



nursing matters

UNISON newsletter for nurses, midwives and health visitors

April 2009

UNISON has launched a new strategic relationship with the Nursing Times that opens a tremendous new range of services, information and offers to members. The partnership will seek to make the most of the two organisations' shared values, but also respects their differences.

Benefits will include a:

- UNISON site on the Nursing Times web site with information about UNISON, including details of how to join
- Nursing Times site on the UNISON web site, including information on practice, research, clinical information and the latest issues, as well as information on the special subscriptions which are open to UNISON members
- special subscription offers to the UNISON nursing and midwifery family
- UNISON features in the Nursing Times magazine.

UNISON's National Nursing Sector Chair Ann Moses said: "In this relationship we are bringing together the expertise of both organisations. UNISON nursing members will have increased access to clinical and research information to inform the way they undertake their practise. Readers of the NT will see UNISON as the leading public service union it is. I am really excited about this and know that it will make a real difference to our members, I have always been a member of UNISON and have always read the NT. Bringing the two together in this way makes sense."

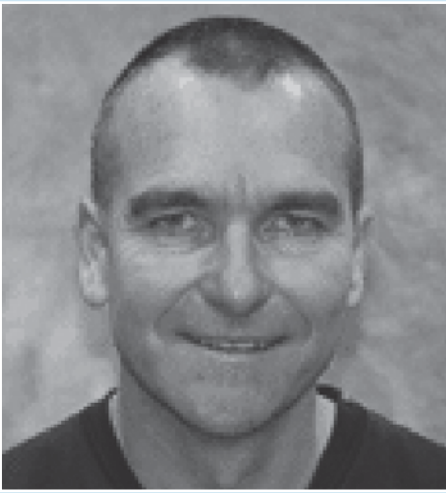
UNISON signs exciting new deal with the Nursing Times



Pictured (left to right) Alastair McLellan, Nursing Times editor, Dave Prentis, UNISON general secretary and Karen Jennings, UNISON head of health.

NURSING^{times}
the future of nursing

UNISON
the public service union



Stand up against the BNP in June elections

By **Mick McKeown**, Nursing and Midwifery Sector Committee Rep

People in Britain will be going to the polls in early June in local and European elections. In these elections on 4 June UNISON healthcare workers have the chance to send a clear message to the BNP – keep out. You can use your vote to stop the BNP sowing their seeds of hate in our communities and exploiting the economic downturn and destroying our democracy.

UNISON has always taken the lead in the campaign against the BNP and the policies they stand for. The union is clear that there is no place in our society for any form of discrimination, inside and outside the workplace. Our members in health are often at the forefront of challenging discrimination and UNISON is proud of the support it gives to members who suffer from racist or any other types of abuse.

