



*To the leadership teams of the Breakthrough Party, Left Unity, the Liverpool Community Independents Group, and others co-ordinating the Transform Politics call for a new left party.*

15th September 2023

## **An invitation to discuss the call for a new party and general election plans**

Dear comrades,

We are writing to invite the core organisations and individuals involved in the Transform working group to discuss with the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) all-Britain steering committee your call for a new party of the left and, in particular, plans for the next general election.

The TUSC steering committee applauds all efforts to unite socialists on a principled basis and congratulates you on the progress that is being made to bring together the members of your respective parties and others into one organisation.

We note, from the last publicly reported figures, that in the first month since the launch of Transform, over 5,000 people have signed your call for a new party of the left, and that over £12,000 has been raised towards your initial launch crowdfunder appeal of £25,000.

Inevitably, of course, at this early stage, there are still many unanswered questions about Transform, and some of these were raised at the meeting of the TUSC all-Britain steering committee on 13th September where this letter was agreed. Some are issues that have been aired previously in the correspondence that has taken place between TUSC and the Transform core organisations over the past few years, which has now been brought together into one report (approved by the 13th September meeting and available at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Correspondence-with-Transform-groups-2021-2023.pdf>).

But rather than repeat them in this letter, it was agreed instead to offer an invitation to the Transform working group to address a future meeting of the TUSC steering committee, for the comrades to present their case and answer directly any questions that may still be there. Our next meeting, to be held on Zoom from 5pm (with a usual end time of 6-30pm), is on Wednesday 25th October, and we would be very happy to organise a scheduled slot for you to attend.

### **General election planning**

A discussion on the political basis and organisational mechanics of how to establish a party of the left that can genuinely be a new mass vehicle of political representation of the working class is

undoubtedly an urgent one. But given that, as we believe, neither TUSC nor Transform are the definitive answer to that question, an even more immediate issue in the absence of such a party is what practically can be done to bring together the biggest possible force of trade unionists, socialists, and working class community and social movement candidates in a common challenge at the next general election, which is now no more than 15 months away.

Again, we have raised this issue with you in our previous correspondence, most recently in the letter sent to yourselves and around twenty other socialist organisations and radical campaign groups in May (see <https://www.tusc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Appeal-to-organisations-May-2023.pdf>).

But there is a particular issue that is now even more pertinent after the launch of Transform, that relates to the issue of the threshold set by the broadcasting authorities for 'fair media coverage' in election periods. As we said previously, to reach the threshold in the general election will require 98 candidates to agree to use on the ballot paper either the party name – or a registered variant 'description' of it – of a party recognised by the Electoral Commission. A 'variant description' can include a joint name registered by separate parties with the Commission.

TUSC currently has eight registered descriptions, one of which is 'Left Unity – Trade Unionists and Socialists', which was registered jointly with Left Unity in 2015 and used by seven Left Unity members in that year's general election. This helped TUSC to qualify for the 'fair media coverage' threshold, including a party election broadcast (which can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcEMrCTVRdg>).

Assuming that Left Unity will no longer contest elections under its own name once Transform is properly constituted and registered with the Electoral Commission, we would be more than happy to replace the current joint description with something like 'Transform – working with TUSC' or whatever variant that the new party may desire.

But again, this is a question that we could most usefully discuss at the October meeting of the TUSC steering committee, if you wish to accept our invitation to attend.

In solidarity,

**Dave Nellist**, TUSC National Chairperson, former Labour MP 1983-1992

**Clive Heemskerck**, TUSC National Election Agent