

# Trade unions in the UK: engagement with climate change

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## List of Unions

<b>ATL</b>	<b>The Education Union</b>
<b>BFAWU</b>	<b>Bakers, Food and Allied Worker Union</b>
<b>Community</b>	<b>the union</b>
<b>CWU</b>	<b>Communication Workers Union</b>
<b>EIS</b>	<b>Education Institute of Scotland</b>
<b>FBU</b>	<b>The Fire Brigade Union</b>
<b>GMB</b>	<b>Experts in the world of work</b>
<b>NASUWT</b>	<b>The Teachers union</b>
<b>NUT</b>	<b>National Union of Teachers</b>
<b>PCS</b>	<b>Public and Commercial Services Union</b>
<b>Prospect</b>	<b>Union for life</b>
<b>RMT</b>	<b>The union of transport workers</b>
<b>TSSA</b>	<b>Transport and Salaried Staff Association</b>
<b>UCU</b>	<b>University and Colleges Union</b>
<b>UNISON</b>	<b>The public service union</b>
<b>Unite</b>	<b>Unite the Union</b>
<b>USDAW</b>	<b>Union of shop, distributive and allied workers</b>

## Introduction and overview

“This report investigates the involvement of UK trades unions in the issue of climate change policy and their level of engagement with such an issue. It asks the questions: what are the driving forces behind trade union engagement in climate change issues, and what are some of the barriers and difficulties for trade unions, in the UK, in engaging with climate change?”

The research was carried out between September 2016 and January 2017, during my internship with the Campaign against Climate Change. It covers the largest 15 unions in the TUC; plus the smaller unions TSSA and BFAWU as they are involved in the One Million Climate Jobs Campaign. Policy officers and environmental activists within many of the unions were interviewed, along with systematic searches of the unions’ websites and policy documents for any relevant literature and documents produced by unions on climate change and related issues.<sup>1</sup>

This introduction looks at some of the key issues for trade union climate policy, such as environmental representatives, energy supply, airport expansion, fracking and divestment from

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<sup>1</sup> Search terms: Aviation/airports (Heathrow); Climate Change; Coal, Carbon(de-carbonisation/low carbon economy); Divestment; Green (energy); Fracking; Just Transition; nuclear; pollution; Renewable; Transport; Waste.

fossil fuels, that are being debated and discussed within trade unions in the context of climate change. Following this discussion there are detailed overviews of the unions investigated.

**The trade union policies referenced in the report can be found in the accompanying policy table: UK Trade Union policies on climate change and related environmental issues: between 2016 and 2014.** This can be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/2vEmTyw>

## Workers and Global Climate Policy

Trade unions have been engaging with the issue of climate change and sustainable development internationally for many years. Organised labour organisations were invited to take part in the first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, held in Rio.<sup>2</sup> In 2006, trade unions held their first ever trade union Assembly on Labour and the Environment.<sup>3</sup> The International Trades Union Confederation (ITUC)<sup>4</sup>, formed a few months after the Assembly on Labour and the Environment, has worked to make environmental issues a priority for the trade union movement. The ITUC has been instrumental in developing the concept of 'Just transition' for workers in the transition to a low carbon economy.<sup>5</sup>

On a national level in the UK, in 1997, the Trades Union Congress (TUC)<sup>6</sup> set up a working group Trade Unions Sustainability Development Advisory Committee (TUSDAC) to work in partnership with business and other stake holders to meet the UK government's climate targets.<sup>7</sup>

In 2015 the UNFCCC Paris agreement, signed by all 196 countries in attendance, came out of the UNFCCC COP21.<sup>8</sup> The agreement committed the global community to work together to keep global temperatures well below 2C above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to keep them from rising above 1.5°C. A global temperature rise above 1.5°C would endanger low lying islands and countries. Countries volunteered Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the global efforts to reduce carbon emissions.<sup>9</sup>

The Trades Union Congress (TUC) and UK trade unions worked with their international counterparts to have workers' rights included in the Paris agreement. The impact that a low carbon economy will have on the workforce was recognised, and the Paris agreement states that action to mitigate climate change should "*[Take] into account the imperatives of a just transition for the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities*".<sup>10</sup> Climate change has been recognised as a class issue that will impact different workers unequally.

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<sup>2</sup> Rosemberg, A., 2013, Developing global environment union policies through the International Trade union Confederation, in Rätzl, N & Uzzel, D., 2013, Trade Unions in the green economy, earth scan Routledge, Oxon.

<sup>33</sup> [http://unfccc.int/cc\\_inet/cc\\_inet/six\\_elements/public\\_awareness/items/3529.php?displayPool=1163](http://unfccc.int/cc_inet/cc_inet/six_elements/public_awareness/items/3529.php?displayPool=1163)

<sup>4</sup> [www.ituc-csi.org/](http://www.ituc-csi.org/)

<sup>5</sup> Rosemberg, A., 2013, 'Developing global environment union policies through the International Trade union Confederation', in Rätzl, N & Uzzel, D., 2013, Trade Unions in the green economy, earth scan Routledge, Oxon

<sup>6</sup> [www.tuc.org.uk/](http://www.tuc.org.uk/)

<sup>7</sup> [www.tuc.org.uk/international-issues/globalisation/trade-unions-and-sustainable-development](http://www.tuc.org.uk/international-issues/globalisation/trade-unions-and-sustainable-development)

<sup>8</sup> COP21: The 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of Parties convention held in Paris 2015, convened to review the UN Framework on Climate Change implementation. [www.cop21paris.org/about/cop21](http://www.cop21paris.org/about/cop21)

<sup>9</sup> [http://unfccc.int/files/home/application/pdf/paris\\_agreement.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/home/application/pdf/paris_agreement.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> IBID

Along with the global framework of the Paris agreement, the UK also has national legislation in the form of the Climate Change Act 2008, which legally binds the UK to reducing its carbon emission by 80% lower than the 1990 baseline by 2050.<sup>11</sup> The Committee on Climate Change (CCC)<sup>12</sup> an independent statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008, set carbon budgets for 5 year periods, and advises the government on possible, cost effective, scenarios on how to achieve them. The UK government agreed to the fifth carbon budget of 1,765 MtCO<sub>2</sub> (including international shipping and aviation) between 2028 and 2032.

The UK government has further introduced a Carbon Price Floor (CPF,) which was implemented to support the other main carbon reduction measures, European Emission Trading Scheme (EU ETS).<sup>13</sup> This policy is intended to underpin the price of carbon permits at a starting price £16 and has been capped at £18 per tonne/CO<sub>2</sub> until 2021. Research has shown that those industries likely to be greatest affected by the carbon price measure are those industries that trade on a global market, such as petroleum refinery, coal and lignite mining, manufacturing of iron and steel.<sup>14</sup>

### Trade Union response to climate change

Trade unions are not a homogenous group. Each union is uniquely historically constituted, through their members' industrial struggles, working conditions, larger economic and social changes and different geographical industrial make-up of regions. These social and economic pressures have created different cultures of practice and priorities within and between trade unions, not least in their response to challenge climate change and its impact on work.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation policies to decarbonise the economy and society, will impact workers unequally depending on the sector they work in. Trade unions' organising in the heavy industry and the energy sectors have to support the members in their current work in the immediate instance, while also looking to ensure they have decent jobs and good working conditions in an 'inevitable' low carbon economy future.

However, for the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) climate change has already become an industrial issue for their members. After the 2007 floods in the UK the FBU got involved in campaigning on climate change issues. The increase in extreme weather conditions storms, droughts, flooding, and grassland fires predicted and starting to occur, due to climate change are going to increase the workload of the Fire and Rescue Service. In Scotland, Northern Ireland (NI), and soon to be Wales, attending flooded areas is part of the Fire and Rescue service statutory duty, but not in England. This means that in England the Fire and Rescue service do not have a budget for the proper kit required to attend flooding.

Beyond industrial struggles responding to climate policy, there are committed individuals at national executive, policy officer and membership level within the trade union movement who are driving the argument that climate change is a class issue and campaigning for workers to be at the heart and leading the transition to a low carbon economy. Many of these individuals participate in Campaign

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<sup>11</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents)

<sup>12</sup> [www.theccc.org.uk/](http://www.theccc.org.uk/)

<sup>13</sup> <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN05927>

<sup>14</sup> <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/65622/1/Grover-et-al-policy-paper-January-2016.pdf>



against Climate Change Trade Union group,<sup>15</sup> a cross union group that brings workers and environmental issue together in campaigning for climate action with a ‘just transition’ for workers. These climate activists within the trade union movement are pushing climate change up the trade union agenda through putting motions to annual conferences, developing environmental representative (rep) roles, supporting environmental campaigns, such as the anti-fracking movement, and working with environmental groups.

### UK Trade unions climate policy

GMB<sup>16</sup>, NUT<sup>17</sup>, PCS<sup>18</sup>, Prospect<sup>19</sup>, UCU<sup>20</sup> UNISON<sup>21</sup>, Unite<sup>22</sup>, from the largest 15 unions in the TUC, along with FBU<sup>23</sup> and TSSA<sup>24</sup> have policies specifically addressing climate change and the impact of global warming. It was not been possible to determine whether Community, RMT, UCATT, USDAW, have policy on climate change. However, ATL, RMT, USDAW, and UCATT had reference on their websites to climate change being an issue that has to be addressed. Though BFAWU and CWU did not have a specific policy on climate change they are both supporters of the One Million Climate Jobs Campaign, and active on climate change and trade union issues.

All the trade unions spoken with and investigated articulated a the need to reduce carbon emissions in the atmosphere, to keep global temperatures from rising by 2°C and ideally the rise kept below 1.5°C, by the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Decarbonising the Work Places

Over half of carbon emissions are work-place related,<sup>25</sup> thus decarbonising the work place is an important site of carbon reduction if the ‘Climate Change Act 2008 is to be met. Some work places are easier to decarbonise that others. Office based workplaces energy efficiency measures such as turning lights out and double sided printing can be implemented. Whereas heavy industry, such as steel works, automotive manufacturing and ceramics industries, where large amounts of energy are required in the processes has greater difficulty. In these industries it is likely to require a large financial investment to achieve significant emission cuts.

One way trade unions in the UK are addressing the need to reduce workplace carbon emissions, and environmental issues, is through the role of environmental reps. Unite, UNISON, GMB, USDAW, PCS, CWU, ATL, UCATT, Prospect, UCU, FBU and BFAWU have an environmental rep role. However environmental reps are not legislated for and working time for environmental rep activity is at the employer’s discretion. The TUC have a draft agreement for environmental reps with employers.

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<sup>15</sup> [www.cacctu.org.uk/](http://www.cacctu.org.uk/)

<sup>16</sup> GMBCFA16RE4

<sup>17</sup> NUTAC16CC1

<sup>18</sup> PCSAC15CC2

<sup>19</sup> Unable to obtain policy,

<sup>20</sup> UCUCP16CC1, UCUCP16GR2, UCUCP14CC7

<sup>21</sup> UNSNC16CC2

<sup>22</sup> UNITPC14CJ7

<sup>23</sup> FBURD15CC1

<sup>24</sup> TSSNC16CC2, TSSNC16CC3

<sup>25</sup> [www.tuc.org.uk/green-workplaces/greening-workplace-%E2%80%93-environmental-rights-work](http://www.tuc.org.uk/green-workplaces/greening-workplace-%E2%80%93-environmental-rights-work)

Often the role is incorporated into the Health and Safety officer's remit which are legally required to be given facility time.

The degree to which environmental reps are promoted, and the position taken up in branches, varies depending on the union and whether members are particularly interested in environment issues. Due to austerity cuts and attacks on the trade union, many of the unions spoken with were having to prioritise immediate issues of jobs losses and attacks on terms and conditions over environment and sustainability issues.

Some unions have found that there are limitations to the environmental reps role in some workplace. On the 'tools' side of the membership, in jobs such as gas maintenance or security services, workers do not work on their employers sites, and/or are often based in vehicles. It is difficult for them to have any influence over their workplace's carbon emissions. Environmental reps are more likely to be teaching assistants, refuse collectors, administrators who have access to office desks.

PCS have a national green executive committee made up of green reps and organise an annual green forum that cover a broad range of topics from how to input in to the new environmental legislation required after Brexit to how to build a campaign on Climate Refugees in the work place.

A good case-study of how trade unions can work with the employers within heavy industry on sustainability issues, is the Devenport dock. Prospect, the union, have signed an agreement with the Ministry of Defence, Interserve and Babcock Marine and Technologies, the employers at the site, to recognise and appoint workplace Environmental Representatives to participate in sustainability and environmental issues to reduce energy consumption and increase energy efficiency at Devonport site, along with working to reduce pollution and identify clean transport options for the site.<sup>26</sup>

## Energy Sectors and Climate Change

One important area of decarbonisation is energy systems, both heating and electricity. The main unions organising in the energy sector, electricity generation and gas supply, are Unite, UNISON, GMB, and Prospect. Unite, GMB and Prospect's energy policy calls for a balanced energy mix. This includes energy sources from nuclear, coal (coupled with carbon capture and sequestration -CCS), gas (CCGT<sup>27</sup>) and renewable energy technologies. The arguments for a balanced energy mix that includes the power generation from coal, nuclear and gas, in the context of decarbonisation, are connected to issues of security of supply, cost of energy impact on industry, and the potential energy gap the UK is facing.

Security of energy supply refers to the reliance of some of the UK energy supply on imported fuel. This leaves the supply vulnerable to changes to the geopolitical landscape. Therefore reducing exposure to imported fuels and developing home grown energy capacity such as coal, considered an indigenous UK supply, renewables and gas (fracking), would reduce this vulnerability. Nuclear

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<sup>26</sup> <https://library.prospect.org.uk/id/2016/November/25/Devonport-environmental-sustainability-agreement>

<sup>27</sup> Combined-cycle gas turbine

requires the import of uranium ores although stockpiling of these ores and use of plutonium created in existing reactors might be considered to make UK effectively 'secure' in this source of energy.<sup>28</sup>

The UK is facing a potential gap in electricity supply by 2025.<sup>29</sup> It is thought with the government's commitment to ceasing coal-power generation, nuclear power stations coming offline, and the lack of investment in renewable technology there will be an electricity shortage post 2025. Unite's position is that this will have a significant impact on workers in the UK, not just in the energy industry, but also manufacturing. If there is a shortfall in electricity then the price of energy will go up, and potentially some industries may be asked to stop production to ensure there is enough electricity to keep the grid functioning for domestic customers.<sup>30</sup>

The UK government wants to phase out coal fire power stations on grounds of the need to cut carbon emissions.<sup>31</sup> Unions supporting coal power argue for the need to develop carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology. The UK government pulled out of funding for CCS technology,<sup>32</sup> but Unite has pointed out, it also had potential to reduce emission for industries such as cement, foundries and steel whose emissions are covered by the emission trading scheme.<sup>33</sup>

Gas, as a lower carbon energy source than coal and oil, has been seen as a transition energy source to a true low carbon energy system in the future. Unite's balanced energy policy considers the government's 'dash for gas' as short sighted, however,<sup>34</sup> and though gas is an important part of the mix for the union, it wants it to be diversified to include coal with CCS. GMB are supportive of coal being part of the energy mix, but are also strong supporters of the gas industry. Gas is an important part of GMB's historical identity as a union and currently in some workplaces GMB organise over 90% of the industry.<sup>35</sup>

UNISON's energy policy states that the energy supply should be designed for what is optimum in terms of meeting the social needs, low carbon, environmental obligations, ensuring security of supply and addressing fuel poverty. They advocate solutions such as climate job creation for those jobs that will be inevitable be lost in some carbon intensive energy production industries.<sup>36</sup>

UNISON, along with PCS, FBU, TSSA and in theory, CWU and BFAWU are opposed to new nuclear builds and want the existing nuclear power stations to be rundown. Along with NUT, they all support rapid deployment of renewable technology as the main energy source.

The initial role of trade unions in the UK is to protect members' jobs and their terms and conditions. The capacity of trade unions to be able to do this is partly dependent on the percentage of the workforce they organise within the workplace, as well as the strength and viability of industries. If

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<sup>28</sup> [www.onr.org.uk/safeguards/civilplut.htm](http://www.onr.org.uk/safeguards/civilplut.htm)

<sup>29</sup> [www.imeche.org/news/news-article/closure-of-uk-coal-and-nuclear-plants-to-create-electricity-supply-gap-of-up-to-55-by-2025](http://www.imeche.org/news/news-article/closure-of-uk-coal-and-nuclear-plants-to-create-electricity-supply-gap-of-up-to-55-by-2025)

<sup>30</sup> [www.theguardian.com/business/2015/nov/05/national-grid-spent-more-2-5m-prevent-power-shortages](http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/nov/05/national-grid-spent-more-2-5m-prevent-power-shortages)

<sup>31</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/577080/With\\_SIG\\_Unabated\\_coal\\_closure\\_consultation\\_FINAL\\_\\_v6.1\\_.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/577080/With_SIG_Unabated_coal_closure_consultation_FINAL__v6.1_.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> [www.londonstockexchange.com/exchange/news/market-news/market-news-detail/other/12597443.html](http://www.londonstockexchange.com/exchange/news/market-news/market-news-detail/other/12597443.html)

<sup>33</sup> UNIPC16BEP2a

<sup>34</sup> UNIPC16BEP2a

<sup>35</sup> GMBBCFA16EP10

<sup>36</sup> UNSEC16EP4

industries are put under pressure due to rising energy costs, or even limited access to electricity supply then it will impact jobs within those industries. Therefore security of energy supply within a trade union context is not just about looking after members in energy industry, but it has a knock on effect for their members in manufacturing industry if energy supply falls short or increases in cost.

### Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED)

In recent years, one way in which trade unions are engaging with the issue of energy generation and climate change is through the campaign organisation Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED).<sup>37</sup> TUED is a global, multi-sector initiative to advance democratic direction and control of energy in a way that promotes solutions to the climate crisis, energy poverty, the degradation of both land and people, and responds to the attacks on workers' rights and protections. Unite, GMB, UNISON, PCS, and UCU are affiliated to TUED. This group addresses the power relations and social implications of energy generation based on fossil fuels. TUED perspective is that a sustainable energy system can only occur if there is a decisive shift in power towards the workers and communities and the public.

### Fracking for shale gas

Fracking is short hand for hydraulic-fracturing which extracts gas trapped in shale rock. A mixture of water, gas and chemicals are pumped under high pressure into wells that are first vertically then horizontally drilled, to fracture the shale rock and release the natural gas trapped inside.

Fracking has become a controversial issue in the UK. The UK government is in favour of promoting fracking, and have said to be 'going all out for shale gas'.<sup>38</sup> They believe that shale has the potential to provide the UK with greater energy security, growth and jobs<sup>39</sup>. However there has been mass opposition from civil society against onshore fracking industry due to environmental risks of contamination of the water-table and methane leakage posed by the technology.<sup>40</sup>

The tension between the pro and anti-fracking movements has created divisions between and within different trade unions. Unite, UNISON, NUT, PCS, UCU, EIS, TSSA, BFAWU, EIS, and effectively CWU all have motions at conference against fracking and in-support of the anti-fracking campaign in the UK. UNISON's policy on fracking calls for a moratorium on fracking. It requires further information regarding the safety of fracking, and how fracked gas matches up against the renewable energy targets for 2030, before they take a position either way on fracking.

The opposition to fracking within the trade union movement is on environmental grounds of water contamination and methane leakage, as well as the health and safety of the workers. PCS, for example, argue that even if the number of jobs estimated by the industry and government of 16,000-74,000 are created, these would be unsafe jobs putting workers at high risk of exposure to dangerous chemicals such as silica which causes silicosis, a form of occupational lung disease.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> <http://unionsforenergydemocracy.org/>

<sup>38</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/news/local-councils-to-receive-millions-in-business-rates-from-shalegas-Developments](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/local-councils-to-receive-millions-in-business-rates-from-shalegas-Developments)

<sup>39</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/about-shale-gas-and-hydraulic-fracturing-fracking/developing-shale-oil-and-gas-in-the-uk](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/about-shale-gas-and-hydraulic-fracturing-fracking/developing-shale-oil-and-gas-in-the-uk)

<sup>40</sup> <http://frack-off.org.uk/>

<sup>41</sup> PCSAC14AF6

On the other side of the debate, GMB have public supported fracking arguing that the UK should not rely on ‘Henchmen, hangmen and headchoppers’<sup>42</sup> to ensure their energy supply. They condemned the Labour Party energy policy for supporting a ban on fracking.<sup>43</sup> Their official policy is that they cannot have a position on fracking until there has been an ‘informed and objective’ debate about fracking<sup>44</sup> and that if fracking does go ahead they should organise in the industry.<sup>45</sup> GMB have stated in their fracking statement that an anti-fracking position would constrain their ability to represent gas workers generally.

Within some unions, there appears to be a difference of position between the National Executive Committees (NEC) and lay membership. Unite and Prospect’s NEC’s put ‘pro’ or ‘amber-light’ motions to the annual conference which were rejected by the conference floor. In the case of Unite a anti-fracking position was supported instead,<sup>46</sup> and Prospect has no policy and therefore consequently they have no position on fracking.

BFAWU become involved with Climate Change issues through their anti-fracking campaigning. For the industries BFAWU organise in, on-shore fracking poses a serious risk due to the potential contamination of the water table. The union consider this a real danger that would have a significant impact on the food industry. Through their involvement in the anti-fracking campaign, BFAWU became involved in ‘One Million Climate Jobs’ campaign. The anti-fracking campaign found that the concept of ‘Climate jobs’ has been vital in their campaign against fracking.

### Aviation and Airport Expansion

A second area of tension in the trade union movement in the UK is whether airport capacity should be increased to meet the predicted demand from growth in aviation, in light of the UK having legally binding targets to reduce carbon emissions 80% of their 1990 level.

Unite, GMB, Prospect and Community along with the TUC have been in favour of airport expansion and the building of a third runway at Heathrow, all publicly support airport expansion on their websites. GMB also have policy that supports a second runway at Gatwick.<sup>47</sup> Prospect is in favour of airport expansion, in the most carbon effective way possible. They produced a report entitled ‘The Sustainable Aviation Industry in the UK’<sup>48</sup> which advocates for a ‘sustainable aviation policy’ which including incentives for research and development into design and control of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and against cutting ticket cost on environmental grounds. Unite have argued that a third runway would improve the local environment around Heathrow and reduce carbon emission (see Unite overview). Community, who are the main union organising in the Steel industry, see Heathrow expansion as vital for the creation of jobs in the steel industry.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> [www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/gmb-slams-speech-against-fracking](http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/gmb-slams-speech-against-fracking)

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/corbyn's-energy-policy>

<sup>44</sup> [www.gmb.org.uk/assets/media/documents/congress/congress2015/CEC%20Statement%20on%20Fracking%20.pdf](http://www.gmb.org.uk/assets/media/documents/congress/congress2015/CEC%20Statement%20on%20Fracking%20.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> GMB CFA16W

<sup>46</sup> UNITPC14F3

<sup>47</sup> GMB CFA15AE17

<sup>48</sup> <https://library.prospect.org.uk/id/2015/01106>

<sup>49</sup> [www.community-tu.org/community-backs-heathrow-expansion/](http://www.community-tu.org/community-backs-heathrow-expansion/)

UNISON, PCS, UCU, FBU, TSSA have formal policy opposing airport expansion at Heathrow. CWU and BFAWU would be opposed to airport expansion if they were asked. UNISON is not opposed to airport expansion but only if climate change is addressed.

### **TUC motion**

At the TUC conference 2016, TSSA put a climate change motion '*After Paris: Climate change, just transition and climate jobs*' to the conference,<sup>50</sup> CWU seconded the motion. However, the motion was voted down 3 to 1. One of the main points of contention being that it would have, along with other things, committed the TUC to campaign to stop airport expansion.

Unite, GMB and Prospect who organise within Heathrow Airport Limited, spoke against the motion along with the unions of British Air Line Pilots Association (BALPA). Heathrow expansion has been estimated to require 370,000 tonnes of steel, and therefore create an estimated 700 jobs directly and indirectly in the steel industry. These jobs would be for a specific period of time 2021 to 2026. It was argued that voting for the motion would be a vote against jobs, 'good unionised jobs'. GMB argued that Heathrow was vital to local economy and wider British economy. It was opponents position that a large infrastructure project, such as Heathrow airport, is important to provide apprenticeships and training for the development of skills, required for the future UK workforce.

Along with TSSA and CWU, PCS and UNISON spoke in support of the 'After Paris' motion on environmental and climate change grounds. CWU asked where are the additional emission cuts would come from to meet the UK's carbon targets, if Heathrow airport expands. PCS, the fourth union to organise in Heathrow Airport Limited, stated that they are working alongside reps and branches in the local area to ensure no job losses. But PCS recognises the potential devastating environmental impact of the Heathrow expansion and highlights the 'One Million Climate Jobs Campaign' as an alternative path to job creation.

### **Divestment from fossil fuels**

PCS<sup>51</sup> and UCU<sup>52</sup> have formal divestment policy away from fossil fuels. UNISON<sup>53</sup> had a policy to investigate the possibilities of divesting pensions funds from fossil fuels. PCS's policy covers encouragement of divestment of union funds, industries and pension divestment. UNISON's policy to investigate divestment follows the ethical implication of pensions being invested in fossil fuels. It is argued that pensions, meant for members and their families' futures, being invested in fossil fuel energy extraction and production that accelerate climate change is not an investment in the future. Another consideration is the knowledge that 80% of the world's oil, coal and gas reserves needs to stay in the ground (the so-called 'stranded assets'). As society beginnings to transition to a low carbon economy, pensions exposed to fossil fuel will rely on 'stranded assets', which, by their very nature, cannot provide for the 'safe' retirement of their workers.

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<sup>50</sup> TSSTUC16CC1

<sup>51</sup> PCSAC15D3

<sup>52</sup> UCUCP16D3

<sup>53</sup> UNSNC16CC4

## Conclusion

Any discussion of the role of trade unions in promoting a just transition to a low carbon economy due to the threat of climate change, must take into account the increasing pressures on trade unions in the workplace. Trade union officials have to deal with the immediate threat to their members' working terms and conditions, from austerity policies and cuts to public services and attacks on trade unions capacity to organise in workplaces. In addition, the introduction of automation and robots are also an increasing threat to jobs. These pressures, perhaps understandably, tend to push climate change issues further down the list of priorities.

Despite this, many of the unions have adopted policies that support the 'just transition' to a low carbon economy. They even attend large international conferences on climate change such as COP21. However, the existence or degree of support for low carbon policies depends on the nature of the industry in which a trade union organises. The clearest example is that of the GMB, which while generally supportive of climate change policies, nevertheless, organises most of the workers in the gas industry, and is therefore, supportive of fracking for gas.

Very few unions have had the work of their members actually affected by climate change. A notable example is the FBU where its members are part of emergency services in rural areas. The increasing frequency of flooding, indirectly probably due to climate change, puts extra demands on its members, as well the need for better equipment.

For general unions that cover a number of different industrial sectors there are often differences over support for climate change policies between these different sectors within the same union. There are thus internal conflicts within unions on such issues as airport expansion, the continued role of coal in energy generation, and so on. Of course there are many differences on climate change policies between unions, for instance over nuclear power, gas fracking, and airport expansion, for the obvious reason that members jobs are immediately at risk for those unions organising in these areas of employment.

To summarise: Unions are generally supportive of taking action on climate change and of 'just transitions' policies for a low carbon future. But they are faced with sometimes conflicting pressures between short term concerns for members jobs versus their growing understanding that 'business as usual' is no longer sustainable. Meanwhile, the Conservative government is creating a leadership void on climate change, energy and industrial policy. There is little sign of the cross-sector industrial strategy required to meet the UK's challenging carbon reduction commitments and to bring forward the necessary investment in a wide range of low carbon technologies. Unions need to step into this void as a matter of urgency.

## Overview of UK trade unions climate engagement

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This covers the largest 15 unions in the TUC plus the 'Fire Brigade Union', 'Transport and Salaried Staff Association' and the 'Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union', as they have been involved in the 'One Million Climate Jobs' campaign.

### ATL – The Education Union

This report draws on published material from ATL's website.

#### Introduction to ATL

ATL is a union for educational professionals, organising all levels of education from early-years to higher education. Their 160,00-strong membership represents teachers and support staff, lecturers and leaders. ATL has been established since 1884, merging in 2011 with the Association of College Management to diversify their membership to include management and support staff. Working collectively to influence education policy, they work with government and employers to defend members pay, conditions and career development.

Each workplace, school, college, are encouraged to elect a representative to act as the first point of contact for members. Branches are organised locally and send a number of delegates, depending of the size of the branch, to the annually conference. The National Annual Conference has the power to pass resolutions that the National Executive Committee is instructed to take action on. In November 2016, the members voted to ballot whether to form one education professional union with NUT. This vote will go ahead in spring of 2017.<sup>54</sup>

#### ATL and climate change

A systematic search of their website showed that ATL are engaging in the subject of climate change and sustainability at national and local level. They have a comprehensive policy position on sustainable education, as well as producing resources for promotion of sustainable schools and colleges.

ATL 2013 statement on 'Sustainable Education: review, rethink, reform'<sup>55</sup> from 2013 sets out their position with regards to global warming and the changes that are required for a sustainable future. They think there needs to be a 'Review, Rethink and Reform' of society's 'values, attitudes and practices in order to address the momentous challenges for our shared future'.

Their vision of a sustainable society is one 'founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace' and they believe education is at the heart of creating a sustainable society.

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<sup>54</sup> [www.atl.org.uk/latest/atl-members-vote-ballot-forming-new-union-nut](http://www.atl.org.uk/latest/atl-members-vote-ballot-forming-new-union-nut)

<sup>55</sup> ATLPSW13SE1, [www.atl.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/policy-posts/sustainable-education-review-rethink-reform](http://www.atl.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/policy-posts/sustainable-education-review-rethink-reform)



ATL position is critical of the 'marketisation' of the education policy-making in the UK, which it feels is geared towards the needs of a commercial service economy. They are concerned with the concept of 'raising standards' being promoted in education that disproportionately teach pupils and students that learning and primary qualifications are commodities to be exchanged for appropriate jobs.

The government's initiative on sustainable schools<sup>56</sup> is welcomed by ATL, whereby they want every school to be a sustainable school by 2020. However they feel that the government's approach remains ultimately rooted in narrow national self-interests. The government policy of ensuring national priorities, such as economic growth and competitiveness, are contradictory to the priorities of meeting the global challenges of sustainability.

ATL therefore call for a review of existing education policies and initiatives in line with their principles of universal access to education; a strong ethos of empathy, care and understanding; collaboration with the local community; supportive education structure for all staff; a curriculum that values creativity, innovation and critical thinking and which promotes a global perspective applied to local circumstances; valuing all members of staff and allowing pupils and students to take responsibility for important areas of their lives. They would like a 'rethink' of the structure of local partnership with less prescription and more local innovation and creativity. Finally they demand a 'reform' of the education system, that sees consistent and joined up practice which is based on a coherent system of aims and values, to make it a more sustainable model.

However, their recent 'Education Manifesto' begins by stating "Our young people urgently need the skills and knowledge to enable this country's economy to grow. Failure to develop these areas will leave Britain unable to compete with the other advanced economies and we will be left behind in the global market."<sup>57</sup> There appears to be a contradiction between the policy position on sustainable education calling for a rethinking on the drivers of economic growth on educational needs compared with 'Education Manifesto' that calls for the skills and knowledge for young people to grow the country's economy. This discrepancy highlights the difficulty with creating a vision of a sustainable future beyond the immediate needs of the educational system embedded in context of the current socio-economic system of economic growth.

### **Sustainable Schools and colleges toolkit**

ATL have also developed a toolkit to promote sustainable schools and colleges so that its members can respond to climate change in practical ways. This resource contains a checklist on food and drink, energy and water, travel and traffic, purchasing and waste, building and grounds, inclusion and participation, local well-being, and the global dimension which are designed to inspire thinking around the different pathways to sustainability.<sup>58</sup>

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[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/planning\\_a\\_sustainable\\_school.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/planning_a_sustainable_school.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> [www.atl.org.uk/Images/ATL-Manifesto.pdf](http://www.atl.org.uk/Images/ATL-Manifesto.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> [www.atl.org.uk/Images/ATL%20sustainable%20schools%20toolkit.pdf](http://www.atl.org.uk/Images/ATL%20sustainable%20schools%20toolkit.pdf)

## ATL and other sustainability issues

In May 2016 ATL welcomed the changes to the national curriculum that included climate change in geography key stage 3.<sup>59</sup> They have also commented on the rising fuel costs and the reduction of public transport transport, which is impacting on the ability of poorer children living in the countryside to attend all school days and other activities.<sup>60</sup>

## Conclusion

ATL appear to have considered in detail the adaptation of the educational system for pupils and students in transitioning to a sustainable society. Its *Sustainable schools and colleges toolkit* is an admirable example of this process. However, the 2016 executive report focussed on skills and knowledge for economic growth, which to a degree contradicts ATL's previous sustainability policy, a tension that is likely to remain as the union considers the future educational needs of the UK.

## BFAWU – Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union

This research draws on an interview with Ian Hodson, National President of BFAWU, and published documents.

### Introduction to BFAWU

The Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union (BAFWU) is the largest independent Trade Union in the food sector in the UK. It was first established in 1847, and represents and organises members in the food sector, from production in factories through to sales at shops.

There is a network of regional officers, who provide support for members and negotiate with employers on terms, condition and pay. The 19,070 members are organised into branches which send delegates to the annual conference to vote on policies for the union. In between annual conferences the executive committee make decisions for the conference.

