

# BRANCH LINES

UNISON West Sussex Branch newsletter • [www.unisonwestsussex.org.uk](http://www.unisonwestsussex.org.uk)

## West Sussex Branch speaks out at national conference

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## INTRODUCTION



We publish this edition of Branch Lines at a momentous time in British history. As political parties

come to terms with the EU referendum result and their own leadership, we mustn't forget the work of our union goes on supporting our

members, irrespective of how they voted. We also tackle important local issues. There are many council service restructures taking place at the moment, affecting our members' jobs. We provide updates on some of those. There are also changes happening to services now provided externally, where we too are fully supporting our members. For any problems with Capita services, we now

have an agreed escalation route for you to raise your concerns, described on page 7. It's going to be a busy and challenging time for public services. The potential economic fall-out from the referendum result could impact council funding, but UNISON will continue to defend those services and the members who deliver them.

**Dan Sartin,**  
*Branch Secretary*

## A different relationship with Europe

**The people have spoken. They have made a clear call for change and a different relationship with Europe.**

We will be working in the coming weeks and months to hold the leave campaigners to the promises they've made – that there will be more money for the NHS, and that our rights at work will remain intact. But this also has to be a time for our country to heal.

At its best the campaign has enabled genuine debate and discussion in our homes, workplaces and communities about the future of the economy and the kind of country we want to live in. At its worst, the campaign has been typified by hatred, vitriol and misinformation that have done a huge disservice to our democracy and values.

All political leaders must now think about how to address the issues that people in our communities care most about – falling incomes, insecure jobs, unaffordable housing and the huge challenges facing our public services after more than half a decade of cuts.

## UNISON defends Jeremy Corbyn

**At time of going to press, UNISON, along with 12 other trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party, issued a statement in support of Jeremy Corbyn.**



He was nominated by UNISON after a proper, democratic decision and confirmed as leader taking 251,000 votes (60%). UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis said: "We believe the attack on him is misjudged, mistimed and indulgent. After the EU Referendum result, it is vital our Labour MPs return to their constituencies to begin to heal the dangerous fault lines that have split poorer working class communities, and not be hidden away in the corridors of Westminster plotting against an elected leader with an overwhelming mandate."

# UNISON summer events. Come and meet us!



**UNISON West Sussex Branch will be out and about this summer for our hub events in late July. If it's warm, we'll give away free ice creams!**

If you're not already a member, please visit our stall to speak to a branch officer or rep. We're a growing branch. We'd love to talk to you about how we can help you at work and discuss the benefits of collective support. If you would like UNISON to visit your workplace to speak to you about becoming a member, then please contact the office on 01243 777636 or email office.unison@westsussex.gov.uk

DATE	VENUE	TIME
18 July	Canteen, Durban House, Bognor Regis	10am to 4pm
19 July	Crawley Library (Social Work Offices)	10am to 2pm
20 July	Canteen, Centenary House, Durrington	10am to 3pm
21 July	Canteen, County Hall North (Parkside), Horsham	10am to 4pm
22 July	Martlets, County Hall, Chichester	10am to 4pm

## School insourcing

**St. Paul's Catholic College in Burgess Hill is 'insourcing' existing external contracts for cleaners and catering assistants into salaried NJC contracts.**

This will give those staff an hourly rate exceeding the Living Wage Foundation recommended living wage of £8.25 an hour. It will also improve sick pay conditions and holidays. Great credit goes to the school's governors for having the vision and determination to see this through.

Director of the school's support services, Laurie Perry said: "For us it is not about the cost of staff, it is about their value. Of course this has to be affordable, but treating our staff well

is not only morally and ethically right, we believe we get better value for money overall because they are so effective. We try to provide all our support services in-house. It helps us to recruit and develop the talent we need, and generates loyalty and commitment."

UNISON challenges the County Council to look at the examples set by St. Paul's and the University of Chichester (see last edition of Branch Lines) and bring its own cleaning contract back in-house.

## NEW PAY RATES CONFIRMED

**The National Joint Council (NJC) has announced the new pay rates for the next two years, 2016-17 and 2017-18.**

Each year of the two will see salaries increase by 1%, as recently agreed between employers and the NJC trade unions: UNISON, GMB and Unite. Pay increases start from 1 April 2016. Salaries will be backdated to this date by the July payroll.

At its June local government conference UNISON agreed to submit a fresh pay claim for 2017-18. Watch this space!

