

BRANCH LINES

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

TIME FOR PAY JUSTICE

Latest NJC pay offer and
campaigning in Crawley.

SEE PAGES 2 AND 4



Photo credit: Kiran Khan

**BRANCH
AGM DATES**
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Happy new year!

2018 will be a tough one for many, but we'll be supporting you all the way. A very happy new year to all our members.

Dan Sartin, Branch Secretary

NJC PAY OFFER

UNISON received a response to our pay claim in December from the local government employers (LGE). The offer is for a two-year pay deal starting 1 April 2018. It's a much more complicated deal than offered in previous years, because there is a need to address the impact of rises in the government's 'national living wage' (NLW) on the NJC pay spine.

LGE have weighted pay increases to be proportionately higher at the lowest end of the pay scale to help keep ahead of the rising national living wage (NLW).

For workers such as teaching assistants and support workers employed on WSCC grades 3 to 5, there would be increases of between 7.5% and 3.7% in year 1.

For staff at the bottom of grade 6 through to the top of the NJC scale, the offer is for a 2% pay rise in year 1.

In year 2, LGE are proposing a restructure of NJC grades and the spinal points on the NJC scale. This is to try to maintain pay differentials and improve equity between spinal points as the effect of the NLW impacts upwards through the pay scales.



If accepted, this would create the complicated task of layering the proposed national NJC pay spine over the County Council's existing grades. Branch secretary Dan Sartin will be discussing proposals with WSCC to

assess the logistics of how it could be applied.

In year 2, new spinal points are proposed up to the middle of the current WSCC grade 8. Members will have to view these spinal points to work out the impact of the proposed pay rise on them in year 2. As yet the discussion with WSCC on how to implement the pay award has not taken place so it is not clear which spinal point would apply. Members are advised to exercise caution when interpreting the offer and to wait for the UNISON pay consultation before coming to a view.

Above a new spinal point 23 (currently the middle of grade 8), a 2% increase would be awarded to all NJC grades in year 2.

Whilst on the one hand the offer is serious and worth a close examination, there are dangers of locking members into a 2-year deal with the uncertainties of Brexit and the potential impact this might have on inflation. For many members, the offer is also less than the current rate of inflation.

Consultation on the offer will begin in January. See full details of the pay offer on our website.

ASPIRE'S PAY AWARD INCREASED

The West Sussex adult learning service Aspire was offered a 1% pay-rise for the academic year September 2017 to August 2018.

However, even though budgets were tight, UNISON managed through negotiation to

marginally increase the award to 1.45%. Though it's not a generous settlement, it is higher than the original offer. Next year's negotiations are due to begin in April 2018 and will be informed by settlements in other areas of education and local government.

PARKING OUTCOME

Parking was a controversial issue during 2017. Staff and UNISON were unhappy with the way a proposed parking policy was developed and shared at WSCC. It could have meant a flat charge of £300 being applied to thousands of staff across hundreds of workplaces, though the council's priority users would have had free parking.

UNISON has been working hard to put the staff view to the chief executive and we believe that the final outcome is the best we can achieve. Parking is not a term and condition of employment. Many people will be satisfied with the solution on offer, others won't. These are the key elements, which in several respects show a radical change from what was consulted on:

- Free parking for priority users, which UNISON agrees with;
- That the arrangements will be confined to Horsham and Chichester and not universally rolled out across council sites;
- External staff such as Capita and others will have access to parking;
- The arrangements will be properly resourced (the previous scheme only failed because it was not resourced);
- That we will see a response to all the points members' raised in UNISON's consultation response;

- Staff with permanent disabilities will get access to free parking;
- There will not be a £300 a year flat charge, but a £1 a day pay and display scheme for bays not set aside for priority users;
- The council will review the impact on displaced staff who will lose access to free parking and see if other options are possible.

The scheme will be rolled out from April. We hope it solves the problems but will keep matters under review. We have met with council officers on a weekly basis to discuss parking and will continue to meet until rollout. Thank you to members who took part in our survey.



