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# UNISON Annual Report

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2014/15

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a million  
voices  
for  
public  
services

**UNISON**  
the public service union

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## Foreword

This report is being written just as we approach the general election which will mark the end of five years of Tory/Lib Dem coalition government—and which we fervently hope will usher in a new administration with a new ethos.

It's been five years in which our members have borne much of the brunt of a ruthless austerity agenda.

Five years which have seen hundreds of thousands of jobs lost in public services. Every job lost a personal tragedy for the families concerned. Every job lost another pressure on those who remain to run our vital local services. Every job lost a savage blow to our communities, our services and our union.

Five years of growing pressure on our members and our union.

Our members have fought back – in defence of their jobs; their services and their communities. This past year alone has seen the union ballot for industrial action in nearly every one of our key service areas – local government and schools; higher education; health care; police and justice. More than a million members balloted for action.

We mobilised and filled the streets of London once again, showing that our union can bring strength and hope and show leadership to all those in the trade union movement struggling with the impact of austerity.

It was inspiring to see so many of you there – filling the streets with purple and green, a fantastic, noisy, good-natured protest that showed our union at its best.

And we've shown that as a union, we can recruit and organise to keep our union strong—despite the toughest challenges. Last year saw the second highest level of recruitment in the history of the union. We have shown that we can come through this period of austerity as a strong union, intact, united and able to speak for our members – when they need it most.

But our members need more than this. They need hope. They need stability for their families. And most of all they need a change of government. That's why this union has mobilised like never before in the run-up to the May election.

I hope that by the time you read this, the Tories will be out of No.10 and we will have a government we can work with, but this is the most uncertain and the most important election of a generation. And whoever is in power, we will continue to face challenges. We do that best when we do it together – standing shoulder to shoulder. One million members supporting each other. Let's use the solidarity that has seen our union survive the five hardest years of its existence to build for a better future for all our members.



Dave Prentis  
General secretary



Lucia Mc Keever  
President

# UNISON Objectives 2015

## The national executive council agreed the following four objectives for 2015

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### Objective 1

Enhance our capability to meet the recruiting, organisational and representational challenges posed by austerity measures including cuts, workforce reductions, reorganisations, attacks on facility time and privatisation. Ensuring the union is relevant to all members who provide public services – including those who work in the private sector – regardless of the economic sector in which they work.

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### Objective 2

Protect and secure fair pay and terms and conditions, high quality employment, and pensions for UNISON members, promoting equality and challenging discrimination, supporting migrant workers, and promoting UNISON's alternative.

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### Objective 3

Develop our public service campaigns in support of quality public services, in defence of the NHS, and all public services, building our political influence, forging alliances with unions, appropriate campaigning and community groups to challenge the austerity programme, including challenging the attacks on the welfare state. To campaign for the election of governments in Westminster, and the devolved nations, which value public services and working people, rejecting the arguments of UKIP and other far-right parties.

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### Objective 4

Ensure that the union's structures including organisational, lay member, ICT infrastructure and internal management systems are efficient and effective to meet the changing needs of all sections of the union and its members.

This annual report is structured around the four objectives.

# Objective 1: Recruiting and organising

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## Recruitment

1 In 2014 UNISON recruited 166,396 new members, a 12% increase on the number of members recruited in 2013.

2 This represents the second best year for recruitment since our union was formed – a remarkable achievement at a time when the union has been under unparalleled attack.

3 Increasing recruitment meant that the net loss of members to UNISON was substantially lower than in previous years, despite the continuing impact of the government's austerity agenda and massive cuts to public services.

4 Around 60% of those joining UNISON in the last year have done so online. This reflects both the increasing accessibility of the technology and the increased familiarity of workers with its use. Personal contact remains crucial to retaining members and UNISON is looking at ways of ensuring that we contact all new joiners.

5 The key to success has been a coordinated whole-union approach to recruitment. Activists and staff are continuing to work together to get the UNISON message into the workplace. Fighting fund organisers make a valuable contribution to the organising and recruitment work of the union. Television, press and digital advertising have been used to reinforce the recruitment message and get it out to a wider audience.

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### *The marketing campaign*

6 UNISON's innovative use of a co-ordinated marketing approach, linking television adverts, newspaper ads and digital with our recruitment and organising in the workplace continues to pay dividends in increased recruitment.

7 In 2014, the union ran three bursts of advertising, planned to coincide with natural peaks in recruitment and support the union's higher profile during the pay campaigns and strike action in particular.

8 Advertising drives a higher number of people to join UNISON, but advertising layered on top of high levels

of public profile and increased visibility in the workplace gives the highest response of all.

9 This is shown by looking at spikes of recruitment activity around the three advertising bursts – January/February; June/July; and September-November. Joining rates spike in each of these periods, but the spikes were highest for the weeks within these periods when we held strike action in either local government or health care. Interestingly even during these peaks of high levels of workplace activity and visibility for the union, the majority of new joiners join online. In the past we would have expected to see an increase in paper forms during these periods, but the growth of online joining seems set to represent more and more of our joiners – even where the increase appears to be at least partly in response to workplace activity.

10 Towards the end of 2014 and in the first phase of recruitment activity in 2015, the union piloted TV advertising on channels whose programming is aimed particularly at Black viewers. Early indications are that while this represents a small part of the recruitment response, it is responsive for us and merits more testing.

11 In 2015, we intend to pilot radio advertising in two regions – Northern and North West, to see whether this will be an effective way of appealing to potential members.

12 The total number of new members attributed directly to the advertising campaign in 2014 is 41,751 members and within a year, those members will have brought in some £4,724,543 in subscriptions income.

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### *Organising our membership*

13 Our organising strategy was agreed by the organisation and membership sub-committee (O&M) of the NEC's development and organisation committee in 2013. Progress in implementing that strategy is detailed below. Essentially the strategy comprised dealing with the effects of the government's austerity policies by growing the number of activists, building our organisation amongst the fragmented workforce and ensuring that there is a whole-union, coordinated approach to these challenges.



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### *Activist development*

14 UNISON has continued to build membership and organisational capacity within our traditional core public service areas. Here the focus has been on activist development. The figures show that recruitment is helping to stem the loss of members but that the number of new activists coming through is going down. It is also important we develop new activists in the fragmented workforce, if we are going to grow our organisation there and ensure that we do not put too much of a burden on existing activists.

15 We have started to share best practice between regions and with self-organised groups. Particular attention has been paid to under-represented groups such as women, low-paid women in particular, and Black workers. We now need to ensure that this is done in a planned and systematic way across the whole union.

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### *Fragmentation of public services: the care sector*

16 The care sector, which is now highly fragmented, remains one of the few areas of public service where the workforce is continuing to grow. The organising work done in the largest care provider, Four Seasons, provides a model for organising not just in the care sector but across the whole of the private sector. Crucially we have been working to ensure that the Four Seasons organising work is self-sustaining, through the development of new structures. The experience of organising in Four Seasons also illustrates the benefits of a co-ordinated approach between the centre and the regions.

17 The following key lessons have been learnt from our experience in Four Seasons:-

- a. Having recognition and access to the workplace has allowed us recruit more effectively.
- b. Mapping centrally allowed regions to see where they fitted in to the bigger picture, and helped facilitate a planned approach across the whole union.
- c. The development of new activists within Four Seasons has been crucial to ensuring that workers see UNISON as a vibrant organisation they want to join.
- d. Adapting our training to suit the needs of care workers has enabled us to rapidly equip these new activists with the skills they need.
- e. The UNISON training offer has given us credibility in the workplace and encouraged the employer to

work with us more constructively and given us further access to the workforce.

- f. Direct involvement of the new activists in the negotiating process has built their confidence and engagement with UNISON.
  - g. Branch allocation has an important effect on members feeling of belonging to a union that belongs to them, and gives activists more ownership of the functioning of the branch.
  - h. Central coordination through the strategic organising unit (SOU), working with the bargaining, negotiations and equalities teams and regions, has maintained momentum and kept focus by providing an overview, regular reports and practical assistance.
- 18 New areas for organising have presented themselves in the care sector, including Care UK and as a result of the personalisation agenda.

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### *Fragmentation of public services: the private sector*

19 Over the last year we have targeted four private companies in addition to Four Seasons in a national organising campaign, with the strategic organising unit, the private companies unit and regions working together. Two of the companies are ones where we have recognition. The other two are specifically targeting services - a potential growth area for the privateers.

20 The focus has been on working with the regions and building an activist base, in line with the Four Seasons model. The centre is also providing mapping information to encourage regions to see the bigger picture.

21 Working alongside colleagues in the regions it has been possible to establish organising plans in most of the regions. The planning process fits into the wider need for UNISON to develop cross regional plans where we are dealing with private companies that operate across more than one region.

22 A national project group has been set up to look at how we can organise effectively in the outsourced private sector. A full report on this is contained in Appendix 1.

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### *Fragmentation of public services: reaching out*

23 The UNISON organising app has been revamped to ensure that it is attractive to new users, and retains existing users' interest.

24 The Organising Space has become more widely used over the last year. New content is constantly being added. We now have around 1,000 users - ensuring a constant exchange of ideas and best practice on organising. It forms an important element in a wider strategy of reaching out to members in fragmented workplaces.

25 The strategic organising unit is encouraging branches and regions to identify shop front spaces which might be able to be used to support innovative approaches to local organising. The aim is to make these 'drop in' centres available across services and particularly to members in the private and voluntary sector - providing workers in the fragmented workforce with the opportunity to have easy access to UNISON. These organising spaces will also give branches and activists the opportunity to engage with the local community around shared interests.

### Planning

26 Last year's conference agreed to establish an annual planning cycle for organising. We are still in the early stages of implementing the new planning cycle. The aim is to bring together regional and national plans after the 2015 conference to ensure a whole-union approach to organising.

## Membership

27 Full membership of UNISON at 31 December 2014 was 1,254,250. This figure does not include retired members.

Membership by UNISON region	2013 Full members	2014 Full members
Eastern	77,750	76,250
East Midlands	91,250	89,250
Greater London	121,250	118,750
Northern	79,750	79,250
Northern Ireland	36,500	35,750
North West	185,500	184,250
Scotland	152,250	150,500
South East	103,000	101,250
South West	83,000	82,250
Wales	94,500	94,250
West Midlands	115,250	114,750
Yorkshire & Humberside	126,750	127,750
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,266,750</b>	<b>1,254,250</b>

## Activist training and education

28 The learning and organising services unit (LAOS) has developed new training materials and short workshop resources to support the needs and development of reps and activists. These include a new two-day course for stewards to further develop their representation skills, a one-day course on using social media and how to use it strategically and training for young members on developing leadership skills.

29 New service group specific courses include a one-day course *Celebrate your School Role* to promote the union to schools support staff. There is also a new *TUPE and Redundancy* one-day course which covers a basic understanding of TUPE; what employers should be doing throughout the process; organising before and after the transfer. The redundancy part of the course covers redundancy and the law; alternatives to redundancies; campaigning; ensuring fair redundancy processes and procedures; supporting members through the process.

30 We are continuing to develop our e-learning capacity for activists and members. All new stewards are now sent an invitation to complete a short e-learning module (e-note) to introduce them to their role, encourage them to access further training quickly and suggest small activities to get them started. E-notes have been developed to calculate whether members are getting paid the national minimum wage and for members in schools who may be requested to support pupils with medical conditions. There is also an online version available of the popular workshop for all members, *Your Skills, Your Future*, and an e-note for members in health on changes to Agenda for Change. In addition, LAOS supported the education workforce service groups to advise about learning routes and promotion of UNISON courses for the re-launched website for schools support staff, *Skills for Schools*.

31 Work to support the roles of branch education co-ordinators (BECs) and union learning reps (ULRs) has continued, including the publication of a new handbook for BECs.

32 Tutor training for both staff and activists has been delivered across the union, and in addition briefings on how to use short workshops continue to be rolled out. Organising staff are planning how to implement a "learn and do" approach to organising and recruitment workshops and considering how to further train and develop UNISON contacts.

33 To support activists in the private and community sectors, a blended face-to-face and distance learning

stewards course is now available. The course includes short modules equivalent to three days' face-to-face learning and it can also be delivered in six short modules or broken down further if required. The guided learning hours for the modular course are the same as for the five day face-to-face course and use the same course book and work book.

34 Activist education and member learning in Four Seasons has gone from strength to strength. A new version of the organising steward course has been developed and piloted. Other approaches such as blended learning stewards course are planning for 2015. Short workshops have been produced to support organising in four seasons.

35 A total of 2722 new stewards were appointed in 2014 of which 57 % were women. Of these stewards, 32% have completed the Organising Steward training course during 2014. The total number who attended steward induction training during 2014, including reps appointed prior to 2014, was 2450, 55% of these were women.

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### Political education

36 LAOS has worked closely with the general election campaign project team to develop a suite of workshops and resources which can be used by activists and branches to engage members to vote in the forthcoming general election. Workshops include skills development and confidence building to have a one-to-one political conversation; *Building a strong union for public services*; *How your vote can make a difference in a marginal seat*; and activities which look at what's at stake in the election.

37 We have also developed the *Voting Matters* election timeline and worksheets: this resource uses visual representation and election statistics from each decade to engage members in activities to reflect on why voting is important and the difference our members can make.

38 In addition, *Use your vote and make a difference* postcards have been produced as part of the political education programme to encourage members to register to vote.

39 The newly-produced wallchart *Austerity, Cuts and You* traces the history of austerity and maps the ways in which cuts to public services have impacted our members. The chart has proved a popular resource with regions and branches and has been used at young members' weekends, promoted at national delegate conference 2014 and is available free-of-

charge to branches. Workshops that accompany the wallchart look at inequality and how these issues affect our members in the workplace and communities where they live.

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### Member development and learning to support organising

40 Member workshops including *Your Skills, Your Future*, *Making the Most of the Internet* and *Facing Change Together* are delivered in branches with organisational support from LAOS and regional education provision. There is clear evidence that these workshops are bringing new potential activists into contact with the union, with most participants having no prior contact with the union before attending the course. New union learning reps have been recruited and the courses have also reinvigorated former stewards. The workshops have been effective both as a recruiting tool and to identify potential activists.

41 To date over 200 students have participated in the member workshops and they have been included in regional education programmes in a number of regions, and over 1000 members have attended dissemination events to find out more about UNISON learning.

42 Our *Return to Learn* and *Women's Lives* courses continue to recruit well across the country, in a climate where adult learning opportunities are becoming increasingly scarce and costly for members. The success of these programmes and the support of the Union Learning Fund have helped us to engage with branches and employers, particularly around apprenticeship programmes and Health Education England's Talent for Care strategy for Bands 1-4 staff.

43 The UNISON/Open University partnership has focused on promoting Continuing Professional Development sessions on dementia in 2014. To date, 693 people have taken part in a UNISON Dementia Awareness session delivered by an OU tutor.

44 The session covers key areas such as what is meant by the term dementia, types and causes, how having dementia affects the way a person behaves and functions and that there is more to a person than the dementia. Attendees are able to apply this knowledge to workplace and personal situations. Feedback has been positive and there is demand for more sessions on other subjects.

45 The UNISON *Staying Strong* workshop has been piloted in a Four Seasons care home. Members have accessed the OU dementia programme. Organisers



are currently developing relationships with home managers in order to negotiate further learning opportunities for our members. More member learning workshops are planned in 2015, including in the North West and Yorkshire and Humberside.

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### *Leadership School*

<sup>46</sup> The UNISON Leadership School 2015 in January brought together 44 lay members and staff from across UNISON for a series of workshops, practical project work and speakers on a range of relevant topics. The school aims to develop leadership skills in UNISON, and to promote strategies which develop leadership at all levels of the union to support effective organising. This is the fifth Leadership School run to date. Participants are benefiting from mentoring by previous participants as they put the skills they gained into practice on specific projects across the union that they have identified.

## Objective 2: Bargaining, negotiations and equalities

47 UNISON's service groups and sectors develop their own workplans based on their priorities and this work is overseen through their democratic structures. However, a number of bargaining issues cut across these areas and represent priority work for the union overall.

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### Living wage

48 The living wage has continued to form a major element of UNISON's bargaining agenda across service groups. With massive public spending cuts setting a tough background for pay bargaining, the ethical arguments for a living wage have been a powerful force for achieving progress. The push toward a living wage has been a central part of many national pay claims, resulting in settlements that provide extra increases for the lowest paid staff. The campaign has also been taken up vigorously by many local branches to achieve breakthrough agreements with employers.

49 With the number of employers across the economy accredited by the Living Wage Foundation doubling over the last year to the point that over 1,000 employers are now recognised as living wage employers, UNISON has been achieving similar progress among public services. The Scottish government has established the living wage within all its public sector organisations, and minimum rates in the Wales NHS, English further education colleges and higher education have been raised to the living wage in the most recent pay settlements. Support staff in more than 12,000 schools across the UK have the possibility of being paid the living wage as a result of recent framework agreements with Church of England and Catholic schools.

50 UNISON's guide, *Campaigning, Organising and Negotiating for a Living Wage*, has been developed to emphasise the importance of enforcing a living wage for outsourced staff alongside directly-employed staff. The guide now shows how public sector employers have taken a variety of approaches to inserting living wage considerations into contract notices when services are put out for tender and offers useful models when negotiating with employers over the terms of contracts issued.