# Residents' Services: the endless restructure

**Residents' Services directorate UNISON members have expressed grave concerns about the way proposals for restructuring their services have been managed for the past two years.**

Staff have been left demoralised after consultants brought in to overhaul services are seemingly no nearer finding solutions than when they began.

Our members have severely criticised service management. They point to an unacceptable number of 'interim' senior management appointments they say jeopardise service continuity and sustainability. Vacancies – some caused by senior colleague resignations – have not been filled, yet workload has not reduced.

Staff remaining at the council have been reallocated this work on top of already demanding workloads. The impact on levels of stress, productivity and morale is evident.

They go on to tell us new internal governance systems are bureaucratic and cumbersome. There's a breakdown of trust between senior management and staff: some of our members believing services are being 'set up to fail' to justify outsourcing.

UNISON members contacted the branch

outlining their grievances. As a result, a special meeting between workplace reps and the Acting Executive Director of Communities and Public Protection took place this month. The branch challenged senior managers to clarify their plans and action them quickly so our members can get on to do their jobs without the unnecessary pressure of uncertainty over their heads. We have pressed for a regular negotiation meeting to be established between reps and management, solely to discuss Residents' Services. We will keep you updated.

## Council's new staff discounts website

**West Sussex County Council will launch a new website called 'West Sussex Choices' offering a wide range of staff discounts.**

Free to sign up, it will give access to discounts on travel, cinema tickets, days out, leisure activities, high street vouchers, reloadable cards and hundreds of local offers.

UNISON supports any initiative that provides staff benefits. We encourage you to take a look at the website when it's launched and make best use of its offers. Don't forget UNISON members can also access exclusive offers, benefits and services via the union. These are provided through our partners such as LV= and UIA Insurance, Lighthouse Financial Services and Vision Express. Look for the UNISON Plus logo on our website home page.



**“It is still a nasty, vindictive piece of legislation. There is no justification for it beyond a partisan desire to weaken trade unions, and indirectly to weaken the Labour party, to the point where it becomes almost impossible for workers to defend their rights.”** The Guardian editorial

# TRADE UNION ACT BECOMES LAW

**The heavily amended Trade Union Bill has now become law: the Trade Union Act. UNISON lobbying helped achieve concessions.**

We should be proud of our campaign. We didn't defeat it, but did manage to remove several elements that would have damaged trade unions.

We defeated the attempt to stop employers processing union subs, which could have cost some unions £millions to set up alternative ways of collection. The worst of the draconian rules on picketing were dropped. Cuts to facility time are on hold for three years. But the Act still includes clauses demanding pickets have an identifiable and authorised supervisor.

The double strike threshold in essential public services remains, imposing a turnout of 50% and then a 'yes' vote of at least 40% of all eligible voters. This can only now be implemented after pilot work into using e-balloting is completed.

## SO WHAT DID WE ACHIEVE?

1. The following were all watered down:
  - plans to give the Certification Officer (trade union regulator) unnecessary power over unions and charge unions to fund it;
  - plans to restrict union political funds; and
  - plans to cap union public sector facility time.
2. The government agreed to a review of online methods for strike ballots.
3. You can continue to pay your subs via payroll if you wish.

These added to previous concessions:

1. dropping extreme measures to restrict protest, pickets and social media campaigns;
2. abandoning plans to make all pickets show personal data to the police;
3. the 40% strike ballot threshold will not apply to union members working in ancillary services (e.g. support staff in schools and the Fire and Rescue Service).

## Corbyn vows to scrap Trade Union Act

**Jeremy Corbyn told UNISON conference delegates in June that a Labour government would immediately repeal the Trade Union Act.**

“We would go further,” the Labour leader said. “We would strengthen trade union and employment rights. We would be a government that says that trade unions are a force for good and a force for equality in our society.”

UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis said, “It was great to see Jeremy Corbyn and senior Labour figures recently making the case for trade unions and the rights of working people. He launched the ‘Workplace 2020’ consultation, and I look forward to UNISON playing a major role in the debate about the future of work in this country”.

## New pensions website

**The Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) has launched a new website: [www.lgpsmember.org](http://www.lgpsmember.org), which is much easier for scheme members to understand and navigate.**

If you make pensions contributions, we recommend you take a look at the website. It tells you about:

- calculating and transferring benefits;
- leaving the scheme before retirement and re-enrolment after retirement;
- tax on pensions;
- pensions and divorce;
- auto enrolment; and
- how much it costs and who can be a member.

