales and therefore making adequate finances available for:

- Investment in staffing to address current vacancy levels
- Adequate protected time for CPD
- A meaningful, restorative and sustainable pay rise to address the years of shortfall and to retain our dedicated NHS staff into the future.

Congress therefore calls on the General Council to mount a priority campaign to ensure that NHS staff in Wales are properly valued and rewarded.

Resolution 28: Tackling the Housing Crisis

Congress notes with indignation statistics on homelessness released over Christmas 2023. The financial crisis that has raged since 2008 – and a lack of council house building in recent decades – have contributed to a desperate need for affordable homes. Around 11,228 individuals in Wales are in temporary accommodation, according to Shelter Cymru – including 3,409 dependents. The number of people braving the streets of Welsh towns and cities has also increased drastically in the past period.

Congress applauds 'The Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Act 2018'. However simply banning the purchase of once affordable rented council housing does not go far enough in solving the homelessness crisis in Wales.

By law, councils can take over empty properties. Congress calls on the Senedd to direct councils to take over the 20,000 properties in Wales that have lain empty for over six months – refurbishing where necessary and making them available for rent.

Congress welcomes the Welsh Government's pledge of 20,000 new homes by 2026. We call on them to reverse their policy of encouraging councils to move their housing stock to Housing Associations – and to make ear marked funds available, so that councils can build the new homes promised.

A campaign of mass council house building would also create skilled, well paid apprenticeships, addressing the issue of youth unemployment.

Finally, Congress calls for Rent Controls in Wales, with participation from local authority trade unions in setting affordable rent levels.

Resolution 29: Bus services

This Congress notes the adverse consequences of the decision last year by the Welsh government to cut the transport budget in real terms and the profits made by private bus companies. As a result there has been a big reduction in the timetables of services, or in some cases a cessation of services altogether.

Congress considers unacceptable the massive economic and social effect this is having on those most dependent on bus transport. Bus provision in Wales, even before these new cuts were very poor especially in rural areas. For many users such as the elderly and those who cannot afford a car then accessing vital health and care services can be a difficult task. In some areas evening services have all but disappeared. Cardiff, the capital city, is now subject to significant cuts in the timetables with some services more infrequent than they have ever been.

Congress further notes the negative impact this will have on the environment as it forces more people back onto our congested roads and highways at the very time when the Wales Government is supposed to be committed to a reduction in carbon emissions.

Congress calls for the following.

- A campaign by the Wales TUC to reverse these transport cuts.
- A commitment from Welsh government to provide well-resourced publicly owned bus services and to protect jobs and conditions of all bus workers.
- To outline a future vision to expand local bus services

Resolution 31: Supporting International Recruits

This Congress notes that overseas-trained staff make a significant contribution to the NHS and the care of patients. We benefit greatly from the expertise, knowledge, and skills they bring and the cultural diversity that makes the NHS a vibrant place to work. In return, it is right and proper that these staff have access to support and development opportunities to enable them to progress in their careers.

Congress recognises the diversity within NHS workforce and the importance of fostering an inclusive and culturally competent environment. We must acknowledge the challenges faced by international recruits when starting new roles in Wales and the need to support them in adapting to the local work culture. We must understand that a well-implemented Cultural Competency Framework for managers can significantly enhance the integration and success of international recruits within the public sector.

We call on Congress to:

- Develop a culturally sensitive and Comprehensive Cultural Competency Framework for managers to support international recruits:
- Develop a Social Partnership Council statement to encourage public sectors to include cultural competency training in managerial development programmes
- Consider how we support international recruits using existing committees or networks and consider if these are fit for purpose for international recruits
- Call for regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Cultural Competency Framework to ensure its effectiveness by establishing key performance indicators.

Resolution 32: Firefighters' Manifesto

Support the Firefighters Manifesto

The fire and rescue service is in crisis. One in five firefighter jobs has been cut since 2010, and real terms pay is down by at least 12%. Every year, it gets harder to do our jobs.

While extreme weather events get more common, our resources have been cut. While firefighters die from cancer, the UK is decades behind other countries on tackling fire contaminants.

Firefighters have had enough. Last year's pay campaign showed that when we stand together, we can shift our employers and our governments.

But now we need to do something much bigger: we need to win a future for the fire and rescue service.

At UK level, it is likely that there will soon be a change of government, and we have an unprecedented opportunity to put forward our case for jobs, investment and a fire and rescue service that is fit for the future.

