

BRANCH LINES

UNISON West Sussex Branch newsletter • www.unisonwestsussex.org.uk

BE HEARD **USE YOUR VOTE**

Vote in UNISON's General Secretary Election



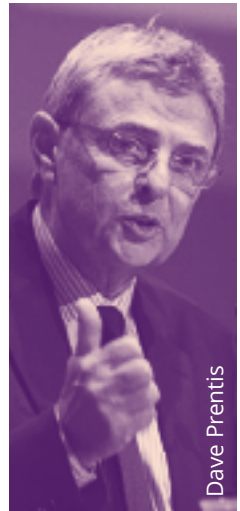
Roger Bannister



Heather Wakefield



John Burgess



Dave Prentis

SEE INSIDE

Our General Secretary nomination 3 • Capita contract reset 4 •
The Customer Experience Programme (CEP) 4 • Trade Union Bill 5 • Spotlight on
further education 10-11 • Sickness absence 12 • Branch Twitter channel launched 14

INTRODUCTION



It's a crucially important time in the union's history. Two major events will determine the future direction of UNISON: the General Secretary election and the passage of the Trade Union Bill through parliament.

The first gives all eligible members the opportunity to decide the sort of union they want by casting their vote before 4 December. You can read the Branch Committee's advice opposite.

The second is a massive threat to workers' rights, democracy and freedom of expression. The Tory-led Trade Union Bill will impose draconian measures on trade unions. Following legislation by successive governments over the past 30 years, union activities are already the most restricted in the developed world.

We need your support more than ever now. We need you to tell your colleagues to join us. It's not just union activity under threat, but a wider, dangerous attack on civil liberties. We need your help to convince MPs that this Bill is unfair, unnecessary, and undemocratic.

Dan Sartin, Branch Secretary

Branch invited to book launch

UNISON West Sussex Branch Secretary Dan Sartin was invited to be on the panel at the national, formal launch of a book focusing on the risks of outsourcing public services. It was produced by the research team at the Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRSCR) in Manchester.

'What a waste: outsourcing and how it goes wrong' argues that the many service delivery fiascos perpetrated by outsourcers are a result of poor contracts, individual incompetence, profiteering and bidding for contracts in areas beyond their competence.

Our branch has added to the national debate on outsourcing through its publication of independent research into West Sussex County Council's contract with Capita, featured in our last edition. Barnet Branch Secretary John Burgess was also invited to represent

UNISON at the event, a branch with another large Capita contract. Dan explained the findings of the branch's research to an audience of researchers, academics, campaigners and journalists, including representatives from The Guardian and Financial Times.



Branch Secretary Dan Sartin (3rd from left) at the launch with Andrew Holt (researcher, 1st left), Aditya Chakraborty (The Guardian, centre), John Burgess (Barnet Branch Secretary, 4th from right), Prof. Karel Williams (lead author, 3rd from right) and other contributors.

Barnet UNISON says 'no' to outsourcing

Barnet Council UNISON members took 24-hour strike action on 2 November. They want to remain employees of Barnet Council and not be outsourced.

87% of UNISON members working for the council voted 'Yes' to strike action. West Sussex Branch Committee agreed to donate £500 towards their strike fund.

A range of Barnet Council's physical and learning disability services were recently outsourced to 'Your Choice (Barnet)' (YCB), a local authority trading company. During an unannounced inspection last year, inspectors found they were failing to provide care which was safe, effective, responsive or well led. This led to an 'inadequate' rating from the Care Quality Commission for YCB's Supported Living Service.

UNISON members are resisting the council's determination to outsource more services. They believe they will also be put at risk of poor delivery.

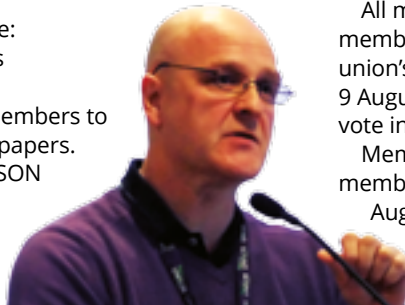


Our nomination for General Secretary

Branch Committee decided to nominate John Burgess for the position of the union's General Secretary in the November election for the reasons below.

Other candidates standing are: Roger Bannister, Dave Prentis and Heather Wakefield.

