
UNISON Annual Report

2015/16



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Proud to be in UNISON

We have now been through one full year of Conservative government. One year of a revitalised austerity agenda – putting public services and the people who provide them under growing pressure. One more year of the government making public service workers pay for the economic crisis through job cuts and pay freezes. One year of vindictive attempts to curtail the ability of unions to speak up on behalf of our members.

And it's only one year of five. So we know that there will be more challenges ahead.

Our members will continue to be in the firing line – whether through benefit cuts that hit working families; perpetual pay freezes that leave public service workers in poverty or the continued slashing of budgets putting jobs at risk.

But it has also been a year when there is much to be proud of. We have recruited some 150,000 new members—a group the size of many small unions. We have taken action on countless local disputes.

On tax credits, we fought and won for our members and millions of other low paid workers. Without UNISON, many families would be thousands of pounds worse off.

We have mobilised our national union and marched on the streets of Manchester and Westminster against the Trade Union Bill. Our mobilisations, our campaigning and our ability to lobby and influence in Parliament and the Lords has persuaded the government to back down on some of its most mean-spirited proposals – in particular the plan to ban check-off, the payment method of choice for most of our members.

And through all the challenges, UNISON has shown that it will stand by its members and speak up for public services – whether it's on the picket line, in the negotiating room or in Parliament.

This report shows how much UNISON is doing to support members: representing them at work, bargaining on their behalf, taking legal cases, challenging government policy and developing campaigns, listening to our members views and finding new and powerful ways to speak up for them.

Unions are not here just for the good times. They were created to fight for working people in tough times. These are some of the hardest times we have known, but we can be proud of what we have achieved and ambitious for what we can do in future.

Now, more than ever, we need to stand together – proud of our union and proud of our members and the public services they provide.



Dave Prentis
General secretary



Wendy Nicholls
President

UNISON objectives 2016

After widespread consultation with representative lay bodies, the NEC agreed that the union's four key objectives for 2016 would be to:

This annual report is structured around the four objectives.

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.

Objective 2

Protect and secure fair pay and terms and conditions, high quality employment, and pensions for UNISON members, building confidence for industrial action when required. Promoting equality and challenging all forms of discrimination, including racism, supporting migrant workers, and promoting UNISON's alternative.

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.

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.

Objective 1: Recruiting and organising

Recruitment

- 1 In 2015 UNISON recruited 149,988 new members. There is continuing pressure on membership numbers as a result of the reduction in public sector jobs. This means that not only are we losing members as a direct result of job losses, but public sector employers are also recruiting fewer workers because of budget reductions, giving UNISON less chance to recruit new starters. Nevertheless UNISON has a recruitment rate of 12% of membership, while this still needs to increase, it compares favourably with previous years.
- 2 This has been achieved by the whole union working together. Activists and staff – including the army of fighting fund organisers – have worked to recruit and organise new members in the workplace. This has been supported by three phases of television, newspaper, digital and radio recruitment advertising to extend UNISON’s reach beyond our organised strongholds.
- 3 Nearly a third of all those joining UNISON come from the private, community and voluntary sector. Indeed the changes in net membership show that it is in the private community and voluntary sector workforce that UNISON membership is growing most strongly.
- 4 The government’s failure to train sufficient nurses has led to a shortage, which NHS trusts have tried to fill with migrants both from within and outside the EU. In addition to the organising campaigns supported by the strategic organising unit, work has also been done to recruit these overseas nurses into membership.
- 5 Around 60% of all new joiners join UNISON online. Many of these online joiners come into membership as a result of face-to-face approaches. But as the workforce in which UNISON organises becomes increasingly fragmented, many join because they see the need for a trade union even though UNISON is not active in their workplace. Building organisation with an increasingly fragmented workforce in membership is challenging and there has been a renewed emphasis on developing more activists. This in turn raises questions about how UNISON can encourage members to become more actively engaged with their union.

Recruitment marketing campaign

- 6 UNISON continues to be the only union in the UK to use widespread marketing – including television ads – to directly recruit new members to the union. In 2015, we ran three phases of activity in January/February, in May/June and in September/October. A total of 33,005 new members are attributed directly to the campaign. These new members will provide an additional £3,734,846 in income in the first year of membership.
 - 7 We continue to try new ways to promote the union and recruit new members, but television advertising continues to provide the largest response for the investment made. Digital advertising and “paid search” is cost effective and we have continued to run radio adverts in two target regions – Northern and North West.
 - 8 In the early part of 2016, we developed an updated television ad, newspaper adverts and digital banners to re-launch our advertising in May. As usual, the response rates will be carefully monitored to ensure that the new approach is as efficient or more than the current adverts.
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- The Big Heart UNISON Prize Draw*
- 9 Following on from the first UNISON DOCAS to Direct Debit switch campaign in the probation service we learnt some key lessons for the future.
 - 10 We were able to reach a large number of members and persuade them to switch using remote communications. Over half the switches followed directly on from a central communication (either email, a directly-mailed letter or a phone call). Given that remote contact is cheaper than face-to-face contact, any larger switch or engagement campaign should aim to maximise the outcome achieved by remote communication (whether that is from a branch, a region or the centre) while focusing our face-to-face resources where they are needed. This technique is likely to be particularly important where we have small clusters of members in fragmented workforces.
 - 11 However, our member data is currently focused on home addresses because this is what is needed for legal balloting. We have relatively few personal email addresses and fewer mobile phone numbers.

12 The Big Heart UNISON Prize Draw is the union's drive to increase that number – allowing us to contact more of our members quickly and cheaply, whether that's to persuade them to switch their payment method; encouraging them to vote in a ballot, or just finding out what they want from their union.

13 It will help the union to become more responsive to its members just when we need it most.

14 The prize draw offered big incentives (kindly provided free of charge to UNISON by our membership service affinity partners) to encourage members to enter by updating their email and mobile phone numbers. At the time of writing, some 100,000 members have entered and we have registered 20,000 new or updated emails and 25,000 new or updated mobile phone numbers.

15 The campaign also included branch incentives to encourage branches to mobilise their members to take part. Improving our data before a potential large-scale DOCAS to Direct Debit switch campaign is a key priority for the union, and we needed branches to engage with it to help us maximise its potential.

16 Branch prizes will be awarded during national delegate conference 2016.

Organising our membership

Activist development

17 Activism in UNISON is under attack from government austerity, firstly because many activists have lost their jobs in the cutback on public sector jobs, and secondly because of the assault on facility time. This has left many activists finding it increasingly difficult to represent members.

18 We need to increase membership engagement and encourage more members to become active. Recognising that asking members to become shop stewards can be daunting, we have developed an online volunteering programme called Team UNISON, allowing members to volunteer their skills at a level they feel comfortable with. The programme was developed last year and is ready for launch this year.

19 Developing activists is central to organising across the whole of UNISON. The strategic organising unit (SOU) has been working with regions in specific areas such as the care sector, with Four Seasons and Care UK, and in the private sector, with Capita, Carillion, Sodexo and Steria, and in each of these areas the

emphasis has been on developing new activists as the key to good organising.

20 The aim going forwards is to work together with colleagues in LAOS and the regions to use the lessons learned to help improve our practice in developing and training new activists. This needs to go hand in hand with encouraging greater membership engagement.

Fragmentation of public services; the care sector

21 Employment in the care sector continues to grow. The overwhelming majority of care provision is from the private and voluntary sector. The provision of care for some of the most vulnerable members of society turns out to be attractive for private equity firms looking for high rates of return.

22 Four Seasons remains UNISON's most successful organising campaign so far. The only private sector employer where we have more members is British Gas. Currently members of the SOU are working with the private companies unit (PCU) and regions to ensure that our organisation in Four Seasons is sustainable. There are two aspects to this. Firstly, the development and support for activists so that they can be directly involved in negotiations with the employer through the national forum. Secondly there is a need to ensure that the membership is properly catered for in the branches they are allocated to. There is no "one-size-fits-all" solution with different regions using different models of branch allocation depending on what works best for them. For instance in the West Midlands all the members have been put in a single Four Seasons branch, while in London they have all been placed in a single community health branch, and then in other regions the membership has been dispersed across a number of different branches.

23 The situation is complicated by the sale and closure of some of the less profitable homes by Four Seasons. Current patterns of ownership by private equity firms at a time when local authority funding is under pressure mean that closures and changes in ownership are inevitable as these firms seek to maximise profit.

24 The same changing pattern of operation is evident in Care UK, which has moved out of mental health, learning disabilities and domiciliary care, so that 400 of our members employed by Care UK in these areas now work for other private providers. Meanwhile Care UK have been given the contract to provide community health services in some prisons. UNISON has been working to support members affected by the transfer. Care UK continues to refuse to recognise UNISON.

25 Likewise BUPA has sold its residential care arm. The care sector is a dynamic area, which remains important to UNISON, not least because UNISON members believe this should primarily be about the provision of high quality care and not just profit.

Fragmentation of public services; the private sector

26 Over the last year, UNISON has focused on organising in four private companies; Capita, Carillion, Sodexo and Steria. The focus has been on building the activist base within these employers. The spread of members is not even across the country, and membership in each of the companies has fluctuated as they have lost contracts, outsourced work to other contractors and won new contracts.

27 Targets are being reviewed as part of the annual target-setting process in consultation with the regions and PCU. Progress to date has been stronger with organising members in Carillion in the south, principally in Nottingham, Oxford and Swindon. While more progress has been made in the North with members in Sodexo in Manchester and Wythenshawe. Both these companies provide soft services.

28 Capita is leading the provision of shared services in local government and work has been done to develop our membership there in Southampton and Warrington. Steria works in both the police and justice service and the Environment Agency, but membership organisation here has been slower reflecting the slower than anticipated growth of the company in the UK.

29 The aim across the four companies has been to develop a model similar to that in Four Seasons, that is to say a centrally-coordinated forum giving workers a real voice with the employer at national level. This requires not just new members, but also the development of activists with the confidence to be involved in a national forum.

Fragmentation of public services: reaching out

30 The UNISON Organising Space now has in excess of 1,700 registered users. It provides a library of resources relating to organising and an opportunity for activists to exchange information about their organising experiences. The Space is there to promote best practice and can be accessed through My UNISON.

31 Members can also keep in touch with what is going on through the UNISON Organising app. The app provides a mobile-friendly resource and is regularly updated.

32 In addition to developing the virtual organising space UNISON is also developing new physical organising spaces in the form of shop-front/ resource centres. Eastern region has identified three sites for UNISON branch resource centres. Two will be shop-front centres and one will be in a hospital. These will be run cooperatively by a number of branches on an open access basis. The aim is to ensure they become active organising spaces which are used by members working in the fragmented workforce as well as branch members working for the main public sector employer.

Organising in the outsourced private sector

33 Work is ongoing to improve our organisation in the outsourced private sector. This year, we have held co-ordinating meetings with all regions and staff from the national private contractors unit (PCU) and the strategic organising unit (SOU). Regions have been asked to provide organising/work plans on how they intend to develop a more democratic and effective organisation for our private contractor members.

34 A national private contractors seminar attended by over 100 delegates to discuss the project and to make recommendations on what further steps need to be taken to deliver the project's objectives. The seminar was held in November 2015. The seminar agreed that it would be premature to set up a private contractors' service group, but that national company forums should be set up for the 13 national target private companies and a general forum to accommodate UNISON stewards working for non-target companies. The company forums will co-ordinate bargaining and organising activity within each company. An overarching private contractors forum comprised of representatives from each of the company forums would have a strategic overview of all private contractor activity. It was recommended that this body should be given rights similar to those afforded to the self-organised groups and the national young members forum to submit two motions and amendments to national delegate conference and to the service group conferences. The NEC has submitted appropriate rule amendments for discussion at the 2016 NDC.

35 It was agreed that private contractor targets are included in the national organising planning cycle, in regional plans and that branches identify their own private contractor targets in joint branch assessments. Regions should review how private contractor members can best be organised within branches and how they should be allocated to branches to enable more effective participation.

36 The union will aim to develop an activist training strategy that addresses the needs of private contractor members.

Membership

Full membership of UNISON at 31 December 2015: 1,239,750 - this does not include retired members.

Membership by UNISON region	2014 Full members	2015 Full members
Eastern	76,250	76,650
East Midlands	89,250	86,750
Greater London	118,750	117,400
Northern	79,250	78,000
Northern Ireland	35,750	38,500
North West	184,250	183,050
Scotland	150,500	150,000
South East	101,250	99,900
South West	82,250	79,050
Wales	94,250	92,200
West Midlands	114,750	111,850
Yorkshire & Humberside	127,750	126,400
Total	1,254,250	1,239,750

Activist training and education

37 A total of 3,202 new stewards were appointed in 2015 of which 57% were women. Comparison with 2014 shows that there was an 18% increase in the appointment of new stewards during 2015. The total number of new stewards trained during 2015, including reps appointed prior to 2015, was 2,598 and 56% of these were women.

38 Over 200 steward induction courses ran during 2015. All regions and nations continue to build flexibility into their core course delivery programme. Most now run a mixture of five days across five weeks, three and two-day blocks, two to three days with homework tasks (this is normally blended or online activity) as well as the traditional five-day block. This flexibility has also been applied to the health and safety and union learning rep courses.

39 In line with motion 6, *Meeting the training needs of UNISON activists in challenging times*, agreed at 2015 national delegate conference, learning and organising services (LAOS) has tailored and developed training materials, including blended learning and online

resources, aimed at attracting more activists and increasing the number of trained stewards particularly in the private and community sectors and from non-recognised workplaces. LAOS has worked closely with the strategic organising unit and regions to develop new activists in the prioritised private sector employers, notably Four Seasons, Care UK, Capita, Carillion, Sodexo and Steria.

40 The online steward's induction course was reviewed and re-launched at the beginning of 2016 and LAOS now organises this training, coordinating with branches and regions and demand has increased. We expect 80 stewards to have completed the training by the end of 2016; most of whom will be from the private and community and voluntary service sectors. There has been an improved rate of participants completing the course.

41 There remain a significant number of new stewards who do not attend the induction training within one year of being appointed, and there are also a significant number of contacts who remain outside our training provision. UNISON will continue to examine the reasons for this and introduce initiatives to encourage these activists to attend training and play a greater role in the union, the initiatives include; reviewing how we publicise and promote training, running "union role" taster sessions at conferences and regional events, ongoing mentoring training for staff and branch experienced activists.

42 A number of e-notes and workshops have been reviewed and developed to support branch officer roles, notably an e-note for branch education officers and a pre-union learning rep e-note to encourage activists to take up the role. The new steward's e-note, which is sent to all stewards where we have email address within one month of being appointed, has received positive feedback and is proving useful. New courses include Branch Secretary Leadership and Finance and the Organised Branch, and Equalities in your Branch.

43 LAOS has continued to offer regional and branch training on responding to procurement and privatisation threats. These include 'deconstruction' workshops that allow branches to forensically analyse privatisation proposals to test for bias and viability. The workshop also includes strategic planning to meet the threat. A TUPE workshop has also been developed to be used where procurement leads to outsourcing.

44 A course on defending facility time was successfully piloted in the South East; a further module has been developed on using legal protections to allow for representation in workplaces where the union is not

recognised. Both these courses are available for roll out across all regions and nations.

45 New service group-specific courses include working with the pensions unit to develop training for pensions champions within the NHS. The re-launch of pensions champions took place at the 2016 health conference. We are working to develop training for reps and staff to improve organising and campaigning activity in this area.

46 As part of the strategy to increase the number of activists, work with self-organised and young member groups at regional and national level continues. This year, the seminars and workshops at national women's conference 2016 were dedicated to learning. LAOS organised and facilitated workshops on *Power to Be You* – confidence skills; *ABC to the OU* (showcasing Dementia Awareness workshops); *The Power of the ULR* (which promoted the importance of union learning reps to branches); *Progression and Leadership in UNISON*; *Influencing the Decision Makers* (a political education workshop which looked a ways to talk to power); and *Women's Lives* (promoting revised course materials with a more political view of women's issues including the fight of the suffragettes).

47 Working with the national young members group, a *Confidence Skills* course was developed targeting young women members to encourage them to become more active in the union. The course was oversubscribed with 18 participants and will run again in the autumn. Some 11 members expressed an interest in attending the young member's weekend.

Future trade union funding for activist education

48 In line with current UNISON policy, delivery of activists' education for the core courses has been under review in order to meet the changing environment that we have operated in since 2010. From August 2016 no trade union education will be fully funded via the further education funding formula. The TUC has made provision for limited funding to continue a programme of delivery until August 2017 that will be based on minimal numbers attending, charges will apply where minimal numbers are not met. The TUC is also developing an alternative online version of their 10-day steward's course.

49 All regions, other than Scotland and the Northern region, use TUC tutors to deliver the core activists courses such as new stewards, health & safety and ULR training. Over the last year the number of organisers trained and delivering core courses has increased. Given the likelihood of continuing cuts to FE

college funding, UNISON will have to consider not only how we deliver but how we fund delivery.

Political education

50 LAOS has continued to develop resources and workshops to support UNISON's campaigns and objectives, including workshops for branches raising awareness of the Trade Union Bill. Following the success of the *Voting Matters* timeline, the resource has been adapted to encourage activists and members to engage in activities for the elections in May 2016, including the Police and Crime Commissioner elections. Postcards have been developed to encourage members to make sure that they are registered to vote and to make a difference in elections.

