

UNISON MANCHESTER ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026

PHYSICAL MEETING

**12:30PM WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH
FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE**

VIRTUAL MEETING

**5:30PM WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH
MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**FINAL AGENDA & MOTIONS
BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT**



FINAL AGENDA FOR BRANCH AGM

1. To note that the aggregate AGM held on 20 March 2025 was quorate
2. To receive the Branch Annual Report (see later in this booklet)
3. To approve the Branch Development Plan
4. To approve the audited Branch Financial Accounts
5. To approve the honoraria payments for the Branch Auditors
 - Neelam Nayar £600.00 Paul Muir £600.00
6. To receive the Branch Nominations for the election of the following Branch Officer posts:
 - A. Branch Secretary
 - (i) Carl Greatbatch Children and Education Services
 - B. Assistant Branch Secretaries (7)
 - (1) Cath Baggaley Neighbourhoods
 - (2) Jim Taylor Corporate Services
 - (3) Dawn Warriner Growth and Development
 - (4) Sonia Stewart Corporate Services
 - (5) Jane Slater Corporate Services
 - (6) Keith Hayes Corporate Services
 - (7) Rena Wood Adult Social Care
 - C. The following nominations for Branch Officer posts have been received:
 - (a) Branch President Julie Connolly Manchester City Council
 - (b) Branch Chair Cath Baggaley Neighbourhoods
 - (c) Branch Treasurer Keith Hayes Corporate Services
 - (d) Equality Officer Sonia Stewart Corporate Services
 - (e) Education & Comms Officer Leon Sullivan Corporate Services
 - (f) International Officer Jim Taylor Corporate Services
 - (g) Health & Safety Officer Lindsey McCaig Neighbourhoods
 - (h) Welfare Officer Graham Edwards Corporate Services
 - (i) Women's Officer Debby Bolding Neighbourhoods
 - (j) Honorary Auditors (2) Neelam Nayar Corporate Services
 Paul Muir Retired Member
 - D. To receive the Branch Steward nominations
7. Guest Speaker - To Be Confirmed
8. Motions - See the subsequent pages for motion text
9. Prize draw for meeting attendees

MOTIONS FOR BRANCH AGM

MOTION ONE: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IS A TRADE UNION ISSUE

Manchester Branch recognises that violence against women and girls (VAWG, including domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking, harassment, so called 'honour'-based violence, FGM, and forced marriage, is never acceptable. It is a fundamental violation of human rights and an urgent workplace, community, and societal concern. Our Branch acknowledges that women make up more than two thirds of UNISON's membership, and the experiences of women workers are central to our collective strength and values. Recent incidents within our own workplaces and union structures demonstrate that VAWG is not an abstract issue: it is happening here, affecting our colleagues, our members, and our communities.

We are clear that assaults, harassment, and predatory behaviour must never be minimised, excused, or ignored. The days of being silent bystanders, dismissing incidents as 'banter', or allowing perpetrators to hide behind intent are over. Enough is enough. If we want a society where our daughters and granddaughters can live free from fear, judgement, and control, the responsibility to act starts with us, collectively and urgently. Women across the country are saying "Enough is Enough", and this Branch will stand firmly with them.

Employers have a duty to ensure safe workplaces, but too often the assaults and harassment of women workers are brushed aside, inadequately investigated, or quietly managed. This allows perpetrators to move into new roles and target new victims. Manchester Branch will challenge employers who fail to protect women and will hold them accountable through negotiation, scrutiny, and campaigning. Every woman has the right to work without fear of violence, intimidation, or harassment.

National statistics reinforce the scale of the problem. Over a million VAWG related crimes were recorded by police in England and Wales in 2022/23, representing nearly 20% of all crime reported that year. Women are disproportionately affected, from domestic abuse and stalking to harassment and sexual assault. These are not isolated incidents but patterns reflecting deep structural inequalities. The National Police Chiefs' Council now recognises VAWG as a national threat requiring coordinated, system wide action. As a major public sector union, UNISON has a vital role to play in the national response.

Manchester Branch therefore demands:

- Recognition of VAWG as a core public safety, equality, and workplace issue.
- Adequate, long term funding for frontline services, policing, prevention, and victim support.
- Comprehensive training for stewards, safety reps, and staff to improve awareness, signposting, and interventions.
- Stronger partnership working with statutory services and community organisations.
- Improved data collection, reporting mechanisms, and research to strengthen workplace policy and union campaigns.

This Branch commits to:

- Lobbying employers to adopt robust policies, including risk assessments, domestic abuse leave, and survivor centred support.
- Organising awareness raising events and training programmes for members.
- Supporting campaigns and contributing to national strategy development.
- Working with elected representatives to secure funding, strengthen sanctions against perpetrators, and improve multi agency responses.
- Creating a comprehensive toolkit to help branches implement effective policies on domestic abuse, stalking, harassment, and sexual assault.

UNISON Manchester Branch stands with survivors, champions prevention, and will work tirelessly to eradicate VAWG from our workplaces and communities.

Proposed by the Branch Officers

MOTIONS FOR BRANCH AGM

MOTION TWO: SUPPORTING SERA'S GROUND TRUTH PROGRAMME

UNISON's year of green activity offers us a vital opportunity to bring sustainability, fairness, and long term thinking into the heart of our everyday work. The environmental challenges facing our communities—rising energy costs, declining air quality, extreme weather, loss of biodiversity—are no longer distant or abstract. They affect our workplaces, our families, and the public services we rely on. By dedicating focused time and collective effort to green initiatives, we can help shape a healthier and more resilient future for everyone.

A sustained programme of green activity strengthens our ability to respond to environmental change in a way that protects jobs, improves wellbeing, and supports the most vulnerable. Through learning, campaigning, and practical workplace action, we can reduce waste, cut emissions, champion sustainable procurement, and promote fair access to clean, affordable energy. It also creates space to empower members with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the transition to a greener economy.

Most importantly, a year of green activity puts collaboration at the centre. It allows workers, employers, and communities to pull together around shared goals—cleaner workplaces, safer neighbourhoods, and a fairer future. By acting now, we help ensure that environmental progress is something that benefits everyone, not just a few.

