

MANCUNION

THE UNISON NEWSLETTER

ANNUAL REPORT EDITION 2015



HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL UNISON MEMBERS
FROM MANCHESTER BRANCH

Although it has been only six months since I was appointed by the Branch Executive as Branch Secretary to succeed Pat McDonagh (who now works for UNISON in a different role as well as being our Branch Chair) in some ways it feels like yesterday given the pace of change in that time!

This continues to be a demanding time for the Branch and our members.

Manchester Council members are again facing a huge job loss of up to 600 staff and yet more restructures and reorganisations.

Manchester College is also facing demands in terms of changes in funding and services. Community, voluntary sector organisations and charities are also facing massive budget reductions.

Whilst our members are facing the threat of hundreds more job losses other members are left facing reorganisations and restructures which will place even more demands on remaining staff.

Our Branch will continue to assist members as best we can to represent their interests.

Naturally a major issue this year has been our continuing pay cuts. Whilst Further Education members voted for an agreement on their claim the Local Government pay strike action, due on 14th October, was pulled at short notice for no tangible improved outcome.

Our Branch has taken a lead in protesting at the shoddy way our dispute was undermined by some of our leaders and called for a requisition for a special Local Government Conference to ensure our fight for pay is kept alive and the failures of some

within our national leadership is not repeated.

We were supported by Branches up and down the country and the Conference will take place in the next few months. Our Branch will continue to be at the forefront of calling for action to protect member's pay and also pensions.

The Branch wishes to record it's thanks to our Branch staff, Moira Stockton, Miriam Fanning and James Crowley for all their hard work over the last year.

Next year promises to be as challenging as ever across our Branch.

Whilst thankfully the political funds were supported by members in the national ballot the Lobbying Act aimed at silencing the voice of trade unions, voluntary / community organisations and charities is now law.

But we can still speak to our own members about the need to remove this nightmare of a coalition and oppose the ultra right UKIP and we will campaign on that basis in the run up to the General Election.

Above all the Branch wishes to thanks activists, stewards, contacts and members for their work over the last year, together we can come through whatever challenges lie ahead.

'Unity is Strength' is not a slogan, it's the truth.

By working together as we have done we can continue to do our best for our members both individually and collectively.



IN MY VIEW EVELYN DOYLE BRANCH SECRETARY

IN THIS ISSUE

As with last year, we have decided to incorporate the Branch Annual Report into this special edition of the Mancunion. Alongside the reports from each of our Branch Officers you will find articles on the recent announcement of further cuts for Manchester City Council and the latest update on our fight for fair pay. Also included are reports on Union Learning as well as a summary of the protests and political activity that has taken place in 2014.

Finally, we here at the Mancunion Team wish all our members a Happy Xmas and New Year.

Patrick Taylor and James Crowley
Mancunion Editors.

CONTACT US

Whether you have a problem at work, just need some advice or want to be more involved in the Branch, we are always eager to hear from members. To get in touch you can call the branch office on 0161 254 7500 or send an email to unison@manchester.gov.uk.

If you want all the latest news then make sure you bookmark our website www.unisonmanchester.org. You can also follow @UnisonMcr on Twitter where we pass on all the latest news and post live updates from major UNISON events.

The Branch Office is based in Manchester Town Hall in room 321 so feel free to contact us anytime.



www.unisonmanchester.org

THE AXE FALLS AT THE TOWN HALL

Anyone feeling a little deja vu?

The Tories and Liberal Democrats have come for us again. They have come to attack Manchester and Mancunians with a new raft of budget cuts.

Since this ConDem government slithered into office we have seen the same result every two years. A huge cut to the grant Manchester City Council gets from the government.

This year is no exception. Once again George Osborne is The Grinch that stole Christmas.

This coming financial year our city will lose £59million, but over two years the total figure could be as high as £90million. A cut of this size cannot be justified. The effect it will have on the most vulnerable cannot be justified.

This continual barrage of public sector cuts is an utterly failed and discredited economic policy. It has not cleared the deficit. It has not solved any of our country's financial problems and it has not delivered any of the promises that George Osborne has made.

