



The TUSC core policy platform for the next general election

What TUSC candidates stand for

For more than a decade Tory-led governments have looked after the interests of the elite and inflicted austerity and real-terms pay cuts on working-class people. There have been increasing inequalities since the financial crash and then Covid. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) wants to see an end to Tory rule. However, there is unfortunately no prospect of a Starmer-led Labour government bringing an end to Tory policies of capitalist austerity and pay restraint.

TUSC argues that working-class people should not pay for a crisis that we did not cause. That was why our coalition was set up in 2010 co-founded by the late Bob Crow – then the general secretary of the RMT transport workers' union – to show that there is a clear left-wing alternative to policies of public sector cuts, privatisation, pay restraint, militarism and environmental degradation.

After decades of experiencing successive pro-rich governments – of the Tories, the Tory and Liberal Democrat coalition, and New Labour – millions of people express their anger by not voting at all. Many believe that participating in electoral politics only provides a ready-made answer for establishment politicians to use against any criticism of their policies, that 'people voted for it'. The result of abstaining, however, is to give the establishment parties free rein. Standing as a TUSC candidate, campaigning for TUSC candidates, and voting for TUSC where possible, is a far more effective means of fighting back.

TUSC has accepted from its start that there may be some Labour candidates who share our socialist aspirations and will be prepared to support measures that challenge the austerity consensus of the establishment politicians and we are not standing against them in this election. We welcomed Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour leader and did not contest the 2017 and 2019 general elections but instead campaigned for a Corbyn-led government.

However, under Sir Keir Starmer's leadership, Tony Blair-style 'New Labour' politics once again completely dominate the party. Jeremy Corbyn's anti-austerity manifesto has been jettisoned and he himself will not even be allowed to contest the next election as a Labour MP. In the majority of seats the only way to ensure that there is a working class anti-austerity socialist alternative on offer is by standing candidates independent of all the establishment parties, including Starmer's Labour.

Every vote for trade union, socialist and anti-austerity candidates, including those standing under the TUSC umbrella, will put pressure on Labour to look over its left shoulder.

Unfortunately, whatever the outcome of the general election it is clear that the next government will act in the interests of the elite and not the working class. As the response to the Gaza catastrophe

shows, as in domestic policy so in foreign policy too, Starmer's Labour now serves the interests of the capitalist system with its inherent inequality and exploitation of the working class, minorities and dispossessed, and the international relations keeping the system in place.

However, even an initially small block of MPs who were determined to provide a voice inside Westminster for the working class, would enormously strengthen workers' struggles outside, and would be a step towards solving the crisis of working-class political representation.

To play this positive role though would require them to refuse to be part of any pro-capitalist coalition government. Instead they would need to maintain their independence, voting to further the interests of the working class at every stage, which is the fundamental, underlying policy of TUSC.

Our coalition is committed to providing a banner under which trade unionists, socialists, community and environmental campaigners can unite to contest elections around a pro-working class, anti-austerity programme. Our general election platform, outlined below, is not a full programme for government but rather summarises the minimum policies which voters should know that all TUSC candidates support:

A. PUBLIC OWNERSHIP, NOT PRIVATE PROFIT

- Stop all privatisation. Bring privatised public services, PFI contracts, industries and utilities – including rail, mail, water, telecoms and power – back into public ownership under democratic control, with compensation only on the basis of proven need.
- Tax the rich. For progressive tax on rich corporations and individuals and an end to tax avoidance.
- For massive investment in a socialist green new deal – transitioning to clean production under democratic working-class control – with no job losses.
- Bring banks and finance institutions into genuine public ownership under democratic control, instead of giving huge handouts to the very capitalists who caused the crisis.