51 During Living Wage Week in November 2014, the new rates were announced of £9.15 an hour in

London and £7.85 across the rest of the UK. Articles, blogs and infographics were used to promote the living wage across websites, publications and social media. UNISON's young members took up the issue as part of the TUC Young Members' Months and promoted the case for a statutory living wage through a petition that sought to show MPs the huge scale of support for the living wage.

52 UNISON submitted written evidence, *Tackling the UK's Low Pay Problem*, to the Low Pay Commission and gave oral evidence at a later session of the commission. The submission argued strongly for the national minimum wage to be raised in steps to the level of the living wage and utilised previous research commissioned by UNISON showing the positive effect of such a policy on jobs and the economy.

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### Facility time

53 Trade union facility time has continued to face a ferocious government-led attack that has frequently squeezed the time available to reps in the public sector, but has also fed through to the private, community and voluntary sectors, where tighter budgets are adding to the pressure on facility time. Branches are increasingly finding their reps barred from organising and representing members in the private and voluntary sectors and in academy schools in England.

54 A group overseen by the NEC service group liaison committee has been monitoring these attacks and developing the union's response. As part of that work, UNISON's *Facility Time Guide* is kept under review and updated as needed. Labour Link have also been involved in the campaign, working with Labour MPs and councillors to promote the value and benefits of facility time – to both workers and employers.

55 The NEC's development and organisation committee has also overseen work on the support available to branches following a cut in facility time. Work is focusing on helping branches ensure that facility time transfers with outsourced employers; developing organising approaches to overcoming loss of facility time and ensuring regions take account of facility time cuts when assigning resources. The aim is to reissue and simplify guidance on applying for funding from the fighting fund and regional pool allocations and to facilitate pooling of branch

resources and bids for funding. In addition, we aim to offer flexible and expanded training for stewards, issue advice about considering funding someone to carry out trade union work where facility time is lost, and continue to work with Labour Link to campaign for a legal right to facility time (including the right for facility time rights in 'core' employers to be extended to outsourced areas).

56 Service groups provide more specific facility time advice to branches and seek to share best practice among branches and regions in defending facility time.

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## Equality and fairness - under pressure

57 We have continued to campaign and profile equalities both across the union and externally. Despite the huge pressure on branches, the annual UNISON self-organised group conferences have been vibrant with increasing attendance.

58 The devastating public spending cuts has continued to be a focus for the work of all the self-organised groups, young members' forum and retired members. The attacks continue to impact disproportionately on those who already face discrimination, including women, Black, disabled, LGBT, young, older and migrant workers. Specifically, the GPF-funded research into the impact of austerity on LGBT people has supported a sustained outreach campaign to expose the true cost of government cuts on individuals, communities and specialist LGBT services. We have continued to use Freedom of Information questionnaires to build data and regional strategies on the impact on Black public sector workers in relation to redundancies and job losses plus highlighting that Black communities are also suffering from the cuts in the public services that we rely on. We commissioned new research, funded by the GPF, from the Fawcett Society into the impact of the recession on women, and the *Women Deserve Better* report into the position of older women in the workplace and society.

59 We have highlighted and campaigned to defend our welfare system which particularly impacts on disabled members who have focussed on promoting evidence of the cuts and are developing guidance on access to work which is a key area of policy.

60 Retired members have been working with the Hands Off Universal Benefits campaign to ensure that those benefits such as the winter fuel payments are protected for older people.

61 A priority has been to support and profile UNISON's Save Care Now campaign which aims to raise the voices of homecare workers and improve the homecare sector for both staff and users.

62 We have continued to ensure that our work on challenging racism puts an emphasis on organising and negotiating around race equality in the workplace and ensuring that service delivery changes continue to be impact-assessed and delivered based on need. UNISON supported the joint TUC/UAF Stand Up To Racism and Fascism event in March 2015 in Trafalgar Square.

63 Alongside evidence of an ethnic pay penalty, Black workers are over-represented in casual, temporary and minimum wage jobs with high levels of in-work poverty that have been steadily rising. We have developed key guides, *Fairer Pay for a Strong Economy*, and *Campaigning, Organising and Negotiating for a Living Wage* to persuade employers that the damaging effects of zero hours and casualisation of contracts must be tackled.

64 Even in these hard times, there are victories: we continue to challenge unfair cuts on equality grounds, saving many members' jobs.

65 We have hosted two major events – the Labour Party *Putting Women's Safety Centre Stage* conference, and the launch of the new UNISON report *A New Housing Deal for Young People*. We await the results of the Equality and Human Rights Commission survey into pregnancy discrimination – the first in over 10 years, brought about by pressure from UNISON and others, as part of our work with the Alliance Against Pregnancy Discrimination. Our work on ending violence against women continues, with our partnership working with the End Violence Against Women coalition of organisations in the sector.

66 We welcomed the first same-sex marriages in December 2014 in Great Britain, while noting that the lives of LGBT families have got considerably harder under the Coalition government. As for equal marriage, we continue to campaign for full equality in survivor pensions, an end to the spousal veto on gender recognition, for same sex marriage in Northern Ireland and for civil partnership for mixed couples.

67 Work preparing for the general election began early, particularly within Black, LGBT and young member's committees/forums starting with targeted political engagement and voter registration. We have worked with a number of partner organisations including Operation Black Vote, Votes at Sixteen, LGBT Labour, building towards 7 May. We have trained LGBT (SOG)

activists in having confident conversations with members about why it's so important to vote and why all parties are not the same.

68 All our equality groups have supported UNISON's pay campaign, Worth It, and built support for UNISON's anti-austerity policies in our communities, including at scores of Black community, LGBT pride events and disability festivals across the UK.

69 Recruitment and organisation remains at the heart of each group's work programmes, for example, a survey of young members was undertaken to find out about why they had joined. Almost 3500 responses were received and of these nearly 400 indicated an interest in becoming further involved, and this is being followed up at regional level. The annual LGBT recruitment and organising awards are now in their fifth year, celebrating success and innovation in bringing LGBT workers into UNISON. Rule amendments carried by 2014 national delegate conference have strengthened the position of the national retired members organisation, particularly at branch level.

70 There has been systematic work on the next phase of UNISON's equality scheme, which provides a straightforward approach to assessing the equality impact of our work. Current UNISON unit and regional action plans cover the period 2013-2016. These are reviewed and updated annually.

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## Bargaining support

71 The information provided to branches on economic developments affecting pay has been developed into a clearer and more accessible format that outlines key cost of living, pay settlement and labour market data. Distributed through the monthly *Branch Negotiators Update*, this work has been accompanied by a new model pay claim that is designed to be of particular value for the growing number of members working for private, community and voluntary employers.

72 We continue to develop new and revised guidance on major cross service group developments affecting pay, terms and conditions. The most notable guidance produced over the last year has included material on new challenges to TUPE, zero hours contracts, holiday pay, shared parental leave, flexible working, working time regulations, facility time and the living wage.

73 Research has been commissioned and the findings promoted on three key issues over the last year:

a) The case for public sector pay rises exceeding the pay cap was advanced by promoting research on

the positive impact of public sector pay rises on jobs and the economy.

b) The damaging impact of outsourcing on terms and conditions was highlighted through research that looked in detail at five service privatisation case studies in health, local government, education and police services.

c) The threat to pay bargaining from proposed changes to inflation measurement was exposed through research that examined the methods used to calculate consumer price indices and from this work practical advice was developed for branches faced with employers seeking to move away from the Retail Prices Index as the prime reference point for pay bargaining.

74 Subscription in 2015 to the Labour Research Department (LRD) Payline service has made a new resource available for branches to examine pay, terms and conditions data and extract information of value to negotiations.

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## Pay and terms and conditions

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### Local government

75 The local government service group continued to cover the following negotiations over pay and conditions over the past year: Food Standards Agency, Care Quality Commission, NJC (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), SJC, Youth and Community Workers (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Chief Officers (England and Wales). Scottish joint council pay is negotiated by paid and lay officials in Scotland.

76 The outcome of pay negotiations and campaigns within those sectors has been heavily influenced by a number of factors:

- Deep cuts of at least 40% to local government budgets in England, and lower, though intensifying cuts in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- The coalition government's 1% public sector pay limit.
- The attack on incremental progression and continuation of unfair performance related pay mechanisms within non-departmental public bodies and the civil service.
- The 20% decline in our members' pay since 2010.

77 Some 64% of members accepted a complex NJC pay offer for 2014-16 of a bottom-loaded basic increase up to scale point 10 and 2.2% above, deletion of spinal column point 5 on 1 October 2015 and a non-consolidated lump sum. This followed a one-day strike on 10 July. Branches are currently being consulted over the claim for 2016-17, while the special conference in March agreed that a claim for the living wage and an equivalent flat rate increase be submitted for 2015-16.

78 Pay offers of 2.2% for youth and community workers and 2% for chief officers earning £99,999 or less were accepted by 77% and 95% of members respectively in consultation exercises.

79 In the Food Standards Agency, a pay dispute and strike action were followed by an offer to eliminate deficit hours overtime, which was accepted by 74% of members.

80 In the Care Quality Commission, a consolidated 1% basic pay offer was accepted by members, although the remaining non-consolidated 'pot' was used to reward only those employees who had high performance ratings. The good news is that we are negotiating a new performance review system to apply from now on.

81 In Scotland, members voted to accept revised SJC pay proposals in November. These included a 1% pay increase, the future bargaining machinery deletion of pay points below the living wage and consolidation of the living wage.

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## Health care

82 As agreed at conference 2014, campaigning on pay was the main focus for the health group over the year. Formal disputes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland absorbed significant resources in regions and UNISON Centre.

83 The government ignored a Pay Review Body (PRB) recommendation to pay 1% consolidated to NHS staff in all four UK countries from 1 April 2014. This led to different pay scenarios unfolding across the four countries.

84 Scotland was the only country to implement the PRB recommendation, plus additional sums at the bottom of the pay scales.

85 Cymru/Wales planned to implement an uplift of the same total sum as in England. Following initiation of a formal dispute, members voted to take industrial

action. NHS staff were offered an improved package which delivered the Living Wage in addition to a consolidated sum on all pay points. UNISON's health care service group executive endorsed the decision of branches in the region to accept the offer in November 2014.

86 Northern Ireland did not implement any pay uplift for NHS staff from April 2014. At the time of writing, UNISON was in formal dispute and balloting members for industrial action.

87 In England, the Department of Health imposed a pay freeze for 60% of NHS staff, with only those at the top of their pay scales given a non-consolidated sum of 1%. Pay rates for 2014/15 remained the same as 2013/14.

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## NHS pay dispute – England

88 In accordance with motions from conference 2014 a formal dispute was initiated with the Westminster government and NHS employers in England. Preparations were made for a ballot of all NHS members in England and work undertaken to coordinate with other NHS trade unions. During this period of preparation, the health group worked closely with regions to undertake campaigning activities.

89 The campaign was run under the overall umbrella of the union's Worth it pay campaign. Much work was done to co-ordinate the fair pay campaign and formal dispute with other NHS trade unions. Agreement was reached on a pay campaign involving all trade unions and included political lobbying work and general campaigning on fair pay and implementation of the PRB award. Importantly, UNISON worked closely with those trade unions that also entered into a formal legal dispute with employers to agree timetables and campaign messages and encourage joint work at local level in the run-up to and during periods of industrial action.

90 UNISON balloted around 250,000 members in England over a four-week period in the autumn of 2014, resulting in a mandate for the union to call industrial action for fair pay in the NHS.

91 For four hours on Monday 13 October, members of UNISON took the first NHS pay strike for three decades, along with colleagues from other unions. The strike received supportive and comprehensive coverage in all forms of media, generating lots of support from the public and influencers. The strike was followed by a short period of action short of strike in the form of a 'take your breaks' activity, during which



many branches ran organising and recruitment initiatives in workplaces. Bespoke action short of strike was also organised in ambulance trusts.

**92** More unions joined the dispute and a second four hour strike was held on Monday 20 November. This was well-supported by the public, although it did not achieve the same levels of media dominance as the first strike. The strike was followed by a period of 'don't work for free' action short of strike, which again was used as an organising and recruitment initiative by many branches.

**93** Although this action achieved public and member support, it did not lead to an improvement in the offer from the government. Indeed, having stood down the NHS PRB for the 2015/16 pay round, the Department of Health for England confirmed that it would again freeze pay for most staff in 2015-16, repeating the pattern by paying a non-consolidated sum to only those on the top of their pay band. Following further consultation with regions, it was agreed in November 2014 to escalate action in order to bring about a negotiation. Consequently, a 12-hour strike was called for 29 January 2015 with plans for a 24-hour strike to follow in February.

**94** As a result of this planned action, the government held urgent negotiations and made an offer which increased the money to be spent on the 2015-16 pay bill.

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### **NHS Pay Review Body round 2015-16 (Scotland)**

**95** UNISON submitted detailed written evidence to the PRB on behalf of members in Scotland. The evidence called for a fair pay rise for all NHS staff in Scotland which protects the value of NHS pay against prevailing inflation rates, pay policy that continues to protect the lowest paid workers in the NHS with delivery of the Scottish Living Wage and the evidence noted concerns staff side unions have on moving away from a four-country system for NHS pay.

**96** An oral evidence session was held in November 2014 and health group staff from the region and UNISON Centre attended and gave evidence to the PRB in support of these claims.

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### **NHS Pay Review Body round 2015-16, seven-day services**

**97** Health minister for England Dr Daniel Poulter MP wrote to the PRB in August 2014 to inform them that they would not be required to make recommendations on NHS pay rates for 2015-16. Instead they were

asked to look at the 'barriers and enablers' to extending seven-day services across the NHS and how this could be done within existing budgets.

**98** The NHS PRB responded to this remit by requesting detailed information from submitting bodies about current arrangements and costs of unsocial-hours working and calling for views on what factors acted as barriers or enablers to extending services needed in order to improve out-of-hours care. Shortly before the deadline for receipt of evidence, it was confirmed that the remit would also cover staff in Cymru/Wales and Northern Ireland.

**99** In response, UNISON submitted detailed evidence consisting of a response to the specific technical questions and particularly about the need for detailed workforce analysis of the likely impact of extending services, and the potential to further incentivise 'hard to fill' shifts through additional payments. Also included in the evidence was a piece of qualitative evidence commissioned from Keele University. This report supported our evidence that staff had become increasingly reliant on unsocial hours payments since the start of the pay freeze, and demonstrated the dreadful impact that any cuts to these rates would have on members' standards of living and on the ability of the NHS to fill night and weekend shifts.

**100** Evidence submitted to the PRB by the Department of Health (England) and the NHS Employers' organisation did not respond to the broader workforce elements of the remit but contained a list of options for changes to the payment systems for unsocial hours. UNISON highlighted these documents as evidence of the likely attack on unsocial hours payments for NHS staff in England (and potentially Cymru/Wales and Northern Ireland).

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### **Agenda for Change**

**101** UNISON held the chair of the NHS staff council during the period of this report, with an AGM due at the time of writing. UNISON's delegation to the staff council was voted in at the HSGE AGM in July, and met ahead of meetings of both the Staff Council executive and full meetings. An update on staff council issues was given at HSGE meetings during the year.

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### **Annex E unsocial hours' payment system for ambulance trusts (England)**

**102** UNISON successfully defended unsocial hours' payments for ambulance staff. Following the cycle of deductions (deemed unlawful by UNISON), industrial action consultative ballot and withdrawal/repayment of

deducted monies by employers in 2013/14, the trade unions entered negotiations with employers on the issue of potential changes to Annex E. An outline agreement in principle was reached in the summer of 2014 but the offer was withdrawn by employers before consultation could commence. The trade union side argued against a move to section 2 and initiated a joint data collection exercise to inform this position. Employers also commenced a high court action seeking a judgement which supported the legality of deducting from Annex E without staff side agreement. At the time of writing, employers had made the offer to cease this court action and other plans to move from the current system of payment.

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### Threats to Agenda for Change

**103** Following two years where a number of employers in England sought to use ‘dismiss and re-engage’ strategies to move away from Agenda for Change, there were no reported breakaways from Agenda for Change by NHS organisations. A poll of employers undertaken by NHS Providers in November 2014 showed that the majority of NHS organisations supported the principle of national pay, terms and conditions.

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## Education

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### Higher education

**104** The 2014/15 pay settlement saw a 2% increase on all salary points plus an additional £60 to salary point 1 was made at a meeting on 15 April 2014. For those working a 35 hour week this equated to an hourly rate of the £7.65: the Living Wage at that time. Joint working was agreed to explore pay-related inequality problems. These included zero hours contracts, the gender pay gap, and low pay. New joint negotiation committee for higher education (JNCHES) working groups met from September / October 2014 to consider zero hours contracts and gender pay. The employers conducted a survey to establish the use of the lower spinal column pay points. The settlement, which UNISON members voted 89% in favour of also saw the end of the 2013/14 dispute.

**105** A claim for 2015, in early 2015 the trade union side of the new JNCHES will meet to begin to consider the content of the 2015/16 claim. The first pay negotiating meeting of JNCHES to consider the joint TU pay claim is due to take place on 26 March 2015.