The National Audit report says that The Department for Communities and Local Government under Eric Pickles "does not monitor in a coordinated way the impact of funding reductions on services".

Basically they are making cuts but have no idea how it affects people. Chances are they don't know because they don't care.

It is the usual Tory political savagery. Snatching money from the people they feel don't deserve it.

But where does the money go?

It flies south for the winter of course! Off to the Tory heartlands. To where the rich Eton boys in the cabinet

have their constituencies. Where the big Tory donors live.

How does this affect our members?

Our members working for Manchester City Council will have all received their voluntary redundancy or early retirement offer.

For some this may be an opportunity. A chance to try something different or to retire after years of public service. But for many it means the prospect of restructures, of changing roles, of seeing the services they care about close and harder times ahead for the residents we serve.

It is understandable that some members will worry about the prospect of compulsory redundancies. But no compulsory redundancies is a key article of branch policy.

A line in the sand that we will not cross. Our commitment is clear, if they are proposed we will ballot all our members for all out strike action.

But the budget proposals that the council is putting forward have implications for members in other employers across the city and will affect a host of smaller community and voluntary organisations.

We will support all our members, wherever they work through these hard times.

We encourage all our members to take part in the formal consultations on the budget and to work with us to oust this government in May.

Manchester deserves a better deal. Mancunians deserve a better deal.

Though they may not deliver everything we want, this country needs a Labour Government.

**UNISON MANCHESTER
BRANCH ANNUAL
GENERAL MEETING**

**25th February 2014 12.45pm
Friends Meeting House
Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS**

**Please make every effort to attend this
important meeting.**

CATH BAGGALEY - ASSISTANT BRANCH SECRETARY



We have campaigned long and hard to address the inconsistencies of dealing with medication, which has left both pupils and support staff vulnerable.

We welcome this clearer, more consistent, statutory guidance on supporting pupils with medical conditions. This will enable all children to be fully included in every aspect of school life.

Professional Standing of Teaching Assistants

UNISON has recommitted itself to raising the profile and professional standing of teaching assistants. Working with the National Education Trust, we are developing a career framework and professional standards for TA's.

School Support Staff Negotiating Body

The Shadow Education Secretary, Tristram Hunt, has given UNISON a commitment that Labour will look to bring in a new negotiating body to advise on the wages and conditions of school support staff in England. This commitment, given at the Labour Party conference, follows months of negotiating and lobbying by the union.

Living Wage Agreements

We have now negotiated a living wage agreement with the Church of England which equates to 4,700 schools within 41 Diocese, the Catholic Church 2,300 and also the Co-operative Society.

Oasis are also supporting the living wage both in-house and with its contractors.

In total these agreements cover 50% of schools across the country

Stars in Our Schools

UNISON recently held a very successful event for all our support staff where, among lots of different activities there were special assemblies held, cakes made and celebration lunches held.

And Finally...

A big thank you to all our school stewards and contacts for their continued support in distributing information, providing support to our members and keeping us informed of any issues arising in their schools.

Academies

The academy conversion rate has recently slowed down, with the council now more in favour of high achieving schools sponsoring ones that are under achieving, rather than having more academy chains, due to this we are now seeing an increase in multi-academy trusts.

Free School Meals

These came into force from 1st September 2014 for children from Nursery to Year 2.

This is causing problems in some of schools, as the facilities they have are not adequate, especially in some of the older school buildings. Some schools are being forced to use money from their maintenance budgets to provide these free meals.

Statutory Guidance – Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

UNISON cautiously welcomes the introduction of the new guidance to be implemented in September 2014 with a review in 2015.



PETE BANKS - ASSISTANT BRANCH SECRETARY



After four years as the Joint Trade Union Officer for the m people team I moved back to the role of Assistant Branch Secretary in June.

After carrying out an important role for our members at m people I'm happy to take up my new role with responsibility for Growth and Neighbourhoods.

