

BRANCH LINES

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



We need more **NJC** **2022**

We report on the employers' pay offer and ballot now underway.

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This edition is printed at a crucial time for UNISON members, most of whom are

feeling the squeeze on their income from seemingly uncontrollable inflation. Years of Tory government economic mismanagement and major international trading fluctuations have

created a perfect storm for public sector workers who are facing unprecedented energy bills and rising food prices. In this context, we outline the employers' NJC pay offer and describe the many reasons why you should reject it. We also update you on several successful negotiations the West Sussex branch has been involved in with various employers, not least being

an encouraging temporary increase by the council in the mileage rate for staff who need to travel to do their job. Elsewhere, our reps have successfully saved jobs at the University of Chichester and succeeded in obtaining extra release time to support members at the Chichester College Group.

Dan Sartin,
Branch Secretary

TEMPORARY INCREASE IN WSCC NJC MILEAGE RATE

In response to exceptional cost of living pressures, the branch is pleased to report the council has agreed to a temporary increase to the NJC mileage rate it uses from 46.9 pence to 58.7 pence per mile. This will be payable to staff for whom NJC mileage rates apply from 1 July to 30 September 2022 and, in discussion with UNISON, will be kept under review.

The council intends to revert to the previous mileage rate at the point petrol prices drop back to 2021 rates, but also wishes to keep the increase under review to check affordability and impact. Unleaded petrol cost £167.7 pence per litre on average in the south east in May 2022, up from £129.6 pence per litre in May 2021 (AA figures).

Due to an increasing number of UNISON members contacting the branch office concerned about their ability to continue to use their private car for council business due to the cost of petrol, UNISON West Sussex branch entered negotiations with the council for a temporary uplift to NJC mileage rates.

UNISON West Sussex recognises that at the time of introduction there were few, if any, equivalent examples of such action in neighbouring authorities and welcomes the council's commitment to staff to help meet some of the impact of the cost-of-living crisis in this way. The branch welcomes this move by WSCC and trusts members will also welcome the measure.



BRANCH VACANCY

Could you work for a branch of Britain's largest trade union?

Our busy office has a vacancy for a vital role which supports our 6,000 members.

BRANCH ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

Maternity leave cover on a 12 months fixed term contract.

WSCC Grade 5

Closing date:

Monday 26 September

For more details, visit unisonwestsussex.org.uk

UNREGISTERED PRACTITIONER CAREER PATHWAYS IN AS AND CPYL

Following the successful improvements to pay and progression achieved for WSCC social workers and occupational therapists, branch convenor for adults' services Gerard Robson brings us up to date with negotiations aiming to address the concerns of 'unqualified' members.

These are grade 6 or 7 posts and are considered unregistered practitioners.

"We've had two constructive meetings with the council's HR service to identify opportunities that might be appropriate for our members. These would form the basis of a 'career pathway' for those posts in scope.

Training and progression

"There is general agreement that training available for established staff is either too basic or too advanced (i.e., being a student social worker). In many cases, staff in scope do not want to take this route, but believe there should be progression within their roles.

Staff regularly perform duties above their pay grade and this situation has been compounded by the cost-of-living crisis, where members in these roles are often using their own vehicles for work-related tasks.

"We'd like the employer to support career development of this group along with



mentoring and shadowing and training opportunities. We'd like to see the creation of more grade 8 practitioner posts, and also have the ability to move, for example, into roles in directly provided services or contracts.

"Service provision will suffer from a significant number of people stuck in jobs with no progression. This 'stagnation' prevents the movement of workers at lower grades being able to move up to such roles as their experience and competence improves."

Terms of reference

"By October we hope to have established clear terms of

reference, roles in scope and an indicative timescale for when these options can be negotiated and achieved. Ideally, it would be great to have this completed by the new financial year starting in April 2023.

"We have every confidence that the new director for adults' social services Alan Sinclair will review this situation realistically, with understanding and sincerity.

Non-UNISON workers

"I'm aware some non-UNISON workers have approached directors directly outlining the issues they have with this situation. Please note UNISON is the only negotiating body acting on behalf of employees and is formally recognised by WSCC for this.

Any issues should be channelled by members through us. We represent the majority of impacted staff. We're the only ones who can gather evidence across the range of teams and services and so present a coherent and fully informed case for the council to consider.

"I'd urge any non-members affected to join UNISON as soon as possible to ensure their voices can be heard."