Member development and learning to support organising

51 The member learning programme continues to support a number of learning and development projects that help transform thousands of our members' lives by providing opportunities for them to develop their skills and knowledge base and has proven to be a successful platform for recruiting new members and new activists.

52 The UNISON bursary scheme supported 113 members during 2015 studying for a higher education qualification.

53 Thousands of members across the UK have attended member learning and training events ranging from taster sessions on maths, workshops run by the Open University and courses such as Return to Learn run by the WEA. Recorded numbers for members participating in member learning events and training were: Scotland 1009; Cymru/Wales 135 learners took part in eight regionally-organised member development courses; Northern Ireland 1,686 and in England over 1,800. There are 2,306 learners registered on the *unison.learning* website which covers both activist and member education, 705 of these learners completed the new stewards e-note and 807 enrolled on the ULRnet section.

54 Regionally delivered *Pathways into UNISON* courses have continued to be funded from LAOS over the last 12 months. Courses have been delivered in Northern Ireland, East Midlands and Cymru/Wales, with further courses planned in the autumn. These courses have recruited learners from membership development courses and have been successful in identifying new activists, including stewards, health and safety reps and union learning reps.

55 Our work with the education team over the year to support learning for members in schools and to develop learning offers targeted to this group of members has gone from strength to strength. We have produced an e-note for members working in schools, providing guidance on supporting the administration of drugs, which has proven very popular.

56 Working with the health care service group we will be releasing an e-note providing advice to members in the health and care sectors about the Care Certificate.

57 Our partnerships with the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) and the Open University continue to bring free and flexible learning opportunities to members across the UK.

58 Our workshops, *Your Skills Your Future*, *Facing Change Together* and *Making the Most of the Internet* continue to be very popular over 30 of these workshops ran during 2015. These workshops have now been successfully incorporated into a number of regional member learning programmes, giving regions and branches new opportunities to engage and support members and build activism. A shortened version of *Your Skills Your Future* has been adapted for use by Polish-speaking members and it has also been run nationally with the Filipino network. Regions have been experimenting with flexible forms of delivery and the workshop is also available online as an e-note.

59 There were 14 *Return to Learn* or *Women's Lives* courses organised in 2015, attended by 120 women. The weekend school *Making a Difference*, designed to encourage members to become more active in the union and the community, has proved a popular progression route for students from these courses. The *Women's Lives* course has been revised to improve relevance to current political and employment issues and was showcased along with our broader offer at this year's women's conference in February.

60 The model of one-day workshops run by the Open University, successfully piloted in several regions with our *Dementia Awareness* workshop, has been extended to cover *Behaviour Management* (for school staff), *Mental Health Awareness* and *Autism Awareness* for all members. A total of 36 workshops were organised in 2015, these workshops are not designed to replace employers' training programmes, but give members increased confidence around workplace issues and encourage learning progression. Many are run in partnership with employers using in-house facilities and with time off for participants.

61 LAOS produced two new toolkits for ULRs, lifelong learning coordinators, branch education coordinators,

area organisers and anyone else who has an interest in promoting learning in the workplace. *Read Anytime Anywhere* incorporates case studies and ideas on how to run literacy initiatives such as Reading Ahead in the workplace. It has ideas for using Quick Reads, setting up reading groups and follow on ideas. *Making Every Penny Count* offers learner-friendly activities that can be run independently or in longer sessions.

Union Learning Fund

62 With support of the Union Learning Fund (ULF) our engagement with branches and employers continues to grow, enabling us to reach members and potential members that otherwise we would struggle to interact with. During 2015, over 500 dissemination and networking events took place in England, Scotland and Cymru/Wales leading to interaction with approximately 30,000 participants. Over 12,000 learners have been supported or referred to other organisations.

63 In March, 80 union learning reps from across the country gathered at UNISON Centre for the *Learning changes lives, the power of the ULR* event. The day included discussions on supporting apprentices, an update from the director of Unionlearn, and workshops on a variety of subjects including using learning to organise in schools, confidence course taster and online learning.

Objective 2: Bargaining, negotiations and equalities

Key cross-cutting bargaining issues

64 Each service group produces their own annual report to their conference reporting on progress on sector-specific bargaining. Some issues run across several groups and are reported here.

Living wage/national living wage

65 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 most national pay claims and even where it has not been achieved, settlements have frequently provided extra increases for the lowest-paid staff. The campaign has also been taken up vigorously by many local branches to achieve improvements on national frameworks.

66 The campaign for the living wage was complicated in July 2015 by the government's announcements of the introduction of a "national living wage." In reality, this is a higher rate of the national minimum wage applicable only to workers aged 25 or over and is not calculated in a way that directly takes into account changes in the cost of living. In order to help dispel any confusion over the living wage and the new "national living wage", UNISON produced a leaflet, *The Real Living Wage*, for branches.

67 Over the summer of 2015, Freedom of Information requests on the living wage went out to all public sector employers in local government, NHS trusts, universities, further education colleges, sixth form colleges and police authorities. The 910 responses gave UNISON a comprehensive picture of living wage policy for directly-employed and contractor staff for the first time. It revealed that just over half of all public sector employers operating in UNISON's principal public sector bargaining groups pay at least the living wage to their lowest-paid staff, but just over 10% of public sector employers place some kind of commitment on the contractor to pay the living wage to their lowest-paid staff when a new contract is signed or a contract goes up for renewal. The results were distributed to service groups and regions to assist targeting of campaigns.

68 In September 2015, UNISON submitted written evidence entitled *Time for a Step Change* to the Low Pay Commission and gave oral evidence to the commission in November. The submission argued strongly for the national minimum wage to be raised in steps to the level of the living wage and made the case that the youth and apprentice tiers are a continuing injustice in the workplace. The commission also invited comments on the impact of the "national living wage" and our evidence set out the view that the target rate should be set at 60% of male median earnings to reduce the gender pay gap, government funding must be boosted to meet the cost to public services and a stricter enforcement package is needed to ensure compliance.

69 During Living Wage Week in November 2015, the new living wage rates of £9.40 an hour in London and £8.25 across the rest of the UK were announced. 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' Month and promoted the case for a statutory living wage through a petition that sought to show MPs the huge scale of support. A renewed push was also made among Catholic and Church of England schools to implement living wage framework agreement.

70 The Scottish living wage is now paid in all parts of the public sector in Scotland. New statutory guidance on workforce matters in procurement should provide a basis for extending the Scottish Living Wage to the private and voluntary care sector, although funding remains an issue. The accreditation initiative, funded by the Scottish government, has now signed up 500 employers – the highest proportion of any part of the UK.

71 In Cymru/Wales, the NHS Wales and Welsh further education colleges pay the living wage and UNISON participates in a Welsh government technical group on implementation of the living wage in local government.

Equality

72 We have continued to campaign for and promote 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.

73 Our campaign against the Trade Union Bill was a main feature of all our conference agendas and we have worked to take the campaign out to equality communities. As well as lobbying politicians about the damage the proposals would mean for workplace equality, we have engaged equality communities in our *We Heart UNISON* campaign. We are now engaged in the important task of encouraging members to update their personal information on the membership system as part of the union's Big Prize Draw initiative. Linked to this, membership records have been amended to allow members to add confidential LGBT monitoring information for the first time. There has been a strong take-up of this option and we encourage all members to add their information.

74 The devastating public spending cuts has continued to be a focus for the work of all self-organised groups, the 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. We are repeating the 2013 GPF-funded research into the impact of austerity on LGBT people to expose the true cost of Tory cuts on individuals, communities and specialist LGBT services. We urge as many members as possible to respond to the research survey – whether you are LGBT yourself or not. If you deliver services to LGBT people, we want to know about your experiences.

75 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.

76 We continue to campaign on equal pay, participating in government roundtables and select committee work, while responding robustly to the government's consultation on the measures needed to close the gender pay gap, which remains stubbornly wide, even in the public sector.

77 We will continue to expose the true cost for our members' lives and make sure equality is at the heart of all our negotiations, demanding that employers consider the equality impact of cuts. The national disabled members' committee produced *Celebrating 20 years after the Disability Discrimination Act* setting out the key milestones and making the case for continued campaigning to improve the position of disabled people in society.

78 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. Retired members continue to work with the *Hands Off Universal Benefits* campaign to ensure that those benefits such as the winter fuel payments are protected for older people.

79 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.

80 We have continued to commit to ensuring 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/Unite Against Fascism, *Refugees welcome here: Stand up to racism, Islamophobia, anti-semitism and fascism* demo in March in Trafalgar square. Using our insight into the crucial role migrant workers play in delivering essential public services and the contribution they may to society we continue to challenge anti-migrant worker sentiment and provide support particularly through our migrant worker networks.

81 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 resources such as *Fairer pay for a strong economy* and *Campaigning, organising and negotiating for a living wage* to continue to persuade employers that the damaging effects of zero hours and casualisation of contracts must be tackled.

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

83 The long awaited results from the EHRC survey into pregnancy and maternity discrimination revealed, as expected, that women still experience harassment and discrimination in the workplace – with around 54,000 new mothers forced out of their jobs each year. The survey was the first in over 10 years, and was brought about by pressure from UNISON and others, as part of our work with the Alliance Against Pregnancy Discrimination.

84 Our work on ending violence against women continues, with our partnership working with the End Violence Against Women coalition of organisations in the sector.

85 We welcomed the far-reaching recommendations of a parliamentary inquiry into transgender equality, to which UNISON gave evidence. The recommendations include strengthening legislation protecting trans people and a “root and branch review” of NHS services for trans people, both specialist and mainstream. These are important recommendations and we continue to push for action to implement them. Some of the recommendations have little chance of success without a proper investment in public services.

86 The Young Workers Month in November is fast becoming an established part of the union calendar, with a year-on-year increase in activity being seen.

87 2015 saw a slight fall in young member recruitment over 2014, but an increase over the 2013 level, reflecting the overall union pattern of recruitment.

88 In February a very successful young women’s confidence skills course was piloted at the UNISON Centre with 18 participants, 11 of whom went on to register for UNISON’s young members’ weekend.

89 We continue with our political education work on targeted political engagement and voter registration. We have worked with a number of partner organisations including Operation Black Vote, Votes at 16, LGBT Labour, building towards the May 2016 elections. We have trained activists in having confident conversations with members about why it’s so important to vote and why all parties are not the same. We continue to encourage our activists to stand for political office.

90 All our equality groups have lent their intelligence to 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.

91 Recruitment and organisation remains at the heart of each of the self-organised group work programmes. The annual LGBT recruitment and organising awards now in their sixth year, celebrating success and innovation in bringing LGBT workers into UNISON. Retired members have successfully supported their working colleagues at branch level.

92 We continue to support bargaining with specialist equality advice and sharing of good agreements. We have used all our equality groups communication channels, including building and developing the use of social media, to spread the word about equality and UNISON’s campaigns.

93 We have reviewed a number of the unions training courses and are in the process of developing a generalist equality training package. We have also had the fourth round of national branch LGBT officer training, with well over 100 activists now trained and active in branches. We continue to develop and issue guidance for branches on equalities and self-organisation.

94 Work continues on 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.

Bargaining Support

95 Over the last year, Bargaining Support has focused on reworking the range of guidance available to branches to move toward more concise advice providing public service benchmarks and model policies of practical assistance in achieving the best possible deal for members in terms of both pay and conditions of employment.

96 Core updates on economic developments, particularly in the key fields of pay settlements and cost of living rises, have increasingly been incorporated into pay claims across the union, giving greater consistency to the union’s national and local claims.

97 As part of the campaign against the 1% public sector pay cap, research was commissioned from the Smith Institute that resulted in the publication of the report *From Pay Squeeze to Staffing Crisis*. Publicity gained from the report exposed the damage caused to services by the pay cap and highlighted the widespread expectation of acute recruitment and retention across the public sector if the cap is maintained.

98 UNISON continued to lead the defence of the Retail Prices Index as the most accurate measure of changes in the cost of living facing workers. Our submission to the UK Statistics Authority’s consultation on *Measuring Consumer Prices* built on the statistical analysis developed in co-operation with Dr Mark Courtney, which has provided the intellectual basis for challenging the drive toward using the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) as the standard measure of inflation. The campaign has also been taken forward with the TUC to minimise the threat from increasing use of CPI as a benchmark for wage increases.

99 Over the year, new guidance has been brought out on emerging issues, such as the introduction of shared

parental leave, rulings on holiday pay and treatment of travel time as working time, the increasing use of volunteers in the workplace and responding to the roll-out of the Prevent Duty as part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act. In addition, new model agreements have been made available on whistleblowing, grievance procedures and organisational change such as internal restructuring, mergers and transfers.

100 Revised guidance has been published on facility time to offer greater assistance with fighting against cuts and coping with the effects of reductions, as well as guidance on unsocial hours, annual leave, working hours and sick pay that offer benchmark data for negotiations.

Public procurement

101 UNISON has continued its campaign against privatisation and the mutualisation of public services this year. Scotland and England, Wales and Northern Ireland have devolved procurement regulations but all have to conform to European Union regulations.

102 New guidance on the UK Public Contract Regulations 2015 has been provided for branches. The new guidance *How your Branch can stop Outsourcing and Protect Members – our step-by-step guide to campaigning and negotiating around procurement* is online on the UNISON website and sits within a wider hub of information for members to access useful information on key aspects of commissioning and procurement.

103 The new guidance offers branches details of the new rules and checklists of activities, negotiations and communications at each stage of the procurement process. Using the guidance branches can influence procurement outcomes, aim to keep public services in-house or ensure that in the event of outsourcing, their employer uses the new rules which allow for a more socially-responsible procurement approach.

104 UNISON has also this year continued to work jointly with service groups, regions, public sector alliances in the UK and with brother and sister trade unions in the TUC, ETUC, EPSU and PSI on a variety of key procurement issues, raising awareness, concerns and joint campaigning:

- Promoting the use of the Social Value Act 2012 and the new beneficial social provisions in the new EU procurement regulations
- Highlighting concerns in response to the Welsh

government's plans for public services in Wales to be turned into non-profit organisations as an alternative to public services when outsourced

- Working with the UNISON local government co-operative councils network, Social Enterprise UK and the Co-operative Business Movement to promote joint working agreements on co-operative public services
- Writing a strong case to maintain FOI to enable transparency in commissioning and procurement of public services and successfully getting the FOI Commission to back down in December 2015 on proposals to reduce public service FOI rights
- Researching and preparing new branch guidance on the government's new Procurement Information Notice (March 2016) aimed at restricting public sector bodies in applying ethical procurement practices
- Sharing information and campaigning strategy with EPSU and PSI on the increasing threat of global Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) to fund public services (health, social care, prisons, probation and education) and the £1 billion SIB market emerging in the UK
- Protecting of the enforcement of labour standards, health and safety regulations and collective bargaining in public procurement within the EU constitutional and internal market frameworks and the new global trade treaties such as TTIP, CETA and TISA
- Campaigning against the EU Commission's 'REFIT' and 'better regulation' programme to ensure they don't damage social rights and ensure that that higher standards in some countries will not be undermined by convergence

105 UNISON will continue campaigning on these key public procurement issues next year and in particular UNISON will be engaging with the EU Commission on the new Social Rights Pillar initiative and the review of the Posted Workers Enforcement Directive to ensure the best protection for public sector workers is guaranteed.

Pay and terms and conditions developments

Local government

106 The local government service group carried out negotiations in the following sectors over the past year: Food Standards Agency, Care Quality Commission, NJC (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), SJC (Scotland), youth and community workers (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), chief officers (England and Wales). SJC pay is negotiated by paid and lay officials in Scotland. Many school staff continue to be covered by NJC negotiations.

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

- A further £7 billion cuts from the revenue support grant to councils in England by 2019/20 and increased cuts in the other UK nations
- Increased costs to councils and contractors through the “national living wage”; price inflation; the apprentice levy; the growing elderly population and increased national insurance contributions, amounting to £797 million in local government alone
- The government’s 1% public sector pay limit.

108 Devastating cuts to local authority budgets since 2010 have had a massive impact on the pay, terms and conditions of the local government workforce. By 2015/16 English councils faced average cuts of 37%, with many faring far worse than that. Coupled with further privatisation and widespread re-organisations, NJC employees were pushed even further to the bottom of the public sector pile in terms of pay and conditions. This was evidenced by the fact that many NJC workers’ fell below the new national minimum wage rate of £7.20 – well below the real living wage.

109 Very few councils now adhere to the conditions in the Green Book collective agreement. Most have cut unsocial hours payments and NJC car allowances, which are now largely paid at HMRC rates. Annual leave, sick pay and parental rights are all under attack. The majority of the NJC workforce – part-time workers – are facing cuts in hours and increased workloads to compensate for the 500,000 jobs lost from councils. Where school-based employees have managed to keep payment for holidays and retainer payments, there are renewed attempts to move them on to term-time working – resulting in pay cuts of over 25% in

some cases. Reorganisations are frequently resulting in larger workloads, without re-evaluation of jobs to ensure ‘the rate for the job’ and equal pay.

110 At the time of writing, 64% of members responding to our consultation have rejected a two-year NJC pay offer of 1% for 60% of employees and a front-loaded offer of up to 10% for the lower paid as a move towards the predicted level of the national minimum wage by 2020. The offer also includes a joint review of term-time working. The NJC committee has requested an industrial action ballot, meanwhile negotiations are ongoing.