This Congress commits to supporting and lobbying to the demands of the Firefighters' Manifesto that fall within the Welsh Governments competency.

It is imperative that the Welsh Government and the next UK Government address the years of neglect, underfunding, cuts and erosion of standards in the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Firefighter's Manifesto demands 'Funding, Standards and a Fair Say' and while Fire is devolved, the funding allocated at UK level will have consequential impacts on budgets in Wales which must be passed on to the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services.

Resolution 33: Police Community Support Officer Role

This congress notes that last year we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the role of the Police Community Support Officer being established in England and Wales. This role is the well-established link between communities and the Police Forces and are unsung heroes of the Police Service who rarely get the recognition they deserve.

In Wales, despite Policing not being devolved, we have seen the Welsh Labour Government invest in 500 hundred extra PCSOs across the 4 Welsh Services as they recognize the value this role brings to communities.

PCSOs are instrumental in reducing Anti-Social Behaviour amongst other things via a problem-solving approach rather than the old-style Policing method that just dealt with the act but not the causes. The public values them and so should we.

Since austerity was introduced more than a decade ago, we have seen some forces get rid of all their PCSOs and there is evidence to suggest that as a result of further budget cuts there has been an overall reduction in PCSO numbers in many other forces.

Congress notes that the police service could not operate without the PCSO role, further it is a role that can deliver the commitments made in Anti Racist Wales. As such, Congress resolves to work with the Police Services to lobby for increased funding for PCSOs.

Resolution 39: A public campaign to remove all profit from social care

The 2021 WTUC Conference committed to a publicly delivered National Care Service as the solution to the worsening social care crisis and since then, the idea of a National Care and Support Service for Wales has been adopted by Labour and Plaid Cymru in the Senedd.

However, Scotland's experience shows whilst the name 'National Care Service' may be supported, what it looks like is less certain.

Wales has the largest private sector delivery of care of the devolved nations. CICTAR's 'Extracting Profit' report and the UNISON-commissioned APSE's 'National Care Service for Wales' report explain the private sector is the barrier to improved care and billions of pounds of public money are removed from Welsh care by private equity groups and property speculation on care homes. Global finance has no interest in improving care quality.

Care work must be properly rewarded if we are to attract the thousands more staff the profession will need. This can only happen when profit is removed entirely from social care.

WTUC believes an energetic campaign could encourage Welsh government to be bolder and eliminate all profit and explain to the public why care would be better under a National Care Service for Wales.

The WTUC will initiate a broad, public campaign for a publicly delivered, publicly funded, publicly accountable National Care Service for Wales including:

- A stakeholder conference
- Establish a national steering committee
- Establish local campaign groups
- Convene marches and rallies
- Organise fringe events and stalls at relevant events and conferences

Resolution 40: Social Partnership

Congress notes that the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 marks a significant milestone in the Welsh Government's commitment to fostering a more collaborative and inclusive approach to policy-making and public procurement.

The Act creates a statutory Social Partnership Council (SPC), with WTUC responsible for nominating the Trade Union side seats. The SPC will serve as a platform for dialogue and collaboration on key social, economic, and environmental issues providing advice to Ministers in relation to matters covered by section 2 of the Act.

Congress believes that as the nominating body to the SPC, WTUC has a key role in coordinating and leveraging the trade union side position to contribute effectively to the SPC's objectives.

Congress calls on General Council to establish a working group which will:

- Develop a strategic framework outlining the priorities, objectives, and working methods of the SPC, aligning with the broader goals such as promoting fair work, enhancing social justice, and advancing sustainable development.
- Ensure the effectiveness of the TU side SPC membership by considering the implementation of a capacity-building program for trade union nominees, focusing on skills and knowledge essential for effective social partnership.
- Consider ways in which Unions can contribute valuable data and research to inform the SPC's deliberations.
- Consider the development of guidelines for trade union nominees to the SPC around responsible and sustainable public procurement.
- Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework for the Act's implementation, with regular reporting to affiliates.

Resolution ii: Rights and recognition for unpaid carers in the workplace

Congress welcomes the progress made by the Welsh Government in moving towards the implementation goals of the National Care and Support Service. This long- term plan will make improvements to the lives of the increasing number of people in need of dedicated and affordable care to help them to live the best life they can.