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### Schools

**106** The majority of school support staff in England Wales and Northern Ireland were involved in the 2014 NJC dispute. Most schools staff in Scotland remain covered by national bargaining (NJC and SJC) systems and were involved in action across the UK to defend their pay and conditions this year.

**107** Following framework agreements with the Catholic Education Society, Schools Co-operative Society and an increasing number of local authorities, UNISON secured a landmark national agreement with the Church of England to bring the living wage to their schools. We now have living wage agreements potentially covering well over half of schools in the UK. The Skills for Schools website was refreshed and re-launched to provide an online guide to training and careers for school staff. UNISON was also represented on a DfE expert panel to create professional standards for teaching assistants in England.

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### FE colleges

**108** The 2014 pay agreement for England saw an increase on the lowest pay point to £7.65 (equivalent to £288.42) and 1 % for those above scale point 5. The employers agreed to continue dialogue on living wage accreditation but would not commit to a national agreement. Members voted 54 per cent in favour of acceptance. Concerns were also expressed that national bargaining has been undermined by many colleges not following the national employers recommendations, meaning no pay rise for some members for many years.

**109** Discussion on the 2015 pay claim in England was reached on a claim for £1 an hour for all staff on all points; a living wage up-rate and commitment to up-rate annually, plus discussions with the Living Wage Foundation on accreditation; a review of the settlement date; and management of excessive workload, including a code of practice.

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### National FE bargaining in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

**110** After long discussions on new national bargaining arrangements in Scotland, a pay claim for 2015 was submitted at an October meeting and negotiations commenced. Two sub groups were set up; one to agree a Recognition and Procedures Agreement (RPA) and an information-gathering sub group to establish current pay scales, structures and terms and conditions across the sector. One strand of the claim was the living wage and the employers indicated that

they wished to pay this as a matter of principle. Talks stalled in the face of a struggle to establish current rates of pay and conditions after years of local determination. The pay claim was put on hold until the mapping exercise is completed.

**111** The Salisbury review of industrial relations in FE in Northern Ireland reported that there should be a single table bargaining structure, replacing the current teaching/non-teaching divide. A task force was set up to look at the 17 recommendations in the review including a rethink of current practice and consideration of devolved bargaining across the six colleges.

**112** In Cymru/Wales, a historic agreement was reached between employers and FE unions to introduce a national contract for college staff and a suite of national contracts for support staff, lecturers and managers were agreed by all colleges. This will be implemented over a 32-month period ending on 1 September 2016 when all employees should be on the new contract. The employers responded to the unions' 2014 pay claim by stating that there would be no pay offer. This led to an industrial action ballot in December, resulting in a clear mandate for strike action. The employers returned to the table with a 1% offer that was accepted by an overwhelming majority in a postal ballot. The living wage is paid as part of the national agreement and is automatically up-rated nationally.

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## Sixth form colleges

**113** Members voted to accept the 2014/15 pay offer of a one per cent increase on the pay spine; new scales applying from 1 September 2014. The agreement included the deletion of the bottom two points of the salary scale, which was worth around 5% for the lowest paid. The rate of standards payment which remained at £320 was paid in the December payroll.

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## Energy

**114** This year, UNISON was able to develop a utilities bargaining skills course specifically for developing reps in the privatised utilities in the energy and water industry. The course was oversubscribed and will be repeated on an annual basis.

**115** In terms of the living wage, the energy service group executive has been running a campaign to ensure that all employers in the industry adopt the standard and become signatories to the Living Wage Foundation. Most directly-employed members already

receive pay rates above the living wage level; however the energy service group executive has pursued the principle for all contracted workers on energy sites, seeking to benefit many ancillary roles such as cleaning, catering and security, which have mostly been outsourced.

**116** UNISON secured a number of progressive pay settlements in the energy sector over the past 12 months. Those working in the regulated sector again received more generous awards than those working in retail or in the field. Highlights included members in Western Power Distribution who received an increase of 3.75% (regulated) while members in EON received 2.7% and British Gas 2.5% (retail) and G4S 1.7% (field-meter reading). Although these awards are better than afforded in the public sector due to government pay policy they do not compare with the huge pay packages given to senior executives in the energy industry which in some cases has seen executives earning packages in excess of £1 million.

**117** A major issue for the energy service group has been following up on a successful UNISON employment rights case (Lock V British Gas Trading Limited C-539/12). This case originated out of the East Midlands Gas Southern Branch and with the union's support went all the way to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). Importantly the judgement concluded that: *"Where such a worker is paid commission calculated on the basis of the sales that they make, that commission must also be included in the calculation of the holiday pay."*

**118** This principle has far-reaching consequences in respect of what workers should be paid when they take holiday from work. The case has now returned to the UK and is with the employment tribunal for further determination, the outcome is still unknown. UNISON has registered a number of cases on the back of this ruling and recruited many new members.

**119** UNISON has continued to be active on a European level working closely with EPSU and other European unions to progress agreed responses. UNISON continues to hold a seat on the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Electricity, which is a tripartite body bringing together the European Commission, employers and trade unions. Over the past 12 months we have led on key issues including the need to have common standards for training and apprenticeships in the electricity sector, raising the bar for corporate social responsibility statements, ongoing developments within the single energy market, energy security and the need for just transition when addressing climate change.

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## Water, environment and transport

**120** It has been a challenging year for recruitment in the water, environment and transport service group, not least because of job losses particularly in the Environment Agency and in some other sectors. Despite these challenges branches have worked tirelessly to recruit new members, both through locally driven recruitment campaigns and by taking advantage of national initiatives.

**121** At the time of writing a number of UNISON's water branches are in the midst of pay negotiations. Some have not yet received pay offers whilst other branches are currently consulting members. At Northumbrian Water UNISON has negotiated a 2.6% pay rise 1 year from April 2015. Over the past year UNISON pressure has helped secure a commitment from two water companies to become fully accredited living wage employers. Work has been carried out with UNISON water branches to map key terms and conditions across UK water companies which will assist UNISON branches in future negotiations.

**122** In the Passenger Transport Forum, the 1% public sector pay cap continues to provide a very difficult context to pay negotiations. The trade union side of the forum has submitted a pay claim calling for a pay rise reflecting the rise in the Retail Prices Index in the last 12 months. UNISON will continue to push for a positive outcome from negotiations.

**123** In the Environment Agency, despite the 1% pay cap, UNISON fought hard to secure a positive outcome from pay negotiations. The union was able to delay for a further year the government-mandated attack on pay progression in the agency. All progression payments for 2014/15 have been fully paid as a result. Through the pay negotiation process UNISON was also able to secure improvements in flexitime.

**124** Following the Lock v British Gas case the principle has now been established in law that holiday pay should reflect normal remuneration, including commission and allowances. In WET UNISON has worked hard to ensure that employers adapt their practices to reflect this new reality. UNISON has issued more detailed bargaining advice for all its branches across membership along with a new holiday pay CASE form.

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## Police and justice

**125** During the past 12 months the police and justice service group has:

- campaigned to win better pay deals for members in all police and justice sectors in 2014
- prepared for some major reviews of terms and conditions in police and probation
- taken steps to defend national collective bargaining from a range of threats.

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### Police staff (England and Wales)

**126** Following a successful industrial action ballot of police staff members in England and Wales in late 2014, over an unsatisfactory 1% pay offer, talks were re-opened at the Police Staff Council. This led to an improved pay offer of 2.2% over an 18 month period, which was accepted by members in early 2015.

**127** The Police Staff Council started a major review of the terms and conditions in the Police Staff Council Handbook. A branch seminar was held for branches in November 2014 and talks continue.

**128** A number of police forces started local talks over changes to terms and conditions which potentially threaten the integrity of national collective bargaining. The service group is supporting those branches and regions involved.

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### Police staff (Scotland)

**129** A 1% pay offer was accepted by members for 2014, in the context of the public sector pay policy agreed between the Scottish TUC and the Scottish government, which guarantees no compulsory redundancies.

**130** A major review of terms and conditions of police staff in Scotland was started to harmonise the legacy pay and conditions which police staff brought with them from the former eight Scottish police forces into Police Scotland.

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### Probation staff (England and Wales)

**131** Probation staff transferred either into the National Probation Service (NPS) or to one of the 21 new Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) on 1 June 2014. The National Negotiating Council (NNC), which covered the legacy Probation Trusts, was protected in the transfer agreement, but has not been properly supported since by the Ministry of Justice.

**132** Both UNISON and Napo are in dispute over a 0% pay offer 2014 for both NPS and CRC staff, which remains outstanding at the time of writing.



**133** In January 2015, UNISON members voted by a majority of 96% to reject the pay offer and to take industrial action to seek to improve it. No progress has yet been made in the dispute.

**134** Negotiations at the NNC have become deadlocked as a result of the pay dispute and the threat from the Ministry of Justice to withdraw check-off facilities from trade unions. UNISON is opposing the check-off threat.

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### **Child and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)**

**135** A pay offer of 1% for 2014 for CAFCASS staff was imposed on members despite a rejection of the offer.

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### **Community and voluntary sector**

**136** The community service group has developed and grown in membership over the last year. It carried out a major review of organising strategies used by different regions, launched a national organising project aimed at five major housing associations. This is broadly on course for its target of 1,000 new members, and 50 new activists have been identified. The next phase will be to consolidate these gains into a sustainable structure.

**137** We have continued to resist attacks on pay, terms and conditions in many social care employers, as a result of cuts to the funding of public service contracts. Low pay and understaffing are endemic with TUPE transfers frequently followed by reorganisations and attacks on pay, terms and conditions. However in the housing association sector, which benefits from relatively secure rental income, we have started to achieve inflation-plus pay deals in some areas.

**138** Because of repeated attacks on terms and conditions, many members are close to legal minimum protection. Employers have been pushed to increase pay-rates for sleep-ins and holiday pay. Working time regulations are widely ignored in social care where staff take the blame for mistakes but don't get 11-hour breaks between shifts. We supported members taking their legal rights under this health and safety law.

**139** The service group executive also identified that it needed to start to coordinate bargaining in large employers more effectively, and has established a major charities sector group to give a forum for the lead lay members for the top 15 employers in the sector to discuss bargaining and organising. We are developing new strategies to support networking among activists

and members, and are piloting an online discussion forum for housing association activists.

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### **Public procurement**

**140** Over the last year UNISON has continued its campaign to ensure that the new UK public procurement rules - The UK Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (England Wales and N. Ireland) and the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 – will include the best provisions and opportunities to provide a new more progressive procurement regime.

**141** UNISON believes that the new regulations and Act will have a significant impact on how public procurement is used to secure the future of quality public services, provide local community added value and improve pay, terms and conditions of its workforce.

**142** UNISON has represented cross-service group issues and worked jointly with the TUC and STUC, Westminster shadow cabinet Labour MPs and Scottish MSPs responsible for procurement policy. Working in civic and community alliances these campaigns have highlighted the ability of contracting authorities to now promote green and social considerations such as the living wage, ethical and fair trade and climate change when awarding public contracts. UNISON has also widely campaigned to keep public services public, working with We Own it, the Labour Finance and Industry Group and Labour Lawyers, to promote both the legal and policy aspects of UNISON's vision for fairer procurement.

**143** UNISON has been campaigning to make it a mandatory requirement for public contracts to be awarded on the basis of 'best price/quality ratio' rather than just price.

**144** Without this the door will be firmly open to the continuation of damaging price-only competition fuelling the race to the bottom.

**145** UNISON has campaigned for a clear signal of a much needed shift in UK public procurement to encourage public bodies to implement the living wage; fair employment practices; improve financial transparency; apply FOI to private contractors; adopt Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), prevent serious breaches of employment law including blacklisting, non payment of employment tribunals, health and safety breaches and breaches of environmental and tax obligations.



146 We are also campaigning to provide clarity for those contracting authorities wishing to reserve contracts for mutuals and social enterprises

147 UNISON has argued that the current UK provisions to reserve contracts for mutual/social enterprises are not fit for purpose. The current wording would allow a contracting authority to reserve a contract for a wide variety of hybrid and private sector organisations.

148 UNISON is campaigning to improve the legal definition and entitlement criteria of co-operatives, mutuals and social enterprises entitled to apply for a reserved contract. This would provide clarity for those contracting authorities wishing to reserve contracts only for the genuine not-for-profit sector and prevent privatisation via the back door.

149 A new UNISON Procurement Charter and service group branch guidance will be developed and updated to assist regional and branch staff in procurement contract negotiations and local community campaigns. The new guidance will demonstrate how branches can negotiate the inclusion of non-price criteria considerations in contract awards, contract selection and contract performance.

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## Pensions choice

150 The government announced in the 2014 budget that it would allow all those contributing to defined contribution pensions (including the local government schemes), the option of being able to take their pot of money as a cash sum from 6 April 2015.

151 This could create a number of issues: possible cash flow problems for the funded schemes if large numbers take up the choice; potential for new scams as unscrupulous advisors get involved; flexibility is likely to worsen annuity rates further so for many members of defined contribution arrangements, leaving some with little real choice but to take the cash but they will pay tax on this sum. This way members cashing in small pensions could get taxed on the lump sum in a way they may never have been on the pension itself.

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## Public Service Pension Schemes

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### NHS Pension Scheme

152 In June 2014, governance arrangements for the NHS Pension Scheme (NHSPS) changed to comply with the new rules required under the Public Service Pensions Act 2013. These were implemented in

shadow form ahead of full implementation in April 2015.

153 The Pension Board seeks to ensure compliance with scheme regulations. The Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) makes recommendations to the secretary of state on the desirability of scheme changes. UNISON held seats on both boards and held the deputy staff-side chair of the SAB.

154 Discussions focussed on the implementation of the new 2015 NHS Pension Scheme and ensuring that it reflected the proposed final agreement agreed in 2012, as well as how the contribution rates for the new scheme should be set. UNISON, along with the trade unions representing the majority of NHS pension scheme members, argued that because scheme members had incurred three successive years of pension contribution rate increases there should be no further consideration of changes to the contribution tiers until at least after the 2016 valuation of the NHS pension scheme had taken place. This was agreed although the government fixed the contribution tiers so that they would no longer be up rated annually in line with any Agenda for Change pay rises, potentially pushing some scheme members into a higher contribution tier earlier than they otherwise would have been.

155 UNISON's pensions unit held numerous pensions clinics as well as regional presentations and briefings to help members to understand the new 2015 pension scheme.

156 After long negotiations and discussions between the Department of Health and NHS trade unions, the widening access regulations to the NHSPS were introduced allowing staff delivering NHS services employed by independent providers to become members of the NHSPS when they had not been compulsorily transferred. Under the access scheme, independent providers can choose from two levels of access: access for existing scheme members or access for all eligible staff who are wholly or mainly employed on NHS work. Alternatively, independent providers can choose to maintain the default position where they only comply with New Fair Deal regulations so only staff who had been TUPE-transferred would be eligible.

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### Working Longer Review (WLR) Group

157 UNISON continued to hold the chair of the staff side of the Working Longer Review (WLR) – a partnership review group between NHS trade unions, NHS employers and health department representatives.

**158** Last year, UNISON worked with the London School of Economics and the Medical Research Council looking at the impact to staff, patients and services of working longer. Additionally, the WLR group published a report making 11 recommendations, which have since been approved by the relevant government minister. Recommendations included the need for more specific data to be collected on the impact of extending the retirement age for NHS staff.

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## Energy

**159** UNISON finally reached agreement with National Grid on making changes to its defined benefit (DB) pension schemes. The scheme is one of the largest occupational DB schemes in the UK and the settlement reached went some way to addressing our key concerns regarding proposed changes. Members were balloted on the changes and by a large majority accepted them.

**160** We are currently engaged in discussions with EDF over proposed changes they are seeking to make to their current DB pension schemes. EDF are one of the very few remaining energy employers who maintain an open DB scheme for new entrants. Although recognising some of the pension challenges the company face, we are again seeking to ensure member's interests are protected and that the scheme is not closed to new entrants going forward.

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## LGPS England and Wales

**161** After the introduction of the new scheme in England and Wales, last year saw a period of consolidation, introduction of supportive regulations and technical work to improve implementation.

**162** The government launched a consultation on establishing common investment vehicles (CIVs) to provide funds with a mechanism to access economies of scale, invest more efficiently, increase passive investment strategies and to generally reduce investment costs, UNISON responded pointing out problems with the proposals: that merged funds would provide for greater savings than CIVs; there is a need for more effective accountability and transparency; pooled funds would add a layer of complexity and opaqueness and CIVs would introduce additional risks and bureaucracy.

**163** The LGPS governance regulations were issued in early 2015 and set out the role of the national Scheme Advisory Board and the new local pension boards. UNISON's submission during the process called for tighter regulations.

**164** To coincide with the governance regulations the LGPS Shadow Advisory Board produced terms of reference and guidance on setting up pension boards. UNISON has been heavily involved in amending these documents to try to ensure that boards are independent and able to actively assist scheme administrators rather than being a rubber stamping policy. UNISON set up a project to recruit and train new member representatives to ensure that where we are involved in the boards our reps are prepared.

**165** The 2012 agreement included a provision to revalue the pay bands (which dictate what percentage members pay into the scheme) in line with CPI. In 2014 it was agreed not to increase the bands with a view to slightly increasing the overall member yield. This was because initial figures suggested the overall yield was producing around 6.3% whereas the agreed target for member contributions is 6.5% (the employer pays 13%). Research by UNISON's pensions unit showed that repeating this exercise would not necessarily increase the yields and so it was agreed to revalue the bands in line with the original agreement.

