

BRANCH LINES

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

VOTE for public services in May's general election!

"I DON'T DO POLITICS...
BUT I DO CARE ABOUT WHAT
KIND OF PLANET MY CHILDREN
WILL INHERIT"

"I DON'T DO POLITICS...
BUT I DO CARE ABOUT MY
KIDS' EDUCATION"

"I DON'T DO POLITICS...
BUT I DO CARE ABOUT THE
QUALITY OF PUBLIC
SERVICES"

"I DON'T DO POLITICS...
BUT I DO CARE ABOUT MY
JOB SECURITY"

"I DON'T DO POLITICS...
BUT I DO CARE ABOUT A
LIVING WAGE"

"I DON'T DO POLITICS...
BUT I DO CARE ABOUT MY
LOCAL NHS"

Still think you don't do politics? See page 16

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WELCOME

In this edition we encourage all UNISON members to vote in May's general election.

Vote for who you think will protect public services. Vote for who will give you and your family the best chances in life. And make sure all your eligible family members are registered to vote.

We also take a look at some of the concerns we're told prevent some people becoming union members or reps and an in-depth view of critical issues regarding performance-related pay and PDRs. It's going to be a very interesting few months. Feedback as always, is welcome.

Dan Sartin, Branch Secretary



New NJC pay claim lodged

UNISON delegates from across the UK met at a special conference in London on 24 March.

New procedures were agreed to ensure that meaningful and transparent consultation is carried out with branches, including before strikes are called off.

And the union will lodge an additional pay claim for 2015/16 to include a Living Wage rate as the minimum pay value of the NJC pay spine and an equivalent flat rate pay increase for other scale points.

Branch Secretary and a delegate to the Conference Dan Sartin said, "The submission of a new pay claim is an important step in our campaign for fair pay."

Tory plans will 'end right to strike' in public sector

UNISON's South East Regional Council has urged national committees to consider launching a media campaign to oppose the Conservative's proposals on strike ballot thresholds.

This followed a West Sussex branch motion taken to UNISON's Regional Council in February. It was passed unanimously. It will now go forward to the National Delegate Conference as a regional-supported motion.

Tory plans would impose a minimum turnout of 50% and a minimum threshold of support of 40% of all those balloted. This would make it almost impossible for unions

to conduct lawful industrial action in the public sector. A 50% turnout would require an 80% yes vote otherwise the ballot would be legally invalid.

Ian Harvey, West Sussex Branch Chair, who spoke to the motion said, "These plans come on top of other recent attacks on trade unionism by the coalition government such as facility time reductions for union reps,

removing the ability to pay union fees directly from pay packets and introducing fees for employment tribunals.

"Our branch takes these concerns seriously. We've done what we can to support our members by raising this issue at a national level. We hope national committees will provide a strategy we can all follow to campaign against these punitive measures."



Ian Harvey, UNISON West Sussex Chair

UNISON backs credit union partnerships

Our 'There for You' credit union service offers UNISON members access to low-interest loans and a range of savings products through our UK network of partner credit unions (such as the West Sussex Credit Union).

Whether you're dissatisfied with current banking arrangements, are struggling with exorbitant interest rates charged by payday and other lenders or simply looking for an ethical alternative, credit unions may provide just the solution.

West Sussex Credit Union may be more willing to help than banks or building societies if you have a low income, no borrowing record or a poor credit history. It can offer you the affordable rates you need to get your finances on track.



To join go to their website
www.westsussexcreditunion.co.uk

If you are contacting the credit union directly (129 Montague Street, Worthing, phone: 01903 237221), please say you are a UNISON member and quote reference T4Y.

Bupa withdraws from local NHS bid

Pressure from lobby groups – including UNISON West Sussex – has claimed a major victory in the campaign to prevent NHS musculoskeletal (MSK) services being privatised to Bupa.



Bupa's decision to withdraw their bid follows an independent impact assessment which highlighted a number of concerns. It found that the financial position of the Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust would be worsened if Bupa provided the service. The sustained campaign against the proposed privatisation has included protests at key meetings, lobbying key players in the decision-making process and gathering signatures for petitions.

