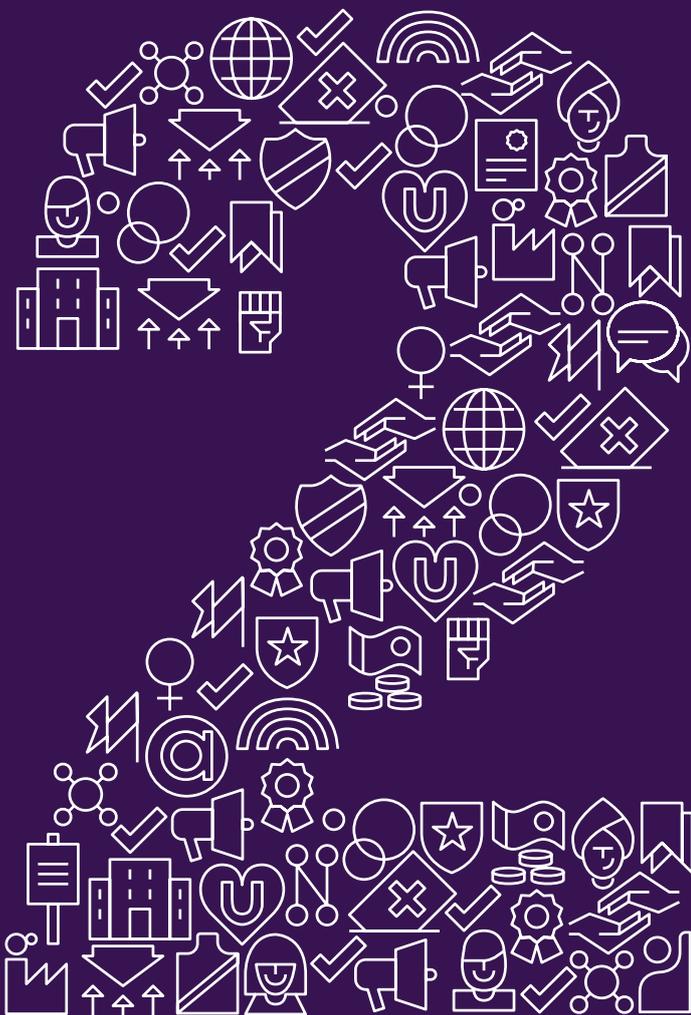


Celebrating 25 years in UNISON

National Delegate Conference 2018
NEC Annual Report



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Introduction

This year, our union celebrates an important milestone—our 25th anniversary. Formed by the merger of three great unions—NALGO, NUPE and COHSE—we were told that it could not be done, that it would not work and that our efforts were doomed to failure. On countless occasions UNISON's downfall has been predicted and UNISON members were counted out.

Those of us who know UNISON members—who are UNISON members—know how big a mistake that was. As the people who heal us, educate us, keep us safe and ensure that we receive care, support and vital services every single day, UNISON people are special people, and the union we have built together is a special union.

Thanks to you—thanks to all of you.

Through every challenge we have continued to move forwards, not just surviving but thriving. Last year nearly 160,000 people joined UNISON and 80% of them were women—further securing our status as the biggest membership organisation for women in our country.

This is a union led by members and where everything that happens starts and ends with the experience of our members. That's why we're not just the biggest union, we're also the best.

The union we have built together was designed to serve its members and we have succeeded in that. Yet whilst we can look back proudly on a quarter of a century of achievement, we owe it to ourselves and to all of our members to redouble our efforts and ensure that in the next 25 years we are a better union still. A union as fit for the next quarter of a century as we have been since our foundation back in 1993.

Ours is a young union and a vibrant union. So while our proud history stretches back more than a century through our predecessor unions, we are not bound by our past. Our focus has to be on looking forwards and building the best possible union for our current and future members.

We can build on our legacy of inclusivity, tolerance and caring and use our collective power to demand so much more—from government, employers and society as a whole.

We can be proud that we're a union that's member-led but go further still, putting more power in the hands of UNISON members, especially women members—the majority of our members—whose voices must never be drowned out.

And we can be confident that our traditions of openness, transparency and democracy can be deepened and strengthened so that ours is the most accessible, responsive and visible union around.

In the years ahead we must work together, united by a shared purpose to build that better union—not of a million members but millions of members. A union that always goes the extra mile. A union that is always working towards our next milestone. A union that cares about every single member.

A union that marches forwards together—in UNISON.

Margaret McKee

Margaret McKee
UNISON president

Dave Prentis

Dave Prentis
UNISON general secretary

Chapter one

Growing the union

Our union is 25 years old this year. But if we are to face the next 25 years with confidence and strength, we need to keep recruiting new members and organising in workplaces. UNISON has always had a steady rate of people joining and leaving; reflecting the sectors we organise in. But years of austerity and cuts to public service funding and jobs mean that the challenge has grown.

Organising and recruitment

¹ UNISON continues to recruit robustly across all categories of public service workers. The union recruited a remarkable 155,071 new members during 2017. This figure, which on its own would equal the size of the ninth largest affiliate of the TUC, was a 4% increase on the previous year. This is a credit to our activists, organising staff and our ongoing recruitment marketing campaign; all of which have helped make UNISON one of the strongest recruiting unions in the world.

² There is considerable variation in recruitment across regions. Most regions showed an increase in recruitment during 2017. The year to date (from January to March) is already showing recruitment levels outstripping the same period last year of 14,936 as compared to 12,971 and 11,787 in 2016. UNISON aims to encourage the sharing of good practice and new organising techniques between regions through the work of the strategic organising unit.

³ The Organising Space is proving to be a useful and popular tool for sharing organising information across regions. There have been more than 41,000 logins by activists and staff since it was launched three years ago. There is an ever-growing library of organising resources available plus a number of forums on specific topics such as organising migrant workers, digital organising and organising through learning.

⁴ Future developments of the UNISON app for mobile phones will also aim to support organising and recruitment initiatives especially for potential members in difficult-to-reach environments. The app is partially available to non-members as a way of attracting them into UNISON membership. Its primary purpose is to help activists and staff recruit and build union capacity through organising-related challenges.

⁵ There continues to be an increase in the recruitment of members who deliver public services but are employed by private sector companies. During 2017 the union had a net increase of 4,000 new members from the private sector. The development and organisation committee of the national executive council (NEC) has continued to support our private sector growth by focusing on the two national organising priorities of the union. These two major companies are Sodexo and Compass. Organisers have been deployed on a three-year organising campaign to work with branches and regions throughout the country to help build membership and a strong activist base within each company. These two private companies are not the only ones where we have members delivering public services, but they are both major players where we already have recognition rights as well as some

existing membership and organisation already in place. This makes for a solid foundation from which to continue to grow and spread our influence with other major private companies.

6 The North West region of UNISON has continued to make positive progress in a major project aimed at recruiting and organising social care workers. Membership and activist levels from the care sector are up and they have persuaded a number of councils to pass motions granting UNISON access to the social care workforce in every provider company commissioned by those councils. The positive practices from the project have been shared with branches and regions across the rest of the union.

7 Since passing its first motion at national delegate conference in 2017, the new national private contractors forum has gone from strength to strength. It meets three times a year and takes a strategic view on UNISON's work with and in private contractors; including analysing recruitment trends, discussing organising projects and making recommendations on how we better support members in the sector. In addition to national delegate conference the forum is now sending delegates to service group conferences to ensure the voices of members in private contractors are heard at all levels of the union.

8 The national forum is underpinned by a number of company forums where reps are able to discuss more company-specific issues. This is a space for members to come together to share both successes and challenges and to get advice from fellow members and officers from the private contractors unit. This enables the union to take a coordinated approach to cross-cutting national issues. These forums have also had a number of specialist training sessions and presentations; on topics including the NEC's workplace learning offer and private sector pensions.

9 The second annual private contractors seminar in November 2017 saw nearly a hundred members working in private contractors meet in Leicester to network and build their skills. There were workshops on organising, joint learning projects, and campaigning on pay. We also had a presentation from a private sector employer about what they value in their relationship with UNISON and what they see as the opportunities and challenges in partnership working. In addition to the seminar, the union is working on ways of opening up more opportunities for private sector members to access relevant and specifically-designed training. An example of this was a three-day negotiation course run jointly with the community service group where members in private contractors learnt how to negotiate recognition agreements.

UNISON membership by region 2016 to 2017

Region	2017 Full members	2016 Full members
Eastern	76,250	76,250
East midlands	84,500	85,750
Greater London	111,500	114,500
Northern	75,250	77,000
Northern Ireland	39,000	37,500
North west	179,250	181,250
Scotland	149,750	150,500
South east	95,500	98,250
South west	77,500	78,750
Cymru/Wales	89,500	91,000
West midlands	109,000	111,000
Yorks & Humber	126,750	123,750
	1,213,750	1,225,500

10 The above table represents full UNISON membership at 31 December 2017 and excludes retired members.

11 Our traditional core areas of membership continue to experience challenging times. Over the year to date local government, where severe cuts to staffing levels have been experienced, had a net loss of membership of 8,000 in spite of determined organising and recruitment efforts. Although representing an overall loss, there are also signs of improvement. Recruitment levels for the first three months of 2018 in local government show a significant increase on the same period for the preceding two years with 6,708 joining UNISON as compared to 5,642 and 5,166 respectively.

12 As the nation moves towards the 70th anniversary of the National Health Service our health care service group continues to recruit well and during 2017 showed a net growth in membership of 399. Once again the first three months of this year shows an increase in recruitment levels on the same period last year with nearly 6,000 new members joining UNISON in health.

13 The community service group also showed a net growth during last year of 515. Given the difficulties in organising in the community and voluntary sector this represents an excellent result. The service group developed an organising project in the Clarion Housing Association. This is one of the largest housing associations in Europe, formed out of a merger between Affinity Sutton and Circle Housing. Our national fighting fund organisers worked with regions and branches to recruit and win recognition. In 2017, Dave Prentis and the CEO of Clarion signed the recognition agreement. With other mergers happening within the sector, further organising work is now taking place at regional and branch level, with co-ordination from national office. A further

recognition agreement was also signed with newly-formed Optivo housing association in February 2018.

14 As well as developing innovative recruitment strategies that take into account increasing work fragmentation and the isolated working that many public service workers now experience, the union is prioritising retention of members. Levels of leavers continue to increase in some regions, and across each service group they are higher than the rate of joiners. This is particularly evident in a number of regions among schools staff. The recent creation of the National Education Union, small pockets of membership and the problem of access to premises all contribute to the challenges of organising in schools. Membership in schools was down by more than 7,000 during 2017 but regions and branches are working together to maintain union visibility in schools to attract new members and retain existing ones.

15 Young public service workers have continued to join the union. The union recruited 16,165 new young members during 2017. This is an excellent recruitment performance given that most other trade unions are struggling to attract young members. The challenge is to now attract these young members into activity within the union. For the second year running, UNISON was the winner of the TUC's youth campaign award. This year it was Cymru/Wales young members regional forum that collected the award from Frances O'Grady, general secretary of the TUC.

16 The *Respect Your Youth* campaign saw the launch of a dedicated website (respectyouryouth.co.uk), along with a charter focusing on winning a real living wage, fair employment, decent apprenticeships, equality, and development and training opportunities. Their use of social media and young workers engagement their campaign was judged to be innovative and effective, and an excellent example of young trade unionists promoting young member recruitment and organisation.

Recruitment marketing campaign

17 UNISON's long-running recruitment marketing campaign combines television advertising with newspaper ads; targeted online ads and use of Google search terms to maximise recruitment. It continues to support the union's face-to-face recruitment, bringing a steady stream of new joiners.

18 This year the campaign was recognised with a special award in the TUC Trade Union Communications Awards. The prize was designed to recognise the best innovation in 40 years of the awards. The judges' commended the union for: "a highly innovative campaign that used great

strategic recruitment planning with key indicators of success. Outstanding use of research evidence and innovative use of the media wowed the judges."

19 Over the whole of 2017, the recruitment marketing campaign brought some 57,000 members into UNISON. For every pound spent on the campaign, the union receives back £3.94 in subscriptions in the first year of membership alone.

20 An average member stays in the union for at least seven years. In terms of membership trends among the campaign-attributed joiners, the percentage of women joiners grew in 2017 and the demographic is younger. Some 61% of these joiners join on mobile phones or tablets. In 2018, we aim to use regional newspapers in addition to the Metro packages.

Activist training and education

21 The training of key activist roles held up well in 2017, with an increase in both stewards and health and safety reps receiving induction training compared to 2016. One in every three stewards who were elected in 2017 had been trained by the end of the year, also an improvement on 2016. There was, however, a fall in the number of union learning reps being trained.

UNISON UK core activist training courses for 2017

	New Stewards	Health and Safety	Union Learning Rep
Number of courses run	156	50	15
Total reps attending training	2,024	494	101

22 As part of the review of activist education and in line with last year's national delegate conference motion 6, Strengthening Our Union: developing and supporting our activists, the induction for new stewards was revised into a two-stage version. Pilot courses ran successfully in North West and West Midlands regions. A blended version will be available in mid 2018.

23 Some 658 stewards undertook ERA refresher training in 2017, an increase of almost 200 on 2016. The ERA refresher course has been updated and a blended version is being developed. In addition to the above core training, over 5,000 activists attended some other course ranging from advanced representational skills to tackling racism in the workplace.

24 For the third year running UNISON ran fully online induction courses for new stewards who were unable to attend a face-to-face course, with 50 reps becoming ERA-accredited.

²⁵ In 2017 the TUC introduced online courses for stewards, health and safety representatives and union learning representatives. Data on UNISON members registering for these courses has been provided by the TUC. Both UNISON and the TUC have stressed that these courses are not designed to replace activist induction courses. They do, however, offer a useful overview of the various activist roles and can also be used by existing activists to refresh their knowledge.

