

## **TUC YOUNG WORKER'S MONTH 2014 - LIVING WAGE WEEK 2 – 8 November**

### **Young members' activity**

**Members of the National Young Members Forum are being called on to lead their regional young members forums to organise to make the case for implementation of the living wage using a petition exercise.**

As part of the TUC's young workers month in November ( [www.tuc.org.uk/about-tuc/young-workers/young-workers-month](http://www.tuc.org.uk/about-tuc/young-workers/young-workers-month) ), the NYMF is seeking to raise the profile of the living wage during Living Wage week 2 -8 November ( [www.livingwage.org.uk/living-wage-week-2nd-8th-nov-2014](http://www.livingwage.org.uk/living-wage-week-2nd-8th-nov-2014) ).

The new living wage rates were announced 3 November 2014. These are now £9.15 per hour in London, and £7.85 outside London.

The current statutory minimum wage is set at £6.50 per hour for those 21 years of age and over, £5.13 for those aged 18 – 20, and £3.79 for 16 and 17 year olds. There is a separate minimum wage rate for apprentices of £2.73 for those aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year. All other apprentices are entitled to the National Minimum Wage for their age.

### **Activity detail**

The aim is to gather signatures for a petition calling for a statutory living wage – a wage rate that is set annually and takes into account the cost of living in the UK – and deliver the petition to a local MP.

For this exercise it is vital that you involve the relevant UNISON level of organisation i.e. at regional level, your regional young members contact; at branch/workplace level, your branch secretary.

Attached is

- (i) a general petition calling for the Government to implement a statutory living wage (you will need to update this with the new rates on 3 November).
- (ii) key briefing points for those collecting signatures (again the Living Wage rates will have to be updated)

NB There may be an online petition supported by the TUC that is made available nearer the time. This will be publicised through UNISON communication channels.

The activity could involve members and non-members in the workplace, and members of the public.

You may want to consider adapting the petition for use with your own employer if they are not already a living wage employer. It is essential that you liaise with your regional young members contact and your branch secretary if you decide to focus on your own employer.

You may want to look at involving other unions and allies who support the case for the living wage. You should look at enlisting the support of other unions in your workplace if you are focusing on your own employer.

### **Considerations for the activity**

Who might your allies be?

- Other trade unions
- Local living wage campaigns
- Anti-poverty groups etc.

### **Resources**

What resources are available for this activity?

- People (to collect signatures etc.)
- Copies of the petition
- Other UNISON material, including recruitment forms

### **Date, time and location**

What day(s) and time(s) will you run the activity?

Where is the best place to get access to the most people?

Do you need to get authorisation to be on any premises to collect signatures?

Who can organise getting the petition delivered to a local MP?

### **Publicity**

Who can take good pictures of people signing the petition (with their permission)?

What publicity can you generate around delivering the petition to your local MP?

Can you issue a press release saying how many signatures you collected?

Can you promote your activity on FaceBook, and post it to the 'young unison' page? (Don't forget – pictures always help tell a story.)

Who will promote your activity on Twitter using the hashtags #livingwage and #tucywm14 or #ywm14

How can you promote your activity online beyond UNISON?

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### **KEY BRIEFING POINTS**

#### **1. What is the Living Wage?**

The Living Wage is an hourly rate of pay, calculated independently, that reflects the cost of living in the UK. Currently it is set at £9.15 per hour in London, and £7.85 outside London.

It is recalculated every year in November.

#### **2. The national minimum wage (NMW) is far too low**

The current statutory minimum wage is set at £6.50 per hour for those 21 years of age and over, £5.13 for those aged 18 – 20, and £3.79 for 16 and 17 year olds. There is a separate minimum wage rate for apprentices of £2.73 for those aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year. All other apprentices are entitled to the NMW for their age.

- If the NMW had risen at the same speed as FTSE 100 Chief Executive Officers pay it would be worth £12.33 an hour today, almost double the current £6.50
- Compared to the NMW's 81% increase since 1999, the price of a loaf of bread has increased by 149% and the price of gas by 192%.
- If NMW workers were paid the national Living Wage of £7.85 an hour instead, they would receive more than £2,300 a year extra..

#### **3. Work should pay enough for someone to live on.**

If someone works for a living, then that work should pay enough for them to live on.

It is because people are not paid enough to live on that the state has to top-up their earnings.

Just over half of the 13 million people in poverty - surviving on less than 60% of the national median (middle) income - are from working families.

#### **4. State benefits are effectively subsidising employers.**

In-work benefits mean that employers are effectively getting cheaper labour at the state's – the taxpayer's – expense. In the private sector this means state benefits helping companies to make profits.

**5. There is broad support for the Living Wage.**

From London Mayor Boris Johnson to the Labour Party, the Living Wage enjoys a wide range of support. 1000 employers now support the Living Wage, including Aviva, Barclays, KPMG and a number of universities and local government employers.

But this support is for the Living Wage being paid on a voluntary basis.

How can it be right that an employer can simply choose not to pay its workers enough to live on, and leave the state to make up the difference?

**6. A Living Wage brings benefits to employers.**

An independent study examining the business benefits of implementing a Living Wage policy in London found that more than 80% of employers believe that the Living Wage had enhanced the quality of the work of their staff, while absenteeism had fallen by approximately 25%.

Two thirds of employers reported a significant impact on recruitment and retention within their organisation. 70% of employers felt that the Living Wage had increased consumer awareness of their organisation's commitment to be an ethical employer.

**7. A Living Wage brings benefits for the economy**

Lower-paid workers tend to spend a higher proportion of their income in the local economy, bringing increased economic activity.

**8. Pay should be based on the work being done, not the age of the worker.**

The Living Wage does not discriminate on the basis of age. The national minimum wage does. If there are 3 workers doing the same job for the same employer, why should one get £6.50 per hour, the second £5.13, and the third get £3.79, just because they are different ages?

We believe that workers should be paid the rate for the job, not the rate according to how old they are.

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## **PETITION: MAKING WORK PAY**

We, the undersigned, call on the Government to make work pay by introducing a statutory living wage – currently £7.85 per hour, (£9.15 in London).

<b>NAME</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>