

# UNISON in LONDON

KEEPING UNISON STEWARDS AND ACTIVISTS INFORMED IN GREATER LONDON EDITION 46 • WINTER 2017

## Welcome to UNISON in LONDON



The last time I wrote I was optimistic that a Labour Government would be in place. Whilst this did not happen, the Government's majority, and mandate, disappeared. The snap election gamble failed

as voters voiced their opposition to further austerity and the decimation of our public services. The prevailing mood is in favour of change and we must take this opportunity to end the Public Sector pay cap.

I am confident, despite the Chancellor's crumbs from the table, that we can achieve proper pay rises for all public sector workers and am looking forward to the debate in Parliament on 4th December, which, without UNISON's petition, would not have happened.

I was honoured to introduce UNISON's London Housing Report at the Houses of Parliament in November. Over 1,100 UNISON members were surveyed and the results were quite shocking, with almost two-thirds of members saying they are looking to leave the capital due to housing costs. Another untenable situation which this Government has failed to solve – the capital's housing crisis simply cannot continue.

UNISON has won some fantastic victories in 2017 – the defeat of Employment Tribunal fees, the reinforcement of consultation rights, and we can, and will win, again. Whether or not there is another General Election in 2018, we as UNISON will continue to do what we do best – defend our members, our union and our public services. I look forward to seeing you at the next regional event.

With very best wishes

**Yvonne Green, Regional Convenor**

## Pay Up Now!

Unison launched the Pay Up Now! campaign in July to build up pressure to break the Government's 1% pay award ceiling. A well-attended regional lobby of the Local Government Association on 14 August was followed by the TUC Lobby of Parliament and rally in Parliament Square on 17 October. UNISON was well represented at the event, those assembled heard speakers on the need to take the chance offered by a weakened government to get a proper pay rise for all public sector workers.

The latest pay offers are below:

**Local Government** – employers wrote to unions on 5th December outlining a proposed two-year pay deal from 1 April 2018, offering a 2% wage rise next April for the majority of council and school support staff currently earning over £19,430, and a further 2% in April 2019.

There is also a proposal to give lower paid staff a higher wage rise of up to 16% over the two years. The offer will be put to the respective committees for consideration.

**Health** – The 2018/19 NHS pay award is expected in March. UNISON broke with tradition and submitted a pay claim directly to the government. UNISON is adamant that there can be no selective pay rises in the NHS.

**Higher Education** – Employers full and final offer for 2017-18: all staff above point 16 will receive 1.7% and the lowest pay point (spinal column point 2) will receive the highest increase, equating to the living wage rate of £8.45 an hour for those working a 35-hour working week. 70% of members and the other unions in JNCHES voted to accept.

**Further Education** – Unions are calling for a pay rise of 3% above inflation or £900 a year, whichever is higher. The joint unions' claim also calls for a minimum wage equal to the living wage – currently £8.45 an hour, or £9.75 in London.

**WEET** – Pay negotiations have commenced with Thames Water. The existing Affinity Water is soon to be split and staff will TUPE across from April. Both organisations' pay deals end this year. In UK Power Networks and EDF members are currently on year two of a three year pay deal (CPI+.0.5%). Members employed by London Waste Ltd will be balloted on the employer offer for either five years RPI or three years PFI from 2017.

**Community & Voluntary** – Individual employer responses to the Housing Associations Branch's 3% (consolidated) Cost of Living pay claim for 2017/18 are, thus far, encouraging. Barnardos have now imposed the proposed 1% without agreement with UNISON.



- It is vital that that members have their say on pay claims and any subsequent pay offers so encourage all members in your workplace to participate in any consultations.
- Keep up to date on pay in your sector at [www.unison.org.uk](http://www.unison.org.uk)

### NEW REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR UNISON GREATER LONDON REGION



Maggi Ferncombe has commenced as the new Regional Secretary in UNISON's Greater London Region, following Linda Perks' retirement in September.

