

MANCUNION

THE UNISON NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2012



The Lord Mayor
Councillor Harry Lyons JP

WE'VE
ALREADY
GOT A
MAYOR.

WE DON'T NEED
A NIGHTMARE...
VOTE 'NO' TO AN
ELECTED
MAYOR.



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: Sonia Stewart

Vice Chair: Steve Lynch

President: Mo Baines

Vice Presidents: Nixon Tod & Ruth Carr

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

Branch ULR Coordinator: Steve Lynch

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...



Our Branch continues to face major challenges and is working hard to represent our members collectively as well as individually in all our employers.

Our Council members are facing two more years of a proposed pay freeze/1% cap. Our Branch is calling on our union to ballot members and will be proposing that to our National Conference.

This has got to be a top priority this year for our union as our members who are mostly low paid cannot continue to be expected to accept cuts in their income by 25% - taking into account inflation over the last three years with two to come - unless we stop this Government in its tracks.

On Thursday, 3 May Manchester residents will be voting on the Tory/Lib Dem referendum for an elected Mayor. If agreed this would be an attack on local democracy and accountability.

We have a system whereby, even if we disagree with the leadership elected by all wards in the City, at least there is accountability.

What is proposed is effectively putting most powers in the hands of one person: no accountability and decisions will go unchecked unless two thirds of the Council register opposition.

As the saying goes 'power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely'.

All UNISON members who can vote in the referendum are urged to turn out and Vote No. Otherwise your job and service could be at risk of decisions by one individual.

In March we held our first Branch Executive under an agreed revised structure to strengthen representation from all employers outside the Council so participation and involvement in our Branch throughout all our employers is enhanced. As a result we have more activists and in future this can only strengthen our Branch overall.

We, as a Branch, continue to have many challenges to face but with improved organisation and collective working with members we will do our best to meet them.

Finally, wherever you live, use your vote on Thursday, 3 May in local Council elections. It is your opportunity to show opposition to this Con-Dem Government.

Pat McDonagh (Branch Secretary)



NHS rally in Albert Square in March... The battle against the destructive Bill, backed by Government, may be over but the campaign to defend our NHS goes on.



Vote 'No' to an Elected Mayor

The Tory-led Government has forced big cities like Manchester to hold a referendum on whether it should have a directly elected Mayor, or keep the current system of local government democracy.

Following discussion at the Branch Executive Committee, it was agreed that this referendum is a complete waste of time and money. The Branch urges people to vote 'No' in the referendum, which will take place alongside the usual local elections on 3 May.

There are much more important matters we should be focusing attention on, like the Government's plans that will ruin the NHS or their continuing deep and savage cuts to public services. However, we should not ignore the dangers an elected mayor would bring to Manchester.

What we've got now isn't perfect, no political arrangements are. But an elected mayor is even worse. Key problems are:-

- power and influence are concentrated into the hands of just one individual. This will create a politics of personality, not of substance or the real issues.
- the role of local ward councillors is reduced even more. The Mayor will take all the decisions, without much need to consult the other councillors. It's less democratic than the current system!
- the ability of communities to have their issues of concern raised and dealt with is reduced.
- removing powers from ordinary councillors will

discourage active engagement in local politics and democratic processes.

- The mayor will have no additional powers or resources. What is on offer is not remotely like the London Mayor and Assembly model, where the London Mayor has real power over transport, planning and development.

The primary reason the Government is pushing hard for a directly elected mayor is that they think a Conservative or Lib-Dem candidate will have a far better chance of getting elected under a mayoral system than at present. However, directly elected mayors are less accountable and less capable of representing the different views of Manchester communities than the current system.

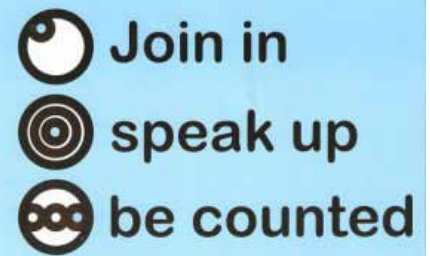
If you have a vote in the Manchester referendum, vote 'No' to a nightmare.

Local Govt Pension Scheme update

Our massively successful strike back in November prevented the damaging changes the Government had intended to impose, and forced fresh negotiations. Indeed, were it not for the success of the strike, we would all by now be paying huge increases in our monthly pension provisions, as the Government had planned the new rates to begin on 1 April, 2012. Many members will have saved more already than the one day's pay they lost by doing the right thing and striking on 30 November.