We encourage all branch members to vote when you receive ballot papers. This is a vital election for UNISON for the next 5 years and will affect us all. The election ballot will run from



9 November to 4 December 2015. The results will be issued on 17 December 2015.

All members, including retired members, who were on the union's membership register on 9 August 2015, will be entitled to vote in this election.

Members not on the membership register by 9 August will not be able to vote.

REASONS TO VOTE FOR JOHN BURGESS

- Currently Barnet Branch Secretary, John is experienced, effective and understands the issues facing branches;
- He's standing on a social

- worker's wage;
- He has provided detailed policies on a wide range of issues and will make sure branches are adequately resourced

- to face the challenges ahead - not least from the Trade Union Bill;
- He will give hope, energy and build union confidence.

UPDATE

CAPITA RESEARCH

Following publication of our research into the West Sussex Capita contract (see web address above) we've been working through findings and implications with the council and Capita.

We're delighted to have added to the national evidence base on outsourcing (see page 2), but the project's aim was to stimulate local debate and make improvements to Capita's practice and provision.

Widespread recognition at all levels shows there is considerable room for improvement, both in contract support service delivery to staff and how Capita employees experience life at work. Responding to our list of requests for

improvement and changes to governance, we received written commitments from WSCC's Chief Officer and Capita's Head of Contract.



This is promising. Over winter, we'll translate these into objectives and ways of working that can be practically implemented and measured and monitored.

Contract reset

UNISON is also involved in the 'contract reset'. We've met with one of the council's consultants, Aecus, and with senior officers in WSCC and Capita.

The reset should incorporate some of the commitments above. Much of this will be completed by the end of December.

A renewed contract goes live from April.

Customer Experience Programme

Despite Capita contract uncertainty, WSCC approved the start of a new 'Customer Experience Programme' (CEP).

This could result in the outsourcing of more WSCC staff to Capita. 467 fte staff will transfer to a new 'Customer Services Directorate'. We made separate representations to the Chief Exec's Board, Cabinet and Select Committee and gave evidence at Select Committee in September.

We prepared a CEP briefing for members, still available from our website homepage.

We do not believe evidence was properly utilised by the

CEP project. Senior front line managers' concerns were omitted from Select Committee evidence. There was an attempt to discredit UNISON's Capita research when it was accepted by all other parties, rather than positively use it. We think the large, complex project is detail light, very risky and would make the Capita contract 'too big to fail'. It insufficiently considers how in-house services could be made more customer-

focused without transferring them to Capita.

The whole episode calls into question how elected councillors scrutinise Cabinet decisions and how far evidence informs decision-making.

WSCC's Labour Group tried to 'call-in' the Cabinet member's decision to proceed with CEP and review it, but it was rejected by Conservative councillors. We'll keep you informed, but recommend you rapidly familiarise yourself with CEP and its objectives.

TRADE UNION BILL

Help us fight it

Trade union rights and freedoms are under attack. The government's Trade Union Bill threatens our ability to organise, support and represent working people. The Bill will:

1 Restrict our ability to represent you at work: facility time allows unions to work with employers to represent members and negotiate collectively to improve terms and conditions. The government wants to severely restrict this time and cut off our voice in the workplace.

2 Stop membership subscriptions being paid from your salary: the government wants to limit your choice about how you pay your trade union subscriptions. Employers were never consulted about this and most don't think it's necessary.

3 Restrict UNISON's campaigning work: the government wants to burden unions with more regulation around how we fund political campaigning, making it harder for us to stand up for what we believe in.

4 Impose ballot thresholds: it will make undemocratic changes to industrial action processes, making it more difficult for you to stand together with your colleagues if your employer enforces unwanted changes. The government will not allow us to introduce electronic balloting, which we know would improve response rates.

5 Employers will be able to bring in agency workers to cover for strikers: This has safety implications, leads to worse public services, and undermines the right to strike.



Branch Secretary Dan Sartin lobbies Worthing West MP Sir Peter Bottomley

UNISON new member support

We'd like to clarify the level of support entitled to new union members.

After joining, for the first four weeks of membership (and for pre-existing issues), you are only allowed up to 30 minutes of telephone/email advice on any issue. After four weeks, you're entitled to the full support available to any union member, though not for pre-existing issues.

Why do we restrict early support? We've had several cases involving new members where we've given a high level of early support due to the complexity of issues.

After our intervention, and once those issues had been resolved, some of those members immediately left the union. We believe this is an unacceptable approach to union membership, especially when we have loyal members who have paid their subscriptions for many years.