Maggi has worked for UNISON for the past 22 years and became the Regional Secretary for the South East region in May 2015, prior to that she was a Regional Manager in the Greater London Region for 10 years.

Maggi started her career in UNISON as a Branch Administrator in a Local Government branch and has also been project manager for RMS at National office.

In her various roles, she has worked with branches and dealt with employers in all service groups.

She has also been the lead on Equalities and continues to campaign for equalities both within the union and outside with employers.

Maggi said: "I am proud to be working class and it's a privilege to work for Britain's largest trade union, one that defends workers rights, empowers its members and activists and campaigns to improve working conditions for some of the lowest paid people in Britain."

### CONSULTATION RIGHTS STRENGTHENED

In July UNISON won a landmark court victory, making it much harder for employers to ignore staff when making major changes in the workplace.

The Court of Appeal ruling means that for the first time employers will be obliged to consult with unions around any workplace issues that affect their members.

The victory came about after the union took up a case involving parks police who were made redundant by the London Borough of Wandsworth.

In 2011 Boris Johnson offered additional policing resources to Boroughs. While most boroughs ignored it, Wandsworth took the offer up on it and immediately made their parks police redundant in order to swap them for half-price PCs, without consulting UNISON.

The late Stuart Barber, Regional Organiser, took on the members' case, which ultimately led to the Court of Appeal ruling that UNISON had the right to be consulted by Wandsworth over the job losses.

While the original case affected a small number of members, this important finding by the courts will benefit thousands of employees whose rights at work are under threat and means that employers will face greater scrutiny over their treatment of staff.

The ruling means employers will also have to involve unions in issues such as those around working hours and holiday pay.

## GOOD NEWS FOR LSE CLEANERS

The London School of Economics (LSE) Branch have been organising cleaners employed by Noonan at LSE since the recognition agreement between UNISON and Ocean TUPE transferred, and submitted a Terms and Conditions Claim, following consultation with members, last Autumn.

Under a historic tri-partite agreement, they entered into negotiations with both Noonan and LSE, led by the UNISON trained

stewards from Noonan and supported by the branch officers. The negotiations were tough and UNISON members rejected several inadequate and insulting offers.

The branch negotiating team, led by Michael Ethridge and Nicole Garnier, worked hard with members and subsequently received a final offer from the employer. Our members were consulted on the offer and voted to accept. The offer was for the cleaning staff to immediately receive halfway

to parity on terms and conditions with directly employed staff and a commitment to bringing the cleaning team in-house in Spring 2018.

This offer is a substantial victory for the branch and, most importantly, the cleaners themselves. There continues to be strong growth in UNISON membership in Private Contractor employers across Public Services and this win is indicative of what members can achieve.

## NEW BRANCH SECRETARIES TRAINED AND ACTIVE!

A new 3 day branch secretaries course ran in November at UNISON Centre, designed for, you guessed it, new branch secretaries, but also activists who were interested in finding out more about the role. 13 activists in all, from Local Government, Health & Higher Education service groups completed the course.

A wide range of topics were covered, all designed to give someone new to the UNISON branch secretary role the practical tools and support to tackle the job of running and developing an organised branch.

These included the role of the organising branch, mapping with WARMS, supporting & developing new activists, delegating &

avoiding burnout, succession planning, the importance of branch communications, the new Organising Framework tool, branch employed staff, an introduction to campaigning, plus lots of shared best practice amongst the attendees.

Delegates probably learned as much from each other as they did from the course tutors. Feedback from everyone who attended was incredibly positive. It was fascinating and informative to hear from the different service groups, the different challenges, but also the similar issues. The Organising staff would like to thank every delegate for your participation, your input and for making it a very positive, enjoyable experience.

If you are interested in attending future courses, please contact **Amanda Mayers** on [a.mayers@unison.co.uk](mailto:a.mayers@unison.co.uk) or **0207 535 6561**.



## NO PLACE TO LIVE

London is facing an exodus of public service workers as housing costs become unaffordable, according to a new report from UNISON.