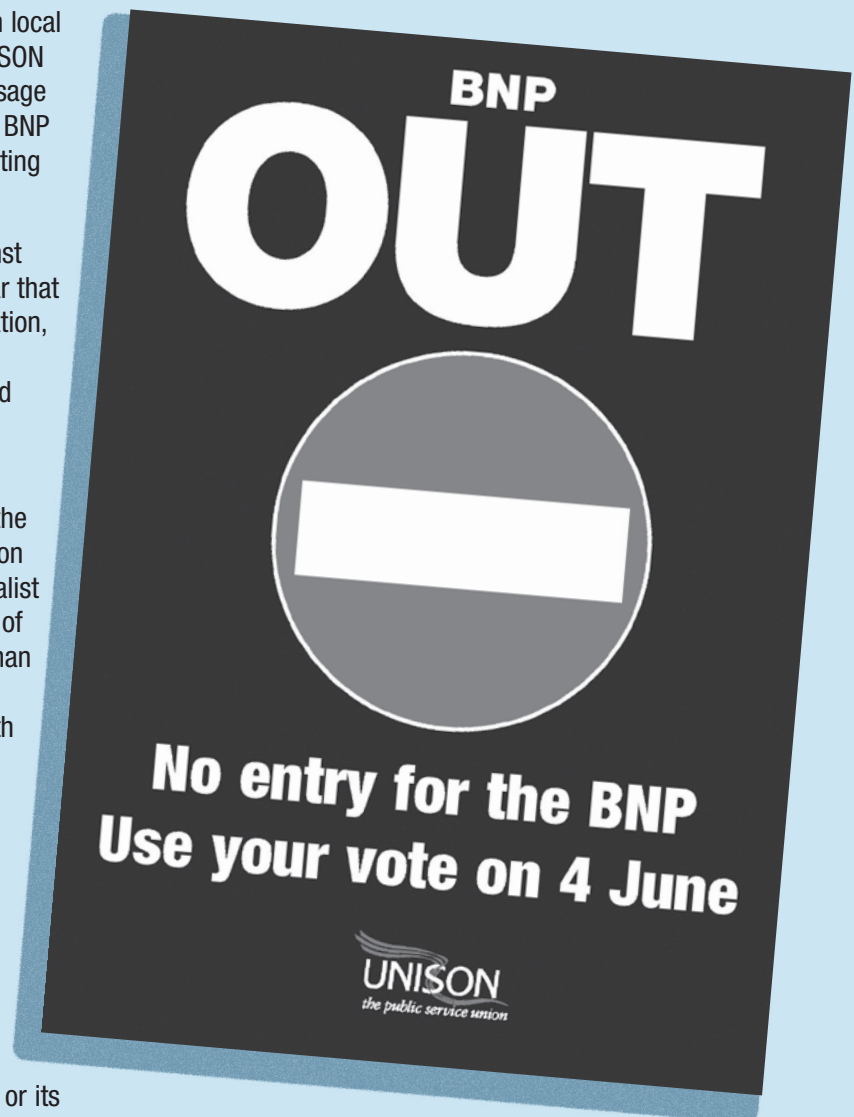
Health and welfare services as a whole have often been the focus of debate on issues like the impact of immigration on the workforce and the economy. At the same time, specialist areas such as mental health services have a long history of dealing with notions of race and other dimensions of human difference. In recent times, black men in particular have experienced quite different journeys through mental health care than their white counterparts, with disproportionate diagnosis of serious mental disorder, more coercive introduction to services, more physical treatments and medication, and less psychotherapy.

Stereotypes of black people have played a role in determining the provision of these services, and this is exploited by parties like the BNP. Their current policy around health services has serious implications for social cohesion and raises major questions over the professional ethics of practitioners who support the party or its manifesto.

Therefore it is difficult not to conclude that membership of the BNP is incompatible with the public service ethos and should debar people from employment in health and social care occupations. That is why the Nursing Sector has submitted a motion* to health conference calling on the government to establish legal powers to prevent BNP members being employed in nursing roles.

I would also call on healthcare workers and service users to support UNISON and other organisations in their anti-BNP campaigns.

In June, it is crucial that we ensure that all UNISON members vote in the European and local government elections to prevent the BNP from benefitting from a low turnout which will help them in their quest to win seats.



* Nursing debates at health conference

In addition to calls to preclude members from employment in nursing roles, there are motions on nurse training, workforce planning, development of HCAs, nursing and health care internationalism and nursing's public image.

UNISON insists on clear disclosure guidance

The Nursing and Midwifery Council has updated its guidance on patient confidentiality and disclosure, following calls from UNISON during the consultation process for clearer guidance around the reporting of knife crimes.

NMC guidance states that, in order to prevent serious crimes, nurses are permitted to disclose information in relation to crimes against the person, such as knife or gun shot wounds.

However, it also recognises the complex decisions that nurses have to make in balancing patient confidentiality against the interests of the public in preventing and detecting serious crimes. Any disclosure should be proportionate and limited to relevant details. Nurses and midwives need to make a clear record of the decision making process, as they may be called upon to justify their decision to the courts or the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

Commenting on the guidance, UNISON National Nursing Sector chair Ann Moses (left) said: "Practitioners need clear



guidance on the difficult and complex decisions they often have to make around disclosing information relating to knife crimes, and this guidance is a step forward in this regard". However, she went on to say: "Nurses should be encouraged to discuss such matters in the appropriate manner fully with other professional colleagues and if necessary to ask their trade union for advice. These are difficult decisions our members have to make and they will need all the support and advice they can get."