West Sussex County Council has recognised the considerable shortfalls of Capita's Hartlink pensions website (not least due to UNISON members' feedback) and has commissioned Capita to produce a replacement website, scheduled to be launched late this summer (see page 7).

Look after and understand your pension because it is a major component of your terms and conditions at work.

## Essex Cares contract latest

**Essex Cares provides the County Council's 'reablement' service. This helps vulnerable people settle back safely into their home after hospital treatment.**

The union is supporting the pay claim for 2016/17. The council is looking at how this service fits in with wider care provision in a more integrated way, as part of a wholesale review of social work and the social care economy in West Sussex.

UNISON has had several meetings with the council's commissioners to discuss the best future model for the service, after the council failed to successfully replace the expiring contract with any provider on a long-term basis. We are working hard to ensure the council chooses the right strategic future option for the service and staff, after the unmitigated disaster outsourcing has proved to be. We're asking UNISON members in Essex Cares to encourage colleagues to join us so the workforce voice can be clearly heard.



## THANK YOU

**"I wanted to say my rep has been a great support throughout, practically and emotionally with a genuinely kind and caring approach. His knowledge and time given has been really appreciated and has led to some really positive steps being made from my management, finally getting the understanding and professional support that had been lacking for too long. I want to thank UNISON for being a great support, making me feel I have a support network in future that I can always turn to."** West Sussex member to the Branch Secretary



# Hartlink replacement testing



After receiving many user complaints about the accessibility and functions of the Capita pensions website Hartlink, West Sussex County Council asked Capita to provide a replacement.

It is scheduled to be launched by the end of summer. Branch representatives Dan Sartin, Judith Taylor and Chris Scanes have been asked to take part in 'user testing' at the end of July. They will provide feedback from both a user and union perspective to help improve the system before launch. We will keep you posted.

## THANK YOU

**"Thank you for the help UNISON have given me with my Stage 1 Sickness Absence. My rep did a great job and I felt very supported. Please pass on my thanks and gratitude for the assistance he provided."**

West Sussex member to branch officer

# Got a complaint about Capita?

**West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and Capita have agreed processes with UNISON to help you successfully raise a complaint or escalate an issue which does not seem to be progressing.**

We've heard from many members that payroll, pension and IT queries particularly can often be logged, but are then not responded to. You can now escalate the matter to a higher level and/or complain by following the processes linked from our website home page via the 'Capita Issues' icon. You can use these processes if you are a WSCC employee or work for another employer using Capita support services, for example academies and colleges.

If your issue is serious please alert your local rep or the branch office at the same



time you lodge or escalate a complaint. UNISON will help you resolve the problem if agreed processes are unsuccessful.

Processes include raising complaints or issues about:

- Pensions
- Payroll and Recruitment
- Schools' Payroll and Recruitment
- IT Services (including IT reasonable adjustments)

Also on our website is Capita's 'Have Your Say' leaflet. This explains the process used to escalate pension-related issues through their Customer Relationship Team (CRT). It includes information about the Pensions Ombudsman Service and the Pensions Advisory Service.

Should any of these processes be unsuccessful, please contact the branch office for further advice: 01243 777636 or office. [unison@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:unison@westsussex.gov.uk)

# Join UNISON – Membership Form

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

## 1 Tell us about you

Title	First name											
Surname/family name		Date of birth / /										
Home address												
Postcode												
email												
Phone number (please indicate if home, work or mobile)	National insurance number (from your payslip)											
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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	▼	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](http://unison.org.uk/privacy-policy) to see how we will protect and use your personal information

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

Please fill in the form and send to UNISON West Sussex

Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

To: The Manager Bank/building society

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of Account holder(s)

Bank/building society account number

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Branch sort code

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Service User Number

9	7	0	0	5	0
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Reference number (for office use only do not complete)

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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





## Branch at National Conference

**UNISON's national conferences took place in Brighton this year. The Branch sent a delegation (including Karen Daubney, Deputy Branch Secretary (left) and Young Members Officer Laura Child, pictured).**

The branch was heavily involved trying to influence UNISON to change for the better, through participation in debates and by tabling motions for discussion. Our branch tends to focus its efforts through our motions on improving UNISON's structures, organisation and funding arrangements.

The branch tabled its own motion on employer facility time at UNISON's Local Government Conference. Dan Sartin, Branch Secretary, moved the motion. It was carried unanimously. The branch also participated in the debate on local government pay. Karen Daubney spoke in the debate for an emergency motion to censure the National Joint Council Committee for having accepted a pay offer which West Sussex members had voted to reject by 82%. This was a finely balanced debate which led to a card vote and a majority decision of 60,000 (of the union's 1.25million members) in favour.