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## LGPS Shadow Board Update (England and Wales)

**166** UNISON has two seats on the national LGPS Shadow Scheme Advisory Board (SSAB), which advises the DCLG on the LGPS and seeks to encourage best practice, increase transparency and coordinate technical and standards issues.

**167** In 2014 the board worked with the government and LGPS funds to implement the new LGPS regulations; responded to government consultations on draft governance regulations and cost saving; and produced a paper on valuations in the LGPS, with a summary of fund valuation results.

**168** The SSAB worked on proposals to reform the ill health retirement process, such as: reducing the number of ill health retirement tiers, re-assessing the reviews process, and considering the role of employers in the decision making process.

**169** Working groups looked at the sensitive area of deficit management and cost management processes to ensure that the scheme stayed in line with the agreed costings. Work continued to agree indicators that would form part of the matrix for comparison of different funds.

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## LGPS Scotland

170 The new scheme started 1 April 2015. Like LGPS England and Wales it is a 1/49th CARE Scheme. Unlike LGPS in England and Wales and Northern Ireland the member contributions are based on bands of pay instead of all the members contributions being based on their level of earnings

171 In Scotland a new Scheme Advisory Board was set up to advise the minister on the new scheme.

172 Pension boards responsible for assisting the scheme manager on compliance with scheme regulations and the requirements of the Pensions Regulator, were also set up in each of the eleven funds in Scotland.

173 There will be at least one UNISON representative (and one substitute) on every pension board in Scotland, supported by a network of branch pension champions. UNISON Scotland ran a two-day training course for UNISON pension board members and substitutes in March 2015.

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## LGPS Northern Ireland

174 The new scheme started 1 April 2015. A review group consisting of the employers and unions including UNISON negotiated a scheme that like the other LGPS' is a 1/49th CARE scheme.

175 Governance arrangements are being finalised. In view the size of the scheme there is only one.

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## Health and safety

176 Health and safety in the workplace continues to be a key topic of concern for members especially as this is an area that many employers seek to cut as part of austerity measures.

177 Safety representatives are under constant threat – not only from the changes in legislation around health and safety, but the perception from employers as to the importance of reps (and the time they need to perform their duties) within the workplace.

178 The national health and safety committee has worked over the last 12 months on many areas of support for members and activists to support organising, recruitment and campaigning around health and safety in the workplace.

179 We have worked on a number of campaigns including Cut Stress not Jobs as well as building on

our high profile campaigns around International Workers Memorial Day and European Health and Safety Week. International Workers Memorial Day saw a huge increase in the reported numbers of activities being held across the country. There was a greater use of social media as well as a dedicated events page on the website that was regularly updated with new events submitted via regions and branches.

180 Regular updates to UNISON information sheets and guides ensure that our safety reps have the most up-to-date advice to support them in the workplace. Topics that have been covered include smoking and e-cigarettes, sickness absence and stress at work.

181 In addition we have continued to maintain a political profile by responding to government/NICE consultations on the aging workforce and sedentary behaviour, as well as providing oral evidence to the Westminster Parliamentary Select Committee on the Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism (SARAH) Bill that could have implications for many of our members working in the public sector.

182 Developing our social media activity has seen a real increase in engagement with safety reps and other interested parties and reps are using the union's Organising Space to share good practice and ideas.

183 There has also been engagement with regions and branches through advice to committees and attendance at a variety of events – such as UNISON Scotland's health and safety seminar, an East Midlands event with union learning reps and the South West region's health and safety training event.

## Objective 3: Campaigning

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### Million Voices

**184** UNISON's Million Voices campaign continued as the union's overarching platform to co-ordinate campaigning to defend public services in the pre-election period throughout 2014. The centrepiece of campaign activity was a public services summit, held at UNISON centre in early summer 2014. Participants included senior lay representatives from each service group, policy experts and opinion formers from outside of the union and Jon Cruddas MP, who at the time was finalising Labour's policy review. The summit provided participants with an opportunity to think through the new and existing challenges facing particular parts of the public services, as well as overarching issues that impact across the union, such as austerity, localism, outsourcing and integration of health and social care. At its conclusion the summit identified priority campaign points from our existing policies to push in the period leading up to the general election.

**185** The main output from the summit was UNISON's public services manifesto, *Securing the Future of our Public Services*. The manifesto set out some clear, realistic and credible policy recommendations necessary to ensure the health of our public services beyond the general election across all parts of the UK. These included:

- Sustainable funding for public services, including reform of local government finance and more progressive taxation.
- A change of direction on privatisation, outsourcing and marketisation.
- Greater democratic accountability of public services.
- Renewed commitment to the public service workforce.
- Greater recognition of the role that investment in public services and public infrastructure has to play in securing a durable economic recovery.

**186** The manifesto has been a key tool to lobby politicians of all parties, employers, media and opinion-formers.

**187** The manifesto, and a shorter, leaflet version produced for use by activists at branch and public-facing events, was also promoted on the Million Voices pages of the website and through social media. As we head into the short pre-election campaign the manifesto is serving as a vital reference point, informing national and local lobbying and campaign activity.

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### General election campaign

**188** A joint meeting of the political fund committees during October discussed the 2015 general election and the different but complimentary roles Labour Link and the general political fund (GPF) could play during the campaign. This took place against a background of increasing uncertainty about the outcome of the general election, recognition of the consequences of a further period of Conservative-led government for public services and awareness that the new Lobbying Act had consequences for the way in which the union would be able to campaign.

**189** Leading political activists agreed some important principles for the campaign, including the need to:

- make the general election the union's top campaign priority at the earliest opportunity in 2015;
- focus on marginal seats;
- employ the most effective, evidence-based, political communication messaging; support existing and develop new campaign capacity in target seats as appropriate;
- ensure our campaign messages reflect UNISON values.

**190** Research was subsequently undertaken into the political views and attitudes of members in marginal seats in England and Wales. This included an in-depth telephone poll of 1000 members, a message-testing exercise and a series of focus groups in marginal constituencies in different parts of the country. Analysis of the findings of the research have informed a programme of targeted member communications and provided material for a range of outputs, including leaflets, pledge cards and editorial copy. These focused on policy differences between the parties on

job security, cost of living and NHS. In keeping with the requirements of the Lobbying Act and to support our strategy of focusing on marginal constituencies, the emphasis of this programme of work has been on communicating with members.

**191** There was recognition early on that following the independence referendum in September 2014 the general election campaign would have a distinctive character in Scotland, and, for different reasons, in Northern Ireland too. UNISON Scotland and Northern Ireland put their own successful bids to the GPF for resources to support their respective campaigns.

**192** A range of materials were produced to support activists during the general election campaign. These included an activist guide, which sign-posted members to different ways that they could get involved and emphasised the need to prioritise speaking to our own members about the issues at stake during the election. A series of workshops were also developed, aimed at supporting activists to think about how to have political conversations at the workplace, and phone bank facilities put in place in most regions.

**193** Complementary press and social media strands to the campaign were developed.

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## **Worth It**

**194** UNISON has pushed forward the overarching Worth It pay campaign to defend, maintain and improve pay structures and levels for all our members across the union.

**195** The campaign took its key messages to Labour Party conference 2014 on the theme of Public Services – Time to Pay Fair, UNISON had a presence at Liberal Democrat conference, and there was a march and Hard Up festival outside the Conservative Party conference that carried Worth It branding.

**196** The campaign commissioned a Smith Institute report on the effects of outsourcing on pay, terms and conditions, which included five case studies showing the detailed impact of outsourcing. The report was launched at a Labour Party conference fringe meeting and went on to gain substantial publicity for the campaign against outsourcing.

**197** The campaign commissioned research on the Retail Prices Index (RPI) that has proved valuable in rebutting attacks on RPI as the key reference point for pay bargaining and has been turned into practical advice for branches in dealing with employers seeking to break away from RPI.

**198** A further study that looks at the impact of the pay freeze and cap on recruitment and retention across the public services, providing valuable information for bargaining and campaigning activities.

**199** Worth It has continued to build the number of members signed up as campaign supporters and provided regular updates of campaign activities through email and social media.

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## **TUC Fair Pay Fortnight**

**200** UNISON promoted Fair Pay Fortnight in February 2015 through publications and social media directed to organising staff, branches and activists across our union

**201** The programme of TUC co-ordinated events was promoted along with various campaign actions via the Going to Work website.

**202** In particular, UNISON used the week to promote a petition to Business Secretary Vince Cable over care workers being paid below the national minimum wage

**203** More widely, articles were published over Fair Pay Fortnight that detailed the impact of the coalition's pay policy, the threat to pay bargaining posed by proposed changes to official inflation measures and the scandal of low pay in the social care sector.

**204** Infographics were also distributed across social media that highlighted the scale of the fall in real wages as inflation has run ahead of pay settlements, drawing comparisons with huge surges in the pay of top bosses and shareholder dividends.

**205** The fortnight proved a valuable vehicle for drawing attention to the cost of living crisis, the need for wage growth for middle and low income earners, and reducing pay inequalities by cracking down on excessive pay of top executives.

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## **Devolution Protocol update**

**206** In response to the aftermath of the Scottish Independence referendum and the acceleration of devolution proposals in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and English regions, the NEC started a review of the UNISON Devolution Protocol that has operated for nearly 10 years. The initial view was that the principles underlying the protocol still stood but implementation needs to be reviewed and improved in 2015 and 2016 and beyond.



## UNISON Cymru / Wales

**207** UNISON Cymru/Wales continues to face significant budgetary challenges across all service group areas. The lack in funding is as a result of austerity policies driven down from Westminster and under-funding via the current Barnett funding formula. The region will continue to campaign around both elements.

**208** The Welsh government is slowly progressing plans to merge the current 22 local authorities in Wales into a fewer number of authorities. The Minister for Public Services is yet to announce a final footprint setting out how services in Wales will look. Our members in Wales are understandably concerned about the future of services and jobs, and we continue to highlight this lack of uncertainty to the Welsh government. UNISON has been engaged throughout the ongoing consultation process and has called for a clear timetable to be made public.

**209** UNISON Cymru/Wales continues to campaign for a reform of the local government pension scheme funds in Wales. UNISON's Future for Wales program published 2014 called for the nine separate pension schemes in Wales to be combined in order to reap benefits from economies of scale. UNISON's campaign is calling for an independent review of the costs, structure and management of the funds and the potential benefits, risks, and issues concerned with the merging of funds.

**210** Within social care, UNISON Cymru/Wales has worked with the Welsh government on the regulation and inspection section of the Health and Wellbeing Bill and has pressed for better regulation and training for care workers throughout this process. The consultation process is ongoing and UNISON will be submitting both written and oral evidence during 2015.

**211** The campaign around the Ethical Care Charter has built in momentum across Wales and a number of local authorities are close to signing up to the charter. We anticipate that three Welsh authorities will have signed up by the end of the summer 2015. We plan to heavily publicise these successes and use their examples to put pressure on other authorities to sign up.

**212** In addition, a regional campaign around the social workers workloads is under development.

**213** The UNISON schools forum across Wales has grown in both numbers and influence. The forum has participated in focus groups organised by the Welsh Government as part of a consultation process into the regulation of the education workforce. A body to

register school support staff comes into being in the spring 2015. Discussions on how school support staff will be impacted, including professional development opportunities, are ongoing.

**214** An all-Wales contract of employment has been negotiated, agreed and is in the process of being rolled out across further education institutes. Members in FE in Wales were also balloted for strike action as a result of the employers proposing a pay freeze. As a result, the employers proposed a 1% pay increase and maintained their commitment to the living wage – an offer which our members accepted.

**215** The Wales FE committee have also taken a clear position to resist attempts to cut core terms and conditions, as cuts to terms and conditions will not save jobs and will open the door to further cuts.

**216** Welsh branches within higher education took part in UK industrial action over pay, which led to a 2% increase for 2014/15. There was also a hard fought campaign, which included four days of industrial action, to defend the defined benefit pension scheme in Aberystwyth University. Although this action did not prevent the closure of the pension scheme, we managed to achieve an increase to employer contribution rates, and greater engagement in the process undertaken to choose the provider of the new scheme.

**217** In addition, the HE committee has participated in the Diamond Review which is considering funding and student fees.

**218** The focus of the community sector in Wales will continue to be to campaign against cuts to terms and conditions. The sector has suffered a particular threat in this area as a result of austerity and Gwalia staff have taken strike action against this very matter. The sector continues to grow within Wales, largely because of the ongoing campaign work that UNISON is undertaking to defend workers in the community and voluntary sector.

**219** Pay has also been at the top of the agenda for Cymru/Wales members within health. Negotiations between the trade unions and the Welsh Government have led to the introduction of the living wage across NHS Wales, a one-off non-consolidated payment of £187 and a 1% pay uplift from April 2015 for all NHS Wales staff. UNISON health members in Wales were balloted on industrial action for the first time and returned a vote in favour of taking action, but following in-depth negotiation with the Welsh government, action was not deemed necessary. Negotiations have also taken place and changes implemented on terms

and conditions, sick pay, incremental progression, and mileage rates within NHS Wales. UNISON remains engaged in the NHS Wales workforce review.

**220** Within Welsh ambulance services, UNISON continues to lead the debate calling for clinically-based measures and targets to be used in order to effectively assess emergency ambulance responses. UNISON's arguments against eight minute targets are gaining momentum both with the public and from a health policy perspective.

**221** UNISON Cymru/Wales members in police and justice have faced numerous challenges, including budget cuts and pay. Branch activists continue to work to defend job, terms and conditions.

**222** Within probation services, the biggest issue our members have had to contend with is the split in the service and the privatisation of the Community Rehabilitation Company. The privatisation of the service has led to cost inefficiencies, and UNISON members have highlighted and campaigned tirelessly where these inefficiencies have been identified. For instance, all vehicles with over eight passenger seats could no longer be driven by staff on their existing licenses as the service is now a commercial concern. This has led to the company having to hire vehicles in for use at great cost.

**223** UNISON Cymru/Wales international work has increased in profile across the region with a number of events taking place at the Welsh Assembly to highlight and commemorate key international events and campaigns. A commemoration was held with Assembly Members to mark the 40th anniversary of the Chilean coup that saw the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Allende.

**224** The regional international committee also hosted a successful visit from young Cuban trade unions. UNISON also continues to lead the discussion and debate on TTIP across Wales. Numerous successful briefings and events have taken place that have gained a wide audience. The campaign continues to build, and UNISON is firmly positioned as a leading voice against TTIP in Wales.

**225** UNISON Cymru/Wales has also launched a new communications forum, which has received wide interest and is looking forward to a busy year ahead as the region has both the general election and Welsh government election taking place during 2015 and 2016.

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## UNISON Northern Ireland

**226** The past year has been one of the most difficult years faced by our members in Northern Ireland. The austerity cuts built into the NI Executive's 2010 budget are now at their most acute level. Financial crises are at their height in health and social care, in our schools and across the community and voluntary sector. Our growing membership in the private sector is categorised by employment at minimum wage or below and faces daily exploitation.

**227** All of this has impacted in a dramatic way on the lives of our members who are struggling to survive with what has become an effective pay cut across all services. It is to their credit that they have been prepared to take industrial action and protest action throughout 2014 and 2015. That action has centred not only on pay and conditions but also on the attacks on our public services and the public themselves.

**228** Our campaigns, and our political engagement with government and public bodies, have ranged across education cuts for children with special needs to high profile campaigns to protect NHS residential care, homecare and A&E services. 2014 and 2015 has been marked by a spectacular rise in the number of members taking part in political lobbies and protest action.

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## Political context

**229** Since 2014 NDC the political situation in Northern Ireland has become even more precarious. The contentious issues of parades, flags and emblems, and dealing with the past dominate the political agenda whilst the equality and human rights commitments in our peace agreement continue to be rolled-back and ignored.

**230** At the end of last year the government announced yet a further round of all-party talks to break the deadlock. This resulted in the Stormont House Agreement. In addition to proposals to resolve disputes over a process for dealing with the past, flags and parades and the driving through of welfare reform; the NI Executive has agreed to institute a comprehensive programme of public sector reform and restructuring, aided by an independent strategic review by the end of 2015.

**231** It is clear that the political crisis, which resulted in the Stormont House Agreement, was used by the UK government to impose structural and economic adjustment on NI. This will destroy public services, further deepen inequality in our society and is a recipe

for continuing unrest and division. It is motivated by a political dogma which opposes public ownership of transport, water and the Port of Belfast, our welfare state, our NHS and our extensive range of vital public services. To further remove protection for our key public services, the agreement acknowledges a veto on human rights which contravenes the Good Friday agreement.

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### Public procurement, privatisation and PFI

**232** The greatest privatisation threats we continue to face are the direct privatisation of medicine, as well as our NHS residential and domiciliary care services. As predicted by UNISON, financial pressures resulted in the Minister for Health ending the majority of medical outsourcing causing job loss and closure in the private medicine sector. Our challenge now is to ensure that there is proper funding to restore these services within the NHS.