Three keys to unlocking better mental health

The National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) programme has called on mental health services to



think about how best to organise mental health assessment to make the process more inclusive, personalised and in tune with recovery.

The advice forms part of "3 Keys to a Shared Approach in Mental Health Assessment," which was published by the Care Services Improvement Partnership's NIMHE programme after a lengthy national consultation of staff, service users and carers.

The "3 Keys" title reflects its central proposals to improve assessment in three key ways:

1. Active participation of service users in the assessment process to achieve a shared understanding that feeds into care planning.
2. Enhancing the input of the whole multi-disciplinary team.
3. Including a focus on personal strengths, resilience and aspirations as well as the more traditional emphasis on problems and needs.

For many practitioners, these will not be startlingly new ideas. The challenge, however, is to organise working practices to best bring about the "three keys" in a meaningful way in routine care. The publication has been co-authored by service user and carer representatives, and is written in a clear and readable style. Helpfully, there are a number of examples to illustrate the ideas put forward and show how they work in different practice settings. In fact, despite the targeting of the booklet on a mental health audience, the three keys could apply equally well to other fields of care.

Dive into "community unionism"

TRADE unionists across the world are becoming increasingly concerned about the way in which large scale changes to global and national economies potentially threaten union organisation.

Growth in service sector jobs has not been matched by union membership figures, with many areas of the health and welfare sector displaying low levels of union density. This has led some people to question the role and value of unions in the 21st century.

For us, the value of UNISON is a given. But, what we must do is constantly look for better ways to organise ourselves and represent our members. One way of doing this is an approach called "reciprocal community unionism." This involves unions making strong links with their local communities and developing a relationship which has unions being involved in community-driven campaigns and the community supporting union campaigns.

For this to happen, real relationships must be forged between union branches and a range of community groups. This often starts with individual members being involved with local community groups. The next step is to formally stitch this together to our union activities.

In the health field, we would look for these alliances with organised service user or carer groups, opening up interesting avenues of mutuality and solidarity in defence of the NHS and social care. This approach also gives us an opportunity to debate future

developments in policy and services. If you are interested in these ideas, they will be explored at a conference fringe meeting at 5.15pm on 21 April in the conference auditorium.

UNISON points the way on expert commission

UNISON head of nursing Gail Adams has been appointed to a new commission of experts, which has been set up by Prime Minister Gordon Brown to advise on the future role of nurses and midwives.

Responding to her appointment, Gail said: "Working on the commission will be challenging, but it is another opportunity to meet with healthcare professionals, hear their views, ideas and concerns and influence the future of healthcare in the NHS. I am keen to ensure that the commission does not restrict itself to the registered nursing and midwifery workforce. Just as health care has changed, so have all of those who participate in its delivery. Healthcare assistants and maternity support workers are really good examples of how their changing roles have been critical to the development of nurses and midwives."

UNISON head of health Karen Jennings said: "We need the nursing and midwifery family armed with the skills and knowledge to tackle the challenges of the future. Who better to ask than the people doing the job for better ways to deliver advanced nursing practice?"



The commission will provide a much needed way of harvesting the wealth of ideas and experience that these nursing experts bring to the profession."

The commission will be chaired by Health Minister Ann Keen MP. In addition to Gail, other commissioners will include Anne-Marie Rafferty (Florence Nightingale School for Nursing and Midwifery), Peter Carter (RCN General Secretary) and Dame Christine Beasley (Chief Nursing Officer for England).

The commission will consult with the profession, patients and the public over the coming months in a series of events to take place around the country. They will report to the Prime Minister by March 2010.

Immigration advice for UNISON members

Are you a migrant worker from a country outside the European Union? Do you need advice on immigration issues related to your work situation and right to work in the UK?