COUNCIL INSOURCES FROM CAPITA

Following the 'insourcing' of the 'MASH' service from Capita due to concerns over children's safeguarding (see page 13), we're pleased to see more services are now being insourced. These are mostly in HR and include the following.

- HR Management Advice (excluding schools)
- Job Evaluation
- Recruitment
- Learning and Development (Training)
- Administration
- Personal Administration (PA) Service
- Supervised Contact Administration

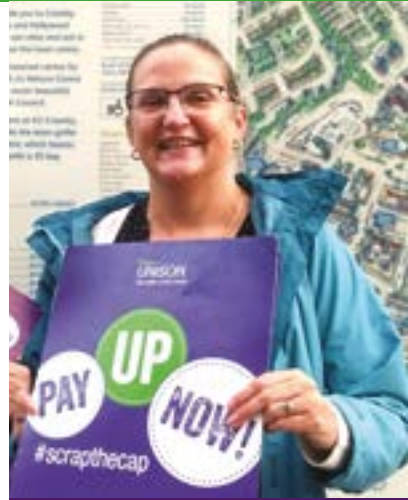
These services will be moved back to the council with staff TUPE transfers taking effect from 1 February.

There are issues with the way some of these services have performed or have been managed by Capita since 2012. It is ever-clearer that the Capita contract has been a tortuous experience for both Capita staff who provide and WSCC staff who use the services.

We welcome the improvement of the HR function by insourcing parts back from Capita who were unable to deliver an adequate service through their staffing model. The staff were not to blame, but the company was. UNISON saw close up how our members going through HR processes suffered because of this, the time the council had to invest to manage and correct issues, and the impact on WSCC managers who sometimes could not get timely or consistent advice.

UNISON believes even more services should be insourced, particularly those related to schools' support. These have an even greater impact than non-schools as they deal with more staff. We welcome the decisiveness by the council in insourcing what they have, but believe they have more to do before the dead weight of this 10-year contract is lifted.

For those staff being TUPEd back to the council, it will be good news if they are assimilated onto WSCC's terms and conditions of employment. The union is involved in negotiating the best deal for staff during the TUPE process. For any worker in the above services, now is a good time to join UNISON.



PAY UP NOW GOES TO CRAWLEY

Supporting the union's 'Pay Up Now' campaign, Annie Flack (community connector for adults' services) joined other branch members and other unions to protest against low rates of pay in local government services.

Annie (pictured) took part in two demonstrations aiming to raise awareness among commuters: one at Crawley Station and one at Three Bridges Station.

"The situation in adults' social care is critical," said Annie. "I know that in provider services, we simply can't recruit enough care assistants (support workers) because pay is so low and it's very hard work. There are vacancies all the time."

GRACE EYRE FOUNDATION PAY CLAIM

UNISON continues to work constructively with GEF, which continues to grow.

We will be lodging a pay claim with them in January. We have an effective network of workplace reps at GEF who

can deal with issues on the ground.

The branch provides support through collective negotiations, especially on pay. Branch staff attended the annual staff conference in November and ran a workshop on the benefits of union membership.

BRANCH LODGES DISPUTE AGAINST CAPITA

Since 2012, the West Sussex branch's experience of Capita as an employer is marked by the inconsistency of its approaches on key HR matters.

These are too often determined by the particular HR lead manager Capita has working on the West Sussex contract, and not by any wider consistency. Capita has had radically different approaches since 2012 to:

- 1) consultation processes during reorganisations;
- 2) sickness and disability; and now
- 3) UNISON recognition.

The branch resolved the first two sets of inconsistencies, which caused untold stress and misery for many of our members, through negotiation and involvement of the UNISON national office. We have been unable to make any progress



on the latest matter and have lodged a formal dispute with Capita.