30 minutes may seem a relatively short time, but if planned well, you can get some helpful advice.

Make sure you keep your union subscriptions up-to-date so you can make the best of the full support available to you after the first four weeks. And maintain your membership so you can make the most of the wide range of benefits available to our members.

Base your decisions on evidence!



Henfield Day Centre provided day care for people with complex, specialist, high-level needs. The council said the centre was losing money and needed to close.



Suggestions put forward by members of the community to generate income were rejected and the building including the service is soon to be outsourced to the social enterprise Henfield Community Partnership (HCP).

With no experience of providing such a service, HCP plan to sub-contract it out to the charity Impact Initiatives (II). As a result UNISON were not involved in contract negotiations. In plans presented to staff II gave little indication of how they would continue to provide a specialist service. UNISON raised concerns over II showing little experience of providing complex day care needs. They are more proficient in providing mainstream care, advocacy and running cafes.

The roles they currently appoint to do not demand the skills required to provide specialist care. There is a significant risk that new Centre Workers would be hired (at a cheaper rate) without the skill set required to support highly vulnerable people.

There is a risk of appointing inappropriate third parties through well-meaning but ill-informed 'community partnerships' which must be guarded against in the future. UNISON is supporting its members through the transition to the new employer.

Social worker of the year nomination

Lifelong UNISON member Wendy Hill was recently shortlisted for the Social Worker (SW) of the Year award in the Principal SW category. Her dedication and support for vulnerable children was recognised by her colleagues who put forward her name for consideration.

Wendy has led on the development of the new WSCC Social Work Academy, providing intensive support and training for newly qualified social workers in their first year of practice. "We are the first local authority to implement this locally," said Wendy, "we're getting great feedback from social workers and gaining from having clear training pathways and consistent learning across the service."



Wendy was also recognised for her work in implementing 'Signs of Safety'. This project started by improving local safeguarding processes within Children's Social Care but is now being used across all Children's Services. Independent surveys with staff and parents/carers have found that both social workers and families like the approach and it is now starting to produce results.

"My UNISON membership has always been important to me," said Wendy. "I believe it's important for staff in challenging jobs to know there is professional support available if things don't go to plan. I'd encourage any SW to join."

Award results are announced at the end of November. We wish Wendy every success.

WODDS restructure update

WSSC staff in 'Workforce, Organisation Development and Delivery Support' (WODDS) are in the middle of a consultation around service redesign and restructure.

This includes the need to achieve savings and a significant reduction in establishment posts. WODDS staff have been working with a very high number of vacancies, which will assist in avoiding some redundancies. However, there are proposed reductions in a number of grades which will leave staff at risk.

Sarah McGreal (UNISON Regional Organiser) is supporting the branch, dealing with the collective consultation. This is an important part of the process: it's the opportunity for staff to influence the structure and try to change proposals.

Following UNISON's response submission and

staff feedback, the timetable for the change is being revised. Responses to the representations that have been made are due shortly.

Sarah said: "The branch and region will continue to work together to help support our members through this time of further change."

Deplorable attack on Freedom of Information



UNISON is one of 140 organisations warning against plans to weaken the Freedom of Information (FoI) Act in a letter to the prime minister.

The letter was signed by UNISON, after Downing Street announced a commission to "examine" the Act. It is likely to consider measures to weaken the legislation, including:

- strengthening the right of ministers to veto decisions by the information tribunal and courts;
- reducing the Act's "burden" on public authorities; and
- introducing fees for appeals to the information tribunal.

The letter says the Act is "a vital mechanism of accountability which has transformed the public's rights to information and substantially improved

the scrutiny of public authorities." It adds that the signatories, "would deplore any attempt to weaken it." In West Sussex, FoI has already been limited in its effectiveness as large outsourcing giants like Capita and Balfour Beatty are exempt – even though they provide public services using public money.

The West Sussex branch believes FoI should be strengthened not weakened, to aid transparency and accountability in local decision-making.

Check the Campaign for Freedom of Information website www.cfoi.org.uk for the full text of the letter.

OUTSOURCING: did you know?

Cornwall County Council (CCC) wants to end its 'strategic IT partnership' with outsourcer BT after 2 years of a 10-year contract. They go to court in December. CCC says BT breached the contract because it didn't create jobs promised in years 1 and 2. Councillors and officers are unhappy about the deal, allegedly including BT's failure to achieve key performance indicators. BT is seeking an injunction preventing the council from terminating the contract. For more information see our website news item.