It begs the question: 'Why did the CCG waste so much time and resources when problems were highlighted at a very early stage?' The cost to the taxpayer was estimated at £350,000.

UNISON Branch Secretary Dan Sartin said: "This is fantastic news, but shows just how dangerous and misguided privatisation plans are. It was only in July 2013 that Bupa scuttled out of West Sussex when they were proven unfit to run a West Sussex care home, where elderly residents were found neglected and uncared for, lying in their own excrement. Why would we trust these companies to run our NHS?"

"Public service workers must join forces with community campaigners to protect all that we hold dear about services run for the public good and which are accountable to us. We did that, and this great victory shows we can win when we do."

Cold comfort at Durban House

UNISON members based at Durban House, Bognor Regis, have succeeded in challenging the corporate agreement on heating workplaces.

This followed a very cold spell of weather in January. Many staff resorted to wearing hats, coats and gloves indoors to allow them to work with a degree of comfort because the ambient temperature was so cold due to draughts. Several requests to increase the temperature setting at Durban House were sent to Facilities Management staff.

Branch health & safety officer Clive Coleman surveyed 36 staff on the heating issue in Room 30. 100% of them said they were unhappy with the working environment, giving specific examples in free-text feedback.

WSSC's policy is to heat buildings to 20°C, but in large, draughty buildings, the union argued this may well be insufficient.

Since our intervention, the council



has agreed to heat the building from a much earlier daily start to make sure it reaches an adequate temperature before most staff arrive.

If your office is inadequately heated, please contact your workplace rep or one of our fully-trained health & safety officers (Chris Barrett, Clive Coleman or Karen Daubney).

Thank you UNISON West Sussex!

Here's a selection of quotes from members who have been supported by our caseworkers, reps and office staff from January to March. Look out for more member quotes on page

“Could I express my thanks for your help during my recent disciplinary matter. I would like to specifically mention my caseworker. Her professionalism, knowledge and understanding were of immense help during a particularly difficult time.”

“I want to thank you for all the support, representation and time you gave me and UNISON for facilitating this. It was more than good to have your support with the UNISON umbrella over us.”

Criticism of £100k give-away to favoured museum

UNISON has welcomed the West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Labour group's criticism of the recent decision to award the Weald & Downland Museum £100,000 from council 'Kick Start' funds.

This adds to further funding 'in-kind' of around £115,000 when a WSCC senior officer was seconded to the museum last year.

WSCC Leader Louise Goldsmith – a 'Friend' of the museum – asked Cabinet Member for Finance Michael Brown to visit the museum and make recommendations on funding to her, to try to avoid the appearance of wrongdoing.



It compares well to funds granted to another of the council's pet Chichester-based projects, the Festival Theatre, which received £1.5m of council tax payers' money last year.

The award to the museum has bypassed the established channels for requesting Kick Start funds by approaching the council directly. No other bidder has been given this 'fast-track' to funding.

Though the decision to award this funding was not made until 10 December, a letter from Michael Brown (dated 29 October) to the Chair of Trustees (former WSCC Chief Executive, Paul Rigg), states the council 'is delighted to allocate' the £100,000.

Indeed the whole decision-making process for this funding is – to say the least – foggy. UNISON Branch Secretary Dan Sartin said: "Our local politics need to adapt. This is not the 19th century. Councillors should not see their roles as playing Lord and Lady Bountiful – they are there to be the custodians of our essential public services. As such, these monies should not be given away to favoured pet projects but used to support the essential services our members work in and deliver to the public. Anything else is a dereliction of duty."

"I've had a read of your response document and would just like to say that I cannot see how you could possibly have done a better job of setting out a case for keeping our jobs in the new structure. Reading your response and the comments from other UNISON members, I feel so much better about our chances. Thank you so much for your hard work on this, at what must be such a difficult time for you. Your support has been invaluable."

Feedback from a UNISON member to our office staff following a collective negotiation.