111 A two-year offer for 2016-2018 of 1% on basic salary and a commitment to joint guidance on workloads and stress for 2016-2018 for chief officers was accepted by 80% of members, while consultation is ongoing over the 2016 pay claim for youth and community workers.

112 In the Food Standards Agency, a 1% 2015/16 offer on basic pay and holiday pay on non-contractual overtime was accepted by 68% of members.

113 In the Care Quality Commission, a 1% basic pay offer was also accepted by members, although a dispute has been lodged over allocation of the non-consolidated pay ‘pot’.

114 In Scotland, 88% of UNISON members voted in September 2015 to accept a pay offer for 2015/16 - 2016/17 of the living wage of £7.85 plus 1.5% for the first year and the up-rated living wage plus 1% in the second year.

115 In Cymru/Wales local government restructuring is on the horizon and, UNISON has been lobbying Welsh government, the Welsh Local Government Association and, the newly-created Public Services Staff Commission to pursue a one-Wales approach to future pay and grading reviews to ensure commonality and equity across the new merged councils when they are eventually created.

Health

NHS pay

116 The NHS Pay Review Body (PRB) recommended a 1% consolidated pay increase for all NHS staff on Agenda for Change contracts across the whole UK. The PRB also recommended that high cost area supplement minimum and maximum thresholds should also be raised by 1%, and stated all that staff below the

top of their Agenda for Change pay band should continue to be eligible for incremental pay progression. This was the maximum the PRB could award within the public sector pay cap set by the UK government. The PRB also rejected all government calls for targeting the pay award at only some members of staff.

117 Although the PRB recommendation is the same for all staff, implementing the award is the responsibility of the four UK governments so there are slightly different outcomes.

England

118 The government has announced it accepts in full all Pay Review Body (PRB) recommendations. This means a 1% pay increase for all Agenda for Change staff. That means all basic pay, as well as rates for additional entitlements such as unsocial hours, will increase by 1%. High cost area supplement minimum and maximum thresholds will also be raised by 1%.

Scotland

119 The government in Scotland has announced it accepts in full all PRB recommendations. This means a 1% pay increase for all Agenda for Change staff.

120 Additionally, staff earning under £22,000 will also receive an additional sum to increase their pay by at least £400. The result of this is all staff in Scotland will earn at least the living wage, as set by the Living Wage Foundation.

121 UNISON is also leading on negotiations aimed at moving all staff currently on AfC Band 1 onto Band 2.

Cymru/Wales

122 The government in Cymru/Wales has announced it accepts in full all PRB recommendations. This means a 1% pay increase for all Agenda for Change staff.

123 Additionally, staff on pay points below the equivalent of the living wage (as set by the Living Wage Foundation) will receive a top-up sum so the NHS in Wales remains a living wage employer.

Northern Ireland

124 The Northern Ireland executive has announced it accepts in full all PRB recommendations. However, the executive has not restored pay lost as a result of pay freezes in 2014/15 and 2015/16. At time of writing UNISON health branches are being consulted.

Agenda for Change refresh talks

125 As part of the settlement of the dispute in 2015 in England, UNISON also agreed that talks would be held with NHS Employers on the balance between pay structure, progression and the annual pay uplift. The staff council agreed that these talks would be a broad 'refresh' of agenda for change, although discussion of the pay structure and progression would be the initial priority. With the Conservative party victory in the general election in 2015 and the subsequent budget announcements of 1% public sector pay cap between 2016 and 2020, securing additional money for members through structural change will be challenging. UNISON has been keen to use the talks to improve the pay structure and to explore ways of returning to UK-wide pay scales in the NHS.

Unsocial hours

126 The Conservative Party made the 'seven day NHS' a key manifesto pledge in the general election in 2015, and UNISON health group made defending unsocial hours payments a key priority.

127 In July 2015, the NHS Pay Review Body (PRB) released recommendations on the 'barriers and enablers' to extending seven-day services. UNISON had given detailed written and oral evidence to this round of evidence and was pleased to welcome the PRB's judgement that there was no evidence that wholesale change to the Agenda for Change unsocial hours' payment system was needed. The health group produced briefings for branches explaining the recommendations of the PRB and encouraging reps to make members aware of UNISON's role in successfully defending unsocial hours payments, while warning against complacency.

128 The Secretary of State for Health sparked a dispute with medical staff following an announcement that he intended to impose a new contract on junior doctors working in England. The health group encouraged members to support subsequent industrial action taken by junior doctors and is continuing to work with other NHS trade unions to show solidarity and support for the BMA.

NHS staff council

129 UNISON held the chair of the NHS staff council following the annual general meeting. The health group continued to meet with UNISON's lay delegation ahead of council and executive meetings. The health group continued to contribute to the work of the council sub-groups, including the job evaluation group,

the health, safety and wellbeing partnership group, and the working longer review group.

130 Other work of the council included the Agenda for Change “refresh” work, with two full staff side meetings during this period used as workshops to agree negotiating priorities.

NHS redundancy provisions

131 Employers had requested further talks through the staff council on changes to section 16 of the AfC agreement. After making good progress initially, the NHS trade unions pulled out of the negotiations following the announcement by the Westminster government of a package of legislation on public sector exit payments which seek to undermine the provisions of the collective Agenda for Change agreement in England.

Threats to Agenda for Change

132 The health group provided advice and support as required to branches and regions facing threats to Agenda for Change and - aside from one active case – the union has been successful in preventing employers from moving away from Agenda for Change terms.

NHS Pension Scheme

133 UNISON continued to hold seats on the main NHS Pension Scheme governance structures and their associated subgroups in 2015/16. This includes the NHS Pension Scheme board which is responsible for ensuring compliance with the scheme regulations and the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) which makes recommendations to the Secretary of State on the desirability of scheme changes.

Other terms and conditions

134 The health group continued to provide advice to branches faced with organisational change. This included promoting the UNISON Agenda for Change Annex X guidance and working with UNISON’s Learning and Organising Services department to develop an online learning resource that assists UNISON representatives faced with workforce re-profiling exercises.

Other policy issues.

135 The health group has continued to produce advice to branches and members on a number of key policy and professional issues including safe staffing levels, re-validation for nursing staff and training and development of healthcare assistants. After the government announced it would be removing the NHS bursary for nursing and associated healthcare professionals in England, UNISON has mounted a major campaign against this, working in association with the NUS, other trade unions and our student members.

Education

Higher education

136 The 2015/16 pay settlement saw a bottom-loaded pay increase, from 2.65% to 1.1% for the bottom 8 spinal column points with 1% for the remaining pay points. For those working a 35 hour week this equated to an hourly rate of £7.85: the living wage at that time. Continued joint working was agreed to explore pay-related inequality problems such as zero hours contracts and the gender pay gap. Both working groups published reports in July 2015. UNISON members voted 75% in favour of the pay offer, while other unions went to dispute, but then finally noted the offer in the autumn.

137 A joint trade union claim for 2016/17 was lodged in March 2016. The first pay meeting of national negotiating body to consider the joint TU pay claim is due to take place on 22 March 2015.

Schools

138 Most schools staff remain covered by national bargaining (NJC and SJC) systems however some academies in England have moved to local bargaining, for which we produced a model pay claim (based on the NJC claim) for branches and regions to use. Our living wage in schools campaign continued to grow with agreements covering over 50% of school employers across the UK, including some of the largest national multi academy trusts in England.

139 Budget cuts and freezes in funding across the UK have meant an increase in cuts to jobs and services in schools, which UNISON is focused on campaigning against.

140 In response to the government’s announcement in March 2016 that it intends to force all schools in

England to become academies by 2022 UNISON has focused on the strategic support that it can give to branches. New academy pages have been created on the UNISON website with specific resources for branches to use for organising in academies and for campaigning to defend local schools. We have begun working with the other education unions and a wider alliance of campaigning organisations, parents and governors to campaign against the forced academies policy.

141 In Cymru/Wales, from April 2016 classroom-based support staff in schools and colleges in Wales must register with the Education Workforce Council (formerly the General Teaching Council for Wales). Since September 2015 the Cymru/Wales region has launched an exciting organising and awareness-raising project with the aim of recruiting new members, activists and assuring UNISON's place as the leading union for school and college support staff in Wales.

FE colleges

142 The Association of Colleges made a 0% pay offer for 2015/16 with no commitments to paying a living wage; although they did recommend that local colleges could make a pay award if they were able to. UNISON wrote to colleges inviting them to make an additional award. Some colleges did so, but those that did not respond to our letter, responded negatively or made an offer not acceptable to members, were included in a national dispute. UNISON balloted members at the start of 2016, with members voting 2 to 1 in favour of strike action and 4 to 1 in favour of action short of a strike action. Consequently a one-day strike was held along with UCU (who had previously taken a one-day strike in the autumn of 2015) on the 24 February 2016. While there was strong support for the strike in some colleges, the overall action across the country was patchy. UNISON's FE committee were prepared to take further action. However the UCU FE committee decided not to take any further action and in this light UNISON also decided not to pursue further industrial action and to begin discussions on next year's claim. The FE & sixth form committee are planning joint campaigning activities on pay around the launch of a claim for 2016/17, to keep up the momentum.

143 In Cymru/Wales FE colleges, UNISON has continued to have some success in winning pay rises for members and this year is no exception. The employers' body Colegau Cymru, has made a 1% pay offer, which UNISON is consulting on.

National FE bargaining in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

144 UNISON Scotland reached the first-ever national agreement for FE staff and began moving towards new national bargaining through the establishment of a new national joint negotiating committee. The agreement included a consolidated uplift for all employees of either 1% or £300, whichever was the greater. All directly-employed staff will receive the living wage. The management side is committed to securing living wage accreditation for all colleges by the end of 2016, a 35-hour week with no loss of earnings, a minimum of 27 days annual leave for all and two extra days for all. Employers and trade unions have also committed to negotiate a new single pay structure and new single set of conditions of service for all staff.

145 UNISON had a seat on a ministerial taskforce on governance which reported in March 2016. Among the recommendations will be a consultation on trade union seats on boards and the implementation of a staff governance standard which sets minimum levels for trade union engagement and individual employee rights in the workplace. The UNISON FE sector committee held a very successful policy seminar in Edinburgh in March 2016, including a political hustings for the 2016 Scottish Parliament elections which saw a wide-ranging debate on major issues in the sector.

146 In Cymru/Wales the joint trade unions submitted a pay claim for an increase of £1 per hour and a number of non-pay elements. The unions received an offer from the college employers of 1% which we are in the process of consulting on. UNISON is consulting all members by postal ballot, with results expected at the end of April. UNISON is arguing that the living wage should be up-rated across Wales for directly-employed staff as it was linked to the previous agreement for an all-Wales contract.

147 In Northern Ireland, UNISON forced the employer's organisation the Association of NI Colleges of Further Education, to include reference to NJC terms and conditions in the recent pay settlement for support services staff. The employers have been seeking to introduce regional pay and conditions.

148 UNISON also made representations to the employers requesting that the Department of Culture and Leisure advises the Department of Finance that pay audits are not a prerequisite for payment of NJC awards.

Sixth form colleges

149 Members voted to accept the 2015/16 pay offer of a 0.9% increase on the pay spine, the new scales applying from 1 September 2014. The agreement included additional increases for the lowest paid, which increased the cost of the award to 1% of pay bill. The settlement also included an agreement to review the national pay spine and pay and grading arrangements in colleges. The review will report its conclusions in 2016.

150 In March 2016 the Department for Education announced that sixth form colleges could apply to become academies as part of the area review process. Preliminary guidance was sent to colleges on the potential implications for staff.

Energy

151 UNISON was for the first time able to run a specific utilities pay 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. Its purpose was to enable trained reps prepare and negotiate on pay in this challenging arena. We have also continued to deliver the negotiating skills course for reps which has been running successfully for a number of years and is again often oversubscribed.

152 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. We have facilitated and secured agreements between the Living Wage Foundation and both Centrica/ British Gas and National Grid and have held round table meetings with Eon and EDF. SSE were already signatories.

153 On the wider pay front, UNISON has continued to secure 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 although the exception to this was in Northern Powergrid where members were forced into taking industrial action to deliver an improved offer for office-based staff. UNISON played an active role in securing this improvement.

154 Pay highlights included members in Western Power Distribution who received an increase of 2.5% (regulated) while members in EON received 2%, British Gas 2.1% and SSE 2.3% linked to performance (retail) and G4S 1.7% (field-meter reading).

155 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 that in some cases have seen executives earning packages in excess of £1 million.

156 UNISON has been active in defending members' pension provision in the energy sector. A key highlight was the success the union achieved with EDF in securing a defined benefit pension for new starters in contact centres. We continue to profile pensions as a key industrial issue within energy and again ran a successful utilities-specific pension seminar looking at key issues affecting member pensions.

157 Government energy policy combined with market developments have in the past year led to a round of major announcements around jobs losses. The biggest was in Centrica, the owner of British Gas, who announced that 6,000 jobs would be lost over the next few years. The announcement by npower that 2500 jobs would be lost received national coverage in which UNISON was prominent in raising its concerns. UNISON is working with many employers in the sector to mitigate against losses and to avoid compulsory redundancy where possible.

158 A major and continuing 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."

159 This principle has far-reaching consequences in respect of what workers should be paid when they take holiday from work. The case has also been referenced in subsequent decisions including the influential Bear v Scotland case which looked at overtime. The case returned to the UK and was heard by the employment tribunal who ruled in our favour, this decision was appealed by British Gas and subsequently a further employment tribunal appeal was also won by UNISON although British Gas have been given leave to appeal this. We continue to have a

large number of cases registered on the back of this ruling and we did recruit many new members. We are in active dialogue with British Gas to find an appropriate settlement that will be acceptable to claimants and the wider workforce. The case we fought is changing the industrial landscape and a number of utility employers are reaching agreements with us to reform holiday pay arrangements and make offers of backdated payments. Examples of this include National Grid, UK PN, WPD and Eon.

160 Within energy 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. UNISON attended the COP21 climate change talks in Paris in December 2015 as part of a small EPSU delegation linked into the wider ITUC group. The main objective was to ensure that an agreement was reached which addressed climate change but also ensured a 'just transition' for workers affected, many of whom work in the energy sector. An agreement was reached and although we did not get 'just transition' referenced in the main agreement it was given prominence in the wider supporting text.

Water, Environment and Transport (WET)

161 UNISON's profile in the water industry has been boosted by the continuing hard work of water industry sector committee members and UNISON activists on the *Making waves for a living wage* campaign. Thousands of low-paid workers will get a significant pay rise as a result of the campaign which launched with a Parliamentary event in April. The union has also campaigned for workers in the industry to have access to a fair pension on retirement. The excellent work done by United Utilities Branch to stop their employer from closing the defined benefit scheme shows that our union understands the concerns of people working in the industry.

162 This year UNISON has campaigned hard to make sure that politicians and key decision makers know the value of Environment Agency staff and that the organisation has already been cut to the bone in terms

of staffing numbers. Through negotiations, press releases, engagement with shadow ministers and online campaigning the union has ensured the key issue of staff numbers has remained uppermost in DEFRA ministers minds. It should also be noted that this year UNISON's EA activists finally achieved their objective of making the Environment Agency a living wage employer. This will benefit many low-paid workers and ensure that nobody providing services for the Agency is paid poverty wages. UNISON also led negotiations on pay reform in the Environment Agency securing a positive deal for our members.

163 In the Passenger Transport Executive sector, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) had been on the verge of leaving the Passenger Transport Forum in 2015, but UNISON persuaded the organisation to pause its exit and get involved in improving the forum's terms of reference. At the start of March 2016 we finally got the news we had all been hoping for – TfGM would be remaining in the forum, including negotiating pay and conditions.

Police and justice

164 Over the last 12 months, the police and justice service group has:

- Negotiated pay increases across all sectors
- Continued with talks to reform terms and conditions in the police service in England, Scotland and Wales
- Worked to maintain existing national collective bargaining machinery

Police Staff (England and Wales)

165 2015 was the second year of a two year pay deal, worth 2.2% over two years, which followed the threat of industrial action by police staff in late 2014. The next pay award is due on 1 September 2016 and branches were consulted on this year's claim during March/April.

166 The Police Staff Council (PSC) pay and reward review entered its second year with detailed negotiation over potential reforms to the terms and conditions in the PSC Handbook. If the PSC Trade Union Side can recommend any proposal which emerges from the talks, this is likely to be put to members in the summer of 2016.

167 The council faced uncertainty in 2015 over future funding for its secretariat, following the withdrawal of

Home Office grant. It is hoped that the long-term future of the machinery can be secured with the police employers this year, and there are hopeful signs that this will be achieved.

Police staff (Scotland)

168 For the pay settlement date of 1 September 2015, there has been an offer made by the employer to include the Scottish living wage. There has not been any acceptance, so far, from UNISON members of the offer.

169 Due to £1.1 billion of budget cuts, reorganisations within the Single Force continue. Since 1 April 2013 there have been over 1000 jobs lost as members have taken voluntary redundancy/early retirement packages. At present, there are no compulsory redundancies. There is also a major harmonisation project underway, which will take up to 2 years, and involves negotiations around job evaluation, pay and grading, terms and conditions and working hours.

