

UNISON in LONDON

KEEPING UNISON STEWARDS AND ACTIVISTS INFORMED IN GREATER LONDON EDITION 47 • SUMMER 2018

Welcome to UNISON in LONDON



I write to you following the TUC march in May and, though I was sadly unable to attend due to a family emergency, I was delighted to see such a magnificent turn out by UNISON colleagues

from up and down the country, including many banners from our region. It is only through consistent, constant pressure that we will hold this government to account for its contempt of workers and the most vulnerable members of our society. In the current political climate, there may well be another snap election. We must ensure that our members are ready to have their voices heard.

I am sure many of you are aware of the current pay ballots and consultations across our various service groups. After so many years of austerity, the Chancellor has realised that the Public Sector has been pushed to breaking point. UNISON and our fellow unions have kept up the pressure on the government to force this break with the Tories favoured dogma through a simple message – no more austerity, pay up now!

I was honoured to chair May's Regional Council and see the presentation of the inaugural Eric Roberts Organising Awards. We lost our president, Eric, in 2016 and I miss him dearly. These awards celebrate his character and spirit as an activist, organiser and friend. I am very proud to count the winners, London Ambulance Branch, among my colleagues in the region.

I look forward to seeing you at the next regional event.

With very best wishes

Yvonne Green, Regional Convenor



UNISON ON THE MARCH

UNISON members marched in their tens of thousands from all across the country on 12 May in spite of the weather and step up for public services as part of the national TUC march and rally.

A samba band, a giant flag, maracas and vuvuzelas, glitter, giant balloons and UNISON banners from across the union added a festive air to the decidedly grey streets in London's West End as the marchers made their way from the Thames Embankment at Westminster to the rally and speeches in Hyde Park.

But they marched with a serious message: after eight years of austerity and cuts, working people and public services need a new deal.

General secretary Dave Prentis had marched at the front of a huge UNISON section of the demonstration and told the crowd at the rally that austerity had been a political choice, not an economic necessity, he told the crowd at the rally.

"You know, the Tories said they wanted a hostile environment – so we will give them one."

"It's our people, our class, who suffer, across

the board, from the residents of Grenfell Tower, through public service workers battered by cuts yet always expected to do more with less, to the Windrush generation, losing jobs, denied care and even deported by a callous, racist government."

"And the change we seek won't just sweep the Tories from office. It will sweep Jeremy Corbyn into Downing Street. It will bring our movement to power.

"And it will change our society into one that works for the many not the few."

Penny Smith is a UNISON member who works for Northamptonshire – "the Tory council that went bankrupt".

With the county council now facing abolition by the Tory government, she added "Northamptonshire is the proof, if ever it was needed, that privatisation, outsourcing, low council tax and constant cuts is a disaster for public services ... an ideological experiment that was doomed to fail."

She had a simple message for government, local authorities and employers: listen to working people, listen to trade unions.



ERIC ROBERTS ORGANISING AWARDS

Following the loss of our President, Eric Roberts, in 2016, the Regional Council Officers decided to introduce an annual award in his name to acknowledge activists and branches in the region who have achieved demonstrable results in organising and recruitment.

Assistant General Secretary Christina McAnea presented not one but two awards in this inaugural year of the Eric Roberts Organising Ward at Regional Council on 23 May.

The London Ambulance Service UNISON Branch was the first recipient; specifically for the excellent project the branch is undertaking in Patient Transport Services. This has seen a significant increase in membership and equally as important, the organising and supporting of these members.

The second was a posthumous award. The Regional Council Officers decided to make a special award in tribute to Irene Stacey, for her dedication and commitment to UNISON, the Greater London Region and specifically for her work in recruiting and organising low paid women.



Assistant General Secretary Christina McAnea with Jo Marren (Havering LG branch) and Eddie Brand (LAS Branch Secretary)

Jo Marren, Irene's daughter and a UNISON activist herself in the Havering Local Government branch, attended to receive the award on her mother's behalf.