WOMEN IN UNISON

Cawston ‘careers’ into Commons

UNISON West Sussex vice-chair (and WSCC senior careers advisor) Sarah Cawston joined other union delegates at a recent, high-profile conference held at the House of Commons. Its focus was the deterioration of careers advice services for young people since ‘Connexions’ was discontinued due to funding cuts.

“UNISON has been campaigning long and hard for a change in the direction originally started by Michael Gove. There is widespread recognition - including that of the Tory-led Education Select Committee - that the government’s approach has failed. Youth unemployment is at a record high.”

“Careers advice, especially for vulnerable young people,” says Sarah, “has become a postcode lottery. Since responsibility has been passed to schools, nationally there is a wide variation in advice provided. It leaves young people - especially those classed as ‘NEET’ (not in education, employment or training) - likely to choose careers that may be unsuitable or inappropriate.”



Sarah Cawston

“We have over 700 16-18 year-old ‘NEETS’ in West Sussex who have limited access to careers guidance. Yet people over the age of 19 have full access to one-to-one guidance through the National Careers Service.”

regardless of age. UNISON, the TUC, NUS, the CBI and others are lobbying government to provide a universal, impartial careers service open to everyone, regardless of age.

“It’s something we must support,” said Sarah, “especially now that education or training is compulsory until the age of 18. Young people must be given sound advice so they can become valued and productive members of our workforce.”



The Super-Rich and Us Episode 2

Jackass' Philo investigates how the super-rich are transforming Britain. In the final part, he looks at how inequality has progressed in a business opportunity. First shown: Sun 16 Jan 2010. Available for 29 days. Download Watch on iD Watch with Ad

Fame at last?

UNISON West Sussex member Andrew Theodoridi was featured marching with other branch members at the October TUC march for a pay rise on the BBC programme ‘The Super-Rich and Us’. This was shown in January this year. Needless to say, being a social worker, Andrew did not represent the Super-Rich!

CASEWORK SUCCESS

Overturning a performance warning

Allegations of poor or unacceptable performance can be devastating to a member facing these charges. However, cases are usually far from clear-cut. UNISON supports its members, offering expert advice and challenging management assumptions and observations where appropriate.

A recent case involved allegations of a safeguarding breach. Confidential information was allegedly shared with others, contravening local procedures. Our member was initially given a formal warning, but this decision was challenged at a performance review meeting.

The caseworker argued that the disclosure breached no known regulation, code of practice or safeguarding procedure. The matter should have been addressed through the supervision process, but there was no evidence to show this had been done.

Our appeal was successful. The formal warning was revoked and removed from the member's professional record. An action plan was agreed for our member, supporting them through the following few weeks.

Performance and disciplinary procedures are stressful and challenging. Our caseworkers can help you build your case. They aim to get you a fair result, whatever the circumstances of the alleged action.

Responding to our caseworker after the outcome, our member said: "My heart goes to you for the wisdom, honesty, belief, experience, dedication and knowledge shared with such high levels of professionalism, in bringing and putting an end to this case in a positive, satisfactory way. Thank you."

NUMBERS

20% amount of value the average public sector pay packet has lost since 2010.

14% average pay rise of FTSE 100 directors in 2013

24% expected jump in shareholder dividends in 2014

(UNISON West Sussex)

WOMEN IN UNISON

Women: make your vote count

Women's unemployment is the highest it has been for decades and the gender pay gap still stands at 17.5 per cent. Two-thirds of those workers on low pay are women, many on part-time and zero-hours contracts.

As Dr Eva Neitzert, deputy CEO of the Fawcett Society, noted: "Since 2010, 285 children's centres have closed or merged, 159 community centres have been lost and over one million street lights are now switched off or dimmed for a set period overnight." Such measures have a disproportionate impact on women.

This government has less than a month left in office. Women have an important role to play in the run-up to the general election in May. Women's votes could determine the outcome.

More than 9 million women didn't vote in the last election. Make sure you are registered to vote.

Councillor casualty of fire service cuts

West Sussex County Councillor Andy Petch has left the Conservative Party and will now represent his division as an independent.