Nationally, the joint negotiating team and the Governance and Administration sub-groups have continued to meet on a regular basis. However, it is obviously crucial that we ensure that every element of a possible new scheme is fully considered and that we explore all options in order to get the best deal for members. This has required a significant amount of work by actuaries and others and

it is therefore not yet possible to produce final proposals. It is hoped that more detailed information can be provided to members before the end of April so that the all-member ballot can commence around the start of May.



UNISON Service Group Executive elections

These are tough times for public services. So it's more important than ever that our union has the right leadership to steer us through these turbulent and difficult times. UNISON's Service Group Executive elections are taking place now, and members will have been receiving their voting papers to elect the people who help decide how UNISON can best defend its members and our public services.

Our Branch has nominated **Brenda Hall** (Women's Seat) and **Glen Williams** (General Seat) to represent our Region and our Branch members. Our Branch also nominated **Mike Richmond** for voluntary and community service group. Use your vote.

Branch news round up

As ever, here's a snapshot of some of the activity UNISON Manchester Branch Officers and reps are involved with. In a Branch the size of ours, we can't cover all employers and workplaces in this newsletter, but if there's something you'd like an update on or if you've some UNISON-

related news you'd like to share, get in touch. And don't forget to check the Branch website, at www.unisonmanchester.org



Manchester City Council - Members working in **Contact Manchester, Chief Executive's Department** will be aware that there are ongoing negotiations around 8am to 8pm working. There was an expectation that this would be in place for 1 April this year.

However, UNISON's Assistant Branch Secretary, **Jane Slater**, requested an extension to the consultation period to allow a fuller discussion over the proposed changes, so implementation will now not go ahead as planned. UNISON reps met with managers from the service in mid-March, and they have taken away the concerns that UNISON raised on behalf of members on the need for an 8 - 8 service and flexibility of rotas.

Managers are now seeking advice on a pilot of the service and rotas, and will continue the discussions with us once they are able to share more. The local steward, Dean Marley has been actively involved in presenting members' concerns to management and will be able to give further updates to members. Once we have further detail we will arrange an all members meeting to discuss the final proposals.

Beaver Road Primary School is just one of the many schools in Manchester where the Branch helps UNISON members, and what's happening in this school is typical of how the cuts are affecting state schools the length and breadth of the country.

There are around 35 UNISON members at Beaver Road Primary School in Didsbury. And, just like in many other state schools, the Head is struggling with ongoing budget pressures. Meetings have been held with staff, including Teaching Assistants, Admin staff and Lunchtime Organisers, and the key message is that the indicative budget is likely to be standstill. Now although there's a pay freeze, there are staff in post who are entitled to incremental increases and the money needs to be found from somewhere. Given the biggest costs are staffing, which account for around 90% of the budget, that leaves very little room for manoeuvre.

This helps explain why the school governors want to introduce a new structure that will disestablish ten Lunchtime Organisers' posts down from the current 14. It's also proposed that Teaching Assistants will have their lunch break cut by half an hour, used to cover lunchtime supervision while those who work in the Nursery also face changes. Admin staff too look to be affected as the Head has requested a report from One Education to analyse the admin needs of the school, the outcome of which will determine any restructure that could result in a grade reduction and a possible shift to term time only working.

It's a story that all of us working in public service will be all too familiar with: staff time being cut

back, even greater job burdens placed on fewer staff which, despite the best efforts of staff, inevitably impacts on service quality. It's in this context, that the Chancellor's recent budget decision to give a tax break to the wealthiest people on the country, needs to be understood. We are all paying for it.

UNISON will continue to defend members, both at the cutting edge, where UNISON Manchester's **Rena Wood** will continue to play a full role in workplace meetings and restructures, and on the wider political stage, where nationally UNISON will continue to campaign for fair funding and decent public services for all. At Beaver Road, final decisions are expected on 14th May 2012, following the consultation period.

Steve Swift, Assistant Branch Secretary, is also busy covering **schools, the voluntary sector and Housing Trusts**, who have now taken on virtually all former 'council housing.' Housing Trusts vary in their approach to Trade Unions, but Steve is proud that, working with other unions, he has secured regular Trade Union meetings in one Trust. They did not have such a forum before, which means the Branch is able to support members at the outset of any issues. A minority of Trusts remain wary of unions, but this doesn't stop UNISON and Steve from providing a strong presence in casework there and holding regular surgeries wherever possible.