²⁶ During 2017, the NEC reviewed most of its activist training courses and revised and updated its suite of organising workshops. A new resource celebrating 25 years of UNISON learning is currently being created. We have worked with Hope Not Hate to fund a series of workshops to be delivered regionally; the workshops use techniques to challenge prejudice using a questioning approach so these skills are transferrable to organising and recruitment situations as well. The NEC also commissioned the updating of the two-day Equal Pay course for staff and activists.

Political education

²⁷ The NEC responded quickly to the announcement of the general election on 8 June 2017 and updated a range of resources and workshops that were used by branches and regions to encourage voter registration and postal vote applications. The popular Voting Matters memory timeline was updated and a series of workshops were designed to help members develop the skills and confidence to have a political conversation with their members.

Union Learning Fund (ULF) activity

²⁸ UNISON's 'inclusive learning project' this year was the first using a two-tier record of priority and non-priority outcomes to evaluate the overall performance. All the nations are delivering well and exceeding their targets for ULF activity. In total during 2017 approximately 490 dissemination and networking events took place in England, Scotland and Cymru/Wales, leading to interaction with approximately 25,000 participants (this includes electronic communication). Many of these learners went on to participate in more learning events or progressed onto one of the longer-term member learning courses such as return-to-learn or went on to undertake qualification training.

²⁹ The NEC responded to the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy (England) by running a series of briefings explaining the requirements of the levy and its implication for employers where UNISON organises. Over 3,000 apprentices were supported during 2017.

Online learning, communications and networking

³⁰ Further progress was made towards integrating Learning and Organising Services' online presence with that of the rest of UNISON. This included the launch of a new subsite, <https://learning.unison.org.uk>. This holds information about the full range of activist and member education available and directs users to regional education listings and other sites of interest. There are currently 4,549 users registered on UNISON's e-learning site (<https://e-learning.unison.org.uk>). Work is under way to move it to a single sign-on system so that users can gain access to it using their My.UNISON login. E-notes introducing the role of the branch treasurer and branch welfare officer are currently under construction and should be launched in 2018, together with one giving an overview of the range of activist roles.

Chapter two

Supporting members

Most members join UNISON for support at work if they need it. Regular surveys show that “an insurance policy in case things go wrong at work” is the primary motivation for most joiners.

Against this need and expectation, the vast majority of members continue to register broad satisfaction with the union, with only 8% describing themselves as dissatisfied in our 2017 member survey. Given the current climate of uncertainty, job losses and a continuing wage freeze, these continued levels of satisfaction are a testament to the union’s capacity to support its members and demonstrate the value of the union. This section of the report deals with some of the key ways the union nationally provides support to members.

Support at work when you need it

³¹ Every day UNISON supports members through individual case work—whether that’s carried out by local reps and branches, organisers at regional level or through our legal providers Thompsons. The first port of call for a member who needs help with an employment issue is to talk to their local branch. The branch may already be dealing with it as a collective bargaining or organising issue—or may decide that is the best way to handle it. They may directly represent the individual, or in some cases they will refer it to their regional office and ultimately to our legal services partner, Thompsons.

³² In 2017, the union’s internal case management system (which includes regional and national cases only) dealt with some 5,659 cases, while our external legal services partner Thompsons dealt with 3,699 employment law cases. These covered issues such as flexible working, unfair dismissal, national minimum wage issues, whistleblowing, working time, maternity rights, compromise agreements, equal pay and discrimination cases.

³³ This is the tip of the iceberg for UNISON, with the majority of issues dealt with at local level by workplace reps who have experience of the employer and a wealth of local knowledge to draw on.

UNISONdirect

³⁴ The union’s call centre, UNISONdirect is often at the frontline of supporting our members. It is a key way that members are reassured that they can contact the union, even if they don’t know the branch details or it is outside normal working hours.

³⁵ UNISONdirect also deals with member queries by email and helps with recruitment—allowing people to join on the phone or talking people through the process through our online live chat service.

³⁶ During 2017 UNISONdirect dealt with 309,157 calls. The busiest month was October when we received 29,698 calls, 35,632 emails and 4,032 online chats, via the UNISON website.

³⁷ The subjects members contacted UNISONdirect about were various but the most requested were:

- 26,295 calls relating to contract changes
- 12,017 calls relating to sickness absence monitoring and related meetings

- 7,288 requests for free legal advice
- 3,375 enquiries about UNISON’s free wills service
- 3,551 calls from members looking for branch contact details
- 2,661 calls from members needing financial assistance from There for You.

Professional services unit

³⁸ The professional services unit is responsible for overseeing and supporting all eligible UNISON members who are professionally regulated and have their fitness to practice called into question.

³⁹ Being reported to a regulator is probably the most daunting challenge many of our members will face. When a UNISON member is reported to a regulator their professional judgement, reputation and livelihood is at risk.

⁴⁰ From our unit at UNISON Centre, members receive continuity of representation, help, advice and support. It is our role to help them through the entire process and come out whole again at the end.

⁴¹ The unit has remained extremely busy with cases coming in throughout the year. It can take some time for the regulator to conclude the hearings and this as a result can have a cumulative effect on the unit and its capacity. Currently we have a total of 528 open cases, of those 258 were received last year.

UNISON professional regulation cases by country	
Country	Number of cases
England	322
Northern Ireland	3
Scotland	177
Wales/Cymru	25

UNISON professional regulation cases received by year	
Year	Number of cases received
2014	263
2015	251
2016	239
2017	258

UNISON professional regulation cases by regulator 2017

Regulator	Number
Nursing and midwifery council	156
Health and care professions council	64
Scottish social services council	33
General dental council	2
Education workforce council	2
Disclosure Scotland	1

UNISON member and outcome of the cases closed in 2017

Outcome	Number
No case to answer	94
No impairment	21
Caution/conditions of practice	11
Struck off	9
Voluntarily removed from register	3

Future shape of fitness to practice

⁴² UNISON responded to the Department of Health’s consultation on “promoting professionalism, reforming regulation”. This UK-wide consultation sought views on the future shape and make-up of professional regulation.

Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)

⁴³ The SSSC recent regulation of support workers has started to bite, as they use “current impairment” as opposed to a misconduct fitness-to-practise model, and the number of referrals remains high.

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

⁴⁴ UNISON responded to the proposed education standards for nurses, including the NMC consultation. The new standards have now been published and we are extremely disappointed that the medicines guidance has been removed. Medication errors are the second most prominent reason for a UNISON member to be reported to the NMC. We will monitor the impact of this decision.

⁴⁵ We have also worked with the health group around the development of the Nursing Associate role, as it will be a newly-regulated professional group of approximately 2,000 from 2019.

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

⁴⁶ The HCPC has now formally separated its regulatory and fitness-to-practice systems, establishing a tribunal service

for conduct. The new system is bedding in now and we continue to monitor it.

47 Research published by the HCPC showed that paramedics and social workers were unnecessarily self-referring to the HCPC. This causes them distress, but it also inadvertently can add to the HCPC caseload. We are now working with the HCPC to develop specific advice and guidance so that registrants better understand when they should self-refer and when not to.

48 We have also been working with the health group to raise this issue with our ambulance branches and also via the ambulance and employers joint negotiating group.

There for You: UNISON's unique welfare fund

49 There for You, UNISON's unique welfare fund, has a long and proud tradition of looking after members and their families in times of hardship or special need.

50 During 2017 we spent £480,158 delivering a wide range of financial assistance to more than 3,000 members in the areas where it was needed most. This represents a 12% increase on 2016.

51 Noticeably, improvements to our application processes, and a widening of the eligibility criteria resulted in a 22% overall increase in applications help under our small grants programme.

52 When members experience financial hardship, we are there providing peace of mind to increase financial security. Our welfare team regularly deals with complex applications and enquiries from those who may be struggling to meet day-to-day living costs, or who are suffering health issues that have kept them off work, with relationship breakdown and sometimes bereavement.

53 Our individual grants provide immediate support for those needing financial assistance for anything from emergency fuel and food, transport costs to attend hospital appointments, money to prevent homelessness, help with the cost of disability adaptations, small grants that ensure children return to school wearing the correct uniforms or remove the worry of higher fuel bills in the winter.

There for You grant expenditure in 2017 (£)

Grant type	£
Emergency crisis payment	17,427
Special payments including hospital travel, childcare	19,378
Short-term weekly assistance	111,373
Household—white goods and furniture	54,872
Priority commitments	53,319
Disability, health, medical	9,719
Household maintenance and services	14,634
Clothing	5,327
Utility cost	18,125
Priority debt	58,038
Small grants—school uniforms	29,200
Small grants—winter fuel	31,640
Bankruptcy	9,700
Wellbeing programme	12,150
Funeral	33,445
Exceptional payments	1,811
Total	£480,158

54 In order to deliver the best possible package of help, during the year we also helped many members in other ways; for example:

- income maximisation, including advice on benefit entitlement
- collaborating with other grant-giving organisations to secure additional financial support wherever possible.
- debt and budgeting advice to help members regain control of their finances and have the constant worry about how to manage from one pay-day to the next removed.

55 Advice and information guides on topics that included arranging an affordable and meaningful funeral; helping and coping with bereavement; advice on managing fuel costs and fundraising etc were produced during 2017-18.

56 As a charity, we must always look to ways of raising additional funds and, having engaged a new lottery manager, we have rebranded and relaunched the UNISON Lottery.

57 For more detailed information about There for You's achievements in 2017, email thereforyou@unison.co.uk to request a copy of the charity's annual report.

Personal injury service

58 UNISON's legal assistance scheme includes a personal injury scheme that offers legal support for members who have been injured at work. This covers accidents at work including manual handling injuries, needlestick injuries as well

as slipping and tripping cases; work-related assaults; and injuries arising from industrial diseases such as work-related stress claims, asbestos-related cases and work-related upper limb disorder claims.

⁵⁹ In 2017 UNISON handled compensation claims for some 3000 members who suffered such an accident/injury as a result of their employers' negligence.

Case study

Pat, from Essex, lost her husband Alan on Christmas Eve in 2014 as a result of asbestos-related disease, mesothelioma.

Alan was unknowingly exposed to asbestos for much of his working life at Thurrock Council while inspecting local authority buildings. Both Alan and Pat were UNISON members.

UNISON took up Pat's case after a post-mortem showed that Alan had suffered mesothelioma.

Following mesothelioma being confirmed as Alan's cause of death, Pat spoke to UNISON, who instructed asbestos experts Thompsons Solicitors to pursue a claim on Pat's behalf.

It was only after the issuing of court proceedings in November 2017 that the council finally admitted liability for Alan's death, and UNISON was able to negotiate a sum of compensation for the family in December 2017.

Most importantly for Pat was the admission of fault, a huge victory after being brushed aside for so long.

Pat said: "All I want is to help other victims or their families to know where to go for specialist support and advice if they find themselves in the same awful situation as me. It's not about the money. Alan should not have been taken from us so soon. For me it became about making sure those responsible were held to account. It seems to me that the council and their insurers just hoped we would go away but Thompsons Solicitors and UNISON supported me and my family all the way."

⁶⁰ In addition, where members suffer an assault at work and that claim cannot be brought against their employers through the courts, the legal scheme will advise members on bringing a claim under the government's Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme.

⁶¹ UNISON's very comprehensive legal scheme also covers members and their family members where they suffer an accident/injury outside of work too, including road traffic accident claims and tripping and slipping cases. In 2017 nearly 1,200 cases of this type were successfully concluded.

⁶² Altogether from 1 March 2017 to 1 March 2018 UNISON won nearly £31m in damages for UNISON members and their family members through the personal injury scheme.

⁶³ *Members are eligible under the legal scheme as long as they have been in membership for 4 weeks prior to the incident that led them to seeking legal assistance.*

UNISON Living

⁶⁴ UNISON isn't just here to support people at work. UNISON Living is the union's package of extra benefits and services for UNISON members provided by our endorsed service-providers.

⁶⁵ They include a range of deals and offers from insurance, to car purchase; holidays to dental plans and much more. UNISON Living has had a busy year reviewing and renewing our contracts with our endorsed providers. The contract review and renewal process is critical to ensuring that we endorse only those providers that meet our strict criteria so that our members can be confident that the providers and their offerings are reliable, ethical and compliant with the relevant regulations.

⁶⁶ At the heart of the endorsement are provisions to monitor, oversee and review activity to ensure that the offerings are delivered with a focus on good customer care and value.

⁶⁷ The NEC priority is to ensure that the UNISON Living benefits package is trusted and of value—this means that the potential to grow the package is restricted and regulated by our 'due diligence' scrutiny.

⁶⁸ UNISON Living endorsement means that our members can be sure that they're dealing with reputable and trustworthy companies that share ethical values and standards. Not only do our UNISON Living partners add value to the member benefits package, they also work

closely with UNISON to ensure that their offerings and activity support our recruitment, retention and organising objectives to grow and strengthen the union. They do this by providing resources and often local teams to actively support branch and regional organising and recruitment plans. We thank our partners for their ongoing sponsorship of branch, regional, and national events and campaign awards throughout the year.

⁶⁹ This year, two new services have been added to the UNISON Living portfolio: an independent mortgage advice service, Lighthouse Mortgage and Protection Solutions and a modern mutual offering financial savings products, Shepherds Friendly.

Member learning opportunities

⁷⁰ UNISON offers a wide range of informal learning opportunities to support members who want to harness the power of learning to change their lives. Some 225 member learning events, attended by 4,242 members, were recorded in 2017.

⁷¹ These included workshops run by the Open University (OU), the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), and regional and national staff.

⁷² A new course, Get That Job, was developed and piloted, and Stepping Up: taking workplace reading and writing to the next level explored new ways for UNISON learning reps to promote literacy in the workplace. UNISON produced guidance on organising around English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).