**233** The Minister of Finance and Personnel has now centralised procurement activity across the entire public sector under the control of his department, benefitting the private sector at the expense of service users and workers. He has also hired Capita to develop outsourcing strategies. The Northern Ireland regional committee and our service groups are working to challenge this strategy.

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### Review of public administration

**234** After an eight year delay, agreement was finally reached on the review of local government. No such agreement was achieved in respect of the Education & Skills Authority and at the end of last year the Minister announced the creation of one 'super board' which is currently being constituted. UNISON is extensively involved at both Ministerial and employer level in protecting our members rights, jobs and the services they deliver.

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### Welfare reform

**235** The welfare benefits system is devolved in Northern Ireland. One of the most distressing statistics is that we now have more people in work on the benefits system than those out of work. In what has traditionally been a low pay economy, more than a quarter of the workforce earn below a living wage.

**236** During negotiations on the Stormont House Agreement the UK government and the Irish government put major pressure on some local parties to reverse their opposition to welfare reform in favour

of introducing a tax cut for the wealthy by reducing corporation tax.

**237** At the time of writing the five NI Executive parties are meeting to try and resolve deadlock over potential measures to protect the vulnerable and safeguard current and future welfare claimants.

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### Employment law

**238** Employment law is also devolved in Northern Ireland. We continue to resist attempts to apply Great Britain reforms to Northern Ireland employment legislation as well as pushing for better employment laws. Some of the GB proposals have already been removed such as the introduction of fees for industrial tribunals.

**239** The relevant minister and government department are engaged in negotiations with the trade union movement and the employers' organisations in a round table forum. We are pleased to report that attention has been paid to some of the key comments in both the ICTU and UNISON submissions.

**240** As part of an ICTU delegation we recently made the case that the UK government amendments to TUPE legislation should not be introduced into NI. This remains the position and NI currently has stronger TUPE protections than GB. It was also recognised that Part 3 of the Lobbying Act requiring a trade union membership audit certificate does not apply to NI and we received confirmation that there are no proposals for a similar extension.

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### UNISON partnership projects

**241** UNISON Northern Ireland continues to develop innovative partnership models with statutory, private and voluntary sector employers in health and social care. In addition to improving care standards for patients, care home residents and the users of domiciliary care services, these partnerships are improving the working lives of our members, are helping to build the union, and continue to act as a bulwark against some of the most disturbing cuts proposals.

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### Devolved bargaining and organising strategies

**242** As reported last year Northern Ireland-wide bargaining structures exist in health, education, local government, the civil service, the fire service and the police service. In some of these areas there is demarcation of trade union membership to specific

unions. UNISON is lead negotiator in health and education.

243 In the private and voluntary sector there is no centralised bargaining structure although we are moving forward on the creation of central bargaining with housing associations and the potential for using the awarding of public contracts in both sectors for some forms of regional bargaining.

244 Our key priorities in 2014/15 has been to challenge increasing casualisation, use of zero hours contracts and staff reductions across all services. This, together with industrial action on pay, has dominated our service groups and regional bargaining groups.

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### Industrial action

245 On Friday 13 March, Northern Ireland ground to a standstill as public sector workers took strike action across all main services including public transport. The action was in response to the deepest budget cuts and job loss ever proposed.

246 UNISON members in health, social services and education stopped work from midnight onwards and the first picket lines formed at Belfast's Mater Hospital as the night shift walked out.

247 In what has been described as the largest strike in Northern Ireland for more than a decade, schools closed; bus and rail serviced stopped; hospitals, social services and social care were reduced to emergency cover; all but emergency outpatient services and elective surgery was cancelled; and across the civil service the majority of government functions stopped.

248 UNISON, NIPSA, INTO, GMB and UNITE all took strike action. Private sector workers such as those in CWU and USDAW took annual leave or used their own time to join picket lines and marches. By lunchtime it was estimate that over 45000 workers marched and rallied in their local towns and cities. UNISON strike leaders addressed all rallies. In Belfast UNISON branches led health and education members in feeder marches from the main hospitals and were joined by masses of strikers at Belfast City Hall.

249 Ambulance workers were scheduled to join the strike but at the 11th hour the Northern Ireland Ambulance service declared a 'major incident' across the whole of Northern Ireland. UNISON's response, and that of the majority of people, was that this cynical strike breaking move would not be tolerated.

250 In an eve of strike poll conducted by the largest newspaper in Northern Ireland, the general public voted 85% in support of the strike. UNISON members are now considering the next form of action to save jobs and services.

251 Confidence in our political system is now at an all time low. To restore confidence, we are calling for our politicians to reverse these damaging policies of using a political crisis to impose the austerity agenda.

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### UNISON Scotland

252 The biggest event in Scotland in the last year has been September's independence referendum. UNISON Scotland participated in this but not on a Yes/No basis. Rather we worked at, and encouraged members and branches to scrutinise the positions of the various campaigns using our *A Fairer Scotland* documents. The emphasis was on urging all sides to explain to our members how they intend to go about creating a more just, fairer society in Scotland and how their preferred outcome would match UNISON's priorities. We took the view that constitutional change should be seen as means to that end and not an objective in itself.

253 In line with this strategy, as political parties advocating a No vote had been coming forward with proposals for further devolution to Scotland we published *A Fairer Scotland and Devolution* which had outlined the sort of powers UNISON had long advocated for the Scottish parliament. When the Smith Commission was set up to consider greater powers for the parliament following the referendum, this document was updated to form the basis of our submission. The resulting proposals recommended a significant shift of powers, particularly fiscal, but did not go as far as we had recommended. Omissions from our proposals included energy, employment, equalities and housing benefit. These would be devolved had the commission applied our subsidiarity test.

254 The Indyref wasn't of course the only thing going on. UNISON Scotland was at the heart of work to influence procurement legislation going through the Scottish parliament. Concessions were achieved from the Scottish government around a number of issues in particular the statutory guidance on workforce matters including the living wage. We have also been involved in helping to shape a variety of other legislative proposals and Scottish government initiatives; the integration of health and social care, the Community Empowerment Bill, new housing legislation and many others.

255 We continued with our Public Works campaign, highlighting the problems and pitfalls of working life in an age of austerity. We published major reports outlining *The Price of Everything and the Value of Wages*, pointing out that *Austerity Economics Don't Add Up*. We have also been pointing out the difficulties faced by particular sections of the workforce in our monthly damage series. Using surveys and interviews we produced reports on occupational therapists, mental health staff, workers in waste management, cleaners and hospital porters amongst others. Our Public Works blog covers a range of ideas and service developments.

256 As the general election approaches we have launched our *Influencers* campaign. This is recruiting activists and giving them key facts and arguments about UNISON's priorities in the General Election to use in conversation with other activists – 'defending public services one conversation at a time'.

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## English city region deals

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### Combined authorities

257 In 2014/15 it was announced that a number of cities and regions across England were developing proposals for new combined authorities. Building upon previous arrangements that saw the establishment of the Sheffield City Region, the North East Combined Authority, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority – the discussions around these proposals are not uniform, with each combined authority designing a separate arrangement unique to its own area. After the initial deal in Greater Manchester, the commissioning of health and social care services was later added in 2015.

258 While some combined authorities have secured significant devolution of decision-making from Whitehall to local areas, allowing local residents to have a greater say in the delivery of public services, UNISON has recognised that there are dangers resulting from the increase in combined authorities. If introduced during a time when reducing central government expenditure on public services, the policy of pursuing combined authorities will simply devolve the decision on making spending cuts to the regional or local level. In addition, further privatisation may also result from the introduction of combined authorities, exacerbating the loss of public service jobs and cutting pay and conditions beyond the levels which occurred under the 2010-15 coalition government.

259 UNISON has urged caution while exploring proposals around combined authorities and requested greater consultation with staff, unions and the general public in areas where proposals seem most advanced. UNISON will continue to evaluate the proposals around individual combined authority's and ensure that its policy position reflects that of the Devolution Protocol recently reviewed by the NEC.

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## Service group and NEC campaigns

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### Our NHS, Our Future

260 UNISON's work with the NHS Support Federation continues to pay dividends, with the organisation's NHS For Sale monitoring work featuring prominently in media coverage of the NHS.

261 The union has won a number of successes in its campaign to fight NHS privatisation.

262 In June 2014 Weston Area Health Trust opted for an "NHS only" future meaning that the Weston General Hospital pulled back from the brink of a private franchising operation. UNISON's vocal campaign on the ground argued throughout the process for an NHS solution rather than handing over patient services to unaccountable private operators.

263 It was announced in October 2014 that elderly care services in Cambridgeshire will remain under NHS management and control. This was the culmination of a lengthy campaign by UNISON in the Eastern region, working with campaigners and patients.

264 This was followed a week later by further good news as, following much UNISON campaigning, Dorset County Hospital announced its decision to retain pathology services in-house, rather than outsourcing to a privately-run regional centre.

265 In January 2015 the news broke at Hinchingbrooke hospital in Huntingdon – the blueprint for the "franchising" model – that private operator Circle was to pull out of their 10-year contract to run the hospital after only three years. This announcement pre-empted a damning report by the Care Quality Commission on the way Hinchingbrooke had been run. The union had warned of the problems with this approach from the outset and was the first port of call for media outlets on the day of the announcement, with the union warning that patients and staff now faced huge uncertainties about the future.



266 The use of the so-called “prime provider” model took off in 2014-15. In the most high-profile example, the coordination of £1.2bn of cancer and end of life services in Staffordshire will be handed to an external organisation (or organisations). The shortlist of bidders was revealed in November 2014 and included the likes of United Health and Virgin Care. UNISON did much work nationally and regionally to challenge this procurement, including detailed briefing of MPs on the House of Commons Health Committee ahead of a session with those responsible for the Staffordshire procurement. UNISON has also sought meetings with the CCGs and charities responsible for this exercise to highlight staff and union concerns.

267 Clive Efford MP produced a private member’s bill to repeal the worst elements of the Health and Social Care Act towards the end of 2014. UNISON encouraged members to sign the government e-petition in support of the Bill and to contact their MPs to make sure they attended the Parliamentary debate on the Bill. UNISON was an integral part of the Trade Union Labour Organisation campaign to raise the profile of the Bill, which included a number of campaign days around the country. The Bill passed was debated in the House of Commons and received the overwhelming support of 241 MPs (with only 18 voting against), including a number of Liberal Democrats and Conservatives who were convinced to vote against the government.

268 In October 2014 UNISON produced a substantial submission to the House of Commons health committee’s inquiry into public expenditure. The response particularly emphasised ongoing UNISON campaigns on NHS pay and highlighted the substantial increase in privatisation since 2010.

269 In March 2015 UNISON produced a guide to resisting privatisation in the health service which aimed to explain the procurement process in the new NHS and offer practical tips for branches wishing to take action.

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## Ethical Care Charter/Save Care Now

270 UNISON’s campaign to improve standards for homecare workers and to promote the Ethical Care Charter gathered pace in 2014-15. The Charter is aimed at local authority commissioning practices, their impact on providers and the damage this does to staff and service users.

271 Seven councils have so far signed up to the Charter (Islington, Southwark, Reading, Renfrewshire, Lancashire, Camden and Wirral).

272 Former UNISON president Dave Anderson MP put down an Early Day Motion (349) on homecare workers and the national minimum wage, which garnered a large numbers of signatures from MPs from a number of different parties. Many Parliamentary Questions were also laid to keep pressure on the government.

273 In October 2014 UNISON research revealed that only 6% of councils in England and Wales ensure their homecare providers pay care workers for their travel time. Only 21% of councils have ever asked to see pay records or other documentary evidence about the pay of care workers despite endemic illegal pay in the sector. The story featured prominently in the media, including on Radio 4’s *Today* programme.

274 The union used Living Wage Week to highlight the plight of homecare workers and worked with Labour MP Andrew Smith to organise a well-attended Westminster Hall debate on homecare on 5 November. UNISON was repeatedly mentioned – and praised – throughout the debate, which culminated in care minister Norman Lamb MP conceding to the union’s demand to request HMRC carry out a detailed further investigation into the sector to combat the widespread failure to pay homecare staff the national minimum wage, largely as a result of not paying workers for their travel time between clients.

275 UNISON launched a new website in March 2015 [www.savecarenow.org.uk](http://www.savecarenow.org.uk) in an effort to engage more with the general public around our campaign to improve homecare services. Thousands of people have already used the website to contact their local council calling for them to adopt the Charter.

276 UNISON’s homecare campaign also exerted an influence on the Labour Party, which went into the 2015 general election promising to end the culture of 15 minute homecare visits and to act over the scandal of homecare workers not being paid for their travel time.

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## Campaigning against the cuts in local government

277 The local government service group has focussed its campaign work around the cuts on continuation of its series of ‘Damage’ reports – highlighting the impact of cuts on specific services and its SOS—Save Our local Services campaign. The aim of the campaign is to gain a higher press and media profile for local government cuts and support action around them. A Damage report on the attack on youth services received widespread coverage. An ‘Audit of Austerity’ is currently being produced to brief journalists and

policy-makers on the impact of cuts to local government under the coalition.

**278** Campaign themes over the last year have centred on the Kids Out for Summer– highlighting cuts to parks, playgrounds and leisure activities in August and public protection and community safety in October. Our campaign on cuts in street lighting was well covered in the press. In 2105 we will be stepping up our use of social media to highlight the cuts, producing more regular briefings and holding a ‘Speak Up for Local Government’ day.

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## Campaigning in community and voluntary sector

**279** Our campaign for recognition at RNIB has been won, and there is close national-regional cooperation in establishing a lay activist structure, alongside our other target employers – Dimensions, Action for Children and Together.

**280** Representatives of the service group met and gave evidence to Lisa Nandy MP’s inquiry into the relationship between the state and the community and voluntary sector. This included the problems of the Lobbying Act the abuse of volunteers, and the need for proper funding. This has helped shape Labour’s approach. We worked closely with the TUC and Children England to produce a “Declaration of Interdependence” between the public and community and voluntary sectors, setting out minimum standards for commissioning and the workforce in children’s services.

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## Police and justice

**281** UNISON’s campaigning work on behalf of police staff members in England and Wales has focused on our Cut Crime, Not Police Staff campaign, including a major report into the impact of the government’s austerity cuts on neighbourhood policing. This showed that PCSO numbers has been cut by an average of 22% across England and Wales, proving that front-line policing was taking the brunt of cuts. UNISON also continued to campaign against privatisation in the police service, and a report which examines the three major police outsourcings to date and highlights successful branch campaigns to oppose privatisation is forthcoming. UNISON remains vigilant over the increased use, and inappropriate deployment of, police support volunteers.

**282** Police staff in Scotland have faced many issues in the second year following the merger of all forces into

Police Scotland, the closing of control rooms being one of the major ones. UNISON has campaigned vigorously to oppose these closures. UNISON has also highlighted rising levels of stress and demands on members to deliver the same service with a continual reducing capacity.

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## Probation Staff (England and Wales)

**283** Probation staff have been transferred into one of the two new delivery bodies, either the National Probation Service or one of the 21 community rehabilitation companies. UNISON’s campaigning work has focused exclusively on campaigning to keep probation public. UNISON’s campaign has included:

- lobbies of parliament together with NAPO
- built good communications with the shadow Justice team in Parliament
- referred the Ministry of Justice to the Office of the Information Commissioner over its refusal to disclose correspondence between the UK government and the EU commission
- published a report detailing the damaging effect on service delivery and our members’ lives
- organised protest days
- worked with NAPO and GMB to highlight our concerns and firm opposition to ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’ to the potential bidders.

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## Education

**284** UNISON’s members in the education sector across schools, further education colleges, universities and children’s services have, to different degrees, faced budget cuts, minimal pay increases, outsourcing and increased privatisation. UNISON continues to oppose deep cuts to the further education sector, the threat of a real terms budget cut to schools, additional free schools and increasingly forced academisation. The impact of cuts to early years services has been a key issue, including support for local campaigns to fight cuts to children’s centres. Fighting privatisation has also been a priority, with UNISON part of the working group that devised and launched the TUC’s anti-privatisation campaign: ‘Education not for sale’.

**285** UNISON’s campaigning has emphasised the importance of democratic accountability, value for money and high standards for the benefit of all, with

decent pay and appropriate development and training for all members of the school and college workforce. In higher education, UNISON has continued to fight for decent pay for members and for the principle of free education and better financial support for students.

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### **School support staff – stars in our schools**

**286** UNISON extended the successful ‘Stars in our School’ celebration day to all school support staff, highlighting the vital role played by school support staff in keeping schools running smoothly, keeping children safe and healthy and helping them learn. Underlying the positive campaign was a serious message about the need for support staff to be better rewarded, with proper career structures and improved pay, terms and conditions.

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### **Pupil health needs**

**287** Responding to increasingly challenging demands on school and early year’s staff across the UK to look after complex pupil health needs, UNISON campaigned for new guidance. In England this led to new, clearer and more consistent Department of Education guidance, which UNISON supplemented with our own guidance. work continues to ensure that the new rules are implemented. In Scotland a dispute in Glasgow succeeded in achieving changes to job roles and improved remuneration for support staff involved in looking after pupils with health needs .The campaign continues to get updated guidance covering the whole of the UK and address challenges experienced by school staff, including training and appropriate payments.