NJC PAY OFFER AND BALLOT: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!

A large majority of our branch membership is on NJC pay, whether that be members in the county council, schools, academies and some other employers.

NJC employers have made a pay offer for the pay year 2022-23. UNISON asked for a flat rate of £2,000 or Retail Price Index (RPI) inflation, whichever was the higher. RPI inflation was reported on 17 August to be running at 12.3% – and was already at 11.8% when the pay claim was submitted in June.

UNISON also asked for a range of other improvements to terms and conditions, the employers' response to which are detailed below. The employers made an offer of a flat rate of £1,925 and an additional day's annual leave for all staff.

This may appear to mostly meet the union's claim – but only if you disregard the part of the claim that required

the offer to take into account RPI inflation. RPI inflation is 12.3%. This means every member at every grade would receive a significant real-terms pay cut. You can see how the offer would impact on you and see the size of your real-terms pay cut by visiting our website at unisonwestsussex.org.uk

The headlines

1. The union claim was for a flat rate £2,000 or Retail Price Index (RPI) inflation – whichever is the greater. The offer meets neither element of that claim.
2. The offer means no members will receive an inflation-equivalent pay rise.
3. The offer will significantly

4. The employers have rejected a one-off Covid-19 recognition payment that covers all NJC workers.
5. The employers have rejected the introduction of a homeworking allowance for all staff who are working from home.
6. The employers have rejected the introduction of a school support staff retention payment scheme.
7. The employers have rejected a reduction of the working week to 35 hours with no loss of pay.

Pay ballot: have your say!

A consultative pay ballot will be run by the West Sussex branch for members on NJC pay from:

**Monday 5 September to
Monday 19 September**

The UNISON West Sussex branch committee recommends that members REJECT the offer. With energy bills set to sky-rocket from October, none of us can afford to accept this pay cut. Watch out for your personal ballot which will be sent to you by email on 5 September. If you do not receive it, try checking your email's spam folder. If it's not in there, contact the branch and we will find a solution. However you vote, please take part! It's your pay, so have your say.

THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

What's driving and what are the consequences of the UK cost-of-living crisis? The summary below provides a (non-exhaustive) checklist of causes and effects.

Causes

1. Fuel prices hit record levels in July. Petrol reached 191.5p a litre with diesel above £2 in some regions. High oil prices are due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and low refining-capacity across Europe. A fall in the value of the pound against the dollar has also pushed up wholesale costs.
2. The cap on average household gas and electricity bills is likely to soar in October from £1,971 to £3,500.
3. Rising production costs – from the price of animal feed and fertiliser to availability of produce, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine – coupled with exorbitant land transport costs led food prices to rocket. Shop prices rose by 4.4% compared to July last year. Fresh food inflation soared to 8% from 6.2% a month before, the highest rate since March 2009. That contributed to overall food inflation of 7%.
4. Non-food prices were pushed up 3% on July last year as a result of higher shipping and production costs partly caused by

continued disruption in China from Covid-related restrictions.

5. The Bank of England has warned RPI inflation could reach 13.2% by October. RPI inflation (including housing costs) was calculated at 12.3% for July.

Effects

1. The National Energy Action (NEA) charity has added half a million households to its estimate of those facing fuel poverty (spending more than 10% of income on energy). It predicts 8.7m households will be in fuel poverty after the next price cap hike in October.
2. According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), more than 70% of low-income households with an 18- to 24-year-old were in arrears with at least one household bill, and more than 80% of households with an 18- to 34-year-old are going without essentials.
3. Citizens Advice has said the number of people seeking help because they cannot afford both food and energy has risen more than threefold in a year.

4. Royal Mail workers voted to strike in August. Barristers in England and Wales staged a five-day strike in July, and about 40,000 RMT members, went on strike during the summer. The strike comes after union leaders rejected a 'paltry' offer of a below inflation 4% pay rise for the remainder of 2022 from Network Rail, and a possible 4% next year if workers accepted changes in working conditions that would compromise safety.

Workers should always be free to decide how they want to respond to pay offers, changes to terms and conditions, and threats to jobs – and as a last resort, to go on strike to defend their livelihoods and to improve their working lives. As the cost-of-living crisis shows no signs of easing, these rights are more important than ever.

We know the Trade Union Act was designed to suppress workers' abilities to respond and act. And now, both candidates battling it out to be Conservative leader are promising more attacks on the right to strike, and offering nothing for public services. But trade unions, like ours, remain the last line of defence, so we must be ready for what's to come.

