

# LABOUR CAMPAIGN FOR FREE EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2015: MOTIONS

*Note: amendments to these motions may be submitted before 5pm on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015*

## **MOTION 1: GENERAL STRATEGY**

*Proposed by James McAsh*

### **LCFE Believes:**

- 1) That the Labour Party should support free education, as laid out in the 'What We Stand For' section of the LCFE constitution.
- 2) That to achieve this we need to build support for free education in the following areas:
  - a. Labour Students and the wider student movement
  - b. The trade unions
  - c. Young Labour
  - d. Constituency and Branch Labour Parties
- 3) That we need to be clear on what we mean by free education
- 4) That we need to arm ourselves with strong arguments for free education and effective responses to criticisms of it.

### **LCFE Resolves:**

- 1) To produce materials – including physical leaflets and shareable online content – that make the case for free education in simple terms, and dispel common arguments against it.
- 2) To organise within Labour Students to change its policy to being pro-free education. This may include
  - a. Co-ordinating and supporting pro-free education candidates for internal elections
  - b. Supporting individuals to bring free education motions to their Labour Club
  - c. Co-ordinating and supporting the Labour Clubs who support free education to bring policy to Labour Students Conference and Labour Students Council
- 3) To work with other pro-free education groupings in the wider student movement where this is possible and appropriate. This may include:
  - a. Liaising with other groups with regard to the National Union of Students
  - b. Supporting or calling actions and demonstrations
- 4) To work with the affiliated trade unions, in particular their youth sections, to put pressure on the Labour leadership.
- 5) To work with other relevant groups in Young Labour, for instance the Labour Young Trade Unionist Network and Young Labour for Democracy, to promote free education. This may include:
  - a. Co-ordinating and supporting pro-free education candidates for internal elections
  - b. Co-ordinating for free education policy to be taken to Young Labour Conference.
- 6) To promote free education in local Constituency or Branch Labour Parties. This may include:
  - a. Producing model motions
  - b. Organising for speakers to attend meetings

## **MOTION 2: EDUCATIONAL MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE**

*Proposed by Humaira Garasia*

LCFE Notes:

- 1) Education Maintenance Allowance used to be paid to students in the UK aged 16-19 on a means-tested basis.
- 2) On 20th October 2010, the coalition government announced its cancellation of EMA in England.
- 3) Since EMA is a devolved issue, EMA continues to be available in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- 4) In studies done by the Institute for Fiscal studies and Loughborough University it was found that the 'stay on rate' improved by 5.9 % for those eligible for EMA.
- 5) That in an interview with the Mirror in October 2013 Tristram Hunt indicated that he would like Labour to reinstate EMA, stating "A bit of rebalancing towards young people wouldn't go amiss."<sup>1</sup>
- 6) That Labour voted against the scrapping of EMA.

LCFE Believes:

- 1) EMA encouraged many students to stay in Education.
- 2) EMA helped increased grades and participation.
- 3) EMA provided support to families earning less than 30,000, allowing them to help their teenagers to stay in education post 16.
- 4) The scheme was a great way to persuade young people to come in to school, on time, every day, as coming in late or missing days would result in a cut to the amount received at the end of the week.
- 5) That EMA provided a push to students who may not have originally considered staying on, to remain in education.
- 6) That scrapping EMA was unjust as it did really make a difference to many of the young people in England who were from poorer backgrounds because it helped them with costs such as travelling (trains are not free), lunch, clothing etc.

LCFE Resolves:

- 1) To make campaigning for EMA an intrinsic part of our campaign for free education
- 2) To lobby Tristram Hunt, and other Labour MPs, to stay true to their previous support of EMA, and to commit to reinstating it.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/tristram-hunt-interview-im-crusade-2648047>

## **MOTION 3: NATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST FEES AND CUTS**

*Proposed by James Elliott*

### **LCFE Believes:**

- 1) That the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts is the dominant force in the free education movement
- 2) That it is broad and democratic and that affiliated political groups have specific rights within it.
- 3) That the Young Greens are the only mainstream political party to be affiliated to NCAFC.

### **LCFE Further Believes**

- 1) That the free education movement should be broad
- 2) That we should persuade those in the student movement of the arguments for membership of and support for the Labour Party
- 3) That LCFE should be a fully participating member of the free education movement

### **LCFE Resolves**

- 1) To affiliate to the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts

## **MOTION 4: SUPPORT MARCH 28TH DEMONSTRATION**

*Proposed by Rida Vaquas*

### **LCFE Believes:**

1. LCFE is committed to fighting for free education within the Labour Party, as laid out in its constitution.
2. LCFE must have a many-sided approach to this fight if it is to be successful.
3. LCFE should work with other groups and movements in order to exert pressure on the Labour Party leadership.

