

# POA Annual Conference 2018

Annual Conference  
**CONFERENCE  
PAPERS 1 & 2**



**Their crisis**

**Our opportunity**

# **Conference Paper 1**

## **CONFERENCE PAPER 1**

### **RESTRUCTURING OF THE POA**

Motion 61/2011 was moved at Conference in relation to restructuring our Union. It called for a Comprehensive examination of current POA structures, to ensure the very best representation is ensured for the membership in the years ahead and to make recommendations if necessary on changes.

In many respects a partial restructuring took place and 10 Conference Papers were accepted in 2013, but that is all that actually occurred was a partial restructure of the Union and there still is much work to be done to ensure that the POA remains fit for future generations as an independent trade union. In any Trade Union reform – change is the only constant. The last 30 years has no parallel in history. Never before has there been such relentless social, political, economic and technological change. There is no doubt Trade Unions in Britain and indeed around the world are struggling to come to terms with this change, much of which requires a profound re-thinking of union roles and practices. The POA if it wishes to survive as an independent trade union needs to accept that the structures that existed in the 1980s and 1990s are no longer suitable for the Union as we have moved on from one single employer in the public sector.

In 2010 there were roughly 76 affiliated unions to the TUC and now there are roughly 54 affiliates. Many smaller unions have simply been consumed into larger unions and indeed medium and large unions have merged for a variety of reasons.

Conference accept that the POA need to get its structures correct so that our Union is modern and indeed reflective of the different employers where we have members. Contained within the 10 different Conference Papers, areas of change were identified, but not actually actioned simply because the political landscape had changed and this was reported back to Conference and that position was accepted.

Conference are asked to endorse Conference paper 1 and to start the necessary work to determine if changes are necessary and to note the clear terms of reference as set out below for a small working party of Honorary Life Members overseen by an independent person to examine our structures and report back to Conference for May 2019, with any changes to both structures and if necessary our Rules and Constitution to reflect those changes. During the process branch officials will be surveyed by the working party for their views and Area meetings convened by the NEC for the working party to attend and engage with branch officials. A survey of all our members to ascertain what is important to them to be conducted using survey Monkey. The National Executive Committee views will also be sought by the working party.

Terms of Reference for the working group; The working group will be tasked to do a full report by Conference 2019 with an interim report periodically throughout the reporting period as issues develop. The working party will have access to branch officials, the membership, lawyers and NEC along with employees. The working group will consider the following:

- Regional or National Structure (England and Wales)
- Structure in Scotland
- Structure in Northern Ireland
- Structure in NHS branches
- Structure in Private Sector branches
- Examination of Staffing at Cronin House, Linden House, Calder Road, Millisle. (Including discussions with recognised trade union GMB)
- Remuneration packages for all staff including General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary and Assistant Secretaries. (Including involving GMB recognised trade union)
- Annual Conference and its structure
- Branch Committee Structure
- Subscription Rate (Is it fair)
- Rules and Constitution
- Structure of NEC (Is it doing appropriate work and is it the correct size)

Conference accept the Terms of Reference and that it will be independently overseen by an individual namely Mr Pat Cuffe who oversaw a review for our colleagues in the Irish POA. Conference recognise by using Honorary Life members does not impact on facility time as this is a trade union activity which the NEC and branch officials will not get the time off to conduct this piece of work. As this piece of work is for all areas of the UK then it is clear there needs to be a geographical spread and knowledge of the working arrangements in each country and indeed within the NHS and private sector.

Conference also authorise the Finance Committee to set a budget for this time bounded piece of work. Conference by authorising this piece of work it potentially sets a foundation for the POA for our long term future. This is not about a cost cutting exercise but ensuring the union has the correct amount of resources and that our structures are correct moving forward.

# **Conference Paper 2**

## **CONFERENCE PAPER 2**

### **WORKERS RIGHTS AFTER BREXIT**

Since the Brexit vote Conference notes with concern some of the inferences being made about further attacks on workers' rights from Senior Conservative politicians. The POA remained neutral in respect of voting and left that directly to our members and indeed their families, therefore there is no POA policy on the rights or wrongs of Brexit.

Irrespective of the views of POA members about coming out of Europe or indeed remaining the Executive believe that workers should not pay the price and instruct the POA to campaign nationally and locally to ensure there is no diluting of worker's rights in any agreements after 2019.

It is accepted that the European Union withdrawal bill is a key moment for everyone concerned about fair treatment in the workplace. It is the responsibility of Government to write EU law into UK law. Many individuals believe that is routine but it would appear many Senior Ministers view this as an opportunity to attack workers' rights. Among those laws being transferred are indeed workers' rights which trade unions have won from our membership of the EU, for example the right to paid holidays, health and safety protections, unpaid parental leave, time off for family emergencies, equal pay for women, and equal treatment rights for part time workers.

EU rules also ensure that management has to consult their workforce regarding redundancies and indeed TUPE rules protecting workers from losing their jobs overnight when part of a company is sold off or a contract is transferred.

The TUC like the POA has a major concern that workers' will pay a big price and therefore we need to watch carefully and be vigilant to ensure there are no watering down or agreements that impact directly on terms and conditions that have been agreed in the past. Brexit has to mean a new deal which strengthens workers' rights. It is the best way to ensure that workers' do not pay the price of Brexit.