

# THE NEXT GENERATION

UNISON's newsletter for young members

[unison.org.uk/young](http://unison.org.uk/young)

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## March for public services 26 March

The whole of the trade union movement is organising for the march and rally in London on 26 March – and it's essential that all young members make every effort to take part.

Called by the TUC and backed by UNISON, this promises to be the biggest ever march in support of public services and will confront head-on the ConDem government's lies that there is no alternative to their slash-and-burn attack on our services, jobs, and pensions.

For young people in particular this event will be a defining moment in the campaign to build an effective alliance between trade unionists, students, service users and community groups. It is young people who will have to deal with the fall-out and pay the cost both financially and in terms of crushed ambitions over the longer term as a 'lost generation'. And it is also our society and our economy that suffers if we fail to nurture, sustain, educate, train, and employ young people.

The student actions at the end of 2010 have put to bed the claims that young people are apathetic and non-political. With over 50,000 people on the street on 10 November



**Join us: go to [action.unison.org.uk/march](http://action.unison.org.uk/march) to get more info and sign up**

and the subsequent wave of protests and occupations, it is clear that there is a real groundswell of feeling among young people to challenge through peaceful actions this government and its dangerous gambling with our future.

But only a cohesive response defending public services, jobs, and pensions, will win our case. For 26 March to be an effective show of

strength, and to act as a springboard for further united political action, we must bring together people from across our communities: our own trade union members in the public and in the private sector and their friends and families; community, voluntary, and faith groups (especially those that have experience around campaigning as service users); students and those in training as apprentices and interns; the unemployed; and spokespeople and pundits and politicians who share our vision for an alternative to the coalition's policies.

26 March offers us an incredible opportunity not just to show our determination to fight back, but also to use the event as a springboard for the next phase of our campaigning. In a bold move, UNISON has created a £20 million 'war chest' to help sustain our activity, building links and alliances in and across communities.

### So now it's up to you!

UNISON is calling on all young members to support the campaign and in particular the march and rally on 26 March, and to take these simple actions:

1. **Talk to friends, families, and workmates about the march and encourage them to attend**
2. **Speak to your branch officers about how the branch will be supporting the march and what you can do to help**
3. **Add your voice to UNISON's Million Voices for public services campaign at [unison.org.uk/million](http://unison.org.uk/million)**
4. **Sign up to attend the event on Facebook (search 'march for the alternative').**

## Young member on the NEC

**Graham Smith** was the successful candidate for the young member's seat in the recent national executive council by-election.



Graham is 23 and a student at Edinburgh University studying Community Education. He's already well known as the chair of UNISON's national young members forum, but what is his plan as the NEC representative? Next Generation spoke to him.

### **Graham, congratulations on being elected.**

Graham: Thanks very much! It's only until June's conference, so I don't have long to make a mark in a short time before the next election takes place.

### **You've been involved in some of the student actions?**

I've been part of my university's occupation and anti-cuts coalition; we called on the university to sign a pledge to lobby against and be transparent with any cuts on campus, but more importantly to make no compulsory redundancies to staff or cuts to their pensions and conditions.

### **What do you say about the media's role in their coverage of the student protests?**

I was at the demonstration in London and even in Parliament Square there was only a tiny minority causing trouble. The cameras follow them

and ignore the thousands there demonstrating peacefully – they'll do anything to sell a newspaper.

### **What do you see as your priorities as the NEC representative for young members?**

It's about campaigning and making the case against cuts. We need to get the message out there that there is alternative, that our public services are valuable, and especially that the coalition's plans bite hardest on young people. We need to recruit

and organise our workplaces, build links in our communities and fight these regressive cuts.

### **What are you doing to support the march for the alternative on 26 March?**

I want to see young members from across the UK taking action in their communities to build up support for the TUC march in London. I'll be working to get our members out on the streets and talking to the public about why we need to make a stand.

### **If you could change one thing in UNISON to help encourage young member participation what would it be?**

I'd like to be able to reach out to the member who's always thought about getting involved but didn't do it. If that's you, you can reach me on Twitter: @Graham\_NEC, or email: gw.smith@unison.co.uk or BBM: 231A4E69 .

If I could have a second wish, I'd ask every young member to speak to a non-member at their workplace to join UNISON. It's a simple and great way of getting active – it's just that first step that needs to be taken. Most people who are not members say it's because they've never been asked. Let's not give them that excuse any more!