### BFAWU and Climate Change

BFAWU have become more involved with Climate Change issues through their anti-fracking campaigning. For the industries BFAWU organise in, onshore fracking poses a serious risk due to the potential contamination of the water table. This is a real danger that would have a significant impact on the food industry. BFAWU feel at the moment there has been no guarantee that the process will not contaminate the water table. There are examples of the water table being poisoned in Australia and USA<sup>61</sup>.

They have official policy opposing fracking and an agreement to support the anti fracking campaign<sup>62</sup> as well as one deploring the tax breaks given to the fracking companies from the UK government<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>59</sup> [www.atl.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/policy-posts/national-curriculum](http://www.atl.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/policy-posts/national-curriculum)

<sup>60</sup> [www.atl.org.uk/latest/press-release/lack-transport-blights-lives-poor-children-countryside-atl](http://www.atl.org.uk/latest/press-release/lack-transport-blights-lives-poor-children-countryside-atl)

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/apr/07/wyoming-fracking-water-contamination-dangerous-chemicals>

<sup>62</sup> BAFVCVR14F4

Historically BFAWU have always run environmental courses and had training through the TUC as well as the environmental green reps. However the recent main driver for environmental concerns their anti-fracking campaigning. The most active members within the union are from the North West of England, where there has been a lot of campaigning against fracking. BFAWU provided food for the Barton-Moss anti-fracking protest, and have involvement in the Yorkshire anti-fracking campaign at Ryedale.

Through their involvement in the anti-fracking campaign, they have become involved in 'One Million Climate Jobs'. 'Climate jobs' as an alternative to the potential jobs created in the fracking industry has become a vital part of the argument against fracking.

A lot of their members are activists looking at the food chain and agriculture and food campaigns such as eco-friendly gardens with a focus on local community growing. The union itself does not have any specific campaigns but members can bring issues to conference and the union can provide funding if it is the campaign is supported by the conference. BFAWU provide funding for Wigan Diggers festival<sup>64</sup>.

BFAWU have tried to promote the issues of saving energy with employers in the food industry. There is often a high carbon foot print involved in mass food production, and heat loss. They are campaigning for a maximum temperature in the workplace. Warburton's have solar power on their roofs of their factories.

There are potential tensions between food producers and their buyers with regards to sustainability. Any investment in energy efficiency measures or renewable technologies could potential be seen as being in conflict with the food producers ability to reduce the price of their product. The food industry's main customers are large food retailers who are able to put pressure on produces to keep price as low as possible. Therefore there is pressure for investment to go into reduce prices, rather than improvements in energy efficiency and sustainable environmental initiatives.

Though the union do not have specific policy on nuclear and airport expansion, they would be opposed to new nuclear power stations being built as well as a third runway at Heathrow.

BFAWU would like to see a joined up industrial strategy that develops the renewable energy industry in the UK, creates a strong northern powerhouse, promotes manufacturing and moves the UK away from being a service economy.

## Conclusion

The BFAWU are committed to being active on climate change issues and climate jobs especially within the fracking movement.

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<sup>63</sup> BAFCVR14F3

<sup>64</sup> <https://wigandiggersfestival.org/>

## Community the Union

This report draws on published documents on Community website.

### Introduction to Community

Community the union was formed in 2004 with the amalgamation of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation and the Knitwear, Footwear and Apparel Trade Union. The industrial regions of the steel and footwear industries, which went through deindustrialisation during the 1980's and 90's. A lot of industry was lost, however the Steel and Iron Traders union stayed in the regions to retrain and support the communities in their new work.

With the changing work landscape in the traditional communities of Community, the union changed and adapted to the needs of the communities. Community the Union today welcome any member regardless of the sector they work in and consider it a general union. The industries are organised into eight sectors<sup>65</sup> including manufacturing which the steel industry falls under. Community is the biggest unions in the UK steel industry.

### Community and Climate Change

Community the union along with other unions organising in the steel industry have made demands on the government to support the industry through green investment; to make port Talbot steel plant a world class example of low carbon, blast furnace steel making; and to scrap the carbon tax for the steel industry. The UK steel industry has been affected by UK carbon taxes, within which Community organise the largest number of workers. The steel industry competes globally and therefore the added cost of carbon affects their capacity to be competitive<sup>66</sup>.

### Community and Airport Expansion

Community supports expansion at Heathrow and has released several press releases backing the project<sup>67</sup>. Their support centres on the potential for jobs and apprenticeships that a large infrastructure could create.

### Community and fracking

Though there is no mention of fracking on their website, Community signed a memorandum understanding to ensure that the country has access to reliable and secure supplies of home-grown oil and gas, with UKOOG.<sup>68</sup> Though it does not refer directly to fracked shale gas, the press release does comment on the environmental impact of importing gas across the continent.<sup>69</sup> As natural gas in the North Sea is in decline, fracked gas is part of the home grown oil and gas they are supporting.

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<sup>65</sup> Betting, Charity & social enterprise, justice services, logistics, manufacturing, social care, sports, White collar and Professional.

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.community-tu.org/autumn-statement-support-the-steel-industry/>

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.community-tu.org/community-backs-heathrow-expansion/>

<sup>68</sup> The representative body for the UK onshore oil and gas industry

<sup>69</sup> [www.ukoog.org.uk/about-ukoog/press-releases/193-community-the-trade-union-joins-with-ukoog-to-promote-onshore-oil-and-gas-development](http://www.ukoog.org.uk/about-ukoog/press-releases/193-community-the-trade-union-joins-with-ukoog-to-promote-onshore-oil-and-gas-development)

Community are associated to SERA, the Labour Environment Campaign.<sup>70</sup>

## Conclusion

Community the Union is supportive of expansion at Heathrow and the development of the oil and gas industry in the UK due to the perceived potential for jobs creation and economic growth.

## CWU – Communication Workers Union

This report draws on an interview with Tony Kearns, Senior Deputy General Secretary of CWU, and published documents.

### Introduction to CWU

The Communication Workers Union CWU is the biggest union for the communications industry in the UK with over 199,000 members. They were formed in January 1995 when the Union of Communication Workers joined forces with the National Communications Union, representing workers in a wide range of roles<sup>71</sup> across the communication industry.<sup>72</sup>

Organising through a model democratic structure, every CWU member belongs to branches that elects delegates to the annual national conferences, where they debate and vote on policy of the union. In-between conferences the National Executive Committee (NEC) make policy decisions. The NEC deals with general organisation issues and divides into two industrial sectors.

### CWU and climate change

The CWU's website<sup>73</sup> provides a link to a union' reps' handbook jointly produced with the Labour Research Department supporting 'the strong desire within our Union to change our workplaces to make them more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

The CWU states that, 'There is overwhelming support from Union members and Representatives for more to be done to combat global warming and to promote good environmental practices at work through robust environmental policies.

Motion 103 on 'Global Warming' was carried at the union's 2009 Annual Conference. In summary, Conference agreed that global warming is relevant to workers, that the CWU should pressure employers to have robust environmental policies and to reduce carbon emissions, to lead by example and aim to become carbon neutral as well as provide information to members and branches.

CWU also have policies relating to the EU referendum and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), a series of trade negotiations being carried out mostly in secret between the EU

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<sup>70</sup> <http://www.sera.org.uk/>

<sup>71</sup> Engineering, computing, clerical, mechanical, driving, retail, financial, call centre and manual skills.

<sup>72</sup> Postal, telecom, mobile, administrative and financial companies including Royal Mail Group, UK Mail and BT, Telefonica O2, Virgin Media, EE and Santander, as well as outsourcing company Capita.

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.cwu.org/departments-services/health-safety-and-environment/environmental-policy/>

and US. The CWU has raised concerns about the environment, fracking and supporting renewable energy.<sup>74</sup>

Their approach to climate change and environmental issues has often been a reactive one, so that when the opportunity arises they will address environmental and climate related issues, with references to the Senior DGS for advice. The Senior DGS was involved at the beginning of the One Million Climate Job's campaign. Initially an issue of personal interest, the union's formal support of the campaign was later endorsed by the NEC.

CWU members are seeing measures against climate change through the individual responsibility requirement to reduce carbon emissions in work places. There is a transition towards a culture of double-sided printing, turning the lights off and saving resources. Within Royal Mail and BT, they will see a transition to electric vehicles as the cost of fuel increases.

The argument for businesses to reduce carbon emissions still has to be won with some employers, even though it saves them money. The engagement of CWU with climate and environmental issues is mostly driven by a few concerned individuals. Members are being hit heavily with industrial issues. A lot of CWU members' work involves physical manual labour, so that officers and reps are spending a lot of their time fire-fighting. For example, in a postal workers branch that may have lost 10 jobs, where the weight they are expected to carry on their back is increasing, there is no time for learning and engaging with the issue of climate change and environment, when immediate threats are to the workers' health and safety.

### TSSA motion at TUC

CWU seconded the TSSA climate change motion '*After Paris: Climate change, just transition and climate jobs*'<sup>75</sup> put to the 2016 TUC conference. The decision to support the motion was debated first among the union's delegates, where the Senior DGS argued the case for CWU to actively support the motion. Because of CWU's active position on the TSSA motion to TUC, to all intents and purposes the CWU now have a position on environmental and climate change, which is expected to be endorsed at its next annual conference. Through the CWU's support of the Labour party's anti-fracking position, its lay members have been in contact to see how they get involved with the CWU's anti-fracking position.

### Conclusion

Workplace actions and the support of committed individuals at all levels of the union to the issue of climate change have ensured that it is on the agenda when the opportunity arises. However, due to constant pressures on members' jobs, terms and condition, CWU has limited capacity and resources to give environmental and climate change issues a higher priority in its daily work.

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<sup>74</sup> CWUGC16EU1; CWUGC16EU2; CWUGC15TTP3

<sup>75</sup> [Link to TSSA TUC motion](#)

## EIS – Education Institute of Scotland

This report draws on published documents.

### The Educational Institute of Scotland

The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) is the largest teaching union in Scotland. They represent over 53,000 education professionals in Scotland.

### EIS and climate change

On the website, the only reference to climate change that comes up is through the ethical investment fund policy which discusses the *Jupiter Ecology Fund*, representing the Institute's first involvement in a specific ethical investment. This investment originated from a Council motion in November 1997 and £100,000 was placed with the Jupiter Ecology Fund in November 1998.<sup>76</sup> The decision 'represents an exciting and diversified longterm opportunity to invest in some of the most forward thinking and innovative companies in the world.'

There is also an advertisement on EIS website of the teacher training initiative set up by the Scottish government to help workers in the oil and gas industry with relevant skills to retrain as teachers<sup>77</sup>.

There does appear to be some support for environmental issues within the memberships. At their 2015 conference two anti-fracking motions were passed, that committed the union to supporting local and national anti-fracking campaigns<sup>78</sup> and to join the "broad alliance" of organisations such as Unison and Friends of the Earth calling for a moratorium on all forms of unconventional gas development including fracking Scotland<sup>79</sup>.

## FBU - Fire Brigades Union

This report draws on published documents and an interview with Paul Hampton, FBU's research and policy officer.

### Introduction to FBU

Since its inception in 1918 the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has helped create and develop the modern fire and rescue service. With over 33,000 members working in a diverse range of roles in the fire and rescue services, the FBU organise 90% of the full-time and 50% of the part-time (retained) workforce. Their main decision making body is the Executive Council, made up of representatives from each of the 12 UK regions.<sup>80</sup> The union is also split up into six sectors that are then divided into trade sections<sup>81</sup> and equality sections.<sup>82</sup> The FBU consider themselves an industrial and political

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<sup>76</sup> [www.eis.org.uk/agm/pdf/Policy%20papers%20relating%20to%20minutes%20of%20council%20AGM%202013.pdf](http://www.eis.org.uk/agm/pdf/Policy%20papers%20relating%20to%20minutes%20of%20council%20AGM%202013.pdf)

<sup>77</sup> <http://news.gov.scot/news/teacher-training-for-oil-and-gas-workers>

<sup>78</sup> EISCR15F2

<sup>79</sup> , EISCR15F2

<sup>80</sup> North East, West Midlands, Scotland, South East, Wales, London, Yorkshire and Humberside, Eastern, Northern Ireland, North west, East Midlands, South West.

<sup>81</sup> Control, Officers, Retained.

<sup>82</sup> B&EMM, LGBT, Women

union. Women have been in the service in control for decades. Women served on appliances during the Second World War, but only since the early 1980s has this been fully established. Women and men have been referred to as 'firefighters' for decades.

## FBU and Climate Change

Climate change became a pivotal issue for the Fire Brigades Union after the 2007 floods in Britain. Cumbria has seen repeated flooding in 2005, 2007/08 and 2014/15. As well as the predictable areas for flooding, unpredictable areas such as Suffolk and Newcastle have experienced flooding, which is likely to only increase with climate change<sup>83</sup>. This is putting, and will put, pressure on the fire and rescue services and their resources. The union is highly critical of the government's failure both to provide the resources to help the UK adapt to climate change, and of its ineffective, market based approach to cutting carbon emissions.

The FBU established a comprehensive climate change policy in 2009,<sup>84</sup> put forward by the Executive Council, which now includes a wide range of issues: legal rights for environmental reps; public ownership in the energy sector; low cost transport; a just transition with worker control over changes to jobs; opposition to market mechanisms as tools to tackle climate change; opposition to new runways at Heathrow and Stansted; opposing nuclear power stations; calling for carbon capture and storage to be combined with any new coal power stations; demanding up to date risk assessments of implications of climate change on the fire service<sup>85</sup>. The union is affiliated to the Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union group, and Trade Unions for Energy Democracy.

In 2010 they also produced a report titled *Climate Change: key issues for the fire and rescue service*<sup>86</sup>. They see climate change as the "Greatest environmental challenge facing humanity at present," and that the UK government policy on climate change is reshaping the political and industrial landscape. The union commits to working within the fire and rescue service, labour movement and the wider community to tackle climate change.

## Flooding – a growing demand on fire and rescue services

Historically the fire and rescue service have helped during flooding – for example firefighters dealt with flooding in 1953. Over the years the composition of the role of the fire and rescue services changed. For example, in the 1960s there was a debate around whether the fire service should attend car accidents, should they attend if the car is not on fire? As the fire service have cutting equipment it was deemed as rescue work and legislated as part of the fire services duty, therefore funding was provided for the service.

There is now an expectation by the public that the fire and rescue service will attend sites of flooding. However, there is no formal legislation to carry out the specific duty in England. At the present time fire authorities in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and soon to be Wales have specific duty to attend flooding and mutual aid arrangements to ensure resources for attending flooding. The FBU have been campaigning for emergency response at flooding sites to be part of the fire and rescue

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<sup>83</sup> [www.fbu.org.uk/news/2011/02/18/floods-firefighters-and-climate-change](http://www.fbu.org.uk/news/2011/02/18/floods-firefighters-and-climate-change)

<sup>84</sup> FBUEC09CC2

<sup>85</sup> [www.fbu.org.uk/publication/executive-council-policy-statement-fbu-and-climate-change-conference-2009](http://www.fbu.org.uk/publication/executive-council-policy-statement-fbu-and-climate-change-conference-2009)

<sup>86</sup> [www.fbu.org.uk/publication/climate-change-key-issues-fire-and-rescue-service](http://www.fbu.org.uk/publication/climate-change-key-issues-fire-and-rescue-service)



service statutory duty across the whole of the UK, and for climate change and flooding to be incorporated into Integrated Risk Management Plans.<sup>87</sup> This would mean that appropriate resource would have to be allocated for the specialised equipment and training for attending flooding.

The fire and rescue service is not only dealing with lack of funding to attend flooding but they are also contenting with austerity measures and cuts to the service.<sup>88</sup> The House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee report: *Climate change adaptation, 2014/15*<sup>89</sup> acknowledges that future cuts to the fire service would undermine further emergency response to flooding. Today there are 6,500 fewer firefighters than at the time of the 2007 floods and the UK is less flood-resilient than it was a few years ago.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, climate change, and relating mitigation and adaption has become a real time industrial and health and safety issue for firefighters.

### FBU and One Million Climate Jobs campaign

The FBU have historically been a politically engaged union<sup>91</sup>. In 2007, Matt Wrack, FBU General Secretary, made the link between flooding, climate change and the impact on the fire service. He spoke at the opening plenary of the Campaign against Climate Change conference on One Million Climate jobs. The FBU have been an active supporter of this initiative. The increased unpredictability of weather because of climate change is changing the hazards facing fire fighters, not only in the form of increased flooding, but also there has been a notable increase in grass fires in the UK.<sup>92</sup> The FBU consider the fire and rescue service a 'green job' that can help society to adapt to climate change.<sup>93</sup>

At membership level, campaigning on climate change issues and on One Million Climate Jobs has come about through members' concerns over health and safety issues and the environment. Lay members are on the front line of climate change in the UK, and readily support legislation to tackle climate change.