170 The following pay offer for 2015 was rejected by members working for Police Scotland earlier this year: 1% for those earning above £21,000; £300 for those earning below £21,000; implementation of Scottish living wage minimum now of £15,366; all increments due on 1 April 2016 honoured; no compulsory redundancies. Negotiations continue.

171 As in England and Wales, the trade union side for Police Scotland is currently in talks with the employer over potential reforms to the terms and conditions package of police staff in the force.

Probation staff (England and Wales)

172 The negotiating environment for probation members working for the National Probation Service or one of the 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies remains very challenging. The National Negotiating Council (NNC) remains the national bargaining body for all employers.

173 UNISON members took strike action in July and September 2015 in support of an increase in the 0% pay offer for 2014. The action did not succeed in bringing the employers back to the negotiating table and UNISON called off the action in late 2015. A claim for a 3% rise was submitted by the probation unions for 2015, but as the pay year draws to a close, the employers have responded once again by awarding only the contractual increments to which staff are entitled. NNC pay points have not been revalorised now since 2013.

174 The National Probation Service has given notice that it intends to reform the NNC pay structure for its staff from the 2016 pay award. This threatens to break up national collective bargaining at the NNC. The probation unions have submitted a plan to the NNC employers side to preserve the NNC as a negotiating body.

Child and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)

175 A 1% pay award was imposed on CAFCASS staff again in 2015.

Community and voluntary sector

176 The community service group has continued its focus on organising, and membership has grown year-on-year to now stand at over 67,000. A data cleansing exercise last year also increased the numbers (though representing no new members to UNISON).

177 However this has been against a backdrop of continued attacks on pay, terms and conditions in many employers, rooted in funding cuts to public service contracts. The annual cuts in social rents have spread these problems to the housing association sector, which was previously reasonably protected.

178 A mapping of the housing association sector has allowed us to understand where UNISON has recognition and meaningful negotiations, and who the lead stewards and officers are. This will lay the foundations on which we can develop a more strategic bargaining approach. Our major charities sector committee already shares information amongst this group of employers. A new community employers database, modelled on the private contractors database, helps make these structures visible across the union.

179 We have developed a variety of approaches to branch and regional organisation. This has meant often taking a pragmatic approach to organising this fragmented sector, adapting UNISON's normal structures, and sharing learning between regions. This is an ongoing process. The benefits of highly-focussed single employer branches need to be balanced against their vulnerability to turnover of leading activists. The benefits of concentrating members into community-specific branches needs to be balanced against the level of resourcing that such branches require. There is a growing general challenge of tracking TUPE'd members on direct debit.

180 In parallel to this, we are continuing the task of developing UNISON structures in more national (and cross-regional) charities and housing associations.

181 The Housing Associations Organising Project has been extended into a second phase which is focussing on developing new activists and employer-based structures in three national employers. This has greatly developed our knowledge of organising in these employers, highlighted the importance of supporting new activists before they become stewards, and utilised the new online and blended stewards training programmes.

182 Activist development still needs some work. Our biennial member survey identified 1,000 potential new activists, though it subsequently also revealed the limitations in our resources to following up such expressions of interest. We have trialled online training through a webinar on pensions, which is more accessible to some activists in fragmented and unrecognised workplaces.

183 The member survey also demonstrated the continuing fall in income, and rising levels of debt suffered by members, with around a third paid less than the living wage. We will continue to use the results in campaigning around the situation of our members and the quality of services. We have also worked with sector organisations to address the rise in volunteers replacing paid staff and cuts in social care funding.

Pensions

184 Since April 2015 of defined benefit schemes including the LGPS (but not the NHSPS) who are aged over 55 have had the option to leave and (after incurring significant charges and tax) take value of their benefits as cash. Although the demand for this has proved lower than originally feared, we continue to monitor take-up of so called 'pensions choice'. The UNISON pension unit has issued briefings on this and the risk to members of potential pension scams.

185 In April members in the LGPS saw their national insurance contributions increase when the new state pension came in. UNISON provided detailed briefings and pension news to all activists showing the effect this would have. UNISON is continuing to take up issues around the change to state pension as set out in the briefings. UNISON is working hard to dissuade members from leaving good pension arrangements as a result of the hike in NI contributions.

186 An independent review of the state pension age is due to commence. The review will be chaired by John

Cridland, former Director General of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), with recommendations expected in early 2017. UNISON and the NHS Pension Scheme Advisory Board have been identified as high-level stakeholders.

187 UNISON continues to support pressure groups like WASPI to try and get further concessions from government for the women unfairly impacted by the reduction of the transitional protection when the last increase in state pension age occurred from 2011.

188 We continue to challenge overly-prudent actuarial assumptions used to cost pension schemes – especially on the long-term potential growth of the value of pension funds. This is the main reason that pension schemes are presented as being currently unaffordable. Independent actuarial assessments have been commissioned and briefings circulated.

189 We have produced briefings on the new Lifetime ISA with a government subsidy. While no doubt good news for those with disposable income, they do not replace good pension arrangements. UNISON continues to oppose any proposal to remove tax relief from pension contributions and is providing briefings to members showing the value of this benefit and what it would mean if the Chancellor took it away.

Public service pension schemes

LGPS England and Wales

190 The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) was -0.1% in September 2015 which means pensions and deferred pensions did not increase in April and CARE accounts for 2015/16 were slightly reduced. The government was called to account as UNISON persuaded the shadow treasury team to force a debate and division in parliament.

191 UNISON pushed for changes in the provision of ill-health retirement and we believe that we are in the process of removing the penal tier 3 ill-health provision in England and Wales.

192 UNISON is pushing hard to bring in greater protection for those being outsourced by introducing New Fair Deal.

193 The government required LGPS funds to submit proposals to create larger investment pools (called British Wealth Funds) by combining their assets. UNISON launched a parliamentary petition to force a debate in parliament over the potential risks of

investing funds in infrastructure projects.

194 A new set of investment regulations were also issued in the autumn. UNISON responded to the regulations expressing concerns that the new regulations did not meet the principle of investing in the best interests of members.

195 The LGPS has established pension boards for each fund. There are now just under 200 UNISON activists recruited and trained by the union who are sitting on the 100 funds across the UK.

196 The England and Wales LGPS Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) was officially constituted in the autumn of 2015 with the appointment of employer and employee representatives. UNISON has two voting members on SAB.

197 Last year the SAB worked on a range of issues including looking at how to reduce deficits, monitoring the costs of the scheme and working on the British Wealth funds.

198 1 April 2016 is the valuation date for the LGPS funds and the LGPS in England and Wales. The fund valuations and assumptions used will determine employer contributions.

199 There is also a separate valuation at scheme level for calculating the cost of the LGPS for cost sharing purposes.

200 UNISON is working to challenge key assumptions of the funds' actuaries where we feel they exaggerate the cost and are too prudent both through SAB and informing UNISON board members and activists.

LGPS Northern Ireland

201 The Northern Ireland local government pensions scheme has now established a new governance board and UNISON NI has secured a seat. The one Northern Ireland LGPS fund will have its valuation date at 1 April 2016. UNISON will monitor the assumptions that will be used for the valuation and work for greater transparency of the LGPS NI fund.

NHS pension scheme

202 UNISON has seats on the NHS Pension Scheme board that looks at scheme regulations and the scheme advisory board that looks at possible scheme changes that can be recommended to the Secretary of State.

203 UNISON is setting up branch pension champions and the UNISON pension unit is providing support and training.

204 The Choice 2 exercise was completed in England and Wales and is currently live in Scotland. This gave members in the 1995 section the option to move to the 2008 section in view of the higher retirement ages in the 2015 section.

205 The health group, with the Greater London region and the UNISON pensions unit worked to challenge the decision by Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust to offer band 5 nurses additional pay in return for opting out or not joining the NHS Pension Scheme. The NHS Pensions Board have also referred the trust to the Pensions Regulator.

Energy and private sector

206 The attack on pensions in the water industry stepped up again this year with the announcement by United Utilities (UU) in December 2015 that they would be seeking to close the defined benefit pension scheme from April, 2016. Following a robust response from UNISON, including a ballot for industrial action which was strongly supported by members, UU confirmed withdrawal of the proposal and said they would engage in further talks on the future of the pension scheme when the costs of future service were confirmed in May.

207 At the time of writing, further talks are pending. The UNISON response was well marshalled both by regional and branch officers, with support from UNISON's national pensions team.

208 UNISON was at the forefront in defending the EDF defined benefit scheme and ensuring it remains to new members.

Higher and further education

209 The year has seen a significant increase in the number of universities closing or worsening their defined benefits schemes. UNISON at regional and branch level in many cases assisted by the UNISON pension unit have responded to consultations and attempted to improve the offers that have been made. An example is Exeter University where the attempt to replace their scheme by a defined contribution arrangement continues to be opposed and delayed with the offer for employer contributions improved.

210 Cost is driving many employers in further education to consider trying to leave the LGPS and UNISON has

been opposing this where it has occurred.

211 The Universities Superannuation Scheme was also changed during the year and UNISON was at the forefront of negotiating a better deal for changes to superannuation arrangements for the University of London

Apprenticeships

212 Since the 2015 general election UNISON has campaigned to ensure that the government's welcome commitment to create 3 million new apprenticeships by 2020 will be properly funded and improve the quality and status of apprenticeships.

213 In September 2015 UNISON launched a parliamentary campaign to raise some of its key apprenticeship concerns in the Enterprise Act 2016 (England only) through MP and Peer briefings and in written formal consultation responses to various Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) consultations and the sub-committee on education, skills and the economy apprenticeships inquiry.

214 UNISON's campaign reflected the UK-wide and devolved aspects of the new apprenticeships regime. For example the new apprenticeship levy to be introduced in 2017 is UK-wide whilst the administration of apprenticeships is devolved in the four regions – England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

215 The key focus in UNISON's campaign has been to raise concerns on behalf of members about:

- the introduction of public services paying into a new apprenticeship employer levy scheme which does not come at the expense of reducing funding for existing staff skill budgets in the public sector and wider further education services
- inclusion of new mandatory public sector apprenticeships targets likely to encourage a low level 'target-led' rather than 'quality-led' high level apprenticeship programme in the public sector and may encourage some employers to displace existing staff with apprentices to meet their targets and efficiency savings
- the need to include equality, pay and conditions and qualifications information in the annual reporting to parliament on the new apprenticeship targets
- encouragement of employers to directly-employ apprentices with an employment contract, which

offers better benefits to apprentices, rather than using agencies

- employers providing information about the role of trade unions for apprentices
- union inclusion in the new Institute of Apprenticeships which has responsibility for overseeing the new 3 million apprenticeships
- practical reforms such as improving careers guidance, amending recruitment practices and providing further childcare support for parents that are undertaking apprenticeships.

216 To offset apprenticeship funding pressures at a time of public sector cuts UNISON has argued that the funds raised from the public sector levy should be ring-fenced. The scheme should allow for apprenticeships to have a 'price/quality ratio weighting' so that the counting of public sector apprenticeship targets has a weighting proportionate to the cost and qualification level of the apprenticeship. In this way higher-level apprenticeships would be counted as more than one low-level apprenticeship target.

217 This would enable public sector employers to fund higher-level apprenticeships for existing employees wishing to progress in their career or offer new higher entry-level apprenticeships to meet staff skill shortages, alongside lower-level new apprenticeships. This would offset the pressure or financial incentives to displace existing staff jobs or offer only low-level entry apprenticeships.

218 UNISON will continue to work jointly across service groups in its parliamentary, public and employer campaigns to ensure that concerns over funding and quality are addressed as the new apprenticeship regime is rolled out in 2016 – 2017.

Exit payments in the public sector

219 The government has introduced a set of reforms to exit payments (including redundancy payments) in the public sector – each set of proposals goes further than the last. All fly in the face of local, and even national, collective agreements, some agreed at the highest levels of government. Some of the proposals will mean re-opening regulations on pension entitlements, breaching the commitment not to alter public sector pensions for 25 years.

220 The proposals cover:

- redundancy payments,

- any pension top-up to enable early retirement
- any payment made as part of an agreed exit settlement between the employer and the employee.

221 There are three separate sets of proposals as follows:

- 1 Recovery of exit payments if you return to the public sector within 12 months – this will affect anyone earning over £80,000 when they were paid to exit public sector employment, if they return to a job ANYWHERE in the public sector within 12 months. Up to 100% of the exit payment will be recovered by the old employer.
- 2 An absolute cap on the value of any exit payment set at a maximum of £95,000 – affecting anyone working in the public sector who gets an exit/ redundancy/early retirement settlement. It will mostly affect high earners, but despite previous government promises, it will also affect moderate earners if they have long service such as nurses, social workers, paramedics and librarians – particularly if they are entitled to access early retirement as an alternative to being made redundant.
- 3 Consultation on proposed new reduced limits on calculating all exit payments in the public sector. It is expected that all areas of the public sector must look to reform or revise their scheme to consider making savings and to specifically consider the following three broad areas:
 - New maximum redundancy/exit entitlements (see below)
 - Reducing entitlements as people near retirement
 - Reducing, or eliminating, access to early retirement options.

222 We are expecting clarification that the proposals are not meant as a “reference scheme” and it is not expected that every public sector exit payment agreement will look the same.

223 These proposals are currently only at a consultation stage. However, the government is clear that once the consultation period is over, guidance or legislation may be issued for implementing any new proposals if changes cannot be achieved through negotiation.

224 UNISON has engaged actively on all three sets of

proposals, meeting and drafting briefings for Lords and MP’s, contributing evidence and tabling amendments to legislation as it goes through the legislative processes. We have also managed to have direct meetings with treasury department officials responsible for the consultation which has been useful. We have published updates for activists to share with members and will be drafting appropriate guidance and advice briefings once the details have been finalised for each aspect of the changes.

Health and safety

225 Health and safety is increasingly a key workplace campaigning issue and an area of concern for our members. Key topics include stress, violence in the workplace and bullying and harassment

226 The Trade Union Bill has shone a new spotlight on the role of the safety rep. The bill attacks the work of safety reps in the workplace – particularly those working in public services – by reducing the time that safety reps can carry out their role making workplaces safe.

227 In response to the negative perceptions and to rally our safety activists UNISON ran a seminar in Cardiff entitled *The People, the Politics and the Procedures*.

228 The seminar included presentations from Geoffrey Podger, former Chair of the HSE and Hugh Robertson from the TUC. The seminar included an afternoon of workshops facilitated by members of the national health and safety committee. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive from the 250+ delegates – the highest ever engagement for a health and safety seminar.

229 We also launched the first every *Safety Rep of the Year* awards. The awards invited and encouraged safety activists (and their branches) to nominate hardworking and active reps for an outstanding contribution to health and safety, or an outstanding campaign in health and safety. Some 20 shortlisted entries were chosen and nominees invited to the awards ceremony at UNISON Centre, with regional awards and overall awards presented by UNISON general secretary and president.

230 UNISON has continued the *Cut Stress not Jobs* campaign, and revised the popular theme *Safety in Numbers* materials. *Cancer in the Workplace* (a joint collaboration with the national disabled members committee and Macmillan Trust) was as launched at the national delegate conference fringe meeting and our regular campaigns for International Workers Memorial Day and European Health and Safety Week

reported lots of activity via social media. Campaigns were also promoted via the dedicated web pages updated regularly as part of the campaign.

231 Technology and social media has played an increasing part in the way the UNISON communicates with its safety activists, and this year has seen us double our engagement through Facebook and Twitter.

232 Regular updates of UNISON health and safety information available on the website has also seen a change in the way we communicate and make information sheets, guides and other resources available to our members and activists. Resources have been reviewed and streamlined so that information is factual and easily accessible.

233 UNISON has continued to engage with all of its H&S stakeholders, such as other trade unions and the TUC on national health and safety campaigns such as the Trade Union Bill

234 We have also supported external health and safety-focused bodies, such as the Hazards campaign at meetings and conferences.

235 Collaborative working continued with regions, service groups and self-organised groups with UNISON supporting events in the East Midlands for existing and new safety reps, Northern Ireland at a seminar and Water Environment and Transport for a seminar discussing new and emerging health and safety practices.

236 The national health and safety committee has undergone a change in personnel, with a new chair – the first woman and first black member to hold the seat.

Objective 3: Campaigning

A new Westminster government

237 Since May 2015 the union has faced a new government at Westminster with a programme to cut public spending, cap public sector pay and shrink the role of public services. This has seen the union vigorously opposing various Bills at Westminster, working with coalitions such as the People's Assembly and fighting cuts locally too.

Trade Union Bill

238 The Trade Union Bill was the single biggest challenge confronting UNISON over the past year – a ferocious attack on almost every aspect of trade unionism in England, Wales and Scotland. It attempted to shift the balance of power in workplaces further to the advantage of employers and away from workers, whether they are in a union or not. It is fundamentally an attack on core trade union activity – facility time, check off, and the ability of unions to underpin collective bargaining with a credible right to strike.

239 The bill also threatened unions with unprecedented levels of civil and criminal penalties, red tape, and monitoring by the certification officer. It proposed to curtail unions' abilities to fund political activities and campaigns, within the Labour Party and wider civil alliances and groups.