This Branch Notes:

- The Labour Government was elected with a clear mandate to deliver rapid progress on clean power, nature restoration, and environmental fairness.
- Our members and their local communities are on the front line of climate impacts, facing risks from flooding and air pollution alongside the pressure of high energy bills.
- There is a coordinated campaign of misinformation regarding Net Zero, often backed by fossil-fuel interests and populist projects like Reform UK, which seeks to undermine green jobs and public health protections.

This Branch Believes:

- Climate action is a matter of social justice. A “just transition” must ensure that the shift to a green economy creates high-quality, unionised jobs and lowers the cost of living.
- The majority of the public supports climate action when it is framed around tangible benefits: cleaner air, warmer homes, and economic security.
- As trade unionists, we have a responsibility to ensure our members are equipped with the facts to counter misinformation in the workplace and the community.

This Branch Resolves:

- To formally support SERA's Ground Truth programme, which empowers activists to counter climate misinformation and champion the local benefits of environmental progress.
- To promote Ground Truth training and storytelling initiatives to our members via branch communications (newsletters, social media, and meetings).
- To ask the Branch Committee to liaise with the regional Labour Link Committee to ensure UNISON's voice is central to SERA's campaigning work.
- To encourage members to sign up as “Ground Truth” advocates to help ensure that Labour's environmental mission remains ambitious and rooted in the needs of working people.

Proposed by the Branch Officers

MOTIONS FOR BRANCH AGM

MOTION THREE: PALESTINE - ORGANISING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The genocide in Palestine did not end with the most recent ceasefire. Hundreds have been killed since the attacks were ‘officially’ stopped. On 4 February 2026, reports stated that 23 people were murdered in their tents by Israeli shelling. Those killed included an 11-year-old girl. With over 70,000 confirmed dead since October 2023, sources such as the British Medical Journal and The Lancet state that the figure is likely to be much higher.

From a British perspective, there have been some important steps forward. The formal recognition of the State of Palestine was no small feat, but it may remain a token gesture without tangible actions being taken afterwards. UNISON must play its part in ensuring that pressure remains on the government to make better decisions, and Manchester Branch has a role in that process.

UNISON believes wholeheartedly that Palestinian rights are a trade union issue. We show solidarity with workers across the world who want the same basic rights that we take for granted: to access safe employment, to provide for their families, and to enjoy leisure time. Last year, workers across Europe in different sectors took collective action to support Palestinian rights. Dock workers in France and Italy refused to unload Israeli arms shipments, while trade unions in Ireland and Norway passed motions stating that retail workers should not be forced to handle Israeli goods.

How does UNISON Manchester Branch exercise its collective power and push for the tangible changes it is able to influence? The answer lies in our access to the Local Government Pension Scheme. Boycotts, Divestments and Sanctions (BDS) is a concept many are familiar with; however, we have yet to take a collective, organising approach towards it. UNISON Manchester Branch must create a space for activists to develop and organise a coherent BDS strategy in the form of an organising committee.

At UNISON Manchester Branch, we understand that the situation on the ground for our Jewish and Muslim comrades is increasingly dangerous. The far-right group Britain First has repeatedly and purposefully attacked Manchester's Islamic community, conflating Palestinian solidarity with support for extremist ideologies. As the influence of the far right has grown, so too has the spread of these pernicious and baseless arguments into public opinion. Moreover, we have sadly seen a rise in antisemitic violence, culminating in the heinous terrorist attack that took place at the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue in the north of our city on Yom Kippur in 2025.

Any committee looking to organise in support of Palestinian rights within Manchester Branch will resolve to move forward with inclusivity and openness, creating a welcoming space for all, regardless of religious or cultural identity.

UNISON Manchester Branch resolves to:

- Establish an organising committee that will focus on progressing UNISON Manchester Branch's commitment to supporting the Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions movement, in line with the values of our affiliate, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

Proposed by the Branch International Officer

MOTIONS FOR BRANCH AGM

MOTION FOUR: OPPOSING THE FAR RIGHT AND DEFENDING OUR COMMUNITIES

This Branch notes:

- The fascist and far right riots that took place in towns and cities across Britain last August, including attacks on mosques and hotels housing migrants, encouraged by public figures such as Tommy Robinson (Stephen Yaxley Lennon), Nigel Farage and others.
- That Stand Up to Racism, together with organisations across the trade union movement, played a key role in pushing back against racist and fascist mobilisation during the summer.
- That Hope not Hate has led and coordinated highly effective electoral campaigns against the BNP, UKIP and similar organisations, and is refining its strategy to challenge Reform UK.
- That Show Racism the Red Card continues important work tackling racism in schools and among young people, preventing prejudice before it becomes entrenched.
- That across Europe, far right and fascist forces continue to grow both on the streets and in parliaments. In Britain, there are now eight Reform UK MPs, giving far right rhetoric a significantly larger parliamentary platform.
- That the re election of President Trump, alongside support from high profile figures such as Elon Musk, has emboldened Reform UK and the wider far right.
- That a far right led march in London, organised by extreme Islamophobe Tommy Robinson, mobilised around 150,000 people and included dangerous rhetoric such as Elon Musk's call to "fight or die".
- That Reform UK is growing rapidly, with reported membership of over 237,000 by August 2025 and polling around 28%. Their strategy relies on dividing communities in pursuit of electoral gain at local and national levels.

This Branch believes:

- That the Labour government must not repeat or echo the migration or Islamophobia related policies of Reform UK or the Conservatives, as doing so risks reinforcing scapegoating of refugees and asylum seekers and accelerating the growth of the far right.
- That a strong, united response to racism, division, and austerity is essential, and that trade unions play a key role in this through campaigning, organising, and the fight against low pay.
- That UNISON's continued support for Stand Up To Racism, Show Racism the Red Card, Hope not Hate, and other anti racist organisations makes a real and measurable difference in resisting racism on the streets and in institutions, and is essential to reversing recent far right gains.
- That our collective work, and the work of our partners, is central to opposing racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, and the scapegoating of migrants and asylum seekers.

