

UNISON
Growing a stronger union
in local government

Local Government Service Group **Annual Report 2021**



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1. Introduction

It's hard to get across how humbled and proud we feel about the immense work carried out by UNISON members who work for employers covered by the local government service group over the last year.

Workers who have provided world class public services, many risking their lives, to keep our communities running during the pandemic.

Members who had to re-set their work, adapted to new technology, and volunteered for re-deployment to help people in need.

Public services and public service workers at their best.

During this time UNISON also responded amazingly – branches, regions and national offices across the UK worked in partnership to deliver information advice and guidance to members who were under enormous pressure and seeking urgent answers.

As you will see from this report – between us we have achieved huge amounts of work under difficult conditions – negotiating with governments, employers and sector bodies to stop staff being put at risk, improving safety arrangements and facing down employers and government departments when they have gone too far.

As well as work on the pandemic we have run wider campaigns calling for increased funding and boosting the profile of local government staff. We have had ups – forcing the government to withdraw legislation on exit payments, and downs – the Supreme Court reversing the decision on payment for sleep-ins, but we have continued to defend members and that has not gone unnoticed with record recruitment as members see our worth.

If the vaccine is effective, the testing system improved, and rigorous safety measures continued to be deployed then we may move out of the pandemic.

If so that gives us the opportunity to learn lessons from the last year and re-think local government, education, and our other public services.

We need to build a better future and resist any attempts by governments to cut the very services that have kept our four countries going.

All of us in the Local Government Service Group have a role to play in the future of local government and our public services. We and the Service Group Executive are determined to be at the forefront of a new Local Government.

Glen Williams

Chair
Local Government
Service Group Executive

Jon Richards

National Secretary
Local Government
and Education

2. The COVID-19 Pandemic and Local Government

COVID-19 has presented a new range of challenges for local government workers. Since the pandemic started our members have shown how indispensable they are to everyday life across the UK.

It is UNISON members in local government who have kept our communities safe and healthy. Whether they are social care workers, risking their lives to care for vulnerable people; school staff, keeping schools open while the rest of the country is in lockdown; social workers and housing workers, visiting people's homes when indoor mixing isn't meant to be happening; parks workers, ensuring our communities have precious outdoor space; or refuse collectors, fighting to ensure they retain social distancing while keeping our environment clean.

While our members have looked after everyone in the UK, the Local Government Service Group has worked hard to look after our members, at branch and regional levels and across the four nations. The Service Group has negotiated and campaigned to protect staff from the impact of COVID and to secure a better deal for them. You will find examples and details throughout this annual report.

We have negotiated, reached agreements, and produced joint guidance with local government associations, employers' sides, and individual employers, to make sure our members' health and safety has been safeguarded. We have produced extensive UNISON guidance and where agreements with employers could not be reached, we have made clear to branches what to press for in local negotiations.

UNISON in local government has also been very active politically. We have met with ministers and officials across UK government departments, to press for greater general recognition and protection and to speak up for groups with particular concerns or issues – for example school staff, refuse collectors and library workers.

We negotiated many improvements to government and sector bodies' guidance over the last year and a half. For instance it was our pressure that ensured that risk assessments must be locally consulted on and made public.

The Service Group's campaigning against cuts and for fair funding took on added urgency with the impact of COVID. Local authorities and other local government employers have faced huge financial gaps. Income collapsed at the same time as authorities were given extra responsibilities – which our members delivered on. We launched a wide-ranging and high-profile campaign, exposing the scale of the funding problem in each local authority, using innovative digital and social media resources to highlight the problems, attract support, and get members involved in practical ways.

As the UK began to emerge from the worst of the pandemic, the Service Group has renewed its focus on the future of local government. This will ask: aside from the clear and urgent need for more funding, what has COVID-19 taught us about what local government should do in the future and what will it need to do those things well? The debates at our one-day virtual conference can shape that debate and direct our future campaigning.

3. Local Government Service Group Executive

3.1 Local Government Finance

UNISON has continued to provide branches with information and analysis of the latest developments in local government finance across the UK.

