

BRANCH LINES

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

BRANCH MEMBERS STANDING FOR UNISON NEC

Please use your vote! • SEE PAGE 5



CHAIR IAN SECONDED TO BRANCH OFFICE

New role to focus on recruiting and supporting Capita members • PAGES 6 & 7

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In this edition we explain some of the challenging issues being faced by our members

working for the County Council such as managers' pay scales, incremental progression, major policy changes and cuts to the staff pay budget. All of these have the potential to affect our members' pay and working conditions, requiring us to be robust in our defence.

We highlight more issues affecting schools' staff, especially the impact of 'under the radar' cuts on service provision. But we're pleased to share the good news that our branch chair Ian Harvey has started his secondment to the branch, aiming to increase our membership among Capita employees. He has a year to do that and we wish him every success. We also launch the new equalities newsletter, put together by our three equalities

officers. We hope it will be a regular supplement to the information in Branch Lines. Look out also for ballot papers coming your way asking you to vote for nominations to the union's top committee (NEC – see page 5). These include myself and two other south-east members aiming to be elected. Don't forget to use your vote!

Dan Sartin,
Branch Secretary

NJC PAY YEAR TWO: 2019–2020



The Year 2 (2019-20) part of the pay deal ranges, depending on your spinal point, from being worth 7.1% to 2.3% from Grade 1 to the middle of Grade 8. After the middle of Grade 8 to 12a the pay award is worth 2%.

The pay award for 2019-20 was complex, requiring changes to the WSCC pay scale. UNISON had constructive input to this process, which saw the branch's positive recommendations being taken on board by the council.

One of these related to the new overlap at Grades 2 and 3, which will see Grade 2 staff paid significantly more.

We have not agreed with WSCC on an overlap to Grades 12 and 12a. UNISON argued this has not been used for some years. The council wants to reintroduce it, which would see new staff appointed at Grade 12a first having to work through the Grade 12 pay scale for 4 years. UNISON's national officers believe this poses a risk of equal pay claims, and have asked WSCC to remove it, which WSCC has

declined to do. Please contact the branch if you are a new grade 12a member of staff.

Our branch has contacted stand-alone academies and academy chains asking them to implement the award in the same way as the council and maintained schools are doing. This has now happened in all cases.

We also contacted Capita asking for the same for their West Sussex TUPE'd staff. This has also been agreed to be implemented.

HAY PAY OFFER 2018–19 AND RECOGNITION ON PAY

HAY, SMG4 and AfC members will recall that WSCC consulted (August 2018) on a 1% pay award; linking future pay awards to appraisals; linking incremental progression to appraisals; and staff to sign letters of variation to their contract to derecognise UNISON.

This led to a detailed UNISON response via formal consultation papers. WSCC eventually clarified the council's position:

1. Future pay awards will NOT be linked to appraisal score;
2. The pay award was doubled from 1% to 2%;
3. Incremental progression will be linked to appraisal score from 2020/21;
4. Staff were not asked to derecognise UNISON.

In fact, there will now be an engagement with senior staff about voluntary recognition of UNISON for pay.

This is a significant breakthrough, defending terms and conditions. This was achieved through member engagement with the branch so we could articulate and represent your views.

Not only that, but huge

numbers of new members joined us – taking our group density from 33% to 50%.

This encouraged UNISON to lodge a request, so that in future WSCC would collectively bargain with UNISON on the annual pay award for these staff, and not merely consult.

The increase in pay is consolidated, so members will receive its full value every year they work for WSCC, and in pensions. Not only has UNISON achieved this, but future pay awards will not be linked to appraisal outcomes.

UNISON is currently continuing discussions with WSCC on recognition for pay for HAY/SMG4/AfC staff. We will keep members up-to-date on developments.

INCREMENTAL PROGRESSION: NJC AND HAY PAY SCALES

WSCC wants to implement an appraisal system from April 2019 measuring employee performance for the financial year to March 2020.

This means increments would only be awarded to staff in April 2020 if they achieved a specific rating. It's a significant change from the existing practice of awarding increments automatically unless staff were within formal capability or disciplinary procedures.

UNISON does not believe this approach will improve

performance. Public sector staff are not primarily motivated by money; public service values and principles play a greater role.

We have lodged our concerns, but the council is seeking to push ahead.