By working closely with Housing Trusts (including Parkway Green, City South, Willow Park, Southway and Northwards) and through a combination of disciplinary hearing success, regular meetings with management and engaging with staff, membership is growing. Steve also led a cross-union pay negotiation at one of the Trusts recently, which represented a good deal in the current climate for UNISON members, agreed by a solid 'yes' vote in an indicative ballot.

The **voluntary sector**, particularly in the area of care, is reeling from the effect of Government cuts,



particularly in the Supporting People funding. So there's been much work for UNISON to do in re-design consultation and giving effective support for members and in helping make the process as fair as possible.

Fears for the complete dismantling of **Sure Start** services in Manchester – another consequence of Government cuts and their anti-public sector bias – look to have been allayed, in the face of steadfast opposition by service users, staff, unions and other organisations.

However, these services will be transformed, with new proposals from Manchester City Council looking to retain a significant number of former Sure Start employees within its **Children's Services Department**. Regular consultative meetings take place between senior management and UNISON Assistant Branch Secretary **Eddy Redmond** and local UNISON Stewards, who report back to a really active Stewards' Committee.

In Children's Services Department, there's an active group of UNISON Stewards, which meets monthly. A key focus is on Social Workers' caseload management, with UNISON working hard to reduce caseloads to more manageable proportions.

UNISON Stewards Lauren Alergant and Katie Ayres are involved in regular meetings with management. UNISON's also active in other areas, including the **Pupil Referral Unit**, the **Contact Service** and will be taking an active interest in the **Complex Families** growing area of work.

The Branch has also got some temporary support from the Regional Office of UNISON. **Beth Knowles, Kate Russell** and **Peter Unwin** will be working in various workplaces, including **Connexions, Manchester Solutions** and **Manchester College**.

And of course, outside of the work involved in service re-designs, restructures, pay negotiations, pensions, cuts and anti-privatisation campaigning, Branch Officers and Stewards pick up a hefty share of casework too, helping look after members'

individual problems and grievances. As ever, there's a mixed bag of results, with some recent successes for members in disciplinaries, discussions over transfers and working hours.

Government Pay Freeze

Our Branch's local government members have experienced three full years of pay freeze.

We are now told that all public sector workers can now expect two more years of pay freezes and that even if any offer is made it will be capped at 1%.

Our lowest paid members are not even being offered the £250 per year increase other public sector workers are receiving. Our Branch believe our members literally cannot afford any more of this.

Our pay has not increased for three years whilst inflation has averaged approximately 5%. This means our incomes have effectively been cut by 15% and a further two years of pay freezes could see our members income falling by up to 20 - 25 %.

Our member and their families are under enormous pressure and we need to be prepared to take strike action to push the Government back and break their public sector workers pay policy.

There is no pay freeze in the financial sector who largely caused the economic difficulties and it is unacceptable for our members to be singled out for such attacks.

Branch officers have proposed Conference amendments to our Local Government and National Delegate Conferences in June, calling on the national union through service groups to consult Branches and Regions on a ballot to take strike action in autumn of this year.

If our members are prepared to take such action there is real scope for joint action with other public sector trade unions to make it clear to this Tory/Lib-Dem cabal that enough is enough.



Remember the Dead, Fight for the Living

UNISON believes that those who are injured, made ill, disabled or even killed by poor health and safety at work deserve more respect. As do the families left behind. Each year, on International Workers Memorial Day, UNISON, other trade unionists, campaigners and workers from across the world Remember the Dead, Fight for the Living.

This year, International Workers Memorial Day falls on Saturday 28 April. **In Manchester, a special march and rally have been organised to mark the day.** The march meets near the CIS building, on the corner of Corporation Street and Miller Street, Manchester at 12.00 noon. March commences at 12.30pm to finish at Albert Square with a rally. More info on the Branch website.

Remember the Dead, Fight for the Living is the slogan for International Workers' Memorial Day. The purpose of the day is not to forget those who have been needlessly killed, injured, or made ill by their work. It's also about using this human tragedy to strengthen the campaign for safe and healthy work.

No one should be put at unnecessary risk at work. UNISON believes that work-related deaths, injuries, ill-health, and "accidents" are not acceptable. Your employer has a responsibility to ensure that your work does not cause you harm. Not only is it the right thing to do – it's the law!