### **LCFE Notes:**

1. A demonstration has been called by NCAFC on March 28<sup>th</sup>.
2. The purpose of this demonstration is to demand Labour commits to free education and living grants, in line with LCFE's own aims.
3. The last demonstration on November 19<sup>th</sup> by NCAFC drew approximately 10,000 people on the streets.
4. Since November 19<sup>th</sup>, NCAFC has been at the forefront of organising a variety of smaller demonstrations, occupations and other forms of protest.

### **LCFE resolves:**

1. To formally support the March 28<sup>th</sup> demonstration as an organisation, and issue a statement accordingly.
2. To encourage people to attend the demonstration.
3. To organise an LCFE bloc at the demonstration.
4. To produce materials in support of the demonstration.

## MOTION 5: ACCESS TO ABORTION IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH OF IRELAND

*Proposed by Aisling Gallagher*

LCFE Notes:

1. The current laws governing abortion in Northern Ireland are the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act and the 1945 Criminal Justice Act.
2. The current laws governing abortion in the Republic of Ireland are the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act and the 2013 Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act. In 1983, the Eighth Amendment was added to the Irish constitution, which acknowledged the “right to life of the unborn” as being “equal to” the right to life of the mother.
3. In practice, this means it is almost impossible to access an abortion in the north or south of Ireland.
4. Thousands of people travel from the island of Ireland to the UK every year to access abortion services, and many buy illegal (and often unsafe) abortion pills online<sup>2</sup>.
5. These are conservative estimates, as those who buy pills are not included in official statistics and it is likely that many people give fake addresses in England to help conceal their identity.

LCFE Believes:

1. Bodily autonomy is an inalienable right.
2. Reproductive justice is not just about accessing an abortion – people should have a real choice when it comes to their reproductive healthcare and whether or not they wish to have children.
3. This includes (and is not limited to) access to free childcare, flexible working hours, a living wage, affordable social housing and sufficient maternity & paternity leave.
4. The laws governing abortion in the north and south of Ireland are entirely unfit for purpose.
5. The current restrictions severely impact UK students studying in Ireland, and students from Ireland studying in the UK.
6. A person should not legally have to prove that they “deserve” an abortion in order to access one (which is the case in the UK).
7. The Labour Party has, in the past, blocked attempts to introduce progressive abortion legislation in the north of Ireland<sup>3</sup>, and continues to pay lip-service to defending a person's right to choose, whilst ignoring the realities of the situation in the north.

LCFE Resolves:

1. To support activists across the island of Ireland fighting for reproductive justice.
2. To support Irish and Northern Irish students studying in the UK who are at a distinct disadvantage to their British counterparts when it comes to accessing an abortion, particularly out of term time.
3. To campaign against any proposal to roll back any aspect of the current abortion laws in the UK.
4. To produce resources explaining and publicising the impact this can and does have on access to education in the UK and Ireland.

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<sup>2</sup> Statistics for the Republic of Ireland: <http://www.ifpa.ie/Hot-Topics/Abortion/Statistics>. Statistics for Northern Ireland: <http://www.fpa.org.uk/sites/default/files/northern-ireland-abortion.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/jul/23/northernireland.law>

## **MOTION 6: WORKERS' RIGHTS**

*Proposed by Liam McNulty*

### **LCFE believes:**

- 1) The replacement of the teaching grant with tuition fees unleashed market forces on higher education. This has had a profound impact on working conditions for staff, with increased workload, ever-higher teaching expectations, and pressures to produce research that is graded as "internationally excellent".
- 2) Meanwhile, workers' pay in FE and HE has suffered huge real-terms cuts – 15% in 5 years in HE.
- 3) Pre-1992 university employers defeated UCU to impose massive cuts to USS pension benefits and increases in employees' costs. Other education pension schemes are now under threat.
- 4) Funding cuts and marketisation are wrecking FE, and colleges are launching local attacks on jobs and workers' conditions and cutting courses like ESOL.
- 5) Marketisation has accelerated outsourcing of services such as cleaning and IT, and "shared services" arrangements between institutions, at the expense of workers' pay and conditions.
- 6) Institutions are shifting toward casualised, precarious conditions for academic workers (e.g. postgraduates), disproportionately affecting women and Black workers.