We have received positive assurances on safeguards around the new scheme and its link to

incremental progression:

- annual pay awards will NOT be linked to appraisal outcomes;
- the 'performance bar' for incremental progression will not move (i.e. when budgets are tight, that it becomes harder to achieve incremental progression);
- there will be an agreed staff appeals process.

If you are denied incremental progression in April 2020 please get in touch with us as soon as possible.

Schools members are unaffected by this.

WSCC EMPLOYMENT-BASED COSTS REVIEW

The council's budget for 2019–21 went through at its full council meeting on 14 February. It included provision for a 'review of staff terms and conditions' with £1.2million set aside to achieve as cuts by March 2021.

£1.2million is only a small fraction of the council's pay bill, but nevertheless the inclusion of this saving marks a change in approach by WSCC. Never before, despite repeated years of budget cuts, have staff been called upon to contribute to meeting the council's deficit through cuts to their own terms and conditions. Staff have already contributed significantly through years of below-



inflation pay awards. This is not an approach we wish to see widened. There may be a case for some aspects of the total pay and reward 'architecture' to be reviewed. Some terms and conditions are so complicated they often lead to errors causing stress for staff – such as overpayments – which are still a sorry and regular occurrence.

Please be aware the branch will be working on your behalf soon in what the council is calling its 'employment-based costs review'. The branch has authority to enter a 'collective agreement' on behalf of all staff, but as members, you will be engaged and asked for your views on any proposed changes.

POLICY CHANGES AT WSCC

WSCC is currently consulting with UNISON on changes to its discipline, performance improvement and sickness policies.

This would only affect non-schools staff. WSCC wants to convert all three policies into a single 'formal action' document. All three policies are lengthy and complex, and we remain to be convinced that the council will be better served by a single, stripped down policy, particularly when their purposes are so different. Our feedback so far has seen a number of changes made to the proposals.

In March we inputted to changes to the discipline policy to help make that fit for purpose. We remain concerned about how this policy is working and will report soon to members.

UNISON has also been working hard for over a year on the county council's 'standards of conduct' policy. This draws together all the council's expectations and standards of behaviour

for staff into a single document e.g. IT use, acceptance of gifts. The starting intention was to make this document a new, variation of contract that staff would be expected to sign. This will not now be the case and we await the final published document imminently.

UNISON also noticed a lack of reference to, or definition of, sexual harassment in its policies. We are working with the council to ensure that this is brought up-to-date, to help protect council staff – and women in particular – from sexual harassment in the workplace.



Photo: Jac Berry (left) from Medway Health branch, and Dan Sartin and Abi Holdsworth from the West Sussex branch

USE YOUR VOTE! NEC ELECTIONS 2019

UNISON's National Executive Committee is the governing body of the union. It is made up of 66 UNISON members, and the seats are allocated to ensure that our different regions, service groups and self-organised groups are represented.

All election candidates are members of UNISON, just like you. If you've been a full member of UNISON prior to 15 January 2019 you'll be sent a postal ballot to your home address. These will be sent from 15 April, and voting will be open until the deadline of 17 May. Please use your vote!

It's really important that all members take part in these elections. UNISON is the UK's largest trade union with 1.3 million members. As such it has a huge resource at its disposal and ability to make a positive impact on your workplace and our wider society. How UNISON is governed and the decisions it takes matters. Now is your chance to determine who should lead the union.

IN THE SOUTH EAST

The UNISON West Sussex branch committee has decided to nominate the following candidates:

Dan Sartin

South East male seat
Dan is our West Sussex branch secretary.

Abi Holdsworth

South East reserved seat
Abi is a West Sussex branch rep in the Capita customer service centre

Jac Berry

South East female seat
Jac is a frontline intensive care nurse and a member of Medway Health branch.

The UNISON West Sussex branch committee believes these are the best candidates for the south east. They have a record of speaking up and fighting for members, and will work together as a team for the south east. They are standing on a platform to change UNISON, to make it more responsive to members and more effective.

OTHER CANDIDATES

The UNISON West Sussex branch committee has also nominated the following candidates. We know these candidates, have worked with them as a branch, and think they are the best candidates.