UNISON is offering a pilot service which provides free immigration telephone advice to UNISON members who have come to work in the UK from countries outside of the European Union.

If you have been a member of UNISON for more than four weeks and need immigration advice and information, please call UNISON on 0845 355 0845. For further details on this service and other immigration issues visit the UNISON web site at:

www.unison.org.uk/migrantworkers/

Get ready for new safeguarding schemes

From summer 2010, if you work or volunteer with vulnerable adults or with children in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, you will have to register with the new Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). Eventually, an aligned scheme will be introduced in Scotland.

The ISA will replace the existing List 99, for staff working within education, the Protection of Vulnerable Adults and the Protection of Children Act lists. Unlike previous schemes, the ISA will operate a 'positive' list, meaning that anyone wanting to work or volunteer within the



relevant fields must be on the register. That means that more than 11 million people will be required to be on the ISA register – a massive undertaking.

If you are in paid work in England and Wales registration costs £64, in Northern Ireland it costs £58. It's a one-off payment to cover your whole career in that field. Those involved only in unpaid voluntary activity in England and Wales or specified voluntary organisations in Northern Ireland and Scotland will not have to pay but must register.

Trade unions such as UNISON believe that protection of the public, particularly children and vulnerable adults, is paramount. There are, however, issues around the cost and process of registering and the transparency of the appeal mechanism.

Lucia McKeever, a healthcare assistant from Armagh who will be expected to register, says: "I'm a firm believer in patient care and public protection but as the main bread-winner in my household I'm worried that paying a registration fee will leave my family out of pocket. There is a danger we may lose good staff because they cannot afford to foot the bill for this new scheme."

UNISON head of nursing Gail Adams said: "While it is essential that those individuals who may pose a risk to vulnerable groups should be prevented from working with them, it is also vital that everyone has the right to a transparent process, a fair hearing and the opportunity to defend themselves against any allegations."

Alongside the campaign for a just process, we are also campaigning for the cost of the scheme to be borne by employers and for individuals who already have to register with a professional regulatory body to be excluded from the ISA scheme. We are also seeking assurances that the information held on the ISA database will be secure and that registrants will have full confidence in the system.

UNISON will be providing more information on the ISA scheme as it becomes available. For more information go to www.unison.org.uk/professionalservices

Staff shortages behind the headlines

Staffing levels are once again in the headlines following the publication of the Healthcare Commission findings into the unusually high number of death at Mid Staffs NHS Foundation Trust.

The report highlighted poor nursing standards caused by staff shortages, with the trust's management and board coming under serious criticism. In the same week, a YouGov survey commissioned by Channel 4 of 1,000 nurses found that 70% believed that understaffing prevented them from doing their job properly. This evidence supports UNISON's latest survey of health members, which showed that 51% of staff reported a decline in staffing levels in their department.

Responding to the report on Mid Staffs, UNISON nursing sector north west rep Chris Sullivan said: "The NMC Code should be used as a tool to help nurses raise concerns about staffing levels or care standards".

We regularly receive emails about staffing levels from nurses who are concerned about patient safety. UNISON is currently producing some guidance which will be available shortly. In the meantime, here are some key points to consider:

- Instinct is a healthy measure of concern if it's telling you that something isn't right. Whether it's about a patient's condition or staffing levels, it's probably right. You can tell the difference between a busy shift or a higher than average level of patient dependency.
- You won't be alone. Talk to other colleagues. Do they have similar worries? Document your concerns regarding number of patients and their dependency vs staff levels and let your manager know. Document your concerns clearly even if it's done through an email. Managers should always address concerns about staffing levels. Sometimes they may feel that you are worrying unnecessarily – that's their right as an individual practitioner but you are accountable for your own actions.
- Contact your local UNISON representative if you do not feel that your concerns are being listened to or acted upon. Look back at older off duty arrangements. What were the staffing levels like then? Skill mix and patient dependency, are they the same? Your local representative can help you to articulate your concerns to a more senior level.
- Most importantly, remember that our focus as health care professionals is on the quality of care patients receive and their safety. There are many ways in which these can be articulated. Work with your local UNISON representative to speak up and out – your professional registration is worth it.