240 UNISON additionally faced a direct and punitive attack in the shape of a prohibition of 'check off'—the direct deduction of trade union subs from workers' wages in the public sector. The majority of UNISON's 1.3 million members choose to have their subs taken straight from their wages – a process which is both efficient and beneficial for employers and members alike. It is underpinned by three contractual relationships: the written agreement between the staff member and the employer, the collective agreement between the employer and the union and the contract of membership between the member and the union.

241 It represented a challenge that required a whole-union response, led by Dave Prentis, UNISON general secretary, and involving all parts of the union – with our members' voices at the heart of our campaign.

242 The parliamentary schedule determined the intensity and timing of UNISON's interventions during

late 2015. UNISON sought to harness the compelling voices and stories of our members to best effect, as constituents talking to and contacting Tory and Lib Dem MPs at local level or at national level at the 2 November mass lobby of parliament. A highly focused and intense lobbying operation, led by the general secretary sought to make the arguments to MPs and Peers directly.

243 UNISON produced both general and targeted issue-based briefings to MPs as well as providing appropriate resources and campaigning materials for activists. UNISON members spent the autumn of 2015 speaking to employers, councillors, MPs and ministers to tell their stories, making compelling arguments and keeping up the pressure on the government.

244 In October 2015, UNISON played a key part in the TUC demonstration in Manchester against the bill. UNISON members took part in a mass lobby of parliament, making up over 1,000 of the 2,500 workers who took part. Dave Prentis gave oral evidence to the public bill committee, focusing in detail on the impact of the bill on public services.

245 Members and branches were critical in getting employers across England, Scotland and Wales to speak up against the government's plans – including the Wales and Scottish governments, councils, NHS HR directors and police and crime commissioners, particularly around the issue of 'check-off.' Virtually all the human resources directors in the NHS questioned the government's plans to prohibit check-off, along with all local authorities in Scotland and Wales and many others in England. Not a single public sector employer spoke up in defence of the government's plans in this area.

246 After intensive lobbying and negotiation, led by the general secretary, an amendment was proposed at the House of Commons report stage by Conservative MP Jeremy Lefroy which would have enabled unions to preserve current arrangements where they paid for the costs of administering check-off. Tory peer Richard Balfe also tabled a similar amendment in the House of Lords.

247 Continuous pressure was applied to MPs through emails, face-to-face meetings, letters and tweets by UNISON members, with more targeted approaches to Peers in the lead up to the House of Lords stages. The

general secretary had over 40 meetings with peers of all parties and with crossbenchers, rebutting government arguments one by one.

248 As a result of UNISON's campaign the government conceded the argument and said it would change the bill to remove the prohibition, allowing unions in the public sector to keep check-off arrangements where they paid for it.

Government defeats

249 On the first day of the bill's report stage in the Lords on 16 March, the government suffered three key defeats:

- e-balloting: The Lords voted by a majority of 139 to require the Secretary of State to commission an independent review on electronic balloting for strike action, and to present a strategy for introducing electronic balloting to parliament.
- Political funds: By a majority of 148, the Lords voted for an amendment restricting the new political fund 'opt in' to new members, extending the transition period from three to 12 months, removing the need to renew opt-ins every five years and allowing unions to use other methods of opting in beyond postal.
- Facility time: By a majority of 88, the Lords voted to remove the reserve power given to the government to cap trade union facility time in the public sector.

Government concessions

250 On industrial action ballots, while the pernicious 50% participation threshold and the additional 40% 'yes' vote threshold for 'important' public services remains in place, a number of small but important concessions were achieved. These included:

- dropping plans to include 'ancillary workers' in affected sectors under the additional 40% threshold;
- a 'summary' of the dispute on the ballot paper rather than a vague requirement for 'reasonably detailed' information which UNISON feared would lead to continuous legal disputes;
- allowing the notice period for ballots to be dropped back to seven days where the employer agrees;
- an extension of the ballot mandate from the proposed four months to six months, with the

possibility of an extension to nine months where the employer has agreed.

251 Following well-publicised campaigning by trade unions and human rights groups, including UNISON's Two Week Warning campaign, the government dropped plans to:

- make unions give 14-days notice of any plans for protests associated with their industrial action, including what will be written on websites, in Facebook posts and tweets or face financial penalties;
- create a new criminal offence, intimidation on the picket line, and Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) could be used against people protesting outside their workplace;
- force picket supervisors to show their letter of approval to anyone who asked to see it;
- require picket supervisors to wear an armband – they are now asked to wear 'something' to identify themselves.

252 The government has so far failed to bring forward the planned regulations to allow agency workers to break strikes.

253 As this report was produced, the Trade Union Bill is due to return to the House of Commons on 27 April.

EU referendum

254 In March UNISON held an unparalleled branch consultation to hear member's views on how UNISON should respond to the EU Referendum to be held on 23 June. The key EU policy issues and debates on the merits of the EU that UNISON had extensively debated in the past were set out in detail in an information pack. In short, UNISON has historically been against the EU single currency and the role of the European Central Bank and more recently led the trade union campaign to remove the inclusion of public services in the new trade agreements such as TTIP, CETA and TISA. UNISON has however also supported a more positive Social Europe with good employment provisions and workers protections, equal treatment, free movement for workers and equalities and human rights protections.

255 Members overwhelmingly responded in favour of a Remain vote and further stressed that they saw this as an important issue for the union to take a position on. The union's national executive council agreed on 13

April to back Remain on the basis of the consultation. An estimated 60,000 members had participated in some form of branch consultation on the EU in the six-week consultation period.

Pay strategy

256 In September 2015 the general secretary called a major UNISON Pay Summit across regions and service groups to revitalise our pay campaigning. Previous conference motions passed had called on the NEC to co-ordinate pay campaigns. The summit discussed turn-out in pay and industrial action ballots, the trade union bill, local government pay, unsocial hours payments in health and police services, tax credits and the total pay package. The service group liaison committee then drew up a cross union pay strategy that was approved by the full NEC in December 2015.

Elections 2016

257 There were a number of elections during 2016, and UNISON campaigned strategically and actively in many of the key battlegrounds. Elections included those for the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, the Northern Ireland Assembly, Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales, local government in England, as well as mayoral contests in London, Bristol, Liverpool and Salford. As with the 2015 general election, UNISON's campaign focussed resources at target areas that would have greatest effect on the overall outcome. Both the Labour Link and the General Political Fund played their distinctive roles, with the latter non-party aligned section being utilised to highlight to members the issues at stake and the importance of voter participation. The results of the election were unknown at the time of writing.

UNISON Cymru/Wales report

258 UNISON Cymru/Wales continues to face significant funding challenges across all service group areas. The shortfall is as a result of austerity policies driven down from Westminster and under-funding via the current Barnett funding formula.

259 The Welsh government has still to finalise its plans to merge the current 22 local authorities in Wales into a smaller number, and will not now do so until after this year's Welsh assembly elections. Our members in Wales are understandably concerned about the future of services and jobs, and UNISON continues to highlight this lack of certainty to the Welsh government.

260 UNISON continues to campaign against councils who consider any type of privatisation and outsourcing and has highlighted this issue through the Workforce Partnership Council; the Joint Council for Wales and by direct representation to Welsh government. However, the government, although against privatisation of health services, does appear intent on driving through the establishment of community mutual or co-operative organisations as "alternative delivery models" to providing public services in local government; but UNISON has had some successes on the ground, most notably Neath Port Talbot council's recent decision to withdraw proposals to outsource all of their adult services.

261 Higher education in Wales has to date, been relatively untouched by austerity, and has actually seen an overall increase of income over the last few years. The draft Welsh government budget proposed a £20 million plus cut, which would have fallen on its support for research and widening access. UNISON had real concerns that a similar attack on provision in HE would have a serious long term impact on access to education for adults and non-traditional learners. UNISON, NUS Wales and UCU initiated an anti-cuts campaign and met with the education minister to raise our concerns. The final budget had a much smaller cut.

262 Due to UNISON campaigning on the new Education Workforce Council, half of Welsh local authorities have now committed to paying the registration fees of £15 per head for each learning support worker. We intend to use this momentum to campaign for the remaining 11 councils work with us and support low-paid schools staff by paying the registration fees.

263 The community sector in Wales will continue to focus on campaigning against cuts to terms and conditions and to seek additional funding from commissioning bodies to meet living wage requirements.

264 In the health sector, after three years, negotiations finished on the all-Wales Organisational Change and were put out for consultation. Improvements included an all-Wales redeployment policy and greater protection for staff with between six and 15 years' service. However, proposals also included the reduction of maximum pay protection on organisational change from 10 years after 15 years' service to six years after six years' service.

265 Ministers in Wales commissioned a review of the NHS workforce and UNISON submitted extensive evidence to this review in September 2015. The review concluded in February 2016, and recommended

retention of four-nation Agenda for Change terms and conditions, continued use of the pay review body as arbiter on pay, with commitment from government to implement its recommendations, and a review of the role and function of the NHS Staff Council to take greater account of devolution.

266 Legislation on safe nursing staffing levels in Wales came into force in February 2016; the first country in the UK to achieve this.

267 Welsh police and justice branches have fought hard to retain members in the face of continued budget cuts. Collaboration is still in the background as all four Welsh police services are looking to introduce various projects in the near future and UNISON continues to negotiate with them on the all-Wales collaboration forum. The heaviest damage in the service group has been in the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) which is now owned by a private company; they have hollowed out the CRC by moving all corporate services to their own operations in England and are about to embark on a huge programme of office closures across Wales.

Influencing Welsh government

268 UNISON Cymru/Wales has submitted evidence and made representations to the Welsh government in respect of: the draft Local Government (Wales) Bill; alternative delivery models in public services; the youth work education workforce council registration consultation; recruitment and retention of domiciliary care workers and zero-hour contracts; the NHS Green Paper: *Our Health, Our Health Service* and the NHS Wales Workforce Review.

Welsh Assembly Elections

269 UNISON Cymru Wales made a comprehensive submission to Welsh Labour's manifesto consultation. We formed a Welsh Assembly Elections campaign group of full-time staff and made two successful GPF bids to support the following work:

- 1 Increasing voter registration
- 2 Engaging and empowering our members, friends and colleagues to vote
- 3 Raising awareness of UNISON's vision for public services in Wales among political representatives and the general population.

270 Well-produced, easy-read UNISON manifestos were developed to make the case for stronger public

services, delivered in the public sector by a well-rewarded workforce as the best way to a fairer Wales. These included a UNISON general manifesto; a health manifesto; a local government manifesto and an education manifesto. The general manifesto was launched on St David's Day at the Welsh Assembly and later in north Wales to coincide with our activities around International Women's Day.

Campaigning against the Trade Union Bill in Wales

271 UNISON Cymru/Wales played a very active role in challenging the Trade Union Bill in its passage through Parliament including convening a briefing meeting of Welsh peers in the House of Lords alongside Labour's Baroness Eluned Morgan. We met with 26 peers across the day, 18 of them Welsh. We solicited letters from public sector employers in Wales showing that this legislation was not welcome, including Welsh NHS Boards and the Welsh Local Government Association and actively supported the Welsh government's strong line against the bill.

UNISON Northern Ireland

272 Despite all we face, it has been a very successful year. We have increased our membership and grown our activist base as we were determined to do. The vast majority of our members have participated in the life of the union through industrial action, political lobbying, public protest, international solidarity and humanitarian aid for those facing worse circumstances than us.

273 Almost 2000 members and activists have taken advantage of UNISON's education and development programmes and we have played a significant role in the wider trade union movement. Our core commitment to equality and human rights has been expressed in all aspects of our work.

274 The latest political crisis resulted in the Fresh Start Agreement arising from negotiations between the Northern Irish political parties and the UK and Irish governments. It is a further austerity programme and a major attack on the welfare state and public services. UNISON, together with our allies in the CAJ and Equality Coalition, held a major conference in November 2015, *Austerity, A Threat to Peace?*, the results of which form part of our strategic plan to challenge austerity in the coming year. We also commissioned work on the impact of this agreement on the two main communities – the results of which demonstrate that the patterns of discrimination and inequality are deepening.

275 Since the industrial action across the public services in 2016 our members have been involved in action short of strike, public demonstrations, marches and political lobbies in opposition to the continuous onslaught, in particular, on health, social services and education.

276 As a result of the campaign to halt the closure of NHS residential homes led by UNISON for over two years, the Health Minister announced that the proposal had been put on hold. However, we continue with this campaign until the decision has been scrapped

277 In October 2015 the UNISON Northern Ireland regional council agreed a strategic plan addressing the key issues for the organising, bargaining, campaigning and administration agenda for 2016. At its core is rebuilding the steward base, reorganising lay structures to reflect the democratic demands of our changing membership base, a primary bargaining focus on the most disadvantaged UNISON members, and strong preparation for the forthcoming assembly elections and EU referendum. We have created a UNISON manifesto to engage with politicians in the run-up to assembly elections.

278 In the course of the year we have continued to engage extensively with government on all key issues.

279 We have made submissions to the OECD which has been engaged by the Department of Finance and Personnel to review public services.

280 We have intervened in the public policy agenda on the key issues of:

- health inequalities
- the need for major health service reorganisation in the form of a public health model
- in defence of our members rights, including securing a commitment from government to reject the proposals in the TU Bill (GB)
- public procurement and human rights at all levels of government and the public service.

281 We are currently engaged in talks with political parties on all core issues in the UNISON NI manifesto 2016 in advance of the upcoming elections and are currently securing commitments on ending zero hours contracts and support for the UNISON Living Wage campaign.

282 Although not applicable in Northern Ireland, we have successfully lobbied NI MPs against the Trade Union Bill, which is the current main priority in the rest of the union.

UNISON partnership projects

283 Over the past 15 years UNISON has initiated a series of unique collaborative partnerships with health employers in NI on a wide range of projects producing real outcomes on improved care and satisfaction for patients, clients, health and social care workers alike.

284 In October 2015 we showcased this work in a major publication, *Time for Change – UNISON/ Employer Partnerships*, and at a major international conference held in Belfast. At the conference senior health employers, UNISON reps and other public service/community sector participants explored the future development of these unique models at a time when critical change is needed. The collaborative model used within each partnership has been described by the King's Fund as 'ground breaking'. They are based on true inclusion; real equality of decision-making, resources and support; as well as trust and respect for UNISON members.

UNISON Scotland

285 As in the rest of the UK, the Trade Union Bill has been a high priority in Scotland. All bar the single Conservative MP in Scotland have been supportive of UNISON's position during the bill's progress and a number of Scottish Lords from across the political spectrum made helpful contributions in the Lord's debates. There have been two debates in the Scottish Parliament that resulted in critical motions. The Scottish government tabled a legislative consent memorandum covering what they believe to be the devolved issues. This has been disputed by the UK government and the presiding officer unhelpfully blocked a motion after the memorandum was approved by a parliamentary committee. Opposition MSPs are supporting changes to the parliament's standing orders to get around this issue. ECHR compliance by Scottish government is embedded in the Scotland Act in that there is no power to "do any act" in breach of convention rights.

286 UNISON Scotland has therefore briefed MSPs that the Trade Union Bill is not compatible with the ECHR, and therefore they have the power to resist the bill should it become law. During the Scottish Parliament elections, candidates have been asked to sign a human rights pledge on this issue and this has also attracted cross-party support. A significant number of Scottish councils have declared that they will not cooperate with the Trade Union Bill.

287 UNISON Scotland's *Public Works* campaign continues to highlight the impact of austerity on

Scotland's public services. There is a new interactive 'High Street' that shows the cost of cuts along with a series of reports that sets out the national picture, together with UNISON's alternative strategy. Every month UNISON Scotland publishes a report that looks at a different occupational group. These reports include background research, Fol data and most importantly, a member survey that allows members to tell their own story. This approach means UNISON Scotland has a large body of evidence on the damage austerity is doing to services. UNISON Scotland also publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Public Service Futures*, that focuses on service reform and there is a Public Works blog that covers the latest research.

288 This year's Scottish Budget was particularly challenging with further cuts imposed from Westminster. The Scottish government chose to push the burden of the cuts onto local government with serious consequences for services and jobs. The Scottish Rate of Income Tax gave the Scottish government the power from April 2016 to levy a higher tax rate across all bands. This could mitigate the impact of austerity, but they chose not to use these powers. The much wider Smith Commission taxation powers in the Scotland Act 2016 will come into effect in April 2017. While the Scottish government has decided to make only limited changes, it has generated a real debate about the role of taxation in creating a more socially-just Scotland.

289 While the *Public Works* campaign focuses on the cuts, there was also a recognition that everything possible should be done to mitigate the damage. This project resulted in the *Combating Austerity* report that suggested ways the Scottish government and public bodies could make savings that do not impact on jobs and services. This has been followed up with a toolkit that helps branches to challenge their employer locally.

290 Some 98% of UNISON members are employed in devolved services and this means that almost all legislation considered by the Scottish parliament has some impact on UNISON members. In the last year there have been major bills on housing, procurement, health care, community justice, care integration, policing, higher and further education. In a typical month UNISON is engaging with MSPs on six bills, several consultations, committee inquiries and secondary legislation. *UNISON Week* is UNISON Scotland's regular publication for MSPs and others, setting out our position on parliamentary business. UNISON Scotland's media coverage far exceeds other trade unions, supported by an extensive social media reach.