There are examples of local activists within the FBU working to reduce the carbon foot print and general environmental of fire stations. In 2016, a motion at the annual conference advocated for the FBU to find alternative ways to communication that does not involve printing paper and thus reduce its carbon footprint.<sup>94</sup>

### FBU position on energy systems

The FBU position on energy policy is that efforts to tackle climate change, eliminate fuel poverty and energy security cannot be solved through market solutions. An FBU report in 2014, *It's time to take*

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<sup>87</sup> [www.fbu.org.uk/publication/inundated-lessons-recent-flooding-fire-and-rescue-service](http://www.fbu.org.uk/publication/inundated-lessons-recent-flooding-fire-and-rescue-service)

<sup>88</sup> [www.fbu.org.uk/news/2015/12/06/firefighters-call-prime-minister-reverse-fire-cuts-storm-desmond-batters-uk](http://www.fbu.org.uk/news/2015/12/06/firefighters-call-prime-minister-reverse-fire-cuts-storm-desmond-batters-uk)

<sup>89</sup> [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmenvaud/453/453.pdf](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmenvaud/453/453.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> [www.fbu.org.uk/publication/inundated-lessons-recent-flooding-fire-and-rescue-service](http://www.fbu.org.uk/publication/inundated-lessons-recent-flooding-fire-and-rescue-service)

<sup>91</sup> [www.fbu.org.uk/international](http://www.fbu.org.uk/international)

<sup>92</sup> [www.fbu.org.uk/news/2013/07/19/increase-grassfires-puts-fire-service-under-strain-says-fire-brigades-union](http://www.fbu.org.uk/news/2013/07/19/increase-grassfires-puts-fire-service-under-strain-says-fire-brigades-union)

<sup>93</sup> [www.fbu.org.uk/publication/climate-change-key-issues-fire-and-rescue-service](http://www.fbu.org.uk/publication/climate-change-key-issues-fire-and-rescue-service)

<sup>94</sup> TUC, Greener Deals Guide

over the *Big Energy firms*,<sup>95</sup> argued that the climate crisis has been caused largely by around 100 companies, producing two-thirds of the greenhouse gas emissions. It is critical of the inefficient housing stock in the UK and the lack of capacity the 'market' has to address this issue and provide the investment needed. FBU argue that public ownership and democratic control over the energy system provides the answer to intersecting problems the working class face today.<sup>96</sup> FBU also supported the Energy Revolution campaign in 2012,<sup>97</sup> demanding that the revenues generated from the carbon tax are used to make UK homes super energy efficient. In support of this policy agenda, the FBU is also affiliated to Trade Unions for Energy Democracy.<sup>98</sup>

## Conclusion

The Fire Brigades Union have been engaging with the issue of climate change seriously since 2007. Its membership could be considered to be at the sharp end of climate change in the UK, as they increasingly have to attend flooding and grass fire emergencies, which are exacerbated by climate change. Its approach to climate change combines strong support for climate change mitigation measures (renewable energy, energy efficiency), in which it is highly critical of the government's approach, with powerful calls for a UK climate change adaptation strategy. Lack of legislation and insufficient funding to ensure suitable equipment and training to attend flooding, means climate change are high priority industrial issue of health and safety for the FBU.

## GMB – Experts in the world of work

This report draws on interviews with a policy officer from GMB and published documents.

### Introduction to GMB

GMB is a general union with almost 639,000 members. Their origins are in the Gas Workers and General Union formed in 1889. Over the years there have been many amalgamations with other unions, and in 1982 the amalgamation with the Society of Boilermakers, Shipwrights, Blacksmiths and Structural Workers (ASBSBSW) saw the creation of the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trade Union (GMBATU). Today the union organises in all areas of the economy.

GMB's structure is based on nine geographical regions<sup>99</sup> each enjoying considerable autonomy, and their makeup reflects the industrial mix of the areas they represent. The regions oversee the payment of benefits and provide the unions professional services covering legal, health and safety pensions and equality to members in the region.

Within the region the members are divided up into three sectors: Commercial Services,<sup>100</sup> Public Services<sup>101</sup> and Manufacturing.<sup>102</sup> There is one delegate sent to conference for every region per

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<sup>95</sup> [www.fbu.org.uk/publication/its-time-take-over-big-energy-firms](http://www.fbu.org.uk/publication/its-time-take-over-big-energy-firms)

<sup>96</sup> Ibid

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.energybillrevolution.org/>

<sup>98</sup> <http://unionsforenergydemocracy.org/about/partners/>

<sup>99</sup> Scotland, Northern Region, Yorkshire & north Derbyshire Region, Midland & East Coast Region, North West & Ireland Region, Birmingham & West Midlands Region, London Region, Southern Region.

<sup>100</sup> The Commercial Services Section combines over 193,132 GMB members working in professional and service industries in the private sector – including Gas workers.

certain number of members, which means the makeup of delegates from a region is dependent on the proportion of the different sectors from that region.

## GMB and climate change

GMB have had official policy since 2006, acknowledging the threat of climate change and that it is a workplace issue, disproportionately impacting the poor and working class. In the subsequent two years they produced a Green Agenda report for congress,<sup>103</sup> setting out what GMB can do about the green agenda. These reports focused on GMB's internal arrangements and negotiations by workers in the work place. They were also founding members of the TUC's Trade Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (TUSDAC). More recently GMB was represented at the COP21 climate talks in Paris 2015. After these talks GMB condemned the lack of legally binding targets to keep warming under 2C, stating that the measures required to solve 'climate change' are counter to capitalist concepts of infinite growth.<sup>104</sup>

Recently climate change policy put to GMB's annual conferences have addressed climate change and greenhouse gases in terms of flooding,<sup>105</sup> supermarket food waste,<sup>106</sup> cuts to renewable subsidies,<sup>107</sup> offshore wind farms,<sup>108</sup> and carbon capture and sequestration.<sup>109</sup>

They appear sometimes to argue for a radical shift in government policy and economic structure towards a low carbon economy to combat climate change. However their action and policies in terms of climate change could be described as contradictory, as they also have policies that prioritise the needs of carbon-intensive industries, with justification in terms of economic growth and security of energy supply.

Such policies include supporting airport expansion at Heathrow and Gatwick<sup>110</sup> and calling for further investment in regional airports,<sup>111</sup> with no mention of climate change; supporting fracking and promoting gas to be at the centre of the Labour party's energy policy;<sup>112</sup> and including coal as part of their 'balanced energy policy'. When commenting on the government infrastructure plan<sup>113</sup> there is no mention of the transition to a low carbon industry and manufacturing base. GMB's position of

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<sup>101</sup> There are about 322,544 members in the GMB's Public Services Section. This section is for members of the Union who are employed in local authorities and private sector contractors engaged in publicly funded work.

<sup>102</sup> The GMB Manufacturing Section combines over 118,382 GMB members working in manufacturing and related industries in the private sector.

<sup>103</sup>

[www.gmb.org.uk/assets/media/documents/congress/congress2007/CEC%20Special%20Report%20Environment%20Final%20colour.pdf](http://www.gmb.org.uk/assets/media/documents/congress/congress2007/CEC%20Special%20Report%20Environment%20Final%20colour.pdf)  
<http://www.gmb.org.uk/assets/media/documents/congress/congress2008/GreenAgendaSpecialReport.pdf>

<sup>104</sup> GSR2016

<sup>105</sup> GMBCFA16F2

<sup>106</sup> GMBCFA16FW3

<sup>107</sup> GMBCFA16RE4

<sup>108</sup> GMBCFA16W

<sup>109</sup> GMBCFA15CC16

<sup>110</sup> GMBCFA15AE17

<sup>111</sup> GMBCFA16RA1

<sup>112</sup> GMBCFA16EP10

<sup>113</sup> [www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/gmb-on-375-billion-infrastructure-plan](http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/gmb-on-375-billion-infrastructure-plan)

supporting expansion at both Heathrow and Gatwick<sup>114</sup> is a job-protectionist one, stating that if Heathrow does not expand then it will close and lose thousands of jobs.

GMB are not affiliated to Campaign against Climate Change (CaCC). The reason given, in the qualification of their climate change motion,<sup>115</sup> is that although they agree with a lot of things CaCC stand for, CaCC campaigns could contradict a number of GMB positions on issues such as fracking, nuclear power and airport expansion. GMB have affiliated to Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED) stating that “it is imperative that GMB, as an energy union, is active in ‘Trade Unions for Energy Democracy’, a collective seeking to bring the sector under public control to achieve a non-carbon economy incorporating a just transition for those workers affected.”<sup>116</sup>

### **GMB membership and environment concern**

Recently the membership demographic of GMB has been shifting, with women and public sector workers making up a larger percentage of the membership. Roughly across the whole union there are about 51% of members from the public service sector, 30% from commercial services (which includes gas) and 19% from manufacturing.

The GMB commented informally that interest in environmental policies has come disproportionately from the young, Black and minority ethnic (BME) and women members in the union. It is likely that climate change and environmental issues would have to be of interest to a significant number of the membership, or attract substantial numbers of new members, before elected officials could take decisive positions supporting policy that potentially would see the decline of a high carbon emitting industries.

In the gas, nuclear, and aviation industries, GMB have significant influence with the employers. It would be difficult for them to give up this long-term relationship for an unknown quantity in other industries, and new industries like renewable energy. Replacing membership from other sectors such as the service sector has proven difficult. In some of these workplaces promotion of unions is not encouraged and workers can be penalised by employers for doing so.<sup>117</sup>

Gas is still the bedrock of GMB. The majority of UK domestic homes are heated by natural gas and this gas infrastructure is due to be renewed. The industry is likely to see the creation of new jobs and, increasingly, become an important source of new members. So the industrial gas sector, which is within GMB commercial services, will still be a prominent component of GMB union in the near future.

GMB have to balance their historic roots of organising in the gas and heavy industry and requirements to protect jobs in those industries in the present moment, with the inevitable shift in demographic and workplaces of members and the transition to low carbon industries. This balance is further complicated with the differences between regions. For example the Scotland and Northern region have released a press release in support of fracking,<sup>118</sup> while Wales & South West,

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<sup>114</sup> [www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/heathrow-and-gatwick-need-more-capacity](http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/heathrow-and-gatwick-need-more-capacity)

<sup>115</sup> GMBFCA08CCC35

<sup>116</sup> [www.gmb.org.uk/assets/media/documents/congress/Congress2016/General%20Secretary's%20Report%202016.pdf](http://www.gmb.org.uk/assets/media/documents/congress/Congress2016/General%20Secretary's%20Report%202016.pdf)

<sup>117</sup> [www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/employer-hostility-at-amazon-and-next](http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/employer-hostility-at-amazon-and-next)

<sup>118</sup> [www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/fracking-debate-needed-in-scotland](http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/fracking-debate-needed-in-scotland)

Midlands & East Coast and London regions have put motions to the annual conferences against fracking, or at least for GMB not to promote the industry.<sup>119</sup>

### Environmental work within GMB

Two ways GMB are active in 'green' and climate issues is through environmental reps, and their own internal measures for emissions reduction.

In the GMB, the environmental rep's role is often rolled into the health and safety remit. Environmental reps are likely to be in jobs such as teaching assistants, refuse collectors and administrators who have access to office facilities and are based on the site of their employer, where it is easier for them to carry out environmental and carbon audits. On the 'tools' side of the membership jobs such as gas maintenance and G4S do not work on their employers sites and are often based in vehicles. It is difficult for them to have any influence over their workplace's carbon emissions. There is a limit to which jobs and workplaces are practically able to carry out environmental audits.

As part of the GMB's internal measures for emissions reductions, seven years ago it replaced its fleet of petrol cars with hybrid vehicles, though this was not purely environmental but had an economic benefit as well.

The GMB has a greener offices programme. However the nature of the structure of the GMB being divided up into nine regions, all with different specifications of buildings and varying levels of data on energy efficiency it is difficult to build up an accurate picture of energy efficiency and carbon emission across the union's estate. Each region has its own culture and autonomy on what data is recorded and what they focus on. Therefore it is difficult to get a clear overview of the carbon footprint of the union, and a unified policy on reducing carbon emission. GMB are hoping to address this in 2017, but with nine regions all with different processes and ways of doing things it will be difficult to create a centralised plan.

GMB set up a lay energy body within the union a few years ago, to look at internal and external policy. The committee was mostly made up of public service members. The regions that are most engaged in environmental issues, London and Southern regions, have a lot of young activists working in public sector.

### GMB position on renewable energy

GMB's Renewable Energy policy<sup>120</sup> commits to campaigning for the reinstatement of subsidies for renewables that were cut by the Conservative government.

GMB have also commented on green jobs potential and investment in green jobs through the Energy Market Reforms designed to incentivise low carbon electricity.<sup>121</sup> The main issue for GMB is the potential the 'green' industry has for job creation.<sup>122</sup> Currently, the supply chain for much of the UK's renewable technology comes from outside the UK. For example, wind turbines are built in Denmark

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<sup>119</sup> GMB CFA16F9

<sup>120</sup> GMB CFA16RE4

<sup>121</sup> [www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/need-assurances-on-green-jobs-in-uk](http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/need-assurances-on-green-jobs-in-uk)

<sup>122</sup> [www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/green-jobs-missed-chance](http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/green-jobs-missed-chance)

and Germany and shipped into UK. Therefore the GMB is critical of the renewable energy sector because it is not realising the industry's full potential for creating jobs in the UK. The supply chain issues and where parts come from appears to be a highly contentious issue, with GMB wanting assurance that these new technologies will be developed and made in the UK.

GMB position highlights that the 'jobs verse the environment' dichotomy can be created through globalised supply chains. Renewable energy technology will reduce the UK's carbon emissions. However the supply chain is not in the UK therefore does not create jobs; for trade unions, job protection and job creation for their members is a main priority. Renewable energy does not provide a lot of jobs in the UK, which GMB describes as the failure of government to develop an industrial strategy that would help the growth of manufacturing in this area (cf Denmark and Germany).

### **GMB, One Million Climate Jobs and Industrial strategy**

GMB perspective on One Million Climate Jobs is that it is a theoretical exercise but not practical. The questions of practicality include organising this and how a 'just transition' would actually safeguard jobs, for example in the steel industry.

GMB would like an industrial strategy that will build up the manufacturing base in the UK. They see that the north of England could become a hub for energy production, with off shore wind, gas, oil, hydro power, nuclear power and green coal, all part of what GMB consider a balanced energy policy.

### **GMB and EU ETS**

The UK government's reliance on market forces to decarbonise the UK industry through the carbon pricing system, together with the UK's relatively high energy costs, have led to many of the high energy intensive industries becoming less viable in a global market. GMB organise in many of these industries and have facilitated meetings with the European Parliament, for example along with the British Ceramic Confederation, to discuss what can be done to avoid 'carbon leakage', where businesses move abroad to avoid the cost impacts of the EU and UK's environmental and carbon tax legislation.<sup>123</sup>

### **GMB's position on fracking**

GMB have publicly supported fracking. A website search produces 15 press releases starting in 2014 calling for 'debate not bribes'<sup>124</sup> with regards to fracking. Recently they condemned the Labour Party's energy policy that does not include fracked gas<sup>125</sup> and criticised Barry Gardiner's (then shadow energy minister) speech at the 2016 Labour Party for supporting an outright ban on fracking. The main argument of their public statements is that without onshore fracking within the UK there is an issue of security of supply, and a moral question of whether the UK wants to rely on 'henchmen, hangmen and head-choppers'<sup>126</sup> for their gas supply.

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<sup>123</sup> [www.gmb.org.uk/assets/media/documents/congress/Congress2016/General%20Secretary's%20Report%202016.pdf](http://www.gmb.org.uk/assets/media/documents/congress/Congress2016/General%20Secretary's%20Report%202016.pdf)

<sup>124</sup> [www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/debate-not-bribes-needed%20-on-fracking](http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/debate-not-bribes-needed%20-on-fracking)

<sup>125</sup> [www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/corbyn's-energy-policy](http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/corbyn's-energy-policy)

<sup>126</sup> [www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/gmb-slams-speech-against-fracking](http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/gmb-slams-speech-against-fracking)

GMB's official policy position is that before they can adopt a position on fracking there needs to be an 'informed and objective' debate. This is set out in a statement on fracking<sup>127</sup> at their 2015 Conference that was carried. The statement says an anti-fracking position would effectively constrain their ability to represent their core activities of representing gas workers. There appears to be a contradiction in what GMB are asking for, as the debate is seemingly pre-determined, with fracked gas deemed necessary for GMB to continue representing gas workers.

Questions that they want the 'informed and objective' debate to answer are whether fracking will produce sufficient supplies that will reduce consumer prices and mitigate the need for imported gas, and if so at what cost to the environment.

They also want the debate to address moral questions of importing gas from countries with less environmental and safety regulations, where workers are denied basic trade union rights, and the environmental impact of transport gas across oceans rather than extracting it from the UK.

The historic connection GMB have with the gas industries means that any position they have on fracking will have to be consistent with their need to organise in the shale gas industry, protect the future of the UK gas industry and the thousands of GMB members currently employed in the industry.