NEW UNISON REP FOR CHICHESTER COLLEGE GROUP



We're delighted to announce that Karen Fisher has been granted three days per week consolidated time to take on the expanded role of union convenor for the recently enlarged Chichester College Group (CCG) of further education colleges across West Sussex.

On 1 August, CCG took over the management of Worthing-based Northbrook College (Broadwater, Durrington and Shoreham campuses) and Worthing College. Northbrook had only recently been part of an unsuccessful merger with the then Brighton City College to form the Greater Brighton Metropolitan College.

The further education commissioner had to step in to resolve the matter after an Ofsted report indicated Northbrook required improvement. The chief exec of the neighbouring CCG was brought in temporarily to address the issues which eventually led to the merger with CCG.

Karen will spend her three days per week supporting UNISON members in all CCG West Sussex campuses (Chichester, Worthing, Crawley, Haywards Heath, Brinsbury and Shoreham), operating principally from her base in Broadwater.

"My aim is to get out to



meet local reps as soon as possible to find out what the local issues are and work alongside reps to help resolve them. I'll also represent our members' views on collective issues across the new group.

"I want non-members to be able to see the benefits of being part of a successful trade union, and hopefully encourage them to join," said Karen.

Karen was formerly on the

UNISON national committee for FE colleges, was the principal negotiating officer for Northbrook with the employer (the Association of Colleges) and has been an active UNISON rep for many years.

"Part of the deal negotiated with the CCG merger was for harmonisation of processes – including pay – across all colleges of the group, so this will be one of my priorities during September: to make sure plans emerge to introduce this change."

"However, I am I hope realistic. I understand managers' options are often restricted by the level of government funding they receive. But I wouldn't like to see a repeat of the situation that happened during the previous merger when senior managers were awarded significant pay rises at levels that did not filter down through the grading system."

"I'm hopeful of a positive future working relationship with the group management team and look forward to meeting many UNISON members across the county in weeks to come."

NDC CONFERENCE

In June, six branch officers and stewards made up a delegation to UNISON's national delegate conference held in Brighton. Conference is the annual parliament of UNISON and determines the policy and strategy of the UK's largest trade union. 3,000 delegates from across the UK attended, and West Sussex played its role.

Pictured speaking are branch chair Ian Harvey who spoke on the issues facing members working for private contractors, branch young members' officer Kiera Hilder who moved a motion for the NEC (national executive council) on the 'right to disconnect' for young workers, and branch secretary Dan Sartin who is also chair of the NEC's Finance Committee and gave a speech to deliver the union's accounts to conference.



UPDATE

WEST SUSSEX PENSIONS MANAGEMENT



UNISON member and former WSCC senior finance officer Tim Stretton has successfully applied to be the employee rep on the West Sussex pensions committee.

He said, "The governance of the West Sussex local government pension scheme (LGPS) is made up of two bodies:

1. A pensions committee (PC): county councillors, plus a scheme member representative and a representative of employers other than WSCC; and
2. A pension advisory board (PAB): a chair, scheme member and employer representatives. The PAB scrutinises the decisions of the PC.

"The PC is the decision-making body for the West Sussex LGPS. Being part of the PC I can influence the way the fund is managed, getting the best returns for scheme members, which includes most local UNISON members working for 200 public service employers including WSCC.

"Two vacant representative posts on the PAB are in the process of being filled. They will join UNISON member Becky Caney. Having reps who reflect the values of the trade union is vitally important for the scheme success as it has 80,000 members. Decisions we make now will impact on the futures of thousands of UNISON members. "I want to assure scheme members that their pension fund is in safe hands and continues to benefit from UNISON influence on both pensions committees."

Membership Form

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

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

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

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

This information helps your employer and us confirm your identity

Your subscription rate is determined by how much you earn

1 Tell us about you

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

2 Tell us about your job

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

3 What you will pay each month

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions

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

Instruction to deduct the subscription from my salary

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

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

This information is standard direct debit mandate information

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

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

Email Text Phone

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

4 Campaign fund contribution

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

Campaign Fund

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

UNISON Labour Link

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

No thank you

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

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

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



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

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

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

SCHOOLS ADVICE FOR THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR

COVID

UNISON West Sussex continues to raise concerns with the council on the risk of workplace Covid infections, particularly the risk to school support staff. Safer systems of working and improved school ventilation systems are a priority.