After 5 years of the contract when this was never an issue, Capita is now proposing to seek the election of staff reps when there are redundancies or TUPE transfers and to negotiate with them. This is exceedingly dangerous for all staff: UNISON reps are trained and experienced, and supported by a West Sussex branch office, regional office, a national office and Thompsons

solicitors. Who do you want to negotiate for you during a complex restructure or TUPE when your job is at stake?

The whole approach is dangerous to all staff's interests and an attempt to dilute the union's strength. We have asked to see details of how staff reps will be elected, how they will be trained, how they will be released from work and how they will be accountable. None of this has been forthcoming, despite assurances it would be.

We cannot believe that as this contract lurches from one crisis to another, Capita feels its interests are best served by introducing another one, and that attacking the trade union and undermining the interests of its staff is the way to make the contract finally work.

We will keep members advised of progress. In the meantime, urge your colleagues not yet in the union to join UNISON.

Branch Officers for 2018/19

The branch committee has nominated the following members to s



Branch Chair
Ian Harvey



Branch Vice-Chair
Sarah Cawston



Branch Secretary
Dan Sartin



Deputy Branch Secretary
Karen Daubney



Equalities Officer (Women)
Vacant



Equalities Officer (BME)
Eleanor Hope



Equalities Officer (Disability)
Heather Andersson



Equalities Officer (LGBT)
Thomas French



Health & Safety Officer (1)
Karen Daubney



Health & Safety Officer (2)
Carla Hardy



Labour Link Officer
Vacant



International Officer
Vacant



Environmental Officer
Julie Bolton



Young Members' Officer
Chloe Pascovitch



Education Co-ordinator
Vacant



Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator
Vacant

Elections

serve as branch officers in 2018/19.



Branch Treasurer
Jennie Barrett



Pensions Officer
Judith Taylor



Welfare Officer
Stuart Gibbons



Communications Officer
Vacant



Membership Officer
Vacant

As part of the union's democratic process, nomination forms for any of the positions here are available from the branch office. The annual election process for workplace representatives has also started. The nomination period for all positions ends at 12 noon on 26 January. If you are interested in taking on any role, please contact the branch secretary to find out more or request a nomination form. Branch committee meets six times per year (split between Chichester and Worthing). If you would like to get more involved with the branch, as a committee member or workplace rep, now is the time.

THANK YOU

“I just wanted to thank you for your ongoing support this year in terms of my request for flexible retirement, I can’t believe this has taken a year out of my life.”

“I’d like to take the opportunity to thank you both for your support in recent months. Your guidance provided me with well needed advice, which enabled me to approach the challenges I’ve faced with confidence. I’m incredibly grateful to you both for providing me with reassurance and also for helping me to be assertive without being over-emotional at a time I found especially stressful.”

“My return to work was much better than I thought it would be. Many thanks to your team for their help.”

SPOTLIGHT ON FURTHER EDUCATION

GREATER BRIGHTON MET

UNISON's national further education (FE) committee recommended UNISON members reject the recent 1% pay offer from the Association of Colleges (AoC).

An indicative ballot of members showed support for action. Consideration is being given for targeted disputes to be organised across the country enabling possible higher awards to be set locally. At the newly amalgamated Greater Brighton Metropolitan College (the 'MET', which includes Northbrook College, Worthing), meetings are being co-ordinated with the University and College Union (UCU).

At Northbrook, an overwhelming percentage of respondents rejected the offer. Our rep there Karen Fisher (pictured) explains;

"Over 300 jobs are on the line due to the restructure caused by the forced merger. Even though we've managed



to negotiate a harmonisation of grades and pay so that Northbrook matches Brighton (and gained a pay increase average of 4.5%), the AoC pay offer was still forcefully rejected by our members, which does show the strength of feeling."

"We've had below inflation pay rises for years but the situation here is now critical. The harmonisation will only bring pay in line with 16/17 AoC recommendations, with management stating the MET cannot afford the latest AoC

recommended pay rise of 1% for 2017/18."

The merger continues to be a bumpy ride. Restructuring the amalgamated colleges has resulted in some services being moved to different campuses. Management Information Services (MIS) and HR have moved from Brighton to Northbrook (Durrington), but Marketing has done the reverse.

