

MANCUNION

THE UNISON NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2015



NO TO
AUSTERITY



Sunday 4 October 2015

**Rally and march in Manchester
Protest at the Tory Conference**

Full report and photos inside



**BRANCH AGM 20TH JANUARY 2016
PRELIMINARY NOTICE ENCLOSED**

The Branch were delighted to see Jeremy Corbyn and Tom Watson elected as Labour Leader and Deputy. Especially having recommended that our members vote for them.

Whilst it's early days and the path ahead will not always be smooth it opens up a debate on the kind of policies we need to see adopted by the Labour Party in future to represent working people and the mass of the population.

The Tories have only been in sole power for a few months but they've wasted no time in attacking all sections of society.

New cuts to the NHS. Selling off more public housing. Imposing a 1% limit on public sector pay for a full five years. That's a full five years of real terms pay cuts for us all.

By Christmas millions of the in work poor will be told of up to thousands of pounds of cuts to their tax credits. Exposing the Tory lie about supporting 'hard working families'.

We urge all our members to consider joining the Labour Party. We can then make sure that when Labour are next elected they are as determined to defend the interests of 99% of society as the Tories are for the 1%.

Later in the year the Government will announce their spending decisions for public services.

We are likely to face further wholesale cuts in Council resources, other public services and knock on cuts in funding for the Community and Voluntary sector.

We've already seen a change in the Labour leadership. Now after long years of job losses, continued attack on our services, cuts in our pensions and living standards, UNISON members now have a choice as to the kind of leadership needed at the top of our union to

challenge the prospect of five years of the same.

Ballot papers go out from 9th November to elect our General Secretary.

We urge members to use their vote and note our Branch Executive overwhelmingly nominated John Burgess as the candidate to support in this vital election.

Finally please note in your diary our next AGM will be on Wednesday 20th January 2016.



IN MY VIEW

EVELYN DOYLE

BRANCH SECRETARY

IN THIS ISSUE

This month we take a look at the proposed Trade Union Bill and why it represents a renewed attack on legitimate trade union activity. We also examine the reasons why it's important to become more involved with the Labour Party to help build support for the next General Election.

Our centre page spread features a report on the recent demonstration that took place at the start of the Tory Party Conference. Alongside our other usual features we also have updates on the current issues affecting our members at Manchester Airport and Manchester College.

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

MANCHESTER NOMINATES JOHN BURGESS FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

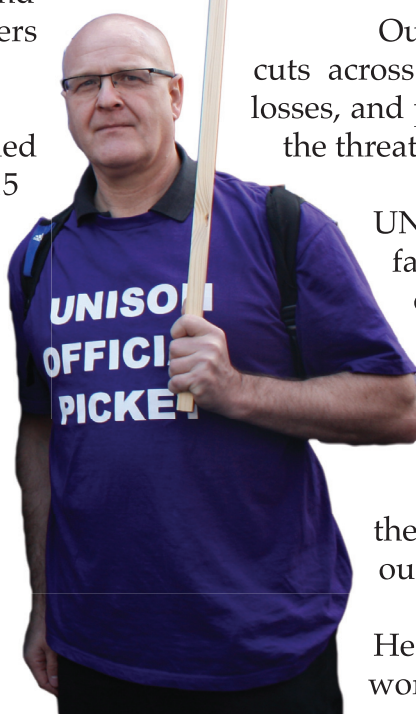
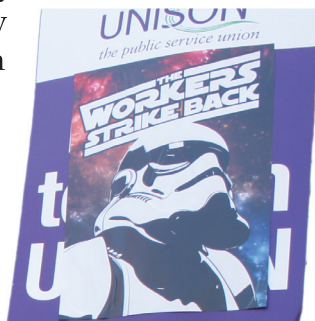
Our National union will shortly hold an election to determine a new General Secretary to take this union forward.

Past elections have unfortunately involved low turn outs, so it's critical that whoever wins has the support of members across our union and can challenge employers and government when our members are under attack.

Ballot papers will be issued nationally from 9 November 2015 and the ballot will close on 4 December 2015.