However, Congress also recognises the invaluable support working carers provide to their family and friends and is committed to working with trade unions, employers and the Welsh Government to share and implement best practice in terms of carers rights in the workplace.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, defines a carer as someone who provides unpaid care to an adult or disabled child. Carers UK, 2022 estimate that there are around .5 million carers in Wales, that almost 1/4 adults provide care and 84% are women. 42% of carers juggle work and caring making this a crucial trade union issue. Carers contribute around £10.6 billion to the Welsh economy.

The Wales TUC has produced a Carers Toolkit that includes:

- Providing guidance for union reps.
- Training for reps., carers, the workforce & managers
- Collective bargaining & negotiation around carers rights
- Undertaking surveys & mapping
- Awareness raising campaigns
- Organising support groups/networks
- Promoting wellbeing and respite care for carers
- Sharing good practice e.g. Carers Passport, Carer Confident etc.

Congress is extremely concerned at the ongoing crisis of unpaid carers across Wales, and calls on the Wales TUC to:

- Encourage unions via the General Council and its Committees to support the roll out of the carers toolkit and to share within their unions & beyond
- Facilitate the sharing of good practice amongst trade unions
- Promote the rights of working carers particularly during Carers Week in June
- Highlight the intersectional nature of caring i.e. the unique challenges faced by diverse groups
- Monitor the take up of the carers toolkit
- Mount a priority national campaign to address the inequalities faced by working carers to include:
 - Formally recognise and support unpaid carers in obtaining better working hours, including a statutory right to flexible working and paid time off for respite and emergency care responsibilities
 - Workplace carer policies including training for managers
 - Affordable childcare for all parents

- Campaigning for an increased level of carers allowance payments and An increase and expansion of the eligibility criteria to receive Carers Allowance, including widows and individuals claiming state pension.
- Reduce the cost of respite care, to enable carers to receive valuable time for their well-being.
- Establishing a publicly funded and publicly accountable national care service for Wales, ensuring that all profits is removed from this vital public service.

Resolution vi: ‘Cynnig Cymraeg’: supporting and organising Welsh-speaking workers

Congress notes the ever greater demand for Welsh-language skills within the economy of Wales and the increased volume of Welsh speakers coming through our education system, contributing to a growing number of bilingual young workers entering the workforce.

Congress believes that workers have the freedom and right to speak and use Welsh in every workplace and in every sector.

With Welsh language legislation imposing duties on public sector employers, as well as union policy and Social Partnership responsibilities, there is a need for unions to urgently plan and organise to support the Welsh language rights of current and future workers, and to identify current and potential Welsh-speaking union reps and members.

Workers are key to implementing the rights of the public in Wales and have the right to expect internal Welsh language services in their workplace too. Making services available in Welsh or English is a ‘proactive offer’ to the public of Wales, without asking in the first place.

Congress welcomes the work that the Wales TUC’s Fforwm y Cymraeg has carried out to date, to support Welsh in the workplace, and the ‘Cynnig Cymraeg’ or ‘Welsh Offer’ that has been developed as a commitment by organisations to communicate and provide services in Welsh. The ‘Cynnig Cymraeg’ tells workers that their union supports and offers services in Welsh because Welsh is an official language and we are a bilingual country.

Congress instructs the General Council to:

- Actively promote take-up of the ‘Cynnig Cymraeg’ among affiliated unions in Wales, as an inclusive first step to recognise, support, safeguard and grow Welsh-speaking union membership across Wales.
- Establish a framework for the Cynnig Cymraeg to grow, develop and support unions in progressing and organising through the medium of Welsh, so that Welsh speaking workers are supported with a proactive offer to use their Welsh Language rights across their own workplaces.

Resolution 42: Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap persists across public services in Wales. CSP members, like the NHS workforce, are predominantly female and this inequity significantly impacts both CSP members and the wider public sector workforce.

With women bearing the brunt of caring responsibilities, taking parental leave, having difficulty accessing flexible working and the taboo of not being able to work at a senior level if you work less than full-time, the gender pay gap will continue to exist and grow. Especially whilst male individuals, who do not carry these responsibilities, remain in positions of power.

Furthermore, reports in Wales have found that gender pay gap reporting remains inconsistent and inaccessible, despite it being a duty under the PSED since 2017. The latest information from the Workforce Partnership Council found gender and senior pay gap reporting continues to be hidden in board papers or annual reports. Welsh Government does not provide an overarching report outlining the gender pay gaps across public services.