"There is a lot of upset. These moves take no account of the increased travel cost and time, especially for low-paid, part-time staff, so many are simply leaving. We've had whole teams applying for voluntary redundancy only to be refused. While it's true that UNISON intervention has enabled flexibility to the proposed structures making the new posts more suitable for current staff, much of the upset could have been avoided had the management taken more time to understand the existing structure here at Northbrook."

CHICHESTER COLLEGE GROUP MERGER

The further education colleges of Chichester (including Brinsbury Campus) and Central Sussex, Crawley have recently merged to become the Chichester College Group (though Brinsbury and Central Sussex will retain their local names).

The group is managed by the former Chichester College

leadership team. Since the merger, there has been an

internal review of services aiming to streamline operations by identifying duplicate functions – such as finance – from the formerly separate colleges. Proposals have suggested merging teams, with consequential redundancies. UNISON has been involved every step of the way supporting our members.

HR RESTRUCTURE: PHASE 1

The most senior management tier of WSCC HR was restructured in December.

A phase 2 will continue the restructure down to middle management and officer roles within the service, and will begin in late January/February.

As some HR services are insourced back to WSCC from Capita, those services will also

be re-organised as part of the phase 2 restructure after they have transferred back to the council. This is to make sure the new service has the appropriate balance of expertise and experience and is properly structured.

UNISON West Sussex will be fully supporting its members during this process.

BRANCH SUPPORT TO MEMBERS

CASE STUDY

In August 2016, six of our members were suspended from work from a council-run residential social care establishment. Suspension is a neutral process which does not imply wrongdoing, and it should only last ideally for a few weeks whilst the investigation and, if necessary, the disciplinary process takes place. Our members were suspended for nearly a year!

This had a massive impact on their health and wellbeing. WSCC failed to manage the investigations, in part because of its reliance on Capita's HR service. The process was a litany of failures: policies and processes were not followed; treatment of members was inconsistent; allegations were unclear; the process took far too long; staff welfare was not paramount; there were complications over pay, sickness absence and annual leave; there were repeated breaches of confidentiality; sanctions

were inappropriate. One member was sacked and then reinstated on appeal (showing why it is so important that UNISON can appeal to independent councillors on the staff appeals panel). Others have now returned to work, and others have achieved satisfactory outcomes.

UNISON's support of our members was steadfast, including lodging several successful grievances on behalf of our members. UNISON has since been involved in a 'lessons learned' meeting with WSCC to try to ensure this never happens again. We welcome that, and the insourcing back to WSCC

of part of the Capita HR service, both of which are serious efforts to improve things for staff in future.

Dan Sartin, branch secretary, said: "I want to pay tribute to the tenacity of Dee Chauhan and Laurence Crossan in the branch team. In the end we achieved satisfactory outcomes on all fronts.

"Any social care worker not in UNISON is playing 'Russian roulette' with their career and livelihood. They should join right now, because UNISON will not let you down when you need us."

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
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Surname/family name	Date of birth / /
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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: *(tick one box)*

<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	<input type="checkbox"/>	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

Please fill in the form and send to UNISON West Sussex
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



HIGHWAYS CONTRACT: SCOPE REDUCED

We're pleased to report that the County Council is now considering outsourcing far fewer teams than feared in our last issue as part of the new Single Maintenance Contract.

In-house analysis from the tender bids has resulted in just two additional teams being included in the new contract: the 'Trees' and 'Inspection' teams. This involves nine staff and is a much smaller scope than previously considered.

WSSC concluded that maintaining direct delivery and responsibility was

preferable to outsourcing more services.

One provider will be selected from the shortlisted bidders during January 2018.

From March to July there will be extensive consultation and TUPE transfers negotiated, with the new contract becoming operational from 9 July. UNISON will work with

the council on the TUPE transfer to protect members' interests and terms and conditions.