Anyone who doesn't receive a ballot paper at their home address by 16 November should contact UNISON Direct on 0800 0857 857.

Replacement ballot papers will be issued from 16 November until 1 December if you need one.



This election will determine the key leadership role in UNISON for the next five years and the outcome will massively impact on the future for all our members so it is vital every member uses their vote.

Why your Branch nominated John Burgess for General Secretary

Our members have seen relentless cuts across our public services, massive job losses, and pay cuts for the last five years with the threat of five more years of the same.

UNISON's national leadership has failed to effectively oppose this onslaught. We need new leadership to stand up for our members and not tamely accept these attacks.

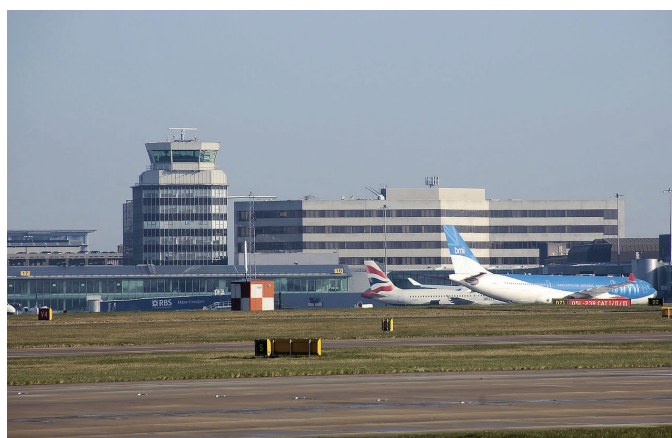
As a Branch Secretary, John Burgess knows how tough it is on the front line and is not removed from our members problems.

He will lead from the front, not just in words and that's why our Branch is supporting him.

MANCHESTER AIRPORT NEWS

We recently conducted an indicative ballot of our Manchester Airport Group members. This was to consult them on a two year pay deal of 2%, plus a one off non-consolidated payment of £200. Members voted to accept the pay offer by 70% to 30%.

The Airport Section Chair Tim Ward has advised the Airport of the result. He has had it confirmed that members will get the 2% pay award, including back pay to 1 August, in November's pay. The one-off payment will be processed in December's pay. The Branch would like to thank all those members who voted in the ballot.



WHY THE TRADE UNION BILL IS AN ATTACK ON US ALL

Parliament is debating the Tories' new trade union bill this month. This malicious bit of legislation is a deliberate attempt to undermine us and strip you of your human rights.

Strangely the Tories keep talking about 'democracy' when they discuss the bill. Let's take a look at a couple of the changes and see how democratic they really are...

Changes to strike ballot thresholds

The right-wing press like to paint a picture of high powered union barons forcing us to do things we don't want to do, but actually our unions are fundamentally democratic. Our members are perfectly happy with our ballot arrangements.

Every year your elected representatives go to our national conference and every year there is an opportunity to change the union's rules. No one has ever said they wanted this change. It is being forced upon us. How is that democratic?

The new ballot threshold of a 50% turnout is beyond ridiculous. The Tories are effectively making all abstentions a no vote. It's an attempt to outlaw the right to strike. One of your fundamental human rights. How is that democratic?

Forcing you to regularly opt in to the political fund.

The new law also forces you to opt into contributing to the political fund every five years. Given that you can opt out at any time if you want to, it's clear that this is just a cynical attempt to cut union funding to the Labour Party to cut the legs out from under their main political opponent.

Why should we be forced to jump through hoops to support a political party? The Tories accepted a £25,000 donation from Warburtons. We don't remember them having to ask every sandwich eater in the country first.

This will create a two tier political system, where trade unions are tied in red tape when supporting Labour, but hedge funds and millionaires can shower money on the Tories with impunity.

How is that democratic?

Criminalising trade unionists.

After spending the 80s getting special branch to spy on unions we are now being forced to do it for them. If you decide to go on a picket line you may be forced to give your name to the police. An employers dream to "blacklist" members from future work.