Earlier this year, over 1,200 members from different areas of the public sector replied to a survey from UNISON's national policy unit to determine the realities facing Londoners in the current housing market.

Melanie Onn MP, Shadow Housing Minister, speaking at the launch of the report at the Houses of Parliament on 28 November, called the report "a timely intervention which supports the housing agenda of Labour.

"The Government is too weak to do anything of substance and there is nothing in the budget to solve the chronic housing shortage."

The report showed that two thirds of workers (63%) spend more than 30% of their income on housing. This figure

rises to 82% for private renters. This in turn has created a desire among two thirds (62%) of workers to want to leave the capital because of the cost of housing. This figure rises to 87% for health workers living in the private rented sector.

UNISON is calling for a greater proportion of properties available for social rent and for the Government to commit to investment in social housing. A recent study by the Chartered

Institute of Housing shows that 79% of government spending on housing subsidises the private housing market.

John Healey MP (Shadow Secretary of State for Housing), James Murray (Deputy Mayor of London) and Yvonne Green (UNISON GLR Regional Convenor) also spoke at the launch of the need for housing supply to allow the people who work in London and support our services to actually live in the capital.





## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL HEALTH TRAINING CONFERENCE

The 2017 Health Training Conference took place on Friday 6 October at Congress Centre and was one of the most successful days in the event's history, with overwhelming positive feedback from delegates.

A variety of speakers were invited to attend across a broad range of issues, including Sustainability Transformation Partnerships, Health and Social Care and Child/Adolescent Mental Health Services.

However, it was Dick Moore from the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust who brought the audience to its feet with a deeply moving and thought-provoking talk on the hidden epidemic of adolescent mental health.

The event also marked the retirement of Chris Remington, Greater London Head of Health, who had served UNISON, and NUPE before it, with great distinction. His final address

to Health Training Conference focussed on rejuvenating branches and developing the activists of the future so as to protect the long-term health of the union and ensure it remains at the forefront in the

debate on Public Services within the region and at national level.

To register for next year's event (Friday 5 October 2018), please contact **Joan Hibbs** on [j.hibbs@unison.co.uk](mailto:j.hibbs@unison.co.uk) or **0207 535 6578**.



## SEVACARE CLAIM SEES HARINGEY SIGNS ETHICAL CARE CHARTER

UNISON is pursuing an Employment Tribunal case on behalf of home care workers in Haringey, formerly working for Sevacare, who the union believes have not been receiving the national minimum wage. Some workers, giving live-in care and working 168 consecutive hours living in someone's home, have an hourly rate of pay on their payslip of £3.27, significantly

less than half the minimum wage rate. Most workers are on zero hours contracts, and have been too scared to raise the problem for fear of losing their hours.

The claim, which now includes 43 members, is long running and complex. A preliminary hearing was held in June 2017, the purpose of which was to decide if there had been a TUPE transfer of home care workers from

Sevacare to other providers. The tribunal agreed with UNISON's arguments and ruled that there was a TUPE transfer. There is the appeal of this decision on TUPE, which is due to be heard by the Employment Appeals Tribunal in January 2018. UNISON will then be moving to the next stage of the case which is for the Tribunal to consider if there was a failure to pay the minimum wage and, if so, what arrears are owed to our members.

The Haringey UNISON branch has used the claim as a recruitment and campaigning opportunity, and as a result Haringey Council signed up to UNISON's Ethical Care Charter on 21 September 2017. Under the charter, Haringey is committed to replacing zero hours contracts with guaranteed hours, and to make full payment for travel time between home care visits. Haringey will be the tenth London council to sign up to the Charter.



## STARS IN OUR SCHOOLS 2017

Stars in our Schools is an annual celebration of school support staff. Every year UNISON celebrates the wonderful work they do up and down the country. School support staff are often overlooked, but they are an essential part of a running a school and so this day is important to make sure everyone across the country is aware of just how vital they are to our children's education.

This year Stars in our Schools was held on Friday 24th November. UNISON schools shared pictures on social media and stories of how schools were celebrating the day.