UNISON is also concerned that some schools report paying for lateral flow device (LFD) testing for staff from school budgets. We're pressing employers to fund LFD testing in special education settings but the focus on the health and safety of our members in all school settings remains a priority.

If you have worries about testing, high infection rates or school ventilation, you should raise a H&S query with the school leadership team and contact the branch.

The current situation remains fluid. Infection rates have been increasing. This impacts on staffing in schools with requests to cover and take on additional workloads. We advise you to read the branch website H&S advice (also emailed to school members) and contact us if concerns continue, or if you need more advice. We will challenge employers on your behalf.

CONSULTATION

1. Consolidating leave policies

UNISON has consulted with WSCC on policies for school staff, including the consolidation into one document of several policies relating to types of discretionary leave. HR will issue advice on any changes needing to be made to school policies. However, we know one school was advised that changes made to its discretionary leave policy required consultation. Appropriate HR advice was given. We're jointly reviewing policies and guidance supporting diversity in the workplace. This includes guidance on the menopause. We questioned the disciplinary and grievance process: in particular implementing relevant training for investigating managers.

2. Recruitment and retention

We have also raised concerns regarding the schools' support staff retention and recruitment crisis. Though a national concern, locally this has led to an increase in work related stress. UNISON will be writing to NJC members, giving you the opportunity to have your say on pay, so please look out for any emails.

3. Long Covid

UNISON is negotiating a protocol supporting those suffering from long Covid following a landmark case in the Scottish courts (see page 13).

4. TUPE

UNISON has requested earlier involvement in service outsourcing TUPE discussions as part of a best practice framework to improve consultation and tendering. Currently, this is most relevant to school cleaning and catering staff members, where transfers of staff sometimes take place. TUPE provides some protections, but due to employers' different terms and conditions (especially relating to sickness absence and holiday entitlement), problems can develop soon after transfer.

5. Academisation

Last term, UNISON supported members through several TUPE academisations involving transfers from WSCC to multi academy trusts. During transfers, new employers can suggest minor changes designed to ease operational requirements. These are not usually controversial, although in a cost-of-living crisis, even a change to pay date can have an impact on already stretched incomes. We were pleased to see during a recent TUPE process one

new employer change their proposed pay date due to UNISON member concerns.

6. Recognition agreements

We're delighted to announce new recognition agreements with Hurst Education Trust and Bishop Otter Academy Trust. These involve the setting up of a joint negotiation and consultation council (JNCC), establishing a solid footing for positive industrial relations. Recognition agreements, paid facility time to release trade union reps to support academy members and establishing regular JNCCs are much welcomed. This is a positive action that should benefit both the trusts and staff.

7. Escalation

UNISON has agreed an escalation process with WSCC HR for managing issues with school employers. Members should continue to first contact the branch when needing advice on collective concerns during consultation, or any HR process they are involved in.

TERM-TIME ONLY WORKERS

UNISON LEGAL VICTORY SECURES MINIMUM PAID ANNUAL LEAVE

All workers in the UK will now receive the same minimum level of paid annual holiday leave, regardless of how many hours they work, following a landmark legal judgment by the Supreme Court in July.

The case, Harpur Trust v Brazel & UNISON, was taken by music teacher Lesley Brazel. She argued her

employer was wrong to give her fewer days of annual leave than the legal minimum because she only worked



during the school term.

The branch has reported on this case before and was in touch with its term-time only (TTO) members in 2020. We negotiated an agreement with WSCC on how it would implement the Brazel judgement if the

(article continued from page 11)

appeal against it was successfully defended by UNISON, which it now has been. The branch will now be working with the council to put the court's judgment into effect as soon as possible, in line with the agreement we made with them back in 2020.

This will mean a beneficial change to the way pay is calculated for TTO staff on lower grades, a sum to account for the council's liability for back pay and a contribution made to members' pension schemes by the council to account for under-contributing to pensions.

Commenting on the judgment, branch secretary Dan Sartin said, "This is an important clarification of the law and one which will provide a benefit to thousands of UNISON members, particularly those who work in schools. Once again this shows the benefit of union membership, which improves the world of work for all of us. Our next job will be to ensure that other West Sussex employers implement the judgment. We are already in discussion with Chichester College Group, the largest further education provider in the county, and will approach non-maintained schools and academies."