How is that democratic?

It's easy to just see the bill from our own point of view as trade unionists in the public sector. But other people will be badly affected. Here are a few.

Agency workers

The bill would lift the ban on hiring agency staff to cover striking workers. How many of them will be forced to work against their principles or not offered other work if they refuse to break a strike?

Employers

The new rules may drag disputes out for longer. With a higher threshold we may well have to spend longer campaigning to be sure of a result. Attacking unions undermines effective industrial relations which prevent most strikes being needed. Threats to end check off of subscriptions even where unions pay over what it costs to administer will reduce employers income.

The Police

The Police are like any other public service under funded and understaffed. They simply do not have the resources to enforce these ridiculous rules.

The chair of the Police Federation has said that it fills him with "dread and fear"... "It would be such a massively complex operation and from the police point of a view a dangerous road to go down."

Your Human Rights

The trade union bill is not just a worker's rights issue. Liberty, Amnesty International and the British Institute of Human Rights have described it as "a major attack on civil liberties in the UK".

This is your union. These are your human rights and the conservatives are taking them from you. We can't let them.

We must oppose it in any way we can. With that in mind a delegation of branch members will be going to parliament on 2 November to lobby their MP and attend a TUC rally to challenge the Government's attacks which even a leading Tory MP described as 'like something reminiscent of Franco's fascist era'.

Every member is urged to call on their MP to ask them to oppose this Bill which attacks our rights and any real democracy.

Writing to your MP is easy. You can do it online by visiting www.theyworkforyou.com

A full report of the lobby of Parliament will be in the xmas edition of Mancunion.



JOIN THE LABOUR PARTY AND MAKE YOUR VOICE COUNT

Our Branch having urged support for Jeremy Corbyn as Leader of the Labour Party and Tom Watson as Deputy were pleased the vast majority of Labour Party members, trade union affiliates and registered Labour supporters shared our view.

The challenge now is to encourage the hundreds of thousands of people who took part in the election to become full members of the Labour Party. This would ensure future policies reflect the needs of most in society and build support for the party in every community to ensure we can remove the Tory government at the next opportunity.

There are around 450,000 Labour Link members nationally in UNISON and 75,000 regionally in the North West.

But those members had to register as formal Labour Party supporters (even though part of their levy payments went as affiliation fees to the party) and in the few weeks involved, the administrative hurdles meant barely more than 5% of those did, so nearly 95% did not get a vote in the Leadership elections.

To resolve this we need all Labour Link members to consider becoming an individual Labour Party member to ensure in future they have a vote on key policies, both nationally and locally, and can take part in selections in future on who should be their councillors, MP and Leader.

But it is also about building support for Labour to be in a position to have such a level of support the Tories can be kicked out next time.

In Manchester Branch alone our levy payers at present total 3234. If only half became individual Labour Party members that would greatly strengthen the chances of moving party policies to benefit our members such as opposing further pay freezes and maximise the base of support to kick the Tories out.

There is a form on the Labour Party website for people to join (join.labour.org.uk), or you can obtain one from the Branch office. UNISON members can join with full membership rights at the trade union rate of £1.96 per month. So for 50p a week you can help build a more positive future for our communities.

MOMENTUM

Momentum, the continuation of the Jeremy Corbyn election campaign, has been launched to

help revitalise the Party at all levels. Members of Momentum will work in area groups without being limited by formal constituency structures to build support to get Labour re-elected.

One of the first campaign priorities is Democracy SOS

Changes to the electoral system mean almost two million people are about to drop off the electoral register without realising it. Democracy SOS is an urgent voter registration campaign to re-register those who will lose their right to vote.

Due to planned boundary changes, people not on the electoral register by 1 December will not be counted when the Boundary Commission redraws constituency boundaries. As a result, poorer areas could have relatively fewer MPs than richer areas.

Momentum Manchester

The Manchester Momentum Facebook page - facebook.com/PeoplesMomentum - gives details of activities and how people can become involved.