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### **Academies (England)**

**288** The drive towards academies and free schools in England; depicted as increasing school autonomy, has led to a fragmented and incoherent education system. Some academies are using their employment freedoms to re-structure staffing, which means cuts in jobs, downgrading of posts and attempts to outsource key services. AET, a major academy chain intended to set up a joint venture with Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) to either directly provide or manage contracts for a wide range of school services. Under the plan, PWC would have been able to take a share of any savings as profit. UNISON’s campaign successfully highlighted the dangers of the privatisation of support services in schools and the prospect of school heads losing control over budgets and cuts to services. As a result, AET eventually announced in December 2014 that it had decided not to go ahead with the Joint

Venture and would discuss an in-house alternative with UNISON and the other unions.

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### **Higher education**

**289** Higher education funding continues to be the subject of hot debate, with ramifications for UNISON members working in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as well as for students. As public funding of universities decreases in parts of the UK with a transition to higher student fees, the trend towards competition, marketisation and outsourcing have become acute.

**290** UNISON’s campaigns in HE have focused on budget cuts and redundancies as well as challenging low pay and the growth of casualisation and zero hour contracts. A UNISON training course on campaigning and organising around privatisation and shared services was part of a range of resources produced to support branch activists.

**291** UNISON working with the NUS has kept up the pressure for HEIs to pay the living wage and become accredited employers to ensure that all HE employees, whether directly employed or contracted out, are covered. The revision of the living wage rate in November 2014, meant that staff on the lowest salary point were once again being paid below the living wage, so the campaign must continue. UNISON has also prioritised tackling equality issues: underrepresentation and bullying and harassment faced by women, Black, disabled and LGBT workers in the sector. This includes action to tackle the gender pay gap, with UNISON taking part in a joint working group over the past 12 months to identify positive recommendations for improvement.

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### **Further education**

**292** Further education has faced savage cuts across the UK. Funding for post-19 learners has taken the brunt of cuts particularly in England and Wales. In February a further 24 per cent cut was announced in England. A campaign group of unions, employers and other stakeholders formed to fight the cuts and launched a petition, EDM and #lovefe website. A lobby of parliament on 18 March was attended by 500 students and staff; UNISON spoke at the subsequent rally. UNISON joined a deputation of unions, led by TUC General Secretary Frances O’Grady to protest about the cuts to Vince Cable, Secretary of State. The predicted loss of 400,000 training places is not just an issue for college members whose jobs, pay and conditions are at risk, but for all members who might wish to access courses at their local college. While

16-19 funding was protected until 2014, that is no longer the case and colleges face a bleak future.

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## Water, Environment and Transport

**293** As part of the programme to support water industry branches and pension trustees, UNISON held a utility company's pension's seminar in January 2015. The seminar was designed primarily for UNISON pension trustees and branch secretaries within utility companies. The seminar covered the key issues such as pension fund transaction costs, trade union workers capital structures and forthcoming corporate governance campaigns.

**294** Following the success of the launch of the water industry report in 2014, UNISON has funded an update of the report to be published in April 2015. The new version of the report updates figures on water bills, the availability of social tariffs and other campaigning issues. It also contains a new section exposing which companies do and do not pay the living wage.

**295** Throughout the Strategic Reviews Response Programme (SRRP) re-organisation in the Environment Agency, which has included significant job cuts, UNISON has engaged with the process in order to get the best possible outcome for members. We have argued for the maximum possible flexibility to ensure that workers can continue in roles using remote working arrangements. Where appropriate and where members are in agreement, we have also argued for the Environment Agency's voluntary redundancy scheme to be made available. Our focus has always been to keep compulsory redundancy to an absolute minimum

**296** UNISON has also continued to support the Campaign for Better Transport's Save Our Buses campaign. As a direct result of UNISON funding and engagement the campaign was able to produce the report, *Buses in Crisis - A report on Bus Funding across England and Wales 2014/15*.

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## Energy

**297** During the past 12 months UNISON has leading a campaign calling for national programme of domestic energy efficiency measures to be undertaken to ensure every UK home is able to secure an energy performance certificate (EPC) level C rating by 2030.

**298** The UNISON report, *Warm Homes into the Future*, was well received by a wide range of stakeholders.

The report provided compelling evidence that addressing domestic energy efficiency issues in a comprehensive and systematic way is the most viable policy approach a UK government could take to address the multiple energy challenges the UK faces.

**299** These challenges include fuel poverty, energy security, supply constraints and environmental targets. UNISON identified the solution to be one of ensuring all UK homes meet an EPC (energy performance certificate) rating of band C by 2030 targeting those in most need first. This would be done by conducting free door to door assessments, providing low income householder's remedial works free at the point of delivery and giving access to interest free loans for those able to pay householders to reach the target.

**300** Such a programme could eliminate fuel poverty in the UK, reduce reliance on imported or fracked gas, make significant inroads into meeting required cuts to carbon emissions, create over 130,000 sustainable jobs and save householders significant amounts of money.

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## Employment rights

**301** UNISON's campaigns to protect and strengthen employment rights for working people in the UK has been tested by a government that views workplace rights as 'red tape' and collective bargaining and trade union campaigning activity as the last obstacle preventing the privatisation of key parts of our public services.

**302** Throughout the year, UNISON has campaigned for a reform of employment status laws and rules so that all workers benefit from the same basic floor of rights as fundamental to tackling the growth of low paid, insecure and casualised work in the UK labour market. Financial hurdles to access to workplace justice has become even more acute as low wages becomes an increasing characteristic of the UK labour market. UNISON continues to challenge the pernicious effects of employment tribunal fees, details of which are covered elsewhere.

**303** UNISON works closely with sister unions, the TUC and the Institute of Employment Rights on the need to strengthen and support collective bargaining. This has included a new TUC-led campaign, Decent Jobs Week, which was inaugurated with a series of workplace and regional activities in December 2014. The campaign called for better access for workers to union representation and collective bargaining; an end to the growth in casualisation and the exploitation of zero-hours contract workers, agency workers, those



on short-hours contracts and others forms of insecure work.

304 It is important to note that Northern Ireland have not followed the many detrimental employment rights changes made by the government in Great Britain.

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### Working Time Directive

305 The UK government has taken a leading role in Europe in trying to water down key protections for public services and workers. This included pressing for a review of the Working Time Directive. UNISON made strong representations, working together with the TUC and sister unions in Europe to defend existing provisions and highlighting problems with the lack of UK implementation and enforcement. UNISON has highlighted the importance of the protections provided by Working Time Regulations, the need to end the 48 hour working week opt out and to tackle abusive practices.

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### Zero Hours Contracts

306 Growing numbers of workers now have no regular hours and face uncertainty every week paying bills and rent, with a rise to 1.8 million zero hour contracts in the UK. These contracts dominate public concern around growing levels of casualisation in the labour market. The government brought in measures to tackle a very narrow element of zero hours contracts, around exclusivity clauses, in their Small Business and Enterprise Bill. UNISON gave oral and written evidence arguing that these measures could be circumvented by employers and would not touch upon the worst exploitation experienced by workers on these contracts.

307 UNISON continues to campaign on the impact of zero hours and casualisation on workers, with high profiles given to their widespread use in the social care sector. The union assisted in the drafting of Ian Mearns MP's Private Members Bill tackling the exploitative use of zero hour contracts and are working with Labour Link to strengthen the Labour party's proposals. UNISON have also updated bargaining guides and resources to support branch activity.

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### Climate Change

308 Over the last year UNISON has continued to participate in the Trade Union Sustainable Development Action Committee (TUSDAC) to ensure that the interests of branch green reps in the workplace and

service group members working in Water, Environment, and Transport and Energy, are represented at Ministerial and Shadow meetings with the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

309 UNISON has also worked closely with the Shadow DECC and DEFRA teams over the last year and provided responses to key Labour documents promoting the unions environmental and energy vision.

310 UNISON has also produced a regular UNISON activist and green rep newsletter promoting the activities and wide range of campaigns of civil organisations that UNISON supports.

311 UNISON will continue to promote its trade union climate change agenda representing green reps and service group members in the workplace in 2015 as the details of how the new government will want public services to assist in the delivery of meeting the new 2015 Climate Change targets become clearer.

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### Housing

312 Housing is a huge issue for UNISON members, their families and communities. Thousands of our members do not just work for housing associations and local authorities; they depend on housing for shelter, for security and warmth, but there continues to be an acute shortage of decent, affordable housing due to the high costs of housing to rent or buy.

313 UNISON continues to campaign against the detrimental impacts of housing and welfare reforms, which are intricately linked – including campaigning against cuts to welfare benefits, campaigning for the abolition of the bedroom tax and the Shared Accommodation Rate of the Local Housing Allowance (housing benefit) for young people and campaigning for an increase in housing investment to tackle the housing crisis.

314 The government's affordable housing programme has failed to increase the social rent sector provision as the rents have been set up to 80% of the market rent, making them unaffordable to many. Increasing the housing supply of all types of housing, particularly social housing, over the next 30 years, would widen the housing options of people and lower the costs of housing overall for everyone, in particular private renters.

315 The union is working in partnership with the TUC, other trade unions and organisations to campaign for a significant increase in all types of housing, particularly



social housing, to tackle the housing crisis and meet the housing needs of the young generation, many of whom are unable to afford a decent home to rent or buy.

**316** UNISON women and young members played a key role in a parliamentary roundtable meeting held in November 2014 (hosted by UNISON) which called for a new housing benefit deal for young people and other measures, including: investment in housing, particularly social housing provided by local authorities and housing associations; effective regulation of the Private Rented Sector (PRS); rent controls alongside measures including landlord regulation and licensing; more secure tenancy agreements; and long-term solutions to reform welfare, including abolishing the Shared Accommodation Rate for all 25-34 year olds as the housing benefit rate is set too low and there is an inadequate supply of suitable shared accommodation for this age group.

**317** In February 2014 UNISON and the TUC played a key role in supporting the campaign group Generation Rent's "Rent Freedom Day" held at the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, London. The event provided a platform to lobby politicians and discuss the key issues that private renters face including: high rents, poor quality housing / low maintenance standards, unstable and insecure renting tenures, and lack of information or empowerment of rights and welfare reform impacts.

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## Welfare reform and benefit cuts

**318** UNISON has continued to campaign, develop alliances and be involved in consultations on a variety of welfare reform issues working in alliance with the TUC and Social Security Consortium a range of leading charities and organisations representing vulnerable and equality client groups – representing the low paid, families and children in poverty, women, black people, single parents, disabled people, sick people and those with mental health issues, LGBT, the homeless, the young and elderly.

**319** UNISON has presented evidence and provided consultation responses to the government and the shadow Labour DWP team. We have published key articles in the press, social media and influential think tank blogs promoting our key messages about how public services locally can help deliver and support funded welfare reforms.

**320** Overall the focus of UNISON's welfare campaigns in the last year has been on highlighting the need for ensuring fairer entitlement in the reform of benefits for

the sick, disabled and vulnerable. In particular making work pay for low paid workers and families, support for, defending the need to maintain universality of welfare vs. the devolution risks of creating a national postcode lottery and ensuring that the current adverse impacts, particularly on women, emerging from the roll out of universal credit and current housing benefit policies are properly addressed.

**321** UNISON is now campaigning against the extension of the sanction and conditionality regime on low paid workers in receipt of universal credit who may be deemed 'in work but could do more'. UNISON believes this will negatively impact on low paid women workers, particularly those on zero hours contracts.

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## Affordable childcare to support working women

**322** UNISON has supported the campaigns led by the Fawcett Society and Gingerbread and Child Poverty Action Group

**323** In June 2014 UNISON was invited to submit evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Affordable Childcare. UNISON submitted written evidence in July and as a result was asked to give additional oral evidence to peers.

**324** UNISON is the leading union representing early year's staff with over 50,000 early years members in nurseries, schools and Sure Start centres. Also, around 70% of our members live in households with pre-school or school age children.

**325** UNISON proposed that any recommendations should link investment in childcare to;

- (a) improving access
- (b) improving quality through greater provision and better training and remuneration for the workforce
- (c) preventing price inflation for parents
- (d) limit direct parental contributions
- (e) target additional support to the most disadvantaged.

**326** We also gave evidence that quality childcare provision must have, at its core, well remunerated, well qualified staff who are experts in their field, respected for the valuable contribution of their work and with sufficient training and regulation to enable them to provide first class care.

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## Abolition of the Bedroom Tax

327 UNISON continued to support Labour's decision to repeal the Bedroom Tax if elected and the Shadow DWP Labour opposition campaign *"Go on the record against the Bedroom Tax"*. This campaign encouraged members to petition David Cameron and write to their MPs to put pressure on the coalition to abolish the Bedroom Tax now. Labour forced a discussion and a parliamentary vote to end the tax in December 2014 to place coalition MPs 'on the record' for keeping the unfair and unworkable tax.

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## Tackling Poverty for families and children: Fuel poverty, Food banks and Free school meals

328 UNISON has worked in a variety of campaigns focussing on tackling poverty working with the End Fuel Poverty Coalition campaigning to improve the government's commitments in its End Fuel Poverty strategy; with the Trussell Trust to highlight that benefit delays and changes and the new punitive sanction regime has caused the rise in the need for people in poverty to access and be reliant on food banks and on free school meals providing strong evidence that awarding free school meals for all children in households receiving Universal Credit will be essential.

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## Labour Link

329 UNISON's affiliated political fund, Labour Link, has continued our work in opposing the coalition government's attack on our public services and promoting UNISON policies within the Labour Party.

330 Labour Link has worked closely with Labour representatives to oppose Government legislation and expose the destructive effects on services and communities.

331 As UNISON predicted, the Health and Social Care Act has further promoted competition and the privatisation of our NHS with a few big companies winning many of the contracts. The NHS is being broken apart as well as being under resourced.

332 Local government funding has suffered the largest cuts of any sector and in addition it is those areas with the greatest needs that have suffered the largest budget cuts and job losses.

333 Labour Link has worked with the service groups on key campaigns such as the crisis in social care with many staff on zero hour contracts and often not receiving even the minimum wage and working to

prevent the outsourcing of staff in the AET academy chain.

334 We have continued to promote UNISON's key policies in Labour's policy making process which will lead up to the manifesto. Among the issues we are pursuing are fair funding for local government, the repeal of the Health and Social Care Act to replace competition with collaboration and make the NHS the preferred provider, action on zero hour contracts, establishing the education support staff negotiating body, a major house building programme, the promotion of equality matters, steps to tackle youth unemployment and the abolition of the bedroom tax. Important progress was made on these and other issues at the National Policy Forum and endorsed at party conference.

335 UNISON won support at Labour conference 2014 for the party to take action on low pay after the years of pay freezes and austerity.

336 We called on the party to make fair pay, the repair of earnings especially for public service employees and decisive action on closing pay gaps explicit missions of the next Labour government.

337 2014 saw UNISON again having to undertake a political fund ballot of all members to approve the continuation of UNISON's political fund structures and our campaigning voice. Labour Link worked with the wider union to explain the issues to members and campaign for a yes vote.

338 In Scotland and Wales, UNISON Labour Link continues to promote UNISON policies within the party in the different political landscapes in which they operate. Scotland Labour Link participated in the party's election process for the new leadership team and used the opportunity to strongly promote public services and UNISON's wider agenda.

339 Throughout the year the committee has been overseeing our work in supporting Labour's ground campaign in the build up to the May general election.

340 We have also worked closely with the other affiliated unions through TULO in promoting our policies within the party and getting the message out to members.

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## General Political Fund (GPF)

341 The General Political Fund has had a busy year. The main strategic focus has been on the general election. Because of the Lobbying Act, a decision was taken

early on in the campaign period to suspend aspects of the GPF operational guidelines that enable regions to sign off bids of below £5,000. In order to ensure that the spending limits imposed upon the union by the Lobbying Act, the committee took the decision to require regions to pass all bids to the national committee, with a recommendation from the region. This has enabled us to properly monitor expenditure during the controlled period while branches and regions to continue to develop their own initiatives within the framework of the union's overall priorities.

**342** The GPF set aside resources to fund an extensive programme of political communication with members throughout the election period. In addition to a strong UK-wide programme, the committee invited bids from and provided resources to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to reflect the need for their campaigns to reflect the different dynamics and institutional arrangements prevailing in the devolved nations.

**343** The GPF worked closely with Labour Link in the successful campaign for a yes vote in the 10-year political fund ballot. This involved supporting a range of campaign materials, including an activist guide, a PowerPoint for use at branch meetings and a variety of posters and leaflets.

**344** Until the general election campaign the committee continued with the successful spot bids scheme. This gives branches speedy access to GPF funds for local activity in support of the Worth It campaign. At the close of the scheme a total of 95 bids had been agreed totalling £52,879. The committee agreed to reinstate spot bids around suitable union-wide campaign initiatives after the election.

**345** The GPF has also continued to support an extensive programme of equalities work and to make donations to important civil society campaigns against the far right, including continued support of Hope not Hate and Show Racism the Red Card.

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### **Political Fund membership as at 31 December 2014** (as a % of total fund paying membership)

Affiliated Political Fund = 31% (396,226)

General Political Fund = 64% (816,491)

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### **Political Fund ballot result**

**346** Our Independent Scrutineer's report of voting in the above ballot, which closed at noon on Sunday 30th November 2014, was as follows.