⁷³ The member learning offer was rebranded, with new materials presenting all the various elements and courses available in one place.

⁷⁴ UNISON renewed its relationships with the OU and WEA with new agreements signed at an event in December. The three organisations share a common goal: to widen access to education and training and to extend learning opportunities to those who have previously been excluded or discouraged from taking them up.

⁷⁵ The WEA recognised UNISON as its national strategic partner of the year at its awards ceremony in November, alongside UNISON member Sharon Proud who received an Olive Cordell Skills for Life Student award. This followed awards for UNISON learning representatives Carol McGrath, Jane Eyre and Beverley Herring at the Unionlearn conference in July.

⁷⁶ Some 135 members who were undertaking study at their own expense were supported through UNISON's bursary scheme, with grants totalling just over £27,000 having been allocated.

⁷⁷ Over 2,000 Quick Reads books and Reading Ahead were provided at the request of branches to promote literacy activity.

⁷⁸ A range of updated and new materials were launched in 2017 including webcasts on stress and ESOL, new e-notes on dyslexia and one for apprentices, video case studies of member learner journeys and a host of other short or bite size learning resources.

⁷⁹ More information about our learning services can be found at www.learning.unison.org.uk

Chapter three

Speaking up for our members

We speak up for our members whether that is at work, in parliament or the devolved institutions or on the global stage. Austerity remains a political choice wherever it is made at the local, national or international level. We aim to put our members' voice at the heart of our collective campaigning using the full weight of the union at every level.

Public Service Champions

⁸⁰ Public Service Champions continues to be the union's main outward-facing campaign, aimed at winning public support for real investment in our members' jobs and public services. The most recent round of activity, timed to coincide with the May local elections in England, consisted of a series of short films in which people working across public services shared their experiences of the challenges that they face. The films were shared extensively across Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to raise public awareness of the challenges our members face. Further activity is planned for the rest of 2018.

Dealing with a new Westminster government

⁸¹ The snap 2017 general election saw UNISON come to the fore in speaking up for our members providing public services. Public service pay in particular was a dividing line amongst the political parties and UNISON members got elected as Westminster MPs from several parties, most notably nurse and former UNISON President Eleanor Smith for the Labour Party. UNISON Labour Link made an important contribution to the Labour Party manifesto and its commitments on public ownership, ending PFI and scrapping the pay cap.

⁸² The reduced majority for Prime Minister Theresa May has meant a partnership deal with the Democratic Unionist Party and a very limited form of government programme, except for legislation related to EU exit, or 'Brexit'. The small majority has meant that UNISON campaigns have a greater chance of success if votes in parliament are required. Our general political fund continues to fund a parliamentary programme so that MPs and peers of all parties get to hear about the experiences of UNISON members when considering Bills. The Chancellor in his Autumn 2017 budget extended the timetable for further cuts in public spending and public services and addressing this challenge will be the political priority of the NEC going forward.

Pay Up Now! campaign

⁸³ Pay Up Now! has been one of UNISON's most prominent campaigns in the past year, as we seek to overturn the government's ruinous pay cap and push for proper pay rises for all public service workers. This has involved a considerable amount of campaigning, both nationally as well as in regions and branches. The national campaign has focussed on lobbying and influencing the political debate on pay.

⁸⁴ From the outset of the campaign, UNISON wrote to all MPs with carefully targeted messages. Conservative MPs were written to first, outlining UNISON's position on pay, explaining the impact this has had on public services and calling on them to support the campaign. Crucially, the letters referred to the number of UNISON members living in each MP's constituency, reminding them of the substantial number of their constituents affected by their party's decisions in government. Opposition MPs were then written to, thanking them for their ongoing support for the campaign. Letters to these MPs included a campaign pack featuring materials (posters, placards, badges, stickers) which MP's could then use to advertise their support for the campaign in parliament, in their constituencies and on social media.

⁸⁵ This preliminary lobbying of MPs was successful, with 10 Conservative MPs responding either to express support, or to ask for further meeting with constituents and/or UNISON representatives.

⁸⁶ A thorough mapping of MPs was conducted by UNISON, based on their views on pay (either shared publicly, identified through lobbying or gleaned through political intelligence-gathering). Based on this analysis, we believed that there were enough MPs—if lobbied effectively—to force the government to abandon the public sector pay cap and move towards improved pay offers for public sector workers. UNISON members in specifically-targeted Conservative seats were then contacted by email and provided with a draft letter to send to their MP, calling on them to oppose the current pay policy and reminding them of the large number of UNISON members in their local electorate. Media work was also done with their local newspapers to reinforce the pressure on these MPs to change their position.

⁸⁷ UNISON also utilised the UK government's Parliamentary Petition website to maximum effect. Any petitions on the site which receive 100,000 signatures are automatically considered for debate by MPs. In early September, as the petitions website was reactivated after the general election, UNISON launched a petition under the name of general secretary Dave Prentis, and pushed the petition out to our members through a variety of digital networks. The petition quickly achieved the required number of signatures, securing a Westminster debate on 4 December.

⁸⁸ Further lobbying took place in October 2017, with a national lobby of parliament on public sector pay. This was organised by the TUC but with UNISON acting as the lead union and providing the vast majority of members lobbying on the day.

⁸⁹ In November the government held their annual budget

statement. This was followed by the parliamentary debate on public sector pay secured by our petition. A fresh round of lobbying of MPs was conducted—including a post-budget email to all UNISON members, asking them to ask their MP to attend the debate. UNISON reiterated our demands and made it clear that although the budget marked a change in government policy, that wasn't enough—it would take real action, and funding, from the government to deliver real pay rises for all public sector workers.

⁹⁰ As a result of our lobbying, more than 80 MPs attended the debate to show their support, despite it clashing with an important EU exit debate and vote. Opposition MPs were clear in their support for our campaign, with 26 separate references to UNISON made during the debate, although the government response showed an unwillingness to commit to anything more than a notional lifting of the pay cap.

⁹¹ However, in the weeks following the Budget and the pay debate, circumstances have begun to change with regards to pay. In local government and health care—the two groups which cover the majority of our membership—pay offers in excess of the pay cap have been received and are being consulted on. There is still a long way to go to achieve a fair and decent pay policy where above inflation pay rises each year are the norm, but there are genuine signs of improvement. That is in no small part thanks to the Pay Up Now! campaign delivered by UNISON members. The next phase of the campaign will focus on campaigning for real and additional funding for public services across the UK to ensure future fair pay rises can be delivered.

National demonstrations

⁹² UNISON branches are often at the forefront of local demonstrations and rallies against local cuts to jobs and services, for example the protests in Norwich against Norfolk Police cutting all PCSO positions. In 2017 in Edinburgh, UNISON Scotland held a large demonstration against the public sector pay cap which got the attention of the Scottish government. These demonstrations attract wider media attention and give workers and citizen campaigners confidence.

⁹³ At a UK level, the NEC supports a large number of demonstrations often with the financial support of the general political fund. In 2018 there have been several already. In February, UNISON members turned out at short notice to support the funding of the NHS in a London demonstration called by the People's Assembly and Health Campaigns Together. In March UNISON backed a major women's march

and rally to coincide with International Women's Day and the centenary of women's right to vote. Also in March, UNISON members marched in London, Cardiff and Glasgow with Stand Up to Racism for United Nations Anti Racism Day.

⁹⁴ On 12 May, tens of thousands of UNISON members and their families marched through London with other trade unionists in the TUC national demonstration for workers and public services. The event was family-friendly and attracted support from workers who wanted a pay rise, properly funded public services, an end to job cuts and rights at work.

⁹⁵ The NEC is also planning ahead and has given early support for demonstrations and celebration events at both local and national level for the NHS 70th anniversary in July.

Exiting the EU

⁹⁶ UNISON has continued to campaign on its four EU exit priorities since the EU referendum in 2016:

- Protecting employment, health and safety standards and trade union rights
- Maintaining quality public services and professional standards
- Democratising trade deals and public procurement with high environmental standards and workplace and employment regulations
- Securing full rights and freedom of movement for EU citizens in the UK (and UK citizens in the EU) and challenging racism and discrimination and promoting equalities and human rights.

⁹⁷ UNISON actively campaigned to amend the government's EU (Withdrawal) Bill which was been deemed unfit by the Lords constitution committee. Working with 79 civil organisations in the Repeal Bill Alliance we campaigned against the undemocratic and constitutional reforms that threatened civil and parliamentary sovereign rights.

⁹⁸ This included weekly parliamentary briefings, setting up briefing meetings with influential MPs and peers and working with the press to communicate the importance of the amendments we campaigned for.

⁹⁹ UNISON campaigned for three priority areas for changes to the Bill:

- Retaining the existing framework of employment and equality laws together with the same health and safety standards as we leave the EU
- Ensuring that in the future workers' rights are not weakened and that UK standards do not fall behind those

of our European partners

- Ensuring Parliament can fully scrutinise any changes to workers' rights – including employment law, equality rights and health and safety standards.
- UNISON has also campaigned along with the TUC for the UK to keep the current rules of single market and customs union membership for as long as is necessary before we agree a new EU-UK arrangement with the European Union which meets key tests to ensure we will be no worse off than where we were before we exit the EU.
- UNISON has worked with our new EU UNISON members network and both The Three Million and the Cavendish Coalition to ensure that the EU withdrawal agreement does not include government attempts to introduce a new confusing two-tier system for EU citizens, limiting transitional and post-EU exit rights.

¹⁰⁰ UNISON has campaigned for devolution rights as part of the UK constitutional deal post EU exit. The legal text in the withdrawal agreement and future EU UK agreements must protect the Good Friday Agreement around Northern Ireland and avoid introducing a hard border. UNISON Northern Ireland co-ordinated an important meeting on Northern Ireland and Exiting the EU with peers and MPs and successfully highlighted the key concerns that UNISON has.

Save Care Now: campaigning in homecare

¹⁰¹ UNISON continues to successfully campaign to get councils across the UK to adopt our Ethical Care Charter. Fife, North Lanarkshire, Hackney, Haringey, Sheffield, Manchester, Halton, Hartlepool, Stirling and Lewisham councils all signed up to the charter in the last year, bringing the total to 35. It remains a key part of the Labour Party's current plans for improving the social care sector.

¹⁰² Following lobbying efforts over the last few years from the Cymru/Wales region, UNISON is hopeful that the Welsh government will soon introduce legislation which will limit the use of zero hours contracts in the homecare sector alongside measures to make pay more transparent and to improve rotas.

¹⁰³ UNISON's *15 Minute Care Makeover* film, which drew attention to how many homecare workers are expected to provide personal care within 15 minute timeslots, was viewed 3.6 million times and shared over 50,000 times on social media. It helped to raise more awareness of this big problem and take our messages out to a wider audience than we

have engaged with before. Over 30,000 people subsequently signed the accompanying petition calling on the government to take steps to outlaw the practice.

¹⁰⁴ This year also saw the launch of UNISON's Residential Care Charter. In March Southampton City Council became the first local authority to announce that it would sign the charter.

¹⁰⁵ UNISON recently had success forcing the government to change the law on providing payslip information on what hours workers are being paid for. In February, the government announced that a new law would require employers to include hourly information within the payslips of time-paid employees. This came about as a direct result of pressure by UNISON's homecare campaign and others. The new law does not require employers to include as much detail as we would like, and so UNISON's campaign for full pay transparency for homecare workers continues.

¹⁰⁶ UNISON continued our campaign against the National Assessment and Accreditation scheme for social workers. We argued that there are many more urgent priorities in the social work system including the level of funding, social workers' workloads, cuts in staffing, reductions in training, and stress. The scheme will be piloted from July this year by six councils, but at this stage it will not be mandatory.

Social care seminar

¹⁰⁷ The union organised a one-day campaigning seminar on social care at the UNISON Centre in January 2018.

¹⁰⁸ The seminar was called by the NEC's service group liaison committee (SGLC) in response to conference motions calling for further action to join up the union's campaigning work on social care—both residential and homecare—that cuts across different service groups and affects each of the four nations of the UK in different ways.

¹⁰⁹ All UNISON regions attended, along with members from the local government, community and health care service groups and the UNISON national private contractors forum.

¹¹⁰ It featured presentations from academics and staff and members working on the key issues, with a focus on care campaigning in the North West region, as well as detailed briefings and workshops to debate the union's priorities in the face of the funding cuts. The SGLC has drawn up a campaign plan based on the event.

Migration—a hostile environment

¹¹¹ A wave of fresh legislation focused on creating a 'hostile environment' for undocumented migrants has started affecting public services, migrant workers in general and anyone suspected of being of migrant background. UNISON has continued its campaigning and lobbying work to highlight rising discrimination and the pressure placed on all public service workers to function as an extension of the Immigration Service. The government has now extended NHS charges to community healthcare services and introduced a charge up-front for healthcare, refusing non-urgent care where a patient cannot pay. Those who cannot pay will now have treatment withheld unless it is classified as urgent. This has started affecting long-term legal residents of the UK who do not have the paperwork that is now required.

¹¹² UNISON has joined with other groups including Doctors of the World, and the National Aids Trust to campaign against these charges. Dave Prentis signed an open letter in *The Guardian* protesting the changes. UNISON has also lobbied the House of Commons and the House of Lords around charges for NHS services, including upfront charges.

¹¹³ UNISON has raised awareness of the dangers of government proposals to share data across government departments for the purposes of immigration enforcement. This has significant implications for public health, let alone other humanitarian considerations. It is likely to put off people with infectious diseases from contacting health services for fear of deportation.