After years of being told that there is no alternative to austerity, hundreds of thousands of people stood up in the Labour Party for a new kind of politics and agreed with Jeremy Corbyn that austerity is a political choice not a necessity.

A quarter of a million people made Jeremy Corbyn Labour's Leader. And now Labour's conference has given its resounding backing to Jeremy and his Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell, to turn Labour into an anti-austerity party of hope and bold alternatives.

SPECIAL MEETING FOR ALL BRANCH MEMBERS

To launch our Branch campaign for members to join the Labour Party we will be holding a special meeting just before xmas and are hopeful a senior Labour leadership figure will be able to attend.

Further details will be sent to all members as soon as details are confirmed.

For further details on Branch Labour Link work please contact Carl Greatbatch Assistant Branch Secretary c.greatbatch@manchester.gov.uk or contact the Branch office.

MANCHESTER FIGHTS BACK!

Report on the TUC March and Demonstration

Yet again the Tories held their party conference right here in Manchester. How could we allow them to spread their lies about the need for austerity without a protest!

For years they have systematically slashed the welfare state and the public sector. Driving our members out of work or into poverty. Or often both.

It's an outrage so something had to be done. On 4 October the TUC staged a mass demonstration against austerity and in support of workers rights. Marching up Oxford Road to Castlefield right past Manchester Central where the Tories were hiding.

We weren't alone. Our national union estimates that our branch members were part of a crowd of 85,000 people. Not just trade unionists, but people from all walks of life representing all sorts of groups. Coming together in a common cause, for the common good.

It was great to see so many people marching together. And not just familiar faces and old friends, but new activists and people who were demonstrating for the first time, young people, students, families and children.

If you were to believe the rightwing press you would think we were a rabble hurling insults and throwing eggs.

But we know you can't believe the rightwing press. It was a positive day and a positive protest. Just ordinary people standing up for what's right. Our message was a serious political one.

Hope you enjoy the pictures and hope to see you at the next protest!

For more photos from the day visit our website www.unisonmanchester.org.



PHOTOS FROM THE OCT 4 DEMO



CUTS TO HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

The Government are targeting Social Housing Providers for cuts.

Rent reduction

In July George Osborne announced that the Government would enforce a 1% cut in social housing rents. He claimed there had been 'staggering' rent increases and that it was a way of bringing down the housing benefit bill.

This is a cynical deception. The cost of housing benefit is high because it subsidises poverty wages. And because so much goes to profiteering private sector landlords charging astronomical rents

This is a direct attack on housing associations and the people they support. Cutting their ability to provide services to tenants and potentially destabilising the social housing sector.

Many tenants face huge reductions in their income thanks to the vicious tax credit cut recently passed by this government. This could have a direct affect on their ability to pay their rent with potentially devastating consequences.

The impact on Manchester Housing Associations is still

unclear. Southways are not planning any reductions at the moment.

Wythenshawe Housing have announced £20 million cuts over the next few years, including 21 compulsory redundancies. We have reduced this to eight through negotiations and we hope to reduce it even further.

One Manchester has announced it will cut 30 staff, but we have got agreement that they will do this through voluntary redundancies.

Right to buy

Under their proposal, the Government will force housing associations to sell homes for only 75% of what they're worth. Perhaps good news for a few people who want to buy their home now, but a long term disaster for people needing social housing in the future. The policy is still under review and it looks like housing associations will fight against it.

We do not know what impact this will have. But we do know that Housing Associations will take a further hit. But UNISON will be there opposing these changes nationally and fighting for our members in the workplace.

PRELIMINARY NOTICE BRANCH AGM

You are invited to attend our Branch Annual Meeting which will be held at:

**FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE
(Behind Central Library)
MOUNT STREET, MANCHESTER
WEDNESDAY 20TH JANUARY 2016 AT 12.45pm**

Any Motions / Amendments to Rule to the Annual General Meeting should be proposed and seconded by UNISON members and received in the Branch Office no later than 10.00am on Wednesday 2nd December 2015.