STAFF/CHILD RATIO CONSULTATION

Responding to the government's launch of a consultation into increasing early years staff-to-child ratios from 1:4 to 1:5 for two-year-olds, UNISON head of education Mike Short said: "Children will be put at risk and staff will be driven out of the early education sector by this government interference."

"Workers are already quitting due to unmanageable workloads. Attracting new staff will be near impossible if ministers heap ever more responsibility on employees.

"Claims that ratio changes reduce costs for parents are a smokescreen. The reality is that risks will increase as staff look after more children and support for the youngest will fall.

"Instead of seeking early years education on the cheap as a way of tackling the cost-of-living crisis, the government must improve funding for the sector.

"Staff should be paid a wage reflecting the vital importance of their work. Only then will the sector be able to recruit and retain high quality workers and give children the start in life they deserve."

JOINT ACTION SAVES JOBS AT CHICHESTER UNIVERSITY



UNISON reps at the University of Chichester along with University and College Union (UCU) colleagues, have recently been involved in organisational change meetings and negotiations with the university senior management, where the unions successfully defended two professional services staff jobs that were 'at risk'.

The two jobs were 'at risk' due to management presenting a 'proposal for change' document (PCD) at a joint consultancy group sub-group meeting, attended by representatives of both the UCU and UNISON trade unions.

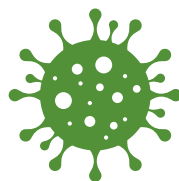
During a number of intensive sub-group meetings with management, over a

number of weeks, both unions continually stated their position that they were totally against the proposal for change. They informed the meetings that if management continued to push the PCD forward, it would risk them going into dispute with the university. At the heart of the proposals was the concept that permanent roles could be replaced with cheaper, temporary roles filled by student graduates.

Eventually, management agreed to withdraw the PCD and a compromise was agreed that allowed both members of staff to retain their existing jobs, at the same grade.

As the PCD was withdrawn, both jobs were no longer 'at risk'. This was a great example of both unions standing firmly together.

EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL CLASSES LONG COVID AS A DISABILITY



In a landmark legal case for sufferers of long Covid, an employment tribunal recently ruled that the symptoms brought about by the condition may be classed as a disability.

Terence Burke brought claims of disability discrimination and unfair dismissal after being sacked from his job as a caretaker in 2021. He had worked in the role since 2001, but had been unable to attend work for nine months after suffering substantial and long-term effects from Covid-19. The tribunal decided Mr Burke's symptoms amounted to a disability within the definition of the Equality Act 2010. It gave Mr Burke permission to proceed with his claim of disability

discrimination against his former employer.

The judgement referenced a TUC report from June 2021 about workers' experience of long Covid, and supported what the claimant said about the recurrence of the symptoms. Employment tribunal decisions are not binding, but they are persuasive, and may still be used by negotiators to point to employers the direction a tribunal might take in similar circumstances.

UNISON's updated guidance explains this important case. It highlights the importance of looking at individual circumstances when arguing the member is disabled due to the impact of long-Covid. Download it from the national UNISON website: [unison.org.uk](https://www.unison.org.uk)



WOMEN'S AND LGBT+ RIGHTS BOUND TOGETHER

Branch equality officers Carla Hardy (Women) and Karen Fenn (LGBT+) outline how recent anti-abortion legislation in the USA could impact on minorities here in the UK.

UNISON joined thousands of people marching in central London in the summer to protest against the recent overturning of abortion rights in the USA and to demand the decriminalisation of abortion in the UK. The overturning of the Roe v Wade ruling has meant that millions of American women are now denied access to abortion.

UNISON is part of the 'We Trust Women Coalition', a group of organisations demanding the decriminalisation of abortion in the UK. The 1967 Abortion Act gives women in the UK access to abortion, but only under specific grounds, with permission from two doctors.

Abortion here is still

treated under Victorian criminal law, with some of the most draconian laws in the world (Offences Against the Person Act 1861), legislating for life imprisonment for abortion. The British law is harsher than that in Texas!

There have been calls for the government to prevent women being unjustly persecuted by expanding the government's own change in law in Northern Ireland to make sure that abortion is an issue between women and their doctors.

With over a million women in UNISON, we believe passionately in defending a woman or person's right to choose. The right to have a safe abortion, in private and with dignity,

should not depend on where you happen to live.

Karen said: "In short, women should have the right to choose abortion regardless of their sexuality, or gender identity."