New Constitution protects NHS principles

A new NHS Constitution has been launched setting out the purpose, principles and values of the NHS, and the rights and responsibilities of patients, the public and NHS staff.

UNISON had a major input into the development of the Constitution and is supportive of its aims, particularly because it reaffirms the fundamental principles of the NHS as a comprehensive service, available to all, based on clinical need and not on an individual's ability to pay. It also provides greater protection for the NHS within the law.

The Constitution will apply to all NHS organisations and all private and third sector organisations that undertake NHS work in England. UNISON aims to make full use of the Constitution to protect staff and patient interests. Copies of the NHS Constitution and the accompanying Handbook are available from: www.unison.org.uk/healthcare

Negotiators set out agenda for 2009

The Health Service Group Executive (SGE) has decided to push forward with a major negotiating agenda during 2009 on terms and conditions issues that have the potential to deliver new benefits to members.

This decision followed the NHS Pay Review Body's announcement in December 2008 that it would not ask the government to conduct a review of 2009/10 pay rates agreed under the multi-year deal. Therefore, the SGE recognised that, against a background of rapidly declining inflation and fears over job security, there was no immediate prospect of re-opening the pay rates in the multi-year deal and, while keeping pay under review, the focus in 2009 would be on key terms and conditions issues.

Transforming Community Services guidance

If you are concerned about the impact of the Transforming Community Services programme on health services in your area, take a look at our guidance on the UNISON website at www.unison.org.uk/pct

Contacts

The full-time officers supporting the Nursing and Midwifery Sector are Gail Adams (gail.adams@unison.co.uk) and Robert Baughan (r.baughan@unison.co.uk), who can also be contacted in the UNISON Health Group on 0207 5511418.

Keep up to date

Don't forget, you can visit the UNISON website for further information about the administrative and clerical sector at www.unison.org.uk/healthcare/nursing/

Join UNISON

If you wish to join UNISON, complete the attached application form or call UNISON on 0845 355 0845.

Telephone users call
FREEPHONE 08000 0 967 968

Lines open from 6am to
midnight, Monday – Friday and
9am to 4pm Saturday

Alternatively visit
www.unison.org.uk





STUDENT NURSE

Review targets fairer NHS bursary

UNISON is one of the key stakeholders on a steering group which has been established to take forward the NHS Bursary Scheme in providing support to students on NHS commissioned healthcare courses. Other stakeholders include representatives from the National Union of Students, British Medical Association and Royal College of Nursing, other trade unions, the Department of Health and other government departments.

The review was announced in the Department Of Health's "A High Quality Workforce", published in June 2008. The review is specifically committed to reviewing the anomaly between the support available to degree and diploma nursing students. However, it is taking the opportunity to consider other changes that could improve the system in supporting all NHS funded students. Its stated aim is to create "a fair system for students that ensures support is provided to those who need it most and attracts quality students from a diverse range of backgrounds."

The Steering Group is developing and analysing a series of options for the future of NHS student support and assessing how well they meet the aims of the review. Once it has completed the first stage of this analysis, it will consult more widely, to enable the views of interested parties to be considered by the Steering Group before it makes its final recommendation to ministers. Options range from small changes to the existing scheme which target support where it is most needed to consideration of larger changes to the way students are funded. We expect this consultation to take place over the summer so be prepared to have your say and influence UNISON's submission before putting the Steering Group's final recommendations to ministers. A decision on the new arrangements is expected to be announced by ministers in the first part of 2010.

The timetable for introducing the new system will depend on which option is chosen. However, it is currently expected that students entering training

from September 2011 would be the earliest cohort that could be affected by any changes.