Though not part of the above contract, highways & transport needs to save £1.7m from its budget next year, so will be restructuring its services accordingly. This will be the third restructure in six years.

One of our main concerns is the inconsistent use of career grades in the service, where movement between grades is not clear. Such issues must be addressed before the use of these grades is extended.

Make sure you're represented!

One of our members was recently subjected to a dismissal hearing due to alleged problems with sickness absence.

The employer involved decided to conduct dismissal procedures before a UNISON rep was available to support our member through the process. This contravenes good employment practice,

so our caseworker appealed the dismissal decision.

With the combined efforts of the branch and the UNISON regional office, our member was reinstated after we successfully challenged

many of the points raised in the appeal hearing.

Don't let employers force you through a dismissal process before you are fully represented and supported by a UNISON rep or caseworker. It can make a huge difference.

MASH INSOURCING LATEST NEWS



The multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) service has a vital child protection role. As the council feared it could not meet its statutory obligations to vulnerable children, it had to quickly insource the MASH admin service back from Capita.

Staff transferred back to WSCC and immediately benefitted from some of the council's terms and conditions. A restructure early in 2018 to ensure the service is fit for purpose will see staff fully assimilated onto all the council's

terms and conditions of employment from April. UNISON as ever has and will play a key role in this process and non-members should join us now.

The MASH service has already seen a significant improvement in performance under the council. UNISON regrets the role Capita plc has played in the MASH and how such an important service could deteriorate to the point it had. UNISON regional organiser Caroline Fife was interviewed by BBC South Today to explain our concerns.

WINTER FUEL GRANTS



Low-paid members can apply for a one-off winter fuel grant of £50.00 per household from the union.

To be eligible:

- you must be a member who has paid 4 weeks' subscriptions before 4 December 2017;
- your total net annual household income must be £18,000 or less (full details described in the form); or
- you're receiving housing benefit; and
- you are responsible for meeting the household fuel bills and are struggling to pay them.

Members and their partners must not have combined savings or, rolling bank balance, of more than £800. Savings of any other adults in the household do not apply.

Download the form from our website www.unisonwestsussex.org.uk or contact UNISON Direct on 0800 0857 857. Submit the form by 16 February 2018.

SCHOOLS' SPECIAL

SCHOOLS SURVEY RESULTS

The branch followed up our first survey of school cuts in autumn 2017. We asked school staff and parents questions linked to the financial crisis which continues to disproportionately impact West Sussex children. Here are some highlights.

91% of parents told us they think their child's school is in financial difficulty.

98% of parents said that the savings their school will have to make will have a negative impact.

One parent said: "The underfunding of our schools is critically disabling state schools and pushing them into failure with no way out."

The comparative data between the two surveys tells us that it is still the most vulnerable children who are affected most by cuts in schools. Things are getting incrementally worse, not better.

68% said that SEN provision had got worse compared to 65% last year.

25.3% now said SEN provision was 'much worse' due to these cuts, compared to 18.6% last year.

One parent said: "My son has autism, already the school have had to cut his speech therapy and reduce his one to one support."

There was also a marked increase in the number of support staff being made redundant.

Where the staff being dismissed was greater than five, this rose from 18.7% last year to 30.7% this year.

The data also tells us that parents are being asked to fill the gap where a squeeze is made on school resources.

91% said savings had been made on resources, and 74% for school events.

This means that many children are denied access to adequate resources or educational school trips. One parent said:

"Last summer my children's trip was cancelled due to too many parents not being able to contribute and the school was unable to subsidise it. This trip was a core part of the topic the children were learning."

The data shows that falling standards, increased workloads, work related stress and other health problems are all directly attributable to these funding cuts, and are getting worse.

57% told us that educational standards had got worse, an increase from 47% last year.

79% of staff had an increased workload and 48% had experienced stress or some kind of health problem, up from 44% last year.

For more information on our survey results, see our website. We'll be alerting local media and working with the Save Our Schools campaign to reverse these damaging cuts. Thank you if you completed our survey.