We call on congress to:

- Call for a WG annual public sector gender pay gap report allowing for scrutiny of the evolving trends in gender pay disparity.
- Challenge the status quo of senior leadership positions in public services having to be 'full-time' roles
- Facilitate career progression for individuals with caring responsibilities.
- Influence WG to widen the Wales specific PSED to include a duty to report on how public sector employers are eliminating the barriers for women to progress in the workplace.

Resolution 43: 'Fight for 52'

Fight for 52 seeks to address the dire imbalances in maternity provision in the fire & rescue service.

A postcode lottery is the reality that women face in the UK fire and rescue service.

Currently, maternity provisions are wholly inadequate, both in terms of occupational hazards and in terms of recruitment, retention and inclusion.

The case for 52 weeks full pay and wider provisions is compelling. Across the country, women are being forced to return to work early after giving birth because they cannot afford to stay on maternity leave.

Ministers, the employers and chief fire officers need to be aware of the risks and rewards related to pregnancy and firefighting – not just in the first year but well beyond. Serious action is needed to ensure women firefighters have adequate maternity arrangements.

Women firefighters deserve better. Equality matters to the FBU. We will fight for 52 weeks of maternity leave on full pay across Wales.

Congress demand – that all Welsh fire employers extend the current arrangement for maternity leave to 12 months on full pay following the date of birth. Pre-birth provisions must also be addressed, ensuring that expectant mothers are protected from the work-related exposures to fire contaminants.

We call to extend this to cover all public sector workers especially NHS workers, who are entitled to twelve months of maternity leave but on significantly reduced and no pay. We call on congress to fight for 12 months of full maternity pay for all public service workers.

Resolution 46: Midwifery Career

Royal College of Midwives (RCM) is asking for Midwifery to be seen as an attractive career for the global majority population. We want to make a real difference to current and future generations of ethnic minority people. We want them to thrive, and to continue to help make Wales a greener, stronger and fairer nation. We want a Wales where everyone thrives and feels valued.

Racial concordance in healthcare means having a healthcare workforce that represents the people they care for. A review of the literature showed that racial concordance was more important than cultural competency training in improving the outcomes for healthcare patients (Shen et. al. 2018). The review concluded that higher education institutions should focus on recruitment if health inequalities in racialised minority people are to be reduced.

It has been shown that ethnically diverse teaching staff increase students' sense of belonging and therefore educational attainment. Global majority students engage more meaningful when they are taught by staff who look like them highlights that through increasing supportive staff networks and diverse staff, students can feel an increased sense of belonging to the higher education institution (HEI), leading to increased levels of engagement.

As part of the Welsh Government commitment to the Anti Racist Action plan priorities, the RCM is calling for Welsh Government to develop a targeted framework for midwifery recruitment which takes a whole systems approach for the global majority population.

Resolution 47: The Menopause Lottery: Women's Pain and Misdiagnosis

Leg muscle aches and pains in the legs are common symptoms experienced by women during menopause. These symptoms, known as musculoskeletal symptoms, are characterised by stiffness, pain, and limited range of motion. Women feel these discomforts not only in their legs but also in areas such as their shoulders, elbows, knees, and other joints and muscles throughout their body.

During the early stages of menopause, women often experience a significant occurrence of leg pain, which can be attributed to the decline in oestrogen levels. This hormonal change affects the overall health of muscles and bones, leading to discomfort in the legs.

We are also seeing a trend of misdiagnosis of the menopause with Fibromyalgia. Many of the symptoms being like Fibromyalgia sensitivity to pain, muscle/ limb stiffness, difficulty sleeping, brain fog, headaches, low mood, all symptoms of Fibromyalgia. With the high cost to HRT and the postcode lottery in healthcare, women are having an increasing battle for the correct medication and support from professionals.

We call upon Congress to call for a campaign for all women in the journey of Menopause and Fibromyalgia to be assessed and diagnosed correctly.

Resolution 48: Equality for parents experiencing miscarriage

Congress notes:

The Welsh Government does not have responsibility over employment issues.

If a baby is lost before the 24th week of pregnancy it is treated in law as a miscarriage, there is no entitlement to statutory maternity leave and pay in these circumstances, the Maternity and Adoption Leave Policy for Welsh Government, if staff need to take sickness absence as a result of their loss, the first two weeks of absence would be treated by the Welsh Government as 'protected' for both absence management trigger points and pay purposes.

Congress believes:

Miscarriage is a bereavement, and an employer should still consider offering time off at what can be an extremely difficult time, both physically and emotionally.