¹¹⁴ In addition to lobbying and campaigning at national level, UNISON focuses on a member-led response, building workplace solidarity and advocating better pay and conditions for all. Our migrant worker networks support self organisation and leadership from those members most affected by this debate. Resources for branches and members campaigning and organising around these issues are now available (www.unison.org.uk/standtogether), including new workshops focused on engaging with 'difficult conversations' and community organising.

Campaigning for equalities

¹¹⁵ UNISON's second annual equality survey received responses from a record 11,590 members across all service groups and showed that equality was slipping off the employers' agenda. Findings included:

- 31% said their employer did not keep them informed about its equality policies

- 41% had had no employer-organised equality training, and only 22% had had any such training in the past year.
- 32% had experienced or had witnessed one or more incidents of unfair discrimination in their workplace.

However, with 22% saying they were more likely to get active in the union compared with a year ago, there is a clear opportunity for UNISON to organise members against discrimination and unfairness at work. The survey also showed that members were under great pressure both at work and at home:

- 43% described their standard of living as worse than it was a year ago (up from 34% in 2016 survey)
- 50% of Black members, 55% of disabled members, 44% of LGBT members, 42% of women members, and 18% of young members said their standard of living was worse than a year ago
- 26% say they have seen an increase in their debts in the last year.

¹¹⁶ Tackling hate crime, mental health awareness and support, increasing participation within self-organised structures and across the union were key priorities for all the equality groups. This included guidance and resources on tackling hate crime against disabled, LGBT and Black people, a mental health bargaining guide and toolkits for achieving proportionality in UNISON and setting up a branch women's group were produced.

¹¹⁷ In addition each self-organised group continued to campaign, organise and communicate at workplace, regional and national level.

Black members

¹¹⁸ Recruiting and organising Black members and ensuring they are visible and vocal within the union is a key priority for UNISON. Campaigning work focused on challenging racism in the workplace and ensuring that race equality remained high on the workplace agenda. The national Black members group also focused on promoting the leadership of young Black members as well as campaigning on critical issues such as in-work poverty, the discriminatory impact of austerity policies and the pay gap experienced by Black workers.

Disabled members

¹¹⁹ Disabled members have been campaigning to change the Personal Independence Payment system. A recent survey of members highlighted worrying concerns. Members reported that hidden and fluctuating conditions

were not taken into account by PIP. The quality of the assessment and the training provided to the assessor were lacking. A member reported being assessed by a physiotherapist for a mental health problem. Members also reported a box ticking approach and many felt ashamed and embarrassed by a process that treated them like liars. There was also a strong feeling that working people were penalised with a member reporting: "They act like if you're working you shouldn't claim PIP. They need to know disabled people can work."

LGBT

¹²⁰ The LGBT group launched a new trans equality model policy and organised a Parliamentary briefing on trans equality for Labour MPs and peers. Campaigns also included marriage equality in Northern Ireland, pensions equality for surviving same sex partners and defending equality and human rights protections as we leave the EU. UNISON also had a strong presence in the community with outreach campaigns at more Pride and LGBT community events, celebrated in an annual LGBT recruitment and organising award. UNISON also hosted a meeting of Commonwealth trade unionists working for LGBT equality at the Commonwealth heads of government meeting—37 of these states still criminalise consensual same-sex relationships.

Women

¹²¹ The introduction of the two-child limit for tax credits means that families who have a third child born on or after 6 April 2017 will be £2,780 worse off. As a result, more than a quarter of a million children will be living in poverty by the end of this parliament, while 600,000 more families will be pushed closer to the poverty line. Exemptions to this limit include adopted children, multiple births or if a child is conceived as a result of "non-consensual" conception, the so-called 'rape clause'. UNISON hosted an event in Westminster in December 2017 chaired by UNISON president Margaret McKee who said "The introduction of the two-child limit for tax credits is the very worst kind of government policy. It's immoral and will plunge many more children into poverty."

¹²² UNISON also campaigned with civil society groups on issues such as Women Against State Pension Inequality, tackling sexual harassment, ending violence against women and promoting family-friendly working. UNISON sponsored a parliamentary summit on 22 November 2017 to mark White Ribbon Day with the theme of encouraging male leaders to champion gender equality in the workplace and challenge violence against women.

Young members

¹²³ An Apprentices' Charter, a bargaining tool setting out UNISON's criteria for decent high-quality apprenticeships was launched. It highlighted the need to pay the rate for the job and the responsibilities of employers for providing safe and healthy workplaces. It is being used as a way of opening negotiations with employers.

¹²⁴ The *27 under 27* campaign showcased young members' self-organisation with a series of 27 photo-portraits of individual young members accompanied with short biographical texts. The aim was to promote young members within UNISON, showing their diversity and interests. It has already been displayed at the UNISON Centre and self-organised group conferences.

Employment rights

¹²⁵ Campaigns to tackle the explosion of insecure, low-paid work continued to be the focus of employment rights campaigns over the past year. The Taylor Review on the changing nature of the labour market made a series of modest recommendations on improving rights for workers on insecure contracts. While some, including strengthened rights to sick pay and the end of the 'Swedish derogation' were welcome, UNISON argued that most the Taylor review recommendations were ineffective.

¹²⁶ UNISON continues to campaign and lobby for strong enforcement action against exploitation, greater coverage of employment rights for all workers and strengthened collective bargaining across the labour market.

¹²⁷ UNISON's wider work on employment rights includes campaigning for in-sourcing of public services, highlighting the dangers for workers' rights posed by a Conservative government as the UK leaves the EU and promoting measures in the Institute of Employment Rights' Manifesto for Labour Law.

Privatisation and PFI

¹²⁸ UNISON continues to actively oppose privatisation and the private finance initiative (PFI) and to promote in-house provision of public services.

¹²⁹ The collapse of Carillion has raised a wide range of issues such as corporate governance, including a wide range of issues such as company structures and complexity, the role of shareholders and other stakeholders in oversight, high

debt/low margin business models, the workforce and other creditors, employment rights following insolvency, terms and conditions and pensions, the implications for the most vulnerable as a result of growth in casual work, triggers for intervention, audit and accounting, cash flow, debt and conflicts of interest .

¹³⁰ However it is also an opportunity to challenge outsourcing with in-house provision as the default option.

¹³¹ In the wake of the collapse of Carillion, UNISON supported calls for a windfall tax on PFI companies. We gave evidence to the public administration and constitutional affairs committee and called for a new set of ethical principles, reflecting the Nolan principles, to apply to private companies seeking to provide public services.

¹³² UNISON is liaising with the Labour Party on its plans to review individual PFI schemes, bring PFI contracts in house and enshrine the rights of staff to have rights kept or enhance them to comparable public sector standards on transfer to public sector bodies.

Health campaigning

NHS funding

¹³³ UNISON continues to campaign for a fair funding settlement for the NHS across the UK. In the past year the union worked hard to make this a central issue at the snap general election in June. UNISON also continued to work on the funding issue with the TUC and other health unions, as well as the NHS Support Federation, who produced a tool for members of the public to find out just how bad the cuts are in their local area. As the crisis came to a head with winter pressures causing problems in many parts of the NHS, UNISON was involved in a great deal of media work to highlight the plight of the NHS.

Health and care workforce strategy

¹³⁴ In December 2017 Health Education England produced a draft workforce strategy for health and care staff in England. The UNISON response highlighted the desperate need for a coherent workforce strategy after years of drift and welcomed the general principles that underpinned the strategy. However, in many other areas the union was forced to highlight omissions or weaknesses. For example, the draft strategy underplayed the impact of the recent abolition of the NHS bursary, gave very minimal consideration to the impact of EU exit, and focused almost exclusively on the clinical

workforce. The UNISON submission called for more work to be channelled through the NHS Social Partnership Forum on areas such as an overarching approach to improving equality and diversity and a whole system strategy for the support service workforce. The union also highlighted the fact that without sufficient funding the many laudable aims of the draft strategy would struggle to make it from paper into action.

Sustainability and transformation partnerships (STPs) in England

¹³⁵ UNISON set up its own “STP Watch” as a means of tracking developments at sustainability and transformation partnerships across England. Work took place with Learning And Organising Services to set up a training course for branches on how to deal with STPs. Work is ongoing through the NHS Social Partnership Forum to pursue the “security package” for staff that UNISON has repeatedly demanded of NHS England where STPs and wider service change is concerned. The union submitted a detailed written submission to the House of Commons health committee inquiry into STPs in January 2018 and then gave oral evidence to the committee in February. The union’s response highlighted the failures of staff engagement and public involvement in the development of plans, and pointed to the need for a properly funded NHS not tied up by damaging competition legislation and with a much more realistic timetable for changes.

NHS Professionals

¹³⁶ UNISON continues to work to resist NHS privatisation in all its forms. In 2017-18 this included a successful campaign working with the We Own It group to stop the government selling off NHS Professionals, the publicly-owned NHS staffing agency. The union’s Early Day Motion was tabled by former UNISON president Eleanor Smith MP, which called for an end to the sale and attracted the support of more than 100 MPs from across the House of Commons. UNISON also worked with Labour’s shadow health team to raise the issue directly with government ministers, which resulted in an open letter to the National Audit Office asking them to investigate the sale, querying the waste of public money and the secrecy involved in the proposed sale. In September 2017 the news emerged that the government had performed a u-turn, as it was announced that NHS Professionals would not be sold off to a private company.

Wholly-owned subsidiary companies in the NHS

¹³⁷ A developing area of UNISON work over the past 12 months has been to challenge the use of wholly-owned

subsidiary companies by trusts in England. There has been an increasing amount of activity in different regions of England by trusts looking to set up such organisations, often for their facilities management—the south west and Yorkshire and Humberside regions were particularly affected by this new drive. UNISON undertook targeted work at a number of these sites to challenge the business case for plans and to fight their implementation. Nationally the union worked with the Labour Party to raise the profile of the issue and held a successful roundtable meeting with a large number of MPs from the affected areas. The union produced branch briefings, parliamentary briefings, campaigning leaflets and a campaign page on the UNISON website. By February 2018 this campaign was beginning to produce its first victories, with North Bristol NHS Trust ditching plans to transfer hundreds of workers after strong UNISON campaigning. A number of other trusts have decided to pause their plans or are actively reconsidering.

In-work benefits

¹³⁸ After playing an important role in forcing the Chancellor to reverse the cut in tax credits planned for April 2016, UNISON has been campaigning to reverse other elements of George Osborne’s £12bn cut to social security. The key changes that UNISON is pressing for include: re-instating the cut in work allowances within Universal Credit, repealing the two child limit, ending the freeze on local housing allowances and major changes to Personal Independence Payments.

¹³⁹ Re-instating work allowances is one of the most effective ways of financially assisting people on low incomes. UNISON produced a report showing that although the national minimum wage for someone working 35 hours a week has risen by over £2,400 a year since 2015, the Treasury has been the biggest gainer when changes to personal income tax allowances, national insurance and work allowances are taken into account.

¹⁴⁰ If people are already claiming tax credits they are protected when they are migrated to Universal Credit so UNISON has been encouraging members who are eligible for tax credits to claim before Universal Credit arrives. UNISON’s tax credit calculator and benefits calculator for members are both available on the UNISON website. The planned migration of Housing Benefit to Universal Credit between 2019 and 2022 has implications for thousands of housing benefit staff and UNISON has pressed DWP to address those issues.

¹⁴¹ At the same time UNISON has been raising concerns about how the way people are paid can affect their Universal

Credit payments, looking at the way Universal Credit works for people paid weekly, 4 weekly, monthly on the same day (e.g. 3rd Thursday) and monthly on the same date (e.g. 23rd of the month) providing select committee evidence and publicising the impact.

Local government cuts

¹⁴² The local government service group launched a major rolling programme of lobbying politicians on cuts to different services. Crippling cuts to local government budgets are the fault of the Westminster government, so we are taking the fight to MPs in their constituencies, getting members to visit local surgeries to make clear the immense damage the cuts have done to services, communities and workers. The work will culminate in the autumn in time to influence the budget and get more money back into local services. There is more detail of the Save Our Services campaign activities in the local government service group annual report.

Housing

¹⁴³ Housing affordability is increasingly a significant workplace issue for public service workers, many of whom are priced out of the housing market due to high housing costs, which is why housing remains a top priority for UNISON.

¹⁴⁴ UNISON continues to lobby politicians to support our calls for more housing that is affordable to our members on modest incomes. Last Autumn UNISON successfully launched our report in parliament: *No place to live: A UNISON report into the impact of housing costs on London's public service workers*.

¹⁴⁵ Over the past year there have been a number of significant concessions due to mounting opposition against the controversial measures contained in the Housing and Planning Act. This includes the deferment of the sale of "higher value" vacant council homes for two years, which if implemented would lead to a further depletion of council housing stock. This is a big win for UNISON's housing campaign—our main campaign objective is for the government to drop this policy altogether.

¹⁴⁶ Due to mounting opposition against housing policy, the government has admitted that the "housing market is broken" and that it needs to do more to increase the supply of new housing across all housing types, and not just building homes for sale.

¹⁴⁷ The Autumn budget provided a modest increase in the amounts that councils will be allowed to borrow to invest in new homes. While the amount pledged doesn't go far enough, it shows a slight shift in government policy towards empowering councils to build homes.

Living wage/national living wage

¹⁴⁸ The living wage has continued to form a major element of UNISON's bargaining agenda across service groups. With major public spending cuts and the maintenance of the 1% pay cap over most of 2017 setting a tough background for pay bargaining, the ethical arguments for a living wage have provided a valuable basis for seeking extra increases for the lowest-paid staff. The campaign has also been taken up vigorously by many local branches to achieve improvements on national agreements.

¹⁴⁹ The living wage is now the minimum rate across Scotland's public sector and social care sector, as well as the NHS and further education colleges in Wales. Framework agreements for support staff in more than 12,000 schools across the UK have set the living wage as a key target for employers. Across utilities, the living wage is paid by SSE, Centrica/British Gas, National Grid and EDF, as well as the water companies Yorkshire, Northumbrian, Dee Valley, Scottish, South East, Sutton and East Surrey.

