

MANCUNION

THE UNISON NEWSLETTER

NOV 2011



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In the first instance, if you have a work problem or query then get in touch with your local UNISON steward or workplace representative. Otherwise, telephone the Branch Office directly on the number below.

**UNISON Manchester, Sixth Floor,
Sunlight House, Manchester M3 3JZ**
Tel: 0161 254 7500
Fax: 0161 274 7365

If you have a membership query, please contact the Branch on the number above or you can email the Branch via the website at:
www.unisonmanchester.org

UNISON Manchester is organised by the Branch Executive Committee and is supported by skilled staff - locally, regionally and nationally. The UNISON Manchester Branch Officers are listed below.

Branch Chair: Noel Bayley

Vice Chair: Eddy Redmond

President: Mo Baines

Vice President: Rodney Lund

Branch Secretary: Pat McDonagh

Assistant Branch Secretaries: Cath Baggaley, Julie Connolly, Evelyn Doyle, Eddy Redmond, Jane Slater, Steve Swift, Patrick Taylor & Rena Wood.

**Joint Trade Union Nominee to
m people:** Pete Banks

Equality Officer: Sonia Stewart

Branch Treasurer: Julie Connolly

Communications Officer: Rod Fawcett

Steve Lynch: Branch ULR Coordinator

Mancunian Editor: Noel Bayley

Proofreader: Mark Bowden

Education Officer: Steve Swift

**Chair & Secretary of Health and
Safety Committee:** Geoff Archibald

International Officer: Isobel McVicar

Welfare Officer: Helen Clarke

The Branch Executive Committee, the Branch's decision-making body, comprises of stewards from across all the workplaces represented by the Branch plus elected Officers.

All members of UNISON Manchester are encouraged to attend meetings, vote in Branch elections and get involved in our campaigns and activities.

We are always looking for people who feel they can contribute to the work of the Branch and help other members. This could be a regular commitment or you could be a 'mailbox' steward and help pass on UNISON information to members in your workplace. The Branch provides training courses, advice and support for all our stewards and officers. If you can help, get in touch.

In my view...



On Wednesday, 30 November, UNISON and 22 other trade unions are striking to defend our public service pensions. UNISON, PCS, GMB, UNITE and even the headteachers' union, that has never taken industrial action in its 114 year history, are coming out on strike.

This will be the biggest strike in Britain for decades.

Trade Union members only ever take strike action when driven to it, when there is no other way of bringing employers back to the table to reach a fair settlement.

That the Tory-led Government have managed to provoke 23 separate trade unions to hold strike ballots for strike action on the same day sums up the attitude they have to our members. That every union involved has delivered a big Yes vote for action shows how out of touch this government is with all public service workers.

And that's why all of us, from all unions and from all parts of the public sector, need to make the strike on 30 November as effective as possible.

30 November is our opportunity to say No to a government which is attacking our pensions, doing nothing for our young people, hurting our public services and communities, reducing the rights of our older people and privatising our NHS. This is a trade dispute about our public service pensions, but it's also about telling the Tories and their Lib Dem poodles that 'enough is enough.'

UNISON Manchester Branch is urging every member to strike and to encourage family, friends and neighbours to join the march



Ready for the off... The start of the TUC's Manchester March for the Alternative on Sunday, 2 October on Liverpool Road - also the start of Wednesday, 30 November's march to Whitworth Park for the TUC rally.

and rally. We refuse to have our pensions and public services pay for the losses and mistakes of the bankers. Bankers and the financial elite are not being asked to meet the cost of their greed and incompetence. Their bonuses are protected, unlike our pensions which we have paid for ourselves.

When all's said and done, it is for us to defend what we and previous generations have fought for and won. We are not greedy, nor are we unreasonable. But we do know when we're being conned. Let's tell Government on 30th November that attacks on our members, our pensions, our families, our public services and our City will not go unchallenged.

The Branch is looking for even more volunteers for picketing, so anyone who wants to help should contact the Branch ASAP. It's good fun, although many people find they have to get up earlier than usual. Picketing is important and the picket lines that UNISON puts into place on every workplace are really effective.