The firefighter, who is also a member of the Fire Brigades Union, has since spoken out against cuts to the fire service, including the removal of frontline appliances and the number of firefighters on the ground in Mid Sussex.

A petition against the cuts was initiated earlier this year by retired firefighter Tony Morris. He said: "New figures show that for a second year running, West Sussex had the most fire deaths and injuries per head of population of any area in the south-east, including London." The petition reports that West Sussex has fewer fire crews to protect the county than at any time since 1939, despite the significantly more diverse and challenging workload.

Fire service cuts have also impacted UNISON members who work in the service as support staff. The branch is currently supporting members at risk of redundancy.

The petition is live until 28 April and can be signed at <http://epetition.westsussex.public-i.tv/>



Andy Petch

“Andy Petch represents that rare breed of councillor: a public sector worker. We need more like Andy who are prepared to stand up for public services.”

UNISON Branch Secretary Dan Sartin



Working together

UNISON influences pay rise at Essex Cares

Essex Cares – who provide rehabilitation services for West Sussex people leaving hospital – recently agreed to award a pay rise to its West Sussex-based staff.

This followed discussions initiated by our branch. Discussions focused on links to collectively-negotiated pay rises, and the need to take action following the NJC pay settlement for 2014 to 2016. The employer agreed that NJC staff transferred over from WSSCC would receive a pay rise of 2.2%.

However, to recognise staff commitment and dedication, the Board of Essex Cares decided to award all staff on bands 1 to 4 the same pay rise. This was backdated to January 2015.

Essex Cares is not bound by the change for most of its staff because they were not transferred under TUPE regulations. However, by agreeing to make an award to all, it shows that staff are valued and appreciated by their employer. UNISON makes every effort to make sure employers are aware of legal changes affecting our members. In this case, our intervention benefited a wider group of staff, showing that union influence continues to make a difference to workers' pay and conditions of employment.

PERFORMANCE & DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS

Checking for fairness

“Some council UNISON members have brought cases where contested PDR scores have been used during restructures as part of the evidence for redundancies. Through challenges led by UNISON, we have had decisions overturned, resulting in our members’ jobs being reinstated,”

says UNISON workplace rep Judith Taylor.



“We also know of cases where scores have been agreed at the PDR meeting, only to be downgraded at a moderation meeting without any reference to or discussion with the employee concerned. We know that not all managers understand the PDR process or the implications of getting it wrong.”

To prevent you being on the receiving end of poor PDR management, Judith’s top five tips are opposite. If you think your PDR score and outcome is unfair, please contact the branch office.

- 1** Agree a range of SMART targets: don’t accept any that are inappropriate or impossible to meet.
- 2** Don’t let your manager use your PDR to ‘dump’ operational workplace issues on you.
- 3** A PDR should be a positive process: it’s about nurturing, not penalising. Remember – the ‘D’ stands for ‘development’!
- 4** Both you and the organisation should benefit from your PDR.
- 5** A PDR should evidence what you can or could do, not what you can’t.

CAPITA

Capita contact for Reasonable Adjustments

Following issues raised by UNISON members, Steve Blighton-Sande has been named by Capita as their key contact for any council staff requests regarding workplace reasonable adjustments.

This followed formal concerns raised by the union to councillors at Staff Joint Committee. At that meeting, UNISON officers explained some of the many issues affecting our disabled members, where often simple adjustments to help them perform effectively

had not been implemented. These issues had been known for several months.

Reasonable adjustments can range from buying specific equipment to a change of working schedule, but their purpose is to help disabled staff perform well at work. Under equality legislation, employers are obliged to implement agreed adjustments.

If you are – or become – disabled please contact your workplace rep in the first instance if you need advice.

Improving our relationship with Mencap



UNISON West Sussex has initiated discussions aimed at improving its relationship with the West Sussex branch of Mencap, the charity supporting people with learning difficulties.

This followed a series of challenging cases managers brought against local UNISON Mencap members from July 2014 which, after formal investigation, were either dropped completely, or had disciplinary sanctions reduced.