**Thanks Graham and good luck in your new role.**

## Out with the old and in with the new

As part of the NYMF's commitment to improve communications with young members and step up our organising work, we are changing the young members newsletter and introducing new organising materials that will be available next year. Part of that change recognises that 'Next Generation' as a branding does not reflect the fact that young members are already here, and many of them are already active.

The NYMF also believes that more of its communications work should be channelled through the UNISON website, including providing a regular download rather than hardcopy newsletter. And it'll be greener too! Watch out for the announcement of the relaunch on the young members web pages.



## Young Labour membership – just £1

Young members who want to help UNISON lobby and influence the Labour Party can do so by joining the party for just £1.

It's a very direct way of getting our message across to politicians. UNISON lobbies the Labour Party through the policy forum process, at party conferences, in the constituencies and through the UNISON group of MPs at Westminster.

UNISON Labour Link branch officers, national staff and lay members work closely with UNISON's different service groups, regions and other parts of UNISON to get our members concerns onto the Labour agenda.

To join the Labour Party for £1 go to <https://secure2.labour.org.uk/join/>

Find out more about UNISON's Labour Link: [unison.org.uk/labourlink](http://unison.org.uk/labourlink)



## Student action!

The recent wave of student activity against hikes in tuition fees and plans to scrap the Education Maintenance Allowance kicked off with a massive march in London on 10 November, with the National union of Students at the forefront. UNISON members in education and UNISON staff were proud to march alongside students and education workers and their supporters on the day. A short film capturing the positive mood of the day, and an antidote to the negative media reports, can be seen at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZUhuo2ZKY0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZUhuo2ZKY0)

## Keeping up with campaigning on the net

The past six months has seen an explosion of anti-cuts campaigning activity on the web – and it can be quite difficult to keep up with everything that's going on. We're recommending three websites that are excellent starting places to keep informed and get involved.

### **False Economy – [falseeconomy.org.uk](http://falseeconomy.org.uk)**

Describe themselves as "For everyone concerned about the impact of the government's spending cuts on their community, their family or their job."

### **Touchstone – [touchstoneblog.net.uk](http://touchstoneblog.net.uk)**

Describe themselves as "An informal blog by TUC staff about policy issues that are in the news, or ought to be."

### **TIGMOO – [tigmoo.co.uk](http://tigmoo.co.uk)**

Describe themselves as "A network for collating and republishing feeds from blogs about UK trades unions."

And don't forget you can search on social networking sites for campaigns as well – for example on Facebook, enter 'Our NHS, Our Future' or 'Connexions services need to unite to fight'.

## Get your mates to join online

Tell your colleagues they can now join UNISON online at: [unison.org.uk/join](http://unison.org.uk/join)

## Regional young members staff contact details

Region	Name	Email
Eastern	<b>Ann Glover</b>	a.glover@unison.co.uk
East Midlands	<b>Adrian Morgan</b>	a.morgan@unison.co.uk
Greater London	<b>Jamie Brown</b>	j.brown@unison.co.uk
Northern	<b>Dawn Nicholson</b>	d.nicholson@unison.co.uk
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Yorks/Humb	<b>Imelda Bennett</b>	i.bennett@unison.co.uk

facebook

## Young members on Facebook

Don't forget you can join in and find out about young members activity and news on Facebook – search for **youngunison**

## Young members' weekend 13–15 May 2011 / Cardiff

We will be meeting against a grim background of ConDem-imposed attacks on services, jobs, terms and conditions, and pensions. Our task this year will be to provide young members with the information and skills to help them campaign effectively against these cuts, engage with the public, and work out how we can take this work forward across the UK.

It's a great chance to meet, work, and socialise with up to 140 other young members, find out more about the union, and learn some key skills.

If you are under 27 years of age on 15 May 2011, ask your branch secretary about attending. Alternatively you can contact your regional contact by calling **0845 355 0845**, or email your full name, branch name and membership number to [young.members@unison.co.uk](mailto:young.members@unison.co.uk)

Weekend costs including meals, accommodation, travel, childcare and other appropriate and properly incurred expenses, will be reimbursed by UNISON.

Please note that numbers are limited and registering your interest does not guarantee you a place at the event.

**UNISON**  
the public service union

UNISON is the UK's largest trade union with 1.3 million members  
More than 5% of UNISON members are aged 26 and under