

## Special conference motion

### Conference notes:

1. Support staff are largely un-unionised, with little more than a third being members of any union. This is in line with the overall decline in trade union membership over recent decades
2. Due to signing the TUC Agreement 2017, NEU are not formally recognised for national negotiating purposes at the NJC and are not scheduled to be part of the proposed SSSNB. The 2017 Agreement also prevents us attempting to actively recruit support staff members in the state sector who are not in any union
3. NEU have faced disciplinary action from TUC, including substantial fines, for supporting NEU members who voted to take action to resist funding cuts and job losses
4. NEU have made numerous proposals to NJC unions - and made it clear that we would consider any proposals from them - that could help reach an amicable resolution of the matter based on organising the unorganised. Our proposals have been rejected and we have yet to receive any counterproposals
5. While there was some progress made at the TUC brokered support staff summit on 28 November 2025, there still isn't a resolution of our differences with NJC unions.

### Conference believes:

- i. There is nothing inevitable about low trade union membership. In a small, but significant way, we have shown that effective, assertive, workplace-based organisation can attract the low paid, overwhelmingly female support staff workforce
- ii. That organising the unorganised – among support staff and in the wider economy is vital to the future well-being of workers in this country
- iii. That squabbling between unions is counter-productive, and that a collaborative joint-union attempt to organise the sector would be in the best interests of all four unions and more importantly, of support workers
- iv. That there is no moral – or even pragmatic – reason to exclude the largest education union, with probably the second largest support staff membership – from having appropriate representation on the relevant formal negotiating bodies

### Conference instructs the executive:

- a. **To notify TUC that we will be withdrawing from TUC Agreement 2017 on 28 March 2026, unless there has been substantial progress towards an acknowledgement by NJC unions that we have the right to actively organise support staff. This means that we will immediately begin to actively recruit non-unionised support staff workers. Any recruitment will not be done on the basis of denigrating sister unions, by undercutting membership rates or by attempting to poach existing union members. It will be done on the basis of developing agency and power in the workplace.**
- b. **To make it clear to the NJC unions that we will continue to seek to work collaboratively in the interests of the workforce and will always be open to proposals for an amicable resolution of our disagreements.**
- c. **To continue to develop policy and advocate actions that advance the interests of support staff. This will include encouraging co-ordinated workplace activity around the key issues that concern support members, such as job creep, unpaid overtime, low pay, restructures that lead to cuts in provision and excessive workloads.**
- d. **That such activities as outlined above will prioritise promoting tactics that encourage unity and solidarity across the whole education workforce.**
- e. **To explore the possibility of affiliation to the General Federation of Trade Unions, a federation of mostly smaller, specialist unions.**