Congress calls:

On the Welsh Government to make representations to the next UK Government to ensure there is standard practice to allow leave for workers that experience a miscarriage.

NHS England now provides up to 10 days paid leave for women experiencing miscarriage within 24 weeks, with partners offered up to 5 days. CSP urges TUC to ensure this change extends to Public Sector Employers.

Resolution 49: Black Activists Development Programme

This congress recognises the good work of the Wales TUC and General Council in promoting the equality agenda on behalf of the trade union movement in Wales. Wales TUC has been undertaking work to improve the representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people within our own union structures and this work is much needed to build a trade union movement that is both anti-racist and reflects our communities and society.

Congress welcomes the Welsh Government Anti-Racist Action Plan and has worked to find ways of making this accessible to union members, helping them to campaign and develop anti-racist workplaces.

The Wales TUC ran Black Activists Development Programme pilot was started in March 2023 and was completed in February 2024. The programme involved 9 women participants, who have gone through the journey of a lifetime to build their confidence and develop themselves to play a pivotal role as activists in the trade union movement and wider society. Participants have spoken on public platforms, organised events, shown interest in politics and have become more active in their unions.

This Congress instructs the Wales TUC General Council to support and fund BADP, to continue its excellent work on encouraging underrepresented members to become active in the trade union movement and wider society. This Congress also encourages all affiliated Trade Unions to work with the Wales TUC and support this programme by helping to recruit and building support to have a more inclusive structures within their own unions.

Resolution 50: Closing the Disability Employment Gap

This Conference is appalled by the Disability Employment Gap of 31.9%* in Wales. The economic activity rate of disabled people is 53%* compared to 84.9%* of non disabled people.

Approximately 27%* of the working age population in Wales are disabled.

Only 17% of disabled people are born with their impairments. 83% of disabled people acquire their impairments, many whilst they are in work. Too many disabled workers leave employment due to the lack of appropriate reasonable adjustments.

More disabled workers need to be recruited, retained and retrained for us to have truly inclusive workplaces that represent the society in which we live.

Congress calls for the Wales TUC to:

1. Campaign for measures and support to increase disabled people's employment and the elimination of the Disability Employment Gap
2. Campaign for equity of employment outcomes for disabled workers.
3. Encourage employers to accredit to the Disability Confident Scheme with those employers already involved seeking to achieve Leader level at their next re-accreditation.
4. Support reps to work in partnership to improve their workplaces for disabled workers through the assessment stages of the Disability Confident Scheme.
5. Campaign for mandatory disabled workforce reporting in Wales.
6. Create a Reasonable Adjustments Toolkit suitable for Reps and for Disabled Members.
7. Raise awareness and understanding of the Disability Employment Gap and The Disability Pay Gap.

*Statswales - Summary of economic activity in Wales by disabled status year ending 30 June 2023

Resolution 54: Charting a Just Transition

This congress notes the increasing global efforts to lower greenhouse gas emissions, especially within the maritime industry, part of the wider effort in tackling climate change.

This congress commends the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) on its 'Sustainable Shipping' position paper that sets out eight principles that a 'Just Transition' must improve worker's lives and be: ambitious, timely, democratic, safe, equitable, diverse, and funded.

This congress resolves TUC Cymru, in line with the aforementioned principles, to campaign to ensure decarbonisation and net-zero is achieved in a just, equitable and holistic way, guaranteeing no one is left behind and addressing existing systemic issues facing Welsh workers.

This congress resolves TUC Cymru to support the changing world of work, especially maritime work, by seeking the Welsh government and other stakeholders work to ensure the workers of today are equipped with the skills of tomorrow and that for those carbon intensive sectors, there is a workforce transition plan driven by quality jobs and future opportunities that maximises high skilled, high value employment.

This congress recognises that only government can undertake the level of planning and coordination needed at Wales level with a workers' plan for a National Climate Service, bringing key sectors into public ownership and delivering real support for communities, quality jobs and services and coordinating with governments across the UK.

This congress resolves TUC Cymru to explore further the expansion of offshore renewables and to work with key stakeholders in ensuring that the full lifecycle of renewable technology, including those transitional technologies, continues to support the Welsh economy and expand opportunities for workers in Wales.

Congress also agrees this campaign should include the strengthening of employment rights, ending exploitation and discrimination and creating unionised jobs covered by collective bargaining and Fair Pay Agreements for seafarers in the offshore renewable energy supply chain from all ports in Wales.