### **LCFE further believes**

- 1) As members of the labour movement, we have a duty of solidarity to support education workers in their struggles
- 2) The same forces are attacking education staff, and raising fees and cutting student provision. Industrial action may affect students in the short-term, but workers' campaigns are defending education and protecting students' interests long-term.
- 3) Lambeth College workers' impressive all-out strike, accompanied by student walkouts, achieved significant wins and was a clear example of how to defend education.

### **LCFE resolves to**

- 1) Condemn all cuts to pay and pensions, and courses and student services, and demand their reversal.
- 2) Press Labour for a commitment to reverse the marketisation of education, starting by opposing the break-up of national pay and pension agreements in HE and FE, supporting the restoration of the teaching grant and abolishing student fees.
- 3) Support workers in future industrial disputes in education to defend courses, jobs, pay and conditions.
- 4) Write a letter based on this motion to Liam Byrne, the Shadow Minister for Universities, Science and Skills.

## MOTION 7: STANDING UP FOR STUDENT SEX WORKERS, SUPPORTING THE DECRIMINALISATION OF SEX WORK

*Proposed by Aisling Gallagher*

### LCFE Notes:

1. Sex work refers (and is not limited) to escorting, lap dancing, stripping, pole dancing, pornography, webcamming, adult modelling, phone sex, and selling sex (on and off the street).
2. The current regime of austerity, and cuts to services and support have disproportionately affected women and women's services.
3. Whilst sex work is not illegal in the UK, sex workers who work on the street can be picked up on soliciting or anti-social behavioural order charges, and sex workers who work together indoors for safety can be charged with brothel keeping.
4. The decriminalisation of prostitution was introduced in New Zealand in 2003 by Labour MP Tim Barnett, who called the debate on decriminalisation "the most significant debate on a moral issue since the decriminalisation of homosexuality"<sup>4</sup>.

### LCFE Believes:

1. Sex work is work. Sex work is the exchange of money for labour, like any other job. It is different from other jobs because it is currently criminalised and stigmatised.
2. People should be free to choose what they do with their time, their labour and their bodies.
3. The moral panic around sex work and prostitution echoes the moral panic that was present when homosexuality was in the process of being decriminalised. It is no coincidence that many who argue for harsh anti-prostitution laws under the guise of feminism also voted against equal marriage and similar civil rights measures.
4. With the rise in living costs, the increase in tuition fees, and the slashing of benefits for disabled people, it is highly likely that some students do sex work alongside their studies in order to survive month to month.
5. The lack of funding for postgraduate education makes it likely that some postgraduate students use sex work as a means to fund their postgraduate degrees.
6. Financial reasons, and any criminal record gain due to the criminalisation of sex work, are often the main reasons for staying in sex work<sup>5</sup>.
7. Stigma against sex work means that sex workers are less likely to seek out help and support if and when they need it.
8. Regardless of the reasons for entering into sex work, sex workers of all backgrounds deserve to have their rights protected and to be able to do their jobs safely. This includes sex workers who do not find their job 'empowering'. Whether or not you enjoy a job should have no bearing on the rights you deserve while you do it.
9. The pushes for legislation which would criminalise the purchase of sex (and introduce what is known as the 'Nordic Model' on prostitution) are often spearheaded by anti-choice, anti-LGBT right-wing fundamentalists, working with radical feminists.
10. Often, legislation of this kind is brought forward in the name of anti-trafficking programmes, when in reality they are laws which aim to control what people can and can't do with their own bodies, combined with dangerous anti-immigration initiatives.

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4 See [http://www.parliament.nz/en-nz/pb/debates/debates/47HansD\\_20030625\\_00001319/prostitution-reform-bill-%E2%80%94-procedure-third-reading](http://www.parliament.nz/en-nz/pb/debates/debates/47HansD_20030625_00001319/prostitution-reform-bill-%E2%80%94-procedure-third-reading)

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[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/303927/A\\_Review\\_of\\_the\\_Literature\\_on\\_sex\\_workers\\_and\\_social\\_exclusion.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/303927/A_Review_of_the_Literature_on_sex_workers_and_social_exclusion.pdf)

11. Criminalising the purchase of sex puts sex workers, especially those who work on the street, in danger.
12. It is impossible to criminalise an aspect of someone's job without it having a negative impact on the person at work.
13. Legislation targeted at combating poverty, austerity, universalising childcare and a living wage, sufficient social housing, and accessible education funding and living grants, is more likely to ensure those who do not wish to work in the sex industry do not feel forced to by economic circumstances.