Like all of the council, Growth and Neighbourhoods faces a difficult two years ahead, with more savage cuts from this Tory led Government. With lots more cuts to come if they win the next election!

Neighbourhood focus: It's proposed that the three main areas in this service: Community and Cultural Services, Neighbourhood Regeneration and Neighbourhood Delivery will be asked to take a more integrated approach to providing their services.

Planning, Building Control and Licensing, Capital Programs and Property, Bereavement Services and others are all at different stages of redesign. This brings it own challenges for staff, the authority and us as a Union. UNISON is taking an active part in making sure we are available to all our members ensuring they can raise any concerns they have about these changes.

This is why we have tried to attend as many staff briefing sessions as possible. Regardless of the challenges ahead Manchester UNISON will continue to work hard for the best outcomes for our members.

The national result of the pay consultation was disappointing but our members can stand proud of their role in trying to continue the fight for a desperately needed pay rise.

We will be back.

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VIMAL GADHER - ASSISTANT BRANCH SECRETARY



bedroom tax.

Our members have had to acquire new skills to enable them to safeguard their roles in a changing work environment, whilst at the same time being involved in various restructures, as various housing associations have implemented changes to deal with the economic constraints that they have faced.

UNISON has assisted members through these difficult times by providing support and guidance to ensure that positive outcomes have been achieved for them.

Further changes are afoot with Eastlands and City South Manchester planning to 'merge' to form one 'housing association'. The respective boards have agreed to the merger and due diligence has taken place which has meant that there are no legal 'obstacles' which would prevent the merger from happening.

Once again it's has been another difficult year for the housing associations, dealing with the cruel and vicious cuts implemented by the Tory led government, notably the bedroom tax.

This has meant that housing associations have had to adapt to the changing nature of the way that their tenants now receive their benefits.

The housing associations have implemented many changes to enable them to make sure that their tenants have been able to adapt to the

As yet details of how the merger will look and how members may be affected have yet to come through. UNISON will be at the fore front at joint Trade Union meetings to ensure that our members will be represented, supported and guided through the process of the merger.

I continue to represent and support members in Housing Associations, primary schools as well as many community and voluntary organisations.

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CARL GREATBATCH - ASSISTANT BRANCH SECRETARY



2014 has been another tough year for UNISON members across the council and, even before the current huge swathe of cuts were announced, we had still been dealing with the outcome of the last appalling budget settlement from central government and its devastating effects on vulnerable adults. What has become clear is that we again face a reduction in services and fewer individuals supported as we enter a new series of restructures and service integrations.

In Homelessness Services Phase 2 of the redesign has finally arrived and will take in to account the concerns expressed by members that staffing plans for Phase 1 were unrealistic and placed undue pressure on staff. I have to say that it is to the credit of everyone involved in the consultations that their first concern at all times has been for service users and if their concerns are heeded then the best possible service will arise out of

these tough times.

Reablement, MEAP, Adult Social Work and PAT end the year facing the prospect of integration with teams from the NHS and, while formal consultation has yet to start, it is clear (as in Homelessness) that there will be some chance to improve aspects of the services as long as members concerns are heard and acted upon.

We have legitimate concerns however that the switch to operational management by the NHS may hamper our efforts to argue our case.

Our ability as a union to argue for these changes has been down to the incredibly valuable work done by the stewards and contacts in these areas who have kept us informed of the difficulties at the front-line of their work.

In Day Services UNISON's work in getting agreed much needed building and safety work for Minehead Resource Centre has been overtaken by the devastating loss of the building due to fire. Having visited there often this year, the commitment of the staff to the centre and its service users was clear and we will do everything we can as a union to get those services returned and maintained.

We face increased challenges as we head into 2015 with almost all areas of the council facing cuts and restructures but strong UNISON membership levels and dedicated activists will ensure that our members concerns and rights are taken seriously and defended at every level of the council.

Museums

While it has been another quiet year for casework from the People's History Museum, The Museum of Science and Industry has been busier with the continued and ongoing restructures and, in some cases, redundancies that have come from the take-over by the Science Museum group. UNISON have remained involved with the negotiations and will continue to argue for our members' rights across this sector.