Local Government

Jane Doolan
Andrea Egan
Diana Leach
Paul Holmes
Higher Education
Sandy Nicoll
Kath Owen

Community

Anjona Roy
Kevin Jackson
Water, environment & transport
John Jones
Health
Claire Dixon
Jordan Riviera

Adrian O'Malley
Neil McAlister
Black members
April Ashley
Sonia Stewart
Hugo Pierre
Disabled members
Paula Carlisle



IAN HARVEY SECONDED TO BRANCH

We're delighted to report that branch chair Ian Harvey has been seconded for one year to the branch to take on the role of UNISON convener for Capita West Sussex. This means he will be in charge of recruiting and supporting members from Capita to the branch, aiming to increase our membership density with that employer. The secondment lasts until the end of January 2020 and is funded by UNISON's regional pool and the West Sussex branch.

"I will be based in the branch office in County Hall, Chichester," said Ian, "but I intend to be out and about across all Capita West Sussex offices most of the time, talking to staff and promoting the benefits of union membership."

"Though I enjoy my job in the Customer Service Centre in Bognor Regis, I don't often get the opportunity to see members in other offices to find out the issues they're facing."

"I'm hoping that once my face becomes better known and people hear about the benefits of membership, they will find it easier to come forward to join UNISON."

Recruiting and mentoring reps

As well as general recruitment, Ian is also trying to encourage existing members to consider becoming workplace reps.

"We have a fairly even union membership density across all the Capita offices, but we don't have an equal distribution of workplace reps. They tend to be concentrated in one or two of the larger offices. It would be much better if we had more local reps so we could respond quicker.

"I want to make sure any reps we train feel both confident and competent to support other members. Mentoring is a really effective way to achieve that as it provides a support mechanism, especially in the early stages. It's something I've always done and something I am very keen to extend during my secondment."

So how does Ian hope to achieve his aims of increasing both the number of members and the number of workplace reps?

The great Capita West Sussex recruitment race competition

"To start with, we have an exciting, major competition for anyone employed by Capita (details below). For anyone who recruits new members, there is the opportunity to win fantastic prizes including a two-night luxury get-away, a £150 ASOS (online fashion retailer) voucher and £100 worth of Amazon vouchers.

"I really had to think hard about the prizes. As I particularly want to encourage more younger members to join, I had to have prizes that would appeal to them as well as more mature members. So, I asked younger colleagues in the contact centre and our young members' officer Chloe Pascovitch, to give me an idea of the sort of things that would encourage them to take part. The prizes are the result of that consultation. I hope it does the trick!"

"Capita members have until the end of May to take part in the competition. So, there's still plenty of time to win those prizes. Please do whatever you

can to take part. Even if you recruit just one new Capita member, you'll benefit from our 10-10 offer. This means that both you and the new member will each receive a £10 Marks & Spencer voucher. But if you recruit more, then you'll get £10 each time. There's nothing to lose!

"Please come and chat to me when I visit your office. It'll be great for me to meet as many of you as possible and hopefully, by January we will have achieved our aims. If you've any questions, just email me at ian@unisonwestsussex.org.uk or call me on 01243 777636.

From Monday 11 March until Friday 31 May 2019 at 5.00pm, the three Capita West Sussex members who recruit most new members will win the great recruitment race and the prizes below!

★ **FIRST PRIZE** ★

2-night luxury getaway from BuyaGift

SECOND PRIZE

£150

ASOS gift card

THIRD PRIZE

£100

Amazon gift card

But that's not all. During this period, every new Capita member who joins the branch via the 10:10 offer membership form will receive a £10 Marks & Spencer voucher and so will the member who recruited them.

For example, if you recruited 20 new members and won the race, you would receive the first prize AND a massive £200 in M&S vouchers!

To join us, claim your voucher and be eligible to take part in the race, you must use the special 10:10 offer hard copy membership application form, which you can download from: <http://unisonwestsussex.org.uk/news/capita-great-race> or ask Ian for a form if you see him out and about.

To find out more, go to the web page link above. Best of luck!