¹⁵⁰ During Living Wage Week in November 2017, the new rates of £10.20 an hour in London and £8.75 across the rest of the UK were announced. Revised publicity material was produced to support local campaigning events, while 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.

¹⁵¹ In July 2017, UNISON provided written and oral evidence to the Low Pay Commission on the government's national living wage alongside the four other youth and apprentice tiers of the national minimum wage. The evidence set out the case for raising all rates to the living wage and included commissioned evidence to bolster our case on youth rate abolition.

¹⁵² Enforcement formed a major part of the evidence, arguing for a legal requirement on employers to set out pay slip details of payments that would enable an employee to check compliance with the national minimum wage rates and help eradicate practices particularly widespread across the care sector, such as the failure to pay for travel time.

Challenging the cut to the top rate of tax

¹⁵³ In the run-up to the budget and as part of the debate on austerity, UNISON produced a report showing that people earning over £1m a year had gained £8.6bn from the cut in the top rate of tax from 50p to 45p in the £ since it was cut in April 2013.

Pensions

¹⁵⁴ The long awaited White Paper on the future of defined benefit (DB) schemes in the private sector was published at the time of writing. It starts from the welcome position that DB schemes in the main are still affordable and deficits likely to reduce in the future. The big relief is that the government has decided not to give employers the powers to override scheme rules to cut indexation that was a major concern for UNISON. UNISON will continue to push for schemes to be valued fairly that does not overestimate the risk and make them unaffordable and to provide support for our member trustees.

¹⁵⁵ An increasing number of UNISON members are in defined contribution (DC) pension schemes where the member bears all the investment risk. UNISON has prepared a DC toolkit to assist members to understand and negotiate improvements to the schemes and to recruit members based on improving pensions. UNISON has helped members deal with an increasing number of attacks on good pension provision. Examples include the social housing scheme, schemes in the energy and water sectors and universities.

¹⁵⁶ The social housing pension scheme costs increased significantly at the 2017 valuation and UNISON is meeting the scheme manager and pensions committee and preparing to defend members from further cuts in future benefits.

¹⁵⁷ UNISON continues to provide support to members to challenge overly-prudent actuarial assumptions which are the main reason why good pension provision is coming under attack. UNISON is taking on actuarial firms that advise employers to close their schemes and then profit by helping to set up replacement DC schemes that they have an interest in. UNISON has issued briefings and commissioned independent actuaries to show how DB schemes can remain affordable.

UNISON staff pension scheme and shareholder engagement

¹⁵⁸ The UNISON staff pension scheme provides retirement and death benefits for employees of UNISON, UJA and 168

UNISON branches. It is an open defined benefit (or final salary) arrangement.

¹⁵⁹ In addition to the statutory responsibilities, the scheme is a leader in the trade union movement for shareowner engagement with the companies it invests in. The trustees, in conjunction with the TUC and UNITE pension schemes, are founders of the Trade Union Share Owners group (TUSO), which is actively expanding to include other UK-based union staff pension funds and union general funds. Through TUSO, trustees have exercised their shareholder voting rights in line with the TUC's guidelines and appointed an external body (PIRC) to assist them in implementing their voting policy. The trustees' voting policy focuses on employment, social, environmental and corporate governance issues.

¹⁶⁰ For example, in May 2017, each of the scheme's investment managers signed a letter to the G7 calling on continued support and swift implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change. In June 2017 the scheme directly signed the letter to the G7. In total, the letter was signed by over 280 investors representing assets of over \$17trillion in assets.

¹⁶¹ In conjunction with TUSO, the scheme sponsored a briefing for investors to discuss working conditions in the UK hotel sector and the risks these create for investors. The briefing included a focus on two major hotel chains, Intercontinental Hotel Group and Whitbread. The briefing included issues such as non-payment of the statutory minimum wage, excessive working hours, health and safety concerns, bullying and harassment and breaches of international standards on freedom of association. The briefing was followed up with specific engagement focus on Whitbread plc as owner of Premier Inn chain and alleged breach of Ethical Trading Initiative standards.

The environment and energy

¹⁶² At our 2017 national delegate conference, delegates passed Composite B on climate change and pension fund disinvestment. The NEC moved quickly to implement this, working with Share Action, to produce a branch guide to pension issues, scheme member rights and investment strategies, particularly in relation to, but not confined to, the local government pension scheme (LGPS). This was launched in January at the annual branch LGPS seminar and the work of UNISON activists at the environment agency pension scheme was praised and highlighted as good practise.

¹⁶³ UNISON has continued to push progressive solutions to fuel poverty and tackling climate change while retaining the

employment and skills base of its members. We continue to push our ‘warm homes’ campaign for a national programme of domestic energy efficiency measures which would lead to a sustained and positive change. We have also been leading the calls for hydrogen conversion of the UK’s gas network to reduced harmful carbon emissions when gas is burnt.

¹⁶⁴ UNISON continues to work with TUC unions and Trade Unions for Energy Democracy on public ownership, sustainable development and meeting targets to tackle and reduce emissions and climate change. In Scotland there is now an official Just Transition Commission that UNISON and the STUC are working with the Scottish Government to implement. It hopes to plot a route to a low carbon future that benefits workers and citizens not large companies.

¹⁶⁵ UNISON holds the presidency of the EPSU standing committee on utilities.

Health and safety

¹⁶⁶ UNISON held its largest ever health and safety seminar in Edinburgh, entitled Guardians of Health and Safety—it attracted around 350 delegates. The primary aim for the seminar and subsequent work-plan was to focus on stress as a workplace issue. This led to the initial launch of UNISON’s stress toolkit—a document to support branch campaigns to get employers to implement the HSE stress management standards approach to managing stress at work. The management of mental health is beginning to emerge as an area of concern for our members and activists.

¹⁶⁷ European health and safety week in October attracted lots of interest with branches getting a “High Five” for letting us know about their week’s activities.

¹⁶⁸ This was followed by UNISON’s first stress seminar held on Stress Awareness Day—where a final version of the stress toolkit was launched—catching the eye of the Health and Safety Executive.

Apprenticeships

¹⁶⁹ UNISON’s campaigning on apprenticeships over the past 12 months has been focused on ensuring that the new apprenticeship regime guarantees apprentices the rights, pay and conditions that befit the job being done.

¹⁷⁰ UNISON launched the Apprenticeship Charter at national delegate conference in 2017. It is a tool to

ensure apprenticeships deliver a positive outcome for both apprentices and employers. It spells out what rights apprentices should have, and what responsibilities employers owe them, with the aim of creating apprenticeships that work for everyone. Crucially, signatories to the charter are asked to guarantee that apprentices receive the same pay, terms and conditions as anyone else doing a similar job—meaning they’re paid fairly, and existing staff aren’t undercut.

¹⁷¹ So far several employers have signed our charter—including Hartlepool College and the Southport & Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust—and shown their commitment to decent apprenticeship standards. In the years ahead, apprenticeships look likely to become a much bigger part of the world of work, so it’s vital we ensure that employers are delivering apprenticeships that meet the high standards our union expects.

Violence at work in the community and voluntary sector

¹⁷² A major piece of campaigning work in UNISON community service group has been the development of a charter against violence at work—a set of 10 measures which employers should take to safeguard staff.

¹⁷³ This issue is a particular problem in for charity and housing association workers. The charter contains measures such as training, risk assessments and support pathways for victims of violence. All employers in community where UNISON has members have been asked to sign the charter and 15 major employers have already signed.

¹⁷⁴ A parliamentary event is planned for June 2018 to thank those who have signed, and to put more pressure on those who have yet to engage.

Libraries

¹⁷⁵ SOS Libraries Day took place in October 2017. The day brought together UNISON’s Save Our Local Services anti-cuts campaign with our ongoing work speaking up for publicly-owned, publicly-run libraries. Branches across the UK took part, visiting libraries, recruiting new members, getting their existing members to join their local library, and raising awareness of the wide range of services that libraries provide, in their roles as community hubs. The day generated a large amount of social media interest.

Probation services

¹⁷⁶ UNISON has long warned that the government's probation reforms, which broke up and part-privatised the service, would be disastrous. The consequences of this experiment were exposed to public scrutiny through a series of inspection reports by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation during 2017. UNISON lobbied and campaigned at regional and national level for political scrutiny and successfully pressed the Justice Select Committee and the National Audit Office to call for a review of probation services being delivered by the private sector and the £340 million bail-out of the failing companies. We were able to submit detailed evidence and appeared before the select committee twice to answer MPs' questions. Evidence from our members proved highly persuasive in pushing for increased political accountability over the use of public money to subsidise private companies. Many used their comment to talk about their fears for public safety and raising concerns about rising workloads, stress and a deteriorating service.

Police staff

¹⁷⁷ UNISON's Cuts Mean Crime campaign was centre stage in the 2017 general election and we have continued to raise the disastrous impact of police cuts on crime, particularly serious and violent crime, across forces in England and Wales. We asked the police minister to stop using the misleading British Crime Survey (an opinion poll which excludes many categories of crime) as the basis of the government's argument that crime is falling. Exactly the opposite is true. As part of this campaign we asked Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary to undertake a thematic inspection of neighbourhood policing in order to take stock of eight years of savage cuts to police community support officers (PCSOs).

¹⁷⁸ UNISON has been working with the London School of Economics on a substantive piece of academic research into sexual harassment within police forces, which included a major survey of police staff members in England, Scotland and Wales. The results and findings of the research, published this summer, will form a significant contribution to tackling sexual harassment in the police service.

Higher education

¹⁷⁹ Over the past year, support for the English tuition fees model has started looking more uncertain with fees and funding at the heart of a new political debate.

A raft of reviews by a number of Commons and Lords select committees has been launched and UNISON has taken the opportunity to provide extensive evidence to parliamentarians and civil servants on the impact of student debt and tuition fees, and the lessons to be learned from the Scottish and Welsh models of higher education funding.

¹⁸⁰ This year UNISON ran a Freedom of Information (FOI) request which found that some of the universities paying the highest wages to vice chancellors had the largest number of low paid or casualised staff. Many institutions pay senior staff huge salaries while there are thousands of low paid service workers on the same campuses, in the same offices, experiencing poverty despite being in work and relying on tax credits.

¹⁸¹ In Wales, the implementation of the Diamond and Hazelkorn reviews offers the potential to transform the provision of higher and further education. A single body overseeing strategic planning for the post compulsory education and training system is a welcome step forward in encouraging the kind of integrated and comprehensive post-16 system that UNISON has long been calling for.

Further education

¹⁸² UNISON's campaigns in further education have focused on demanding better funding and governance for the sector and opposing cuts and redundancies. A survey last year of members in the further education sector showed that issues including low pay, excessive workload and constant job insecurity were leading to high levels of stress and anxiety.

¹⁸³ UNISON is also working on new guidance for college support staff on dealing with the increasing problem of excessive workloads. The guide gives members ideas on how to set up campaigns, ways of gathering evidence and building a case to take to management to address the problem of workload.

Early years education

¹⁸⁴ UNISON is working with the Families and Daycare Trust on developing future funding and workforce models for the early years workforce that properly reflect their professionalism and the demands of their work. When completed we will use the research and modelling to argue for a significant investment to achieve UNISON's long-held goals of good-quality early years provision delivered by valued and properly remunerated staff.

¹⁸⁵ UNISON continues to campaign for better funding for early years to protect vital services such as school and maintained nurseries and children's centres.

¹⁸⁶ We have been working in Scotland to promote an increased role for the public sector and have published research on the critical impact of a high quality workforce on outcomes for young children.

Schools

¹⁸⁷ Last year UNISON campaigned across the UK against school funding cuts. In particular we worked with our sister school unions to highlight the severe impact that restricted funding has been having in schools (see the website www.schoolcuts.org.uk). It was widely acknowledged that this joint campaign along with pressure from parents and the general public led to the government pumping an additional £1.3billion into schools funding in England. However this fell well short of the money needed by schools to make ends meet and so the union campaign continued.

¹⁸⁸ Defending members working in academies which faced financial challenges has been a priority. Engaging with Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) in England has been particularly difficult. One example has been in the Academies Enterprise Trust, covering 63 schools. It introduced a significant restructure and cuts to its estates and facilities staff. In April this year UNISON launched a staff survey. With support from other teaching and support unions, we intend to use evidence from the survey to demand urgent action.

¹⁸⁹ Responding to the merger of NEU and ATL into a new union: NEU, UNISON and other support staff unions renegotiated a previous agreement that aimed to stop the ATL from recruiting support staff in maintained schools. The new agreement was much stronger stating that NEU should not produce targeted recruitment materials, NEU reps should not knowingly or actively recruit members and it covered all publicly-funded schools including academies and free schools. We have reported several breaches of the agreement to the NEU nationally.

International

¹⁹⁰ 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 (EPSU) and Public Services International (PSI). The UNISON International Development Fund (UIDF) is an important tool in delivering real trade union solidarity.

¹⁹¹ The 30th world congress of Public Services International took place from 30 October to 3 November 2017 in Geneva,. There were over 1,200 delegates and visitors from 425 affiliated unions from over 110 countries. UNISON's delegation was led by the president Margaret McKee and was made up of the presidential team, representatives of the policy and international committees, the young members' NEC rep and staff. The delegation intervened in key debates as well as holding bilateral meetings with 10 unions from across Europe, the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Dave Prentis was unanimously re-elected as PSI president alongside general secretary, Rosa Pavanelli.

¹⁹² The NEC international committee decided to prioritise work on Palestine, Colombia, Qatar and Turkey in 2017. It also agreed to develop work on global supply chains and quality public services in the Global South. For 2018 the committee prioritised work on Colombia, modern slavery, Palestine and Turkey.