Union learning update

In conjunction with Unionlearn, **Steve Lynch**, Union Learning Rep (ULR) co-ordinator is organising a launch for a **GO ON** campaign in Manchester. The event will be aimed to coincide with the 2012 Olympics and the launch is likely to happen in early July 2012.

The aim is to promote the use of the internet to the 65,000 Manchester residents that have never used the internet, which equates to an approximate financial loss of £500 per person. This is particularly relevant given that Manchester has been nominated as a superfast broadband city and is committed to become one of the top 20 digital cities in the world by 2020.

Many ULRs have signed up to become **digital champions** but we need more, as this gives us, as a Trade Union, the capacity to reach out into the community to help those more vulnerable. The campaign will encourage our



members and work colleagues to access basic IT training to give them the ability to use the internet for online learning as well as class-based tutoring leading to better long term employment prospects and personal career development.

Steve has also been developing a three-day course for ULRs on **dyslexia awareness**, and how to help potential learners plus the second stage of the ULR training began on 16 April for five weeks. This will see 23 fully trained NVQ 2 equivalent ULRs available to encourage, advise and support their colleagues in their workplaces to take up learning/training.

If you are interested in becoming a ULR or want any info, get in touch with Steve, ULR Coordinator, Manchester

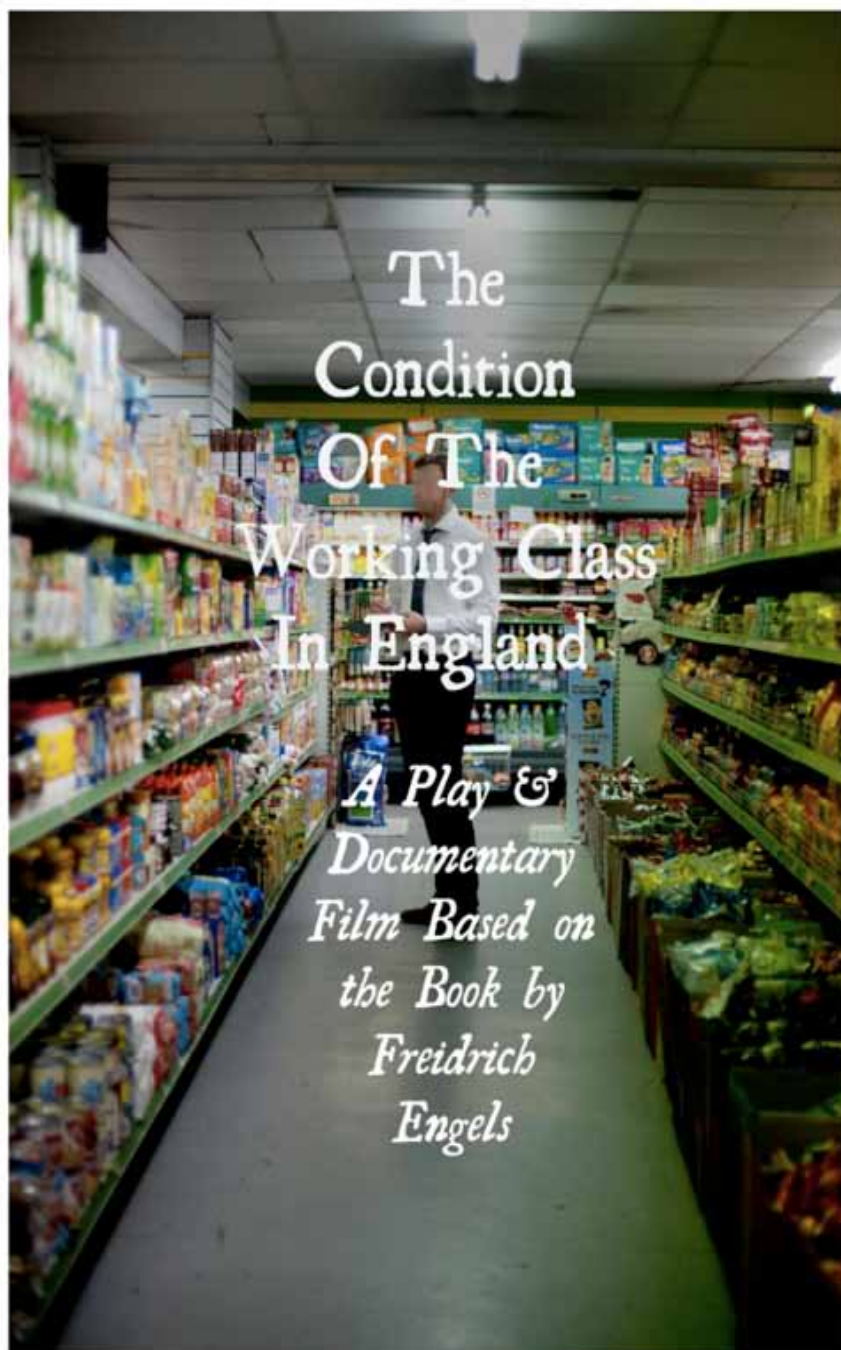
City Council, Town Hall Learning Centre, tel (internal) 800 3519 (external) 0161 234 3519, mobile 0797 184 3377, email: s.lynch@manchester.gov.uk