291 The Scottish parliament elections were an opportunity for UNISON Scotland to make the case

for stronger public services. Two major research projects on pay and the Scottish economy provided credible arguments in support of the UNISON Scotland manifesto proposals. There were a number of manifestos covering UNISON Scotland's main campaigns and an opinion poll commissioned from Survation. A network of 'Influencers' have been recruited from activists and they are encouraged to have regular conversations with members based on UNISON Scotland briefings. Social media is supported with a range of materials including specially commissioned cartoons and a range of infographics. UNISON Scotland has also launched a new website that can better accommodate a range of different media.

English devolution

292 During the last year the government has passed the *Cities and Local Government Devolution Act* to expand its agenda with regards to devolution in England. UNISON has an existing national policy which allows for branches and regions in an area to develop their own policy for or against a Combined Authority or other devolution arrangement in their area. This policy recognises that there are both risks and opportunities within the devolution programme. UNISON is acutely aware of the risks to its members when many combined authority/devolution deals in England focus so much on service re-design and do little to address public sector spending cuts.

293 In Greater Manchester, the most advanced of the Combined Authority devolution deals, UNISON has developed a joint protocol on workforce matters – an agreement between the interim mayor, local council and health leaders, and the public service trade unions which sets out principles on employment and consultation arrangements that will assist in ensuring that workers' voices are heard in changes to public services. UNISON will continue to provide support, where required, for regions and branches to engage in local debates over devolution and to ensure that any new deals focus on improving conditions for public sector employees and the services they provide.

Service group and NEC campaigns

NHS One Team

294 UNISON's reinvigorated *One Team* campaign aims to promote the importance of support staff to the work of the NHS, and to challenge the artificial divide between so-called "frontline" and "back office".

295 There is a dedicated section on the UNISON website and the union produced a range of materials for branches and newsletters for support services members.

296 Former UNISON president Dave Anderson MP tabled an Early Day Motion (number 501) to raise the profile of the issue in parliament, which attracted cross-party support and brought in MPs from all countries of the UK.

297 UNISON's response to a Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) consultation succeeded in changing the way the HSCIC categorises its workforce data, by arguing that the use of a separate "frontline NHS staff" category was unnecessarily divisive. The HSCIC has now decided not to include such a category and will also remove the "non-medical" staff category.

298 The *One Team* campaign has also been instrumental in how the union responds to Lord Carter's government review into efficiency in the NHS. The union has challenged the way Carter equates management and administration costs directly with waste, along with his report's lazy use of the term "back office" to describe non-clinical functions in hospitals.

299 UNISON is proud to be the main union for NHS support staff and the union reacted strongly to the publication of the report, featuring prominently in the media. The union pointed out the dangers of trying to use privatisation as a means of generating efficiency and highlighted the fact that all staff in the NHS play an important role in providing a high quality of service.

Save Care Now

300 UNISON's campaign to improve standards for homecare workers and to promote the Ethical Care Charter via the *Save Care Now* campaign gathered momentum in 2015-16.

301 Leeds, Cheshire West and Chester, Milton Keynes, Tower Hamlets and Bradford Councils all agreed to adopt the Charter, taking the number of signatories up to 12 councils. Southwark and Islington Councils, who were the first councils to adopt it, released information detailing how adoption of the charter had led to improved care standards, morale and staff retention rates.

302 Homecare workers are increasingly being expected to do the sort of tasks that were previously undertaken by district nurses. Many are expected to provide this

care with absolutely no training, in a rushed manner, whilst being paid poverty wages. In some cases, this lack of training could have potentially fatal consequences for care users.

303 The report has been used to put pressure on the government, care regulators, skills agencies and councils to improve the level of training that is provided for homecare workers.

304 The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence issued formal guidance on the provision of homecare in September 2015. In a boost to our campaign many elements of the guidance reflect what UNISON has been calling for in our Ethical Care Charter.

305 UNISON contributed to an ITN documentary that focuses on the problems afflicting the homecare system. It aired in October 2015 and featured a number of UNISON homecare members along with the general secretary.

306 In January 2016 UNISON released a report called *Suffering Alone at Home* which focused on the lack of time that many homecare workers are given to provide care for their service users. It highlighted how 74% of councils in England still use 15-minute homecare visits. The report received substantial media coverage across the BBC and in a number of papers, with UNISON homecare members powerfully articulating the challenges they face in their role.

307 The Welsh Government has accepted the premise of our campaign – that poor terms and conditions for homecare workers lead to poor quality care outcomes. Consequently they launched a consultation in early 2016 which is looking at restricting the use of zero hours contracts for homecare workers, ensuring that they are paid for their travel time and that they are not forced to 'call clip'. The consultation is also looking at improving training standards and the career structure for homecare workers, all of which are measures that UNISON supports.

308 UNISON is also working with Labour MPs to get the government to take action over the continuing scandal of care workers being paid below the national minimum wage.

Local government campaigns

309 Local government has been severely hit by budget cuts across the UK and the cumulative effect has been the withdrawal of services to the public and the loss of thousands of jobs.

310 As part of the union's *Save Our Local Services* campaign, the *Audit of Austerity* was published in 2015. The report provides a detailed examination of the consequences of the unprecedented squeeze on local government funding on local services since May 2010.

311 The UNISON *Save Our Local Services* campaign is currently developing its presence online and on social media. Updated campaign pages of the UNISON website now include a blog and an area for members of the public to share their experiences of cuts. We will also shortly publish a toolkit for activists dedicated to campaigning against cuts to local services. This campaign is designed to help the local and regional union fight against cuts.

312 The campaign aims to publish the next Damage report on the impact of social care cuts on older people through the experiences of social workers and service users.

313 UNISON branches have continued to be involved in fights to protect vital library services. Neath Port Talbot UNISON successfully led a community campaign to halt the closures of a number of its libraries while Lambeth UNISON is playing a leading role in a high profile campaign against proposals to diminish the library service in the borough. UNISON worked as part of the Speak Up For Libraries coalition to organise a parliamentary lobby in Westminster to protest against the attacks on our library service in February. In June UNISON is holding a UK-wide Library seminar to focus on helping branches to run help branches run campaigns locally to protect library services but also to help ensure that the UK governments are held accountable for their role in attacking the service.

314 In the Food Standards Agency, European regulations are being reviewed which will have an effect on our members who work to protect consumers from diseased meat. The review could lead to an end to independent meat inspection. A lot of work has been undertaken on researching slaughterhouse inspections that fully evidence our arguments to maintain independent meat inspection regulations. Intensive and relentless lobbying is taking place by industry to state the contrary view. The future of meat inspection – as a state and independent service in the UK – will be determined by how the European Parliament votes in a full plenary session later this year. Finally, every MEP in the UK has been written to with our latest video which talks about the changes to these regulations [882/2004] and the link with the Transatlantic, Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP). All 22,000 councillors in the UK have been emailed. Every MP except Conservative MPs have also been contacted. To watch the video visit www.unison.org.uk/meat.

Police and Justice campaigns

315 In England and Wales, UNISON has highlighted the impact of cuts to police services and rising levels of crime, leading up to the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) elections in May. Police forces have experienced a cut in central funding of £2 billion in real terms between 2010 and 2016. As a result, police staff have been cut year on year, with more than 40,000 policing jobs lost between 2010 and 2015. This has meant a 30% cut in PCSOs and 20% fewer police staff jobs. The impact of cuts has also been felt by the public through rising crime. In England and Wales sex offences rose by more than a third (36 per cent) and violent crime by more than a quarter (27 per cent) between 2014 and 2015. UNISON research found that over 90 per cent of our police scientific services staff reported job cuts to their team and many scenes of crime officers gave personal testimony to the union on the damage being done on the ability of police forces to capture evidence and bring criminals to justice.

316 UNISON spoke strongly against controversial new proposals to arm police support volunteers with chemical agents such as CS gas and the union remains vigilant over the increased use, and inappropriate deployment of, volunteers. Equality continues to be a key concern for UNISON and the union is working with the National Black Police Association and Association of Black Probation Officers to develop joint protocols to facilitate better joint working between our respective organisations. Work is also continuing with the London School of Economics to initiate a survey of sexual harassment in the police workplace.

317 UNISON is also campaigning strongly ahead of the PCC elections on 5 May 2016, supported by the General Political Fund. A PCC election postcard was printed for all branches to raise awareness with members over the elections and the issues at stake. Members were also written to in PCC marginal constituencies to encourage them to vote.

318 In Scotland UNISON continues provide a strong voice for police staff members despite the challenges faced by Police Scotland following the merger of all forces into one body. UNISON's long standing concerns about the whole Police reform project have not been dispelled by the crisis which has since rocked Police Scotland. UNISON continues to highlight increased demands of police staff, who are having to deliver the same service despite ongoing job cuts and post-merger organisational change.

Probation Staff (England and Wales)

319 UNISON probation members now work either for the new National Probation Service (NPS) or one of the 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) which were privatised in February 2015. Our campaigning work has focused on highlighting the risks to public safety, data protection and health and safety in the newly privatised regime. We have renewed our contact with the Shadow Justice Team in Parliament and are working with sister union Napo to defend members' interests.

320 UNISON members in probation also faced a major challenge in the autumn of 2015 as the government withdrew the ability of National Probation Service members to pay their UNISON subs by check off. A campaign was launched in conjunction with regions to encourage as many members as possible to switch to direct debit.

Education

321 UNISON's members in the education sector across schools, further education colleges, universities and children's services have, to different degrees, faced another year of budget cuts, minimal pay increases, outsourcing and increased privatisation. UNISON continues to oppose deep cuts to the further education sector, the real terms budget cut to schools, additional free schools and forcing local authority schools in England to become academies. 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.

322 UNISON's campaigning has emphasised the importance of democratic accountability to local communities, 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 has campaigned against government proposals to remove the Education Maintenance Grant and Disabled Student Allowance and raise tuition fees even further.

Early Years

323 In England the Minister for Early Years, Sam Gyimah announced in December that he intended to publish a workforce strategy for early years staff in England in 2016, but this had not appeared at the time of writing this report. The Childcare Bill received Royal Assent and will extend free childcare places for three

and four year olds to 30 hours for working parents in England. UNISON generally welcomed the expansion, but expressed concern at the change in focus from supporting disadvantaged families and improving educational achievement to just supporting parents back to work. The government also conducted a call for evidence into early education funding. UNISON's response focussed on the need to protect the maintained sector and provide a proper wage and career structure.

324 The government in England dropped requirements that all staff starting level 3 qualifications require GCSE English and maths. This will now become an exit requirement if staff are to count towards ratios. UNISON welcomed this u-turn as it had caused a collapse in student numbers starting level 3.

325 The government is currently consulting on amending guidance on keeping children safe in education, focussing on online safety for pupils. They are also consulting on extending the right for parents to request 'wraparound' and holiday childcare. The high profile collapse of both Kid's Company and British Association of Adoption and Fostering has highlighted the dangers of transferring vital services for children to the voluntary sector. In both cases, the maintained sector has had to take responsibility for services at very short notice. In both cases staff were terminated without consultation and we are pursuing cases for compensation.

326 The Scottish government published its response to the Early Learning and Childcare and Out of School Care Workforce Review. A key recommendation was that a strategic group should be set up to oversee a long-term vision and development plan for workforce reform. The government has set up the Workforce and Quality Group to carry out this work on which UNISON is represented.

School support staff – stars in our schools

327 UNISON's *Stars in our Schools* celebration day continues to grow and 2015 saw the largest engagement yet. Many branches used the run up to the day to visit every school in their county or borough. In some areas, MPs also got involved, recognising the work done by support staff in schools. The day continues to provide an important focus for the whole community – teachers, pupils, parents, and governors – to acknowledge the work done by our members.

Training and development

328 UNISON launched a campaign to promote training and development opportunities for school support

staff and to recruit more learning reps in schools. UNISON has developed a relationship with the National Extension College and we are working together to promote the learning agenda.

Learning Support Worker Registration in Cymru/Wales

329 From April 2016, all learning support workers in Wales will be required to be registered with the Education Workforce Council (EWC). The registration fee is an annual payment of £15 per person. As the union for school support staff, UNISON has been campaigning for local authorities to pay the registration fee for all learning support workers in Wales. As a result of intense lobbying, half of Welsh local authorities have now committed to paying the registration fees for school learning support workers, after concerted lobbying by UNISON Cymru Wales. UNISON will now use this momentum to encourage remaining authorities to pay registration fees also.

Academies (England)

330 The ongoing drive towards academies and free schools in England has continued. We have seen an increasing number of academies using their employment freedoms to restructure staffing, leading to cuts in jobs, downgrading of posts and reducing full time roles to term time only. A new section on the website for academy schools has been launched. This puts relevant information and resources together.

331 UNISON continues to campaign actively for members in academies on issues including the living wage. We have seen several successes with multi-academy trusts agreeing to pay their lowest-paid staff the living wage.

Further Education

332 UNISON continues to campaign against savage cuts facing further education, particularly in England and Wales where funding for post-19 learners has taken the brunt of cuts. A report last year by the National Audit Office highlighted the decline of the financial health of the sector, a trend it forecasts will continue.

333 A #lovefe campaign bringing together unions, employers and other stakeholders has been highlighting the impact of the cuts on students, staff and our wider communities. Further education students are more likely to be from a deprived background compared with school sixth form students, more than 100,000 over-60s are taught in FE colleges each year

and those who rely on FE are more likely to have been hit by other government cuts too. As a result, millions of the most vulnerable adults could now be left without access to any opportunity to improve their education.

334 In 2015 the government announced plans to restructure the further education sector, citing the need to reduce public expenditure as a major driving factor. UNISON is concerned about the threat this raises around job security and site closures or relocations, the failure to include trade unions and learner reps on local steering groups, the impact on staff and the threat of privatisation. UNISON also believes that a potential reduction in FE sites will affect learners' ability to access courses. UNISON will take these concerns forward as a member of the government's national Area Review Advisory Group.

335 In Wales, UNISON is campaigning together with the NUS and UCU to raise the profile of further education provision following years of significant cuts. The campaign highlights the importance of part time and flexible study in enabling adults to return to education, the need for appropriate funding and clear advice and support for potential students.

Higher Education

336 In England, public funding of universities has further decreased, while the trend towards higher fees, competition and outsourcing has continued apace. November 2015 saw a new Green paper for the higher education sector in England which outlined proposals to implement a Teaching Excellence Framework and open the door to increased fees and marketisation. Key areas of policy concern for UNISON continue to be the rapidly escalating cost of attending university and significant levels of long-term debt being accumulated by students. The Educational Maintenance Grant was abolished in January 2016, further closing doors to disadvantaged students. This was compounded by a change to the student debt repayment threshold. UNISON has also highlighted the disproportionate amount of government support directed at for-profit providers; the rapid decline in part-time students (especially mature students and women) and the significant barriers faced by individual groups including disabled people and those from non-traditional backgrounds. UNISON also continues to highlight the lack of accountability of senior managers within HEIs and has urged the government to address issues of accountability and transparency of decision making at all levels.

337 Key campaigns for UNISON within the higher education sector include challenging budget cuts and

redundancies; promoting the living wage and tackling low pay; and the growth of casualisation and zero hour contracts. UNISON has also prioritised tackling equality issues, tackling issues of underrepresentation, bullying and harassment faced by women, Black, disabled and LGBT workers in this sector. UNISON held an equalities seminar in November 2015 attended by Kate Green, Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities. UNISON has taken part in a joint working group focused on the gender pay gap in HE.

338 UNISON has welcomed Scottish government proposals to give unions a seat on university courts, as part of its Higher Education Governance Bill. UNISON believes the move will improve participation in decision-making, giving UNISON members a voice on campus and helping to ensure that Scottish higher education institutions are more inclusive.

339 In Wales, UNISON has campaigned to retain a distinctive approach to Higher Education, while calling on the Wales government to protect and extend access to higher education for working class people. UNISON also made detailed written and oral submissions to the Diamond Review into higher education funding and student finance arrangements in Wales, arguing for greater fairness in resourcing higher education in Wales and a more collaborative, less market-driven approach than the English model. UNISON also highlighted the fact that if education was to live up to the social and economic aspirations placed upon it, opportunities for mature and non-traditional students should be increased, not decreased.

340 UNISON has also focused on the importance of part-time or flexible study, which allows many adults to return to learning though they often face a lack of co-operation from their employer. UNISON has called upon the Welsh government to provide incentives to ensure part-time study and lifelong learning are available to all and commit to genuine equality between full and part-time study.

Climate change

341 Over the last year UNISON campaigned along with the wider UK Climate Coalition Movement and Climate Change Coalition (Scotland Stop Climate Chaos) in the global call for urgent action on climate change at the historic December 2015 Paris United Nations International Climate Change talks.

342 UNISON joined public service trade unions from Public Services International to call for a “just transition” and decent work to ensure that workers and communities benefitted from the Paris UN Climate

Change agreement. As the UK moves from fossil fuel dependent energy sectors to renewable and carbon free energy and industries, the workforce will need to be consulted, jobs protected during the transition and funding made available for new green skills for the workforce.

343 UNISON has continued to work with its key climate change alliances to engage with both the EU and the UK government on how the EU and UK will now meet targets set out in the Paris protocol and the three main targets in the EU’s 2030 climate and energy framework covering:

- cutting greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% from 1990 levels
- renewable energy to comprise at least 27% of electricity generation
- an indicative target of at least 27% more efficient energy use.

