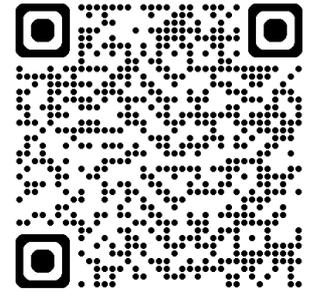


LABOUR LEFT INTERNATIONALISTS



Special for *NW Regional Conference - January 24th-25th 2026*

Employment Rights Act - local campaigns needed, and a Part 2

The Employment Rights Act finally became law last month. Although scaled down since its earlier versions it probably still fits the description of “the biggest upgrade to workers’ rights in a generation”. But with implementation phased over two years, and multiple consultations to take place over details, it needs *defending* - employers’ organisations will be using those consultations to try to minimise the powers of the Act.

And it needs *extending* - with a follow-up ‘day one act’ or ‘ERA part 2’ to restore those manifesto commitments lost through the antics of unelected Lords - see our suggested CLP motion at <https://labourleftint.uk/2026/01/18/template-motion-on-employment-rights-act/>.

And branches, CLPs and affiliates need to *campaign for it* - a clear explanation of what it does and how it affects people at work is probably our best means of undercutting Reform. As the UNISON motion this weekend points out, our campaigning must “show how Labour in government delivers tangible benefits for working people” - which means being precise about what the Act does, and *when*.

And that goes hand in hand with protecting the Act from its opponents, and with CLPs promoting trades unionism and collective assertion of rights at work.



In place immediately:

- The scrapping of provisions in the Tory ‘**Minimum Service Levels**’ legislation.

Next month (February):

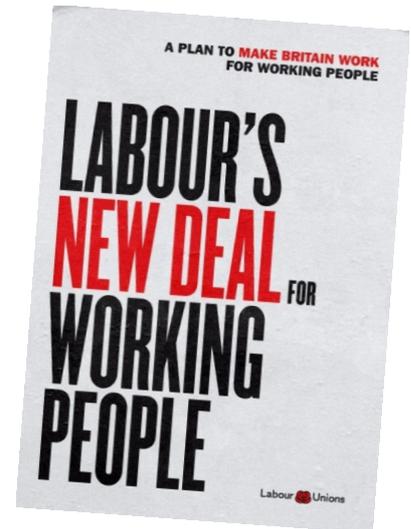
- Dismissal solely for **taking part in industrial action** will automatically be considered ‘unfair’ in law.
- Some provisions of the Tories 2016 trades union legislation will be removed or amended, reducing the **notice period** unions have to give for a strike from 14 days to 10.

April:

- **Paternity leave** will become a ‘day one right’ (down from the current 26 weeks), as will ordinary parental leave (currently one year).
- **Statutory sick pay** will become a day one right, including for low-paid workers (currently excluded from it)
- **Sexual harassment** will be included in whistle-blowing.
- Trades unions will be able to ballot members **electronically**, rather than only by post, with the threshold removed for action.
- Gaining trades union **recognition** will be simplified (though the details of this are not yet clear).

October:

- **Fire and rehire** will automatically be unfair dismissal unless employers can show “financial difficulties” threatening their viability. This is a sizeable loophole, and what that would mean in the case of the current actions of *Tetrosyl* in Rochdale, for example, is still to be seen.



- A **amended** rules on trades unions’ **right of access to workplaces**, and employers’ duties to inform workers of their rights. (The details of both of these, like all the later changes, are subject to consultation).

April or October 2027 (subject to consultations for the details):

- The right to claim **unfair dismissal** comes down from two years to six months. (This was originally to be a ‘day one’ right, dropped to get the bill through the Lords).
- Workers on **zero-hours contracts** to have the right to know their hours if they want. (This is a particular one Tories and Lib Dem’s tried to scupper in the lords).
- Increased protection against dismissal of **pregnant workers and those returning from maternity leave**.

Bereavement leave.

- Compensation for **cancelled shifts**.