This Branch resolves:

- To continue work under our agreed strategies and policies against the far right, in coordination with other unions, the TUC, and anti racist organisations including Hope not Hate, Show Racism the Red Card, and Stand Up to Racism, with the aim of preventing the growth of the far right.
- To work with our anti racist partners, publicising their meetings, campaigns, protests, and other activities, and encouraging Branch participation in line with our strategy.
- To agree delegates to appropriate anti racist events to ensure our Branch plays an active and visible role in this essential campaigning work.

Proposed by the UNISON Inspire Black Members' Forum

MOTIONS FOR BRANCH AGM

MOTION FIVE: STAND UP TO RACISM

This Manchester Unison branch AGM notes:

The worrying rise of the far-right in Britain and internationally. This includes the mass protest in September 2025 of 100,000 people on a demonstration organised by Tommy Robinson.

The growth of Reform UK who are trying to build a mass right party, using anti-establishment rhetoric combined with scapegoating of refugees, immigrants and the Muslim community.

Unison, along with the wider trade union movement has mobilised to counter these right-wing mobilisations and challenge far-right ideas, in the workplace and on the streets.

That the new Together Alliance uniting trade unions, faith groups, environmental and anti-racist organisations has called a national protest on March 28 to put the anti-racist movement on the front foot.

In Manchester the far-right have tried to mobilise and gain support by protesting outside hostels and hotels where refugees have been housed.

Manchester Unison's presence on Stand Up to Racism (SUTR) mobilisation against the far-right and in support of the Muslim community, immigrants and refugees is an important part of building solidarity against the right.

National Unison's affiliation to SUTR and its support for SUTR and Together Alliance events.

This AGM agrees:

- Manchester Unison stands firmly against all forms of racism including antisemitism and islamophobia, as well as racism directed at the Gipsy, Roma & Traveller (GRT) community.
- Manchester Unison will donate £250 towards Manchester SUTR to affiliate.
- As an affiliated body, we will send a regular delegate to the Manchester Stand Up to Racism steering group.
- Continue to support Stand Up to Racism and other anti-racist and anti-fascist mobilisations in our city and nationally by sending a delegation to the events, encouraging attendance by members by circulating information and helping towards travel costs if appropriate.

**Proposed by Martin Empson
Seconded by Lesley Lancelott**

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

IN MY VIEW - CARL GREATBATCH - BRANCH SECRETARY



Every year I say it, but it feels like these Annual Reports come around faster every year. It hardly seems any time since we set out our priorities for 2025 - yet here we are again, preparing to share our plans for 2026 at our slightly later than usual Annual General Meeting.

The AGM remains one of the most important moments in our organising year. It is where we confirm the results of elections for our officers, stewards and activists, and where we present the programme that will guide our branch's work for the year ahead. With the meeting taking place later this time, we have been able to bring together a fuller, more developed set of plans - reflecting a year of growth, change and increasing confidence across our activist base.

Throughout 2025 and into 2026, our central focus has been implementing the organising model across the whole branch. This is now

starting to take real shape. Our Casework system has enabled us to support more activists to get involved in workplace issues, and the combination of shadowing opportunities, regional training and on the ground mentoring has resulted in a growing number of stewards who feel ready and able to take on complex matters. We are genuinely delighted to see more stewards stepping forward to support members directly in their own workplaces. This is exactly what a strong, member led union looks like.

Our dedicated Organisers, the first of whom joined us in August 24, have continued to play a crucial role. Their projects in schools, social care and housing providers have helped deepen our presence and strengthen workplace structures. They have also been working closely with reps across the branch to support campaigns, recruitment and day to day organising. As always, I want to encourage every member to consider getting involved: whether as a contact, steward, learning rep or Health & Safety rep. There has never been a better moment to step forward.

Nationally, this year has brought significant challenges and changes. A major priority for the union movement has been responding to the rise in extremist and divisive political narratives, and standing up for inclusive, safe communities for all. At the same time, we have continued to press for fairer funding for public services from central government, an essential part of securing the resources and staffing our members need. This work will continue throughout 2026, and our involvement through Labour Link and other channels ensures that our members' voices are heard where national decisions are made.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the AGM and to the conversations we will have about the year ahead. If you are unable to attend but have questions about any of the work we are doing, please do get in touch with me through the branch at any time.

In Solidarity, Carl Greatbatch (Branch Secretary)

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

JANE SLATER - CORPORATE CORE / GMCA



Over the past year, the budget position has improved, and we welcome the confirmation that there will be no cuts to the services delivered to residents. While public services continue to face significant financial challenges, the election of a new government last summer brings cautious optimism. Councils have borne the brunt of austerity for over a decade and here in Manchester City Council we are now seeing greater support from government that will allow investment, and growth in the services we deliver and residents rely on.

Within the Corporate Core, staff continue to deliver high quality services despite ongoing pressures. The workforce has not yet fully recovered from the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, cuts to budgets and services caused by the unnecessary austerity imposed on the country. Many staff are still

fatigued from all of the above, however their commitment to maintaining excellent services for residents has never been clearer.

The introduction of the Adjustments Hub within the Corporate Core has proved to be a massive development and gives staff the assurance that they will be supported with conditions that impact them. The Hub supports staff across services by implementing adjustment passports, reducing the need for individuals to repeatedly explain their circumstances. This provides clarity for managers and members and should prevent disability discrimination. It also supports staff wellbeing. The team works closely with Health and Safety colleagues to ensure that appropriate risk assessments continue to be carried out, with no reduction in support.

The Branch has also delivered training for stewards on the new case management system, enabling the secure storage of member queries and cases in line with GDPR requirements. In parallel, GDPR training has been rolled out to ensure members can be confident that their personal information is handled appropriately.

A significant amount of individual casework continues, including support with stress risk assessments, adjustment meetings, attendance management, capability processes, disciplinarys, whistleblowing and complaints. To improve accessibility and capacity, we have started rolling out in house training for stewards around organising and representation, with the aim of returning to a model where organising and representation is embedded within workplaces. This will ensure stewards are familiar with their service areas and help reduce pressure on the branch office and give speedy support to members close to where they work.