Number of voting papers despatched:

1,352,364

Number of voting papers returned to the scrutineer:

138,026

Turnout: 10.2%

Number of votes found to be spoiled or otherwise invalid: 199

Total number of valid votes to be counted: 137,827

THE RESOLUTION is that the political objects set out in section 72 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 be approved as an object of the Union.

#### **Result**

Number of valid votes cast for the resolution:

119,821 (86.9% of valid vote)

Number of valid votes cast against the resolution:

18,006 (13.1% of valid vote)

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### **The Lobbying Act**

**347** In 2013 the government announced legislation that would introduce a statutory register for lobbying agencies, update the law around the regulation of campaigning activities by non-party campaigners and create a new system for verifying the membership records of trade unions. Recognising this was a politically-motivated attack, UNISON joined forces with sister trade unions, charities and other third-sector organisations to campaign against this legislation which sought to undermine the principles of free speech in the UK.

**348** With a focus on the 2015 general election, UNISON introduced a reformed GPF process to ensure that bids for political campaigning activities took into account the new legal restrictions on campaigning activities. Guidance on compliance with the legislation and the new GPF process was issued to activists and union officials – making use of digital communications, briefing sessions and established regional and national structures. Taking into account the additional requirements placed on campaign planning and to reflect the need for flexibility around the campaign, GPF bids were taken on a rolling basis throughout the regulated period to encourage the maximum number of requests for general election-related campaigning.

**349** Working through Labour Link, UNISON sought assurances from the Labour Party that it would commit to repealing the legislation if elected and

continued to push for other political parties to commit to repealing this restrictive legislation.

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## Cleaners taskforce

<sup>350</sup> UNISON is working with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in Great Britain to establish some recommendations for improving working conditions for those working in the cleaning industry.

<sup>351</sup> Initial EHRC research (including some focus groups drawn together from UNISON members) showed that cleaners often get a raw deal in terms of employment practices. As a result of that research, the EHRC has set up a taskforce to work through the common issues and come up with a set of recommendations to government around significant changes - from improved pay to greater dignity and respect in the workplace and access to the same rights and benefits as other employees.

<sup>352</sup> We are hopeful that at the end of the taskforce work we will have contributed to a set of proposals that could lead to real improvement in the sector including a possible 'Ethical Cleaning Charter' whereby large companies or clients would sign up to only contracting cleaners who are paid well and treated well.

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## Campaigning against hate

<sup>353</sup> The May 2014 European parliament elections saw the defeat of Nick Griffin, leader of the BNP, crowning a series of electoral defeats for the far right. However, the success of UKIP at the same elections and their domination of public debate around immigration, race and national identity in the year leading up to the 2015 election has meant that UNISON has been more active than ever in campaigning and organising against the politics of hate and intolerance.

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## Immigration

<sup>354</sup> UNISON's work at branch, regional and national level in challenging the current debate which blames immigrants and other vulnerable people for the UK's economic and social problems has been underpinned by a positive message focusing on decent pay, stronger employment rights and trade union solidarity. We have argued for a rights-based approach to tackling labour market exploitation and the problems faced by migrant workers in a series of government consultations which have introduced punitive measures around NHS charging, landlord checks and the workplace based civil penalty scheme.

<sup>355</sup> UNISON also made submissions to the Labour Party's review of exploitation law arguing that focusing on tackling exploitative employers and illegal pay would be more effective than targeting undocumented workers. UNISON continues to support and work with groups of migrant workers and with organisations such as the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) and Migrant Rights Network to amplify our voice and promote a positive message on immigration.

<sup>356</sup> In the lead up to the 2015 election, UNISON's campaigning work on these issues focused on integrating messages around voter registration, voting and the impact of UKIP policies for public services, for workers and trade union members.

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## Community organising

<sup>357</sup> While campaigning around the general election has been a key priority for UNISON, the year round work with the TUC, STUC, WTUC and ICTU and local anti-racist, anti-fascist campaigns to tackle racism and xenophobia at local level has continued. This ranged from challenging the activities of groups such as the English Defence League to local community campaigns such as "Hope Street" which was a positive response to Channel 4's planned "Immigration Street". The engagement of UNISON activists and members across the UK in with local community activities, building their reach and capacity continues to be one of the union's strongest responses to those who seek to divide working people.

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## International work

<sup>358</sup> Building the campaign against the TransAtlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, TTIP, and the other trade agreements currently being negotiated by the European Union with Canada (CETA) and with 23 other countries (TiSA) has been the priority for UNISON's international work. These treaties could have a major impact on the way public services are organised; on the right of government's to regulate in the public interest; and on employment and trade union rights. UNISON has been central to the noTTIP coalition in the UK and has worked closely with our European and global trade union federations, EPSU and PSI.

<sup>359</sup> UNISON has long-standing policy in support of justice and self-determination for the Palestinians. UNISON was swift to condemn the renewed Israeli assault on Gaza in the summer of 2014 and the union at national, regional and branch level made donations to Medical Aid for Palestinians. UNISON continued to work closely with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign



and agreed to support the development of PSC's trade union network. We also began to develop work around divesting Local Government Pension Scheme investments in companies who profit from economic activities linked to the illegal Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the blockade of Gaza. The UNISON International Development Fund (UIDF) has supported projects aimed at organising the most vulnerable workers in Israel, migrant agricultural workers and Palestinian workers in the settlements.

**360** We saw some significant developments in the peace process in Colombia in the past year. UNISON has supported Justice for Colombia in their work in promoting the process, most importantly in sharing the experience of the Northern Ireland peace process.

**361** UNISON has continued to support the development of the trade union movement and alternatives to the neo-liberal economic model as well as supporting ground-breaking test cases seeking reparations for the families of leading trade unionists murdered in recent years. Finally UNISON has sought to highlight the plight of Colombia's political prisoners, including many trade unionists, by focussing on Huber Ballesteros, the leader of agricultural workers' union FENSUAGRO who was arrested just days before he was due to travel to the UK to attend the TUC congress.

**362** We celebrated the return to Cuba of the Miami 5 in December 2014 after many years campaigning for their release from prison in the USA. We will continue to work with the Cuba Solidarity Campaign to bring about an end to the US embargo on Cuba and a normalisation of relations between the UK and Cuba.

**363** In the rest of Latin America UNISON renewed our strong links with the Nicaraguan trade union movement through new projects with public service workers' union UNE and health workers' union FETSALUD. UNISON continued to monitor the trade union rights situation in Guatemala, supported an anti-water privatisation campaign in Peru, helped organise banana plantation workers in Costa Rica and continued to support the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign.

**364** UNISON has strong historic links with the trade union movement in Southern Africa. The denial of political and trade union rights in Swaziland has become a focus for our work in that region, especially as Swaziland, an absolute monarchy, remains a member of the Commonwealth. UNISON worked with Action for Southern Africa to put Swaziland on the agenda of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta at the end of 2015. This included bringing Vincent Ncongwane, general secretary of the

Trade Union Congress of Swaziland (TUCOSWA) over to the UK for a week long speaking tour and meetings with MPs, civil servants and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

**365** UNISON has been calling for Qatar to introduce sweeping reform of its employment legislation, including abolishing the Kafala system of sponsorship which is responsible for trapping migrant workers in the emirate despite their being victims of appalling abuses by their employers. We have been working with the TUC on the Qatar: PlayFair campaign which is encouraging football fans to get involved in calling for Qatar to respect the rights of migrant workers, especially those building the infrastructure for the World Cup in 2022.

**366** The Philippines continues to be an important part of UNISON's international programme of work, especially as we have so many Filipino members in public services in the UK. We have supported a number of projects which seek to build the capacity of public service union, PIPSEA, and help other unions fighting privatisation of public utilities. Following the devastating typhoon at the end of 2013, UNISON, made an immediate contribution to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC). Over the past year, the union has worked with Filipino activists who are fundraising for rebuilding programmes in the worst affected areas.

**367** Public Services International (PSI), UNISON's global union federation, was swift to respond to the Ebola crisis after receiving disturbing reports of high death rates amongst health workers in the effected countries in West Africa and UNISON was one of the first unions to commit funds in support. PSI identified the need for a political response to the outbreak highlighting the devastating impact of budget cuts and pay freezes on health services imposed by bodies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund on the worst effected countries. PSI will support a two-year project advocating for significant investment in public health systems and for the full involvement of the health workforce in planning for such crises in the future.

**368** The UNISON International Development Fund (UIDF) is an important tool in delivering real trade union solidarity. The UIDF has funded 17 projects in 11 countries in the past year.

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## Pay Rise demonstrations

**369** On 18 October 2014, UNISON provided a significant presence at major trade union Pay Rise



demonstrations in London, Glasgow and Belfast organised by TUC, STUC and ICTU. The demonstrations were called to protest at falling wages and living standards.

## Objective 4: Resources

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### UNISON's membership system

370 UNISON's membership and subscription income system, the RMS and WARMS, continue to support the union in its core activities and campaigns.

371 The ability to join UNISON online has continued to be very successful for potential members, especially those who work at smaller employers as this service is available 24hrs a day. Over 300,000 applicants have applied to join UNISON this way. During 2014, we launched an innovative facility whereby new members can join online but pay their subscriptions via DOCAS.

372 During September 2013, UNISON launched a new secure web-based membership system for branches called WARMS. Over 1,700 users have been granted access to the WARMS system covering over 800 branches. It is available to all branch secretaries, membership officers and branch administrators. Access to WARMS is via an award-winning, sophisticated e-learning platform that allows users to learn at their own pace whilst being able to access this resource for refresher training. One very pleasing aspect is over 70% of those branches who did not have access to a membership system, are now using WARMS.

373 Members can use the My Details platform to register with this service and view and amend their details online. We'll be exploring ways to make this service easier to access and improve the integration with WARMS.

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### Membership services re-launch

374 UNISON's legal and UNISONPlus membership services are a valuable recruitment and retention resource. The legal services and UNISONPlus portfolio can add value to members benefits package and help to underline the value of continued union membership. The effective use of this resource is crucial to membership and income growth. UNISON is undertaking a comprehensive review of the membership services package, branding and marketing strategy to raise awareness and maximise the use of the resource. The review, which has involved extensive research with all stakeholders and specifically members to establish the understanding and value of membership benefits, will culminate with a

re-launch of the membership services package in 2015.

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### Legal services and ET fees judicial review

375 UNISON mounted a challenge to the government's decision to introduce a fees regime in the Employment Tribunals and Employment Appeal Tribunals in Great Britain.

376 The High Court in this first judicial review appeared to accept the union's argument, but ruled that because the fees were introduced in July 2013 the full impact could not be judged. UNISON appealed this decision and, in September 2014, the Court of Appeal stayed the hearing in light of new evidence showing a further huge drop in tribunal claims. UNISON lodged fresh proceedings in the High Court.

377 In the second decision, following evidence of a 91% drop in sex discrimination claims, and an overall drop in claims of 80%, the High Court described the extraordinary fall in the number of claims as "striking" and Lord Justice Elias anticipated that some workers would have insufficient funds to bring claims. Nevertheless the High Court did not rule in UNISON's favour.

378 Before the introduction of fees on 29 July 2013, the Employment Tribunals received an average of 48,000 new claims per quarter. However the most recent quarterly figures for July to September 2014 show that in that quarter there were only 13,612 new claims - 66% fewer than the number of claims lodged in the same period of 2013 (when fees were payable), according to Ministry of Justice figures released on 11 December 2014.

379 The Court of Appeal will consider, on 31 March 2015, if it will join the two appeals brought by UNISON following the High Court's decision turning down its first and second Judicial Review applications over the government's decision to introduce employment tribunal fees.

380 In a landmark case run by UNISON relating to holiday pay, the European Court of Justice ruled that commission payments paid regularly should form part of pay for the purposes of paid annual leave. This meant that UNISON member Mr Lock, an energy sales

consultant working for British Gas, was entitled to have his commission payments included in his holiday pay. The case was sent back to the Employment Tribunal to interpret how this judgment applied in domestic law. On 25 March 2015 an Employment Tribunal confirmed the European Court's decision applied. This is significant for our member and many other members who regularly receive commission payments as part of their pay.

**381** In *Glasgow City Council v UNISON*, the Court of Session in Scotland upheld an EAT judgement that arms-length companies delivering local government services are "associated employers" for equal pay purposes and "single source" pay comparisons will also be valid where the inequality emanates from a single source (the council) that is capable of restoring equal treatment.

**382** UNISON is also pursuing a strategic National Minimum Wage claim in respect of 12 members who work in the care sector. These members worked on zero hours contracts and were not paid for travel time between appointments. UNISON is arguing that this resulted in their pay falling below the NMW threshold and that when the members sought to unionise they were victimised. The case is due to be heard by the Employment Tribunal in the summer.

**383** Finally, UNISON's legal services was recognised as Employment Law Team of the Year by the Lawyer magazine in their national awards. This prestigious award, against high-profile competition, including large City law firms, is a reflection of the strategic and high impact work done by UNISON's legal team.

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## Professional Services Unit (PSU)

**384** The professional services unit (PSU) is UNISON's specialist team that provides advice and deals with cases where a member is a professional registrant facing investigation and potential action by their registration body.

**385** During 2014, the PSU closed 60 cases and provided representation in 470 cases. Roughly two-thirds of this caseload being nursing and midwifery cases, while the remainder was comprised of members regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council including social workers, occupational therapists and paramedics.

**386** The majority of cases have been resolved with a satisfactory outcome. The PSU continued to work in partnership with professional bodies and the regulators to raise issues and try to improve health and social

care regulatory processes in the future.

**387** It also continued its regional training programme by organising seminars across the country for both full-time and lay officials and revising its guidance to reflect the rule amendment affecting representation eligibility criteria.

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## Fighting Fund

**388** UNISON is currently employing 95 fighting fund organisers, who are working on projects aimed at building UNISON's capacity to organise and represent its members.

**389** The projects cover organising and recruitment in academies, care homes, housing associations, the private sector as well as a whole number of projects aimed at improving branch organisation across all service groups.

**390** Fighting fund organisers carry out direct recruitment, provide steward support, helped build local bargaining and representation structures. Many of them have brought a new energy and dynamism into the organisation.

**391** Over the past year we have continued to refine the monitoring and evaluation of fighting fund projects, tracking and comparing the recruitment activities of those branches with an allocated fighting fund organiser.

**392** So we can say that;

- some 440 new activists and roughly 4,500 new members can be directly attributed to the work of fighting fund organisers
- 60% of the branches involved in the scheme have shown some level of growth in the last three quarters of 2014
- 103 cases have been undertaken by FFAOs in 2014
- Over 2,600 workplaces visits have taken place with over 9,400 existing members and over 10,300 conversations with potential members. Over 24,000 membership forms have been handed out.

**393** The data that we are gathering helps extend our understanding of recruitment and organising, allowing us to get a feel for how many visits and conversations are needed to generate interest in joining UNISON or becoming a workplace contact for a given employer.

394 The contributions made by branches towards the cost of employing a fighting fund organiser have continued to grow year on year indicating their value to the organisation.

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## Branch finances

395 Since NDC 2011 carried the motion calling for a review of branch finances there has been extensive consultation and work undertaken by the NEC's finance and resource management committee. This work was reported back to conference in 2013 and given positive support and endorsement of proposals in relation to branch budgeting, branch banking and use of the online branch accounting system (OLBA). Conference asked for the work to be continued and a further round of consultations was undertaken. A report back to conference in 2014 highlighted the continuing pressures faced by this union and many branches as a result of the coalition government and austerity measures.

396 These challenges were exacerbated by continued downturn in the economy and pressures on our members' jobs and finances. Conference carried Motion 116 which called on NEC to set up an implementation group to consult and make recommendations on the practical application of the working group's findings. This group consists of representatives from the NEC, regions and branches and will report to conference in 2016.

397 So far the group has continued to review all aspects of branch finances including the potential of the branch budgeting and OLBA accounting system. The review is continuing to look at a mechanism for the equitable distribution and utilisation of branch finances; the most effective use of our resources through sharing them where possible and improving participation in our democratic process. Alongside this, we continue to work on specific issues around branch-employed staff, procurement and maximising return on branch savings and investment.

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## Industrial action

398 UNISON carries out more ballots, and more industrial action, across more regions and more sectors than other unions.

399 The scale and numbers of both members and employers balloted is unprecedented.

400 This includes those working in the private sector as well as in directly employed public services. In

contractors such as Sodexho, Mitie, G4S, Medirest, Interserve – all balloted so they could be included in our major national industrial action.

401 And in academies – despite the change in the law with the ECJ Alemo Herron decision on TUPE and the huge legal challenges – we sought to include national academy chains and, where we could, local schools. Anyone involved knows the huge logistical effort this required: at short notice and across the board we balloted an extra 43,000 members across 2,019 separate employers.

402 All action was without successful legal challenge against us.

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## Industrial Action key statistics

403 Numbers balloted: 250,000 members in health in 500 employers, nearly 500,000 members in local government in almost 4,000 employers.