Use the QR-code for more online



<https://labourleftint.uk>

Saturday afternoon - motions debate

Special Needs in Schools

Motion 1 from Wigan is important, calling out as it does the comments of the odious Richard Tice of reform, attacking children with special needs: <https://shorturl.at/69cNI>

We hope the movers will clarify in the debate why they oppose “the current requirement for children with EHCP’s attendance to be mandatory”. Attendance is mandatory for all children, and there are great risks in creating a two-tier system. Punitive measures like fining parents have very little positive effect for *any* child - better funding and a reformed curriculum to enable schools to *become more inclusive and pleasant places for children to be* would be a benefit for all. The need for adequate funding is greater than the need for more training - delegates might find the comments of Labour’s affiliate the **Socialist Educational Association** interesting, tracing the roots of the SEND crisis: <https://shorturl.at/EzMs3> The SEA can send speakers on the topic to CLP meetings - contact the SEA in the NW via davebarter@me.com.

Asylum hotels and care for refugees

Motion 2 (Oldham East & Saddleworth, Bury N) is hugely important. Whilst the far right have organised demonstrations against refugees (including in our region) little attention has been paid to the profiteering of companies like SERCO and the appalling way they treat the refugees in their care. Whilst there has been - rightly - discussion in the party about the importance of safe legal routes for refugees and a house-building programme, these CLPs are challenging us to ask why companies like SERCO are left in charge. Their call for the funding for accommodation to return to the public sector is right, and if asylum-seekers also had the right to work many more would be able to meet their own housing needs.

Retail Crime, workers safety

Motion 3 (USDAW) raises the important issue of the safety of home delivery drivers, and movers will explain how they think making this a specific offence will work. A huge proportion of delivery drivers are in the ‘gig economy’, with no union recognition - working for Amazon, Uber, JustEat - with some at greater risk as employers use their immigration status against them if they raise their heads. We need to work on how the Employment Rights Act and a drive to organise the unionised can make a difference for them too.

Reform in Lancs - Care Homes and Daycentres

Motion 4 (Lancaster & Wyre) highlights the shocking threat from Reform in Lancashire to close 10 care homes and day centres for older people. News reports suggest that Reform are feeling the pressure from protest against these plans: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cz0pnjd2vj5o> Support for Labour campaigning on this issue in Lancashire will be of benefit to exposing Reform across the whole region.

Water and Sewage (and link to a petition)

Motion 5 (Stretford & Urmston) reasserts and updates the policy passed at regional conference 2025 in the motion from Oldham East & Saddleworth. Leaving water and sewage in the hands of failed water companies is increasingly unsustainable in the face of greater environmental challenge and the billions

the hedge fund investors take out - see <https://shorturl.at/M7uCH>.

Public ownership of water - which worked for nine decades before Thatcher’s greed-driven privatisation - is supported by 82% of voters in the UK. See **Clive Lewis’s campaign and sign the petition** at <https://shorturl.at/VvbSt>

Women’s Health

Motion 6 (Bolton NE) criticises the move, from last July, for cervical screening in England to be only every five years rather than every three - a change that was made in Wales three years earlier. They rightly link the risk from this to the levels of deprivation and screening uptake in the region - and of course to the speed with which cancer can develop.

Getting Our Message Heard

Motion 7 (UNISON) is a very important one, that starts to address the crisis we face as a party, and recognises the scale of the threat from the anti-democratic far right. The problem is not just poor messaging, but too much poor policy too - something the motion perhaps hints at with reference to the need for progressive taxation. (For a take on ‘messaging’ itself, see ‘more effective messaging?’ overleaf).