Join UNISON – Membership Form

Please fill in the form and send to UNISON West Sussex,
Central Attic, County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RQ

1 Tell us about you

Title	First name														
Surname/family name				Date of birth / /											
Home address															
Postcode															
email															
Phone number (please indicate if home, work or mobile)				National insurance number (from your payslip)											
				<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>											
Please give your ethnic origin: <i>(tick one box)</i>															
<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> Black African	<input type="checkbox"/> Black UK	<input type="checkbox"/> White UK											
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian UK	<input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> Black other	<input type="checkbox"/> Irish											
<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian other			<input type="checkbox"/> White other											

2 Tell us about your job

Employer's name
Your job title/occupation
Workplace name and address
Postcode
Payroll number (from your payslip)

3 What you will pay each month

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions.

Annual pay	▼	Your subscription
Up to £2,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£1.30
£2,001–£5,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£3.50
£5,001–£8,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£5.30
£8,001–£11,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£6.60
£11,001–£14,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£7.85
£14,001–£17,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£9.70
£17,001–£20,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£11.50
£20,001–£25,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£14.00
£25,001–£30,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£17.25
£30,001–£35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.30
over £35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£22.50

4 Choose your political fund

One of the ways UNISON works on your behalf is through political campaigning. Your subscription includes a political fund payment so you won't pay any extra, but in UNISON you choose how you want that money to be used.

Please tick one box only.

- Our Affiliated Political Fund takes UNISON members' views directly into the Labour Party, working to promote UNISON policies.
- The General Political Fund is used to pay for branch, regional and national campaigns but is independent of any political party.

5 Choose how you wish to pay *Please tick ONE box only*

EITHER deduct from salary:

I wish to join UNISON and authorise deduction of subscriptions from my pay by my employer.

Signature

OR pay by direct debit:

please complete the direct debit form below

I wish to join UNISON and authorise deduction of subscriptions by direct debit

Date

Please go to unison.org.uk/privacy-policy to see how we will protect and use your personal information

Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the form and send to UNISON West Sussex



Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

To: The Manager	Bank/building society
Address	
Postcode	

Name(s) of Account holder(s)

Bank/building society account number

Branch sort code

Service User Number

Reference number (for office use only do not complete)

Please pay UNISON Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with UNISON and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

Spotlight on Further Education >

Resounding rejection of 0% “pay offer”

UNISON further education (FE) members have angrily rejected The Association of Colleges’ (AoC) 2015 recommendation not to pay a cost of living rise or move to the current Living Wage. In workplace consultation, 95 per cent rejected the offer.

UNISON believes a number of alternatives should have been considered. For example, the AoC could have:

- met our claim, knowing that colleges which can’t pay, won’t pay;
- offered a flat-rate increase lower than £1 an hour;
- given a pay-rise to those on spot salaries, without increments;
- moved the bottom of the scale to the 2014 Living Wage;
- awarded a non-consolidated lump-sum;
- recommended a range of non-pay rewards;
- made NO recommendation rather than sanction a pay freeze.

AoC could have proposed options including those above to be negotiated locally, with national leadership, on the basis of affordability and local circumstances.

Support staff have been facing redundancy. Any job losses intensify the volume of work for those remaining. There have been attacks on conditions of service (for example, sick pay following AoC’s unilateral withdrawal of the national scheme). There is uncertainty in a sector riven by underfunding and political meddling. Colleges and learners need a motivated workforce to fight to defend FE.

UNISON has written to AoC and its FE college members asking for a pay offer and the Living Wage. Those who responded prior to 6 November avoided inclusion in a national ballot for industrial action and other elements of UNISON’s dispute strategy.

5 reasons why the pay offer was rejected

1. FE pay has fallen by more than 17% since 2009.
2. Pay restraint hasn’t applied equally to all. The gap between high and low pay is rising. The number of staff earning more than £100,000 has increased with some college principals earning footballer wages while the pay bill is shrinking.
3. Work on the Living Wage has been sabotaged by employers making no national recommendation on the bottom pay point.
4. Most support staff in FE are part-time and low-paid. The gender pay gap continues to widen due to the inequality of posts held, despite job evaluation or equal pay reviews.
5. Doing nothing is not an option. Unless we stand up and fight for a decent pay rise, things could get even worse.