Hybrid working continues to benefit staff and services, offering greater flexibility and autonomy while

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

JANE SLATER - CORPORATE CORE

supporting the council's environmental and carbon reduction commitments.

Our focus remains on supporting members to feel supported, listened to and to have a voice at work so they can continue deliver excellent services to residents. We will continue to protect members terms and conditions. Manchester City Council is one of the few councils across the country to have retained 2010 terms and conditions due to our strong commitment of getting things right for members.

UNISON is entering negotiations on the 2026 pay award. Achieving a fair outcome will require collective action and member engagement to ensure our voices are heard. We need all members to actively take part in ballots so that the national union knows your view.

Recruitment remains vital. Strength in numbers is essential to secure meaningful change, and members are encouraged to speak to colleagues about joining UNISON and the value of collective action. We also encourage members to consider becoming workplace stewards so that every area has a strong and informed voice. We are fortunate enough to have been able to employ two branch organisers who are supporting members to be active, give them the confidence to speak up and deliver real change for their colleagues.

Finally, we urge members to sign up to the Labour Link fund to maintain UNISON's influence within the Labour Party, particularly now Labour is in government. Ensuring that UNISON members' priorities are reflected in national decision making is critical. When we act together, we are stronger. We cannot have divisive policies that pitch us against each other that will destroy local government that undermine what we do better deliver for residents.

I hope 2026 is the year of growth and opportunity in Manchester.

Jane Slater (Assistant Branch Secretary) - Corporate Services

UNISON MANCHESTER BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026



Physical Meeting

12:30PM Wednesday 25 March 2026

Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Central Manchester

Virtual Meeting

5:30PM Wednesday 25 March 2026

Register online via unisonmanchester.eventbrite.com

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

JIM TAYLOR - NEIGHBOURHOODS, GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



As another year passes, UNISON members deserve recognition for their essential role in ensuring the City of Manchester can deliver all of its services. In the directorates of Neighbourhoods, Growth and Development it's been a busy with many challenges, but our members have taken some great steps forward, as a collective, toward being an organised working group. I also want to say thanks for those who have supported me in my first year as Assistant Branch Officer. It's been a privilege.

Housing Services

Northwards staff moved back into Manchester City Council 4 years ago, and with the harmonisation process being completed in early 2024, we are still supporting members as they adjust to their new environment. We're still seeing elements of external Housing Services come back into Manchester City Council's

control, such as the Lifestyle's Centre in Wythenshawe. UNISON will be working to ensure that those who come back to the council are able to benefit from the terms and conditions that we have fought for and won.

We've recruited new stewards and began campaigns to challenge issues that have come up due to the ongoing restructures at the council. We want housing services staff to feel empowered to challenge issues on the ground, when they see them and to have the structures in place to do so. Outside of the council we have negotiated increased pay and terms at Wythenshawe Community Housing Group and continue to negotiate terms at Southways.

Homelessness

The members in homelessness are some of the most dedicated and passionate workers we have and the challenging work they do is often not recognised or rewarded enough. In Temporary Accommodation we have recruited two new stewards who have been leading our members by challenging their On Call/ Standby terms and conditions. In Outreach, changes to the rota and work plan in recent years have been beneficial, especially during the months of severe weather, where staff can prioritise certain areas within the city at specific times. However, attempts to change this on an ad-hoc basis was met by a challenge from UNISON members, activists and stewards. UNISON ensured that the agreed rota was brought back into action, signalling the strength we have when we work together.

Libraries/Galleries

Local Stewards and Health & Safety Reps in the Libraries/Galleries continue to negotiate with managers and represent members. Their work is a model example of how we want to move forward as a directorate and a branch. We have seen fantastic leadership from our long standing stewards, Nicholas Sternberg and Debby

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

JIM TAYLOR - NEIGHBOURHOODS, GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

Bolding who have been carrying cases and ensuring that the libraries are a safe place for all to work in. On top of that, they've managed to recruit new members, host events and bring a sense or organic organising into the libraries area.

Growth and Development has some significant changes this year and we continue to negotiate all matters regarding service provision/development etc. We meet regularly with senior management to deal with any issues as they arise.

Manchester Airport

In the spirit of celebrating our wins, I wanted to pay a special mention to our Manchester Airport members, who have now been part of the Manchester Branch for a number of years. I was proud to lead on the pay negotiations with support from the stewards and senior steward, Tim Ward. The negotiations resulted in an end to minimum wage work at Manchester Airport, with large gains made on behalf of the workers. New job security agreements were made.

General Issues

As always, redesigns in the authority are significant concern for all involved. There appears to be no end in the changes that the council proposes and implements, which is part of the evolving nature of local government. I have seen an increase in women coming forward to challenge cultures of misogyny in the workplace, whether that be tackling menopause discrimination, undermining women's roles in leadership or marginalising women in the workplace. We are a majority women union and I am proud to have supported and to continue to support women in the workplace to keep fighting for equality in the workplace.

In Neighbourhoods, Growth and Development the key word has been 'organise'. We plan to keep this mantra going next year and to build on what we've achieved. To be a strong union we need confident and knowledgeable stewards and activists who can support the members on the shop floor. We have begun developing those structures, with new regularly stewards meetings, acting collectively to tackle issues and increasing lines of communication between members, branch activist and full-time officers. We win when we work together.

Call for Workplace Leaders to become Stewards

A quick thanks again this year to all UNISON stewards and contacts for all the work they have done to represent and support UNISON members through the last 12 months. It is your work that makes this branch function.

Who are the leaders in your department or place of work? Who is the person that everyone else goes to for advice and support? We need natural leaders to become workplace stewards. Full training is provided, and representation is based on what you can manage. Stewards in Neighbourhoods, Growth & Development meet every month to discuss issues in the workplace and work together to find collective solutions.

Please contact me on james.taylor@manchester.gov.uk if you know anyone, or feel it is something you would like to do. Finally, as a member, don't forget to always check if your work colleagues are in a union and if they are not, please encourage them to join UNISON.