One case involved an employee who represented themselves unsuccessfully at their first hearing. Through representation from the South East area organiser leading UNISON's appeal, the employee was reinstated in their job. The union was able to draw on previous cases to substantiate their

argument. Local knowledge. Regional success. Happy UNISON member.

We need our members to work for good employers. And we can help organisations become better employers by working with them to agree common standards based on good employment practice. Our branch officers, reps and caseworkers have a great deal of experience in this field.

By working with us and adopting those practices, it will help reduce disciplinary matters, sickness absence and capability issues. How?

Because both managers and staff work within a fair and agreed framework. Everyone knows where they stand.

West Sussex Mencap is the latest local organisation UNISON wants to work more closely with. In our opinion this benefits both employers and employees. Employers develop better management practice and a reduction of - sometimes costly - cases, and the reputation and membership of the union grows.

If you know people working for employers providing social care or health care services, but who are not union members, let us know. We look forward to developing a successful working relationship with Mencap.



Branch Lines feedback

We've had lots of very positive feedback from union members about the style and content of the new-look Branch Lines. Thanks to everyone who has passed on comments to us. We hope it's helping to keep you informed about union activities and our work with local employers. If you have any comments, especially ideas on how we can improve further, please let us know by emailing: editor@unisonwestsussex.org.uk

Senior staff accept pay offer

In line with the recent national offer to NJC grade staff, senior WSCC managers ('Hay' grade equivalents and above) have accepted a similar level of pay award (1% each year for the years 2014 and 2015), voting by a margin of 3:1.

Many managers expressed solidarity with staff they manage, feeling they could not accept a higher award in challenging economic circumstances. Like all WSCC staff, managers are expected to cope with increasing workloads while real pay stagnates. They also have to manage HR issues, occupational health referrals, IT matters, SAP finance and a host of other activities formerly provided by support staff. As one UNISON Hay grade manager said:

"Staff have been working extremely hard in difficult circumstances to support councillors and their various decisions, as well as the revised strategic direction for the organisation. I don't see any of this being reflected in the pay offer."

"The employer should be aware of how its senior cohort of staff feels about the continued imposition of below-inflation pay awards, and the impact that is felt on recruitment, retention and motivation."

Dan Sartin, UNISON Branch Secretary



UNISON resist performance-related pay

WSCC plans to link incremental pay rises to performance at senior management level have been heavily criticised by UNISON.

Proposals – which were later imposed – appeared in the annual pay offer consultation and were sharply rejected by Branch Secretary, Dan Sartin. He explained: "We would have similar concerns if there was to be a proposal to roll this out to NJC staff."

"The PDR system is fundamentally flawed (see page 9). We know the inconsistent use of PDRs is widespread and variable between departments.

"We believe the withholding of increments will establish a two-tier workforce, with workers doing the same job on the same grade with the same length of service on different rates of pay. It'll be divisive and possibly even discriminatory against young staff who are less likely to perform well in the first stages of their career".

The union also questions the timing of this political move so close to an election.

"We do not believe there should be politicised drivers for change, but rather practice that is in keeping with our public sector ethos and principles of equity and fairness," said Dan. "UNISON believes that where there are genuine performance issues, processes to address them should not be punishments. If proposals like these come forward for NJC staff, we will consider balloting our members to reject them."

Any senior management members who have increments withheld are encouraged to contact the Branch Office immediately for advice.

Union life after retirement!

If you are retiring soon it doesn't mean the end of your life as a trade unionist. The UNISON West Sussex Retired Members' Group started in June last year. It campaigns on issues directly relevant to pensioners.

Group Secretary Ruby Cox outlines the group's progress: "Retired UNISON member Margaret Guest (also Chair of 'Don't Cut Us Out') keeps us up to date with local campaigns and lets us know what we can do to support vulnerable residents and those who provide their care.

"Members of the group also made their views known in letters to the press in advance of the council meeting on 13 February."

At the end of last year, Ruby gained a seat on the Regional Retired Members' Committee which will give the group a voice at regional level. It has also affiliated to the National Pensioners' Convention. The group has produced two newsletters and is working with the Branch Office to improve the layout."