In the same year as the statement on fracking was carried in 2015, there were two anti-fracking motions<sup>128</sup> which were voted down, demonstrating the conflicting position between regions and branches in the union. These contrasting positions could be seen as owing to the different industrial make up of the nine different regions of GMB. The northern region and Scotland are made up of more commercial members working in heavy industry and energy production, whereas in the Southern and London regions there are more public services members who do not rely on gas supply for jobs.

Though officially GMB do not have a definite position for or against fracking, they have publicly supported onshore fracking industry and have signed a memorandum of agreement with the UK Onshore Oil and Gas industry (UKOOG) focusing on safety, skills and supply chain development<sup>129</sup> and see it as a vital for security of gas supply for many industries such as ceramics, chemical production and heating of homes. Their support for fracking is considered a pragmatic decision, along with nuclear, due to the potential energy gap predicted by 2025.<sup>130</sup>

GMB has a policy calling for public ownership of the shale gas, if it is viable, seeing it as a national asset which shouldn't be traded as a commodity on the open market.<sup>131</sup>

## Conclusion

GMB have engaged with climate change and the transition to a low carbon economy through formal policy, participating in the TUC sustainable development committee and commented on

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<sup>127</sup> [www.gmb.org.uk/assets/media/documents/congress/congress2015/CEC%20Statement%20on%20Fracking%20.pdf](http://www.gmb.org.uk/assets/media/documents/congress/congress2015/CEC%20Statement%20on%20Fracking%20.pdf)

<sup>128</sup> GMBCS15F13a

<sup>129</sup> [www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/gmb-ukoog-agreement-on-shale-gas](http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/gmb-ukoog-agreement-on-shale-gas)

<sup>130</sup> [www.imeche.org/news/news-article/closure-of-uk-coal-and-nuclear-plants-to-create-electricity-supply-gap-of-up-to-55-by-2025](http://www.imeche.org/news/news-article/closure-of-uk-coal-and-nuclear-plants-to-create-electricity-supply-gap-of-up-to-55-by-2025)

<sup>131</sup> GMBCFA14F19

international and national climate strategy. They have implemented where possible carbon reduction initiatives in GMB's estate and have a network of environmental reps within workplaces.

However they organise in carbon intensive industries such as steel, electricity production energy supply carbon intensive industries that are under pressure to decarbonise. GMB position is that it is their remit to protect the jobs of their members and therefore have to support the industries that the members work in.

This perceived conflict between their members' jobs and taking actions to decarbonise the UK economy have led to conflicting policies within GMB.

## **NASUWT – The Teachers Union**

To research NASUWT's engagement with climate change a systematic search of the website was carried and an interview with the press officer.

### **Introduction to NASUWT**

NASUWT is the largest teachers' union with over 295,000 members. Their membership is made up of teachers organised in 34 districts across the UK. The main decision making body of the union comprises the five National Officers elected by the membership every four years and the National Executive Committee made up from members representing their districts. A membership vote before hand decides which motions will be taken to conference, therefore not all motions put forward are discussed.

### **NASUWT and climate change**

A search of the union's website suggests that the NASUWT does not appear to have policies on climate change or key environmental issues such as fracking or airport expansion. From discussion, the union may be potentially working more broadly on climate change concerns, for example through their work with refugee children.<sup>132</sup> One result from the systematic search of the website concerned pollution in Iraq impacting the capacity of children to access education.<sup>133</sup>

The union is engaged in work on Sustainable Development Goals, and also works closely with Education International, a global union federation (GUF) of teachers' trade union consisting of 401 member organisations in 172 countries and territories, who work around the world campaigning for free education for all. The NASUWT's interests include Bahrain, Iraq, Zimbabwe and Colombia.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> [www.nasuwt.org.uk](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk) - Position Statement: CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND THE REFUGEE CRISIS

<sup>133</sup><sup>133</sup> <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/news/international/international-news/pollution-affecting-life-chances-in-iraq.html>

<sup>134</sup> [www.nasuwt.org.uk/news/international.html](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk/news/international.html)



## NUT – National Union of Teachers

This research draws on published documents and attendance at the inaugural meeting of the London NUT climate network meeting.

### Introduction to NUT

The National Union of Teachers (NUT) is the largest trade union for qualified and training to qualify teachers, in Europe, with over 300,000 members. They organise in schools in England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. England is divided into 9 regions and Wales has its own regional office. Policies are determined by the National Conference through motions submitted by associations, divisions and the Executive.

### NUT and Climate Change policy

NUT has one policy on climate change passed at the 2016 conference.<sup>135</sup> This policy acknowledges the threat of climate change and that keeping warming below 1.5°C is essential for the sustainability of human civilisation. To ensure that warming does not go above 1.5 °C, some 75-80% of known fossil fuel reserves need to left in the ground. The policy calls for a coordinated effort from the government to ensure that growth in sustainable technology of solar, wind etc occurs and carbon emissions are cut by 8-10% per year by industrial countries. The policy also demands: the government to reverse their decision to stop subsidies to renewable technology; retrofitting existing schools to make them as carbon neutral as possible; the insertion of sustainability and the values of a sustainable society at the heart of the curriculum; phasing out of coal power without Carbon Capture Storage by 2023; the abandoning of domestic fracking and an embargo on the import of any fracked gas or tar sand oil from other countries; and the socialisation of power generation.

The policy also instructs the conference to work with environmental campaigning organisations such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, and to affiliate to Campaign against Climate Change.

### NUT London Climate Network

In autumn 2016, the NUT London Climate Network held its inaugural meeting, with plans to build up the existing network of climate activist within NUT, and to implement and develop union policy on climate change. They are also working with other organisations on environmental issues using the network to share information, such as Campaign Against Climate Change (supporting their Climate Refugee conference in February 2017), Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace.

Through communication with the network, it would appear that historically there have been a few activists within the union from across the country, who have been in email contact about the issue of climate change. There are about 10% of schools engaged with eco-schools,<sup>136</sup> an international charity that provides a framework for learning and action on nine topics, including biodiversity, energy, litter, global citizenship, health living, school grounds, transport, waste and water. This provides a benchmark for where schools are in terms of environmental considerations with the UK.

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<sup>135</sup> NUTAC16CC1

<sup>136</sup> [www.eco-schools.org.uk/about-us/](http://www.eco-schools.org.uk/about-us/)

## Conclusion

As an education union climate change has massive implications for NUT in terms of the curriculum, the impact it will have on students in the future, and on the sustainable management of schools through the installation of renewable energy devices. The NUT has established a network of committed activists on climate change who are trying to push the issue up the agenda of the union. While climate change is not currently a mainstream issue within the union, clearly there are new efforts to make it so.

## PCS – Public and Commercial Services Union

This report is drawn from an interview with Sam Mason, PCS Policy Officer, and published documents.

### Introduction to PCS

PCS is the largest civil service trade union with around 180,000 members. They organise throughout the civil service and government agencies as well as private sectors, usually those who had previously been public sectors<sup>137</sup>.

PCS members are organised into branches through either their locality or employer, in which case members of the branch may work across different workplaces. All branches can put motions to the annual conference and input into national policy. There are also bargaining groups for larger sectors or employers<sup>138</sup> for example Department for Work and Pensions. There is a PCS green reps network, and equality forums for members who are traditionally under represented and want to work together.<sup>139</sup>

### PCS engagement with climate change

PCS has been described by many people interviewed, and not just members or employees of the union, as one of the most progressive unions in the UK on climate change policy, position and action. They have had policy on climate change issues since 2006 and in the subsequent years to date. Their climate and environmental policies cover campaigning for statutory rights for workplace environmental reps, establishing consultation structures on sustainability issues across the civil service, integrating green/sustainability agenda into wider collective bargaining objectives, supporting environmental campaigns such as the anti-fracking movement, promoting the One Million Climate Jobs campaign and just transition.

The issue of climate change and its impact on jobs and workers permeates PCS's activities. They are actively engaging with the issue of a just transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, at international, national, union and branch level. Chris Baugh attended the COP21 talks in Paris as part of the International Trade Union Confederation delegation. Through their involvement with

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<sup>137</sup> Air traffic control, Benefits and welfare advice, Border and immigration, Coastguards, Courts service, Customs, Defence maintenance and support, Information technology, Police support, Royal palaces, Security, State pensions, Taxation.

<sup>138</sup> Public Sector group, Call centres forum, Atypical workers forum, Support and related grades association, The professional and managers association, Commercial sector association, Culture, media and support.

<sup>139</sup> Women's forum, Black member's forum, disability forum, Proud, Young members forum.

TUSDAC,<sup>140</sup> they try to make sure that climate change issues are at the heart of the TUC's agenda. They are affiliated to the Campaign against Climate Change and the One Million Climate Jobs Campaign Trade, a member of the Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED) initiative, as well as working in partnership with organisation such as Friends of the Earth and This Changes Everything (UK).

PCS has developed material for members on a wide range of issues and topics, such as 'Agriculture, Food and Climate Change', 'Aviation and the environment', 'No to fossil fuels, yes to climate jobs', and 'No to fracking, yes to climate jobs'.<sup>141</sup> They also produce a *Greener Union* report for their annual conference each year.<sup>142</sup>

The three main strands of PCS's green policy involve their own workplaces as an employer, members and their employment, and campaigns such as One Million Climate Jobs and fossil fuel divestment.

### PCS and One Million Climate Jobs

PCS have been involved with the One Million Climate Jobs campaign since its inception. PCS's Assistant General Secretary chaired the first national conference on climate jobs and has been a strong supporter of the campaign. PCS have produced their own material on climate jobs, promoting the campaign amongst their membership.<sup>143</sup>

### PCS Green reps

PCS has a well developed Green reps network, with conference policy to continue campaigning for statutory rights in the workplace<sup>144</sup>. It has a Climate Change and Environment Committee (CCEC) which is a sub-committee of its main National Executive Committee. It holds an annual Green Forum each year who in turn elect five members to the Green Forum Advisory Group (GFAG) to support the CCEC.

The 2016 national green forum debated a broad range of topics related to the environment, climate change and how they fit in with the work place and trade union activities. The AGS spoke on how the trade union movement can be strengthened by the climate movement and that the binary choice of jobs or the environment was a false choice. A representative from the Lucas Aerospace Plan 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary spoke on how a group of shop stewards created a plan to transform the business from producing technology for the defence industry to producing socially useful products.<sup>145</sup> Mika Minio-Paluello<sup>146</sup> described the problem of how to keep below 2C<sup>o</sup> warming, when

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<sup>140</sup> Trade Union Sustainable Development advisory Committee. [www.tuc.org.uk/international-issues/globalisation/trade-unions-and-sustainable-development](http://www.tuc.org.uk/international-issues/globalisation/trade-unions-and-sustainable-development)

<sup>141</sup> [www.pcs.org.uk/en/utilities/document\\_summary/document\\_summary.cfm/docid/CA5D0A95-EE79-46C9-BCCFBD6737B3CB3E](http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/utilities/document_summary/document_summary.cfm/docid/CA5D0A95-EE79-46C9-BCCFBD6737B3CB3E)

<sup>142</sup> Greener union report 2016  
[www.pcs.org.uk/en/utilities/document\\_summary/document\\_summary.cfm/docid/046174DE-FC98-47E0-A80D6F4BADE152D7](http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/utilities/document_summary/document_summary.cfm/docid/046174DE-FC98-47E0-A80D6F4BADE152D7)

<sup>143</sup> [www.pcs.org.uk/en/utilities/document\\_summary/document\\_summary.cfm/docid/95122D4D-2387-4B29-8FFBD412D43493A5](http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/utilities/document_summary/document_summary.cfm/docid/95122D4D-2387-4B29-8FFBD412D43493A5)

<sup>144</sup> PCSAC16SCS1

<sup>145</sup> <http://lucasplan.org.uk/>

<sup>146</sup> Energy economist and Author of 'Jobs in Scotland a New Economy'  
[https://greens.scot/sites/default/files/Policy/Jobs\\_in\\_Scotland\\_New\\_Economy.pdf](https://greens.scot/sites/default/files/Policy/Jobs_in_Scotland_New_Economy.pdf)

we can only remove 20% of the known fossil fuels from the ground. Sheffield Climate Alliance spoke on how action can be taken through local partnerships with councils and employers to act on reducing carbon emissions. The overall message of the conference was that workers have the knowledge and skills to decarbonise their industry and workplaces, and we have to consider the further skills required to create a green economy.

The forum did not leave it at describing the problem, but workshops throughout the weekend gave participants the opportunity to learn about examples of what unions are doing in other countries to bargain for environmental and climate issues in the workplace.<sup>147</sup> As well as generate their own possible strategies for bargaining on issues from a diverse range of topics from equality and climate change, health impacts of climate change, nuclear – clean energy or green-wash, and developing a response to climate refugees.

PCS is actively trying to engage their members in the discussion around climate change and transition to a low carbon economy and to come up with solutions to the problems. Yet, although they are proactive in this area, there were several comments from attendees at the forum that many members of PCS are unaware that they are a green union and actively engaged in this debate.

### PCS's position on airport expansion

One of the tensions in the trade union movement and the fight against climate change is that those unions who have members and organise in carbon intensive industries, say it is easy for unions who don't have members in these industries to call for action on climate change and decarbonisation policy. They do not have to defend members' jobs in these industries.

PCS is challenging the idea that because a union has members within an industry the only way to support those members is through supporting its growth irrespective of the environmental consequences. PCS organise security personal within Heathrow airport. They first and foremost have to look after the jobs of those workers. However, they also have national policy against further airport expansion at Heathrow on the grounds of carbon emissions and climate change.<sup>148</sup> To address their commitment to protecting jobs with a more environmentally friendly policy towards unchecked expansionism, PCS commissioned a report by Caroline Molloy and Roger Sealey to look at not only the question of how many jobs are likely to be created with Heathrow expansion<sup>149</sup>, but also to investigate and highlight the complexities around the question of airport expansion with regards to environment, economic, industrial, political or legal. The report aimed to provide evidence based arguments to have discussions with employers, and the wider union about how to

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<sup>147</sup> **Bargaining in the work place** for environmental and climate issues- Examples given where the Lucas plan, the Canadian workers organisation 'Iron and Earth' <http://www.ironandearth.org/> a non-profit social enterprise set up by Canadian oil sands workers who have seen the need to diversify the energy grid in Canada, to be more ambitious with its renewables share. Their strategy is based on four pillars of Collaboration, Vision, Training, and Advocacy. Campaigning for a three point strategy of building up renewables, building up Canada's manufacturing of renewables and positioning existing energy sector workers within the renewable energy sector. The personal experience of a PCS green rep being involved in a campaign to stop the British Museum accepting money from BP who in an attempt to appropriate the image of the arts and culture to legitimise it's polluting industry, sponsor exhibitions at the museum.

<sup>148</sup> [PCSAC14A8], [PCSAC09HE20]

<sup>149</sup> [www.join.pcs.org.uk/en/aviation-group/latest-news/protecting-jobs-protecting-the-planet.cfm](http://www.join.pcs.org.uk/en/aviation-group/latest-news/protecting-jobs-protecting-the-planet.cfm)

change the industry to protect the interests of workers, the environment, and also the wider public.<sup>150</sup>

PCS also commissioned a specific piece of research into the jobs claims made by Heathrow Ltd that expansion would bring, which has been discussed in a joint meeting with local reps at Heathrow and John McDonnell who is the local MP. This was to provide evidence to the arguments that jobs claims are exaggerated but also drawing out wider bargaining issues i.e. new jobs will in any case be on lesser terms and conditions. In order to give confidence to members that there are viable alternatives, the Union is also working on an integrated transport strategy that will provide an alternative vision for transport including in addressing climate change concerns.

This is an example of how trade unions can challenge the assumed logic that to protect their members' jobs, they have to automatically support growth in an industry regardless of the environmental impact of that industry. The report highlights some of the broader issues that may impact their members working within the aviation industry and therefore their jobs such as the contradictions of creating a European Sky and at the same time deregulating the industry and subsequent difficulty of creating a coordinated effort to reduce emissions. They also provided real solutions to emission reduction and alternatives to jobs that would be created through airport expansion<sup>151</sup>, including climate jobs and encouraging an integrated transport system.

PCS works with NGOs, local community and politicians to disseminate information about the impacts of aviation and climate change, and possible actions and alternatives to building a third runway that allows growth of the industry within acceptable ecological limits.

## Conclusion

PCS are committed to the issue of tackling climate change while also ensuring they can carry out their primary role of protecting their members' jobs. They are proactive in generating and disseminating information and debate on the issues of climate change within the union and workplaces and work locally, nationally and internationally with many different partners to drive the debate on solutions to the problem of decarbonising the economy while ensure workers are protected in the process.

## Prospect – Union for Life

Prospect Overview: based on online research and an interview with Sue Ferns, Prospect's DGS.

### Introduction

Prospect is the largest union representing professional, scientists, managers and specialists in their respective fields.<sup>152</sup> Its 141,000-strong membership (boosted by a recent merger), is organised into three sectors: Civil Service, Energy Supply and BECTU, representing members of the former

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<sup>150</sup> Molloy, C & Sealy, R., 2013, PCS Aviation Review: Protecting jobs/Protecting the planet.