Membership Form

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

We use this address to send you information core to your membership such as your membership pack, UNISON election information and any information relating to ballots if relevant

We use this to contact you about trade union activities and services

This information helps us find the best UNISON branch to support and represent your needs

This information helps your employer and us confirm your identity

Your subscription rate is determined by how much you earn

1 Tell us about you

Title	First name		
Last name			
Home address			
			Postcode
Email			
Phone			Date of birth

2 Tell us about your job

Employer's name	
Your job title or occupation	
Workplace name and address	
Postcode	
Payroll number	NI number

3 What you will pay each month

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions

Annual pay	Core subscription	£14,001 – £17,000	£17,001 – £20,000	£20,001 – £25,000	£25,001 – £30,000	£30,001 – £35,000	£35,001 – and over
£0,000 – £2,000	£1.30 <input type="checkbox"/>	£9.70 <input type="checkbox"/>	£11.50 <input type="checkbox"/>	£14.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	£17.25 <input type="checkbox"/>	£20.30 <input type="checkbox"/>	£22.50 <input type="checkbox"/>
£2,001 – £5,000	£3.50 <input type="checkbox"/>						
£5,001 – £8,000	£5.30 <input type="checkbox"/>						
£8,001 – £11,000	£6.60 <input type="checkbox"/>						
£11,001 – £14,000	£7.85 <input type="checkbox"/>						

Instruction to deduct the subscription from my salary

By signing the below I wish to join UNISON and authorise deduction of subscriptions from my pay by my employer

Signature	Date
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This information tells us whether you wish to contribute an additional 5% toward UNISON's campaign fund. This voluntary contribution will be taken annually in October as a single deduction by Direct Debit. Further information is available at www.unison.org.uk/changes

This information is standard direct debit mandate information

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

We are legally required to keep your information up to date. You can amend your details via My UNISON at www.unison.org.uk/my-unison

Email Text Phone

By ticking these boxes, you are giving your consent for UNISON to contact you by these means about how we campaign on your behalf.

4 Campaign fund contribution

UNISON stands up for its members and speaks out publicly on the issues that affect them. To continue this work we ask for a voluntary 5% campaign contribution by Direct Debit when you join. Please tick your preference below:

Campaign Fund

The campaign fund promotes better public services, enables the union to talk with politicians of any party about the work our members do and supports the union's equalities work.

UNISON Labour Link

Labour Link campaigns for UNISON policy on the NHS, your employment rights and for quality public services within the Labour Party locally and in Parliament.

No thank you

I do not wish to contribute to campaigning at the moment. Those who choose not to opt in will not be disadvantaged in any way as compared with members who do opt in.

If you selected 'No thank you' – by ticking this box you are giving consent for UNISON to contact you in future about our campaign funds. We will do this using the contact details you provided on this form.

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



To the manager bank / building society	
Address	
	Postcode
Name(s) of account holder(s)	
Account number	Branch sort code
Office use only	Office use only
Service user no.	Membership number

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

WSCC'S SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY

UNISON welcomes the increase in potential paid special/compassionate leave staff can receive in any rolling calendar year (from 5 to 10 days) within the new special circumstances policy.

However, UNISON would like to bring the following to your attention:

- The chief executive's announcement email said the policy was created with input from HR, culture board and staff groups. UNISON was also involved, though we were not mentioned.
- We (and no other group) pointed out a serious mistake. The policy draft stated staff should use annual leave and TOIL before special/compassionate leave. The

policy was duly amended.

- UNISON remains concerned about inconsistent policy application by different departments and managers.
- The new policy weakens one important provision. Previously, staff who needed special time off and could not use TOIL (due to shift patterns) were granted paid time off. But now the policy says they 'may' be granted this at local management discretion. Our request for

the original wording to be reinstated was declined.

- Management has changed the policy to imply staff groups provide the same range of services as a trade union. They do not – and most do not wish to.

Staff groups should provide challenge on strategic equalities matters. Their role will become even more important to clarify when other policies are amended, as staff may be given unreasonable expectations that the staff groups could support them with capability, disciplinary, sickness or grievance meetings.

ADULTS' SERVICES

BEST INTEREST ASSESSMENTS

Following member concerns, UNISON has raised the issue of the BIA rota with management.

Previously those who volunteered to complete the training and participate in a rota to undertake assessments did so as they believed their commitment was for a limited period. However, members contacted us after those who had done the training were told they needed to continue to commit to the rota.

Due to the current backlog and level of risk Adults' Services decided to change the way the assessment work is managed. WSCC considers BIAs an appropriate social worker task (this is expected in other authorities), and wants assessments to be included with business as usual. Their intention is that eventually all social workers and occupational therapists complete BIA training.

UNISON has raised several issues regarding this change including how this additional work will be prioritised and managed. The policy/guidance is still being formulated but there has been a commitment to include UNISON in this work. In the meantime any requests for exceptions will be considered on an individual basis.