If you are close to retirement, you can have UNISON lifetime membership for a single fee of just £15.

Retired members can attend the group's next meeting on 1 June, 12 to 2pm, in Chichester.

For more info contact Ruby on ruby.cox@orange.fr

Free County Cricket tickets offer

LV= is offering UNISON members a pair of complimentary tickets to the cricket club of their choice to watch one day of a 2015 LV= County Championship match. To claim tickets, and for more information:

1. Go to our web page: unisonwestsussex.org.uk/news/cricket-ticket-offer/.
2. Print and fill in the voucher.
3. State the order of preference of the three counties you'd like to watch (Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire are all included).
4. Return it to the FREEPOST address.

Successful applicants will receive two ticket vouchers valid for one day of an LV= County Championship match. Vouchers are valid only for matches played at the First Class County Grounds.

Tickets are subject to availability and will be despatched within 28 days.

Thank you quotes

More from UNISON West Sussex members to caseworkers last month.

"We are very pleased with the outcome and happy with the support that UNISON have given us, but especially grateful for the help and support that you have provided."

"Thanks very much for your helpful and prompt response to my questions. I will wait to see what's on offer and maybe contact you again later. Thanks again."

Capita survey results and prize winners

The first headline results of the two Capita surveys conducted by independent researcher Andy Holt were shown at the branch annual general meetings held across the county in March. Results showed there were both positive and negative views on a number of key issues. A couple of examples discussed were:

- 1 Of the Capita-run council services, customers appeared to be most satisfied with the Contact Centre, Health & Safety and Payroll, but least satisfied with Recruitment, One Way to Buy and IT.
- 2 Capita employees responded generally positively to questions about cultural issues related to their direct line management, but this contrasted starkly to the level of satisfaction and motivation to perform well for the company as a whole.



Ian Harvey presenting award to Linda Williams

We will be publishing a detailed overview of the results after the research project concludes in May. Thanks to everyone who took part. We received 832 survey responses. Six lucky winners were drawn from the hat and will be awarded the following prizes:

- 1 iPads: Linda Williams (pictured) and Stephanie Goldfinch;
- 2 £50 vouchers: Steve Plummer and Jane Moseley; and
- 3 £25 vouchers: Pat Clarke and Briony Stilliard.

YES to strike action at Barnet

87% of UNISON members working for Barnet 'easyCouncil' have voted YES to strike action.

The strike ballot is a response to five commissioning projects agreed at Barnet's recent full council meeting. This would mean outsourcing most workers into a variety of delivery models. Services include:

1. Libraries
2. Children's Centres
3. Adult Social Care
4. Education & Skills

It's thought highly likely Capita will win the first big contract being let (Education & Skills), making it the third they will have won with Barnet Council.

Barnet UNISON Branch Secretary John Burgess said: "The workforce here is amazing and resilient. The vote confirms our members have had enough of the

ideological obsession with outsourcing."

UNISON West Sussex Branch Committee recently voted to donate £500 to Barnet UNISON's strike fund, should such action take place.

UNISON West Sussex Branch Secretary Dan Sartin said, "We hope this amazing 87% ballot result will send a signal to Barnet councillors that they must draw back from their dangerous and unfounded plans."

WOMEN IN UNISON



WORKPLACE REP PROFILE

Karen Johnston

Social worker and UNISON workplace rep Karen works at County Hall North, Horsham as part of the Fostering Recruitment Team.

"I've always been a union member," says Karen. "I think they are absolutely essential to support working people, especially against the massive social care and job cuts we've had to face in the past few years."

"I manage my day-job and my union rep responsibilities by being really clear about the way I can help members in my service. I try to act as a channel for information; making sure members are well-informed about union activities and encouraging them to attend events.

"I'm always happy to listen to members if they have general concerns about things happening in their workplace. Recently, I've been approached about the impact of the restructure in Children's Services, anxieties about job security and workplace bullying. I've also pointed Capita colleagues (who have worked with me for a long time) in the right direction when they've come to me with their issues. If someone comes to me with a serious problem, I'll refer them to the people best placed in the branch to help them. I love both my job and my role as a union rep. But by being really clear about how I can help, I think I manage both effectively."