The branch was also at the centre of

efforts to change the way the union's funding is distributed. We want to see more of it provided to branches that tend to do the work from which members benefit. The branch drafted a motion on this. Six other branches rallied around. This proved to be the other most hotly contested debate of Conference. The branch's position was lost by just 40,000 votes (52 to 48%). However, in the period leading up to the debate, a number of concessions were made to the branches. This means from 2017 new funding streams should be available to help us better support members.

Of course there were many more debates in Brighton, from the Trade Union Act, to Palestine, to youth services, to the crisis in social work. Your delegates listened and voted in them all. Conference was also addressed by Jeremy Corbyn MP, who is a UNISON member and used to work for its predecessor union, NUPE. He received a rapturous reception from delegates who feel he is the first Labour leader for decades to fully share our values and beliefs. If you would like to read the motions the branch drafted, or see the list of all the decisions taken at Conference, please get in touch with the Branch office.

## Aspire Sussex contract retender

**Adult and Community Learning (ACL) provider Aspire Sussex has seen its fair share of problems since it was 'spun out' of the County Council.**

These have been documented in previous editions of Branch Lines. The ACL contract is due for retender in 2017. A pay claim was submitted by branch reps for 2016/17. The 'staff mutual' will now have to bid in an EU rules-compliant tendering process to continue to run its own services.

Potentially, Aspire will be bidding against stiff, commercial opposition from any provider who wishes to enter the market, even on a loss-leader basis. This is one of the pitfalls of launching a staff mutual; there is no cast iron guarantee that says your organisation will always provide the service. We saw this in Surrey when Virgin took over a popular staff-run health provider.

## How councillors spend your council tax

**The latest examples in an ongoing saga of questionable funding grants awarded by West Sussex County Council's County Local Committees (CLCs) arose in the South Chichester, North Horsham and Joint East Arun CLCs in June.**

The council has made the following awards:

1. £600 to the Rotary Club to purchase an 'arts frame';
2. £2500 to the Chichester Baptist Church for an oven;
3. £800 for planters in Angmering to celebrate 40 years of 'twinning';
4. £500 to provide bowling green steps in Billingshurst; and
5. a deferred decision to award £744 to buy portable heaters for a rifle club.

It's difficult to understand how the council can justify giving away scarce public funds like this. These grant streams aren't monitored. The council has no idea if they're value for money.

To his credit, and after pressure from UNISON, the council's cabinet member for corporate relations Bob Lanzer approved a £142,000 cut to the Community Initiative Fund (CIF) budget in 2017/18. He argued that during times of financial pressure the authority had to review the "suitability of its budget for spending such as CIF."

## AFFINITY SUTTON UPDATE

**The merger with Circle Anglia is apparently going ahead, starting on 1 September.**

UNISON West Sussex is already providing support to members and will continue to do so throughout what may be difficult times ahead, including an imminent TUPE process. The branch also supported a small group of members with a TUPE transfer to Southern Housing.

## BARNET LIBRARY STRIKE

**Barnet Council libraries UNISON members couldn't take the threat of cuts and outsourcing any more.**

They came out on strike for 3 days from 13 June. Huge swathes of the council's work have been picked up by the global outsourcing giant Capita, including statutory services such as environmental health and planning.

UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis said: "Our members in Barnet have been at the sharp end, with the council outsourcing anything it can. The spirit shown by Barnet library workers is a tremendous example to us all."

West Sussex branch extends its support to Barnet.

# TTIP threat remains

**We may not be in Europe, but the threat of TTIP remains.**

In June, UNISON delegates in Brighton agreed that it was a 'top priority' for the union to continue to campaign against public services being included in trade treaties currently being forged between politicians and businessmen behind closed doors.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the US and the EU, and the broader Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) are still being negotiated, while the

Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the EU is closer to ratification.

Public services have been included in all three agreements, despite an unprecedented European and US public and trade union campaign.



Speaking at conference, a Scottish representative said: "Even though we're now leaving the European Union, we're still subject to TTIP through the single

market. These agreements were negotiated with no democratic accountability or transparency and provide a licence for multinational companies to take control of public sector services."

"They have a 'lock-in of privatisation' so that private companies with a hold on health care and other services could not be removed," she said. "Employment and trade union rights would be attacked, and health and safety standards driven down. Deals could also pose a threat to the environment."