Irene was a long standing NEC member and

played such an important part in the union nationally, the London Region was so proud of her and all her achievements. She was a stalwart of the union and an inspiration to other low paid women.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY UPDATE

The national employers for local government made a 2-year pay offer on 5 December which included a 2% increase on SCs 20 and above in 2018 and a further 2% on SCs 23 and above in 2019. Various increases above 2% are offered for SCs 19 and below in 2018 with a revised pay spine being implemented from April 2019.

The application of the national pay award was more complex in London and a number

of technical meetings took place to look at how the pay award might apply in London to ensure the key principles of the NJC award were met.

A final offer from the London employer was made on 22 January 2018 and formed part of the national branch consultation which concluded on 9 March and which carried a recommendation to reject the offer following a close vote by the NJC Committee.

The overall outcome of the consultation was to narrowly reject the offer with the Greater London Region response also being to reject

but on a low turnout, in line with the overall national turnout.

In light of the consultation responses, the NJC Committee re-considered its position and reluctantly amended its recommendation to acceptance of the pay offer and branches were asked to seek member feedback on this revised position.

Following this further consultation, 11 of the 12 regions, including the Greater London Region, agreed to accept the offer.

BARTS HEALTH UNISON MEMBERS CAMPAIGN AGAINST POVERTY PAY

On 9 May, UNISON and Unite joined forces to protest against the treatment of soft FM staff outside the Barts Health NHS Trust Board meeting. This launched a campaign for pay justice for more than a thousand domestics, porters, receptionists, security guards and catering workers.

UNISON and Unite asked the Board to overturn its decision to completely remove the link to NHS pay deals for outsourced members working for private company Serco.

For a number of years, despite being outsourced more than 80% of the 1800 soft FM workers in Barts Health had maintained their TUPEd NHS terms & conditions AND also had NHS pay awards applied, something most companies/ commissioning bodies choose not to do, creating a two tier workforce.

Unfortunately, when Serco took over the contract Barts used it as an opportunity to break the link with the NHS pay model. At the core of the UNISON & Unite joint pay claim is the call for the reinstatement of the link to NHS pay for those on TUPE contracts and a phased transfer of new starters, currently on the London Living Wage, onto NHS pay.

Lead UNISON Serco Rep Chris Akaluka said: "Whilst UNISON is consulting nationally on the NHS pay offer, we are campaigning to get Serco and Barts to apply it to all Soft FM staff.

"The London Living Wage is the minimum benchmark for pay, but ending the lowest



band for us (band 1) would mean an immediate rise of about 10% for the lowest paid, putting an end to poverty pay in the NHS – this should apply to all Barts workers."

UNISON Regional Organiser Chong Ma said: "Barts Health NHS Trust is the largest NHS Trust in the country and this issue is symptomatic of outsourcing in the NHS: thousands of low-paid soft FM workers in

the NHS working for private companies face the prospect of being left behind, creating a growing gap between people who work for the same patients and communities.

"We are calling on Barts to pay all our members the long-overdue pay rise they deserve and not to treat one set of workers as the poor relations of directly employed NHS staff."

Please contact Chong Ma, Regional Organiser (c.ma@unison.co.uk) with your messages of support.

UNISON Barts Health branches website: unisonbarts.wordpress.com

VICTORY ON PAY FOR BANK STAFF

UNISON East London Mental Health has successfully fought for the improvement in pay for bank workers after lodging two collective grievances with Unite and the Royal College of Nursing.

In November 2016 the unions submitted a claim for substantive staff working bank to receive holiday pay of 12.07% of their salary and for this to be backdated to July 2015, the date of an Employment Tribunal ruling on the matter. It required tenacity and determination to push forward negotiations with the Trust. Finally in August 2017 the Trust agreed to the claim and over 1000 staff received the backdated payment and, from there on, their holiday pay entitlement.