Photo: Lobbying Sir Peter Bottomley at Westminster

SOS: FUND OUR SCHOOLS FAIRLY!

UNISON member and further education support worker Sarah Maynard helps coordinate the work of the parents' campaign group Save Our Schools (SOS) West Sussex. Its focus is to campaign for fair funding of West Sussex schools. Here, Sarah explains its recent work and plans for the future.

"Fundamentally, we're dealing with the long-term, chronic under-funding of West Sussex schools," said Sarah.

"The national funding formula (NFF – the calculation used by government to fund schools across the country) has been biased against West Sussex for many years. For example, a secondary school with a very similar demographic and catchment area in Reading would receive £½m more than a West Sussex school. In Hackney it would receive £4m more.

"When our children are judged against the same Ofsted and exam criteria, it cannot be fair that our schools receive far fewer resources. The £1.3bn offered recently by education secretary Justine Greening



was not new money. It was simply shuffled around from other budget areas. The Institute of Fiscal Studies has said there will still be a £1.7bn shortfall by 2020. It's simply not enough to compensate for the drastic level of cuts experienced by our schools."



The SOS West Sussex campaign has been actively lobbying on behalf of local schools, supporting the work led by headteachers. In October, as part of a mass lobby of parliament, both SOS and UNISON members met with Worthing West MP Sir Peter Bottomley.

"It was a disappointing meeting," continued Sarah. "Though we handed over a huge scroll of messages from teachers, parents and

support staff, he told us it would make no difference and refused to raise the matter with the chancellor.

"We get similar reactions from other West Sussex MPs, but it won't stop us making our case. It's now reached such a critical point that parents are being asked by headteachers to help plug the funding shortfall by paying for books, trips and resources. We know heads are desperate, but it cannot be right that parents are being asked to do this. Our taxes are already paying for education. It completely discriminates against low-income families that might not be able to afford to pay for these basics, so their children risk performing poorly." Please follow and support the SOS campaign.

 Save Our Schools – SOS West Sussex
 @SOSWestSussex

 saveourschoolswsussex
 saveourschoolswestsussex@gmail.com



SCHOOLS' SPECIAL

SUPPORTING PUPILS WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS GUIDANCE

Following recent changes to statutory guidance schools must support pupils with medical conditions. The pressure for support staff to take on duties relating to the health needs of children has grown, resulting in situations where support staff may be providing medical care without a suitable policy in place.

1 School Policy: schools must have regularly reviewed policies on administering medicines. Every child should have an individual health care plan (IHCP) stating how their medicines should be given. If the child also has an education and health care plan (EHCP), the two should reference each other.

2 Responsibility for administering medicines cannot be loaded onto just one person. It is the shared responsibility of parents, social care, teachers and TAs. They must all be equally and fully aware of policies and individual practice.

3 Training: anyone required to administer medicines

must be fully trained.

4 Non-compulsory: support staff cannot be required to support children with medical conditions unless it is part of their contract. Employers cannot unilaterally impose amendments to contracts to include medical procedures. However, realistically someone in a school has to do this. If no-one volunteers, the school must recruit to this role which could have knock-on effects on existing staff. If you have concerns, contact us.

Branch victory for part-timers

Part-time school support staff at the former Rydon Community College have received back-pay following a restructure that involved them having to accept lower grades. Their new employer – Steyning Grammar School – increased their working hours, but did not offer pay protection due to the downgrade.

UNISON argued that despite increased hours, they should still receive pay protection for three years, as per the school's policy. The school confirmed this to staff in January 2017, but failed to actually pay them. Then in August 2017

staff were told pay protection would not apply!

Our branch officer explained to HR that the school's approach was potentially discriminatory to part-time staff (mostly women) because full-time staff would have been

compensated through pay protection. WSCC agreed with UNISON that the policy had been misinterpreted. This does have wider implications for all part-time staff at WSCC or in schools, the majority of whom are women. If you're a part-timer subject to a downgrade but with extended hours at the lower grade, you are still eligible for pay protection on your previous grade for three years.