Jim Taylor (Assistant Branch Secretary) - Neighbourhoods, Growth and Development

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

SONIA STEWART - CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SERVICES



During the last 12 months I continued to represent and support members on various workplace issues which included: Service Redesigns; Reasonable Adjustments; Grievances; Disciplinary Investigations and Hearings, Discrimination in the Workplace and Attendance, as well as negotiating for better working conditions.

Recruitment and Retention

Continuing to raise the issue of exit interviews eg monitoring level of people leaving the Services, reasons why and evidence of remedial action, if required.

Sickness Absences

In addition to levels of absences, working on identifying and monitoring root causes, eg absences which are specifically work-related and the triggers for these. Mental health is still one of the top reasons for absence, with reasonable adjustments, personal safety, work/life balance and caring responsibilities to take into consideration.

Also continuing to insist on more clarity around Optima recommendations, as vagueness regarding the way forward often causes unnecessary delays to a member of staff returning to work with the required level of support needed, if indeed they are to return to work.

The continued challenges of staff to meet the high demands of the Services still creates additional pressure, however, staff are trying their best to deliver, whilst also adjusting to changes within Services and meeting targets. While recognising Services are working towards putting support mechanisms in place, including for staff mental health and wellbeing, management training and better ways of working,

UNISON is committed to ensuring implementation of improved working conditions for our members in the workplace, followed by regular monitoring, equality impact assessments, evaluation of impact and timely feedback.

The Branch continues to ensure staff are not disadvantaged by any proposed workplace changes. Stewards: Stewards' meetings are in place, and I would like to thank our existing stewards for the support they provide to members. However, we need more active stewards in the Services. If you would like to become a Manchester Branch UNISON active steward in Children's and Education Services please get in touch with me. Training will be provided, as well as opportunities for shadowing.

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

SONIA STEWART - BRANCH EQUALITIES REPORT

Branch Self Organised Groups (SOGs)

The Branch Women's Self Organised Group, Inspire Black Members Forum and LGBT+ Group continue to operate, providing a safe space for members to come together to discuss concerns, provide support, celebrate achievements, work closely with the Branch towards common and specific objectives and to make progress in helping to eliminate inequalities. Following our last Call Out! A Retired Members Group is in the process of being formed. Look out for updates on that.

See below if you are interested in becoming involved in any of the SOGs:

Inspire Black Members Forum - Damian Daley: damian.daley@manchester.gov.uk

Or Leverne Thompson: leverne.thompson@manchester.gov.uk

Women Members - Debby Bolding: debby.bolding@manchester.gov.uk

LGBT+ - Bea Ellis: bea.ellis@manchester.gov.uk

Want to make a difference? We're looking for committed members to form a Disabled Members SOG - let's make your voices heard in 2026! This is another important platform to have discussions within a safe environment and to receive support, with the Branch acting on their behalf to bring about resolutions. If you are interested in leading/being active in any of the above SOGs, please email the relevant SOG lead or Sonia Stewart sonia.stewart@manchester.gov.uk as soon as possible if a particular SOG has not yet been formed.

Equality Events

Equality events/campaigns supported by the Branch included another successful White Ribbon Campaign; a well-attended and thought-provoking Black History event held in the community entitled 'Black History – Unravelling the Truth Part 2', with the key note speaker being Professor Gus John; performances including a play 'The Great British Lie', stalls and lots of participant engagement. In addition, SOGs participated in other events throughout the year - defending workers' rights. If you would like to get involved in Branch equalities events in 2026, please let us know.

Equality Matters

We all have something to offer in this drive for improvement and fairness: that's why working together is so important if we want realistic and visible change to happen. We must continue to challenge discrimination and break down barriers to equality of opportunities – there is still work to be done, including on sexual harassment, bullying and violence against women and girls. The Equality Matters Branch newsletter will continue to keep members up to date on current issues relating to equalities including news, legislative updates, events and community engagement. We welcome your articles and if you want to become involved in working with me to produce the newsletter please drop me an email.

Sonia Stewart (Assistant Branch Secretary / Branch Equalities Officer)
Children and Education Services

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

KEITH HAYES - ADULT SOCIAL CARE / MUSEUMS



This year I've supported groups of our members at service redesigns, job evaluation and health and safety processes, and individuals at attendance management meetings and disciplinary and grievance hearings.

Our network of stewards in Adults' is growing and a big "thank you" to all our reps. But we need more – so, if there isn't a UNISON steward in your workplace, please consider stepping up. Our hard working and skilled members deserve representation, decent conditions and fair pay but these don't get handed to us, we have to fight for them.

I've also supported UNISON Organisers in coordinating collective action at a Manchester private care home, recruiting

members and helping organise efforts that led the employer to reverse detrimental changes to pay and conditions for our lowest paid and most vulnerable members. The next objective is to secure full UNISON recognition in that workplace.

Keith Hayes (Assistant Branch Secretary)
Adult Social Care / Museums

**UNISON MANCHESTER BRANCH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026**



Physical Meeting

12:30PM Wednesday 25 March 2026

Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Central Manchester

Virtual Meeting

5:30PM Wednesday 25 March 2026

Register online via unisonmanchester.eventbrite.com

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

RENA WOOD - PRIMARY SCHOOLS (SOUTH) / LEISURE CENTRES



Thank you to all stewards Health & Safety reps and contacts who share UNISON information and promote the work that we do. I also appreciate and acknowledge the contribution made by our School Champions.

I also want to extend a warm welcome to activists who have volunteered to be new school stewards and I look forward to working alongside them.

The Labour Government decision to increase funding for local government is a welcome decision & will hopefully benefit our members delivering vital public services. We are nearer to establishing the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB), commonly known as the triple SNB, which should have a positive impact on all schools' members. We are fortunate in that Cath Baggaley, Assistant

Branch Secretary & lead officer on Education, is part of the national negotiating body set up to finalise what the SSSNB will look like.