Election of Branch Officers

Under Rule 17 "Elections", nominations are sought for the following Branch Officers:-

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| • Branch President | • Branch Communications Officer |
| • Branch Vice President (2) | • Branch International Relations Officer |
| • Branch Secretary | • Branch Education Officer |
| • Assistant Branch Secretaries (7) | • Branch Learner Reps Co-ordinator |
| • Branch Treasurer | • Branch Young Members Officer |
| • Branch Equality Officer | • Branch Welfare Officer |
| • Branch Health & Safety Officer | • Branch Honorary Auditors (2) |

Nominations should be proposed and seconded by Manchester UNISON members and counter-signed by the nominee, and must be received in the Branch Office no later than 10.00am on Wednesday 2nd December 2015.

Election Addresses

Any member nominated for any of the Branch Officer posts may submit to the Branch Chair, care of the Branch Office, an Election Address of no more than 300 words (excluding experience) by no later than 10.00am on Wednesday 2nd December 2015.

Disabled Members

The Friends Meeting House has wheelchair access to the building. Please advise the Branch Office no later than 10.00am on Wednesday 6th January 2016 of any other requirements that might need to be arranged to enable disabled members to participate at the AGM.

Facility Time Arrangements

For those members employed by Manchester City Council facility time of an hour and a half plus up to half an hour (15 minutes each way) travelling time for those outside of the City Centre has been agreed, subject to the usual provisions of ensuring service cover. Facility time is being pursued for members working for other employers.

Please make every effort to attend this important meeting.

Yours sincerely

**Evelyn Doyle
Branch Secretary**



www.unisonmanchester.org

MANCHESTER COLLEGE UPDATE

Restructures, redundancies and resistance!

Since the general election nearly 250 staff have left via voluntary redundancy as a direct result of the near 30% cut in funding for adult education.

Four years of cuts to 16 - 19 year old education have taken their toll. 24% cuts over the summer to adult skills funding (an adult is anyone 19 years or older) meant new cuts to ESOL, learner support, and Level 1 and 2 courses.

Cuts that once again make learners' education chances worse, with more staff redundancy, restructures and confusion.

The onslaught looks set to continue. The Government is expected to announce more huge cuts to college funding in England this November.

UNISON meets management regularly to try and minimise the damage to students but it's reaching a point where every cut is going to hurt.

'More for less' is now a meaningless mantra. These funding cuts are not about efficiencies, or new models of service delivery. It's all about 'austerity'.

This Government is blatantly reducing the educational options of many, many people young and old to pay for tax cuts for the rich.

UNISON will continue to negotiate to protect our members in these difficult times. But if we are to have any real effect we will have to consider other strategies. We need to let people know what is happening to our colleges. We will have to consider protests and industrial action.

Ballot for strike action

UNISON members have rejected the AoC's 0% pay 'increase' offer made at the FE National Joint Forum on Pay and we may be looking at industrial action soon.

The wider picture

The people of Greater Manchester are losing a vital community resource. This doesn't just affect the staff at the college. It affects all of us who have children who will go on to further education. It affects any of us who might want to retrain or change direction later in life.

Most of the people making these decisions and cuts to our sector have never accessed adult education. They have no idea of the many different skills, courses and opportunities that adult education offers to people. They've never needed a safety net or a second chance.

We are suffering the consequences of an ignorant, arrogant government and as usual it's the most vulnerable who suffer the most.

Collective action

This is why we have trade unions. Individually we are on our own, but collectively we have the power to challenge and change the Tory agenda.

UNISON members have already been rallying to defend adult education with a large turnout of members from different colleges at the TUC demonstration. UNISON members at The Manchester College are joining up with colleagues at Salford City College, Bolton, Trafford, Stockport and all over the Greater Manchester area who are suffering similar job losses and cuts to courses.

This is especially important as Greater Manchester is undergoing a Government led area review, likely to lead to more college closures and mergers. We're also linking up with student led groups campaigning for access to free education to present a united front of staff and students.

Visit freededucationmcr.wordpress.com to find out more

We need to unite across Greater Manchester and demand a different and better future.