SCHOOLS' FORUM REJECTS FUNDING TRANSFER



UNISON Schools' Forum member Keith Manville (pictured) reports on recent difficult decisions and challenges discussed at December's meeting.

"In December the forum unanimously rejected (23 votes to 0) a proposed one-off transfer in 2018/19 of £2m from the 'schools block' to pay towards the most deserving, but less well funded 'high needs block'. Everyone agreed this strategy had failed in the past because it was 'robbing Peter to pay Paul'. It's a crisis waiting to happen.

"It gave the impression to government that the schools block was well funded and could afford it. With a heavy heart, many forum members working in SEN accepted the pain we could now go through.

"A clear message needs to be sent to local MPs and government; as a statutory body, we are no longer prepared to support the council's strategy and approve or accept such measures."

Branch officer James Ellis explains: "National Funding Formula (NFF) plans have been announced. WSCC is working towards introducing them by 2020. But when the apprenticeship levy, pension costs and pay rises are factored in, there is no new money available for schools. WSCC also allocates money to West Sussex schools through a local formula. It's a measure related to this that has been rejected by the Schools' Forum."

Central government has given West Sussex heads and governors an impossible situation. It's driving our schools over a cliff edge. It's about time our local politicians did more to speak out on the scandal inflicted by the government.

Schools' Forum meets again in January. Keith is a workplace rep at Oak Grove College special school, Worthing. He represents UNISON members on the Schools' Forum.



School collectives

1 RIVER BEACH PRIMARY, LITTLEHAMPTON

A falling roll has caused a challenging financial situation, coupled with widely reported funding problems in West Sussex. There's a risk of 12–13 redundancies, with jobs subject to reduced hours. A new structure is being introduced in September 2018, with many contractual changes. The school is already consulting early on this to enable notices to be served in January, though jobs will be held open until August.

2 DOWNSBROOK PRIMARY, WORTHING

Due to an 'inadequate' Ofsted rating, probably linked to drastic funding cuts and redundancies in the summer term, Downsbrook has been forced to become an academy. The Schools Works Trust will take over school management. Members fear another restructure and loss of employment rights. UNISON knows the trust after establishing a recognition agreement earlier this year. We will continue to defend our members' interests.

QUICK GUIDE FOR MEMBERS

UNISON'S LEGAL SERVICES



Here's a quick overview of the range of legal services you and your family may be entitled to through your union membership.

Nationally, UNISON has an 'in-house' team of lawyers who focus on employment law and rights, especially those affecting large numbers of members. Individual employment tribunals and specialist legal services are led by UNISON's approved lawyers, Thompsons. Our branch has access to local, high-quality employment, personal

injury and criminal law advice from Thompsons via our regional office. The table below shows the range of legal services available to UNISON members and their families. These are provided in accordance with the union's rules and the conditions of the union's legal scheme. A qualifying period and exclusions apply.

Accessing legal services

Legal support will be given as long as your case has a reasonable chance of success. Advice and representation is provided at the absolute discretion of UNISON. Legal support may be withdrawn if you do not follow legal advice or fail to co-operate.

1. Employment

For employment advice, first contact your workplace rep. Your case might be referred to the branch, regional office or, where appropriate, UNISON's lawyers.

2. Other legal services

First contact your workplace rep or the branch office (01243 777636) or UNISON Direct on 0800 0857 857.

	Members	Members' families
Employment advice	Free	Not available
Personal injury advice (following accident/injury)		
a. Accidents at work	Free	Not available
b. Criminal injuries compensation	Free	Not available
c. Accidents outside work	Free	Free
Criminal law advice (re: work-related criminal charges)	Free	Not available
Wills	Free (includes joint will)	Special rates
Conveyancing	Special rates	Special rates
Free initial legal advice (up to 30 mins)	Free	Not available
Clinical negligence	Free	Free

LATEST NEWS ON BUYING AND SELLING ANNUAL LEAVE

WSSC will be introducing a scheme for buying and selling annual leave (excluding schools) for 2018/19. A window will be opened to apply during February.