I have represented a number of members who work at Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) at their Disciplinary and Grievance meetings. There seems to be an ongoing issue with GLL's pay roll system and this impacting on members not receiving their correct pay, which we are trying to address. I have also represented and advised a number of members on disciplinarys, grievance and capability hearings working in various south Manchester primary schools. There has been an increase in the number of schools members off sick with stress, partly due to an increase in the volume of workloads, as a result of covering classes during teacher absences for far too long periods.

School Ofsted Inspections are ongoing across all schools and I support members through this process, which can be demanding & stressful. I continue to support members on school restructures & redundancy consultations that are complex, requiring careful negotiations to ensure fairness, transparency and equality. I continue to support members working for Ofsted with their probation reviews, disciplinarys and grievance meetings.

I have supported a number of our migrant worker members in the social care sector, very few of their employers have transparent & fair policies. Some employers exploit our members to such a degree that they potentially could have their work visas withdrawn & be threatened with deportation.

I have represented members who have not been paid their proper salaries resulting in unlawful deduction of wages which UNISON has challenged legally. I have also supported members employed in the Private and Community & Voluntary sector to ensure they are paid the National Minimum Wage.

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

RENA WOOD - PRIMARY SCHOOLS (SOUTH) / LEISURE CENTRES

I have represented members during TUPE consultations involving mostly schools' members employed in catering & cleaning who have been outsourced, which is an issue UNISON is campaigning against, as we believe public services should be insourced where our members are on more favourable terms & conditions, which, through collective action, through negotiating and bargaining are a fundamental principal role of our trade union.

Once again, a number of members have sought my support on their pensions discussions, resulting in their ill health dismissal following attendance management hearings. There is quite some delay in members receiving their local government pension, once they have been dismissed on health grounds.

I have worked on recruitment initiatives in a number of schools by holding recruitment stalls with UNISON publicity material with the aim of increasing UNISON membership and encouraging active participation.

As a member of the Labour Party, I have campaigned to highlight the value of the services that our members provide, by taking UNISON policies into the Labour Party, particularly on the issue of local government funding, at every opportunity.

Pay restraint and spending cuts are not curing the deficit; growth seems to still be stagnant; unemployment is not falling; tax revenues are down. I have consistently raised the issue of fair taxation as this would clearly resolve the funding deficit to councils and would mean our NJC pay claims would be more than affordable I distributed NJC pay campaign material to a number of schools to encourage members to participate in our NJC pay ballots. I represent the North West Region on the NJC as a low paid member.

I have signed up to Tax Justice UK and I use their information to lobby my M.P. I would encourage you to do the same.

I hope that as many of you as possible are able to participate in the 2 AGM's we have arranged so we can best represent your views and your priorities. Once again Local Government workers are treated as the poor relations in Public Services. By the time of our AGM we would have had our pay offer for 2025/26 so please participate in any consultation and share the information with your colleagues.

Members who have been on long term sickness absence through stress and are now out of pay are really struggling and having to use food banks. This situation will only get worse as the Government has no real interest in properly funding Public Services.

I am as concerned about individual members problems as I am with collective issues that affect the workforce.

**Rena Wood (Assistant Branch Secretary)
Primary Schools (South) / Leisure Centres**

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

DAWN WARRINER - PRIMARY SCHOOLS (NORTH) AND CARE WORK



The last year has been a challenging one for our schools support staff. School budgets feeling the financial squeeze have meant some schools have faced consultations on redundancies, and UNISON has been supporting members through this to ensure that they get the very best deal possible if they do get offered redundancy. Most have been voluntary, but unfortunately there have also been some compulsory redundancies announced. To be clear, all members still need to have their working rights and wages protected; no-one is protected by giving these rights away, whatever some managers would like you to believe. The School

Staff Support Negotiating Body (SSSNB) will be coming into force later this year, and whilst not a silver bullet, it will hopefully give members in schools more certainty and negotiating power.

Similarly care workers often need support against pressure to go way above and beyond their role and salary. There is specific vulnerability migrant workers and for staff working for small, private care organisations. We have had some very positive outcomes for members from this sector who have come to us in good time. Its soimportant to know your rights, and to get this information from outside your organisation – we can help with this. It is very satisfying to get a good result where someone is being unfairly pressured by unscrupulous employers.

Members who have been treated unfairly are being supported with taking out a grievance individually or collectively. We have referred issues to the legal case unit when necessary, though thankfully, our earlier successful intervention has made this an exception rather than the norm. I personally would always like to hear from members at the earliest stage of an issue, as problems can often be nipped in the bud before they get to an advanced disciplinary stage.

**Dawn Warriner (Assistant Branch Secretary)
Primary Schools (North) and Care Work**

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

CATH BAGGLEY - SECONDARY SCHOOLS / ACADEMIES



We have had yet another very busy year in our schools.

SSNB Update

The Employment Rights Bill received Royal Assent on 18 December 2025, the main details are as follows:

The Employment Rights Act provides for the establishment of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) as a statutory body specifically for school support staff, with a remit to negotiate pay and conditions, and to advise on training and career progression. The body will give a sector specific voice to support staff, who make up roughly half of the school workforce, by bringing together employer and employee representatives. The body will recognise the varied and vital roles support staff undertake, and in turn support work to drive high and rising

standards in schools and ensure we give children the best possible life chances.

Agreements ratified by the Secretary of State on pay and conditions will be incorporated into individual employee contracts, where they are currently on terms below the new statutory minimums agreed by the SSSNB. This means there will be a consistent national 'floor' for pay and conditions that all school support staff can expect, whilst protecting individual employee entitlements beyond this, and allowing room for employers to innovate.

Secondary legislation will be required to commence and constitute the body in 2026. It is anticipated that school support staff will continue to be covered by their existing arrangements in 2026-27, with the first outcomes arising from the SSSNB from the 2027-28 financial year at the earliest. Findings from the public consultation held in June and July 2025 will be published in early 2026. Discussions with DfE officials, including unions and employer organisations, on implementing the SSSNB have continued through a SSSNB 'working group'. Strands have been identified to enable the necessary practical work to begin.

Three strands have been identified:

Strand 1: Operating Model

"To consider the size of the body, appropriate representation proportionate to the size of the sector and which officials would attend."