On strike day, the TUC has organised rallies throughout Greater Manchester, including in Manchester, Oldham and Wigan, which all members' families and friends are most welcome to. Full details are available via the Branch website or on www.pensionsjustice.org.uk

In Manchester, the march will leave Liverpool Road, off Deansgate, at 11.30am, proceed through the City Centre and arrive at Whitworth Park by 1.00pm for the TUC rally.

There will be a 'make the loudest noise at 1pm' TUC national event to make the largest possible protest at Government attacks on our pensions. Bring an instrument or a big VOICE.

Some apparently intend to chant '6 - 1', others are rumoured to be bringing vuvuzelas to drown that out!

Pat McDonagh (Branch Secretary)



Good to Meet You... Sonia Stewart

The Branch's Equality Officer Sonia Stewart...

Job? Interim HR/OD Strategy Lead for Manchester City Council. I'm also the Branch's Equality Officer

What's your ideal job? Event management.

How long have you been a member of the union? I originally joined NALGO in the '70s, before the emergence of UNISON.

Favourite...holiday destination?

Jamaica

film? Gone With The Wind

drink? Brandy

football club? Man U {How did this get in? - Ed.}

What do you like about your role in UNISON? Helping members to have a voice and striving for equality of opportunities.

What was your best day at work?

Being given the opportunity to work on the Commonwealth Games.

Whereabouts do you live? Stretford

And your worst? Receiving bad news.

Where would you want to live? Canada (in summer)

Best thing about UNISON? Actively fighting for and protecting the rights of its members, including those from protected characteristics, challenging unfair treatment and engaging with our diverse communities.

Why do unions matter? Without unions, we would be much more vulnerable at work, with no-one to advise and represent us, negotiate and support our rights as well as helping us to provide vital public services. And a world without unions means a much more unequal world.

Who or what is your inspiration? Oprah Winfrey

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself? Being a chocoholic.

What is the trait you most deplore in others? Insincerity.

If you were Prime Minister, what would you do first? Carry out the pre-election promises I had made and which I had been elected on.

What superpower would you like? I would like the superpower to stop wars and prevent famine.

I'm not gonna let a bunch of Tory/Lib-Dem MPs, all of whom enjoy the best pension deal in the UK, lecture me on pensions fairness. It's a no-brainer. The choice is to do the right thing and strike with colleagues. Or give in, agree with government that we're being too greedy and lose a half decent pension.

Julie Connolly

New Support for Union Learning Reps

Steve Lynch, one of UNISON Manchester Branch's senior stewards, has taken up the position of Union Learning Representative (ULR) Co-ordinator.

ULRs are trade union reps who promote learning and training in the workplace on behalf of staff. ULRs are still a relatively new type of union activist, but they've got a really important role in advising staff about educational and training opportunities that match their needs and aspirations, and can ensure that staff get the training they need.

Steve's role is to co-ordinate, support and represent the ULR's on behalf of the Trade Unions and specifically UNISON. Working from the Town Hall Learning Centre, Steve is keen to get cracking to make sure ULRs have the support they need, so that they can give staff all the help they can.

By his own admission: "there's a lot of work to do." So Steve's starting by reinvigorating the ULR network: "to reignite ULR's passion to help and support others through the learning experience." He's also keen to recruit up to 150 more ULRs, as the reps to members ratio is still too low.

In addition, Steve's only too well aware that: "many staff, particularly those that work outside of the City Centre, have no idea

that the Town Hall Learning Centre exists, or if they have heard of it, they don't know where it is situated. Marketing of the Learning Centre and the resources and courses that are available has to be one of the main priorities."

More satellite venues for training, for those that cannot access the Learning Centre because of travel and time restraints and other important issues such as child-care and caring for infirm or elderly family and/or friends is a key ambition, as is publishing web pages on the City Council's Intranet that will effectively market and advertise the Learning Centre, ULRs and the valuable work they can do. That said, Steve's very aware that too many City Council staff don't have access to email or the intranet, so other forms of communications will be important too.

Most of all, Steve's keen to hear from existing ULRs, and if you'd like to become a ULR or have any ideas about how the service can

be improved, then do get in touch.