344 Working with other trade union organisations such as Trade Unions Sustainable Development Action Committee and Trade Union Energy Democracy UNISON has campaigned for the government to provide a clear national energy plan and strategy for

- the future supply and provision of secure and affordable energy
- transparency and debate on the role and funding of nuclear, renewables and fossil fuel such as shale gas (fracking) and the implementation of the ‘precautionary principle’ and community consultation in decision-making
- the transition to decarbonisation and investments in renewables
- energy efficiency measures and funding to deal with home energy waste and fuel poverty through domestic energy efficient refurbishment of old housing stock
- how a ‘just transition’ on clean energy and green jobs will be agreed.

345 Regions have also actively promoted UNISONs climate change agenda policies in the last year. Both the North West and Scotland regions have held regular Green regional network meetings, invited speakers to take part in Climate Change debates and participated in the national activities and the Peoples March for Climate Change.

346 UNISON will continue in the next year to promote its climate change policies and initiatives working within its EU and UK environment and energy alliances, UNISON service groups and regions.

Housing

347 Over the past year UNISON has been at the forefront of campaigning to challenge and resist government housing reforms, which promote homeownership above affordable and social renting and make little or no provision for those who currently cannot afford to rent or buy in the market due to high housing costs. These reforms include measures contained in the Housing and Planning Bill, which will result in fewer affordable social housing – and cuts to jobs and housing services in local councils – as well as higher social rents, less secure accommodation, longer waiting lists, and increased homelessness and poverty in England.

348 The union has been lobbying and working with MPs and Peers to improve the Housing and Planning Bill. We have held meetings with leading Labour MPs, including John Healey, shadow cabinet minister for housing and planning, and Labour Peers to influence the bill.

349 UNISON has joined an alliance of campaign groups, trade unions, housing organisations and tenants from all sectors to campaign around housing issues, including the acute shortage of housing, affecting our members and the wider public. The group's campaign, *Kill the Housing Bill – Secure Homes for All*, hosted a meeting in the House of Lords in February 2016 where UNISON gave evidence about the impact of housing and welfare reforms on key workers, providing essential public services.

350 UNISON has supported key activities of the housing campaign group, including urging our members to sign an online petition against the detrimental measures of the Housing and Planning Bill. UNISON also supported a national demonstration against the bill which took place in March 2016.

351 UNISON is also working with the TUC and other organisations, including Generation Rent, to call for stronger measures to effectively regulate the private rented sector to improve accessibility, affordability and conditions. As part of this work, the TUC produced a Young Workers' Housing Charter, which was launched in 2015. This calls for a range of measures to regulate the sector by introducing stronger rent controls and better regulation to drive up standards, strengthen tenants' rights and improve conditions.

352 UNISON is involved in a policy development programme, *Housing and Life Experiences*, commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and led by the Centre for Housing Policy (CHP) at the University of York, which seeks to focus on preventing, mitigating and reducing poverty in housing. We have provided evidence on housing and welfare policy and how this impacts on housing options and poverty for citizens and our members. The project's findings will be used to make recommendations to government, local authorities and other organisations in housing provision to inform decisions on meeting the UK's housing needs.

353 The union will continue to lobby parliamentarians and work with campaign groups and other organisations to develop policy solutions to shape and influence housing policy.

Welfare reform and benefit cuts

354 Over the last year UNISON has continued to work with the Social Security Consortium in its parliamentary campaigns to ensure that welfare reforms and budget benefit cuts did not just disproportionately affect households with the lowest incomes and the most needy and vulnerable.

355 UNISON objected to all the key provisions in the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 and contributed to MP and Peers meetings, briefings and amendments throughout the parliamentary passage of the Bill.

356 There were few amendment concessions agreed by the government in the final Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 and UNISON continues to campaign on the unfairness and negative equality impacts of the act and other benefit budget cuts.

357 In 2015, UNISON in alliance with cross party peers and the consortium won a common-sense victory for ordinary working people in getting George Osborne's planned cuts to working tax credits to be abandoned completely. It was clear to all that this tax credit cut would hit unfairly and disproportionately 3 million working families in the UK, resulting in the average loss of £1,350 per year.

358 UNISON members – over 75,000 of whom used a UNISON online calculator to find out how they would be affected – were willing to talk publicly about their already stretched finances and the distress, anxiety and hardship the cuts would cause. Their stories convinced the public and government that the unfair tax credits grab was clearly wrong.

359 UNISON will continue to campaign against further tax credit cuts, which will now happen as families move over to Universal Credit, and instead argue for higher wages so that families and low income households have less need for benefit and tax credit top ups.

360 UNISON will continue to work with the consortium and other anti-poverty and welfare organisations, MPs and Peers, government officials in the Social Security Advisory Committee and the DWP. We will continue across the union – service groups, self-organised groups and the UNISON welfare charity There for You on key aspects of in-work benefits, equalities and human rights emerging from the government’s welfare reforms.

Political Funds and the Trade Union Bill

361 The Trade Union Bill included measures with far-reaching consequences for the political fund. At the time of writing it is still unclear whether these will be included in un-amended form in the final act. If the bill is un-amended, unions with political funds will be required to move from a system whereby they offer members the choice to ‘opt out’ of the political fund, to one in which they have to go back to all members to ask them to ‘opt-in’ (in writing) to the political fund. Unions will be required to repeat this process every five years. The transition time for opting members in is three months. While at the time of writing the union continues to lobby hard to secure changes and concessions to the bill, it has been necessary to formulate draft rule changes to bring to NDC 2016 to make provision for the short term. This would provide some breathing space to enable the union to develop a longer-term response. The political committees and the NEC approved the rule changes unanimously. It is hoped that the rule changes can be withdrawn prior to conference – although this will depend on the final shape of the legislation. The bill also includes more onerous reporting requirements on trade unions with political funds. All spending above £2000 would need to be detailed in returns to the Certification Officer. If un-amended this would impose significant administrative burdens on the union.

Labour Link

362 Following the general election defeat and the resignation of Ed Miliband, the Labour Party conducted a leadership election over the summer months. The election was held under a new system which allowed votes not just from individual members but also affiliated supporters and registered

supporters. UNISON Labour Link encouraged our affiliated members to sign up as affiliated supporters so that they could participate in the vote and 20,000 did so. We ran hustings with all the candidates both for leader and deputy at our forum in July and consulted our regions on who to nominate. The key issues raised by regions were an alternative to the government’s austerity agenda and support for public services. The national committee received the results and agreed to nominate Jeremy Corbyn for leader and Angela Eagle for deputy. During the campaign party, membership almost doubled and together with affiliated and registered supporters there was an electorate of 550,000 people. The result in September showed an overwhelming victory for Jeremy Corbyn as leader with Tom Watson as deputy.

363 The new shadow cabinet has established a clear anti-austerity position for the party and we have worked closely with the party to oppose much of the government’s legislative agenda in Parliament and expose their continuing assault on public services.

364 The campaigning work led by UNISON on the real impact of George Osborne’s proposed cuts to tax credits forced a government U-turn as did the widespread opposition to further cuts to police spending. We have also been active in opposing the ending of nurse bursaries, attacks on social housing and the recent proposals for cuts to disability payments.

365 In July the government published its Trade Union Bill which saw proposals to impose ballot thresholds for industrial action, strict rules on picketing and a fundamental change to union political funds which would result in the curtailment of unions’ ability to campaign and major cuts to Labour Party affiliations. In October at committee stage the government added an amendment to prevent public sector employers allowing members to choose to pay union subscriptions by check-off. Labour Link has worked with the party and others to oppose this fundamental attack on union organisation and campaigning. We have worked closely with Labour in the Lords to build wide opposition to the check-off and political fund proposals.

366 With important elections in May we are coordinating our activities with Wales, Scotland, London and our regions to support Labour. We are also highlighting the importance of the Police and Crime Commissioner elections across England and Wales for our members.

General Political Fund

367 The General Political Fund (GPF) approved more than 40 bids during the period May 2015 to February 2016. Financial support provided by the GPF helped a broad range of activity across all parts of the UK, including: the 2016 election campaign (see above), the fight against racism and extremism; support for the wide ranging equalities agenda; the campaign for the living wage; opposition to austerity; support for more progressive taxation; effective measures to combat climate change and rejection of TTIP.

368 The national GPF committee held an away-day in October 2015 to examine the implications of the trade union bill for the future operation of the political fund, develop its post-general election strategy and identify ways of improving accessibility to the fund to all parts of the union. New guidance was subsequently published to help those making bids and to encourage bidders to focus on the union's overall campaign priorities. Further improvements to the administration of the fund are in train, but final arrangements are dependent on the outcome of the Trade Union Bill. The committee has also embarked upon a programme of presentations to regional councils aimed at boosting the profile of the fund.

*Political Fund membership as at 31 December 2015
(as a % of total fund paying membership)*

Affiliated Political Fund = 30% (371,925)

General Political Fund = 62% (768,645)

Cleaners Taskforce

369 UNISON has approximately 40,000 members working in the cleaning industry.

370 In early 2015 UNISON was asked to be part of a project working with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to establish some recommendations for improving working conditions for people working in the cleaning industry.

371 At the beginning of last year the EHRC did initial research (including some focus groups drawn together from UNISON members) which showed that cleaners often get a raw deal in terms of employment practices. As a result of that research, the EHRC set up a taskforce to work through the common issues and come up with a set of recommendations to support employers and employees in the cleaning industry – the issues covered included best practice employment

contracts in the cleaning industry and greater dignity and respect in the workplace as well as improving access to the same rights and benefits as other employees.

372 UNISON was proud to be invited onto the taskforce and although we didn't achieve everything we hoped (like an absolute commitment to paying at least the living wage) the finished products are a big step in the right direction for recognising the vital work that cleaners do.

Campaigning against the politics of hate

373 Following the fracturing of the parties of the far right and a series of electoral defeats, UNISON's work campaigning against the politics of hate at the ballot box began to focus on UKIP, whose domination of public debate around immigration, race and national identity at last year's general election caused deep concern. Relentless campaigning and focused get-out-the-vote efforts highlighting UKIP candidates' racist, homophobic, sexist and disablist comments took a steady and marked toll on their popularity over the course of the 2015 general election campaign. UKIP, and in particular, Nigel Farage's favourability ratings soon hit a hard ceiling. UKIP ended the election campaign with one fewer MP than it had started with. However, with nearly 4 million votes gained, and 150 new UKIP councillors elected, this work continues to be an ongoing political priority for UNISON.

Immigration

374 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 working for decent pay, stronger employment rights and respect for all. UNISON's work focuses on the day-to-day practical support needed for migrant workers, immigrants and refugees/asylum seekers – whatever the latest attacks from the government or the media. In recent years, this work has been supplemented by supporting positive contributions to the immigration debate, and challenging hostile measures from government which ultimately penalise all vulnerable workers.

375 UNISON continues to support and work with groups of migrant workers and with organisations such as the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and Migrant Rights Network to amplify their voice and widen the political space for a positive message on immigration.

376 During the 2015 general election, UNISON's campaigning work on these issues focused on integrating messages around voter registration, voting and the impact of party policies for public services, for workers and trade union members within existing member communications. Messages and articles in the main UNISON publications were supported by targeted local campaigns. Year-long organising work with migrant workers, young workers and the LGBT self-organised group to promote the union's anti-racist message was also integrated into the broader campaign to raise awareness and increase voter turnout.

377 At Christmas, the president, Wendy Nichols, launched a *Refugee Charity Appeal* to highlight vital, lifesaving work being done by charities such as Doctors of the World, the Refugee Council, Refugee Action, Women for Refugee Women and City of Sanctuary who focused on both immediate and long-term needs of vulnerable refugee people

The 'Prevent' Duty

378 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 included a provision which places a general requirement on specified authorities to "have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism." The "specified authorities" include local authorities, the NHS, schools, further and higher education bodies, probation service providers and police forces across England, Wales and Scotland.

379 UNISON has been highlighting its deep concerns about the reach and effect of Prevent on public services and the position it places public sector workers in. UNISON has been working with the TUC on a trade union wide response to Prevent, particularly in an anti-racist, anti-discriminatory context. In the meantime, advice to branches has highlighted important safeguards under freedom of speech, equality and data protection legislation which limit the scope for abuse of the Prevent Duty in Great Britain.

International

380 As one of the largest public service unions in the world UNISON recognises the importance of international trade union solidarity and plays a leading role in the European federation of Public Service Unions and Public Services International. The UNISON International Development Fund (UIDF) is an important tool in delivering real trade union solidarity. The UIDF has funded 25 projects in 18 countries in the past year.

381 Palestine was the top priority for the international committee in 2015-16. UNISON developed a campaign pack for members and branches to influence companies involved in the illegal occupation of Palestine, through their investments in the Local Government Pension Scheme. We began to develop resources for members in other pension schemes to do the same. Regrettably in October 2015 the government announced it was seeking to prevent public bodies from considering human rights concerns in other countries when making investment and procurement decisions. UNISON is responding to this threat, including working with NGO partners.

382 In April 2016 UNISON, supported by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, took a delegation to Palestine to meet trade unions and civil society representatives, to strengthen our links and further develop our work.

383 The UIDF continued to support projects organising migrant agricultural workers and Palestinian workers in the settlements. We are also supporting new projects working with Palestinian women in East Jerusalem, organising Palestinian workers in the Jordan Valley and supporting trade union education.

384 UNISON sent its first delegation in five years to Colombia at the end of 2015 made up of national executive council and regional representatives which was able to meet with trade unions and social movements. There have been 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.

385 Nevertheless there cannot be lasting peace in Colombia without a commitment to social and economic justice as the country remains one of the most unequal in the world. For this reason, Colombia is the country with the largest number of UIDF projects supporting trade unions and human rights organisations. UNISON continued to highlight the plight of Colombia's political prisoners, including many trade unionists, including Huber Ballesteros and Miguel Beltran who the delegation was able to visit in prison.

386 UNISON continued to work with a range of Latin American solidarity campaigns including Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela. The UIDF supported projects in Nicaragua, Costa Rica and a campaign against water privatisation in Peru.

387 Building on our long-standing links with Southern Africa UNISON continued to support trade union

demands for democracy and workers' rights in Swaziland, including calls for the Commonwealth Heads of Government to address the denial of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We supported Action for Southern Africa to produce an exhibition on Swaziland, briefings and actions targeting the Commonwealth, and brought Vincent Ncongwane, the secretary general of the Trade Union Congress of Swaziland, to the UK.

388 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) continues to be a priority for UNISON's international work. These treaties could have a major impact on the way public services are organised; on the right of governments to regulate in the public interest; and on employment and trade union rights. UNISON has been central to the no-TTIP coalition in the UK and has worked closely with our European and global trade union federations.

389 UNISON continues to be part of the TUC's Playfair Qatar campaign calling for the abolition of the Kafala system of sponsorship which traps migrant workers in abusive positions. UNISON activists around the country have been engaging in the campaign, and the higher education executive has developed policy to engage higher education institutions opening up campuses in Qatar.

390 As part of UNISON's strategy to raise the profile of the Playfair Qatar campaign, a series of events took place at NDC in 2015 with ex-international footballer Abdes Ouaddou taking part in a penalty shoot out with Dave Prentis in the UNIZONE. The UIDF has enabled Anti-Slavery International to develop a project in which seeks to empower and educate would-be migrants before travelling to the Middle East.

391 Since the collapse of Rana Plaza in Bangladesh in 2013 when over 1,100 mostly young women lost their lives, UNISON has supported a number of initiatives to support the fledgling trade union movement in the garment sector. One of the projects has enabled a union federation to open up an office outside Dhaka. It provides advice and represents workers in disputes.

392 As part of UNISON's policy to support workers in the supply chain we have also been developing a strategy for members to engage with their employers, especially in health and local government, to develop ethical procurement policies to ensure there is no abuse in public procurement supply chains which are valued at billions of pounds per annum.

393 UNISON continued to support West African health unions in their response to the Ebola crisis, through our work with Public Services International (PSI). This project is supporting unions to campaign for quality public health services to address years of underfunding and privatisation, and ensure they are fully involved in planning for future health crises. We submitted evidence to the international development select committee enquiry on Ebola arguing for quality public health services in West Africa, and are building on this with new work campaigning against the damaging impact of the UK Department for International Development's health privatisation agenda.

394 UNISON continues to attract high-profile speakers to its annual international seminar which was held in Sheffield this year and attracted nearly one hundred branch and regional activists.

Objective 4: Resources

Our membership records

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

396 The ability to join UNISON online has continued to be very successful for potential members, with some 60 per cent of new members now joining online. A total of over 460,000 applicants have applied to join UNISON this way.

397 We continue to improve our direct debit services as we currently collect over 300,000 direct debit payments every month. Last year we introduced an additional monthly collection date and we intend to offer more collection dates, whilst maintaining the reliability of our direct debit process. Our membership system including RMS, WARMS and UNISON Direct have been enhanced so it's possible to easily switch members in large numbers from DOCAS to Direct Debit if the need arises due to proposed legislation in the Trade Union Bill.

398 UNISON's secure, web-based membership system for branches is called WARMS. With over 800 branches able to use WARMS, feedback remains positive as enhancements are made to WARMS throughout the year. It is available to all branch secretaries, membership officers and branch administrators. UNISON has also piloted a simple web-based organising tool based on a cut-down version of WARMS that is specifically for mobile devices. This tool allows users to amend members personal and contact details, as well as recording member responses during face-to-face contact. We are currently reviewing the most effective method to deploy this new tool taking into account training and system support.