IPEH: £5M BUDGET CUT THREATENED

WSSC has decided to cut the budget for the highly successful, nationally recognised Integrated Prevention and Early Help service (IPEH) by £3million in 2019-20 and £2million in 2020-21, making a massive dent in its ability to support children and families.

The service operates through a range of important resources, such as children and family centres. It aims to improve quality of life, ensuring problems do not escalate to the point where families require social workers. UNISON is concerned about the following:

1. How a successful service has suddenly been alleged to not be sufficiently meeting its objectives to justify continued investment;
2. How a review of the service can take place as quickly as planned and lead to a robust set of proposals that will not destabilise the service; and
3. The role and public cost of review consultants PWC.

We have placed on record our concerns with the interim director of children's services and the executive director of CAFHE that the review is happening too quickly and without sufficient engagement of staff and partners.

We believe it may be difficult to invest IPEH budget cuts into frontline social work if social workers cannot be recruited due to insufficient labour supply.

We will fully support IPEH members as we move into any period of formal consultation. The branch has requested to speak at the select committee that will deal with the proposals.

LABOUR LINK

LABOUR 'WILL BAN' OUTSOURCING OF PUBLIC SERVICES TO PRIVATE FIRMS

Private companies will be banned by a Labour government from running services that deal with vulnerable people and their rights, under a far-reaching plan to restrict outsourcing.

The party has drawn up the plan in response to what it describes as a series of 'outsourcing disasters' involving services handed to private firms – from testing for sickness benefits to the operation of some NHS cancer services.

Both central and local government would have to follow new statutory guidance, which would see a major increase in the services run in-house by acouncils and Whitehall departments.

This commitment shows that Labour is serious about restructuring the economy, and driving better value and social value from public services. If implemented the plans will have a major impact on UNISON West Sussex members, both delivering and using services which would return to public hands.



You can read more via the following link:
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/24/labour-ban-outsourcing-public-services-private-firms>

MORE SCHOOL RESTRUCTURES AND REDUNDANCY RISKS

The branch has been supporting members recently in 17 schools (see opposite) as they negotiate new restructures, often putting jobs at risk.



It's not just the number of jobs potentially impacted in these schools that shows the whole picture of the level of cuts West Sussex schools face. Many schools are also making significant 'under the radar' cuts to try to make ends meet, such as not replacing staff who leave and ending full-time contracts.

The headteacher at one of the schools above, Michael Ferry at St. Wilfrid's in Crawley, was recently featured in The Guardian as a case study showing the acute situation his school is facing. In that interview he said:

"We have had to save in the region of half a million pounds by not replacing staff who have left. That's £500,000 saved, and we still need to find more. I can't

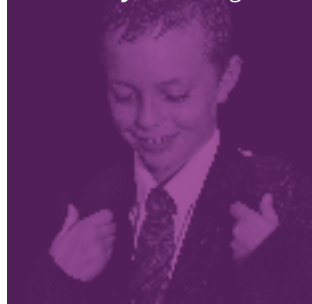
rule out having to make similar savings in the future.

"Support staff have been reduced over time. I found out yesterday I will have 20 students with education, health and care plans (EHCPs). It's going to be really tight for us just to meet our statutory requirements.

"The knock-on effect is that children who would have got extra support a few years ago are getting more limited support. Students who, five or six years ago, would have had a teaching assistant in a small class of possibly 10 to 12 students, if they needed extra one-to-one support, that's not now going to happen.

"That is the serious reality. If we can't do something that's cost-neutral or close to it, then we can't do it at all."

- Angmering High
- Barnham Primary
- Barns Green Primary, Horsham
- Bartons Primary, Bognor Regis
- Bishop Tufnell, Bognor Regis
- Bourne Community College
- Copthorne Junior
- Jolesfield CE Primary, Partridge Green
- Lyminster Primary
- Midhurst Primary
- West Hoathley CE Primary
- Worthing High
- Rumboldswyke CE Infants, Chichester
- Springfield, Worthing
- St. Andrew's School for Boys, Worthing
- St. Margaret's Primary (Nursery), Crawley
- St. Mary's Catholic Primary, Worthing



Needless to say, the UNISON West Sussex branch is actively involved in supporting all our members in these restructures and will fight to retain as many jobs as possible. We still maintain our close links with the 'Save Our Schools West Sussex' parents' campaign.