In Croydon UNISON branch, St Giles Special School had a day of recognition for all their hard work. In the morning their Head Teacher treated all the support staff to a breakfast, in the afternoon the Branch handed out cakes and goody bags.

It was also a good opportunity for support staff to find out more about UNISON and talk to their fellow colleagues who were members and find out why they think

UNISON is an organisation worth being part of.

UNISON General Secretary, Dave Prentis, visited Lister Community School in Newham and met School Support Staff, saying:

"Whatever roles UNISON members at the school were working in, the message was the same. They were there to help the

students, and do their best, even in difficult circumstances.

"That kind of attitude is the hallmark of UNISON members, not just in schools but across all our public services. A belief in public service, a sense of duty and dedication that is truly inspiring. It makes me so proud of our union and proud of our members."



Photo credit, Ralph Hodgson.

## UNISON SUPPORTS GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

Regular visitors to Champion Hill in Dulwich will be familiar with the pink and blue of Dulwich Hamlet Football Club, but this season they are also sporting the UNISON logo after a sponsorship deal was set up

between the club and the Kings College Hospital branch.

UNISON has had a pitchside advertising board for many years but with the club struggling to survive, despite unprecedented

attendances for non-league football, the branch decided to step in and help a club that is part of the fabric of the local community. The branch has also made a donation to Peckham Town Ladies FC for new kit and sponsorship.

Kings Branch Secretary Karen Buonaiuto said: "The branch is proud to support these clubs, whose message of inclusivity and sport for all makes them natural team mates for UNISON."

**Matchday admission at DHFC for 2017/18 season:** £11 Adults, £5 Concessions (includes Seniors – 60+, Teenagers (13-19), Unemployed (JSA), NHS Staff, Blue Light Services, Serving Members of the Armed Forces and Full Time Students, all on production of valid ID for your concession), while under-13s are free when accompanied by a paying adult.



Nyren Clunis in action for Dulwich Hamlet at Worthing in September © Laraine Bateman

### CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



On 2nd March 2018, the Greater London Region will be holding a training event for women followed by evening drinks in celebration of International Women's Day.

This will be the fourth annual Women's Training and Networking Event, which is being organised by the Regional Women's Committee. The event is aimed at all elected branch officers who are women, and branch women's contacts.

Attendance is free of charge and refreshments will be provided throughout the day. However, travel expenses to and from the venue must be covered by your UNISON branch.

Further information and details of how to register will be circulated in due course. If you have any queries regarding this event in the meantime, please contact Fran Allton, **Secretary to the Regional Women's Committee**, on [f.allton@unison.co.uk](mailto:f.allton@unison.co.uk).

### KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

In recognition of Disability History Month (22nd November to 22nd December), the Regional Disabled Members Committee held a Disability Information Day on 30th November. Fifty delegates attended, covering all service groups.

The event began with an update on the National Disabled Members Committee 2017 work plan from Peter Daley and Maggie Griffin. Regional Convenor Yvonne Green also attended and provided an update on work undertaken by the region in 2017. The briefing included: UNISON Head of Health & Safety, Tracey Ayton Harding, speaking on Mental Health Awareness, Ian Draper from the Stress Network on Work Stress, Emma Game from Thompsons Solicitors gave advice on Compiling a Case on the Grounds of Disability and Michael Paul from Disability Rights gave a presentation on The Equality Act.

The feedback has been very positive and the committee is planning to hold a similar event again next year – date TBC.

For more information on RDMC, please contact **Helen Chater**, Secretary to Regional Disabled Members' Committee on **020 7535 6617** or [h.chater@unison.co.uk](mailto:h.chater@unison.co.uk).

### REGIONAL BLACK MEMBERS POLICY DAY

The Regional Black Members Committee came together in November to review 2017 and update their vision statement and programme for 2018.

