

Resolution Date: 12 May 2020
Resolution Title: Support for Rent Cancellation

This Branch supports the call to ‘cancel the rent’ during the pandemic made by tenant organisations and Labour under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn. Labour have now dropped support for rent cancellation.

We note that the government policy of postponing eviction proceedings during the lockdown leads to the possibility of a large number of evictions at the end of the period.

There is a growing arrears crisis reflecting increasing hardship, research in April showed that residential tenants were already paying less than half what they owe in rent.

Many tenants face losing their jobs which can result in income being halved even when Universal Credit is paid and workers who are furloughed will typically face a cut of 16% in their income after tax according to the New Economics Foundation.

Labour now calls for an extension of the period in which evictions are postponed with all rent arrears accumulated still payable. Under the policy tenants would have two years to pay arrears which, in effect, means a 12% rent increase on top of other rent increases.

This Branch agrees to:

- Support the ‘cancel the rent’ campaign; for a UK-wide suspension of rents and mortgage freeze.
- Call on Unite to join Labour activists in pressing the Labour leadership to return to supporting the campaign.
- Call on Unite to campaign for rent cancellation whatever the position of Labour’s from bench.