



London Ambulance Service UNISON Branch

# LABOUR LINK



09 July 2016

## LAS Labour link news



Dear Members,

I wanted to write directly to all Labour members and supporters after the publication of the Chilcot Inquiry report on Wednesday when I apologised, on behalf of our party, for the decision to go to war in Iraq.

I made this apology because politicians and political parties can only grow stronger by acknowledging when they get it wrong and facing up to their mistakes.

This apology was owed to the people of Iraq, the families of those UK soldiers who died in Iraq or returned home injured or incapacitated, and to the millions of British citizens who feel our democracy was undermined when the decision to go to war was made.

The Iraq war divided our party and it divided the country. We need to learn the lessons of Chilcot — and what has taken place since 2003 — for the future.

# Information

So I commit our party to uphold international law, to seek peaceful solutions to international disputes, to respect the role and authority of the United Nations and always to treat war as the last resort.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy Corbyn MP

Leader of the Labour Party

## **UNISON statement on the Labour Party**



Monday 27 June 2016

Speaking today (Monday) UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis said:

“Last summer, our union nominated Jeremy Corbyn for Labour leader, and a great number of our members voted for him in the Labour leadership contest.

“Support for Jeremy remains the position of this union, as determined by our members through our democratic structures.

“Our Labour Party members’ conference next week will have an open and honest debate about the future of the party, and how Labour can win the coming election.

“It is not the Parliamentary Labour Party or trade unions who now elect the leader – it is party members and affiliate supporters, and that mandate should be respected.

“It is essential that the Labour Party is united in dealing with the huge threats to our economy, society, the disturbing rise of racism in our communities and attacks on public services as our country faces a period of huge uncertainty.

“The Tories are divided, but at this crucial time, Labour should not be. As we appear to be moving towards an early general election, our members need strong and united leadership from the Labour Party.

“If MPs choose not to serve in the shadow cabinet, the Labour leader has a right to seek to form a shadow cabinet and lead our party as long as he has the support of party members.”

## **Joint trade union statement on the Labour Party**

The current crisis within the Parliamentary Labour Party is deeply regrettable and unnecessary. Last week’s vote to leave the European Union presents the entire labour movement with unprecedented challenges. Above all, we need to be fighting to preserve our members’ jobs, already under threat in several industries and across the public sector as a consequence. The government is in crisis, but already serious debates are taking place and decisions being made which profoundly affect the interests of working people.

Under these circumstances, our members and millions of others will be looking with dismay at the events in parliament. It cannot be right to seek to denude the Labour front bench at this time, when the government more than ever needs to be scrutinised and held to account by an effective and united opposition that does the job it is paid to do

Jeremy Corbyn is the democratically-elected Leader of our Party who secured such a resounding mandate less than ten months ago under an electoral procedure fully supported by Labour MPs. His position cannot and should not be challenged except through the proper democratic procedures provided for in the Party’s constitution. We urge all Labour MPs to abide by those procedures, and to respect the authority of the Party’s Leader.

While we have stated that we believe a Leadership election would be an unwelcome distraction at this time of crisis, if one nevertheless occurs through the proper procedures we would expect all parts of the Party to honour the result and pull together in the interests of the country, and working people in particular. The only party that can win for working people is a strong and united Labour Party.

## **Three Specialist Cardiac Units to Close**

The closures have wider reaching implications for paediatric services - Diane Abbott

Diane Abbott MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Health, responding to the announcement by NHS England that three specialist cardiac units in Leicester, Manchester and London are to close, said:

"Decisions must be taken on the basis of what is best for patient care. Given this Government's record of failure on the NHS, with soaring waiting lists and hospitals in financial crisis, people will understandably question this decision.

"These closures could see large areas deprived of specialist cardiac units for children, which risks unnecessary strain for families.

"The closures have wider reaching implications for paediatric services. The Royal Brompton may have to close the doors to its entire paediatric intensive care unit, as patient numbers will automatically reduce. Specialists are rightly concerned that these closures may seriously compromise outcomes."

## **Nursing Bursaries**

NHS Frontline Crisis Worsens as Government Scraps Nursing Bursaries

The Government has created a recruitment gap by capping the supply of nurses and then announcing an untested policy that will only increase shortages.

From next year, the government plans to fund nurse training through loans instead of grants to create an 'open market' that will remove the NHS's ability to place nurses where there is demand.

The shift from grants to loans is regressive, which means poorer student nurses are more likely to rely on loans and will be more likely to be saddled with debt.

Diane Abbott MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Health, responding to the news of the recruitment gap, said:

"Placing the burden of the cost of education on nurses themselves is plain wrong.

"Nurses are the lifeline of our NHS and they shouldn't have to be saddled with excessive levels of debt to qualify.

"Like the junior doctor contracts, the Tory government is imposing more unpopular policies on frontline staff.

“Nurses spend half of their training working in the wards of our hospitals. Making them pay for their own education means that they are in effect paying for the privilege to look after the nation’s sick.

“The recruitment gap is a result of the government’s ideological attachment to austerity and is a problem of its own making. The solution is not to lump our nurses with debt but to lift the cap on recruitment.”

**Jason Anderson**  
**Unison Labour Link Officer**