Film project

A TV production company has been in touch with the Branch about a theatre

and film project that may be of interest to some members. They want to bring together people from the Manchester area to write and perform a series of theatrical sketches based on Frederick Engels' book *The Condition of the Working Class in England*.

They are filming the process and it will end up as an hour long documentary. Full details about



This is an opportunity to be involved in an exciting and collaborative project. We are looking for people to help write and/or perform a play based on Freidrich Engels' book 'The Condition Of The Working Class In England'. The process will be filmed as part of a documentary.

Going into rehearsals for 2 months starting in May 2012.

For further details see: www.conditionoftheworkingclass.info

Call: 07952 823219

Or email: insidefilm@btinternet.com

the project are at: <http://www.conditionoftheworkingclass.info/>

They are keen to get trade unionists involved. Interested, then get in touch at:

insidefilm@btinternet.com

Use your vote on Thursday, 3 May

With jobs being shed in the public sector at the fastest level in living memory, with funding cuts impacting hard on both public and private sectors, with lengthening dole queues, with a deeper recession threatening, with private companies unable to step in to fill the gaps, this is really a Government of economic ineptitude.

Previous Conservative Prime Minister John Major famously said, "if it's not hurting, it's not working." It looks like George Osborne's recent Budget takes this to a new level where it's both "hurting and not working" unless you're rich, of course, in which case you'll get tax cuts.

Vote. It matters more than ever.



Patrick Taylor (left) with colleague Steve Swift on a rally in Liverpool...

Job: UNISON Manchester, Assistant Branch Secretary

How long have you been a member of the union? 12 years.

What do you like about your role in UNISON? Knowing that I am doing something worthwhile and can be proud of.

Whereabouts do you live? Blackley

Where would you want to live? New York

Best thing about UNISON? That it is member led and focuses on the things that are important to us.

Who or what is your inspiration? The other activists that I have worked with down the years. No one else has ever given me the encouragement or opportunities that the Manchester Branch has or made me feel more welcome.

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself? I am easily annoyed by quite insignificant things.

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

If you were Prime Minister, what would you do first? Make all public services public again. Right after building a sewage processing plant on David Cameron's front lawn!

What superpower would you like? I've always loved classic British comics, so I would probably have a metal hand that turned me invisible when you pass electricity through it (one for all

you Steel Claw fans out there!).

What's the worst job you've ever done? Washing up on Saturday mornings at the Middleton Masonic Hall aged 15.

What would be your ideal job? Maybe a barrister. I've always fancied doing a big summing up, full of righteous indignation at the end of a case. On the other hand, I don't think the wig and robes would be a very good look for me.

Favourite holiday destination, film, drink, football club? The Green Man Festival, I go every year. Three days of folk, psychedelia and dangerously strong beers: Ferris Bueller's Day Off. Real ales with unusual sounding names. I don't follow football; controversial I know.

What was your best day at work, and your worst? Best: When I met my partner Katie working at The Museum of Science and Industry back in 2003.

Worst: A few years back I got carbon monoxide poisoning from a faulty heating system. I spent three hours in casualty listening to a drunk complain very loudly about his piles.

Why do unions matter? Trade unions have protected and cared for working people for generations. So many of the rights we now take for granted were fought for and won by our predecessors in the trade union movement. Unions continue that work today, protecting past achievements and fighting for better terms and conditions. I'm very proud to be playing my own small part in that.



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.