UNISON will continue to lead the fight against TTIP. Conference agreed the union would campaign for all public services to be removed from all trade agreements.

## Thank you

**"I just wanted to thank you for all your support and advice through what has been a very difficult time. I need to draw a line in the sand now and move on with my life. I would also like to wish you all the best for your future plans."**

West Sussex member to caseworker

## Grace Eyre Foundation faces challenge

**Grace Eyre Foundation (GEF) is facing challenges experienced by many care support providers as funding models and approaches change.**

Sadly, this often results in downward pressure on pay terms and conditions for those staff transferred from the County Council. GEF is no exception. We are fully supporting our members to resist pay reductions, but GEF has had to move away from its Living Wage employer status thanks to ever-restrictive market conditions.

The failure of council commissioning processes to successfully extend the contract with any provider on a long-term basis again means the council must review its options for this critically important service for vulnerable people with learning difficulties.

UNISON will ensure the long-term interests of service users and staff are forefront in that decision-making process, now the service's outsourcing journey has reached a dead-end.

# SERVICE REVIEW UPDATES

## 1. ADULT PROVIDER SERVICES

A number of staff engagement sessions were held to discuss the current day centre service for disabled and older people: what works well, not so well, how staff would like to see the service develop and what they would like to do more of. A series of meetings is planned for the rest of the summer. UNISON has asked to be involved in the options appraisal process so staff are represented.

## 2. ADULT OPERATIONS

Very 'high-level' plans are being discussed to develop a new model of community-based social work. Firm proposals are being developed: a pilot approach is likely. UNISON welcomes this, and is involved in discussions with the Director of Adults' Services and others. Team managers were briefed on this project work in June and asked to pass on information to staff.

## 3. CHILDREN'S PROVIDER SERVICES

An independent review of Cissbury Lodge was completed but there are no outcomes to report yet. The union has questioned 'violence at work' (VAW) statistics at Cissbury. We were recently informed by HR that the online reporting system shows a decrease in reported incidents. However, this needs further investigation. It appears a decision was made to introduce a paper 'tick' incident-report sheet for support workers

to complete and keep on file locally, as they do not have time to complete the online forms. Therefore, not all accidents and incidents are being clearly reported. We need a better understanding of who makes the decision and the criteria they use to decide which incidents are reported.

## 4. CHILDREN'S/FAMILY OPERATIONS

The council plans to bring together Early Help, Think Family and the Youth Prevention Service to work more closely together. During June, management workshops took place, but there are no firm proposals to report yet.

## 5. AMHPS ALLOWANCE CLAIM

A pay claim was submitted on behalf of Accredited Mental Health Professionals to improve the allowance they receive for this statutory and challenging work. The claim was developed after a detailed electronic survey of members. The claim is for a £150 or £175 lump sum dependant on staff experience.

## 6. CENTRAL SUSSEX COLLEGE

Plans to close the Haywards Heath campus continue, but in clear breach of the collective trade union recognition agreement, college management refuses to engage with the staff trade unions. UNISON and the teaching unions are now considering their next steps.

**Thank you** "I've just had a call from x. She mentioned that she couldn't have got her ill health retirement sorted out last year without you and that you were brilliant. Hopefully she told you at the time but, if not, now you know!"

Branch officer relaying information from a branch member to a caseworker

# Welcome to our new Casework Coordinator

**Dee Chauhan started work with us in April as the permanent replacement for Tim Harrison, who retired at the end of 2015.**

Throughout her career Dee has been involved in trade unions. She was GMB's workplace rep with Seeboard (now EDF) in Hove. Lately, she represented and advised UNISON members in the Birmingham Health Care branch for 2.5 years.

"One of my priorities is to get to know branch workplace reps," said Dee, "so I can find out how best to support and develop them in their role. This could involve arranging courses, mentoring

and fully supporting reps as they manage cases.

"I've been involved in pay and progression negotiations with various employers. There's no better preparation for this than reading through all relevant material thoroughly. I always do my homework! You can only fight effectively for your members if you know your case inside out. And when I know I'm right, I'm like a dog with a bone: I won't give up!"

"We're delighted to have



Dee on board," said Branch Secretary Dan Sartin.

"Starting a new job is always a steep learning curve, but I know everyone across the branch will do their best to help Dee settle in quickly."