B. NO CUTS – FOR QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES

- A massive expansion of public services including the NHS and council services. Oppose privatisation and cuts to public services and campaign to reverse them.
- For a high-quality, free National Health Service under democratic public ownership and control, free at the point of need.
- Bring private social care and childcare facilities into public ownership, in order to provide free, high-quality care services for all who need them.
- Re-nationalise all rail, bus and ferry services to build an integrated, low-pollution public transport system, providing low cost travel for all. Take Royal Mail back into public ownership to guarantee our postal services. Bring prisons, probation, and all other parts of the justice system back into the public sector.
- Stop council estate sell-offs and build high-standard, eco-friendly, affordable council housing.

- Good, free education for all, under democratic local authority control; student grants not fees.

C. DEEPENING DEMOCRACY

- The right to vote at 16.
- For voting rights in all elections for everyone resident or working in the UK.
- For the right of the people of Scotland to decide the date and terms of a referendum on independence.
- Annual elections for local councils. For a redistributive revenue-raising system to finance local council services.
- Defend our liberties and make police and security democratically accountable.

D. EMPLOYMENT AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS

- Repeal the anti-trade union laws, defend the democratic right to strike.
- For an immediate increase in the minimum wage to £15 an hour, without exemptions, and for it then to automatically rise in line with inflation or wages, whichever is higher.
- Scrap zero hour contracts. Guaranteed hours and full employment rights for all, including migrant workers, from day one of employment; including trade union rates of pay and sickness pay, and sickness, parental and holiday rights. Cut the working week to 32 hours with no loss of pay.
- Invest to create and protect jobs, including for young people.
- Solidarity with workers taking action to defend jobs, conditions, pensions, public services and trade unions. Reinstate full trade union rights to prison officers.

E. PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT – STOP GLOBAL WARMING

- Prioritising major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels and nuclear power with renewable energy to achieve deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions – otherwise climate change, caused by capitalism, will destroy us.
- Nationalisation of the energy companies, under democratic control, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need, in order to invest in publicly-owned and controlled renewable and affordable energy for all. Oppose fracking.
- Move to sustainable, low-pollution industry and farming – stop the pollution that is destroying our environment. No to profit-driven GM technology.
- Produce for need, not profit, and design goods for reuse and recycling. End the use of single-use plastics.

F. ELIMINATING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

- Reverse cuts to benefits including restoration of the £20 per week addition to Universal Credit until it is abolished and replaced with a universal benefits system which is based on actual need and relates to the living wage, rising in line with it.

- Scrap benefit sanctions and the housing benefit cap. End child poverty now.
- End outsourcing of the welfare system to private companies.
- Restore the pre-Thatcher real value of pensions. Reverse the increases imposed on the state retirement age.

G. STOP THE ATTACKS ON DISABLED PEOPLE

- Promote inclusive policies to enable disabled people to participate in, and have equal access to, education, employment, housing, transport and welfare provision.
- Support measures to ensure disabled people receive a level of income according to needs. Equal pay for equal work.
- Take action against employers and service providers for failing to make reasonable adjustments to address disability needs.
- For a supportive benefits system, free of discrimination.

H. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND JUSTICE

- Demand equality, welcome diversity and oppose racism, fascism and all forms of discrimination. Defend the right to asylum, repeal all racist immigration controls. For an immediate end to the transportation of migrants to Rwanda or holding centres elsewhere. For the right to work and to access all public services for all refugees and asylum seekers.
- Ensure women have genuinely equal rights and pay.
- Full equality for LGBT people. Oppose transphobia, promote trans and non-binary rights. Support Gender Recognition Reform for all trans and non-binary people.

I. SOLIDARITY NOT WAR

- No to imperialist wars and occupations!
- Justice for the Palestinians, lift the siege of Gaza and the occupied territories, recognise the state of Palestine.
- Decommission nuclear weapons. No more spending on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). End arms trading and convert arms spending into socially useful products and services.
- An independent socialist foreign policy, based on international working-class solidarity.

J. SOCIALISM

- For a democratic socialist society run in the interests of people not millionaires. For bringing into democratic public ownership the major companies and banks that dominate the economy, so that production and services can be planned to meet the needs of all and to protect the environment.