Thank you

“I just want to thank you so much for your support and how you have helped me to move on. I am enjoying my new job and the time it gives me spending time with my family. Once again thank you.”

UNISON member to Branch Officer.

FE CASE STUDY

Northbrook College future



Like many FE colleges, Northbrook in Worthing is faced with threats to its very existence. For the first time, sixth form colleges are being reviewed together with FE colleges to find out where cuts can be made. 'Regional Reviews' are considering closing colleges or amalgamating them in an effort to make savings. For Northbrook, rumours of merger are being discussed.

"There are bound to be redundancies if this goes ahead," says Karen Fisher, UNISON workplace rep. "Remote shared services will become the norm, with access to HR and finance advice only available from a call centre, rather than having locally based staff who know how the colleges work. It's low-paid support staff who will be worst affected."

"The FE Commission does not seem to see the value in vocational courses, and is fixated on providing apprenticeships with local employers. With training funding given directly to the employer to educate their apprentices, there is the danger of awarding second rate, employer-only recognised qualifications. This does not allow more general skills to be developed, unlike a college course where the focus is on employability and providing a wide range of skills.

"20+ year old students will be hardest hit by these cuts. Formal career advice is no longer available to them: it's now all done on a voluntary basis by local business reps.

"Government expects at least 10% of all course delivery to be digital. It is not hard to see a future where more young people study remotely and are assessed by mobile assessors. All the benefits of social interaction with peers and group learning will be lost.

"With year on year cuts to staffing levels, an exponentially increased workload, a 0% pay offer recommendation simply rubs salt in the wounds, especially when you consider that the college's principal was given a 4% pay rise on a salary of £140,000 last academic year."

To find out how you can contribute to the FE campaign, email Karen: K.Fisher@nbcol.ac.uk

UNISON's contribution to school changes not recognised

The Worthing area schools age-of-transfer process changes have been recognised as successful by head teachers, parents and the council's education Cabinet member, Jeremy Hunt.

In a recent council press release, Mr Hunt expressed thanks to a wide variety of groups and individuals who had contributed to this success. However, there was no mention of UNISON's significant role in negotiations, nor that of any other union involved.

All trade unions with school-based members, including UNISON, played a key role working with the council's HR department to help shape and negotiate a 'protocol' to avoid redundancies by encouraging schools to cooperate and accept redeployments. This was a huge success. UNISON also put in a lot of work with our members, resolving a number of individual issues by working with HR officers and schools.

Branch Secretary Dan Sartin said, "Members can rest assured that even if the council does not always want to recognise our crucial role in public, we are working hard for them and delivering results."

Thank you

“We would like to take this opportunity to say how pleased we were with the union rep’s service. I cannot speak highly enough of him. He was so supportive throughout my case. He listened, gave good advice and cared how I was treated. Thanks to him we won the case. We cannot thank him enough.”

UNISON West Sussex members to Branch Secretary regarding Caseworker support.

Don’t be fobbed off!

A recent case has shown us you can take nothing for granted.

One of our members recently complained to Capita Payroll regarding incorrect salary payments made to her during a period of maternity leave. Refusing to take no for an answer, she argued she had been underpaid, explaining her entitlement. All she received from Capita was misleading advice and a feeling of being repeatedly ‘fobbed off’.

After negotiations involving one of our workplace reps, the situation was finally resolved. Our member was vindicated. Capita admitted their mistake and made outstanding payments to her quickly. She even received an apology from the HR Shared Services Manager.

Don’t ever presume the salary advice you’re given is correct, when you know instinctively it isn’t. Always check your pay. Don’t assume there won’t be mistakes. If there are, UNISON will always support you to get the pay you’re entitled to.



SICKNESS ABSENCE Know your rights

We’ve been involved in a number of recent cases where staff who have been off work sick, including members with life-threatening conditions, have been managed wholly inappropriately on their return to work.

A meeting following a long spell of sickness absence is accepted as part of the process of phasing someone back in to the workplace. However, we’ve been made aware of some managers who invite their staff to ‘absence management’ meetings and tell them “there is nothing to worry about,” then issue them with a formal warning.

If you are invited to one of these meetings, always consult a rep – even if you receive reassuring noises from your manager. Having a rep with you can make all the difference.

For most employers sickness absence policies state ‘unless there is a pattern of frequent sickness absence, it’s the end of the sickness absence procedure’. A long period of sickness absence does not constitute ‘a frequent pattern’, so any formal warning issued on this basis would be invalid.