In September 2017 a further grievance was lodged concerning bank pay rates. Pay rates for the same band role differed across the Trust, they were not aligned to Agenda for Change and for some roles bank staff were paid the band below the vacancy.

The unions believed that there had been no increase to the pay rate for 3 years, astonishingly in their response the Trust acknowledged that the pay rates for London based staff had not changed for 7 years. After negotiation we were able to agree on principles which will be applied this summer:

- Nationally negotiated uplift under Agenda for Change will be applied to bank staff;
- No bank shifts would be paid at a rate lower than a substantive post in the establishment on a shift by shift basis.
- To pay substantive staff their incremental point when they work a bank shift at their own grade
- If a member of substantive staff covers a bank shift which is lower than their substantive pay band, they will receive the incremental point that would be equivalent to their substantive band. If their substantive incremental point is above the payscale of the shift they are working they will be paid the top point of the band of the shift that they are covering

These successes will mean significant increases in the pay rates for bank staff and parity for staff.



NEW RECOGNITION AGREEMENTS IN HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

UNISON has signed a new recognition agreement with the newly merged company Notting Hill Genesis. This means that our recognition as a union post-merger is secure.



Notting Hill Genesis CEO, Kate Davies and UNISON Regional Organiser, Colin Inniss (both seated) sign the new recognition agreement.

It also means that for Genesis employees who have never had the benefit of a union before, these employees can now join if they wish. Membership numbers are expected to increase and the local branch to go from strength to strength.

This follows the signing of a recognition agreement between Optivo Housing and UNISON in February.

UNISON general secretary, Dave Prentis, and Optivo chief executive officer, Paul Hackett, signed the agreement at Optivo's head office, Grosvenor House, Croydon. The agreement covers the whole organisation and allows the union to both recruit members and bargain and negotiate on members behalf at a Joint Negotiating Committee.

Optivo, formed by the merger of Amicus Horizon and Viridian Housing Association, is one of the UK's largest housing associations with over 44,000 affordable homes in London, the South East and the Midlands.

UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis said: "UNISON and Optivo have worked closely together to develop a strong working relationship since the merger last May, building upon the foundations which were already in place."

"The organisation is always willing to work with UNISON to ensure that our members have a voice that is heard and respected in the workplace"

Agreements have also been recently signed by Clarion Housing and L&Q/East Thames.

SERVICE GROUP PAY UPDATES

Health

In last November's budget the Chancellor announced there would be new money available for NHS pay and changes to the NHS pay structure. Intensive and detailed talks followed that announcement and the result is a framework agreement.

The framework proposed between government, employers and trade unions includes:

- Simplifying pay bands so that most staff reach the full rate for their job faster. This could be worth between 9% and 29% over the three years;
- Meaningful increases for top-of-band staff – for most, this would be worth 6.5% over three years, plus a 1.1% lump sum in year two;
- Removal of band overlaps, to ensure that promotion comes with a proper pay rise;

- Ending poverty pay through an immediate move to a new minimum rate that is above the living wage, with further increases for the lowest-paid staff by the end of the deal;
- Big improvements to starting salaries, to help the NHS attract and retain new staff

Most terms and conditions would remain unchanged, including annual leave. There would be no fundamental changes to unsocial hours payments, though there would be adjustments affecting some staff to maintain the integrity of the system.

A majority of the NHS trade unions are recommending this agreement to their members, as they believe it is the best deal available through negotiation.

The ballot closes on 5 June, after this newsletter went to press.



HIGHER EDUCATION

In Higher Education, the 2018/19 claim has been submitted. The claim includes an increase to all spine points on the 50 point national pay scale of 7.5% or £1,500, whichever is greater, £10 per hour minimum wage with all HEIs to become foundation living wage employers ensuring all campus staff are paid at least the foundation living wage rate, nationally-agreed framework for action to close the gender pay gap by 2020, nationally-agreed framework for action on precarious contracts, nationally-agreed payment to recognise excessive workloads and to establish the Scottish Sub-Committee of New JNCHEs as set out under the New JNCHEs Agreement.



COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY

Most pay negotiations in Housing Associations are still being conducted, with a claim for a consolidated award of 4% being submitted to most employers. However, pay claims have been agreed at Notting Hill Housing / Genesis for 3% plus a £1,000 bonus and L&Q / East Thames for an award of 2.5 % plus a bonus of up to 5%.

Local reps, supported by the Branch and Regional Organising Team, have submitted pay claims in several recognised Community & Voluntary Organisations and following negotiations have secured offers of 3% subject to approval.



Have your say on pay

FURTHER EDUCATION



On 29 May the University and College Union (UCU) and UNISON welcomed a u-turn from the Association of Colleges (AoC) over pay talks for staff in further education. At the start of May the AoC said that it would not discuss a pay claim for 2018/19 while UCU members were still in dispute at some colleges.

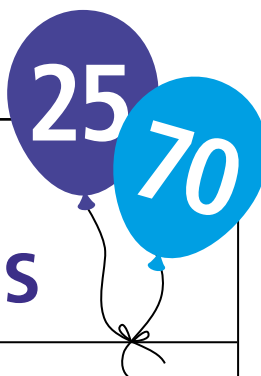
That threat prompted unions who represent staff in colleges to write to the AoC saying that a refusal to discuss the pay claim was an "unnecessary provocation" and warned the AoC that

it risked undermining its "credibility and relevance to the sector" if it would not talk with the unions.

The AoC has now said it will receive the 2018/19 pay claim from the unions.

In the spring of 2017 the joint unions put in a pay claim for inflation (RPI) plus 3% or £900, whichever is greater. The claim also called for the Living Wage foundation rate to be the lowest rate of pay in FE colleges. After negotiations, the AoC made a final pay offer in September 2017 of 1% or £250, whichever is greater.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO UNISON AND THE NHS



UNISON MEMBERS ELECTED ACROSS LONDON

Members may be aware that Thursday 5 July is the 70th birthday of the NHS. This week also sees UNISON celebrate its 25th birthday.

To mark the occasion, UNISON is encouraging all branches (regardless of service group) to organise birthday-themed activities and events, such as holding birthday parties, arranging stalls

to celebrating the history of the NHS, or organising stunts and social media activity.

There is still time to organise your event in your branch

This will also be the first of our regional recruitment weeks for 2018.

July also marks 25 years since NALGO, COHSE and NUPE merged to form UNISON, the UK's largest union for workers in public services.



OPERATING THEATRE STAFF CELEBRATED WITH FIRST NATIONAL AWARENESS DAY

Monday 14 May saw the first ever awareness day to highlighting the contribution of Operating Department Practitioners (ODPs) to patient care.

ODPs work in operating theatres as well as in other areas within hospitals providing critical care. Their job includes ensuring equipment is working properly such as anaesthesia machines and catheters, and that surgeons have the correct instruments.

The National ODP's day will be an annual

event to raise the profile of ODPs and their crucial NHS role, said the College of Operating Department Practitioners (CODP), which is affiliated to UNISON.

UNISON head of health Sara Gorton said: "ODPs ensure patients receive the best care, from the moment someone is anaesthetised to their discharge back to the ward.

"We hope that this day will enable ODPs to share the diverse nature of their role with the public so that there can be a greater understanding of this exciting profession."



Rokhsana Fiaz was the first Black woman to be the directly elected leader of a London borough.

The newly elected Mayor of Newham, who is a UNISON member, won a huge 73.4% of the vote in May's local elections.

During the campaign Ms Fiaz had questioned the equity of the distribution of wealth in the borough following regeneration projects, including the Westfield shopping centre.

She said: "Eight years of devastation by Tory cuts is showing with wins like this. I think it reflects the confidence of the people in Labour's ability to lead a council in the face of these cuts."

While local council elections did not see a decisive result across the country, Labour saw an increase of 65 councillors in London and also regained Tower Hamlets from no overall control.