¹⁹³ The UIDF, despite a drop in income from UNISON's affinity partners, continues to serve a vital role in delivering on the union's international priorities. At the end of 2017 the UIDF was supporting 17 projects in 15 countries with sister unions and labour movement organisations. These included union organising and support for human rights defenders in Colombia, trade union education and training in Palestine, supporting migrant workers in Qatar and capacity building for health unions in Latin America.

¹⁹⁴ UNISON continued to support, financially and practically, the work of Justice for Colombia following the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC rebels. Justice for Colombia's expertise was recognised when they were appointed as official advisers to the negotiations. Colombia was also the country with the largest number of UIDF supported projects.

¹⁹⁵ 2017 marked the 50th anniversary of Israel's occupation of Palestine and the 10th anniversary of the blockade of Gaza. UNISON supported a number of events organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) to mark these important anniversaries, including the national demonstration in November. UNISON also supported PSC's successful legal case against government attempts to prevent the Local Government Pension Scheme divesting from companies involved in the occupation of Palestine, and developed new materials to help branches engage with their pension funds. UNISON continues to support the development of the European Trade Union Initiative for Justice for Palestine, bringing together trade unions across Europe to campaign for Palestinian rights.

¹⁹⁶ Since the attempted coup in 2016 the government of Turkey has suspended or dismissed approximately 150,000 public sector workers and continues to erode democracy, human rights and the rule of law. UNISON contributed to the ITUC/ETUC appeal which has provided legal support to thousands of dismissed and suspended workers. UNISON has also supported campaigns for the release of trade unionists, political prisoners and human rights activists, and repeatedly called on the UK government to address the denial of human rights and end the sale of arms to Turkey.

¹⁹⁷ At the end of 2017 the Qatari authorities announced new measures to dismantle the 'kafala' employment system for migrant workers and bring to an end to this particular form of modern slavery. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) decided to close the complaint against Qatar which was initially brought by the ITUC in 2014. The ITUC welcomed the new guidance from the Qatari government following campaigning by unions around the world, including UNISON. However, several other countries including Saudi Arabia and the UAE continue to operate forms of the kafala system.

¹⁹⁸ UNISON's June 2017 national delegate conference passed a motion calling on the ILO to classify child marriage as a form of child labour. This was followed by a UNISON briefing, and print and web articles. UNISON also raised the issue with the TUC and the ITUC and worked with US sister union the American Federation of Teachers to get them to join the campaign.

¹⁹⁹ In 2017 UNISON became the first and only UK trade union to issue a statement under the Modern Slavery Act but also the first trade union to join Electronics Watch, an international NGO that campaigns against labour rights abuses in global supply chains in the IT and electronics industries and which works with its members to help them trace the supply chain of their own procurement contracts.

General political fund (GPF)

²⁰⁰ The GPF agreed more than 60 bids during 2017. These included requests for funding towards important national campaigns, such as Public Service Champions, Hope not Hate, We Own It and Show Racism the Red Card, and important activity in the nations and regions, including local anti-cuts campaigns, engagement with politicians in the devolved administrations, and support for the union's involvement in the full range of equality events. Total GPF expenditure reached £2.7m.

²⁰¹ The GPF committee also held an away day in December 2017 to discuss priorities for the year. It was agreed that

with the introduction of the opt-in for new members in Great Britain from March 2018, a clear focus will be on demonstrating to new members what the fund does and how it is relevant to them.

²⁰² The agreement to change the name of the GPF to the Campaign Fund reflects this new focus. New materials have been produced to promote the fund and to support activists and organisers to encourage members to opt-in. An extra effort will be needed in future to ensure that campaigns that receive support give credit to the fund, so that these can be used as examples to new members of what the fund does.

Labour Link

²⁰³ The Labour Link committee continues to direct the work of promoting UNISON members' interests inside the Labour Party and in parliament to oppose the government's ongoing attacks on public services and those that provide them.

²⁰⁴ The number of UNISON members elected as MPs grew significantly following the 2017 general election and Labour Link has met with them individually and collectively to highlight the union's priorities. A large number of Labour MPs attended the Westminster Hall debate in support of the Pay Up Now! campaign and briefings have occurred to explain the consequences of UNISON's win in the Supreme Court regarding employment tribunal fees.

²⁰⁵ The union has been in discussions with the Labour Party about proposed radical changes to the energy sector. Proposals on bringing large parts of the sector back into public ownership have been supported but crucially for UNISON this must include the retail and customer operations side where we have many thousands of members. A coherent case for this has been pressed by UNISON and we will be continuing to ensure this is included in future commitments.

²⁰⁶ UNISON is working with the Labour shadow cabinet, backbenchers, police and crime commissioners and elected Labour mayors to call for increased political accountability at a devolved level in probation services.

²⁰⁷ Working with Labour's team in parliament, opposition has been voiced to the cuts in local government and social care as well as concerns being raised about Sustainability and Transformation Plans in England.

²⁰⁸ Labour Link balloted levy payers in Scotland to elect the new leader of Scottish Labour, Richard Leonard, who was nominated by UNISON. Similarly, in Wales levy payers were

balloted in support of Julie Morgan, for deputy leader of the Labour Party in Wales.

²⁰⁹ Labour Link is participating in the Labour Party's democracy review and is clear that the union's voice is maintained at all levels within in the party.

²¹⁰ Labour Link continues to support member who wish to become councillors or parliamentarians with training and advice.

Political fund membership of Labour Link and GPF at December 31st 2017 as a proportion of full members	
Labour Link (APF)	32%
Campaign Fund (GPF)	62%

²¹¹ The remaining 6% of members have opted out of the fund or did not join in the first place in Northern Ireland, where an opt-in system exists.

General pay trends

²¹² The public sector pay cap remained in place over much of the year until the government announced a formal end to the policy in its Autumn 2017 budget. However, with departmental budget cuts slashed through years of austerity budgets, funding continues to act as a severe restraint on pay policy.

²¹³ Nevertheless, negotiations in the higher education sector delivered an early push beyond the cap, with a settlement in August 2017 delivering a 1.7% basic rise alongside the living wage (based on a 35-hour week) for staff at the bottom of the pay scale.

²¹⁴ Claims have been submitted across our largest bargaining groups that frequently seek both to keep pace with inflation, currently running at 4%, and provide an element of catch-up for the major cuts in living standards suffered by public service workers over recent years. Almost all claims have also sought to establish the living wage as the minimum rate where it is not already in place or establish higher increases for the lowest paid staff.

²¹⁵ In the weeks following the budget, circumstances have begun to change with regards to pay. In local government and health—the two groups which cover the majority of our membership—pay offers in excess of the previous pay cap have been received and are being consulted on.

²¹⁶ The budget squeeze on the public sector transmits through to privatised public services, where contracted private

companies and community/voluntary organisations commonly agree pay claims on a contract by contract basis dependent on the funding received from the commissioning body.

²¹⁷ Among the utilities sector, long terms deals and deals linked to the retail price index (RPI) are more common than across our other bargaining groups. Consequently, deals over the last year have averaged in excess of 2%.

Campaigning in the devolved nations

Scotland

²¹⁸ The first half of 2017 was focused on the local government elections, with every seat being contested. The proportional representation system delivered 32 hung councils, which resulted in a combination of minority administrations or coalitions, primarily between Labour and the SNP. UNISON Scotland published a manifesto, *For Fairness and Democracy—Keep it Local*, supported by social media, questions for candidates and Local Government Champions leaflets. Polling by Survation reinforced public support for the key messages.

²¹⁹ These elections were overlapped by the UK general election, which was a further opportunity to reinforce key messages with members and maximise turnout.

²²⁰ EU exit has been a continuous theme throughout the year. Powers from the EU in devolved areas should come directly to Scotland. However, the UK government is attempting to retain some of these powers at Westminster and negotiations have so far failed to reach an agreement. The Scottish parliament is unlikely to give legislative consent to the EU Withdrawal Bill and will pass its own legislation, the EU Continuity (Scotland) Bill to address devolved competencies. UNISON Scotland has made a number of submissions to Scottish parliament inquiries on the impact of EU exit, with a focus on immigration and the impact on public services.

²²¹ The focus on EU exit has resulted in a smaller legislative programme. However, there are important public service reforms in education, planning, safe staffing and early years provision; together with progressive social legislation on gender recognition, gender balance and the socio-economic duty. New government strategies on energy, fuel poverty, food, workforce planning and climate change have benefited from UNISON's input.

²²² The second half of the year was dominated by the Scottish budget. The UK budget now accounts for half of

Scottish revenues, with devolved powers over income tax and other revenues resting with the Scottish parliament. There has been a vigorous debate on the use of taxation powers and parliament decided to make some modest changes to make income tax more progressive.

²²³ Tory austerity remains a big problem as does the Scottish government's decision to pass on austerity to local government. UNISON Scotland has been at the forefront of organising demonstrations, parliamentary lobbies and other campaign activity, supported by detailed briefings. This resulted in a significant improvement in local government funding and a new pay policy which guarantees a 3% increase for staff below £36,500 and 2% for those above. The Scottish living wage continues to be paid to all public sector workers in Scotland and reaches many more through procurement.

²²⁴ UNISON Scotland's Public Works campaign continues to highlight the problems and pitfalls of working life in an age of austerity. An implementation report on UNISON's Combating Austerity proposals highlighted the significant savings that public bodies could deliver without impacting on jobs and services. The difficulties faced by particular sections of the workforce are highlighted in the damage series of reports. The Public Works blog covers a range of ideas and service developments. Original research on violence at work, ageing workforce and social care implementation puts workplace issues in the forefront of campaigns.

²²⁵ Regular UNISON Scotland publications include; *Public Service Futures*, *UNISON Week*, *Scotland in UNISON*, *Council Connections*, together with regular briefings to activists and opinion formers. These promote UNISON's campaigns and build the union's profile in traditional and social media. All these can be accessed on the UNISON Scotland website www.unison-scotland.org.

Campaigning in Cymru/Wales

²²⁶ It has been a busy year for UNISON Cymru/Wales campaigning on devolved matters.

Young members' Respect Your Youth charter

²²⁷ The charter was developed through the regional young member's forum—it has five key demands that would transform the quality of life of Welsh young people: a real living wage regardless of age—£8.45 an hour for all; quality apprenticeships which are used to offer decent training and work and are not just a way for employers to avoid paying the correct wage for the job. We want fair employment and

an end to zero hours or low hours contracts; equality in the workplace and training and development opportunities which offer a chance of a career. Our key focus is to encourage all employers across Wales to sign up.

UNISON local government Cymru/Wales manifesto

²²⁸ The region launched a UNISON local government manifesto ahead of the local government elections in May 2017.

²²⁹ The manifesto urged existing and prospective councillors to say no to outsourcing, and no to the spending of taxpayers' money on private consultants. UNISON also called on candidates to ensure staff providing local government services are paid at least the real living wage (£8.45 an hour in Wales). The manifesto was supported by 150 prospective councillors from across Wales, and we have maintained contact with those who were successful at the election on local government campaign issues.

Merthyr Rising festival

²³⁰ The Merthyr Rising festival in 2017 was bigger and better than ever before. The festival was opened by UNISON assistant general secretary Roger McKenzie. The festival, which commemorates the 1831 Merthyr rising, when the red flag was flown as a sign of protest for the first time anywhere, is sponsored by UNISON.

General election 2017 Cymru/Wales

²³¹ Having undertaken a significant level of campaign activity in the run up to the local election, the Cymru/Wales Labour Link committee took a decision to run an offensive strategy in three additional marginal constituencies in Wales—Cardiff North, the Gower, and the Vale of Clwyd.

²³² UNISON Labour Link had a significant input into campaign activity, alongside grassroots campaign groups. The level of mobilisation that UNISON and local campaigners created enabled these seats to be recognised by the party as winnable in the week running up to polling day.

²³³ The hard work paid off and UNISON's strategy was vindicated when we won all three of our target seats from the Tories. These impressive results would not have been achieved without the hard work from UNISON activists and staff who put in an enormous amount of work in these three seats to achieve victory.

Save Our Services rally

²³⁴ UNISON Cymru/Wales called an all-Wales #SaveOurServices rally in the constituency seat of the Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns MP, on 4 November in Barry.

235 On the day, UNISON, brought hundreds of people to the constituency seat of the Secretary of State for Wales. King's Square was awash with colour, placards, banners and flags as families crowded to hear public services are rapidly disappearing as a direct result of UK Conservative government savage spending cuts.

#SocialHousingNow conference

236 Social housing experts, residents, workers and community campaigners gathered for a landmark conference in Cardiff to discuss the future of social housing in Wales. UNISON convened the first conference of its kind in Wales against the backdrop of the Grenfell disaster in what it is describing as a critical time for social housing. The #SocialHousingNow event examined the need for a housing charter for Wales.

Campaigning in Northern Ireland

237 Despite all the union faces in Northern Ireland, 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.

238 We continue to build and grow our partnership projects with health employers, developing exciting new projects tackling urgent public health issues such as mental ill-health and suicide. We are mainstreaming these approaches by training health and social care managers and UNISON activists in approaches to a partnership of equals.

239 In October 2017, our regional council considered a number of motions and put in place a strong, strategic plan addressing the key issues for the organising, bargaining and campaigning for 2018. At its core is dealing with the challenges of the vote to exit the EU; growing our membership through the Fighting Fund project; reorganising lay structures to reflect our diverse membership; and campaigning and bargaining on major issues affecting our members such as low pay, the overuse of agency and locum staff, the funding crisis in our education services, protecting health and social care services from closure, childcare provision, equal pay and challenging poverty and welfare cuts.