**LCFE Resolves:**

1. To support the full decriminalisation of sex work.
2. To resist and campaign against any proposals to introduce the Nordic Model in the UK.
3. To support and be led by the work of the English Collective of Prostitutes and Sex Worker Open University.



## **MOTION 8: AFFILIATION TO BATTERSEA AND WANDSWORTH TRADES UNION COUNCIL**

*Proposed by Rachael Ward*

### **LCFE Notes**

- 1) That a number of campaign groups, other than trade unions, are affiliated to Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Union Council (BWTUC). Currently these are as follows;

*Abortion Rights, ACTSA Amnesty International, Charter of Women Campaign, CND, Construction Safety Campaign, Cuba Solidarity Campaign, GLATUC, Greese Solidarity Campaign, Health emergency, Insitute of Employment Rights, Justice for Columbia, Keep the NHS Public, London Hazards, London Socialist Film Co-op Ltd, LRD, Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, NPC Greater London Region, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Reel News, Searchlight, United Campaign, Venezuela Solidarity Campaign, Wandsworth Stop the War*

### **LCFE Believes**

- 1) That affiliation to Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Union Council (BWTUC) would go some way to starting to make connections between the campaign for free education and Trade Unions.

### **LCFE Resolves**

- 1) To attempt to affiliate LCFE to BWTUC.

## **MOTION 9: ON THE USE OF PRE-CHARGE BAIL CONDITIONS**

*Proposed by Warwick University Labour Students*

### **LCFE Notes:**

- 1) That on 3rd Dec 2014, a sit-in at Senate House, Warwick University organised by Warwick Campaign for Free Education, resulted in the involvement of the police, who used CS sprays, and threatened use of tasers, in addition to making three arrests, which included one Warwick student. The three arrested later became known as the 'Warwick 3'.
- 2) That following said arrests, the three campaigners were released without charge under pre-bail conditions. These conditions:
  - a. Prohibited them taking part in protests on any university campuses
  - b. Prohibited them from communicating with each other
  - c. Prohibited them from entering Warwick Campus., with the exception of the one Warwick student whose presence on campus was restricted to attending lectures, and nothing else.
- 3) That on January 12th 2015, these bail conditions were further extended, still without charge.
- 4) That it was not until 19th February that charges were finally bought, and that at a preliminary hearing on March 5th the bail conditions were finally revoked after more than 3 months.
- 5) That the 'Warwick 3' spent a total of 76 days on highly restrictive bail conditions without being charged.
- 6) That according to data obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by the Guardian,<sup>6</sup> since 2008 855 have been banned by the police from protesting using pre-charge bail conditions.
- 7) That of those 855, there were just 123 cases in which CPS could be convinced that there was enough evidence to prosecute and that it was in the public interest to do so. 732 (85%) cases did not result in a charge being bought.<sup>7</sup>
- 8) That as the law stands, there is no time-limit on how long pre-charge bail conditions can last.
- 9) That as the law stands there is no judicial process involved in setting of pre-charge bail conditions.

### **LCFE Believes**

- 1) That the use of pre-charge bail conditions against protesters is fundamentally unjust.
- 2) That most of the public is unaware of the existence and legality of pre-charge bail conditions.
- 3) That, in particular, use of pre-charge bail conditions to prevent protesters and activists from participating in activism is entirely at odds with the principles of free speech.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/dec/25/revealed-police-using-pre-charge-bail-muzzle-protesters> Figures accurate to our knowledge as of Dec 25th 2014

<sup>7</sup> As above

- 4) That the length and nature of pre-charge bail conditions are often unnecessarily harsh and expansive, posing a serious threat to the well-being and employment/ education of those affected.
- 5) That, in the case of the Warwick protests, we are particularly concerned with the use of pre-bail conditions to control who the 'Warwick 3' could communicate with, and their ability to enter campus, in terms of the effect on their well-being and education.
- 6) That the use of pre-charge bail conditions on the 'Warwick 3' sets a worrying precedent to all Free Education activists, and is extremely intimidating to other would-be campaigners.
- 7) That intimidation felt by other activists as a result of pre-charge bail conditions used against protesters, is not merely a side-effect of their use by police, but actually one of the purposes of their use by police.

#### **LCFE Resolves**

- 1) To raise awareness of:
  - a. the existence of pre-charge bail conditions
  - b. the quantity of people affected by them
  - c. the harsh and arbitrary terms and lengths of them
  - d. their use in the context of the Free Education movement
- 2) To campaign against use of pre-charge bail conditions against activists.
- 3) To work with other organisations such Netpol and Defend The Right To Protest on this issue.