🍏 Steve Lynch, Branch ULR Coordinator, Town Hall Learning Centre, Level 4 Town Hall, Manchester, M60 2LA
Telephone: 0161 234 1271
E-mail: s.lynch@manchester.gov.uk

News Round-Up

Chief Executive's - The Service's re-designs have nearly come to an end with only a few interviews needing to take place. All the moves out of the **Corporate Core** have all but been finished with staff moving to Neighbourhood Services, Adults, Children's and Corporate Services.

The formal Joint **Consultative Committee** within the Corporate Core is now established and has met several times, with UNISON taking an active role.

The **Joint Health Unit** is currently going through changes that involve the NHS, as Public Health Manchester is established. It is envisaged that this service will move into the Adults Directory.

Taking a wider perspective on health, UNISON along with many other organisations like the TUC, BMA, patients' bodies and Health Professionals are fighting the Government's plans that will massively shake-up the NHS, cause huge damage to patient care and waste vast sums of public money.

I've been in the pension scheme for six years and this is the second time they want to raise the retirement age as well as reduce the amount of pension I'll get. The proposed increase in contribution combined with the pay freeze for the last two years and the rising cost of living will have a significant impact on my income to the point when it may become unaffordable to stay in the scheme. **Rachel Kuusela**

The plans will turn the NHS into a business where our taxes will increasingly pay for profit-driven companies to provide our healthcare. Want more information about what UNISON is doing, or want to join in our campaigns? Then check www.unison.org.uk/ournhs

Legal Services:
collaborative working with Salford - This is on track for a transfer of Salford staff into Manchester City Council by April 2012. The trade union now has a seat on the board, and this seat goes to UNISON Manchester Branch as the biggest trade union in both authorities. The trade unions also have monthly meetings with management from both authorities. There are to be some further staff

engagement events in November, the timetable for this is to be shared with us shortly.

The **Chief Exec's Stewards'** committee has now started meeting again on a monthly basis, and as ever we welcome new Stewards. Interested? Then get in touch with Jane Slater at the Branch.

The Manchester College
- UNISON is continuing to negotiate on harmonization of pay and hours. Completion is near for a new contract for Electronic Note Takers and