240 Our members have been involved in public demonstrations, marches and political lobbies in opposition to the continuous onslaught, in particular, on health, social services, education and funding for the community and voluntary sector.

241 Our core commitment to equality and human rights has been expressed in all aspects of our work. In the course of the year we have continued to engage extensively with public bodies on all key issues, despite the ongoing political instability we face.

Bargaining in Northern Ireland

242 We continue to press for the pay increases our members deserve in the absence of political leadership. In December 2017, due to sustained public campaigning led by UNISON NI, the Department of Finance finally paid UNISON members what they were already owed. This move did not address the wider public sector pay cap or the fact that health workers in Northern Ireland still face a pay deficit compared to their colleagues in England, Scotland and Wales. Our members remain seriously undervalued and continue to suffer whilst the cost of living rises relentlessly. We will continue to press for a real living wage for all our members as the minimum rate of pay across both the public and private sector.

243 In the next 12 months, we will continue to campaign for pay justice for our members, alongside colleagues across the UK, as part of the Pay Up Now! campaign. In particular, we intend to continue to bring pressure to bear on the DUP, in order that they use their influence with government to end the pay cap.

Campaigns and public policy

244 Northern Ireland remains in the middle of a significant political crisis, with several rounds of talks aimed at reforming a Northern Ireland executive having all failed over the last 12 months. We therefore remain without a government in Northern Ireland and the situation has been further complicated by the DUP-Conservative confidence and supply agreement, which gives the DUP major influence over the future of Theresa May's government at Westminster. We pay tribute to our members and activists for their staying power—three elections in two years and still no government.

245 In this unstable political environment, we have continued to successfully engage with all local political parties, highlighting the key concerns of our members. This has included producing and disseminating campaign materials in advance of the June 2017 general election highlighting key issues of concern for Northern Ireland, supported by the UNISON GPF. We held a regional hustings with activists from across NI, affording our members the opportunity to challenge the parties on key issues such as health, education, jobs, pay, human rights and equality, and the impact of exiting the EU.

246 The campaign to restore devolution is a priority for the next 12 months and is closely aligned with the ICTU Better Work, Better Lives campaign in which UNISON staff and lay activists are playing a leading role across all constituencies. The absence of political will to embed equality and human rights commitments as a framework for government led to the collapse of the previous executive and assembly and a return to genuine power-sharing must occur on this basis.

247 Whilst the most recent budget for Northern Ireland announced at Westminster contains £410 million of the £1 billion in funding for Northern Ireland earmarked in the DUP-Conservative deal, no-one should be under any illusion that this represents the end of austerity for Northern Ireland. Large amounts of the money are earmarked specifically for infrastructure projects, not the day-to-day resources our public services desperately need. By 2019/20, it has been estimated that there will be £855 million less in cash terms being spent on public services in Northern Ireland than in 2009/10.

248 It is clear that the UK government has largely ignored the negative consequences that an EU exit will have on the peace process in Northern Ireland. An EU exit will weaken the Good Friday agreement; weaken equality and human rights protections; and could lead to a hard border being re-imposed on the island of Ireland. We remain very concerned in particular at the potential for the EU Withdrawal Bill currently progressing through parliament to undermine workers rights, equality protections and the devolved powers of the Northern Ireland assembly. We have worked with colleagues within UNISON across the UK to attempt to have amendments made to the Bill protecting the Good Friday agreement and the powers of the devolved administrations.

249 We remain very concerned by the threats to the Human Rights Act 1998. The Good Friday agreement sought to protect human rights in NI through requiring that the UK government incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into law, with direct access to the courts and remedies for alleged violations of rights. The Conservatives have repeatedly stated a desire to repeal the Human Rights Act, with speculation that they will also seek that the UK leave the European Convention on Human Rights altogether, which would breach the terms of the Good Friday agreement. Repeal of the Act and the UK leaving the convention altogether becomes even more likely after an exit from the EU.

250 A Bill of Rights could be used to protect rights based in EU law in the future, and limit the power of government to weaken those rights. It is now needed more than ever. It is increasingly clear that the UK government has no

commitment to the equality and human rights agreements which are core to the Good Friday agreement and which will be seriously undermined through exiting the EU. In this context, UNISON must continue to campaign to defend the Human Rights Act and a strong, enforceable Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland must be brought forwards.

251 Throughout 2017 we continued to support our allies across the equality and human rights sector in Northern Ireland. In 2018 we will engage in a major new programme, supported by UNISON GPF, to campaign for the full implementation of commitments made within the Good Friday Agreement in relation to equality and human rights as part of marking its 20th anniversary.

252 In the key public sector negotiating bodies we have moved equality to the top of the negotiating agenda. However, it is increasingly clear that employers are side-stepping their statutory duties. The absence of a government has delayed the introduction of regulations on gender pay reporting and consequently we have moved ahead with this as a bargaining demand.

Chapter four

Legal challenges and opportunities

This year, UNISON has faced an unprecedented set of legal challenges which have meant widespread change for the union. But the law has also been the union's friend, as we have pursued strategic legal cases to support our members; challenge the government's agenda and defend the rights of working people like never before.

This section of this year's NEC annual report will look at some of these challenges and how the union has faced them, as well as how UNISON has shown that strategic legal challenges can change the lives of our members and all working people.

The Trade Union Act: a trio of challenges

²⁵³ UNISON fought a ferocious campaign against the government's proposed Trade Union Bill for Great Britain in 2016/17 and was successful in defeating some of the worst excesses. However the Act as it was eventually passed still contained significant challenges for us in three particular areas: changes to our political fund arrangements; changes to the arrangements for the payment of union subs through deductions from salary (DOCAS); and the introduction of new thresholds for industrial action ballots.

Political fund changes

²⁵⁴ The political fund provisions of the trade union act required all unions with political funds in Great Britain to move from an 'opt-out' to an 'opt-in' arrangement by 1 March 2018.

²⁵⁵ UNISON set up a joint working group, including officers of the Labour Link, the general political fund committee and finance committee, plus representation from the presidential team and regions.

²⁵⁶ The working group's objective was to develop rule changes that enable the union to comply with the act while also:

- preserving the link with the Labour Party
- maintaining campaign capacity
- protecting the union's income.

²⁵⁷ During 2017/18 the working group oversaw a wide-ranging work programme consisting of:

- pilots and trials to test different messages and approaches to securing the highest number of opt-ins
- focus groups with public service employees
- analysis of recruitment data
- negotiations with the certification officer
- development of appropriate joining materials, financial and membership systems.

²⁵⁸ The working group carried out a second union-wide consultation (the first was reported in last year's annual report) inviting comments on its five preferred principles for the future operation of the fund under the opt-in system:

- Maintain the two sections of the fund
- Keep the progressive principle—members who earn more pay more
- Harmonise political fund contributions for existing members at 6.5%
- New members to pay an add-on of 5%
- Learn lessons as we go, recognising that the union will discover best practice at encouraging people to opt in over time.

²⁵⁹ Responses to the consultation were supportive of the approach taken by the working group. Some issues were identified for further work, including putting arrangements in place to facilitate new members opting in to pay political fund contributions through DOCAS and being ready for re-harmonisation in the event that the Act is scrapped.

²⁶⁰ Special meetings of the national Labour Link Forum and GPF committees met early in 2018 to consider the union's preparations; look at responses to the consultation and agree proposed the rule changes. The GPF further agreed to change its name to the Campaign Fund. These changes will now be retrospectively ratified at the national delegate conference in June.

²⁶¹ The changes affect all recruitment activity. Join online pages have been changed, UNISONdirect scripts altered and paper forms changed for both direct debit and DOCAS. An extensive programme to make the opt-in as successful as possible, and learn good practice as we go, is being implemented across the union.

DOCAS subs payment changes

²⁶² The government had announced that changes in the Trade Union Act would mean that from 10 March 2018, new DOCAS agreements would have to be in place to ensure a "reasonable fee" is being paid wherever employers deduct union subs directly from staff wages.

²⁶³ The new rules applied to public sector employers and do not apply in Northern Ireland.

²⁶⁴ The Welsh government passed the Trade Union (Wales) act 2017 which removed the restrictions on employees in the Welsh public sector. The UK government is on the record stating they intend to pass legislation to bring the Welsh public sector back into line with the rest of the UK, but as of now, has not proposed any legislation. UNISON Cymru/Wales is running its own project on DOCAS fees.

²⁶⁵ UNISON's strategy for ensuring that the union's income would be secure was three-fold:

- Most UNISON members work for the 300 largest employers, so this was the first priority for regions to sign up new agreements with.
- A second tranche of medium-sized employers formed the next priority for agreements to be signed at regional level.
- A third group of some 7,500 very small employers—many with fewer than 10 UNISON members each—were covered directly through central communications.
- At the time of writing, the regulations that formally

implement this change had not been laid in parliament, presumably because the government has been focused on other political priorities, such as EU exit negotiations. Advice to employers however has been to act as though the 10 March deadline had been hit. UNISON has done the same, in order to ensure the union's income is not at risk. By March 2018, some 81%, or £76million per year of the union's DOCAS income for England and Scotland had been secured through agreements and negotiations were ongoing for the remainder.

New industrial action thresholds

²⁶⁶ Possibly the most significant element of the Trade Union Bill was the imposition of new thresholds for an industrial action ballot. Ballots now require at least a 50% turnout to be legally valid, and in specific important public services a further requirement that the action is supported by 40% of eligible union members. This represents a major organising challenge for the union and UNISON is working alongside the TUC and other unions to continue to campaign against the changes but also to develop new strategies to ensure that industrial action remains a key part of our bargaining strength.

²⁶⁷ These include:

- Using digital technology together with organising to engage more members earlier
- Building support through achievable local gains (e.g. "earnings max")
- Considering alternative forms of industrial action
- Supporting local industrial action
- Although digital balloting is not allowed for statutory ballots under current law, we can use these newer engagement techniques for our own internal consultations.

²⁶⁸ The union has now had several experiences of running a digital consultation in conjunction with local organising. In this model, we encourage branches to focus on talking to members about the issues and asking them to update their email and mobile data on our records. The actual consultation is then carried out as a central online survey and we use email, texts and social media to give members an easy and instant way to engage and express their views.

²⁶⁹ So far this has resulted in some improvement in engagement levels and provides the branches and UNISON centrally with a lot of valuable information about participation patterns that we can feed back into our organising strategy.

²⁷⁰ The health care service group has pioneered a pay strategy known as "earnings max" which has encouraged local branches to focus on ways to increase their members'

pay by resourcing local activity on rebanding, making living wage claims, improving shift patterns etc. This is aimed at building confidence among members that the union can deliver real change, well ahead of any industrial action ballot

271 Alongside this, the union is evaluating alternatives to the traditional national strike ballot—for example looking at targeted industrial action; rolling programmes of activity; regional actions.

272 Since the industrial action provisions of the Trade Union Act came into force on 1 March 2017, over 68,000 members have been balloted in local and national ballots.

273 Members from a variety of workplaces have taken action, including:

- hospital porters in Devon and Exeter
- housing workers in Torfaen
- waste and recycling workers in Hull
- home carers in Birmingham
- water utilities workers in the North West.

274 The NEC receives regular reports on all ballots and action taken.

Treating our members' data with care

275 New rules about data protection, known as the General Data Protection Regulation or GDPR, came into force at the end of May 2018. The GDPR aims to protect individuals from misuse of personal data by any organisations and to give individuals more rights to challenge how their data is collected and used. It has legal force and there are very large fines for non-compliance. This will mean some changes to what information UNISON collects about members, and how it collects, stores and uses it. It is a challenge for the union but also an opportunity to build trust among members that the union treats their personal information with care. One of the first changes in UNISON has been to redesign the union's application forms. The new forms include very clear explanations of how we will and will not use the information joiners provide on the form, including allowing people the option to choose whether or not we use the information they give to communicate with them through various channels.

276 The new regulations also have very specific rules on how organisations process "special category" personal data: which includes things such as ethnic origin, political belief and trade union membership.

277 None of this information can be shared with an employer—except union membership through a DOCAS

form. Equality monitoring information is also not necessary to joining the union: according to the law, it would be regarded as "excessive" data collection if we collect it when people apply to join.

278 However UNISON is committed to monitoring the diversity of our membership and we will be working with representatives of all of UNISON's self-organised groups to develop a new framework for gathering information and looking at new ways to engage our members in this process.

279 The GDPR changes will also mean some changes to the way we manage members' data in our own information systems. Some advice has already been circulated to branches and more specific guidance will be made available.

Using the law to fight for our members

280 The law has also been a powerful weapon this year in the fight to support our members, redress injustices and challenge the government's attacks on the rights of working people.

Making legal history on employment tribunals

281 July 2017 saw UNISON win a landmark victory against the government's imposition of employment tribunal fees after a dogged four-year legal battle. Seven Supreme Court judges ruled that the government had acted unlawfully and unconstitutionally when it introduced the fees four years earlier. The court ruled that the fees of up to £1,200 per case had restricted access to justice and therefore undermined the rule of law.

282 The ruling held that if people couldn't reasonably afford to bring employment tribunal claims, this damaged the ability of the courts to enforce the law and if the laws Parliament makes can't be enforced, then the electoral process itself could become "a meaningless charade".

283 UNISON's pursuit of the case—despite losing the argument at six earlier unsuccessful hearings—has meant that hundreds of thousands of workers (not just UNISON or union members) have had their access to justice restored, and the government will have to refund up to £27m to the thousands of people charged for taking claims to tribunals between July 2013 and 2017.

284 The historic significance of the case has been widely recognised and applauded. UNISON's in-house legal team were awarded The Lawyer magazine's Employment Team

of the Year in 2014 for bringing the case; in 2016 they won a similar award from The Solicitor's Journal and in 2018 the Best Use of Law Award by the Sheila McKechnie Foundation at its National Campaigner Awards. In 2017/8, head of legal services Adam Creme was named lawyer of the year by Liberty and Shantha David, who conducted the litigation was awarded Outstanding Achievement Award in the Modern Law Awards and the Halsbury Award for Rule of Law by Lexis Nexis at its Legal Awards 2018.