From UNISONplus to UNISON Living

399 UNISON's membership benefits package is valued and important; it underpins UNISON's organising strategy by offering members access to a wide range of services and products.

400 This year we have completed a comprehensive review of UNISON's membership services package, developing a new identity including a name, logo, look and feel and an annual marketing and communications

plan for our endorsed affinity partners benefit package. The new identity will be introduced at this year's national delegate conference and work is ongoing to develop and increase the value of the package. UNISON is undertaking a robust study of the benefits market and search to identify new providers, services and products to add to its affinity package to deliver the greatest benefits to members and UNISON.

401 In addition to growing the affinity group, motivated by the core values of credibility, sustainability and accountability, UNISON will also be looking to add exclusive and substantial deals and discounts to the benefits package to include a lifestyle focus.

402 The aim is to create a member benefit scheme that is valued by our members and their family, frequently used and often recommended.

403 The success of UNISON's 2016 UNISON Big Prize Draw initiative supported by our affinity partners (UNISONprotect, UIA mutual, UNISON Health and Dental Plans) to make UNISON stronger by updating contact details, will help us to maximise digital communications channels to raise awareness of the full benefits package.

404 The national executive council's services to members committee reviewed The Tax Refund Company service specifically in 2015 and decided not to enter into a new contract with the company but to continue to monitor the demand for an endorsed tax review/refund service provider and in the interim direct members to the HMRC free on line service.

Legal services

405 UNISON's legal team mounted a challenge to the government's decision to introduce a fees regime in the Employment Tribunals and Employment Appeal Tribunals in July 2013.

406 Before the introduction of fees on 29 July 2013, the Employment Tribunals received an average of 48,000 new claims per quarter but since then there has been a 70% drop in claims.

407 The High Court in the first judicial review appeared to accept the union's argument, but ruled that because the fees were introduced in July 2013 the

claim was premature as the full impact could not be judged. A further High Court action was filed, but was also unsuccessful despite Lord Justice Elias commenting on ‘the striking and very dramatic reduction in claims’ and stating that some workers would have insufficient funds to bring claims. Permission to appeal was granted but in August 2015, the Court of Appeal rejected UNISON’s appeal, with Lord Justice Underhill describing the case as ‘troubling’, and expressed a ‘strong suspicion that so large a decline [in claims] is unlikely to be accounted for entirely by cases of ‘won’t pay’ and [that] it must also reflect at least some cases of ‘can’t pay’.

408 In February 2016, the Supreme Court agreed that UNISON’s appeal could proceed to a full hearing. UNISON’s challenge has been several years in the making, but we are determined to keep up the fight, and this year the Supreme Court will decide whether or not this fees regime is lawful.

409 In a landmark case, *Lock v British Gas*, 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 employee of 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 and Mr Lock should receive payment in respect of commission for periods of annual leave. British Gas appealed to the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) and on 22 February 2016 the EAT rejected British Gas’s appeal. British Gas have requested and been granted permission to appeal this decision to Court of Appeal.

410 UNISON is exploring litigation options in relation to a challenge to the Trade Union Bill. If passed as currently drafted it poses a significant attack on trade unions and working people. Extensive preparatory work is being done to ensure that UNISON is able respond and challenge the bill when enacted.

411 We are also looking at developing a litigation strategy to support the union’s wider organising strategy around home care workers. We are building a significant challenge to non-compliance with national minimum wage by a number of providers. This will support the intensive work being done to recruit and organise low paid workers in the care sector.

412 UNISON has brought several successful TUPE challenges in the careers service and health sectors; and is currently fighting two cases at the Court of

Appeal over trade union discrimination, and breaches of Article 11 (the right of freedom of association) of the European Convention on Human Rights.

413 2015 saw the conclusion of two of the largest post-Single Status equal pay cases in Scotland. Under sustained litigation pressure, North Lanarkshire and Fife councils finally agreed to settle members’ claims at near full value for the three year protection period and significant compensation for failures in implementing job evaluation. Both councils have also committed to independent reviews of current evaluations in claimant job groups. Litigation against Glasgow City council, the largest in Scotland, continues with a recent EAT judgment referring protection issues back to the Employment Tribunal.

Professional Services

414 UNISON continues to see a growth in cases relating to issues around professional registration and regulation. The largest source of cases is the Nursing and Midwifery Council which announced an increase of 14% of referrals in 2015. The second-largest professional regulator, the Health and Care Professions Council has almost trebled the number of cases received since 2012.

415 As well as the rise in case referrals over the last four years the number of staff who are subject to professional regulatory bodies is certain to rise as school-based members in Wales come under a professional body for the first time. Social care support staff in Scotland have joined social workers under the jurisdiction of a regulatory council and the Northern Ireland parliament has approved similar plans which will treble the number of social care staff who are subject to professional regulation.

416 In order to manage this increase in referrals, stricter vetting procedures have been introduced to ensure that only fully-eligible UNISON members receive representation.

417 In total, UNISON has over 500 cases including the 246 new referrals received in 2015 and has a success rate much higher than the national average which has been achievable thanks to branches and regional staff working together with the centre.

Fighting fund

418 UNISON currently employs 123 fighting fund organisers to work directly with branches on recruitment and organisation.

419 Fighting fund organisers carry out direct recruitment, provide steward support and contribute towards building local bargaining and representation structures alongside local activist colleagues.

420 Over the course of 2015, over 5,600 workplace visits took place identifying approximately 1,000 potential new activists and 5,000 new members. Over 25,000 conversations took place encouraging new members to join and over 23,000 conversations took place with existing members ensuring they retain their membership and participate in the union. Fighting fund area organisers have assisted with over 600 cases.

421 Fighting fund projects are running in all service groups with many projects being shared across different branches and sectors. Branches of all sizes and levels of organisation have been able to access fighting fund resources.

422 The amount of match-funding contributed from branches continues to increase year-on-year demonstrating the clear benefit experienced by branches and commitment to ensure that the resource continues to be accessible to other branches in the future.

423 Co-ordination across the fund has helped learning to be shared across the union where new ideas that work can quickly be shared to colleagues facing similar challenges in another part of the union.

424 Learning and data collected from the fund organisers has informed the strategy development around any potential DOCAS to Direct Debit switch campaign.

425 Fighting fund positions have given the opportunity to gain practical experience of what working for a trade union is like to a wide range of people from a variety of walks of life.

DOCAS to Direct Debit pilots

426 Although UNISON is committed to fighting the Trade Union Bill, in October 2015 three regional pilots were commissioned in the North West, South East and West Midlands to explore how UNISON would approach a mass DOCAS to Direct Debit switch if the bill is passed unamended, outlawing the payment of trade union subscriptions directly from public service workers' salaries. These pilots are being overseen by a pilot support group made up of UNISON Centre and regional representatives.

427 The pilots have built on learning from UNISON's

experiences within the National Probation Service and those of other unions. The primary objective is to ensure that members retain their membership and to limit the effort required for them to do so. It aims to conduct this exercise as efficiently and effectively as possible while taking the opportunity to re-engage, organise and recruit.

428 The branches involved in the pilots have specifically been identified to cover a range of different workplaces from small district branches, large local government branches with members fragmented across schools and small employers to significant health branches with large hospital sites. Similarly they have different levels of organisation and facilities available to them. The aim of this is to ensure that plans are robust enough to ensure all members can be reached.

429 UNISON has taken the opportunity to trial innovative mobile technology and more sophisticated digital communications. A new online switch form is in place to allow members to go online to switch at their convenience. A new mobile campaign tool (MCT) has been developed based on the web-based membership records system to assist branches and organisers to work together to organise members in a switch campaign. We have been exploring large-scale outbound-calling to members and text messaging. The aim is that all of these approaches will be jointly co-ordinated through the new systems.

430 Earlier in the year, UNISON launched its largest prize draw to date to encourage members to update their details to ensure the union can contact them by as many different routes as possible.

431 Further work is being undertaken to explore alternative options to Direct Debit where this might not be the best payment method for members. Different approaches are being developed to address the numerous types of DOCAS payroll arrangements to ensure that DOCAS deductions cease promptly.

432 Activists and organisers have been jointly exploring different ways to engage with all their members within the pilot areas regardless of working arrangements, shift pattern or site. To establish trust with members that this exercise is genuine these events are high profile with numerous activists and organisers in attendance with UNISON branding highly visible.

433 Initial findings show that the pilots have been of significant benefit across UNISON in terms of learning and positively also in terms of recruiting and organising new members.

Conferences

434 Information showing participation by delegates in UNISON conferences can be seen in Appendix I.

435 The attendance at self-organised group conferences continues to grow and this is a UNISON success story.

436 The NEC is working with UNISON Scotland to resolve industrial issues at the Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre (SECC) and will not be returning to the venue for conferences until they are resolved to the union's satisfaction.

Industrial action

437 Since last conference over 15,000 members have been balloted in local and national ballots.

438 Members took action in a variety of workplaces including:

- All members in FE colleges in England
- Members working for the National Probation Service (England and Wales)
- Paramedics in the North East
- Traffic enforcement members in Camden
- Porters in Hull university

The NEC at each meeting received reports on all ballots and action taken.

UNISON continued to challenge on the TU Bill and to resist potential changes which could seriously hamper our members rights to take industrial action.

The industrial action committee will continue to review UNISON processes and any changes in the law. They have undertaken an initial review of UNISON strike pay and hardship payment arrangements.

In December 2015 the committee agreed to increase strike pay from £15 to £25 per day. As before once a fourth day of action has been undertaken strike pay is payable from the first day.

Branch finances

The last five years have proved the most difficult for UNISON and for the public service workers we

represent since our union was formed. The impact has been to put additional pressures on the union and its branches in terms of the support needed by members. Although we are recruiting strongly, the loss of public service jobs is reflected in falling membership income to the union.

These challenges look set to grow with the Conservative government now free of any constraint imposed by coalition and pushing through hostile legislation, such as the Trade Union Bill. The union and branches are under huge pressure to maintain the services our members need in an environment of increasing privatisation, fragmentation and political hostility.

The branch resources review has already introduced significant changes to the way finance and resources are managed at branch level. This included the introduction of annual budgeting, production of NEC policy on an expenses framework, advice on tax matters and the further development of the new online branch accounts system (OLBA) to support branches in budgeting and financial management.

Conference asked for an implementation group to undertake further work and make recommendations to the NEC on the practical application of the working group's findings. This group consists of representatives from the NEC, regions and branches.. Full details on this and proposals for the future are included in a separate NEC report to conference and are the subject of a motion for debate.

Analysis of recent branch financial data shows that overall even though membership and income have declined during this period, branch finances have remained robust with branch reserves growing each year. However, this does not mean that all our branches have sufficient funds to operate effectively in the current climate.

The focus of the review has been on providing a mechanism for the fair distribution of branch finances and the most effective use of our resources through sharing them where possible and improving participation in our democratic process. In conjunction with all this, is the ongoing work in respect of branch employed staff, procurement and maximising return on branch savings and investment. The branch resources review is taking constructive suggestions from all representative groups into consideration to shape these into a solution which will meet the union's needs as a whole and for the longer term.

The review outlines the need for bold steps in an evolving process of updating our financial management and resourcing. But it also aims to make

a fundamental shift by proposing an immediate process for injecting additional funds where they are most needed, giving financially-stressed branches an automatic boost in funding and resources. Throughout this process proposals have been based on a careful appraisal of financial data, discussed with stakeholders and feedback sought and acted upon before piloting the new approaches. The testing of activity-based budgeting is underway and has received widespread support. It may provide the solution and basis for effective branch resourcing and sound financial management to build branch stability and to ensure short and long term strength.

The review process has been lengthy and will continue. It is gradually introducing a culture change in UNISON and this takes time and requires the full engagement of branches and regions in supporting the case for change and testing the specific proposals before widespread introduction.

Financial governance

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

During 2015, the union and its members continued to face the challenges and further attacks from the political administration by way of cuts in public spending and public service jobs affecting our members directly. However the union faces its most significant challenge with the Trade Union bill as a direct attack on the trade union movement, its democracy and finances. Whilst union has weathered the last few years reasonably well considering the economic and political climate, the removal of DOCAS as threatened could have far reaching and as yet an unquantifiable impact on the union, its income and membership.

Subscription income in 2015 has declined for the fourth consecutive year to just over £167 million. Nevertheless, our finances show that general fund reserves which stands at just over £200 million (before pensions deficit offset) is a positive indication of the union's current and continued financial strength.

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

- Operating within balanced budgets and controlling expenditure within our means and income each year.

- Avoid use of reserves to meet day-to-day operational costs thus maintaining a strong financial base.
- Ensuring sufficient cash is available to meet our objectives and our capital requirements to maintain our infrastructure.

There is still a deficit in the staff pension schemes as reported in the financial statements which is being addressed. The figures reported are calculated under Financial Reporting Standard 102 although they fluctuate year to year. At the time of the triennial valuation in June 2014 the deficit had increased to £123 million. This is not unique to UNISON, The majority of defined benefit schemes are facing similar challenges as a result of low interest rates resulting in lower than expected returns on UK government gilts. Since the valuation, UNISON has been working very closely with the pension trustees, the staff trade unions and members of the UNISON national executive council, to put together a set of proposals that will clear the deficit over the long-term thereby placing the scheme on a firm and secure footing for current and future members. The revised recovery plan aims to provide savings to the scheme of £156 million which is higher than the deficit itself as a measure to cover any further potential deterioration of the funding position.

The union continues to have a solid financial platform to deliver the planned work ahead and to meet the challenges ahead through robust management of costs and budgets. The work of the branch resources review aims to ensure sustainable and effective branch resourcing, to enable the union to remain financially stable. With subscription income budgeted to remain steady albeit marginally lower than at current level, the outlook for 2016 is even more challenging but still manageable.

Raising membership and thus income must be prioritised to ensure we continue to improve the services and support to our members and ensure strength through recruitment and retention. The fighting fund initiatives as well as targeted recruitment campaigns, strategic marketing and communications are crucial to this. In the shorter term, with reducing income, expenditure must continue to be carefully planned and reviewed at all levels of the union to ensure it is in line with financial planning and strategy. The union has to continue using the resources that are available more effectively and efficiently. We must continue to build a stronger union in our resources, our finances and our commitment to our members.

UNISON Staff Pension Scheme and shareholder engagement

UNISON provides retirement and death benefits for employees of UNISON, UIA and 151 UNISON branches. The UNISON Staff Pension Scheme is currently a contracted-out defined benefit arrangement open to new members. Contracting-out of the State Second pension (S2P) will cease with effect from 6 April 2016 as part of the government's state pension reforms.

The scheme and its assets are managed by a board of eight trustees who meet at least four times a year. The trustees receive regular training throughout the year and also have the support of various professional advisers.

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 (TUSO) scheme, a voting and engagement project. The trustees support TUSO initiatives such as the precarious work investor project (which has led to campaign activity at Sports Direct) and the Qatar construction engagement (working with the International Trade Union Confederation). The trustees are also signatories to the United Nations principles for responsible investment.

Appendix 1 UNISON conferences delegate attendance 2011 – 2015/16

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	481	1252	112	140	46	121	35	102	769	1181	1438	3061	383	549	102	292	193	392	272	462
2016	403	683	462	821	111	238	97	207	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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 Black Members' Conference, Women's Conference and Retired Members' Conference has continued to increase to their highest ever levels in the last 12 months, while there has been a slight increase on previous years' figures for Community, Health, Local Government and National Delegate Conferences.

The different size and shape of each conference results in UNISON using a variety of venues and this year included a return to the refurbished Venue Cymru, Llandudno.

Appendix 2

Monitoring Information

UNISON is committed to 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 (proportionality) is:

Membership	Full members 77% Retired members 61% Overall (all categories) 75%
Accredited stewards	52%
Health and safety reps	44%
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.

2015 national delegate conference – information on delegates

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

Female	59%
Part-time workers	19%
Black members	16%
Disabled members	16%
Young members (under 27)	4%

By service group:

Local government	45%
Water, environment, transport	2%
Health care	30%
Energy	2%
Police and justice	5%
Community	4%
Higher education	6%
No response	6%

Subscription band

A Up to 2,000	1%
B 2,001 – 5,000	1%
C 5,001 – 8,000	1%
D 8,001 – 11,000	2%
E 11,001 – 14,000	5%
F 14,001 – 17,000	9%
G 17,001 – 20,000	15%
H 20,001 – 25,000	19%
I 25,001 – 30,000	16%
J 30,001 – 35,000	13%
K Over 35,000	9%
Member in education / apprenticeship or on unpaid leave	
No response	9%

National executive council 2014 – 2015

Female	58%
Male	42%

Ethnicity

Black African	4%
Black UK	4%
Irish	4%
White UK	88%
White other	%

Disabled

Yes	33%
No	67%

Service group

Local government	45%
Health care	29%
Community	8%
Police and justice	8%
Water, environment, transport	4%
Higher education	4%

Subs band

A – D (up to £11k)	16%
E – G (£11,001 - £20k)	20%
H – K (above £20k)	64%
Member in education/apprenticeship	0%

Age

16-26	4%
27-39	4%
40-49	4%
50+	88%
Not answered	0%