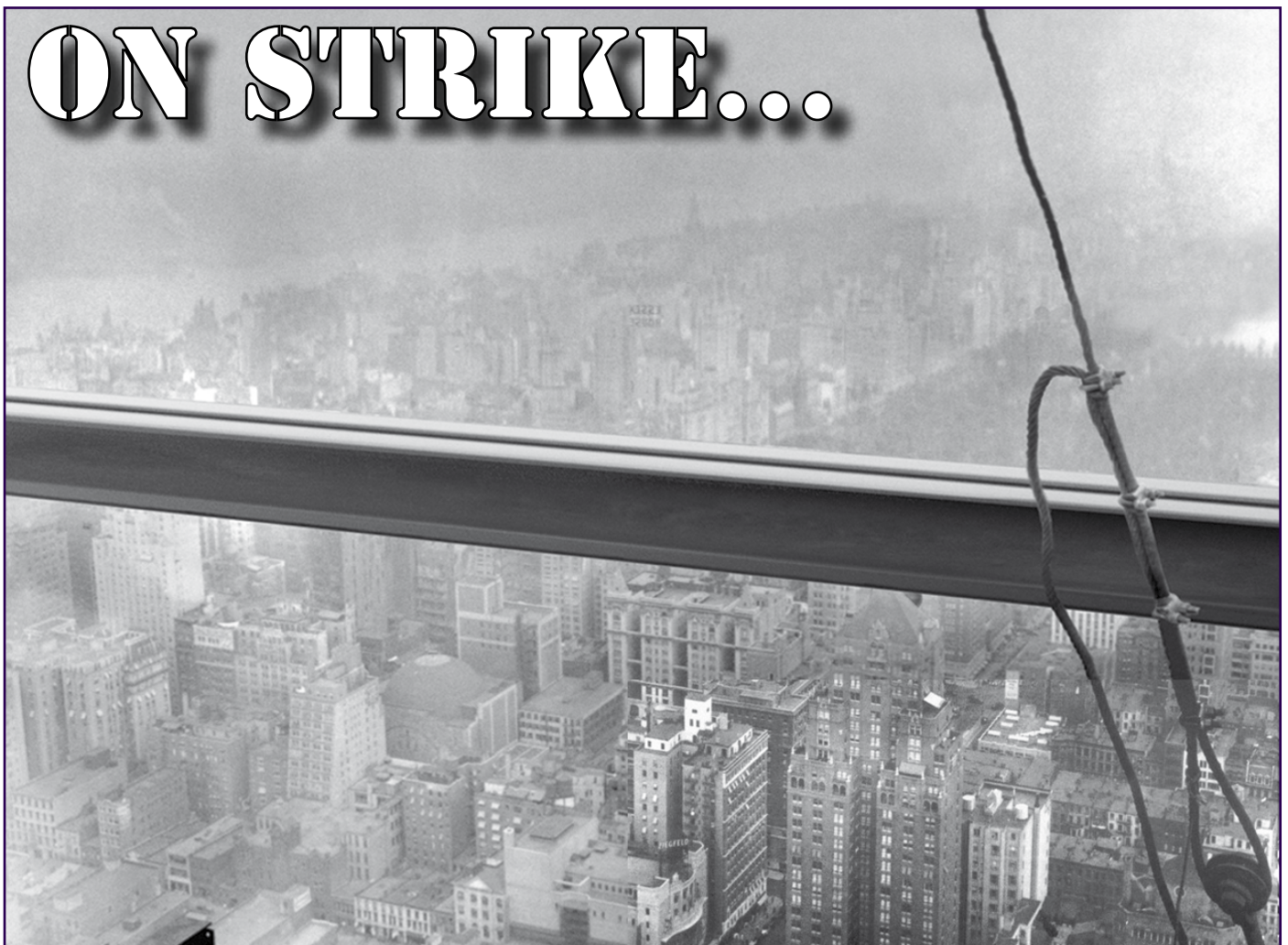
Communication Support Workers, and the Branch has held 11 meetings on pensions across the college and is seeing a steady rise

in membership. We also welcome two new stewards, Georgina Sullivan and Ian McGuinness, to assist new Assistant Branch Secretary Patrick Taylor.

Corporate Services - In Capital Programs, the transfer of Highways staff from Neighbourhood Services is nearly concluded, the interview process has started and staff are moving into the new service.

In **Revenues and Benefits**, staff who requested VER/VS are on hold until March 2012 as there is a need to back fill the roles through the *m people* process. The Stewards' Committee is meeting regularly and is very well attended.

ON STRIKE...



Education - In schools, Branch Officers Steve Swift, Cath Baggaley and Rena Wood continue to meet headteachers regularly, they hold numerous workplace meetings and pick up individual cases for Teaching Assistants and teaching support staff.

They're keen to support Stewards robustly and to stay visible so that Stewards and members who can often feel a bit on a limb, know that they have always got someone at the Branch they can come to for help.

In the **Housing Trusts**, good forward planning is enabling them to face any cuts with knowledge and fresh ideas. Steve Swift has worked hard throughout this sector, and helped open up dialogue with the Trusts and will be heavily involved in any consultations. UNISON will maintain a visible and active role in supporting members in these companies, with

Steve supporting Stewards, meeting members and handling casework.

Private Sector employers - the Branch also represents members employed by private companies who provide public services, and in these areas there is a whole mix of issues. The cut in Supporting People funding will affect the care companies, where Steve represents members, so workloads look to increase here. On the other hand, efforts to energise the Stewards' network, should help us deliver information and advice to all members who need it. As ever though, if you need help, get in touch with the Branch. Reading this and not a member of UNISON? Join NOW.

Neighbourhood Services - The City Council's Neighbourhood Services continues through the Transformation programme,

and UNISON is keeping a close eye on how this will affect staff and services.

The **Neighbourhood Delivery Teams** have now gone live and it is expected that it will take time for this service to bed in. If any members are experiencing difficulties please contact your UNISON Steward or contact the Branch Office.