Even if an employer decides to proceed with a Stage 1 absence management meeting, the procedure can be terminated without a formal warning being issued.

If you think your sickness absence has been managed inappropriately, please contact us as soon as possible.

- Phone 01243 777636
- Email office.unison@westsussex.gov.uk

Should tax payers' money subsidise the private sector ?

Yet again, West Sussex County Council subsidises the private sector through 'Be the Business' grants.

This time the recipient is Sussex Uniforms of Haywards Heath. The £25k award allowed it to buy an industrial embroidery machine and expand production. Two teaching assistants (TAs) could be funded for a year with the same money given to one company.

UNISON is not against business expansion, nor any jobs created, but it is against the use of public money to fund local businesses. Tax-payers' money should be spent on providing local, essential services, not subsidising the private sector. If a business wants

to expand, should it not go to a bank, particularly when interest rates are at historic lows?

This...



...or this?.



WSCC really needs to look hard at how it spends its money. Around half a million pounds of tax-payers' money was used to give 'Be the Business' bonuses to local businesses last year. Think about the struggling public services that would have benefited from such a cash injection.

If WSCC really wants to stimulate the economy it should look closer at its own activities. Outsourcing has been used to depress staff and pension costs for local people and move jobs out of West Sussex. This does anything but stimulate the economy as it takes money out of local circulation and local businesses suffer.

Thank you

"I just wanted to thank you for putting together a well-constructed response on behalf of the UNISON members. I appreciate it must have taken up a lot of your time pulling that all together."

UNISON member to Branch Officer.

UNISON helps ORMs get a better outcome

The team of Office Resource Managers (ORMs) - whose jobs were transferred over to Capita three years ago - were recently subject to a restructure.

Capita wanted to review their roles and give them new job descriptions. This would include a two-grade drop in salary. At the same time Capita was advertising externally for people to fulfil the new ORM job descriptions before the consultation with UNISON had finished.

Our negotiations with Capita resulted in a much fairer though not ideal outcome: a reduction of one grade. This was then implemented with a 'pay protection' policy. The restructure caused a lot of stress but UNISON was there and able to support our members and limit the pay reduction significantly.



Lunch 'n' Learns score top marks!

A recent series of UNISON 'Lunch 'n' Learn' sessions proved to be a huge success, with over a hundred people attending, giving very positive feedback.

Organised in partnership with Chichester District and Hyde Housing UNISON, both members and non-members gained valuable insights useful to both professional and personal development. WSCC and Capita supported the events through the branch's 'Learning Agreement' with employers. Courses were delivered by

UNISON/TUC tutors from Sussex Downs College and funded by UNISON's national learning fund. Taster subjects such as 'Stress Management' and 'Increasing Confidence' were selected to find out the interest for further learning and development.

Mervyn Sams, Branch Education Officer, hopes

to follow-up this success by organising similar future events: face-to-face, online, informal and formal.

"I am working on a short feedback survey to all members asking them about the sort of learning they'd like to see in the future. I'm also hoping to establish a small resource library so members can follow-up learning in their own time. Contact us for more information."

- Email: office.unison@westsussex.gov.uk
- Phone: 01243 777636.

Branch Twitter channel launched

UNISON West Sussex has created another social media channel in an effort to keep our members better informed about issues affecting them.

The new branch 'Twitter' channel is now live. You can find it by searching on Twitter for 'UNISON West Sussex' or using the handle @UnisonWSx.

We will be tweeting content throughout the week, including information about local events and decisions impacting on you. We'll also be retweeting from a variety of other Twitter users that raise issues or comments

on a wide range of topics such as those impacting on trade union activity, workers' rights and raising awareness of important political decisions.

So you can now join us on Twitter as well as joining our Facebook group. Please 'follow' us and encourage any union colleagues to do the same.



@UnisonWSx

WORKPLACE REP PROFILE

Paul Windsor

Paul is due to start work as a Practice Manager in the WSCC Social Work Academy in Crawley. He will support newly qualified social workers in their first year and trainees preparing to become social workers.

He's been a workplace rep for many years.

One of the more controversial issues he has led on for the union is car parking at Parkside (formerly County Hall North) campus, Horsham. Paul gathered information from colleagues to help build a case for the extension of parking once Horsham District Council staff moved into the building. You can read more about this opposite.