Artificial Intelligence

Motion 8 (CWU) calls for prevention of off-shoring of work and its replacement by AI, including “work with trade unions to campaign against North West employers engaging in offshoring or the wholesale replacement of human jobs by AI technologies”. The motion is a little confusing perhaps, mixing up ‘off-shoring’ (work done by human beings who can be organised in unions to fight for their rights) - with replacement by AI. Both require an internationalist approach to trades unionism. Serious discussion of AI from a workers’s right point of view is developing across the movement now, and there is so much to say and do - the model motion for CLPs being circulated by the Musicians Union has provoked some good discussions in party meetings: <https://shorturl.at/GESIm>

Some good speakers we have heard at CLPs:

UK Friends of Standing Together: <https://ukfost.co.uk>

Pride in Labour: www.prideinlabour.org.uk

Labour Campaign for Council Housing: <https://thelabourcampaignforcouncilhousing.org>

Ukraine Solidarity Campaign: <https://ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org>

Neurodivergent Labour: <https://www.ndlabour.com>

Labour Campaign for Free Movement: <https://www.labourfreemovement.org>

How are we using conference time?

Two an a half hours for debates isn’t much. Nor is just eight motions from CLPs and affiliates. Keeping our party’s **democratic structures** alive is vital, as is engaging members in them - and **recruiting new members**. Last year we experimented with a single day for conference, and one CLP has called for that to become the norm. Whilst the training sessions etc are often useful, wouldn’t it be better to keep the two days, but with more time for debate?

Fire and rehire

“Workers at Tetrosyl are trying to protect their livelihoods, and the protest this morning was a lively and passionate one. One worker told me that their wages have fallen from £30k to £23k. Others spoke about their rising rent, food costs and other household bills, while the company is cutting their pay.”

Elsie Blundell MP, following her solidarity visit to the picket line

Workers at Tetrosyl in **Rochdale** are striking against fire and rehire. **USDAW's** statement explains: “The business was able to pay shareholders a dividend of £2 million last year. Yet, as it stands, warehouse staff are set to lose between £4,000 and £7,000 per year, due to the removal of terms such as a shift supplement and paid breaks.”

The picket line next Friday (January 30th) will be joined by supporters from

the local labour and trades union movement - at least one CLP outside Rochdale has already agreed to send a solidarity delegation to support workers on the day. It would be good if delegates here this weekend could get messages of support sent from their CLPs and unions for Friday. Find out more on the **USDAW** website.

This strike illustrates why we need the restrictions on fire and rehire in the **Employment Rights Act** - this is an important example for us to highlight across the region. But it also illustrates why we should not have to wait till October for them to come into effect, and why the loopholes should be closed. We hope we will hear more about this strike this weekend. We should hear from strikers themselves.

Bacup - Virtual Teachers

A recently successful strike by teachers in Bacup is significant too - the issue at

dispute is very much connected to the challenge Labour faces in rethinking the school curriculum. Staff have voted to strike over a pilot scheme to have maths lessons delivered by a ‘remote teacher’.

There is an increasing tendency in some academy trusts, **Star Academies** being a prime example, for lessons to be centrally designed. Children’s particular needs are disregarded as are the skills of individual teachers. Lessons are reduced to a de-skilled ‘delivery’ of PowerPoint slides provided by the trust. The Star experiment is an extreme version of this, where the teacher isn’t even in the classroom. It is another element of the SEND crisis **Wigan CLP's** motion 2 highlights.

A report on the blog of the Labour-affiliated **Socialist Educational Association** explains further: <https://shorturl.at/jyynf>.

Re Motion 2 - what is Serco’s record?