STARS IN OUR SCHOOLS EVENT

You are a
Star in our school

**HOLD AN EVENT TO CELEBRATE
THE STARS IN YOUR SCHOOL
AND
WIN UP TO £500 FOR YOUR
SCHOOL'S FUNDS**

It takes a whole team to make school a safe and happy place for children to learn, and support staff are often the unsung heroes of our children's education. Whether it's the TA who goes the extra mile, the LO with infectious enthusiasm or the school cook with unstinting passion for their job, support staff are the heartbeat of school life.

Every year UNISON organises **Stars In Our Schools** to celebrate the role of support staff. We'll be celebrating again on **Friday 27th November 2015**—and we want as many schools as possible in Manchester to get involved by holding an event.

It could be a special assembly or award ceremony to celebrate the work of support staff in your school, a fancy dress competition where staff and children dress as superheroes, a tea party, coffee morning or cake sale. Whatever you fancy!

Every school that holds an event – no matter how big or small – will be entered into our prize draw to win up to £500 for your school's funds. So why not start organising an event today?

How to Enter

1. Contact Cath Baggaley at UNISON Manchester at c.baggaley@manchester.gov.uk to let her know that you'd like to hold a Stars in Our Schools event. We'll be in touch to offer support and advice
2. Hold a Stars in Our Schools event at your school on or around Friday 27th November
3. Take photos and write a brief report of what the event was and how it went
4. Send your photos and report to c.baggaley@manchester.gov.uk by Friday 4th December

First Prize - £500

Second Prize - £250

Third Prize - £150

Fourth Prize - £100

UNISON
the public service union



www.unisonmanchester.org

GOOD TO MEET YOU

Name: Bob Brown

Job: UNISON Organiser

How long have you been a member of the union? 17 years

What do you like about your role in UNISON?
The variety of members I get to meet.

Whereabouts do you live?
Slaithwaite in West Yorkshire.

Where would you want to live?
Barcelona is quite nice.

Best thing about UNISON?
That we are one of the loudest voices for social justice and workers' rights. They are under attack from this government and we need to fight them.

Who or what is your inspiration?
My parents. I'm one of 14 kids – No 13 actually – and we were all raised wanting for nothing which wasn't always easy for them.

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?
Short-temper!!

What is the trait you most deplore in others?
A lack of compassion.

If you were Prime Minister, what would you do first? Abolish the House of Lords, renationalise the railways and utilities and reverse all the pernicious cuts undertaken by the current government. It'd be a busy first day!

What superpower would you like?
To be able to fly – and they couldn't privatise it which is an added bonus.

What's the worst job you've ever done?
Worst job was unloading lorries filled with stones for stonewashing Levi jeans. I'm not built for such work which became obvious to the foreman fairly quickly.



What's your ideal job?
Ideal job would be assisting Patrick Vieira with the youth team at City. I feel I have a lot to offer to the club!!

Favourite holiday destination, film, drink, football club?
Holiday would be Seville in Spain, film would be anything by Ken Loach or the Coen brothers but if pushed Loach's *Raining Stones*, drink would be a light or golden real ale and football team is Man City.

What was your best day at work, and your worst?
Best day(s) at work was helping set up the Equal Pay unit in the North-West region and the work we did there, worst day when I found out a colleague and friend had died unexpectedly during a routine operation.

Why do unions matter?
Unions matter because we are the voice for a fairer deal for the workers. To quote a favourite song of mine (*Billy Bragg - 'There is Power in a Union'*), 'Money speaks for money, the devil for his own, who comes to speak for the skin and the bone?' We do.

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
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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"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian UK	<input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean	<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	£1.30
£2,001-£5,000	£3.50
£5,001-£8,000	£5.30
£8,001-£11,000	£6.60
£11,001-£14,000	£7.85
£14,001-£17,000	£9.70
£17,001-£20,000	£11.50
£20,001-£25,000	£14.00
£25,001-£30,000	£17.25
£30,001-£35,000	£20.30
over £35,000	£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

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

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

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