The **Community and Cultural Services** Transformation continues and members should be receiving confirmation of the outcome of their interviews.

The Transformation Programme has now commenced within **Business Units**.

The **Stewards' Committee** continues to meet monthly and if you would like to get involved and become a Steward, contact Julie Connolly at the Branch.

I'm taking strike action because, after making contributions towards my pension for almost 30 years, the prospect of the rules and my benefits being negatively changed isn't something I can accept. Additionally I feel it's vital that as many people as possible support all of our younger colleagues and staff on low pay who are being asked to significantly increase their pension contributions at the same time as they are being asked to accept further pay freezes. **Mark Slater**

We're taking strike action...



Branch Officer Eddy Redmond leafletting at the Etihad Stadium.

- * **To save our pensions**
- * **Because I signed a contract, and I expect the employer to keep to it**
- * **To keep pensions fair**
- * **Because the majority said 'Yes'**
- * **To help others**
- * **Because we're worth it**
- * **To tell the Government to get stuffed.**
- * **Because I refuse to be dictated to**
- * **Because if we don't stand up, we'll all end up poorer**

All Together Now?



Steve Swift, Assistant Branch Secretary, gives his take on "We're all in this together"

Really Dave? Well, look to this, taken from a recent interview with Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, "Every time that the Headteacher, or the Director of Children's Services... reaches for excuses such as 'We're under resourced... or it's very difficult to fire teachers,' they're spending time justifying under performance."

Well, Michael, the truth is that staff are not reaching for excuses, they're reaching for funding that isn't there, to provide kids and students with services that they used to have, they're remembering jobs they used to be able to provide, some are even reaching for the begging bowl. The reality is Government cuts have made life really tough in the public education sector. And that isn't an excuse, it's a hard and unpleasant fact.

Manchester City Council is not looking at compulsory redundancies, which is in

large part testament to the solid and well regarded work that our UNISON Branch has done – day in day out, month in month out, and over many years in Manchester – unlike other authorities where this has not been the case.

UNISON Manchester Branch works hard for our members. In troubling times Stewards and members need the backing of a strong union; with our practical knowledge, experience and strength, our Branch is the best union to support our members. Our Officers and Stewards are out every day solving issues, helping members and safeguarding jobs. You can trust us on that.

Your NHS Needs You

The Government's controversial Health and Social Care Bill seeks to fundamentally alter the NHS and undermine the basic principles on which it was founded.

If delivered, these reforms will allow private companies to manage commissioning and service provision on behalf of GPs, and ultimately turn the NHS into little more than a brand name attached to a range of competing services within a fragmented health system.

The Bill will:

- Put profit before patients. Competition will be introduced into healthcare. Money that should be used to improve patient care will bleed out of the

system into the hands of private companies. A postcode lottery will be allowed to develop - with no guarantee that your local NHS will continue to fund treatments that are not sufficiently profitable.

- Prioritise private patients. NHS patients will be pushed to the back of the queue, as hospitals will be able to raise unlimited cash from private paying patients.
- Cause massive instability. The NHS is under huge pressure to produce £20 billion of savings. The reforms will be hugely expensive to implement and will result in massive, wasteful structural upheaval

UNISON, along with a wide range of organisations, has been fighting the Bill, and trying to get the support of the Lords, where the Bill is now being debated. We need all the help we can get in our campaign to save the NHS, and letters to Lords are an important way that individual members add their voice, so check the UNISON website for details on how you can help.

I am taking strike action as the attacks on our pensions are nothing to do with our pensions being 'gold-plated' or unviable but everything to do with the Tories making us pay for the bankers crisis. I refuse to accept poverty in old age whilst bankers and the millionaires in the Coalition Government really do have gold-plated pensions.
Marion Doherty



With more than 1.3 million members working across the public services, being part of UNISON means you have the full weight of the UK's biggest trade union behind you.

We have more workplace representatives than any other union in the country - backed up by experienced full-time regional and national experts. Together we can help ensure that your rights are protected at work and that you are in a safe environment.