In contrast, the Tories lost 90 seats across the capital, although they did regain control of Barnet from no overall control.

Labour now holds four of the eight 'metro' mayor positions and 11 of the 16 city mayor positions in England.



Standing up for Colombian trade unionists



Colombia is the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist. 3,000 activists have been killed in the past 30 years. Many receive death threats and are unjustly imprisoned. Workers in public and private

sectors are hit by brutal anti-union policies making it almost impossible to join a union.

Justice for Colombia was set up by the British trade union movement to show solidarity with Colombian trade unionists. JFC campaigns in

Britain, Ireland, and Europe to bring an end to the anti-union violence and facilitates various financial projects sponsored by British and Irish trade unions. JFC works on numerous campaigns depending on the needs of our Colombian partners. It lobbies the British Government to speak out against the abuses and support trade unionists and other activists in Colombia.

UNISON's commitment to solidarity with Colombian workers has been unwavering. Together with Justice for Colombia, UNISON has helped secure the release of several high-profile political prisoners, has forced the British government to stop ignoring Colombia's human rights crisis, and has solidified solidarity links at a national, regional and branch level with public sector unions in Colombia.

**Your support and solidarity is more important than ever
– please affiliate your UNISON branch to JFC today**

UNISON Branch:

Contact: Secretary/Chair/Treasurer/Other (please circle or specify)

Name:

Phone:

Address:

Postcode:

Email:

We enclose a cheque for £40 (annual branch affiliation fee)

Plus donation £ Total per year: £

Please return to: Justice for Colombia, 4th Floor, 75-77 St John Street, London WC1M 4NN
Make cheques payable to the Justice for Colombia or contact the office to arrange to pay by direct debit or standing order

PERSONAL INJURY CLAIMS

As part of their membership, UNISON members receive free legal advice and representation on personal injury at or away from work, on holiday or on the roads and they keep 100% of any compensation. UNISON members in London have won more than **£1.2m** in compensation from Personal Injury Claims in 2018.

Members wishing to find out more or make a claim should contact UNISON's legal service on **0800 085 7857**.



HEALTH TRAINING CONFERENCE 2018

After last year's successful event, the next Health Training Conference takes place on Friday 5 October with more details of the programme to be announced in the coming months.

All health branches are encouraged to register. Please contact Joan Hibbs on j.hibbs@unison.co.uk or **0207 535 6578**.



REGIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

All branches have been sent the new education programme for 2018. The education team would like to draw attention to some new courses that will benefit activists in the current climate as the trade union act's regulations come into force.

- **Mental health at work awareness, 2 – 4 July**
- **Facility time, 31 Oct – 2 Nov**
- **Negotiating Skills, 31 Oct – 2 Nov**

All courses are being held at Euston (NUT) – speak to your branch today to secure your place on these innovative new courses.

The Regional contact for Education is **Amanda Mayers** on a.mayers@unison.co.uk or **0207 535 6561**



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

June

- 17-18** Local Government Conference
Water, Energy, Environment and Transport Conference
- 19-22** National Delegate Conference
- 21** June Solstice

July

- 1** UNISON 25th Birthday
- 5** NHS 70th Birthday

August

- 27** Summer Bank Holiday

September

- 19** Regional Committee



Presidential Charity 2017-18

UNISON President, **Margaret McKee**, has chosen **Rosemount House** as her presidential project for 2017 – 2018.

Rosemount House is a residential home setup for homeless men, suffering with alcohol addiction, drug addiction and mental health problems. Their unique approach provides a long-term rehabilitation programme for residents. The aim is for residents to go on to live independently, reintegrate in their community and

reconnect with their families. There are extensive support services provided, including group sessions and one-to-one counselling.

Please make cheques payable to Rosemount House Limited and send them to Joan Walker at UNISON Centre, 30 Euston Road, London, NW1 2AY, or donate via their website at <http://bit.ly/2k0R7pV>