



How TUSC functions

Introduction

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) was set up with the initial aim of enabling trade unionists, community campaigners and socialists to resist electorally the pro-austerity consensus of the establishment parties in the 2010 general election.

The position that was outlined in the TUSC founding policy statement remains. “The working class and peoples of Britain are facing a ruling class offensive against public services, incomes, living standards and trade union rights”, we wrote, and it is “an offensive which has support across all the establishment parties”.

That was why, our founding statement went on, “the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition will contest elections, to show that there is a clear left-wing alternative to policies of public sector cuts, privatisation, militarism and environmental degradation”.

TUSC recognised at its foundation, and still does, that there can be “Labour and non-Labour candidates who agree with our policies, who share our socialist aspirations, and who will be supported by left and labour movement organisations participating in our coalition”.

It was also recognised in the founding statement “that there are different strategic views about the way forward for the left in Britain, whether the Labour Party can be reclaimed by the labour movement, or whether a new workers' party needs to be established”. But TUSC was and remains “united on the need for mass resistance to the ruling class offensive, and for an alternative programme of left-wing policies to help inspire and direct such resistance” to be fought for, including at the ballot box.

1. Elections and policy:

- (i) The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition should remain registered with the Electoral Commission and maintain and develop a structure that enables it to fulfil its core task. This still is to provide an opportunity for local groups of trade unionists, community campaigners and socialist organisations who want to stand candidates in elections to appear on the ballot paper, if they so wish, as part of a wider challenge – as TUSC candidates rather than as ‘Independents’.
- (ii) To this end, TUSC will endeavour to co-ordinate challenges in local and parliamentary elections. We will organise conferences open to local TUSC steering committees or branches, delegates from trade union branches, political organisations and independents supportive of TUSC, other local groups who are planning to stand candidates in such elections, and any other member of TUSC, and will back any efforts by TUSC members and supporters in Scotland and Wales to organise similar events to prepare for elections there.
- (iii) TUSC will also consider, on a case-by-case basis, endorsing candidates to stand under its banner at parliamentary and local council by-elections.
- (iv) The founding TUSC statement developed for the 2010 general election remains in place, with subsequent updating revisions, as a summary of TUSC’s core policies. In addition supplementary policy statements shall be developed for local elections and other election campaigns, to be agreed at the relevant conferences, subject to the final approval of the national steering committee.
- (v) We also confirm that, as a federal ‘umbrella’ organisation, participating organisations will continue to be able to produce their own supporting material, subject to electoral law, as has been the practise successfully adopted in our election campaigns to date, which allow different organisations and local campaigns to collaborate under a common banner.

2. Structure and election organisation:

- (i) TUSC shall continue to have an All-Britain Steering Committee, comprised of representatives of the trade unions and socialist organisations currently participating in the coalition plus, in a personal capacity, leading trade unionists and anti-cuts councillors. Representatives of individual members shall also be elected to the steering committee by those who attend the national TUSC conference who are not otherwise members of a constituent organisation. The steering committee will operate by consensus of its component parts.
- (ii) The adherence of further organisations will be subject to the approval of the steering committee. The steering committee can also agree to expand its membership to other leading trade unionists as it decides. While recognising that NEC or national officer level trade unionists have their own constituency that they are accountable to as elected union leaders, they would be expected to participate in TUSC Supporters Groups in their union which may propose a different method of organising representation from their union on the steering committee.
- (iii) TUSC supporters in Scotland and Wales shall organise autonomously, with their own Scottish TUSC Steering Committee and TUSC Wales Steering Committee respectively.
- (iv) Local TUSC steering committees or branches will be established, where possible, for local government areas and parliamentary constituencies where it is planned to contest seats on whatever broadly similar basis is appropriate for each.
- (v) Local groups should also operate by consensus and with provisions made for the representative involvement of trade unionists – including for locally-organised TUSC supporters’ groups in unions where formal affiliation is not possible – and the local branches of the TUSC constituent organisations.
- (vi) Membership of TUSC should be administered locally through TUSC groups, including the setting and collection of membership fees, but with provision for national membership at a nominal £1 fee for individuals unable to join a local group or establish one themselves.
- (vii) The participants in TUSC recognise that this structure remains only an interim arrangement and that discussions must continue to take place on the best way to organise the coalition as it develops in the future. Future conferences of TUSC shall make provisions to include debates on this issue.

3. Candidates:

- (i) Candidates from organisations participating in the All-Britain Steering Committee, the Scottish TUSC Steering Committee and the TUSC Wales Steering Committee can expect to have their nomination papers for elections authorised by the coalition nominating officer as TUSC candidates if they so request. They can also stand, if they wish, under the existing registered electoral name of their organisation.
- (ii) Other prospective candidates, from local trade union organisations or other organisations, can also request to stand as TUSC candidates. All such requests shall be referred to the Steering Committee for decision.
- (iii) Prospective candidates will be asked to endorse the coalition’s founding core policy statement – and the relevant supplementary policy statement for the election they are contesting – but, with that provision, candidates will be responsible for their own campaign.
- (iv) The Steering Committee will have the final say on all coalition seats and candidates. Once approved by the Steering Committee, a candidate will be issued with a Certificate of Authorisation which shall only be withdrawn if the Steering Committee agrees by a new consensus decision to rescind its support.
- (v) The Steering Committee will seek to raise funds for national campaigning. For local challenges, the normal expectation will be that local deposits and campaigns will be financed locally.

Last updated at the TUSC All-Britain Steering Committee meeting on 7th September 2022