Guardian journalist Owen Jones recently stated: "It is no coincidence that attacks on gay and trans rights in the US have been accompanied by the onslaught against women's reproductive rights – or indeed that the same politicians are leading the charge against each."

"The fate of women – of all sexualities – and LGBT+ people are bound together. While women are the principal targets of a society rigged in favour of men, this system also punishes those seen to deviate from rigid gender norms. Improving the position of women will probably be accompanied by progress for LGBT+ people; likewise, rolling back women's rights will also mean those of LGBT+ people deteriorate in tandem."

Reported homophobic and transphobic hate crimes have surged in the UK. In January, the Council of Europe placed the UK in the same category as Hungary, Poland, Russia and Turkey for its position on LGBTQ rights, while for the third year running the UK has been relegated in the annual ranking of LGBT+ rights across Europe.



Marilyn Cox

MARILYN IS ELECTED!

Marilyn Cox, UNISON West Sussex rep from Field Place Infant and Nursery School in Worthing, has been elected to the national UNISON local government service group executive.

Marilyn Cox
2,991 votes (89.7%)
Sarah Barwick
343 votes (10.3%)

Marilyn is a teaching assistant and will stand up for all our members including those like her on low-pay. Congratulations

Marilyn on such a convincing win! And many thanks indeed to all branch members who took part in the vote.

100% OF CAPITA SERVICES BACK TO WSCC



After years of campaigning by UNISON West Sussex, WSCC decided to bring all its services currently managed by Capita back under council control on 1 October 2022.

The decision to insource 100% followed a period of uncertainty where a small number of Capita staff thought they might be retendered to another private organisation, or even Capita if they chose to bid for the work. This will not now happen.

Members will now work for WSCC, widely seen as an employer of choice by anyone working for Capita. On day one they will qualify for a local government pension, rather than the statutory minimum scheme Capita

chooses to use for its staff.

The branch is working hard to iron out the complexities which inevitably arise after outsourcing failure. A key issue remaining is how quickly to remove the 'two tier' workforce issues that will arise on day one: how quickly can staff be transitioned to NJC-job-evaluated roles?

UNISON has successfully resolved another key issue: how to replace an element of pay based on discredited performance indicators in the customer service centre. This element of

pay will now be made to staff in full outside of any performance evaluation process, until such time as roles are restructured and staff transition to NJC grades. The branch is confident this is a major achievement for members: we did not wish to see failed performance-related pay coming to WSCC in any guise.

The branch has meetings scheduled with the WSCC HR Director to work through other issues. Local UNISON reps will be in close contact with members ahead of transfer on 1 October.

IS YOUR 'DIVERSITY DATA' UP TO DATE ON SAP?

Please take a moment to check and update it! WSCC is trying to improve its staff diversity data. UNISON supports this and is strongly encouraging members to go onto SAP (via the staff intranet) to update your details.

Having accurate staff diversity information helps WSCC and trade union partners to work towards shared goals of having a diverse workforce, being a workplace where everyone can be themselves and provide equal opportunity and access.

Diversity data is treated confidentially and only used to provide insight on the whole workforce, not for any other purposes. The data you provide is not available to your manager or colleagues.

You're disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal day to day activities.

Some examples: sensory impairments, chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), fibromyalgia, depression, epilepsy, systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, mental health conditions such as anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and some common chronic illnesses such as diabetes.

Every question has the option to select 'prefer not to say' if you don't feel comfortable sharing information on a particular question. Thank you!

CYPL

SCOPING CAREER PATHWAYS

Branch convenor for CYPL Sarah Etherington reports on progress being made on plans to offer a range of career pathways and progression for crucial roles across the service.

"The restructure of social worker roles earlier this year had a knock-on effect on lower paid but important jobs involving many on the 'front line'.

"For many staff there was no career progression beyond grade 7. UNISON instigated and persisted in negotiations with the council to consider a range of career pathways. The council recognised this is a priority and the importance of work done by a range of staff across the service. It found staff on similar roles in adults' services could also be impacted, so broadened the scope of the exercise.

"Right now, the role of children and family workers is being reviewed. Senior managers have committed to prioritise this issue. All credit to the council for conducting this review.

"We'd like to achieve a better recognition of workers' expertise and their fundamental role within the service. Scoping should be finished in October.

"Across the service many staff from other teams have recently been called on to help out in crisis situations in social care. Senior managers have recognised the impact this is having on staff. We have been called on frequently to support our members suffering work-related stress and sickness absence through unmanageable workloads."