UNISON has concerns about how the policy came about, as reported in the last issue of Branch Lines. We also conducted a detailed survey of our WSSC members to understand your position on it. 37% approved of the policy, 41% were against it and 22% didn't know: hardly a resounding endorsement, but not a mandate either for the branch to oppose it.

Therefore, we had a long period of negotiation with the council to highlight 10 key concerns our members said in the survey they had about the policy. The council has responded positively to these.

In 2018/19 staff can buy up to three days' additional leave. This should help mitigate any potential additional workload on staff; members were concerned

that if colleagues could buy lots of extra leave, workload would simply transfer to those who could not afford to do so.

From 2019/20, in exceptional circumstances, selling up to three days' leave will also be available.

We believe this is a better outcome for members. The scheme will be kept under review by both the council and UNISON, so let us know what impact it has on you in your team.

SLEEP-IN PAYMENTS

In our Autumn edition, we reported on two UNISON cases involving workers who do sleep-ins as part of their job now being paid for those hours.

We had hoped that such workers would have received their back-pay by now, but the government has since introduced the 'Social Care Compliance Scheme' (SCCS). This provides a voluntary opportunity for employers to identify what they owe to workers, supported by technical advice from HMRC.

Employers have until 31 December 2018 to enter the scheme, with the final deadline for paying arrears being 31 March 2019, a much longer period than

UNISON would have liked.

Employers will then have up to three months to pay workers and will not run the risk of financial penalties or be publicly named for underpayment of the national minimum wage (NMW). However, there is a lot still unclear about the scheme. UNISON members who believe they are paid below NMW because of sleep-ins or are owed back pay can contact the branch or the HMRC pay and rights helpline on 0300 123 1100.



James is on his way!

After six years, our negotiations officer James Ellis is leaving the West Sussex branch in January to move to a new job working for the new National Education Union (formerly the NUT and ATL).



Branch secretary Dan Sartin said: "We wish James all the luck in the world for his new job. He has been a brilliant support to members and will be very difficult to replace. If anyone would like to be considered for the vacant role, please see the advert opposite".

BRANCH AGMS 2018

Branch AGMs will take place from 20 March 2018. There will be four, short AGM sessions consisting of half hour business reports and annual elections to the branch committee, then questions to the branch secretary, treasurer and other committee members.

Three take place from 12:30 to 1:30pm as follows.

- **Tuesday 20 March**
Committee Room 3,
Durban House,
Durban Road,
Bognor Regis, PO22 9RE
- **Wednesday 21 March**
Conference Room 4,
Centenary House,
Durrington Lane,
Worthing, BN13 2QB
- **Thursday 22 March**
Cowdray Room,
County Hall North/
Parkside, Park Street,
Horsham, RH12 1XH
- **Friday 23 March**
Martlets Restaurant,
County Hall, Chichester,
PO19 1RQ: **5 to 9pm.**

Our quiz and curry night immediately follows the shortened AGM in Chichester, with free dinner and complimentary glass of wine for all members.

There will also be a free raffle with some great prizes. All members from any employer (and retired members) are welcome at any of our AGMs. We'd love to see you there.

There are only 80 places available though at the quiz and curry night at Chichester, so you must book your place via our website www.unisonwestsussex.org.uk

JOB VACANCY

Branch Negotiations Officer

Full-time position
£27,668 to £30,153
with final salary pension

Do you have:

- A strong work ethic and drive to succeed;
- A developed understanding of organisational change and of employment law;
- Negotiating and written skills?

Can you work with people under duress and help them to achieve the best outcomes?

Do you want:

- Opportunities to learn and train and develop;
- To join a busy team of high performers;
- To be at the coalface doing a wide variety of real trade union work;
- To have a career in the trade union movement?

Then we might have the perfect job for you!

Closing date for applications: 10am, Monday 22 January.

See our website for full details: www.unisonwestsussex.org.uk