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EDDY REDMOND - ASSISTANT BRANCH SECRETARY



This hard fought battle was sadly not supported by the rest of the country even though the besieged workers of Manchester stood firm and rejected the insulting offer.

The government backed OFSTED inspection began at the end of June. In September they reported back that services within the Childrens' Directorate to provide help and protection were inadequate or needed improvement.

The summary of findings said that across all social work services the high case loads mean that staff are often unable to fully and quickly respond to priorities and address children's needs as effectively as possible.

UNISON members are fully aware of the 'more for less' society they are in. A society in which they are given more work to complete and less time to provide an effective package of support for the most vulnerable people in our society.

Much of my time over the next few months will be spent attending meetings regarding the restructuring of services as the Council is forced to implement another 59 million pounds of ideological cuts to the services for the people of Manchester in the year 2015/16.

I will continue to assist members in all the challenges they face across all of Childrens' and Families.

After being elected unopposed in late February 2014 the heavy workload of the Assistant Branch Secretary was again reflected in the day to day work of supporting the membership in the attendance monitoring reviews, grievances, disciplinaries and the occasional member complaint.

Running alongside of this was the work of the Branch in fighting for the much needed pay rise for the under attack public sector workers of Manchester and I took a lead role on the Branch strike committee.



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JANE SLATER - ASSISTANT BRANCH SECRETARY



Unions around some behaviour change process for managers, which have now been rolled out to all directorates. There will be a redesign of the service due to the cuts.

Finance will be delivering services differently going forward, we are looking at bimonthly budget monitoring and other ways to make savings. The redesign will start in the new year.

ICT have been trying to recruit and retain staff into the last redesign and there will be a further redesign due to the new financial budget.

Revenues and Benefits have been busy with changes to the way benefit is delivered and the ongoing changes of Universal Credit. The stewards have been supporting members in a variety of hearings and were very active around the strike over pay.

This has been an extremely difficult year, with a backdrop of cuts and now we are getting set to see more cuts hitting Manchester hard. We have had a year of concluding services redesigns and are now preparing for the next round that will take place early 2015.

We will see changes to services that the council delivers that will be felt for generations. Everyone is experiencing increased workloads due to the reduced workforce. UNISON is working hard to support members to make sure that this increased pressure is recognised and all necessary support is given.

The Corporate Contact Centres are looking at reducing some of their delivery hours. The online service that is now up and running for some services is to be rolled out further. The health and safety issues that were around the Customer Services Centre have now been resolved.

HR/OD have been working with the Trade

There has been lots of individual representation over the last 12 months with members involved in attendance monitoring, with some moving to capability meetings and hearings. There have been several gross misconduct disciplinarys that have seen staff dismissed but through appeal brought back into the work place and several dispute resolution meetings that have seen positive outcomes from our members.

There are well attended regular stewards meeting's within Chief Execs and Corporate Services, we are always looking for new stewards to support their section and training and support will be given.

Over the next 12 months, we be going through redesigns, delivering services in ways we have never delivered before. As a Branch, we need to encourage stewards and members to recruit their colleagues, explaining to them the importance of being in UNISON so that we have a union with the strongest voice in the council.

RENA WOOD - ASSISTANT BRANCH SECRETARY



Skills Solutions which is a partner company that comes under the holding company of Manchester Solutions Group. This resulted in a reduction of Employability Tutors and establishing core delivery teams in each of the training centres

Serco lost the contract for the provision of leisure facilities for the council and members were TUPE transferred to Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) who were awarded the contract with effect from 1st October 2014. GLL is a charitable social enterprise set up by Greenwich Council there were no proposed "measures" so thankfully a redundancy situation was avoided

I have represented and advised members on disciplinaries, grievances and capability hearings working in south Manchester Primary schools as well as negotiating some settlement agreements. Due to a reduction in school budgets several school restructures have taken place. Some schools have reduced teaching assistant hours due to significant changes in SEN funding for those members working on a one to one basis with pupils who are statemented. There is a significant consequence of school budget reductions for our part time low paid members; Lunchtime Organisers have been particularly hard hit

This has been quite a hectic year with the consequence of the Austerity measures starting to impact on member's jobs. This year CONNEXIONS once again proposed an incremental freeze on members' pay. We submitted a formal Grievance following legal advice and we succeeded in getting the threat withdrawn. We have finally got a signed Recognition Agreement with CONNEXIONS after a number of protracted meetings over many months

There have been redundancy consultations with

There has been an increase in the number of members I have represented in the Community and Voluntary Sector in disciplinaries and redundancy consultations.