Strand 2: Role Profiles and Job Evaluation

"To develop a proposal on how we turn our current understanding of support staff jobs into a structure of role profiles, that can be evaluated so that the SSSNB can negotiate pay."

Strand 3: Transition

"To develop a proposal for transition arrangements for school support staff from existing arrangements

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

CATH BAGGALEY - SECONDARY SCHOOLS / ACADEMIES

(including NJC) to SSSNB agreements.”

These Strand meetings are now underway, the Chair & Vice-Chair of the National School Sector Committee and myself as a North West Representative attend these meetings alongside National colleagues. The other NJC unions (GMB and UNITE), the DfE and LGA are also in attendance. It is important to note that only the recognised NJC trade unions are involved in these negotiations, with UNISON being the largest union for school support staff.

NEU Dispute

Earlier this year, the three recognised school support staff unions, GMB, UNISON and Unite, submitted a formal complaint to the TUC about the NEU's continued organising activities and recruitment of school support staff, and their publicly stated intention to continue with these activities. Our three unions took this formal step reluctantly, but it was very clear to us that the NEU were repeatedly and deliberately breaching the 2017 agreement signed by the four unions, and a previous Award made by a TUC Disputes Committee in 2023. Both the agreement and the TUC Award made clear that there are only three recognised school support staff unions, and NEU should not organise that group of workers.

Despite having just signed a principles document which committed them to abiding by the previous TUC decision, at their conference in April the NEU made very clear they had no intention of sticking to what they had agreed, and would continue to organise school support staff. In September 2025, the TUC issued its new judgement. Once again our complaint was upheld.

The judgement reaffirmed that the school support staff unions (GMB, UNISON and Unite) have exclusive bargaining rights for school support staff, and that the NEU will not be part of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body. It also explicitly stated that the NEU should not actively organise or recruit school support staff.

As a result, the NEU have been formally censured by the TUC and instructed to place a detailed report on this verdict – with specified wording – on their website. We called on the NEU to abide by this instruction immediately. The three unions would have preferred not to have had to bring a second formal complaint in three years. We are pleased that our complaint has been upheld and note the formal censure of the NEU. Our hope now is that this puts an end to the matter, and all unions can return to their previous good relationships and get back to joint campaigns on wider, cross-cutting issues affecting all of our members.

Academy Conversions

We have had number of academy conversions this academic year:

- The Alliance Trust was formed which was a merger of the Link Learning Trust (Barlow Hall & Brookburn Primaries) and M20 Trust (Beaver Road Primary). Cavendish and Northenden Primaries also joined the Trust.
- The Federation of St. Edmund's RC Primary & St. Patrick's RC Primary joined the Emmaus Trust, along with – St. Margaret Mary's, St. Dunstan's and St. John Bosco RC Primaries.
- St. Aiden's RC Primary joined the Corpus Christi Trust.

We have supported our members throughout the TUPE process.

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

CATH BAGGALEY - SECONDARY SCHOOLS / ACADEMIES

North West Regional Schools Seminar

We will be holding the first NW Regional Schools Seminar on Wednesday 25th February in Liverpool.

Speakers and topics include:

- School support staff negotiating body (SSSNB) - what does it mean for schools support staff? Guest Panel.
- Online safety - Karl Hopwood, leading expert in online safety. A former headteacher and now an international consultant on digital safeguarding.
- Medication administration in schools - Emma Smith, an independent consultant advising schools/MATs, special school networks and national organisations on the arrangements for health services in school settings.
- Violence/Aggression dealing with parents and pupils in your school, strategy to deal with issues- event organised by UNISON North West.

We hope this Seminar will be great success.

This year's National Schools Seminar will take place on Wednesday 29th April in Leeds, the National Seminar is always well attended and receives very positive feedback.

Member Representation

We have continued to support our members throughout the last year in many areas, TUPE transfers, Disciplinary Hearings, Grievances and Attendance meetings to name just a few.

Stars in Our Schools

Many of our schools hosted events again this year, which is fantastic. It was lovely to hear of the celebrations and events that took place.

And finally...

I always end my annual report with 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. If your school does not have a workplace contact or steward and you would like more information about becoming involved as a workplace contact or steward, please contact the Branch Office on 0161 254 7500 or via email to unison@manchester.gov.uk

Support staff are integral to the smooth running of a school from reception to back-office staff, teaching assistants, pastoral support, technicians, cleaners, catering staff, caretakers, and facility staff to name but a few. They have shown their absolute dedication to their schools, going above and beyond on so many occasions, especially during this cost-of-living crisis.

We will continue to support and provide regular updates to our school members in these extremely challenging times. As ever there is no end in sight to the challenge's our schools face.

Cath Baggaley (Assistant Branch Secretary) - Lead Officer for Schools

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

MATTHEW KIRK / JUDE PERCIVAL - BRANCH ORGANISERS



The past year has been lively for organising. Our focus has been in schools where organising efforts have been to recruit and train new stewards in order to create active and engaged union structures in their respective workplaces, which should, in turn, increase membership and improve workplace conditions over time. In 2025 we visited 36 schools gaining a contact in every school and 14 new stewards/ reps. This has increased our total school reps from 15 to 29, an increase of 93% in one year.

Where reps have been elected, we have supported them in running workplace meetings where they can identify issues for campaigning and create stronger union structures that allow member participation and democracy. A clear example of this is where members took collective action in one school and entered negotiations with SLT and won concessions from the school leadership. These have been great successes in the school project which we hope to build upon in the coming year.

The main barriers to organising in schools has been unresponsiveness from schools themselves and poor attendance from staff in some visits. To overcome these barriers, we have changed our approach to visits. We now organise visits trust by trust with the HR director of each trust, and we have used phone-banking of members to maximise attendance. The focus for the year ahead will be to recruit and train stewards/ reps and link them up in "Steward/Rep Networks" with their fellow stewards/ reps across their respective trusts. We hope that the formation of these Stewards/Rep Networks will provide structure and greater leverage for our membership to fight collectively on trust-wide issues.