Serco currently has a ten year £1.9Bn contract for ‘asylum support services’ in the NW and midlands, its largest ever contract. It was the only bidder for the NW. For 2024, Serco reported “Underlying operating profit: £274m, up 10% in the full year, and an increase of 30% in the second half compared to the same period in 2023”. In September 2013, Serco was accused of an extensive cover-up over sexual abuse at Yarl’s Wood Immigration Removal Centre. In August 2014, it was criticised for using immigrant detainees as cheap labour, with some being paid as little as £1 per hour. In July 2022, the company supplied food containing maggots to children in a hotel in the Midlands. The firm issued a profit warning for 2014 as a result of the costs of becoming embroiled in an electronic tagging scandal, and repaid £68.5 million to the government for its overcharging on the contract. In 2019 a fine of £19.2 million was imposed on Serco following delayed legal action started in 2013 for fraud and false accounting over its electronic tagging service for the Ministry of Justice. In 2019 Serco had lost the contract to provide housing to asylum seekers in Glasgow, and was charged nearly £3 million by the Home Office for repeatedly breaching its contract to house asylum seekers in Glasgow and Northern Ireland. At St Thomas’ Hospital, the increase in the number of clinical incidents arising from Serco non-clinical management has resulted in patients receiving incorrect and infected blood, as well as patients suffering kidney damage due to Serco providing incorrect data used for medical calculations. A Serco employee later revealed that the company had falsified 252 reports to the National Health Service regarding Serco health services in Cornwall. *Support motion 2.*

Defend the Hillsborough Law

“The Prime Minister promised the law in full. We were elected on it. Yet the Government’s latest amendments partially carve the intelligence services out of the duty of candour. That would allow the very behaviour exposed by the Manchester Arena Inquiry to happen again, where MI5 was able to withhold information and avoid accountability.”

Paula Barker MP, Liverpool Wavertree

“I welcome the Government’s decision to withdraw its Hillsborough Law amendment on a duty of candour for intelligence officers, which many of us felt weakened the Bill. I also welcome the postponement of Third Reading to allow for further discussions, and I urge the Government to adopt my amendments, which meet the concerns of the families, campaigners, MPs and the Hillsborough Law Now team. It is imperative that any legislation leaving the Commons is truly worthy of being called the Hillsborough Law before it proceeds to the Lords.”

Ian Byrne MP, West Derby

More effective messaging?

“Everyone has probably seen variants of the ‘what Labour has done so far’ lists, which mix up things that have already happened, that are planned to happen at a definite point in the future, and that are as yet just intentions. Take the statement “Labour has frozen rail fares”. It looks great on the flyers, and it is true: all ‘regulated fares’ are frozen for the next 15 months, not due to rise again until April 2027. But a big proportion of rail fares are not ‘regulated fares’ - train companies can do what they like with these. The fact that current law only gives government say on half of fares is *part of the reason why the Rail Bill is so important*, taking train operating companies into public ownership. We should explain this. If we give the impression that *all* fares are frozen now, and people then see their own fares going up, that leads to distrust - something sadly in no short supply at the moment.

“It is the same with “Labour has expanded free school meals to everyone on Universal Credit”. The government has made the decision, but its effect is from September this year. I’d like to see us do much better with precise messaging about what actual positive difference the government is making, and when each thing takes effect, so that people can see it for themselves. I am entirely open that I say that as someone who is entirely *uninspired* by many other actions of our government, and actively opposed to some, but where the government gets things right - or even *partly* right - I want us as a party to be able to get that message out far more clearly that we do at the moment. And to build the party.” (*Adapted from a recent discussion piece in a local branch newsletter*)

For a Mandate to Rejoin the EU



The coming 'EU reset bill' is a means by which the Government deflects the internal Labour Party pressure towards joining the Customs Union by posing parts of the single market as an alternative. The customs union is about tariffs and the single-market about non-tariff barriers. It's not possible to effectively have one without the other. The UK economy and people need and want membership of both, including reciprocal free movement of people.

Use the QR-code above to read more online. The motion:

We note the government plans to legislate to simplify the implementation of the agreements made as a result of the UK EU Summit May 25.

The pace of agreement is disappointingly slow, and there remain eight infringement proceedings outstanding from the withdrawal agreement and the Windsor framework.

We believe "Fixing Brexit" is unachievable and that the attempts to achieve a "Swiss style" deal makes agreement more difficult.

We believe that the government should seek to rejoin the customs union and single market immediately in this parliament, and that the Labour Party should ask for a mandate to rejoin the EU in its next manifesto.