UNISON members include staff working for the NHS, the Police Service, Colleges and Schools, the Electricity, Gas and Water Industries, Transport and the Voluntary Sector.

UNISON campaigns to keep services public and strengthen the voice of public sector workers. Join us and make sure your voice is heard.

your friend at work



Please fill in this application form in BLOCK CAPITALS and send it to the address shown below.

1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Mr/Ms/Miss/Mrs/Other	First Name	Other Initial
Surname		Date of Birth / /
Home address		
Postcode	Home	
National Insurance No. (from your payslip)		
<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>		
How would you describe your ethnic origin?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Black Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Black African	<input type="checkbox"/> White UK
<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> Irish
<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> White Other	
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian UK	<input type="checkbox"/> Black UK	

☐ Please tick this box if you require materials in a different format (e.g. large print or Braille) - be sure to supply contact details below

Please give a telephone number/voice/text/email address for UNISON to contact you - indicate if work or home

2. YOUR EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Employers Name
Job Title/Occupation
Department/Section
Workplace Address
Postcode
Payroll No.

When completed please send to:-
UNISON Manchester
Sixth Floor Sunlight House
Manchester M3 3JZ
Fax: 0161 254 7515

3. WHAT YOU WILL PAY FROM 1 OCTOBER 2003

Please tick your earnings before stoppages

Weekly Pay	Annual Pay	✓	Band	Per Week	Per Month
Up to £38.47	Up to £2,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	A	£0.30	£1.30
£38.48-£96.16	£2,001-£5,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	£0.81	£3.50
£96.17-£153.84	£5,001-£8,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	C	£1.22	£5.30
£153.85-£211.53	£8,001-£11,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	D	£1.52	£6.60
£211.54-£269.23	£11,001-£14,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	E	£1.81	£7.85
£269.24-£326.92	£14,001-£17,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	F	£2.24	£9.70
£326.93-£384.61	£17,001-£20,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	G	£2.65	£11.50
£384.62-£480.76	£20,001-£25,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	H	£3.23	£14.00
£480.77-£576.92	£25,000-£30,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	I	£3.98	£17.25
£576.93-£673.08	£30,001-£35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	J	£4.68	£20.30
£673.08 +	Over £35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	K	£5.19	£22.50

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid

- ☐ Weekly
☐ Fortnightly
☐ Four Weekly
☐ Monthly

☐ Please tick this box if you are a student member in full-time education (including student nurses or modern Apprentices). Your subscription is £10 per year.

4. POLITICAL FUND

UNISON'S **Affiliated Political Fund (APF)** is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliates to the Labour Party.

UNISON'S **General Political Fund (GPF)** is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union and for research and lobbying in Parliament and Europe. It is independent of support for any political party.

It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes below. Your subscription shown above includes a political fund payment so you do not pay any more by being in one of the funds.

5. YOUR AUTHORISATION

- ☐ I wish to join UNISON and accept its rules and constitution.
- ☐ I authorise deduction of UNISON subscriptions from my salary/wages at the rate determined by UNISON in accordance with its rules to be paid over to them on my behalf and I authorise my employer to provide to UNISON information to keep my records up to date.
- ☐ I authorise deduction of the following political fund payment as part of my subscriptions: *Tick one box only*

Affiliated Political Fund ☐

General Political Fund ☐

Now please sign and date below.

Signature

Date

If you have been a member of a trade union before, please state which one below:

DATA PROTECTION

UNISON will process your membership information together with other information for administration, statistical analysis, conducting ballots and other statutory requirement purposes. We may also send you newsletters, journals and surveys and let you know about educational and campaigning matters. We will disclose your information to our service providers and agents for these purposes.

☐ If you do not want to receive any mailings from UNISON besides those required by statute as shown in bold above, please tick this box.

We may share your information with organisations with whom we have a business relationship for your benefit. We, or they may contact you by mail, telephone, SMS, fax or e-mail to let you know about goods, services or promotions which we think may be of interest to you.

☐ If you do not wish to receive such information please tick this box.

If you tick either of these boxes then you will be removed from the appropriate mailing lists as quickly as possible but for administrative reasons this may take a couple of months.