As well as schools, we have been active in other workplaces. Notably we took migrant workers to action in a private care company and won. Halting changes to contracts and securing back-payment for unpaid wages. We have also organised in housing associations, the GMCA and Manchester Airport, by supporting Full-Time Officers (FTOs) in delivering trainings, facilitating meetings, phone-banking and creating resources to be used in organising efforts.

In October, we delivered training on organising skills at the stewards away day, which was well-received and has equipped the stewards who attended with a better knowledge of organising and how to implement it in their workplaces. We hope that this will become a yearly event to continue this educational work.

We have also created two new posters for the branch to increase our material presence in workplaces, with a focus on recruitment and election of stewards/ reps. These posters are available to any member who are encouraged to put them up in their respective workplaces.

Over the coming year we expect to continue and build on the work we have done and aim to support more workplace campaigns and see members take collective action more often to better their working conditions. However, this work is not solely our responsibility, and we cannot do it all ourselves. It is the responsibility of you – the membership – to be actively organising in your workplaces. If any assistance or advice is needed in this, we are here to support you in that effort.

In Solidarity,
Matthew Kirk and Jude Percival (Branch Organisers)

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

FRAN MURRAY / KATE RUSSELL - THE LTE GROUP



The LTE Group is the biggest learning and skills social Enterprise in England and Wales with hundreds of UNISON members in the Manchester LG Branch.

LTE Group consists of The Manchester College (further education), UCEN (higher education), Novus (prison education in England), Novus Cambria & Novus Gower (prison education in Wales), Group Professional Services & Group Functions (central services) and Total People/MOL (apprenticeships and professional qualifications).

The Manchester College and UCEN

The year has been a relatively stable one for the college and UCEN, with both getting positive rewards for the efforts of staff, including many UNISON members – TMC gaining a 'good' Ofsted rating and UCEN successfully progressing towards degree awarding powers.

Well done to all UNISON members in TMC and UCEN for these achievements.

A 5% consolidated cost of living increase was negotiated and accepted by UNISON members in TMC and UCEN. Along with this were other benefits, including a small uplift of the increment rate, a small uplift of the bottom of pay ranges and a guarantee for staff on pay grades 3-5 that their salary will be at least £500 above the Real Living Wage. The employer also applied the RLW increase of 6.7% in December 2025.

We have also been working with college management on Working Framework Agreements, which attempt to provide guidance for colleagues and managers on working practices. The one for teachers was finalised this year and we are currently working on one (or ones) for colleagues in support roles. This is proving to be even more challenging than the teachers one, as working practices are far more diverse across the different support teams and roles. We will be in touch to update UNISON members in TMC and UCEN on this soon.

One challenge we are aware of for TMC is the stagnation of funding for adult education over the past 10 years. We believe that adult education is key to unlocking many positives for our society and economy. UNISON has and continues to lobby and advocate for increased funding for further education and for adult education in particular.

Novus

The past year has been busy one, and a difficult one for many Novus colleagues. The move from the Prison Education Framework (PEF) contract to the new Prison Education Service (PES) was always going to bring change as the market share for any prison education provider was capped under PES. Novus gained the high security prisons and lost the London prisons lot. The outcome for the West Midlands prisons contract has not yet been released. The changes have meant that we have had some Novus colleagues being TUPE'd out and some new colleagues TUPE'd in. It was positive that the Project Connect improvements to terms and

BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2025

FRAN MURRAY / KATE RUSSELL - THE LTE GROUP

conditions, which were agreed by members last year, were implemented prior to the contract change so that colleagues leaving Novus could take the improved terms with them to their new employer. Similarly, the annual cost of living increase (4%) was negotiated, agreed and implemented ahead of the contract change. Thank you to UNISON members in Novus for their quick response to our consultation which made this possible.

Sadly, the new PES contract has brought cuts to prison education funding and cuts to the courses Prison Governors decide will be delivered. This has meant many redundancies across the estate for teaching staff and also some support roles held by UNISON members. This is very disappointing and difficult for affected colleagues. We also believe it is a retrograde step. All the evidence shows that investing in prison education brings net economic and social benefits in reducing reoffending, improving employment prospects and raising tax revenue.

In addition to our work within Novus, UNISON lobbies nationally on behalf of prison education staff, on issues such as funding, safer workplaces and the application of the New Fair Deal for pensions in the sector.

LTE Group Professional Services and Group Operations

This year saw major restructures across many teams in this area, involving reductions through redundancy. This was explained as being mainly due to the reduction in income from Novus, and also to better shape the business for the current climate. In several teams, the restructure has also meant that staff who were not selected for redundancy have had changes to their job roles to adjust to. Restructures are always stressful and unsettling for all affected staff, particularly for those who are selected for redundancy. We also want to know about how it affects staff remaining going forward, in terms of any impact on workload.

In terms of the cost of living increase, LTE members were also balloted on a 5% offer, which was accepted. After many long years of waiting, talks on Project Connect for LTE commenced in the later months of 2025. We have sent initial information on the proposals to UNISON members for feedback and talks remain ongoing.

Total People and MOL

The landscape for Apprenticeship has changed over the last 3 years, although the funding and levy has not. We have had positive figures for our enrolments for the past year with still a good Ofsted grade.

We met in October for our annual pay negotiations after receiving initial offer of 2% UNISONs negotiations meant that we soon received a final offer of 3% consolidated on all grades plus £330 as a one off payment. This is still below the colleges pay offer however it was a positive increase and we will still look to talk about pensions move from defined benefits schemes, car allowance increases and other benefits we can negotiate for our members in Total People and MOL.

This year in January we have had our first meeting on Phase 2 of Project Refine looking at running a Job Evaluation process within TP/MOL our first meeting has been positive where we have scoped out elements to consider. As part of this we will be looking at Car allowances, working patterns and rewards/recognition as well as health and wellbeing and personal development. The culture of any organisation is an important consideration as we look to future proof and increase the working conditions of our members. So lots of positives to look forward to.

Fran Murray and Kate Russell (UNISON Convenors, LTE Group)