404 In Police in England and Wales we balloted 30,000 members.

405 Local Government in Scotland – we balloted 71,000 members.

406 And of course, all our members in health and education in Northern Ireland who took action on March 13th 2015.

407 It should also be recognised that our Foods Standards Agency members took action in a very difficult environment.

408 We have also run numerous local ballots – from university staff in Wales, to charity workers in Yorkshire and Humberside. From library staff in Northern Ireland, to college workers in London and FE workers in the North West. And numerous ballots of council workers – crematorium workers, cleaners, estate workers, social workers, housing workers, the list goes on.

409 There were numerous days of strike action, and action short of strike action for groups of workers across our membership. All supported by the union – nationally, regionally and locally.

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## Our union's finances

410 UNISON's detailed and audited financial statements are produced and published separately from the annual report.

411 During 2014, the union and its members faced yet another year of challenges, cuts in public spending and attacks on public service jobs and our members. Recruitment and organising initiatives undertaken previously and again in 2014 provided support to branches and regions to slow down further decline in membership and income. Nevertheless subscription income has declined again and for the third consecutive year to just over £168 million in 2014. Our finances show that general fund reserve at £199 million is a positive indication of the union's current financial strength.

412 UNISON has achieved this through its continued strategy designed to ensure the long-term viability of the union and ability to meet future demands by:

- operating within balanced budgets and controlling expenditure within our means and income each year
- continuing to maintain reserves
- ensuring sufficient cash is available to meet our objectives and capital requirements.

413 There are still significant potential challenges ahead for the union. The first is the Tory proposal to withdraw DOCAS (deductions of contributions at source) for union subscriptions and the risk of losing members and income as a result. The union is working on our systems and developing a campaign of action to mitigate this risk. Another potential issue is the union's pension scheme deficit which despite the recovery plan, has been exposed to fluctuations in the current economic climate like so many other defined benefit pension schemes. There remains a deficit in the staff pension schemes as shown in the financial statements. The figures reported are calculated under Financial Reporting Standard 17 although they fluctuate year to year. The recovery plan agreed and put in place in 2009 is designed to reduce the deficit over the long term and has been on track as the 2011 valuation indicated. Since 2011, most occupational schemes have been hit by the uncertain financial climate, low yields and low interest rates. UNISON is currently reviewing what further steps can be taken to secure the future of the defined benefit scheme and this work involves all key stakeholders, the trustees, staff trade unions and the employer.

414 The union continues to have a solid financial platform to deliver the planned work ahead and to meet the challenges it faces going forward by making best use of its resources at every level. The outlook for 2015 is challenging but manageable with subscription income budgeted to remain steady at current level.

Nevertheless the impact of continued attacks on public sector finances should not be underestimated.

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## UNISON staff pension scheme

415 UNISON provides retirement and death benefits for employees of UNISON, UIA and 143 UNISON branches. The UNISON staff pension scheme is a defined benefit arrangement open to new members.

416 The scheme and its assets are managed by a board of eight trustees who usually meet at least four times a year. The trustees receive regular training throughout the year and also have the support of various professional advisers. To ensure efficiency and effectiveness, the trustees are in the process of reviewing their professional advisers and where appropriate a rigorous tender process will be carried out during 2015/16.

417 The scheme is a leader in the trade union movement for shareowner engagement with the companies it invests in. The trustees, together with the TUC and UNITE staff pension funds, participate in the Trade Union Share Owners scheme, a voting and engagement project. The trustees are also signatories to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment.

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## Investors in People

418 UNISON's Silver Investors in People (IIP) award, achieved in July 2013 remains valid until 2016. As reported last year this prestigious award is held by less than 3% of IIP accredited organisations. Our staff guide This is UNISON – a great place to work, created to mark our success, received the TUC Union Communications Award for best 'one off publication' in 2014. We continue to run our annual staff survey to provide feedback on working practices and areas for development. During 2014/5 UNISON also took part in the UK Commission for Employment and Skills review of the Investors in People standard, which has been updated and is being relaunched this year.

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## Apprentices

419 UNISON's national centre apprenticeship pilot, launched in 2013 is progressing well. We have achieved a 100% retention rate, with all five of our apprentices due to complete their business administration level 3 awards by June 2015. Our systems management apprentice received an award from Camden Council in 2014 for 'most improved



apprentice' within the local authority. Our conference management and strategic organising unit apprentices have been shortlisted for Camden's 2015 awards. UNISON has published a booklet, Training the next generation, including a case study of our pilot to demonstrate our commitment to good quality apprenticeships. Our next national centre intake and a new regional proposal are under consideration.

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## **Living wage accreditation**

420 UNISON remains a recognised Living Wage Employer and has implemented the new pay rates announced by the Living Wage Foundation in November 2014.

# Appendix 1

## NEC report: Organising in the outsourced private sector

A national project group was established to oversee implementation of the NEC decision to prioritise effective organisation and organising in the outsourced private sector and the 2014 NDC resolution on Organising in Fragmented Workplaces.

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### Project Group Membership

Membership of the project group was as follows:

- NEC: Maureen LeMarinel, project group chair
- Presidential team: Lucia Mc Keever, Wendy Nichols, Eric Roberts
- Development and organisation committee: Sue Highton
- Regional convenors group: Clare Williams
- Senior management group: Karen Jennings (AGS), Cliff Williams (AGS), Roger McKenzie (AGS), Dave Johnson (national secretary)
- Strategic organising unit: Greg Thomson (head of strategic organising)
- Staff trade unions: John Loudoun

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### Project group scope and objectives

The primary focus of the project is the effective union organisation of UNISON's private sector membership in what has been defined as "the outsourced sector" or "the fragmented workforce". It was agreed that work in this area cannot be conducted in isolation from other sectors of the union, or its structures at branch, regional and national level and that this must be reflected in consultation, decision-making and communication on this issue.

It was recognised that effective organising in the private sector will be a long-term priority for the union, as the scale of organisational change and organising and recruitment activity required will not, realistically, be achievable within a one-or-two-year time frame.

The phase of activity covered by this project group was time-limited by the aim of completing the objectives listed below, to enable a progress report to be submitted to the 2015 National Delegate Conference:

1. Consolidating acceptance across the union of the need for private sector organisation and organising/recruitment to be prioritised strategically; identifying barriers to this objective and addressing them.
2. Agreement on a strategy that distinguishes between the organisational and organising needs of private sector members employed by large and small employers:
  - a. Large employers – organised on the basis of sustainable organising strategies, supported by democratic structures at branch, regional and national level;
  - b. Small employers – predominantly organised on a "servicing" basis and grouped into branches/structures that can provide effective support for this requirement.
3. The roll-out of the 2014 NDC decision on the annual organising planning cycle under the direction of the D&O committee and: i) evidence that the branch, regional and service group planning requirements are understood and operational; and ii) the national priority setting process is operational.
4. The establishment of regional heads of private companies in all regions and, through that structure, more effective co-ordination of private contractor strategy and activity up and down the union and across service groups. Other benefits arising from this will be:
  - a. Identifying proposals/ideas for relevant and effective private sector structures at branch, regional, national and employer level consistent with the strategy identified in point 2 above.

- b. Sharing models of good practice – organisation and structure, organising and recruitment etc.
  - c. Providing more effective two-way communication and activity on national lead employers.
5. Holding a private companies national seminar: i) to promote the objectives identified in this report; ii) to generate further debate and consensus on the strategic organisational change and organising required at all levels to secure the long term objective of delivering effective and democratic organisation within the union for private contractor members.
  6. Holding fringe meetings and conducting other relevant activity on the project at service group conferences and seminars, NDC, SOG and other relevant union events to raise awareness and secure wide involvement.
  7. The provision of improved private contractor information and resources to facilitate organising and recruitment for UNISON activists and staff.
  8. Regular communication/reporting on the work of the project group and activity arising from it to relevant committees, regions, branches/activists and to the wider membership.
  9. The development of training and development on private contractor organising/recruitment and bargaining for activists and organisers.
  10. Submission of a report to the 2015 NDC on the work of the project group and work related to the 2014 NDC resolution specifically.
3. Discussions on the implementation of an effective organising strategy are currently taking place with regions. These are being conducted jointly by the national private contractors unit and the national strategic organising unit. The meetings are being arranged with groups of regions on a cluster basis and they involve relevant lay members from each region and full time staff. At these meetings, regions are being asked to commit to producing a regional action/work plan that outlines how this work will be taken forward in each region.
  4. Arrangements are being made to run a national private contractor seminar. The seminar will be held in October 2015. Attendance at the seminar will be drawn from the regional cluster meetings and private contractor lay activists.
  5. The need to distinguish between large and small employers is one of the issues being discussed at the regional cluster group meetings referred to above.
  6. The implementation of the 2014 NDC decision on the annual planning cycle is being overseen by the D&O committee.
  7. All regions have now established regional heads of private contractors. Two meetings of the regional heads have now been held.
  8. A private contractor database and other organising tools and resources have been developed. Briefings are currently taking place with regional organising staff as part of the national roll out of these resources. Plans are being made to make the resources available to branch secretaries via the UNISON Organising Space during 2015/16.

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## Exclusions

It was agreed that the work required to implement the above objectives must avoid large-scale reviews of branch and service group structures.

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## Actions/progress to date

1. A statement from the President and the General Secretary was issued across the union in Autumn 2014 that explained why prioritising organising and organisation in the outsourced private sector was so important to the union as a whole. A copy of that statement is included as Appendix 2 to this annual report.
2. The statement has been supported by articles in InFocus magazine for activists and U magazine for all members.
3. The learning and organising services team is developing training modules geared towards the private contractor membership.
4. Consideration is currently being given to the high-level oversight and governance of the private contractor organising work over the longer term.

## Appendix 2

Joint statement by the president and general secretary

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### Private contractors and the fragmented workforce – committing to the future

The outsourced and private sectors are now the fastest growing areas of the union, particularly in the private sector. This reflects both the continued tide of privatisation and outsourcing that is taking place across the public sector, as well as increased joiner rates in the private sector. We now have around 175,000 members in these areas of the union, with over 100,000 private contractor members. There is every likelihood that the increased pace and scope of privatisation will lead to a doubling of the size of the outsourced public sector over a short space of time, with corresponding growth in this area of membership within UNISON. That will mean that UNISON's outsourced and private sector membership on its own is bigger than the membership of most other TUC unions.

Irrespective of the outcome of the next general election in 2015, it is likely that outsourcing and privatisation will remain a prominent feature of the operation of our public services. During the coming year UNISON will continue to campaign against the ideology that is driving the public sector privatisation agenda. We will also campaign for changes to the way in which public sector commissioning and procurement is conducted, to try to secure greater protection to keep services in-house. We will campaign for the best, but we must prepare our union for a future where privatisation and outsourcing continues to transfer services and jobs from public sector management control to private sector and community and voluntary sector control. The outsourced and private sectors will become an increasingly large and important part of UNISON.

The conference motion spells out clearly the challenges that our members in these parts of the union face, both at work and with regard to their ability to have an effective voice within UNISON. These are areas of the union where we have been unable to organise as effectively as we need to do and they are characterised by low union density. When our members are outsourced, our strategy must be to follow those members into their new employer and build an effective and democratic union organisation within that new environment. Organising and bargaining in these areas present massive challenges for us as a union. We are faced with a situation where

members are spread across thousands of employers, many with which we do not currently have recognition, and an even larger number of individual workplaces. Their bargaining and representation needs place huge demands on our existing branch officers and stewards, which they are struggling to meet, particularly with the facility time restrictions that are increasingly being imposed across the public sector. The dispersion of these members across multiple UNISON branches and service groups, together with the lack of structures across the union for the private sector members, present additional challenges for how we can best organise them, encourage greater union activism from within them, and give them a stronger democratic voice within the union.

These are challenges that we must face up to as a union and find effective organising and organisational solutions for. Securing membership growth in these parts of the union, allied to increased density and effective trade union organisation, is essential to the future of our union as a whole. If we fail to do this, we will face a situation where the union could shrink in size, which would impact adversely on our status, our negotiating and influencing power and sustainability. We cannot allow that to happen. That is why we are emphasising the need for the union to prioritise the work needed to implement the conference motion effectively.

A high level working group has been established to oversee the implementation of the conference motion. The working group is chaired by past president Maureen Le Marinel and includes the NEC presidential team, the chair of the development and organisation committee, a representative from the regional convenors and members of the senior management group.

Amongst other things this work will include:

1. Implementing the annual strategic national organising planning process that is outlined in the conference motion. This will include national, regional and branch private contractor targets.
2. Identifying the larger private contractor employers where sustainable organising can be targeted.
3. Ensuring that private contractor members in smaller

employers are adequately supported within branch and/or regional structures.

4. Securing recognition and developing good industrial relations with those private contractor employers that are willing to work positively with UNISON.
5. Developing relevant national and regional private contractor structures.
6. Developing private contractor steward networks.
7. The designation of regional heads of private contractors to facilitate improved co-ordination between the national private contractors unit, the national strategic organising unit and regions, and to give greater focus to private contractor organisation within regions and branches.
8. Developing an enhanced private contractor database within the existing bargaining support system.
9. Continuing to support efforts to protect facility time, and developing organising solutions to the challenges posed by cuts in facility time.
10. Developing trade union training and learning packages aimed at private contractor members.
11. Sharing organising models and examples of good practice across regions and branches.

**Dave Prentis**  
**General secretary**

**Lucia Mc Keever**  
**President**



## Appendix 3

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### Monitoring Information

UNISON has a policy of proportionality and fair representation to ensure that our members are properly represented at all levels of the union. UNISON monitors participation and membership of all national and regional conferences and committees.

We remain committed to ensuring that our organisation remains relevant and reflects our membership. This includes our local lay representatives as well as our members on national bodies.

Of UNISON members, the percentage of women is:

Membership	Full members 77% Retired members 61% Overall (all categories) 75%
Accredited stewards	54%
Health and safety reps	43%
Branch secretaries	50%

Every effort is made to ensure that every new member recruited to UNISON completes full monitoring information. We continue to work to ensure that our RMS records are up to date.

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### 2014 national delegate conference – information on delegates

Monitoring identified the following levels of participation at last year's conference

Female	63%
Part-time workers	32%
Black members	11%
Disabled members	16%
Young members (under 27)	5%

### Service group breakdown

Local government	46%
Water, environment, transport	3%
Health care	33%
Energy	2%
Police and justice	5%
Community	3%
Higher education	6%
No response	2%

**Subscription band**

A Up to 2,000	0.5%
B 2,001 – 5,000	0.5%
C 5,001 – 8,000	2%
D 8,001 – 11,000	4%
E 11,001 – 14,000	6%
F 14,001 – 17,000	2%
G 17,001 – 20,000	15%
H 20,001 – 25,000	21%
I 25,001 – 30,000	17%
J 30,001 – 35,000	13%
K Over 35,000	8%
Member in education / apprenticeship or on unpaid leave	0
No response	0.01%

**National executive council 2014 – 2015**

Female	63%
Male	37%

**Ethnicity**

Black African	3%
Black UK	15%
Irish	3%
White UK	70%
White other	9%

**Disabled**

Yes	18%
No	82%

**Service group**

Local government	41%
Health care	29%
Community	12%
Police and justice	6%
Water, environment, transport	3%
Higher education	9%

**Subs band**

A – D (up to £11k)	15%
E – G (£11,001 - £20k)	24%
H – K (above £20k)	61%
Member in education/apprenticeship	0%

**Age**

16-26	0%
27-39	0%
40-49	18%
50+	9%
Not answered	3%

## Appendix 4

### UNISON conferences delegate attendance 2011 – 2014/15

Del = Delegates + Sharer 1s, where appropriate

Year	Black Members		Women's		Higher Education		Community		Health		Young Members		Energy		Water, Environment & Transport		Local Government		National Delegate		Retired Members		Police & Justice		Disabled		LGBT	
	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All
2011	302	577	366	770	103	202			499	1278	88	124	70	150	42	106	869	1414	1569	3348	317	450	132	308	138	356	230	398
2012	282	559	328	730	120	245	86	191	475	1246	113	135	61	147	50	111	847	1317	1512	3224	306	472	119	328	167	375	222	412
2013	273	557	391	810	111	238	86	200	481	1260	108	133	51	136	44	116	813	1318	1448	3169	321	495	110	317	154	369	244	412
2014	275	585	352	732	108	251	98	225	481	1261	118	147	54	127	43	110	765	1239	1409	2979	368	506	118	281	227	446	275	456
2015	382	675	414	780	121	262	73	194																				

Key

■ Peak year for delegates across these years

■ Peak year for total number registered across these years

□ No conference held

Thirteen rule book conferences - national delegate conference, seven service group conferences, four self-organised group conferences, retired members' conference - and the national young members' weekend are organised each year through the executive office.

As well as debating motions and deciding on union policy, conferences include guest speakers, exhibitions, campaign zones, workshops, fringe meetings, regional meetings, caucus meetings, and provide opportunities for delegates to meet and network throughout the year.

Delegate registration and attendance at the self-organised group conferences, retired members' conference and the young members' weekend has increased to the highest ever levels in the past 18 months.

The different size and shape of each conference has resulted in UNISON using a variety of venues over the past few years - Sheffield City Hall, Brighton Centre, Hilton Hotel Manchester, Cedar Court Hotel Bradford, ACC Liverpool, SECC Glasgow, St Pauls' Hotel Sheffield, Southport Convention Centre, Manchester Central, Hilton Hotel Blackpool.