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STILL FIGHTING FOR FAIR PAY

Pay has been our dominant issue this year.

A year that began hopefully, building to a successful day of strike action ended in a clumsy surrender, followed by disappointment for members and concerns at all levels of UNISON about what happened.

As always our union will continue to fight for fair pay. Without unity we are nothing and we are working to resolve the issues that arose.

THE JULY 10th STRIKE

Following a national ballot rejecting a measly 1% pay offer Manchester built to a strong day of action. We recruited loads of new members on the run up to the strike and more on the day as people filled out forms on the lines.

We all called for action and we all delivered. Members were already asking when the next strike day would be. What could possibly go wrong?

THE LONG WAIT

Weeks and months ticked by. An August strike date was set, then cancelled to suit GMB and Unite. A date was set for October 14th, over three months after the first day.

Already things were slipping as a revised two year offer was made. A deliberately complex and divisive hotch-potch of a deal which when analysed was actually a money saver for the employers.

A fact Sarah Messenger, the NJC Employers side Secretary for the Local Government Association (LGA), knew full well. She even wrote to the councils to tell them so.

Rightly, the offer was initially rejected, even as other unions considered taking the deal. There were many reasons to reject it, but the fact is our NJC committee (that makes the decisions on pay negotiations) could not accept it, as it worked out that some members would get less than the 1% that had been rejected in our strike ballot

That's when the LGA got clever and some people lost their nerve.

THE WHEELS FINALLY COME OFF

With two working days to go before the strike our NJC committee met again. There was a "new" proposal on the table. Just a pittance added to take everyone over the 1% threshold. Just enough to allow the strike to be called off.

Our General Secretary Dave Prentis shared a letter with the meeting. It had been sent to him by Jim McMahon the leader of the Labour group on the LGA.

Simply put, it said if you don't call off the strike and don't

agree not to recommend that people reject it, you won't get the deal.

Our North West reps and others held their ground to keep striking, but the majority voted to call the strike off and consult on the proposals.

THE AFTERMATH

Clearly this was a bad decision. Like many others our branch campaigned for members to reject the proposals. We encouraged other branches to do the same, to pass motions recommending rejection and to work together.

It wasn't easy. National materials were slanted to put the deal in a positive light and the question the ballot asked was designed to make people think that if they refused the deal they would have to take all out action continuously.

Branches that campaigned for a no vote rejected the deal. But nationally the deal was accepted and the door has closed on getting a decent pay rise this year.

WHERE NEXT?

No matter how you look at it, national pay bargaining in its current form has been failing in its most basic test: Our members are getting poorer. Years of below inflation rises are driving down wages and standards of living. We believe that something must be done.

We can't bury our heads in the sand and say the issue is closed. There is no point being bitter and sniping from the sidelines. That won't get us anywhere.

In October our branch agreed to requisition a special Local Government Conference on pay. It required branches representing 25% of UNISON's local government membership to support us. It's difficult to achieve. Our structures aren't designed to help branches from different regions talk to each other. In fact they make it difficult.

It has been a long campaign, involving getting the support of branches across the country. We used our website to give people the wording to write their own motions and the details on how to make the requisition. We used social media to push the message out, updating everyone on the progress. And we called, emailed and spoke to everyone we could. Making new alliances and building a real momentum.

We are pleased to say that this has been achieved. A conference will be called. We will have our say on some of the disgraceful antics we have seen this year. Most importantly we will be able to decide a new approach to pay bargaining. Heal the rifts in our union and get back to what we should have been doing all along.