<sup>151</sup> ibid

<sup>152</sup> Broadcasting, Defence, Education and Children's services, Energy, Environment and Food, Heritage, IT & Telecoms, Justice, Nuclear, Public Service, Science, Sport, and Transport: [www.prospect.org.uk/our-industries/index](http://www.prospect.org.uk/our-industries/index)

Broadcasting, Entertainment and Cinematographic Trade Union. The merger, involving workers in media, entertainment, communications and digital industries, took place in January 2017<sup>153</sup>.

Prospect is a member-led union whose policies are determined at the biennial national conference. In alternative years the union holds sector conferences to discuss and vote on policy related their interests. Within each sector, members are organised into branches, the majority of which would be made up of members working for the same employer even though they may be located in different part of the country; other branches operate across several employers in the same industry.

Prospect's membership embraces environmental scientists, conservationists, energy supply, and workers in aviation, highways, engineering and transport. Its members play a key part in environmental lobbying and climate change-related issues.

### Prospect and climate change

Prospect has a long term commitment to tackling climate change, because the move to a low-carbon economy has massive implications for jobs and skills, the working environment and energy and economic policy. It is therefore the subject of many of the union's policies, both nationally (including through the TUC) and in terms of international development.

Prospect policy on climate change is similar to the TUC's, in supporting a low carbon economy that considers sustainability, security, energy affordability and the need for a skilled workforce. The union plays a leading role through the TUC as chair of the Trade Unions Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (TUSDAC), which was established to facilitate consultation between trade unions and the government on sustainable development and environmental issues.

### Prospect Environmental reps' network

Prospect has built up a network of environmental reps who are supported by a dedicated policy officer. Reps' resources include bespoke training courses and a range of briefing notes and workplace manuals such as *Targeting climate change*<sup>154</sup> to support bargaining for sustainable workplaces. These materials have been downloaded thousands of times by reps.

The union seeks to establish formal green workplace agreements with employers. For example, at Devonport Royal Dockyard, the 35 Prospect environmental representatives have broken new ground by the signing of a formal agreement<sup>155</sup> on environmental sustainability with the employers. Signed jointly with GMB and Unite, the agreement signals an operational commitment to reduce energy consumptions and increase energy efficiency to reduce carbon emissions, and a range of other commitments.

### Prospect's energy policy

Prospect supports a balanced energy policy that is as low carbon as possible, and has called for a

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<sup>153</sup> [www.prospect.org.uk/news/id/2016/December/27/Prospect-BECTU-unions-merge-on-January](http://www.prospect.org.uk/news/id/2016/December/27/Prospect-BECTU-unions-merge-on-January)

<sup>154</sup> <https://library.prospect.org.uk/id/2015/00646>

<sup>155</sup> <https://www.prospect.org.uk/news/id/2016/02214>

government-led skills and training strategy for a low carbon future<sup>156</sup>.

The union supports massive new infrastructure investment across the energy sector, both public and private, including new baseload nuclear energy such as Hinkley C, facilitated by a long term infrastructure plan that is removed from the 5 year electoral cycle, to ensure investor confidence, and a strategic planning body for at least 10 years that is outside the parliamentary cycle.

The union's membership includes many who work in the technical side of energy generation and supply. One issue of concern to the union is the current intermittency of renewable energy supplies, which are not yet in a position to supply base load energy. There should be a gradually increasing share of renewables onto the grid, consistent with local connectivity, energy security, affordability and the skills required. However, there is little appetite among Prospect's members for the renationalization of the energy grid itself.

The union believes that the government has made some poor strategic choices on energy policy, for example that it was a huge mistake to cancel the £1 billion public fund to support carbon capture and storage. They argue that short termism of this kind will lead to us importing coal, and high carbon coal at that.

Another problem identified is that Britain's building stock is one of the least energy efficient in Europe, yet there is no effective government strategy to tackle this issue. We use gas to heat our homes, which will continue for the time being until an alternative is decided upon. Importing gas will continue due to the energy gap.

Prospect is committed to promoting and supporting members' personal and career development.<sup>157</sup> Faced with an ageing workforce in the energy sector, the union argues that the UK's skills strategy cannot be left to employers alone - their time horizons are short-term. Crucial policy issues on access to training by gender, ethnicity and orientation require clear government leadership. While there may be a record number of people in employment, Prospect argues that many are low paid, low skilled jobs, partly because of the lack of opportunities for training and skills development.

It believes that a joined up industrial strategy must include the positive contribution that trade unions can make in boosting economic productivity and ensuring that the UK's workers are highly-skilled, well-motivated and fairly rewarded. Only 10% of the 504,00 apprenticeships taken up in 2016 were in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects.

### **Prospect's position on fracking**

To date, Prospect does not have a formal position on fracking. The union's NEC submitted an 'amber light' policy<sup>158</sup> on fracking to the its 2016 conference, which delegates rejected by a ratio of 62% to 38%. The intended policy wanted the issue of fracking to be considered by assessing the scientific facts, rather than taking either of the extreme views, such that "[fracking] is the silver bullet that will meet the UK's future energy needs"; or "that no matter what regulatory framework is in place, it represents an environmental and safety hazard that cannot be contained." Furthermore, the NEC

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<sup>156</sup> <https://www.prospect.org.uk/news/id/2015/01078>

<sup>157</sup> <https://www.prospect.org.uk/at-work/careers-and-skills/index>

<sup>158</sup> <https://www.prospect.org.uk/news/id/2016/01060>

believed that the union should consider fracking in the context of its longstanding balanced energy policy and ensuring security of energy supply in the UK. But the motion was lost. However, for some time the union has actively engaged in the fracking debate, holding a fringe event at its 2014 conference.

### Prospect's position on just transition

Prospect supports the need for a just transition to a low carbon future. Its briefing, *Bargaining for a Just Transition*<sup>159</sup> argues that, 'The Just Transition concept for trade union members represents our core values of defending workers in a changing world. It encapsulates ensuring quality employment, safe workplaces, informing and educating members and bargaining for the retraining and up-skilling of workers to meet the demands of a changing world.'

In its interview with the CaCC, Prospect observed that the language that is used in developing the argument for just transition is important: we need to be clear about what we mean by a just transition when we go to talk to workers in an industry facing significant change. We have to consider the impacts of change on livelihoods and jobs. In some sectors, such as the defence industry the language of just transition means little to employees, although Prospect is supportive of the ideas of progressive technological change in the Lucas Aerospace initiative.

Prospect expressed reservations about the notion of 'climate jobs' as a solution to climate change as it was felt that the term 'climate jobs' tends to create a false distinction between 'green' and 'other' jobs – for example, Britain requires carbon intensive industries such as the steel industry, which provide vital components for a low carbon future. Their position is that all jobs should be decarbonised.

### Prospect's and airport expansion

Prospect represent workers across the aviation industry, including Heathrow and the 10 regional airports, from air traffic control to engineers building and developing aviation technology. Prospect's 2015 report, *Towards a Sustainable Aviation Industry for the UK*, informed the union's strategy for increased airport capacity in London and the South-East and greater incentives for research and development to improve, design and control of aviation's CO2 emissions. Prospect is working with other unions in the aviation sector (Unite, GMB and BALPA) to support the campaign.

The union opposed the 'After Paris' motion on climate change at the TUC in September 2016, arguing that the proposed opposition to Heathrow expansion contradicted existing TUC policy, and that as a trade union they could not vote for a policy that would harm their members' jobs.

### Conclusion

Prospect's membership strengths in the fields of scientific research and technological development securely underpins its science-based approach to tackling climate change. The union has consistently supported a low carbon energy and industrial strategy for the UK, and green workplaces. It has been a consistent critic of government policy, for its lack of urgency, the lack of effective market interventions, and the absence of a sustainable skills strategy. Conversely, it could

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<sup>159</sup> <https://library.prospect.org.uk/id/2015/00960>



be argued that Prospect's support for Heathrow expansion has placed what the union sees as its members' immediate interests above a credible low carbon plan for the aviation industry. And in Prospect's challenge to the notion of 'a million climate jobs,' there is possibly more common ground with the CaCC on the need to decarbonise all work than it perhaps acknowledges.

## **RMT – The union for transport workers**

The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport workers organise over 80,000 members across the transport industry, from mainline and underground railways, shipping and offshore, buses and road freight.

### **RMT and climate change**

They produce a report in 2013 titled 'buses matter'<sup>160</sup> arguing that transport policy has to respond to the challenges of climate change. With the need to shift away from high carbon modes of transport, such as driving, towards lower carbon modes such as public transport, RMT argue that buses can make a major contribution to delivering the Government's carbon reduction targets. Therefore bus services have to be properly supported by the government to ensure services don't decline or fares go up.

RMT are involved with TUC's Trade Union Sustainability Development Advisory Committee (TUSDAC) and support Campaign against Climate Change on their website. It would appear that RMT are engaged at some level with the issue of climate change.

## **TSSA – Transport and Salaried Staff Association**

This section is based on a systematic search of the TSSA website and conference papers, and an interview with Fliss Premru, a TfL company council and industrial relations rep who has also been actively pursuing environmental issues in TSSA.

### **Introduction to TSSA**

TSSA, the Transport Salaried Staff Association, represents over 22,000 members in administrative, clerical, managerial, professional and technical jobs in the railways, buses, the London Underground, the travel trade, ports and ferries, and road haulage.

Within the workplace they have local reps, health and safety reps and learner-learning-reps. Outside of the workplace the union organises into branches, divisional councils, and an executive committee, while policy is made at the annual conference.

The union sees public transport and rail freight as a vital part of a low carbon economy. The TSSA does not have members who directly work in the energy industry, but since its members work in the rail freight industry which would transport coal, their jobs were affected by the reduction of coal mining.

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<sup>160</sup> [www.rmt.org.uk/news/publications/buses-matter-report/](http://www.rmt.org.uk/news/publications/buses-matter-report/)

## TSSA climate change and environmental issues

TSSA support the One Million Climate Jobs campaign. General Secretary, Manuel Cortes, spoke at the 2016 TUC fringe event, 'There are no Jobs on a Dead Planet;' and a TSSA representative spoke at a similar event on trade unions and climate change at the 2016 Momentum fringe 'Take back the world festival' at the Labour Party conference.

TSSA started to engage with climate change at a policy level around 2005/6, at the time when there was a commitment to the coal industry, and a continuing sense of solidarity with the miners left over from the 1970's and 80's struggles.

However, since the union joined the One Million Climate Jobs campaign, they have embraced climate change as an issue that unions should engage with, while committing that former mining and abandoned communities should benefit from investment in climate jobs. As a transport union, TSSA believes that organising in public transport fits in well with the campaign and is relevant to the issues facing its members: increased investment in public transport the use of rail for freight would create jobs in the sectors TSSA members work in. They see publicly owned passenger and freight rail as being a vital part of a low carbon economy.<sup>161</sup>

TSSA engage in the environmental and climate change issues within their specialist field of transport. A 2012 report on the future of rail<sup>162</sup> highlighted some of the contradictions in the reduced freight track access charges. Instead of increasing freight by rail, they in fact gave a disproportionate boost to the coal industry comparatively to renewables, as the cost of transporting coal went down. They also found that the freight companies, instead of using the reduced cost to look for more business, had pocketed the increased profits.

## TSSA Climate change policy

TSSA considered two climate change policies at their conference in 2016, in a composite motion that was carried.<sup>163</sup> There was a slight difference in the degree to which the COP 21 Paris Agreement was viewed, one motion being highly critical of the absence of a plan to address climate change or climate justice; and the second being more supportive and viewing it as a step forward from Copenhagen. The comprehensive motion also addressed issues of a just transition, reduction in fossil fuel to a net – zero carbon emissions through energy democracy, rapid electrification of transport which would also improve air quality, renewable technology, and the development of environmental and climate change champions to take this work forward. At the present time TSSA do not have an environmental network.

## TSSA's position on fracking

TSSA have a comprehensive motion carried in 2013<sup>164</sup> against fracking, which is also critical of supporting nuclear technology over renewable energy generation.

## TSSA's position on airport expansion

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<sup>161</sup> [www.tssa.org.uk/en/whats-new/news/index.cfm/rail-freight-s-role-in-the-green-economic-future](http://www.tssa.org.uk/en/whats-new/news/index.cfm/rail-freight-s-role-in-the-green-economic-future)

<sup>162</sup> [www.tssa.org.uk/en/campaigns/better-rail/better-rail-resources/rebuilding-rail-report.cfm](http://www.tssa.org.uk/en/campaigns/better-rail/better-rail-resources/rebuilding-rail-report.cfm)

<sup>163</sup> TSSNC16CC2, TSSNC16CC3

<sup>164</sup> TSSNC13E11

TSSA are opposed to further airport expansion, seeing the drive for unpopular new airports or additional runways in the South East as in clear conflict with plans to reduce carbon emissions in the UK.<sup>165</sup>

### **TUC conference motion (2016) ‘After Paris’**

TSSA submitted a climate change motion to the 2016 TUC conference.<sup>166</sup> The motion was lost following a significant debate on the floor of Congress.

The TUC motion came out of an earlier conference in West London on the Heathrow expansion question, held by environmental groups, where it was suggested that a motion on airport expansion should be put to TUC to at least have a debate within the trade union movement. Historically the TUC annual Congress had not formally supported airport expansion, although the TUC have recently campaigned in favour of Heathrow expansion on the basis of growth of the UK economy and the potential for job and apprentice opportunities.

The motion put forward by TSSA would have committed the TUC Congress to develop an active energy and climate change strategy that campaigned for no further airport expansion, promoted alternatives to short haul flights, energy democracy, improved links with anti-war campaigns, supported refugee and climate change movements, and the creation for a climate justice fund.

It was thought that the motion produced a genuine debate to Congress floor on issues that had previously not been debated. The contentious issues for the larger unions such as Unite and GMB were the anti-Heathrow position, the anti-defence industry element, and the opposition to the coal industry. The TSSA felt that unions with members in these industries spoke of the need to protect jobs over the environment.

### **Conclusion**

TSSA have been active in the One Million Climate Jobs Campaign and engaging in public discussion around what a just transition could look like. They are committed to the issue at a policy level and taking part in wider discussions. Within the union there is no structure as yet for environmental reps, and there potentially could still be more work done around education and action on climate change issues.

## **UCU – University and Colleges Union**

This report draws on an interview with Graham Petersen, retired Environmental Officer, UCU members and published material.

### **Introduction to UCU**

The University and College Union (UCU) represents over 110,000 academics, lecturers, trainers, instructors, researchers, managers, administrators, computer staff, librarians and postgraduates in universities, colleges, prisons, adult education and training organisations across the UK.

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<sup>165</sup> TSSNC13T10

<sup>166</sup> TSSTUC16CC1

The union was formed in 2006 through an amalgamation of the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and NAFTHE – The University & College Lecturers’ Union. Both unions had been in existence since the beginning of the twentieth century.

The annual conference is the ‘supreme policy making body’ of the union, delegates are voted to go from every branch and association. The branches and associations are organised via work places and they elect their own officers who negotiate and represent members on a local level supported by their regional branches.<sup>167</sup>

Academic research on global warming and climate change, and the social implications are being carried out by members of UCU in the university and colleges they organise in. For the students being taught at these institutions, climate change, and sustainable development skills required to tackle it are an important issue.<sup>168</sup> Therefore UCU members are uniquely placed with specific knowledge about the issues of climate change and have an invested interest in engaging with the issue, to ensure adequate training and skills, as well as research and development, are developed to meet the demands required to transition to a low carbon economy.

### UCU and climate change

UCU have a specific environmental section on the campaigns<sup>169</sup> area of the website, where they provide education and information about climate change and UCU initiatives. They also produce an annual environmental report<sup>170</sup> on the activities of the union in the four key strands of UCU environmental engagement: developing an environmental rep network, campaigning for climate change and sustainability to be taught as part of the curriculum in colleges and universities, support of environmental campaigns, and divestment.

The union is also affiliated to Campaign against Climate Change, encouraging members to join on their website. UCU have been a co-funder of the One Million Climate Jobs booklet and have policy supporting the campaign.<sup>171</sup> They are also affiliated to Trade Unions for Energy democracy (TUED), promoting the organisation and their anti-fracking material in the bi-annual environmental newsletter.

Further activities include working with The Workers Beer Company,<sup>172</sup> to raise funds for the Greener Jobs Alliance, by members working at festivals.

UCU’s shift towards climate change issues came about through local branches bringing motions on climate change to conference. The first was brought by South Thames College in 2009, and now UCU have 10 motions on climate change and climate change issues. These motions have developed the four strands of UCU’s environmental work, set out below.

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<sup>167</sup> HE London; Northern Ireland; East Midlands; Yorkshire and Humberside; South; South East; North West; FE London; West Midlands; Northern Region; Wales; Eastern and home Counties; Scotland.

