**Scottish Labour Party Conference – March 2014**

**Socialist Health Association Scotland – Contemporary motion**

**Time to Care**

Conference believes that a priority of the Scottish Government should be urgent action to maintain and improve the standards of care provision to elderly and vulnerable people.

Conference notes that care services are coming under increasing strain with too few staff being asked to deliver services with insufficient time to care while facing cuts in their pay and conditions of service.

In UNISON’s ‘*Scotland it’s Time to Care’* report, care workers explain in their own words the reality of social care in Scotland today. They tell us the service they provide is not sufficient to meet the needs of elderly and vulnerable people they care for. Either in terms of the time they can spend or the quality of care they can provide.

An increasing number of care workers are being placed on zero-hour and nominal-hour contracts, which like blacklisting has serious consequences for service user and staff safety. Conference therefore welcomes the inquiry into zero-hour contracts by the Westminster Scottish Affairs Committee.

Conference also believes that fair pay for care workers, including the Scottish Living Wage, is essential to raise standards, reduce turnover and ensure continuity of care. Conference therefore notes with dismay the rejection by SNP MSPs at the Scottish Parliament Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee on March 12th of Labour amendments to the Procurement (Scotland) Bill which would make the payment of the living wage a requirement in public contracts.

Conference believes that care services will be only be of a sufficient standard when they are designed in conjunction with users, adequately resourced and delivered by adequately paid staff with sufficient time and training to do their jobs. Conference therefore calls on the Scottish Labour party to campaign for:

* The Scottish Living Wage as a contract requirement to help the recruitment and retention of staff and support continuity of care;
* Improved training to ensure that care is delivered by properly qualified staff;
* Proper employment standards including ending the abuse of zero and nominal hour contracts;
* Adequate time to care in every care visit.

Those who rely on care services deserve nothing less.