Getting a good deal for our members on pay.

EQUALITIES REPORT

Equality

UNISON Manchester Branch continues to fight against injustices to its members and is not afraid to challenge those who discriminate against the rights of its members.

The Branch has a diverse membership, with a breakdown of full members as follows:

Gender

- Female: 74%
- Male: 24%
- Not Defined: 2%

Ethnicity

- White: 50%
- Black: 10%
- Not Disclosed: 40%

Self Organised Groups (SOG)

Black Members

Relaunch of the Black Members SOG took place in July 2014. Following which the group organised a successful Black History Month event in October 2014 with the theme 'Recognising our Contribution'. A full article on this event will be made available on our website soon.

Areas the group will focus on in 2015 are:

- Recruitment (Group and Branch)
- Challenging racism in the workplace

The next Black Members' National Conference will be held in February 2015.

LGBT Members

The first meeting of the LGBT SOG was held in July 2014. Delegation to the November 2014 LGBT Conference addressed a range of motions, including 'Kicking Homophobia Out of the World Cup'.

Areas the group will focus on in 2015 are:

- Growing the group
- Ensuring it's fair representation and proportionality
- Political engagement
- Campaigns

February 2015 is LGBT History Month and the National Conference will take place in November 2015.

Women Members

Representatives from the Women's group, formed two years ago have been active at various regional and national events, including Women's Conferences and the group is also represented on the Regional Women's Committee.

Areas the group will focus on in 2015 are:

- Women's health
- Domestic abuse
- Racism and the impact on women of the rise of UKIP

The next Women's National Conference will be held in February 2015.

LABOUR LINK REPORT

As in previous years, the branch has delegates attending all five of the Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) in Manchester and a further three across the Greater Manchester area.

The branch has sent delegates to the Labour Link Regional Forum and we maintain our important work ensuring that the concerns of UNISON members are heard at every level of the Party.

The by-elections in Manchester and Oldham this year were won by the Labour Party, though you might have missed that fact in the constant publicity given to UKIP by the mainstream media!

Perhaps just as importantly, the complete collapse in the Lib Dem vote in Manchester resulted in their total wipeout and removal from the council. Surely just punishment for their work nationally in propping up an unelected Tory government that has wreaked havoc with its unwarranted attack on local government budgets. Nick Griffin and his odious BNP were also sent packing by the electors of the North West in 2014.

2015 will see increased campaigning as we work towards removing this politically toxic government and fight for a fairer deal for Manchester and the North West generally.

UNISON are putting particular effort into campaigning in the Manchester Withington constituency for the general election but we would be happy to co-ordinate anyone looking to support the Labour Party throughout Greater Manchester and beyond.

If you wish to join the Labour Party or if you are a member interested in representing the Branch at your constituency Labour Party meetings, or are willing to do some work in your area to kick this government out then please contact us at the branch office.



LEARNING AND EDUCATION

Learning and training has expanded rapidly this last year due to a highly successful collaborative learning agenda in Manchester.

Manchester Branch is seen as a beacon of learning and training and an example of a highly thriving way of working together to provide members with the opportunity to develop themselves on both a career and personal level.

In conjunction with HR/OD and workforce development teams licences have been granted for training section staff to undertake BKSb assessments internally. This has led to staff being able to be assigned directly, for an assessment, to the assessors by ULRs, line managers and MPeople and this has resulted in a much more efficient and timely system.

There have been several hundred Manchester Branch members undergoing the BKSb skills testing to establish their skill level which ensures that they are appointed to the correct course to encourage their own development and enhance career opportunities. Most importantly it aided employment sustainability.

Despite the economic situation Manchester has still progressed with the apprenticeship scheme, although at lower levels than in previous years. Apprenticeships are available to existing staff and not just for external recruitment.

As a branch we have now instigated a twice yearly Mental Health Awareness course. The 3 day blended course of 2 days in the classroom and 1 day online, has been successfully completed by over 50 members. The course is a nationally certificated level 2 qualification

and can be the stepping stone for a career in Mental Health.

