

UNISON Labour Link Motion for 2023 Welsh Labour Party Conference

Conference welcomes Welsh Labour's commitment to make a National Care Service for Wales a reality. This was demonstrated in the wholehearted support for the UNISON Labour Link motion accepted at the 2022 Annual Welsh Labour Party Conference.

Conference agrees that the difficulties faced by the NHS & Local Government in Wales are the result of the Westminster Conservative Government's indifference to ordinary people and the services they rely on to keep them and their communities safe. Despite this indifference, there are devolved decisions that can be made to mark out a more progressive and public centred approach to the 'care question' here in Wales. The creation of a National Care Service for Wales has become a more urgent necessity given the demands placed on the workforce and the ever-increasing needs of service users

In 2022, UNISON published an important report by the Association of Public Service Excellence called 'A National Care Service For Wales'. It's conclusions are clear:

' These issues will not be addressed...by an increase in funding. Such an increase is no doubt needed, along with a fair mechanism for achieving it, but any increase in guaranteed income will drive up the capital value of care firms, making them even more attractive as targets for merger and acquisition. All that means an increase in the debt charged to balance sheets and a further drain on care home income and by extension, the public purse. The likelihood of increased expenditure leading to any major improvement in the terms and conditions of care workers seems slim....it is particularly important to ensure that any increase in public spending on care services does not go to shore up yields to speculative investors looking to profit from the Welsh taxpayer'

Conference accepts that social care should be publicly delivered and publicly accountable.

Conference calls upon Welsh Labour, in Government to:

- Increase funding for direct local authority provision, including recommendations from the Expert Panel report to set up central budgets so that Local Authorities can apply for to bring care contracts back in house, purchase care facilities etc.
- Support pilot Local Authorities which provide care directly, to, as APSE assert, create 'a critical mass of publicly employed care workers' as 'the best way to push up the terms and conditions of this neglected section of the workforce, without creating an immediate crisis for front line care companies'.
- Support the work of the social partnership body 'the social care forum' to establish collective bargaining across the care sector as a positive interim measure to drive up working conditions in the care sector
- Develop a realistic timetable for the 2024 conference outlining the full transition to a National Care Service in Wales