"Greenland was part of the European Union until 1985, when it left following a referendum. As a then member of the European parliament's Socialist group, I sat alongside Finn Lynge, representing the country for the Siumut party. Maybe in light of the fact that Donald Trump is intent on "conquering Greenland" and the country's dramatically changed circumstances, and its preference for Denmark and the EU over the US, Ursula von der Leyen could offer fast-track re-entry. You never know, it might set a precedent."

Glyn Ford, Labour MEP 1984-2009

The right of protest

As much as we have disagreements with Palestine Action (including their refusal to even talk with workers employed in targeted workplaces) the government's attempt to ban them and treat them as

terrorists is wrong, anti-democratic and counter-productive.

CLPs should discuss motions calling on the government to reverse this ban and the Police Act 2022 and Public Order Act 2023 (which Labour opposed when the Tories put them through Parliament).

Solidarity with the workers of Iran



Follow the QR-code for a statement from the **Solidarity With Iranian Workers** committee (chaired by **John McDonnell**).

Venezuela - neither Trump nor Maduro

Trump's actions have not led to the release of a single one of Maduro's political prisoners, and have preserved his regime under a different, Trump-obesant, figure-head. Our motion (at <https://shorturl.at/3ULqf>) calls for:

- The US to get out of Venezuela.
- Promotion of the voices of the independent, anti-Maduro left in Venezuela.
- The release of all Venezuelan political prisoners
- Free trade unions, freedom of the press and freedom to protest
- Freedom for left parties to operate
- The election of a constituent assembly, to replace the current Venezuelan constitution
- An end to sanctions on Venezuela

MAINSTREAM

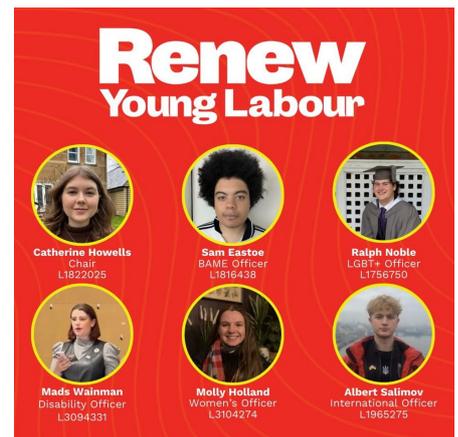
Left getting organised?

MPs in the soft-left **Tribune Group** now have 120 members and a new exec, with position papers planned on a number of key topics that will be shared publicly in the party. We don't expect to agree with all they say, but both them and the **Socialist Campaign Group** could help rebuild a democratic culture in the party and show that there is more than just the faction around the leader.

Mainstream is getting organised, with local groups being set up in **Bolton, Cheshire, East Lancs, Manchester and Oldham**. A second national organising meeting planned **Mainstream's 'It Takes**

a Movement' campaign on Thursday - based on four points including a Part Two of the Employment Rights Bill to reintroduce the manifesto commitments dropped. Mainstream is broad, and we in LLI are probably among the furthest left of its membership, but we think these local groups could help bring more party members back into activity and stem the tide of membership loss. www.mainstreamlabour.org.

We are pleased to see the **Renew Young Labour** campaign taking off, describing themselves as "formed of young members from across the party, who have been involved with **Mainstream, Momentum, and Open Labour**". Read more in their piece on Labour List at <https://labourlist.org/2025/12/renew-young-labour-launch>, including their take on how the Young Labour's current controlling faction (running in this year's elections as 'Organise', backed by the right wing 'Labour to Win' faction) have stifled YL. Nominations close at noon on Thursday next week.



Keep in touch

LLI now produces a regular bulletin to print out and distribute in CLPs. Email lableftint@gmail.com for info.

Labour Left Internationalists, for:

- Labour support for strikes and workers' struggles,
- consistent internationalism, including fighting for free movement and to reverse Brexit,
- arguing to replace capitalism with socialism, a radically new society based on common ownership and democratic and workers' control, not profit-making,
- radical policies so the labour movement can serve working-class interests and push towards socialism,
- democratising Labour, making conference the party's sovereign decision-making body.