It is essential to note that learning is not all about certificates and career development. Under the Health & Wellbeing agenda the branch was approached to support the creation of a weekly yoga class. As the class was new there was no equipment available and this may have put people off participating due to the outlay for yoga mats and blocks.

A bid to the Union Learning Fund, held nationally, for funding of the equipment was submitted and was successful. The ULF fully funded all the required equipment. The first class was held on the 9th December. If you want to join the yoga sessions see the intranet for details.

It has always been an ambition to take learning out to those members who find it difficult to access learning and training due to venue inaccessibility.

Therefore to alleviate the problems of travelling to venues a bid was submitted to the Union Learning Fund for funds for a pop up mobile learning centre and 8 Asus T100 multifunctional tablets. The bid was accepted for in excess of £3000.00 to provide the kit.

Therefore taster sessions, learning events and workshops can be run wherever they are required without the need to find a venue as the venue will go to the learners.

If you feel that you could help support your friends and colleagues with learning then sign up and become a fully trained Union Learning Representative by contacting the Branch office.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER'S REPORT

Earlier this year I took over from long standing officer Rod Fawcett. Rod has started a new job that means he will now be a member of a different branch. Well known, and highly respected for his work both for the branch and for North West region, Rod will be sorely missed.

None the less this has been a good year for branch communications.

We have put out several issues of our newsletter The Mancunion, posted to all members. We are now including posters and an application form for people to use in their own workplace.

We have supplemented this with regular website updates and leaflets distributed by stewards at work.

We also produced our own materials to recommend rejecting the pay offer.

We have also made good use of Twitter. We have live tweeted our national conferences so our members know branch policy and how their representatives have voted. We have also tweeted from protests, demonstrations and at the launch of the "Life After Austerity" report.

In our report on pay you will also see the role that the web and social media played in requisitioning a special conference.

Next year we will be working on a redesign of our branch website and continuing our policy of regular communication for all members.

M PEOPLE QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Quality Assurance process is unique in that it is jointly run by the Trade Unions with the Quality Assurance Officer being selected by the joint Trade Unions.

Sonia Stewart is the Joint Trade Union Quality Assurance Officer within the m people Team.

When I began my new role of Quality Assurance Joint Trade Union Officer at the end of June 2014, representing the three Unions and based within the m people Team in HROD, I was ready for the challenge.

My role in the team is to listen to and address matters of concern arising from the m people process. This isn't always straightforward and depending on the case, sometimes involves going through all stages of the Quality Assurance Review process. However, most cases are resolved early in the process.

The Quality Assurance (QA) Process is in three stages:

Stage 1 (informal): Involves the member of staff discussing their concerns with their line manager to try and seek an agreement. If no agreement –

Stage 2: The staff member liaises with the QA Joint Trade Union Officer and completes a QA Review Form. The Line Manager must also complete the relevant section before the form is submitted.

A further attempt is made to resolve any concerns.

Stage 3 (final stage): If necessary, the case is reviewed by the Quality Assurance Panel that includes Trade Union representatives and senior management.

In addition to discussions with the member concerned, the process involves discussions between the QA Joint Trade Union Officer and management, other Trade Unions and m people leads.

This is a valuable service that has assisted in addressing and resolving members' concerns and helping them to move through m people as smoothly as possible.



Sonia Stewart - Joint Trade Union QA Officer

PROTESTS AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY

UNISON activity doesn't all take place in negotiation meetings, in formal hearings or on the phone.

Sometimes there's only one way to be heard and that's by taking to the streets. This year branch members took part in several demonstrations.

Most recently at the TUC "Britain Needs a Payrise" march and rally down in London.

We wanted as many of our members to attend as possible so we arranged for 100 free train tickets. We are pleased to say that nearly all of them were used. We were just part of a massive turnout from all unions, all with the same message.

Pay restraint is unfair and only damages our economy.