UNISON campaigns for decent pay as real solution

While UNISON has been seeking to make the most of the current bursary system by negotiating for the best possible terms and conditions, it has been simultaneously campaigning for a return to salaried status for student nurses. UNISON believes that such a system would:

- be simpler to understand
- remove the need for means testing and leave less exposure to fraud etc
- attract more students from more diverse backgrounds - alternatives such as schemes based on bursaries, grants or loans often require students to accumulate debts to be paid off after they have qualified or rely on support from parents or partners. This discriminates against students from less well off backgrounds
- lead to closer ties between employers, strategic health authorities and higher education institutions, as well as more vocationally based training
- lower attrition rates as students would have a stronger vocational commitment to nursing and also receive a proper salary.

It's also fair to say that we are a lone voice in this argument. None-the-less our student members continue to argue that this is the best solution for them and we will do all that we can to deliver this. If we condemn students to poverty, how can we expect them to see the NHS as a model employer. Some argue that they are like other students, but this simply is not the case. They work full time, 37.5 hours per week, and they work alongside qualified nurses undertaking the same tasks and duties as them while they learn – to treat them any less favourably is inequitable. Our task is to secure more money for students so that they cut back on the second and third jobs that they are undertaking, which we believe undermines the experience of their learning.

Join UNISON — your friend at work

PLEASE FILL IN THIS FORM IN BLOCK CAPITALS USING BLACK INK AND GIVE IT TO YOUR UNISON REP OR SEND IT TO HEALTH GROUP (NURSING), UNISON FREEPOST (WC5652), LONDON WC1H 9BR

1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Please tick or fill in the boxes below

| | | | | |
|---------------------|----|------|----|-------|
| Mrs | Ms | Miss | Mr | Other |
| First name | | | | |
| Surname/Family name | | | | |
| Home address | | | | |
| Email | | | | |
| Postcode | | | | |
| Other initial(s) | | | | |
| Date of birth / / | | | | |

National insurance number (from your payslip)

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | |
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How would you describe your ethnic origin?

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Black UK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> Black | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> African | <input type="checkbox"/> White UK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani | <input type="checkbox"/> Black | <input type="checkbox"/> Irish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian UK | <input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> White Other |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Overseas nurse | |

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

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

Contact tel/voice/text/email

2. YOUR EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

| |
|------------------------------------|
| Employer's name |
| Your job title/occupation |
| Department/section |
| Workplace name and address |
| Postcode |
| Email |
| Payroll number (from your payslip) |

3. WHAT YOU WILL PAY — FROM 1 October 2003

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions.

| Annual pay | YOUR SUBSCRIPTION BEFORE TAX RELIEF per month | YOUR SUBSCRIPTION AFTER TAX RELIEF per month | Band |
|--|---|--|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Up to £2,000 | £1.30 | £1.10 | A |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £2,001–£5,000 | £3.50 | £2.90 | B |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £5,001–£8,000 | £5.30 | £4.48 | C |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £8,001–£11,000 | £6.60 | £5.58 | D |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £11,001–£14,000 | £7.85 | £6.64 | E |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £14,001–£17,000 | £9.70 | £8.21 | F |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £17,001–£20,000 | £11.50 | £9.73 | G |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £20,001–£25,000 | £14.00 | £11.84 | H |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £25,001–£30,000 | £17.25 | £14.59 | I |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £30,001–£35,000 | £20.30 | £17.17 | J |
| <input type="checkbox"/> over £35,000 | £22.50 | £19.04 | K |

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

| |
|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly |

Please tick this box if you are a student member in full-time education (including student nurses or Modern Apprentices).

Your subscription is £10 per year.

4. POLITICAL FUND

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

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

It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes below.

Your subscription shown above includes a political fund payment so you do not pay any more by being in one of the funds.

5. YOUR AUTHORISATION

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

Now please sign and date below

Signature

Date

DATA PROTECTION

UNISON will process your membership information together with other information for administration, statistical analysis, conducting ballots and other statutory requirement purposes.

We may also send you newsletters, journals and surveys and let you know about educational and campaigning matters. We will disclose your information to our service providers and agents for these purposes.

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

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

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