ST PETER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, ARDINGLY

UNISON has been closely involved in school restructuring exercises, especially where the WSCC HR shortcomings overwhelmed both staff carrying them out and those affected.

For example, at St Peters Primary School Ardingly, UNISON ensured members were protected and raised a collective grievance on behalf of teaching assistants in order to improve staff relations and the overall handling of the process.

The key points were:

- a lack of operational and financial information from the school and HR;
- positive suggestions from staff not taken up by the school;

- important stress risk and equality impact assessments not followed up;
- finally, there was confusion between the school and WSCC about whether staff should be dismissed and re-engaged if they did not sign up to 2 contractual changes.

We sought the following outcomes:

- a review made of the process used and HR advice with a view to future improvements in the school and elsewhere in other WSCC schools;
- an apology given for the process errors which resulted in confusion and hurt feelings of staff;
- a commitment from the school to engage in early meaningful future consultation/negotiations with the unions and staff.

All the points UNISON raised were accepted and the outcomes agreed. We now await further discussions about the future process.

SCHOOLS' CONSULTATION RESULTS

UNISON's national school sector committee met recently to review the results of the recent school ballot.

Results show that UNISON members:

- overwhelmingly think that government funding cuts are having a negative impact on schools;
- almost unanimously want UNISON to continue to campaign on school funding; and

- a sizeable majority of those who voted would be prepared to take industrial action to secure improvements.

Unfortunately, the national turnout in the ballot was not as high as we would have liked (even though the West Sussex branch was the top performing county branch in England), so we will not move to a full industrial action ballot.

However, we will re-double our campaign to get the government to increase funding for schools and early years; working with our sister unions, the school cuts coalition, parents, governors and all others who want to see a better and fair funded education system.

Thanks to all West Sussex members who took part in the ballot.

NEW BRANCH EQUALITIES NEWSLETTER LAUNCHED

Our branch equality officer for black members Anusree Biswas-Sasidharan is pleased to be able to help launch the new branch equalities newsletter. You may find a copy as an insert to this edition of Branch Lines.

Working with the branch officers for disabled members (Heather Andersson – see our May 2018 edition) and LGBT+ members (Paul Woodcock – to be featured in our next edition), the group plans to update all our members on equality issues with future newsletters planned to coincide with Branch Lines publication dates.

Anusree explains: “Equalities is not simply aimed at people who belong to a minority group, it applies to all of us. It’s something we need to consider in our daily work. We need to make sure we provide equal access to all our services for people from diverse backgrounds.”

“It is important to treat each other fairly and respectfully in our workplaces: valuing and celebrating difference without discrimination, irrespective of our identity.”

Anusree lives in Brighton & Hove and has been

involved in equalities initiatives for many years, both professionally and personally.

“I’m a passionate advocate of equalities,” she says. “In my spare time I’m involved in local neighbourhood initiatives, I’m the chair of the Sussex Police’s stop and search scrutiny panel, sit on the strategic independent advisory group for Sussex

“Equalities is not simply aimed at people who belong to a minority group, it applies to all of us. It’s something we need to consider in our daily work. We need to make sure we provide equal access to all our services for people from diverse backgrounds.”

Police and an elected Community Works equalities rep and sit as an attendee at Brighton and Hove Council’s neighbourhoods, inclusions, communities and equalities committee. I’m mindful of equalities issues in my roles beyond those affecting black people, but across all the



Anusree Biswas-Sasidharan

equality strands.

“I want to apply my experience and knowledge to help UNISON West Sussex’s black members so they feel welcome and happy working in West Sussex.

“I want to ensure we better understand our workforce data and will focus on improving recruitment and retention for black workers. I’m asking everyone to please read our equalities newsletter and get in touch with us if anything in it affects you, or you need more information. We will always do our best to support you.”

If any member wants a copy of the newsletter, please contact the branch office: 01243 777636 or office. unison@westsussex.gov.uk You can also download a copy from the ‘Newsletter’ section of our website.

UNISON CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURIES

UNISON's national office has conducted research into a random sample of 50 members' compensation claims that have occurred because of musculoskeletal injuries (UNISON's solicitors had supported their claims).