<sup>168</sup> <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/executive-summary-students.pdf>

<sup>169</sup> <https://www.ucu.org.uk/environment#envrep>

<sup>170</sup> Environmental report 2016 [www.ucu.org.uk/media/8119/UCU-annual-environment-report-2016/pdf/ucu\\_environmentreport2016\\_may16\\_.pdf](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8119/UCU-annual-environment-report-2016/pdf/ucu_environmentreport2016_may16_.pdf)

<sup>171</sup> UCUCP11CJ10

<sup>172</sup> <http://www.workersbeer.co.uk/>

## 1. Environmental reps and network

The first priority for UCU's environmental campaign is to build an activist group through developing environmental rep roles at branch level.<sup>173</sup> Environmental reps are not yet formally recognised by the employers, therefore all the work has to be done voluntary outside of their work hours. UCU are campaigning for legislation for the workplace role of environmental reps to be recognised. To date, there are 150 UCU green reps in the union's 600 branches, so that one in four branches have an environmental rep.

UCU environmental network produce a bi-monthly newsletter about a broad range of environmental issues from national policy and strategy to campaigning and events.<sup>174</sup> They run a one day training course for new environmental reps and people interested in workplace environmental issues. Other material and associations UCU promote on their website for Environmental reps include the EAUC Sustainability Exchange<sup>175</sup> (a knowledge exchange on sustainable education resources); and the Greener Jobs Alliance<sup>176</sup> which promotes skills training and job creation to meet the needs of Britain's rapidly growing low carbon sectors and to green the whole economy.

## 2. Climate change and education

Requesting and pushing for a sustainability and climate change curriculum to be taught in schools is a second strand they focus on.<sup>177</sup> Part of the Paris agreement at COP21 is an education commitment that governments have to meet to promote climate change awareness at national level.<sup>178</sup> UCU was part of the lobbying efforts to ensure that education was included in the agreement.

Further legislations to include sustainability in education came out of the adoption by the UN in September, 2015, of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the UNESCO Global Action Programme<sup>179</sup> which provided a platform to embed Education for Sustainability (Efs). This places a clear duty on member states to implement this in national programmes. Some institutions in the UK such as Anglia Ruskin University, who were the first university to sign the Rio+20 Declaration of Higher Education Institutes, have started to do this but according the UCU 2016 environmental report they are still the exception rather than the rule in the tertiary sector<sup>180</sup>.

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<sup>173</sup> UCUCP16GR2

<sup>174</sup> March 2016 environmental newsletter: [https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7982/UCU-environmental-news-45-Mar-16/pdf/ucu\\_environmentalnews\\_45\\_mar16.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7982/UCU-environmental-news-45-Mar-16/pdf/ucu_environmentalnews_45_mar16.pdf)

<sup>175</sup> <http://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/home>

<sup>176</sup> [www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/](http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/)

<sup>177</sup> UCUCP16SE4

<sup>178</sup> [https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/paris\\_nov\\_2015/application/pdf/paris\\_agreement\\_english\\_.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/paris_nov_2015/application/pdf/paris_agreement_english_.pdf) Affirming the importance of education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and cooperation at all levels on the matters addressed in this Agreement,  
- Article 12 Parties shall cooperate in taking measures, as appropriate, to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information, recognizing the importance of these steps with respect to enhancing actions under this Agreement.

<sup>179</sup> <http://en.unesco.org/gap>

<sup>180</sup> [www.ucu.org.uk/media/8119/UCU-annual-environment-report-2016/pdf/ucu\\_environmentreport2016\\_may16\\_.pdf](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8119/UCU-annual-environment-report-2016/pdf/ucu_environmentreport2016_may16_.pdf)

UCU have also supported the NUS Responsible Futures EfS accreditation scheme<sup>181</sup> that was piloted in 2015 in 8 universities and 5 colleges. Though for this to have a good level of take up an effective framework of policy drivers would be required.

### 3. Environment campaigns

The UCU encourages members to campaign on environmental issues such as fracking,<sup>182</sup> and anti environmental measures such as Heathrow expansion.

Though they have official policy opposing Heathrow expansion,<sup>183</sup> their delegates at the TUC 2016 conference abstained from voting on the TSSA climate change motion.

### 4. Divestment

Finally, the UCU also campaigns on the question of responsible investment, including divestment from financial interests in fossil fuel shareholdings<sup>184</sup> and in support of ethical investment<sup>185</sup>.

### Barriers to climate change engagement

Graham Petersen felt the barriers to much higher levels of commitment to tackling climate change and uptake of climate jobs within UCU and wider trade union movement to be: the recession; job cuts in the public sector; legal weakening of unions; and a reduction in numbers of people joining the union. Because capacity has diminished, unions have to focus on reacting to issues faced by members in their workplace rather than being proactive about issues that may not immediately impacting member's terms and conditions of work. However, Graham's experience has been that some people have been attracted to the union because of their proactive response to climate change. He also feels it is encouraging that there is legislation and clear targets within the Climate Change Act, and that the Committee on Climate Change has set out clear pathways to cut the UK's carbon emissions in the Fifth Carbon Budget.

### Conclusion

UCU is clearly committed to engaging with the issue of climate change and what that means for the future of education and the work that will be carried out by its members. They are pushing for legislation at national and international level, and not just engaging with the debate on what skills and training will be required to transition to a low carbon economy, but producing material to educate and train members with the skills for a sustainable low-carbon economy.

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<sup>181</sup> <http://sustainability.unioncloud.org/responsible-futures/articles/uwe-just-got-a-responsible-futures-accreditation>

<sup>182</sup> UCUPC15F6

<sup>183</sup> UCUCP09EW12

<sup>184</sup> UCUCP16D3

<sup>185</sup> UCUCP16EI5

## UNISON – The public service union

This report draws on an interview with Allison Roche, UNISON policy officer, and published material.

### Overview of UNISON

UNISON is the second largest union in the UK with over 1.3 million members, providing public services<sup>186</sup> in the private or public sector. The union is divided into 12 regions.<sup>187</sup> The regional offices support and develop branches in local and regional issues of workplace negotiating and bargaining, promoting equalities and anti-racism, providing education and training opportunities for local members and ensuring that members are actively consulted and involved in local and national campaigns.

Members are also organised into service groups<sup>188</sup>, so that specialist and relevant information and support can be provided for the members working in that service sector. They also have self-organising members' groups<sup>189</sup> that meet locally and nationally to discuss and support specific issues that affects them. The service and members groups hold annual conferences where they respectively vote on service group and self organised related policies. At the present time, there are no conflicting policies between the national policy and service groups and members groups as policy is co-ordinated by the NEC Policy Development and Campaigns Committee (PDCC) which consults and engages with each Service Groups Executive and Members committees.

### UNISON, climate change and environmental issues

UNISON has been engaged in climate change since its inception in 1994, when three public sector unions merged.<sup>190</sup> They have a strong international commitment to climate change issues and have been active in campaigning on climate change and just transition at international, national and at local level.

There are several reasons why UNISON is engaging with climate change and the implications for work. Firstly, it is coming from their members, activists who are concerned with social justice issues and environmental issues. Secondly, they organise in the energy sector which will inevitably have to transition to a low carbon economy changing the type of work and security of jobs of their members. Currently their members work is already being impacted by climate change, especially those working in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Part of the EPA's remit is to monitor and respond to flood risks, with risks likely to increase with climate change. The EPA also has the responsibility for monitoring and assessing climate change

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<sup>186</sup> Local government, Health care, Education, Police and justice, Community, Water, environment and transport, energy, private contractors.

<sup>187</sup> Cymru/Wales, East Midlands, Eastern, Greater London, North West, Northern Ireland, Northern, Scotland, South East, South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire & Humberside.

<sup>188</sup> Health; local government; higher education; community; police & justice; water, environmental & transport; energy;

<sup>189</sup> [Black members](#), [disabled members](#), [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members](#), [women members](#), [young members](#), [retired members](#).

<sup>190</sup> National and local Government officers associations, National union of Public Employees and confederation of health Service Employees.

agreements.<sup>191</sup> Their ability to carry out these tasks is being impacted by austerity measures. UNISON are engaging with the issues of climate change not just at a policy level but in the more traditional role of looking after members' terms and conditions of work.

During the 2016 EU referendum campaign UNISON found that members rated concerns over preserving EU Environmental protections relatively high in a branch survey. This demonstrated that UNISON members recognise that environmental and Climate Change issues are an important part of wider political challenges in the UK.

### UNISON climate change policy

UNISON's National Executive Committee is committed to the issues of climate change, clean energy and a 'just transition'. Policy updates are regularly reported to the Policy Development Campaign Committee (PDCC) with a working programme to achieve these objectives.

The union's conferences in 2014, 2015, and 2016 acknowledged the risks of climate change, asking for conference to take action in various forms. All policies were supported in principal, with the PDCC continuing work on the issue of climate change and its impact on members.<sup>192</sup>

However, the PDCC decided not to affiliate to CaCC nationally but instead encouraged branches and regions to affiliate separately. They support One Million Climate Jobs campaign and promote events through their environmental network.<sup>193</sup> UNISON nationally supports the Climate Coalition in England and Wales and its sister organisation Climate Chaos in Scotland, but generally do not support groups financially at a national level, instead encouraging regional and branch affiliations.

At an international and national level, UNISON works in various alliances with a host of global, EU and UK trade union and environmental and citizenship campaign groups: Public Services International (PSI), European Trade Union congress (ETUC), European Public Service Unions (EPSU), Trade Union Sustainable Development Committee (TUSDAC), Trade Union Energy Democracy (TUED), UK Energy Democracy alliance, UK climate change movement, Labour Energy Forum (LEF) and End Fuel Poverty alliance.

#### Climate change related policies include:

- divestment from fossil fuels;<sup>194</sup>
- transition to low carbon energy, which involves: campaigning for a sustainable energy supply that meets environmental obligations; ensures energy efficient homes; and that the requirements of a just transition are met by replacing jobs lost in the traditional energy production are given equivalent opportunities in the economy;<sup>195</sup>
- a memorandum on fracking (see below);<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> [www.gov.uk/topic/climate-change-energy/climate-change-agreements](http://www.gov.uk/topic/climate-change-energy/climate-change-agreements)

<sup>192</sup> UNSNC16CC2; UNSNC16CC3

<sup>193</sup> UNSNC14CCC11; UNSNC14CCC12

<sup>194</sup> UNSNC16D4

<sup>195</sup> UNSEC16EP4

<sup>196</sup> UNSEC16F5



- public ownership of Energy Utilities;<sup>197</sup>
- Green and Renewable energy targets;<sup>198</sup> and
- integrated public transport system.<sup>199</sup>

### UNISON Environmental rep network

Unison has an environment rep network, supported by materials setting out their climate change, environment and workplace policy,<sup>200</sup> guidance on environmental bargaining, and a module on greening the workplace.<sup>201</sup>

Seven Unison branches have affiliated to the CACC Trade Union group at one time or another. Scotland and the North West regions have set up working Environmental and Climate change campaign groups. Environmental reps at Stockport Unison have negotiated facility time for themselves using the TUC draft agreement. The only resistance that has been met is when a change of management at Stockport council suggested that environmental activity would become a problem if it interfered with their work.

### UNISON position on Fracking

UNISON has a moratorium on UK fracking currently as it believes that it does not meet the precautionary principle. For example there is little supportive environmental impact assessment evidence and conflicting evidence on potential growth and jobs creation. Before UNISON can support it as an industry the union would require certain questions to be answered around safety including: pollution of drinking water; how drilling for fracked gas can be done without breaking the Paris climate change agreement; restricting the governments national powers in overturning local community and local authority decisions against fracking in their local areas; and how fracking matches up with getting the UK off fossil fuel dependency and the UK's 2030 renewable targets.

National conference climate change policy includes an anti-fracking stance. However, the 2016 energy conference passed a motion that the Energy Service Group Executive (SGE) should develop informational material with the arguments for and against fracking for shale gas. The SGE are instructed to allow members to make an informed decision and then develop policy in line with the outcome of the investigation into fracking.<sup>202</sup>

UNISONS' report, *Warm homes into the future: Meeting the UK energy needs (doc)*, suggested that energy savings measures would help eliminate the need for shale gas fracking. Energy efficiency measures would be rolled out systematically to domestic houses, raising the housing to stock to be compliant with the Energy Performance Certification (EPC) B and C\*. Reducing the consumption of the UK's dwindling gas supply, would avoid large-scale fracking and the need for 400 new wells to be

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<sup>197</sup> UNSEC16PO7

<sup>198</sup> UNSEC16R6

<sup>199</sup> UNSNC14T13

<sup>200</sup> <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2013/06/On-line-Catalogue173553.pdf>

<sup>201</sup> <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2013/06/On-line-Catalogue189353.pdf>

<sup>202</sup> UNSECF2

developed.<sup>203</sup> The funding for the energy efficiency measures was to come from the government's Green Deal scheme,<sup>204</sup> now cancelled and with no replacement in sight.

### UNISON's position on Heathrow and Airport expansion

UNISON does not support airport expansion at Heathrow without climate change being addressed. They feel there has been no discussion addressing climate change targets, air and noise pollution. They supported the TSSA motion to the TUC Congress 2016 that included no airport expansion.

### UNISON and social dialogue

There appears to be no barrier within UNISON with regards to climate change issues, in that UNISON are driving policies within their own union and at national and international level, working with the international and European public service sectors, as well as the Green Alliance, and Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED).

UNISON suggests that the main barrier to tackling climate change is the lack of political leadership on the debate within the UK on climate change and just transition. Allison Roche joined a discussion panel at the 2016 Labour party conference with Barry Gardiner, shadow Energy Minister, on what a 'just transition' means in terms of expansion of growth, infrastructure and energy needs. One problem identified is that since 2010 both the coalition and Tory government have failed to develop a long term energy strategy or create an inclusive social dialogue where the future challenges' can be properly discussed and a long term coherent 'just transition' plan developed ensuring a long-term strategy to build low carbon Britain.

UNISON has welcomed the more consultative social dialogue and long term approach taken by the Labour Party in implementing a 'just and fair transition' and is working with TUED and the Labour Party on the possibilities of a social dialogue between governments, business, industry and trade unions for a coherent UK energy strategy and meeting climate targets.

UNISON has been proactive in the debate on climate change, just transition and what this means for workers. It has been supportive of the idea of developing TUED chapter in Europe. By sharing knowledge with their European counterparts about creating and working within a social dialogue framework they intend to debate and discuss the just transition dialogue and questions about future plans being put forward for a low carbon energy industry.

UNISON has 20,000 skilled workers in the gas industry. Issues that need to be addressed in the UK 'Just Transition' in future energy models for the UK include: how energy workers jobs can be protected in a just transition; how unions can ensure that current good pay and conditions are matched in future municipal, co-operative and decentralised local energy models; who will pay for the update of the National Grid infrastructure; how the public will be consulted on future energy options and choices so that energy democracy is put into action on issues of public ownership; and what new 'green' and future technological energy skills do we need to develop and in what energy sectors.

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<sup>203</sup> [www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2014/06/unison-announces-ambitious-new-proposals-to-avoid-large-scale-fracking-and-bring-millions-in-from-the-cold/](http://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2014/06/unison-announces-ambitious-new-proposals-to-avoid-large-scale-fracking-and-bring-millions-in-from-the-cold/)

<sup>204</sup> [www.gov.uk/green-deal-energy-saving-measures/overview](http://www.gov.uk/green-deal-energy-saving-measures/overview)

UNISON considers that trade unions have a key role to play in the energy democracy debate to ensure there is a proper, democratic debate on these issues. Citizens and consumers don't always realise that gas will run out, that hydrogen could be the future energy supply, that renewables are important to meeting our climate change commitments and there is a debate on the viability of carbon storage capture. There needs to be citizen education and information on the various choices and latest technological developments which could become the foundation for the future UK energy supply – affordable, secure and carbon free.

## Conclusion

UNISON is active in addressing climate change issues within the union and in the wider economic and political landscape. They are not only concerned and responding to the immediate impact climate change policies have on members and their working conditions, addressing energy as a citizenship issues for the low paid and poor but are initiating and driving the discussion on Just Transition and the urgency of a low carbon economy.

## Unite - the union

This report draws on interviews with a Unite policy officer, members, and published material.

### Unite the Union introduction

Unite the Union is the largest union in the UK with over 1.42 million members. Their structure is based on regional committees and industrial sectors, splitting the UK and Ireland into 10 regions. As a general union, Unite are active in all areas of the economy, organising in 21 sectors, from heavy industry transport, public services, 'food and agriculture', to 'education' and 'professional services'. They primarily are an industry based union, so members are represented on the basis of their workplace. There is some independence between sectors, with industrial sectors having conferences every two years alternating with the national policy conference.

Some of Unite's sectors of interest are likely to be more susceptible both to the potential job gains and losses from industrial change as the UK transitions to a low carbon economy. Examples include high carbon emission industries such as aviation, fossil fuel power, coal mining, the energy intensive industries such as steelmaking, chemicals and ceramics, and motor manufacture, where the transition to a low carbon economy is perhaps more challenging than in the services sectors, where there are relatively low-carbon emission workplaces.