For casework support, first contact your local rep, or if you don't have one, the branch office on 01243 777636 or email office. [unison@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:unison@westsussex.gov.uk)

## WORKPLACE REP PROFILE

### Carla Hardy

**New workplace rep Carla joined the County Council in May as a Facilities Officer (Chichester).**

She was made redundant at Horsham District Council (HDC) following a restructure and service outsourcing. At HDC, Carla was a Contracts Officer, a UNISON Steward, Unison Health and Safety Officer and a member of the branch committee.

Carla contacted the West Sussex branch soon after her arrival at County Hall and quickly became workplace rep for the Facilities Management



Service. Ironically, that service is part of a restructure of Residents' Services, currently in its early stages. However, this places Carla in a unique position, as she explains:

"Having gone through a painful restructure at HDC and come out the other side, I know how difficult things can be for colleagues, especially when the outcome isn't known and you're expected to

carry on as normal. I hope my experience can provide support for UNISON members who don't know what to expect and whose jobs may be affected by the changes. I am hopeful this restructure will be much smoother."

"I've always seen my work as being more than just a job. Being part of the union puts me in a position to be able to help others: to make a difference. It's always something I look forward to learning more about, and plan to take advantage of the many union training opportunities to help me improve in my role as rep, as well as in my job."



## Further Education pay talks



**Further Education (FE) employers stated in June they were not yet in a position to make a revised pay offer to unions and were extending their consultation with colleges.**

UNISON expressed its disappointment and frustration at the lack of an offer to consider.

Employers said that although the sector's financial outlook appeared better than a year ago, considerable uncertainty remained with future funding and the Area Review process. They stated they were committed to working together with unions to promote FE and were prepared to commit to joint work on the gender pay gap.

UNISON emphasised the impact pay cuts have had on college support staff. We highlighted falling living standards and the struggles many of our members have in making ends meet. Successive pay cuts have increased members' debts and forced many to rely on friends and family for financial support or take second jobs. Over 80% of support staff say staff morale has fallen as a result of FE pay policy.

We are hoping for more constructive negotiations when talks resume this month.

## Thank you

**"I just wanted to say a big thank you to you and UNISON for the support you gave me yesterday."**

West Sussex member to workplace representative

## Save money with UNISON Plus' insurance provider

**One West Sussex member told us: "I saved about £25 by combining my home building and contents insurance with UIA. But the big saving came on an annual European travel policy."**

"I previously bought my travel insurance from the Post Office, but saved another £50 by switching to UIA. What's also great is that I pay my insurance policies by monthly direct debit, split equally across 12 payments in the year, without any surcharge for paying in instalments. My previous provider added a premium to direct debit payments if you didn't pay your bill in one lump sum. For some members these savings could be greater than their annual union subs. Not being penalised for splitting payments across 12 months is also excellent."

UIA Mutual Insurance has been providing great value, high quality insurance to trade union members and their families for over 125 years.

Being mutual means UIA is owned by its policyholders; which enables them to keep premiums low, provide excellent products and employ highly trained staff.

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# SCHOOLS NEWS

Many West Sussex schools have been hugely impacted by the fall-out from the government's unfair schools funding formula which disadvantages our area. UNISON will launch a campaign on this for the autumn term, with news in the next Schools' Branch Lines.

## SIR ROBERT WOODARD ACADEMY, Lancing

Budget cuts mean the academy has had to reorganise its pastoral service. Two teams were amalgamated, but after a team member resigned, she was not replaced. With a smaller team, attendance monitoring could not be done effectively, creating a safeguarding issue. It could only be done if remaining staff worked extra unpaid hours. Even though teams were merged, there was still not enough resource



to meet workload demands. UNISON argued that the school should either find the money to reorganise properly, or stop doing some of the activities allocated to the team. We have asked the school to provide immediate relief staff to the team. The school is consulting until the end of term and we are fully involved supporting our members.

## LITTLEHAMPTON ACADEMY

Up to ten support staff are being made redundant as a result of a restructure caused primarily by budget cuts. It is hoped most will be achieved voluntarily, though there are concerns for the impact on children.

## LITTLE GREEN SPECIAL SCHOOL, Compton

There are proposed support staff reductions in three areas: pastoral care, school driver (though subject to a re-evaluation) and teaching. Schools such as Little Green work with children who have behavioural difficulties. CCTV helps monitor their behaviour to make sure staff and other children are not put at risk. The proposed redundancies affect a member of staff who operates the school's CCTV, which is a major concern. The school has agreed to postpone the redundancy pending UNISON concerns being fully addressed and a risk assessment being completed.

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