

Corbyn Inspires UNISON Conference

“The Labour Party and the labour movement: united for the many – not for the few. Be of good cheer – the election will come soon!”

That was the message from Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn when he spoke to UNISON’s national delegate conference in Brighton this morning.

He had arrived in the hall to a standing ovation, cheering, singing and applause. He left to an even greater ovation. One that would be repeated at the Glastonbury Festival.

“Theresa May and the Tories are now weakened and divided,” he said. “She lost her majority and her political authority. “This is what you call ‘strong and stable’.”

He described Labour’s performance as “a real advance for ... working people across the country,” noting that it was a result of putting “popular policies centre stage”, offering a vision of a country “governed for the benefit of the many, not the few. All of us – we showed that the politics of hope always will overcome the politics of fear.”

Mr Corbyn praised UNISON and its members for the work the union does every day. Last week has shown how necessary change was, he said. The Grenfell Tower fire should never have happened. “Every single one of those deaths could and should have been avoided”.

But from Hillsborough to the child sex scandal to Grenfell, “working people’s voices are ignored.”

Paying tribute to the heroic public service workers who have rushed to help in recent terrorist attacks and at Grenfell, he noted that it was “not good enough to be grateful,” before reaffirming that a Labour government would end the public service pay gap and would invest once more in our services. Labour would reinstate the NHS bursary to train nurses and would increase the number of police and firefighters.

How would it be paid for? A Labour government would “ask the top 5% to pay a small amount extra in tax,” he explained. “And they would still have a lower tax rate than they had under Margaret Thatcher.” Big business would also be expected to contribute more – “but still a lower rate than in any other country in the G7.”

And as he told the hall that he believed that the next election would not be far away and would bring “cheers of hope,” delegates cheered him to the rafters.



Sandwell Branch Chair Shiv Dewitt, next to Jeremy Corbyn as he addressed an additional crowd of supporters outside UNISON conference

Pay Claim for 2018 Lodged

Sandwell UNISON members overwhelmingly backed the suggestion of lodging a 5% pay claim for April 2018.

This was also the result of the consultation with other branches and at the national committee for pay it was unanimously agreed this would be our pay claim.

The claim of 5% plus the Living Wage for those at the bottom of the pay spine is now the agreed position of UNISON, GMB and Unite.

With RPI inflation at 3.3% this claim is a modest request considering the value of local government pay has been cut by 21% since 2009!!!

Jeremy Corbyn has promised that a future Labour Government would end the 1% pay cap across the public sector.

However, in the meantime the new laws for trade unions requires at least 50% of members to vote before a union can take legal industrial action.

We urge all members to participate in any future consultation or legally formal ballots. Without reaching the required 50% turnout your union will not be able to exert the pressure required to get a decent pay rise.