Our branch also had a good turn out for the "Austerity Wrecks Lives" demo here in Manchester. We dished out piles of our branch Fair Pay t-shirts, but, it being Manchester, people seemed far more grateful for the waterproof ponchos we gave out.

But it's not all about demonstrations. In August we got the chance to do something a bit different for "Locked Out" a day of action on pay. Branch officers went out and about around the city centre at lunchtime giving out leaflets and balloons, chatting to people about fair pay for council workers.

One of the best things about this kind of activity is the support we get, whether we are marching, at a rally, or just talking to people in the street, everyone seems to support us and support our causes.



GOOD TO MEET YOU...

Name: Sharon Osborne

Job: Off site Co-ordinator at Levenshulme High School

How long have you been a member of the union? 20 years

What do you like about your role in UNISON?
The feeling of comradery from being part of the Unison team and the opportunity to support my colleagues in the workplace

Whereabouts do you live?
Levenshulme

Where would you want to live?
On a beach

Best thing about UNISON?
The essential service and support it provides to it's members

Who or what is your inspiration?
My family and my work

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?
Opening mouth before engaging brain

What is the trait you most deplore in others?
Dishonesty, bullying and unfairness

If you were Prime Minister, what would you do first?
Living wage for all, more help for homelessness and more accountability for government

What superpower would you like?
Invisibility - now that would be interesting!!!



What's the worst job you've ever done? What's your ideal job?

Worst job was a dishwasher in cafe with too many pots and not enough speed. Best job is my job now working with young people and being a mum too.

Favourite holiday destination, film, drink, football club?

France is my favourite. Lovely holidays have been spent there. Film is Wizard of Oz, favourite drink at work is coffee and at home I'm partial to a Pimms. Football club is Manchester United

What was your best day at work, and your worst?

Best day was results day last year for a group of pupils I had worked with who had overcome many hurdles. Worst day not had any - yet

Why do unions matter?

Unions matter because they represent the voice of the members and fight for our right to work in a place we are appreciated protected and happy.

Join UNISON

To be completed by new applicant

Please fill in this application form in
BLOCK CAPITALS and send it to:-
Manchester UNISON, Room 321, 3rd Floor,
Town Hall, Albert Square, Manchester, M60 2LA

Recruit a friend to UNISON...
and receive a £10 for each member you recruit!

Recruiter

To be completed by the existing UNISON member.

Name:

Membership Number:

1 Tell us about you

Title

First name

Surname/family name

Date of birth / /

Home address

Postcode

email

Phone number (please indicate if home, work or mobile)

National insurance number (from your payslip)

Please give your ethnic origin: (tick one box)

<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> Black African	<input type="checkbox"/> Black UK	<input type="checkbox"/> White UK
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian UK	<input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> Black other	<input type="checkbox"/> Irish
<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian other		<input type="checkbox"/> White other	

2 Tell us about your job

Employer's name

Your job title/occupation

Workplace name and address

Postcode

Payroll number (from your payslip)

3 What you will pay each month

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions.

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

4 Choose your political fund

One of the ways UNISON works on your behalf is through political campaigning. Your subscription includes a political fund payment so you won't pay any extra, but in UNISON you choose how you want that money to be used.

Please tick one box only.

- ☐ Our Affiliated Political Fund takes UNISON members' views directly into the Labour Party, working to promote UNISON policies.
- ☐ The General Political Fund is used to pay for branch, regional and national campaigns but is independent of any political party.

5 Choose how you wish to pay Please tick ONE box only

EITHER deduct from salary:

- ☐ I wish to join UNISON and authorise deduction of subscriptions from my pay by my employer.

Signature

Date

OR pay by direct debit:
please complete the direct debit form below

- ☐ I wish to join UNISON and authorise deduction of subscriptions by direct debit

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

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

Please fill in the form and send to UNISON, 130 Euston Road London NW1 2AY

Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

To: The Manager

Bank/building society

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of Account holder(s)

Bank/building society account number

Branch sort code



Service User Number

9 7 0 0 5 0

Reference number (for office use only do not complete)

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

Signature(s)

Date

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