Share your rep duties!

Many of our members have told us they would like to become a workplace rep, but they don't have enough self-confidence to make sure they do a good job of it. So what's the solution? Role share!

West Sussex deputy branch secretary Karen Daubney explains: "When I first started being a rep I did it in partnership with another colleague at The Rowans Day Centre in Worthing, Cath Lawrence. Though both of us had been union members for a long time, neither of us knew much about being a rep. We supported each other when dealing with cases and attended training courses together.

"It was a gentle and easy way into learning how to be a good rep. We gave each other moral support and felt less isolated. That experience ultimately led to me becoming deputy branch secretary, so I'm really grateful I was able to start on this path jointly with a real 'buddy'. We still keep in touch regularly, even though Cath has now retired."

Reps benefit from free union training that is also relevant to their day-job. We also



provide an induction into the role, mentoring and a starter 'tool-kit'. If you're interested, fill in the form opposite.

“Being a Social Care UNISON rep is no conflict of interest!”



So says care officer at The Rowans Day Centre, Worthing and our deputy branch secretary, Karen Daubney.

“It’s often the case when we talk to social care staff at recruitment events they feel there is a conflict of interest between their professional role and that of being a union rep, especially if they are a manager. However, in my experience, the opposite is true. I’ve found that union training has really helped me in my job, especially the employment law, negotiation skills, disciplinary and capability procedure courses.

Social care reps have been heavily involved in recent major consultations on the proposed Children’s Services Redesign (CSR) and Adults’ Services Redesign.

They’ve been very influential in securing the best deal for social care colleagues.

There’s also often very relevant training available for managers who are useful as reps for their strategic input during collective negotiations. Karen continued: “It really gives an insight into the staff side of things. I also think that if you know your manager is also a rep, it enhances their reputation because you know there is someone senior to you fighting your corner, putting your views into service decisions. That has to be better for the service as a whole.”

Social care staff would never be under pressure to support someone from their team or service where they may have a genuine conflict of interest. As Karen explained, “The union has a wide network of reps. If you can’t support a member because of your professional role, you can always call on other reps to take on a case for you. You should never feel compromised. Using another rep outside your service gets around this problem.

However, the majority of the issues reps deal with are not major confrontations. It’s often a quiet word to the right person that solves the problem.”



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.

Working for Capita? You can join the union!

Several Capita employees approached UNISON office staff when distributing the last edition of 'Branch Lines'.

Many of them were unaware that Capita staff could also be UNISON members. We'd like to make clear that any member of staff working for Capita – whether you were transferred in from WSCC or not – can be a member of the union.

Indeed, we'd love you to join us. We have hundreds of Capita members already signed up and we've supported them through

many challenging situations. Capita has a national 'recognition agreement' with the union, meaning that it formally recognises the union as the body representing members of its own workforce on employment-related issues. We have workplace reps who work for Capita such as Ian Harvey, Mervyn Sams, Kim Unwin and Abigail Holdsworth.

So if you want to join us, don't listen to anyone who says you can't do so because you work for Capita. It's simply not true. Please fill in the form below and send it in to us. We look forward to hearing from you.

USE YOUR VOTE!



As a UNISON member, you belong to an organisation that seeks to influence the political process to improve the lives of our members and the services they provide.

UNISON can help you make your voice heard on the issues you care about. What makes us so influential is that we all speak together, with our members making their voices heard by using their votes in local, national and European elections. UNISON does politics, and so should you.

“STILL THINK YOU DON'T DO POLITICS?”

Join UNISON! MEMBERSHIP FORM REQUEST

Complete and send to: UNISON West Sussex, County Hall, West Street, Chichester, PO19 1RQ. You can also join online at: www.unisonwestsussex.org.uk/join

Name (PLEASE PRINT)	Email address
Workplace address	Home address

I would like more information on (please tick all that are relevant):

Joining the union

Becoming a rep