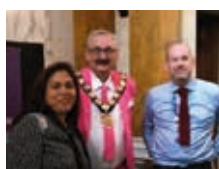
Cllr Yemi Osho, Mayor of Waltham Forest, spoke of arriving from Nigeria, working as an NHS nurse and her campaigning role for social justice. Cllr Osho and the committee discussed many political issues disproportionately affecting Black Members including the pay gap, criminal justice system, home ownership and health outcomes.

UNISON National Officer Narmi Thiranagama led a thought provoking discussion on the current political climate and the impact on Black Members, many of whom experience increasing hostility at home and at work.

Elizabeth Baptiste, RBMC Chair said: "This was a really positive and productive day which highlighted the importance of self-organisation and the vital role we must play in supporting Black Members in 2018."

For more information, contact **Jamie Brown**, Secretary Regional Black Members Committee [j.brown@unison.co.uk](mailto:j.brown@unison.co.uk)

## LGBT CELEBRATION IN CAMDEN



UNISON members attended a wonderful event at Camden Council Chambers on 27

July, with the Mayor of Camden, Cllr Richard Cotton (centre) and Matt Ratcliffe (right), Hillingdon Branch Secretary, in attendance.

The event celebrated the 50th anniversary of the repeal of the Sexual Offences Act in 1967. Sex between men was no longer a criminal offence but the age of consent for men was set at 21 years. The struggle for legal equality continued and has only

made progress by the sustained efforts of committed activists.

Mayor Richard Cotton spoke of his proud life-long commitment to the Trade Union movement. A former Nalگو (one of UNISON's predecessor Unions) Branch Secretary and activist, he was a founder member of Haringey Nalگو's Lesbian and Gay Workers Group. He was joined by Cllr Jonathan Simpson, who was Camden's first openly gay Mayor, and Keith Moffett, the first openly gay Leader of Camden Council. Another speaker, Camden Cllr Angela Mason, was a Nalگو and UNISON activist in Camden Branch before becoming the Director of Stonewall.

Other speakers were Jeffrey Weekes, who has written extensively on LGBT history, Jenny Wildblood, a relative of Peter Wildblood, who was key to the repeal of the Sexual Offences Act, and Leslie Smith, who gave a moving speech about his experiences as a gay man, both before and after the repeal. The event ended with the wonderful Lana P, an international cabaret performer, then drinks and networking.

Facebook: **UNISON LGBT London**  
Twitter: **@UNISONLDNLGBT**  
Email: [outinlondon@unison.co.uk](mailto:outinlondon@unison.co.uk)





# 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

## 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.

- **Facility time, 20-22 February**
- **Mental health at work awareness, 2-4 July**

Both 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](mailto:a.mayers@unison.co.uk) or **0207 535 6561**



## PERSONAL INJURY CLAIMS

As part of their membership 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 £3.1m in compensation from Personal Injury Claims in 2017.

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

## REGIONAL COUNCIL AGM

The Regional Council takes place on **Wednesday 7 February 2018**, the deadline to register delegates is **Monday 15 January 2018**.

All branches are encouraged to take part. If you want to be involved – contact your branch to find out more. The Region's contact for Regional Council is **Nick Turnbull** on [n.turnbull@unison.co.uk](mailto:n.turnbull@unison.co.uk) or **0207 535 6575**.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### December

- 18** International Migrant's Day
- 20** Last day of Hanukkah
- 22** Regional Office closes

### January

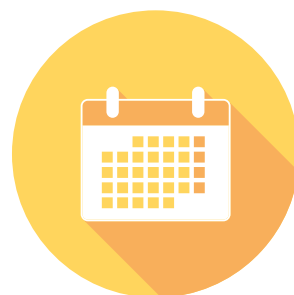
- 1** New Year's Day
- 2** Regional Office reopens
- 11** Higher Education Conference
- 17** Regional Committee
- 19-21** Black Members Conference

### February

- 1-3** Women's Conference
- 6** International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation
- 7** Regional Council AGM
- 13** Maha Shivaratri
- 16** Chinese New Year

### March

- 2-4** Community Conference
- 8** International Women's Day
- 11** Mothering Sunday
- 30** Good Friday
- 31** First day of Passover



## 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>