Paul is a key member of the Children's Services Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) UNISON side. This meeting – with Children's Services senior managers – discusses major issues that will impact on staff and service delivery, for example the recent restructure of Children's Social Care.

It's vital for the union to have reps at such meetings as they have an overview of the impacts of important decisions such as this on the service and staff.

"Senior managers don't have an issue with me being a union rep as I always clearly define when I am acting in my management role and my union role. Where I sense there is a genuine conflict, I can call on other workplace reps to step in for me. It's great to have that safety net of support when dealing with challenging issues."

"I am also a member of the UNISON/ WSCC LGBT staff group. I'm very happy to talk to any LGBT branch members about workplace issues affecting them."



Parkside Parking

UNISON Workplace Rep Paul Windsor reports back on the latest moves at Parkside, Horsham to try to alleviate parking problems at the campus.

"Back in April, office staff based at Parkside were asked to put themselves forward voluntarily for a permit allowing them to park at nearby Piries Place. Staff had to be based solely at Parkside to do their work: they should not have to visit people in other offices or external customers. This would release space for peripatetic WSCC staff because Horsham District Council (HDC) staff moved into the building earlier in the year and were allocated their own parking spaces.

"The deadline for permit applications was 30 October. I'm pleased to report that – after being delayed since June – permits can now be allocated. New parking arrangements should be fully up-and-running by the end of the year.

"This also has implications for staff who visit, but don't normally work at Parkside. The message is: 'Don't park there!' Use the nearby public car parks and claim back the parking charge. Better still – catch the train whenever possible.

"Senior managers will be asked to identify those staff who don't work at but visit Parkside on council business. Their parking passes will be reviewed, with access to Parkside removed accordingly. Facilities Management will also closely monitor the use of HDC's allocated spaces and if they're underused, they'll negotiate to have them returned to WSCC."

LV= insurance discounts worked for us!

Many UNISON* members have purchased the 5-star rated, competitively-priced car insurance offered by UNISON Plus provider LV= (Liverpool Victoria). Several have been so impressed they've agreed to share their experiences.

Sarb Bahia, Gravesham (Kent) Branch Chair, was delighted with the saving he made (including UNISON member discount) by moving his insurance to LV=.

Alan Gates, Branch Organising Coordinator (Sussex Police and Justice) posted news of his experience on the branch website: "As my car insurance was due for renewal I gave LV= a call. The results were quite startling, giving

me a significant saving on insuring two family cars for the year."

And a member's claims experience was just as impressive: one Wednesday morning in March, Portsmouth City Branch member, Tricia Cane, was on the A27 on her way to work, when her car was extensively damaged by a driver who did not stop. At home that night she reported the incident to LV=. The car was taken away on Thursday. On Friday the garage told her the car was a write off. This was confirmed by LV= on Monday morning. They offered a settlement figure. After checking the car's value with Autotrader, Tricia found LV='s offer was fair and accepted it, enabling her to replace the car 'like for like'. She received the LV= cheque on Tuesday, under a week from the accident date.

To get your personal quotation and receive the exclusive UNISON membership discount, contact the friendly LV= call centre on 0800 756 8178 or go online to LV.com/UNISON.

**UNISON acts as an Introducer Appointed Representative to the Liverpool Victoria group of companies for General Insurance.*



CAR INSURANCE FOR UNISON MEMBERS

0800 756 8161

LV.com/UNISON



BREAKDOWN COVER FOR UNISON MEMBERS

0800 202 8137



FS21546770

For TextDirect: first dial 18001. Calls may be recorded. Mon-Fri 8am-9pm, Sat 8am-5pm, Sun 9am-5pm. Breakdown Mon-Fri 8am-8pm, Sat-Sun 8am-5pm. UNISON acts as an Introducer Appointed Representative to the Liverpool Victoria group of companies for General Insurance.

NOMINATION FORM to become a UNISON Workplace* Representative

Complete and send to: UNISON West Sussex, County Hall, West Street, Chichester, PO19 1RQ.

I would like to become the Workplace* Representative for *(name your team, location, directorate or employer)*:

Full name (PLEASE PRINT)	Signature	Date
Proposed by (PLEASE PRINT)	Signature	Date
Seconded by (PLEASE PRINT)	Signature	Date

Please note: proposers and seconders should be UNISON members from the same workplace.

*A workplace may be a large team, a location (a day centre for example), a section within a directorate, or an employer.