Unite has policies in support of action on climate change, 'green workplaces', the creation of climate jobs, anti-fracking and in support of renewables and the development of public transport. In relatively high carbon industries such as coal mining, coal power, the energy intensive industries such as steelmaking, and aviation, Unite is developing a series of policies designed to help support these sectors in the transition to a low carbon future, for example through the application of carbon capture and storage technology.

## Unite and climate change

Reflecting Unite's longstanding internationalist perspective, the union views climate change as one of the greatest challenges we face, industrially as a nation and as part of the global community. Leading up to the Cop21 talks in Paris Dec 2015, Unite released a report, 'Meeting the Climate Change Challenge,' supporting the international union movement in its calls for a 'just transition' that ensures workers are treated decently to be included in the international climate treaty (the underlying principles being consultation/union voice, green and decent jobs, green skills, balanced energy low carbon economy, respect for labour and human rights, and social protection)

The report calls for reducing energy consumption through an integrated and modernised transport system and home insulation to tackle fuel poverty. It also calls for a 'balanced energy policy' (discussed below) that includes a mix of renewables, nuclear and cleaner coal and gas generation including Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS). The importance of investment in climate jobs is acknowledged, referencing the 'One Million Climate Jobs' campaign, while recognising 'there are areas where we diverge'.

Thus, Unite has a formal policy on climate change, climate jobs,<sup>205</sup> and was a co-funder of the "1 Million Climate jobs" campaign<sup>206</sup>, stating that "tackling climate change and creation of climate jobs is of direct importance for trade unions and their families". Unite supported the UK's first joint *Climate Refugees* conference in London (February 2017), with a contribution from the union's Assistant General Secretary, and also supported the 'Time to Act' climate change march in 2015. At its energy sector conference in 2013 there was a fringe meeting on climate change, energy policy and fight for climate jobs.<sup>207</sup>

## Unite, environmental issues and green workplace reps

Unite was one of the first unions, along with Prospect, to develop an environmental training programme for its workplace reps, and has provided training for health and safety reps on how to do carbon emission audits. Unite, along with other trade unions and the TUC, have campaigned for environmental reps to have facility time to take up workplace environmental issues, a demand on which trade unions have not been successful so far.

Environmental issues raised on Unite's website are mostly tied up with health and safety matters. Currently (Spring 2017), environmental issues on Unite's website include condemning the decommissioning of a North Sea oil and gas vessel in Bangladesh; combating climate change, covering what workers, in general, can do to reduce energy consumption in the work place; and (see below) the dangers from inhaling the emissions that are produced by diesel engines.

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<sup>205</sup> UNITPC14GJ6

<sup>206</sup> UNITPC14CJ7

<sup>207</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/uploaded/documents/FRINGE%20MEETINGS%20AT%20SECTOR%20CONFERENCES%20201311-14390.pdf](http://www.unitetheunion.org/uploaded/documents/FRINGE%20MEETINGS%20AT%20SECTOR%20CONFERENCES%20201311-14390.pdf)

## Unite's energy policy

Unite's demands for a balanced, low carbon energy policy<sup>208</sup> includes a mix of renewable energy, nuclear power, cleaner coal and gas generation, to ensure security of supply. They also support Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), 'a global community of trade unions fighting for democratic control over energy.'

## Coal power and carbon capture technology

Unite supports the inclusion of 'cleaner coal' in the UK's energy mix<sup>209</sup>, committing Unite to campaign for the retention of coal-fired power stations whose future in a low carbon economy could be protected by the development of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) technology.

Unite is a vocal supporter of CCS, joining forces with the NUM to campaign for government support of CCS. They argue that CCS has to be embraced to cut energy bills, create jobs, and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from both fossil fuel power stations and heavy industries like steelmaking. Unite, along with other trade unions, was highly critical of the government's unexpected decision to cancel the £1 billion CCS development programme in the Autumn Statement, 2015. Unite called on the government to continue investment.<sup>210</sup> Unite's position paper on Energy sets out their continued support of CCS technology: "Unite are convinced that the deployment of CCS within the UK is crucial to ensure security and diversity of energy supply".<sup>211</sup>

Unite has invested in ensuring the coal industry continues in the UK, for example, organising a conference in February 2015 that brought together MPs, coal producers, CCS developers including the Carbon Capture & Storage Association, the NUM, the TUC and others with an interest in the future of the UK coal sector to debate the 'critical position of coal as an indigenous fuel with huge reserves'.<sup>212</sup>

Unite has been critical of the UK government for allowing the closure of the coal mines and coal-fired power-plants such as 'Fiddlers Ferry' which they deem as a 'glaring example that the government has discarded 'King Coal' as part of the solution to the UK's energy crisis'.<sup>213</sup> Unite organise in coal power stations and have good industrial relations with the employers and are trying to protect their members' jobs. They are also concerned with security of energy supply, and see coal as an indigenous resource of the UK, which if CCS becomes mainstream could secure jobs and provide cheaper energy bills.

## Unite's position on nuclear power

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<sup>208</sup> UNITPC14E5

<sup>209</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/news/loss-of-270-jobs-at-fiddlers-ferry-another-nail-in-the-coffin-of-king-coal-says-unite/](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/loss-of-270-jobs-at-fiddlers-ferry-another-nail-in-the-coffin-of-king-coal-says-unite/)

<sup>210</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/news/government--investment-needed-after-draxs-pull-out-from-1bn-carbon-capture-scheme/](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/government--investment-needed-after-draxs-pull-out-from-1bn-carbon-capture-scheme/)

<sup>211</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/uploaded/documents/Energy201211-3509.pdf](http://www.unitetheunion.org/uploaded/documents/Energy201211-3509.pdf)

<sup>212</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/news/unite-invites-you-to-seminar-on-coal-in-the-21st-century/](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/unite-invites-you-to-seminar-on-coal-in-the-21st-century/)

<sup>213</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/news/loss-of-270-jobs-at-fiddlers-ferry-another-nail-in-the-coffin-of-king-coal-says-unite/](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/loss-of-270-jobs-at-fiddlers-ferry-another-nail-in-the-coffin-of-king-coal-says-unite/)

Unite views nuclear as a low carbon technology that is vital both for security of energy supply and having potential for secure, long term skilled employment. Unite co-signed a letter to the French company, EDF energy, to say the UK unions were behind Hinkley Point C<sup>214</sup>, arguing that the facility is vital for the UK's energy mix and safeguarding jobs. Hinkley Point C is due to contribute 7% of the UK energy mix.

### Unite's position on fracking

In 2014 Unite carried an anti-fracking motion<sup>215</sup> at their national policy conference. This policy committed Unite to building awareness within the union of the danger of shale gas extraction, actively opposed fracking and supported campaigning for a UK-wide moratorium, advising members not to work on fracking sites and encouraging them to support local opposition campaigns. The policy is opposed to fracking on land, not such activities that occur out at sea.

At the 2014 conference delegates considered two motions on fracking, one in support moved by the National Executive committee (NEC), that fell; and an anti- fracking motion put forward by members that was carried.

A fracking policy amendment was made at the 2016 conference that clarifies Unite will continue to organise workers in the fracking industry, it will stand by members' jobs and continue to seek to organise and represent workers engaged in fracking related work. But the union would still maintain its opposition to the impact fracking has on the environment.<sup>216</sup>

The Unite website has provided news stories on fracking in their daily digest and has issued a press release in support of the anti-fracking campaign in Lancashire.<sup>217</sup>

### Unite's position on renewable energy technology

Unite organise in the "green" and renewable energy industries. They signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Renewable UK in 2012, committing them to campaign for funding and policies to facilitate growth and innovation in the renewable energy sector.<sup>218</sup> Unite publically support renewable energy projects, such as the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon<sup>219</sup> as well as being critical of loss of funding or lack of investment in renewable energy such Sharp's withdrawal from solar panel production in the UK<sup>220</sup> and loss of construction jobs at the waste energy plant in Teesside<sup>221</sup>. Unite urged the then Labour government to intervene to save the Vestas wind turbine plant on the Isle of White.

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<sup>214</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/news/hinkley-point-litmus-test-on-post-brexit-investment-in-big-infrastructure-projects/](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/hinkley-point-litmus-test-on-post-brexit-investment-in-big-infrastructure-projects/)

<sup>215</sup> UNITPC14F3

<sup>216</sup> UNITPC16F1

<sup>217</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/news/unite-urges-councillors-to-keep-lancashire-frack-free/](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/unite-urges-councillors-to-keep-lancashire-frack-free/)

<sup>218</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/how-we-help/list-of-sectors/energy-and-utilities/energyandutilitiesindustrialissues/](http://www.unitetheunion.org/how-we-help/list-of-sectors/energy-and-utilities/energyandutilitiesindustrialissues/)

<sup>219</sup> UNITPR14SBT33

<sup>220</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/news/exploitative-employment-practices-and-undercutting-revealed-at-teesside-energy-from-waste-plant/](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/exploitative-employment-practices-and-undercutting-revealed-at-teesside-energy-from-waste-plant/)

<sup>221</sup> <http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/hundreds-of-construction-jobs-at-risk-as-question-mark-hangs-over-teesside-renewable-energy-facility/>

Unite has formal policy on renewable energy<sup>222</sup> which states that they are committed to campaigning for an immediate annual windfall tax on energy companies, with profits from the tax and energy companies to be invested in the renewable energy and having a target of 75% renewable by 2030.

Unite are clear that they see the move to a low-carbon economy cannot be achieved 'ubiquitously' through market forces but requires government action to support the investment so these industries can become viable.<sup>223</sup>

### Unite's position on Aviation

Unite sees Civil Air Transport as a strategically important industry for the UK economy,<sup>224</sup> and is strongly in support of investment in Heathrow expansion, calling the government 'irresponsible' for delaying the decision in June 2016.<sup>225</sup> Once the decision was made in October 2016 Unite put pressure on the government to fast forward the construction of the runway, to protect jobs in the industry and stop rival 'hub' airports at Frankfurt, Paris and even as far afield as Turkey from gaining a competitive edge. After the green light decision by the government on Heathrow was given Unite have further asked members to sign up to pledge their support for Heathrow.<sup>226</sup>

Unite's perspective for the expansion of Heathrow is that its hub status needs to be protected, as it is, at present at full capacity, and therefore requiring increased capacity to be able to meet the demands of the market and continue to be a competitive hub, in the process creating and retaining the jobs at Heathrow.

Unite is aware of the environmental impacts of Heathrow, but argues that it is in fact better for the environment and reduces the overall emissions from aviation, if Heathrow's third runway is built. Advantages include the reduction in stacking of flights waiting to land and taxiing on the runway, and a reduction in indirect routes because of people from the UK changing flights in Paris and Amsterdam.

Their argument is also related to, for example, the building of a 6-lane hub airport in Turkey. If Heathrow does not expand and is unable to be a competitive hub, airlines will fly from America to Turkey and then onwards to Europe, increasing journey length and carbon emissions that would otherwise not have to be emitted if airlines could use Heathrow.

Aviation is also one of the few industries that it is hard to decarbonise technologically; estimates suggest that its share of the UK carbon budget will reach 27% by 2050. Unite supports the need for much more investment in low carbon fuels and fuel efficient aircraft.

### Energy intensive industries and skills

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<sup>222</sup> UNITPC14RE8

<sup>223</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/uploaded/documents/LowCarbonElecSub11-3513.pdf](http://www.unitetheunion.org/uploaded/documents/LowCarbonElecSub11-3513.pdf)

<sup>224</sup> UNITPC14A4

<sup>225</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/news/unite-condemns-heathrow-runway-delay-as-irresponsible/](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/unite-condemns-heathrow-runway-delay-as-irresponsible/)

<sup>226</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/how-we-help/listofregions/londonandeastern/campaigning-now/unite-for-heathrow/](http://www.unitetheunion.org/how-we-help/listofregions/londonandeastern/campaigning-now/unite-for-heathrow/)

A Unite report on 'Building a low Carbon economy'<sup>227</sup> argues that energy intensive industries such as iron and steelmaking, cement and lime manufacture, chemicals, ceramics, glass, non-ferrous metals (such as aluminium, zinc and lead), pulp and paper, coke and refined petroleum product industries form the foundation of UK manufacturing. But according to this report, these industries are under threat of becoming uneconomical through the additional pressure of a carbon floor tax, on top of high energy prices and carbon reduction commitment.

Unite's position is that these industries should be supported to decarbonise through technological innovation rather than be destroyed or lost through the additional costs of carbon pricing. They state that the low-carbon market is predicted to be worth \$20 trillion by 2020 and provides an opportunity for UK manufacturing.

Unite have made demands for retention and creation of skills required for transitioning towards low carbon industries, in several sectors such as steel, automotive, coal and aviation industries. In the recent steel industry crisis in March 2016, it was determined one of the ways the government could help the industry was by supporting investment in technology and skills for a low carbon steel industry, without breaking EU 'state aid' guidelines.<sup>228</sup>

### Motor manufacture

The UK's car industry is a key sector for Unite and it has been working with Prof. David Bailey on the development of a manufacturing strategy for electric vehicles, and is lobbying for this sector within the government's new found interest in a UK industrial strategy. Unite argues that, "We want the UK to be the world leader in electronic vehicle production". Unite have commented on the importance of the growth of the automotive industry and investment in home grown supply chain by Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM), in ensuring the UK motor industry has the correct skills for the future to the industry in the context of a low carbon economy.<sup>229</sup>

Unite have also highlighted the dangers from inhaling the emissions that are produced by diesel engines be they driving a ship, lorry, generator or train. Unite is working with Friends of the Earth on incentives to remove all diesel black cabs from the road, and to highlight the dangers in London where the black cab driver is particularly exposed to air pollution. In April 2017, Unite launched a major new campaign against the diesel fumes 'time bomb'.<sup>230</sup>

### Conclusion

Unite articulates an awareness about climate change, building on its long term internationalist perspective, and the necessity to transition to a low-carbon economy as vital for the future survival of the planet, and that trade unions have a key role to play.

Unite campaigns for increased renewable energy production, continued coal use enabled by the development of carbon capture and storage and see new nuclear as part of a low carbon energy mix,

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<sup>227</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/uploaded/documents/MadeInBritain11-14471.pdf](http://www.unitetheunion.org/uploaded/documents/MadeInBritain11-14471.pdf)

<sup>228</sup> <http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/steelworkers-meeting-sees-new-demands-on-government/>

<sup>229</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/news/wind-power-industry-blown-back-on-course-thanks-to-siemens/](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/wind-power-industry-blown-back-on-course-thanks-to-siemens/)

<sup>230</sup> [www.unitetheunion.org/news/unite-take-action-against-diesel-fumes-time-bomb/#sthash.OKUN7C8K.dpuf](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/unite-take-action-against-diesel-fumes-time-bomb/#sthash.OKUN7C8K.dpuf)



and are anti-fracking on environmental grounds. However, Unite will continue to organise workers in the fracking industry; it will stand by members' jobs and continue to seek to organise and represent workers engaged in fracking related work.

Unite seeks to protect energy-intensive manufacturing industries from the impact of carbon pricing and calls for government support for appropriate technological changes to reduce their emissions. Unite argues for government support for new local carbon technologies and wants the UK to be a world leader in electric vehicles.

Perhaps the most difficult policy area to balance with support for the UK's overall carbon reduction targets is aviation expansion, including support for a third runway at Heathrow. Although there may be significant disagreements around such issues, with so many members employed in energy-intensive industries Unite will continue to be a vital player in the struggle for a just transition to a low carbon economy.

## **Usdaw – Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers**

The report draws on published documents on the Usdaw website

### **Introduction to Usdaw**

Usdaw is the fourth largest union in the TUC representing over 429, 000 workers in retail, distribution, manufacturing and service sector.

In the Usdaw Executive Council Statement 2016 there is reference to climate change, as an argument that being in the European Union, gives the UK a stronger voice in the world allow the UK to take a lead on climate change.<sup>231</sup> In 2010 Usdaw supported David Miliband for the Labour party leadership partly due to his record of tackling and taking on climate change.<sup>232</sup> They have also campaigned against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) due to the deregulation of areas such as genetically modified organisms and fracking.<sup>233</sup>

From a search of their website Usdaw appear to have some engagement with climate change and related environment and social issues.

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<sup>231</sup> [www.usdaw.org.uk/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=7cfa0a45-1c49-4f70-a486-279dde45218f](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=7cfa0a45-1c49-4f70-a486-279dde45218f)

<sup>232</sup> [www.usdaw.org.uk/About-Us/News/2010/July/Why-Usdaw-is-endorsing-David-Miliband](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/About-Us/News/2010/July/Why-Usdaw-is-endorsing-David-Miliband)

<sup>233</sup> [www.usdaw.org.uk/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=fea45957-18e2-4849-9cd4-700cdb501f75](http://www.usdaw.org.uk/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=fea45957-18e2-4849-9cd4-700cdb501f75)