Housing: Campaign for high quality housing as a human right

On August 15th the Office of National Statistics released statistics showing that the average UK house price increased by £10,000 in the last year.

Conference notes:

- The current housing crisis, which has seen the doubling of homelessness since 2010, a massive increase in families living in temporary accommodation, and a drop in homeowners by 900,000.
- The rising cost of housing benefit and the increasing share going to private landlords.
- That over a million children live in poor quality housing, resulting in asthma and allergies.
- The increasing refusal of landlords to rent housing to people under the age of 35.

Conference believes:

- That houses should be for living in rather than for investment or speculative activities.
- That the lack of affordable housing, skyrocketing rents, exploitative landlordism, and poor quality housing are the outcome of a model which treats housing as an asset to speculate on, and that this model has failed millions of people across Britain.

Conference applauds:

- The Labour Party manifesto which included a commitment to build at least 100,000 council and housing association homes a year for genuinely affordable rent or sale, as well as support for the rights for private renters.

Conference calls:

- For the Labour frontbench, working alongside Labour councils and mayors, to investigate models of controlling rent rises in proportion with incomes.
- For cuts to subsidies, tax breaks and any other incentives to buy to let or landlords, and efforts to ensure that property speculation is penalised not encouraged.

Word Count: 246 words
Social security: Campaign for a social security as a human right

On August 6th 2017, 31 Labour MPs wrote a letter to the Guardian expressing concern that the rollout of Universal Credit (UC) would cause hardship for people during the festive period. Similarly, on August 3rd, the Department of Work and Pensions released statistics showing an increase in the number of families hit by the benefits cap of 240% since it was lowered in November last year.

- Conference notes that the implementation of UC has increased the difficulty in making benefits claims and resulted in an increased cases of underpayment.
- Conference believes that the benefits cap is a cruel policy which has been mis-sold to the public on the basis of claims that it will help get unemployed people into work, and is increasing poverty and homelessness in Britain’s major cities.
- Conference opposes the 1% cap on benefits which is also causing poverty at a time when inflation is more than double the level of the cap.
- Conference opposes all rhetoric which explicitly or implicitly blames the poor for their own poverty, and in particular condemns politicians who use terms like ‘scrounger’, or any other derogatory term to describe recipients of social security, which are divisive and dangerous.
- Conference applauds the commitment of the 2017 Labour Party manifesto to scrapping the worst excesses of Conservative policy, including the punitive sanction regime, the Bedroom Tax, cuts to housing benefit for under-21s and to the Bereavement Support Pension.
- Conference calls on Labour to review its position on universal credit.

Word Count: 246 words
Defence: Campaign for Defence Diversification

On 7th August 2017, the UNICEF representative in Yemen, Meritxell Relano, stated that over 200 children have been killed in the conflict in Yemen this year. Approximately 10,000 civilians have been killed so far in the conflict, which has been characterised by systematic human rights violations on the part of the Saudi Arabian military. A House of Commons’ report last year stated that violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws have probably involved arms supplied from the UK.

- Conference notes that the UK is the second biggest arms dealer in the world.
- Conference condemns the fact that the Conservative government has sold arms to 22 of the 30 countries on their own human rights watch list.
- Conference resolves that a future Labour Government will place an arms embargo on Saudi Arabia and other states that systematically violate human rights.
- Conference calls on the Labour Party to establish a commission – including relevant unions, frontbench, sectoral and stakeholder groups – to look into defence sector diversification so that UK industry and human rights are protected, and to ensure that Labour’s industrial strategy incorporates defence diversification as a policy objective.
- Conference urges the commission to explore ways to ensure that the skills of people currently employed in the arms industry are harnessed to support more socially useful projects, particularly green energy.
- Conference further calls on this commission to report to annual conference 2018.

Word Count: 233 words
Counter Terrorism: Call for a review of current counter-terrorism legislation

Conference deplores:

The appalling terrorist attack in Barcelona on 17th August, resulting in the deaths of 13 people.

The killing of an anti-racist protester by far-right extremists in Charlottesville on 12th August.

The threat posed by extremist ideologies of all type and the hatred they promote.

Conference notes with concern:

The Prime Minister’s concerning statement on 6th June 2017, following the most recent terror attacks, calling for additional counter terrorism measures, in which she threatened “if human rights laws stop us from doing it, we will change those laws so we can do it.”

That British counter-terrorism has been built around the ‘Prevent’ strategy, which has been described by the UN Human Rights Council on 16th June 2017 as being ‘inherently flawed’, on the basis that it risked ‘dividing, stigmatizing and alienating segments of the population’.

In light of that statement, Conference reaffirms its commitment uphold and protect the dignity of individuals and their fundamental freedoms, as well as democratic practices and the rule of law, and rejects any approaches to counterterrorism which stigmatise people of particular religion or ethnicity.

In light of recent failings to protect the public against terror attacks, Conference resolves to review and improve the legislative framework, strategic direction, due process, dedicated resources and institutional architecture of UK counter terrorism efforts, including a review of the Prevent strategy, as called for by Jeremy Corbyn on 26th March 2017, in order to better maintain our democratic principles and protect people.

Word Count: 243 words
Labour must fully commit to ending privatisation in the NHS

Conference notes:

- The NHS Accountable Care System (ACS) contracts announced on 7 August impose a basis for 44+ local health services to replace England’s NHS. This has bypassed Parliamentary debate and due legislative process.

- On 9 August, the House of Commons Library revealed a doubling of the number of NHS sites being sold off. 117 of these currently provide clinical services.

Like their US templates, ACSs will provide limited services on restricted budgets, replacing NHS hospitals with downskilled community units.

The ACSs and asset sell-off are fruits of the 5 Year Forward View (SYFV) currently being implemented via the Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs). The SYFV meticulously reproduces global policy aims formulated by healthcare multinationals.

This Conference congratulates our Party for its manifesto commitment to restore our NHS by reversing privatisation and halting and reviewing STPs. It therefore calls on the party to oppose and reverse not only cuts but also SYFV policy, which includes:

- creating ACSs
- replacing 7500 GP surgeries with 1500 “superhubs”.
- downskilling clinical staff.
- reclassifying NHS services as chargeable, means-tested “social care”.
- cementing the private sector role, e.g. as ACS “partners” and/or as combined health and social-care service providers.

This CLP recognises this process is too advanced for mere amendment of the 2012 Health & Social Care Act to be effective. It calls for our next manifesto to include existing Labour policy to restore our fully funded, comprehensive, universal, publicly-provided and owned NHS without user charges, as per the NHS (Reinstatement) Bill.

Word Count: 246

(Drafted by Momentum NHS. For supporting arguments, please see here)