They found 90% of claims were caused by basic failings in risk assessments. 21% were caused by staff often being forced to, single-handedly, manually lift loads requiring two or more people.

One of the most common reasons regulatory bodies have to take enforcement action against employers is when equipment such as slings or hoists is poorly fitted or maintained. You can help to reduce injuries by:

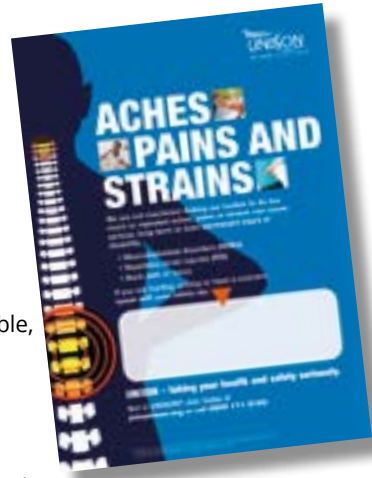
- becoming a health and safety rep – with more reps we can better hold employers to account;
- complying with employers' health and safety guidance instructions.

Health and safety reps should call on employers to:

- carry out robust risk assessments;

- where possible, eliminate the need for manual handling by providing mechanical aides;
- where this is not possible, reduce risks by minimising manual handling or ensuring there are sufficient staff to safely manage difficult loads;
- providing appropriate and well-maintained equipment, such as adjustable visual display units and chairs and lifting aides such as slings and hoists.

Downloadable resources are available by searching 'musculoskeletal' on www.unison.org.uk



UNISON TAKES SLEEP-INS FIGHT TO SUPREME COURT

Building on the union's proud victory in the Supreme Court over employment tribunal fees, UNISON will once again be taking the fight for members' rights to the UK's highest court.

We're fighting to win our case on 'sleep-ins' – making sure care workers who stay overnight with the vulnerable people they care for receive the pay they deserve for their work. UNISON was recently granted

permission to take its case to the Supreme Court.

This will be an opportunity to clarify the law once and for all, and a chance to win again for low-paid women workers.

Across the UK, thousands of care staff work sleep-in shifts looking after

vulnerable adults and children, many with significant, challenging needs. So it's outrageous those hours aren't counted as working time.

They're not free to come and go as they please and, as often the sole member of staff, they're likely to be on their feet for much of the night. It's work and it needs to be paid.

As UNISON takes the fight to the Supreme Court – that's the case we'll be continuing to make. We will keep you posted.



UNISON'S BREXIT IMMIGRATION ADVICE

If you're a UNISON member and are worried about your status if or when the UK departs from the European Union, we can help.

At time of going to press, the UK is scheduled to leave the European Union by 31 October. Many members, who are EU citizens, or who have family members who are EU citizens, are still worried about their status after Brexit.

UNISON provides free immigration telephone advice to members who have come to work in the UK from another country. We work with the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) to provide this support.

If you have been a member of UNISON for more than four weeks and need immigration advice and information, please call UNISON Direct on 0800 0 857 857.

Your contact details will be passed on to an adviser from the JCWI, who will call you on a Tuesday, between 10am and 4pm.

When calling UNISON Direct, please be ready to give your full name, contact phone numbers and your UNISON membership number if you know it.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

CHECK YOUR UNISON REGISTRATION!

Senior occupational therapy (OT) assistant and UNISON workplace rep Tamsyn Hicks is calling on OT colleagues to complete membership forms for the West Sussex branch (see pages 8-9).

Even if they are registered as members under the RCOT (Royal College of Occupational Therapists, formerly BAOT: British Association of Occupational Therapists), they may not be registered with the branch.

She explains: "The problem is that when OTs signed up with RCOT/BAOT they became UNISON members, but that information is not always shared with local branches. Colleagues need to be registered with the branch to have support both personally and collectively.

"I'm asking all colleagues to please complete the membership form (including OT registration number) – leaving out the direct debit section – and send it to the branch office as soon as possible."

Chichester-based Tamsyn has been a workplace rep since November last year.

"I recently completed my UNISON training to become a rep. It was all done online through interactive and self-directed learning.

"This was great for me, as being a part-time worker and full-time mum, it gave me the maximum flexibility to complete the course over seven weeks. I was able to link up with other reps in training, sharing and learning with them.

"I'd thoroughly recommend this option for anyone thinking of becoming a rep."

Tamsyn Hicks