²⁸⁵ Between July and September 2017, claims in employment tribunals increased by more than 100%, doubling from a total number of claims of 13,759 (between April and June) to 30,339, showing the immediate practical impact of the UNISON legal action. This is now known as “the UNISON effect” and the case as “the UNISON case”.

Establishing the right to consultation

²⁸⁶ The UNISON ET win was quickly followed by another landmark court victory against Wandsworth Council that makes it much harder for employers to ignore staff when making major changes in the workplace. The victory came about after the union took up a case involving parks police who were made redundant by the London Borough of Wandsworth. After a three-year legal battle, the Court of Appeal ruling means that for the first time employers will be obliged to consult with unions around any workplace issues that affect their members. Until now, unions only had the right to be consulted where the law required this, for example in TUPE regulations where employees transfer from one employer to another, and in redundancy cases. The ruling means employers will also have to involve unions in issues such as those around working hours and holiday pay. It will benefit thousands of employees whose rights at work are under threat and means that employers will face greater scrutiny over their treatment of staff, says UNISON.

Winning equal pay in Glasgow

²⁸⁷ A 10-year battle by UNISON finally saw the Court of Session, Scotland's highest civil court, rule that a bespoke job evaluation scheme introduced by Glasgow City Council in 2007 was unfit for purpose. Following this decision, the council voted not to appeal further and has now agreed to “negotiation not litigations” to discuss a settlement with UNISON and other unions.

²⁸⁸ Glasgow UNISON women members are now demanding a fair and transparent pay and grading scheme and full compensation for the pay they have been denied. If they are successful in achieving fair compensation, it will be one of

the largest redistributions of wealth in the history of Glasgow. Although the battle goes on, the Glasgow case shows UNISON can win through by litigating, negotiating, lobbying and campaigning for equal pay.

Pressing for change in care

²⁸⁹ UNISON is using strategic legal action as a tool to press for change—alongside organising care workers, negotiating on their behalf, lobbying councils and decision-makers and working with community groups to support some of the most vulnerable and low-paid public service workers in the care sector.

²⁹⁰ The litigation has focused on enforcement of the national minimum wage as homecare workers were not receiving it in full because travel time between care appointments was not factored into their pay calculations. Claims have now been brought against all major homecare providers in the UK in order to demonstrate that this is a widespread industry practice, not just a few “bad apples”.

²⁹¹ UNISON is currently representing 43 members in north London in what is considered the largest ever homecare group claim.

²⁹² Homecare workers have low levels of union membership, are employed in precarious work arrangements on zero hour contracts and often do not have a fixed workplace where they can meet colleagues for support. They are vulnerable to exploitation as a result. This is why this litigation is so important—to give the workers an opportunity to enforce their right to receive at least the national minimum wage and also to provide an organising and recruitment opportunity.

²⁹³ Another strand to the litigation and organising strategy has been to support members in accessing their national minimum wage records. If employers fail to produce records within a prescribed timeframe, the worker is entitled to compensation of 80 times the national minimum wage: up to £600.

²⁹⁴ This approach supports our organising agenda because unlike the main enforcement claims these claims are relatively quick to progress. Workers can be supported by reps with the request, accompanied to inspections if they happen or provided with assistance in making a claim which builds the relationship between worker and union. UNISON is the only union supporting this type of claim.

Chapter five

Supporting branches

Supporting branches with the tools and resources to meet the challenges of the future

²⁹⁵ Our union is only as strong as the branches it is made up of. The members and potential members of today are not the same as 25 years ago when the union was formed. They have more diverse needs and expectations. The pressure facing branches in a climate of continual austerity, fragmentation and limited resources remains a key challenge for the union going forward.

²⁹⁶ The union is committed to supporting branches by centrally providing a wide-ranging package of resources to ensure that branches can access the tools, staff, financial support and information quickly and easily. These include:

Bargaining support

²⁹⁷ Over the last year, the union's central bargaining support function has continued to develop cross-service group guidance that seeks to provide branches with concise practical advice on all key aspects of terms and conditions. The guidance has been reshaped to place greater emphasis on highlighting the best terms that have been achieved across public services to offer practical targets for negotiations and increase the availability of model materials designed to ease the process of negotiation. Regular updates of economic developments relevant to pay claims have informed national claims and provided a consistent basis for many local claims.

²⁹⁸ New guidance over the year has included material on:

- Responding to the facility time reporting regulations;
- Negotiating mental health policies in the workplace;
- Ensuring sleep-in payments meet minimum wage requirements;
- Utilising the procurement process to defend terms and conditions;
- Negotiating policies to support older workers;
- The protections available to prevent employer victimisation of trade union members;
- Negotiating an effective apprenticeship policy;
- Bargaining on behalf of workers engaged in home-working;
- Tackling hate crime and hate incidents as a workplace issue.

²⁹⁹ The NEC also makes an annual payment to the Labour Research Department (LRD) organisation to ensure that they can offer publications and bargaining support to branches at reasonable rates.

The Campaign Fund

³⁰⁰ The new Campaign Fund (formerly the General Political Fund) is available for funding campaigning activities at all levels of the union. The fund is overseen by a national lay committee which releases funds after bids are made. The committee works closely with regions, who can approve bids under £5,000 in line with the national guidelines, to make sure campaigns can get started quickly.

The Regional Pool

³⁰¹ The Regional Pool is a long-standing fund based on a small percentage of subscription income. Funds are made available to financially support recruitment and organising initiatives at branch level. The pot is divided between regions according to size with a regional lay committee responsible for approving bids from branches or groups of branches.

Fighting Fund

³⁰² The Fighting Fund has an allocated budget of £3 million to enable branches or groups of branches to bid for organiser staff resources for specific time-limited organising and recruitment projects with clear objectives and milestones. In 2017, this funded some 104 organisers working on 110 projects across all 12 regions.

³⁰³ Participating branches are asked to contribute towards the fund to ensure that it can continue to be available to support branches in the future. This support amounted to £1.5 million in 2017. Projects are agreed by the presidential team with the majority of organiser positions being recruited, inducted and managed alongside other organiser colleagues.

³⁰⁴ An additional £1 million is allocated for union-wide projects and in 2017, this helped fund a significant amount of the work in preparation for the Trade Union Act implementation, organising in health commissioning and procurement and some of UNISON's new digital innovation.

³⁰⁵ Last year the Fighting Fund commissioned the development of a secure web-based digital tool, the member contact tool (MCT), which enables organisers to check, and update members' details, record workplace visits and identify potential members and activists. This information is then available to develop insight about what work and doesn't work, enable organisers to identify potential campaigns and help organisers follow up actions in a structured way. An offline version of MCT is presently in

development for areas where internet coverage is poor as well as a version for activists.

³⁰⁶ Fighting Fund organisers can now be recruited quickly following a decision to move away from resource-intensive assessment centres to an interview and unseen test. This has enabled branches to receive support quicker and organisers to be replaced quicker if post-holders leave.

Branch funding support

³⁰⁷ UNISON has been reviewing branch funding to ensure all our branches are able to meet the emerging challenges.

³⁰⁸ At the 2016 national delegate conference, motion 121, Gateway to the Future; stable and sustainable branch resources was carried, pledging support to branches facing financial difficulties through a structured process of budgeting, review and assessment of needs, and agreed work plans. This allowed for a collaborative approach between branches and regions.

³⁰⁹ The aim was to provide vulnerable branches with a strong base through financial support and assistance but not simply to top up or add to branch reserves. The process was designed to address both the short-term objectives of the branch and to start building branch stability for the future.

³¹⁰ Motion 121 proposed that branches without sufficient funds to support their objective-based budgets and agreed workplans would be able to benefit from a top-up from the regional pool. Some 192 branches were identified who may have qualified for such uplift. Financial support was given to 131 branches and the NEC agreed and made payment in two tranches, with a 75% immediate uplift by the end of February 2017. The remaining uplift was then paid before the end of the financial year up to an additional 25% to bring the branches up to £16 per member in reserves in line with the national standard.

³¹¹ Further work is now being undertaken to identify branches which may now qualify using the actual financial data received from branches and the annual financial returns, as opposed to the previously projected data. The branch review working party has met and identified branches which may now qualify for an uplift using this data. Regions have been advised which branches may benefit from this next tranche of uplift funds and have been asked to work with these branches to confirm they meet the criteria and it has been agreed and signed off by a regional lay committee.

Supporting branches in managing accounts

³¹² OLBA (the online branch accounting system) is UNISON's web-based branch accounting system. Training is available at national and regional courses and a national help team supports users. It has been developed to help branch treasurers and branch committees with all aspects associated with the day-to-day management of their finances, regardless of their level of experience. Whether it is maintaining records of financial transactions (financial accounting) or setting budgets and providing reports to budget holders/committees (management accounting), OLBA provides a simple platform for all branches and is also designed to help make delivering your branch's annual financial returns easier to manage.

Organising Framework

³¹³ This year saw the digitisation of the joint branch and regional assessment process via the new Organising Framework, a bespoke digital solution which can be accessed using any device with an internet connection. It facilitates discussions within branches by quickly granting branches and regional organisers a helicopter view of current information about the branch in an accessible format, provides the quick collation of information to inform decision-making at all levels and supports action planning. Feedback from the first year of the new approach has been broadly positive from all stakeholders and there is keen interest to develop the approach and system with additional functionality requested from branches.

Branch membership system

³¹⁴ WARMS (web accessible RMS) is UNISON's integrated membership system specifically designed for branches. All branches are now live on WARMS, with more than 1,700 registered users overall. Getting access to WARMS through our award-winning e-learning platform is easy and flexible. Branches can manage their membership, get key organising information and reports and communicate with members on a safe and secure system. Crucially, using WARMS ensures that branches are compliant with the new GDPR data regulations when they contact members by email.

³¹⁵ Over the past year we have developed the facility to deliver key reports directly to users' mailboxes; we carried out our first big user survey and introduced a brand new and responsive WARMS Help Space. We always listen to feedback, and work with branches to deliver improvements that support branch work.

Branch websites project

³¹⁶ The branch websites project has continued to expand this year. The project offers branches a template website, hosted centrally and integrated with the design of our national website, to make it easier for branches to communicate with their members more effectively. Training days have been held in five regions, Northern, North West, Eastern, East Midlands and Wales and there are now 67 branches on the platform, including some that have been migrated over from an existing scheme in the South East. Feedback from branches has been really positive, with many glad to see UNISON Centre providing this service at a much lower cost (£300 a year) than external providers do.

Organising Space

³¹⁷ The Organising Space is a secure safe digital space for reps and organisers to share experiences and resources. There have been over 40,000 logins by activists and staff since it was launched and it now hosts a wide range of individual organising forums for specific groups including campaigning, digital organising, private companies, migrant workers, LGBT, and health and safety and plans to host more. There is an ever-growing library of organising resources with some trending resources being downloaded thousands of times.

Appendix

Monitoring Information

Since its foundation, UNISON has pursued 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	78%
Membership – Retired members	61%
Membership – Overall (all categories)	76%
Accredited stewards	53%
Health and safety reps	44%
Branch secretaries	51%

³¹⁸ Every effort is made to encourage each new member recruited to UNISON to complete full monitoring information. We continue to work to ensure that our membership records are up to date.

2015 national delegate conference delegates

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

Female	60%
Part-time workers	21%
Black members	10.5%
Disabled members	16.5%
Young members (under 27)	4%

Service group breakdown

Local government	44%
Water, environment, transport	2%
Health care	32%
Energy	2%
Police and justice	4%
Community	3%
Higher education	6%
No response	7%

Subscription band

A Up to 2,000	0.5%
B 2,001 – 5,000	1%
C 5,001 – 8,000	1%
D 8,001 – 11,000	3%
E 11,001 – 14,000	4.5%
F 14,001 – 17,000	9%
G 17,001 – 20,000	14%
H 20,001 – 25,000	21%
I 25,001 – 30,000	14%
J 30,001 – 35,000	12%
K Over 35,000	13%
Member in education/apprenticeship or on unpaid leave	0.25%
No response	6.75%

National executive council

45% of NEC members responded to the 2017 survey. Of these:

Female	50%
Male	50%

Ethnicity

Black UK	10%
Irish	3%
White UK	80%
White other	7%

Disabled

Yes	23%
No	77%

Service group

Local government	43%
Health care	27%
Community	10%
Energy	3%
Water, environment, transport	3%
Higher education	10%
n/a	4%

Subs band

A – D (up to £11k)	9%
E – G (£11,001 - £20k)	30%
H – K (above £20k)	61%
n/a	1%

Age

16-26	0%
27-39	23%
40-49	20%
50+	57%
Not answered	0%

UNISON conferences delegate attendance

2011–2017/18 (updated 10/04/18)

Year	Black		Women's		HE		Comm		Health		Young		Energy		WET		Local Gov		National		Retired		Police		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	98	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	479	1257	89	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	475	1254	93	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	89	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	466	1194	96	143	51	115	36	93	726	1124	1408	2821	368	528	94	276	195	394	239	420
2017	397	681	422	824	106	225	90	202	480	1183	92	141	52	117	43	103	722	1120	1405	2849	380	535	81	264	213	428	289	465
2018	388	665	453	900	93	209	79	193																				

Key

- Peak year for delegates across these years
- Peak year for total number registered across these years
- No conference held

Del = delegates + sharer 1s, where appropriate

UNISON has 13 rule book conferences: national delegate conference, seven service group conferences, four self-organised group conferences, retired members' conference, plus the national young members' weekend each year.

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