Councils were already in a perilous financial situation before being dealt a further blow by the pandemic. Vital sources of income for councils, such as leisure service and parking fees, were severely disrupted whilst business rates and some council tax payments have been suspended. Councils have also had to spend more money on measures like food deliveries to the most vulnerable members of the community, support for social care providers, getting rough sleepers off the streets and helping track and trace efforts. This resulted in councils across England, Scotland and Wales facing a COVID-19 funding challenge of well over £10bn for 2020/21. Despite warm words and a series of spending announcements throughout the year to support them through the pandemic, funding for councils from national governments has been insufficient.

A comprehensive Freedom of Information request to all councils in England, Scotland and Wales found that as late as December, many still faced significant funding gaps, despite taking steps such as moving money from reserves and cutting service budgets. Councils in England were still facing a funding shortfall of well over £1bn despite a promise from the Secretary of State for Local Government that the Government would do “whatever it takes” to support councils.

In Scotland, UNISON and COSLA pushed for an extra £1.5bn for councils in the Scottish Government’s budget for 2021/22 but they only received a cash increase of £92m. The insufficient level of support was highlighted by Audit Scotland who pointed out that COVID-19 has cost councils around £767m last year, with the help from the Scottish Government reaching at most 70% of that total.

In Cymru/Wales the Welsh Government provided greater support to local councils, compared to the Westminster Government, with a 3.8% increase in core funding in Wales compared to 2020/21. Individual councils have seen increases ranging from 2% in

Ceredigion to 5.8% in Newport. However, these funding increases are in the context of preceding years of cuts and increased demand for services.

The Westminster Government’s March budget unhelpfully arrived too late for the Scottish and Welsh Governments’ budget-setting processes, meaning they didn’t know how much money they would have available to spend. The Budget provided no extra meaningful financial support for councils in England to help them address the difficulties caused by COVID-19 or the ongoing problems that they have been grappling with. There is still no clarity about the long-term funding of councils, as the Budget was quiet on the key issues of social care funding, business rate reform and fair funding. This will be a key area for future UNISON campaigning.

3.2 Local Government Funding – COVID Campaigns

Campaigning on local government funding and cuts across the UK was a key priority for the Service Group last year, especially with the financial impact of COVID-19. We have worked through the media, social media, politically and through member participation to pressure the Westminster Government to increase local government funding (and the consequent ‘Barnett formula’ funding for devolved governments).

A major piece of work in summer 2020 was the release of a **well received video**, which received over one million views. This raised awareness amongst the public about the financial pressure facing councils and the consequences for services. Another topical and attention-generating short video is in production, which will build on the theme of the damage that will be done to our communities if vital services disappear.

Another big campaign initiative was the launch of our council cuts website in February 2021 **councilcuts.unison.org.uk**. This shows the funding gap in councils across England and Wales, based on Freedom of Information (FOI) research carried out by UNISON. The site allows people to see the funding gap that their local council faces for this financial

year. The website should raise the profile of the problem among the media, politicians, and the public. The website will be updated early in the financial year of 2021/22 to reflect the huge funding gap councils will have to contend with in the medium-term.

Attached to the video and the cuts website was an email action tool which encouraged people to contact their MP and/or Senedd member and Member of the Scottish Parliament to request more funding for councils. By early March 2021 just under nine thousand people had used the tool.

Westminster-based lobbying work highlighted the funding cuts in constituencies in the so called “Red Wall” seats. These MPs have leverage over the government and face pressures as their council areas have been particularly badly hit. Leading lay members have worked with regional staff to co-ordinate the campaign work and increase the number of members who lobby their national politicians. National officers have met with some “Red Wall” Tory MPs to try to convince them to back our calls for more funding for council services.

Two regions (South East and West Midlands) have piloted the Speaking Up for Local Government course, which helps members to articulate why their jobs and the work done by local councils are so important. In addition to developing their story about the value of their work, members have been helped to arrange meetings with their MP to relay their experiences and ask for increased council funding.

In 2021 we have begun work on another eye-catching and innovative campaign showcasing the heroic work of council staff. This should help our message resonate with people outside of UNISON’s usual sphere of influence and lead to more pressure on UK governments to provide more funding for council services.

Following on from a successful webinar with councillors on adult social care in the autumn of 2020, the Service Group hosted another webinar on local government finance in February 2021 with the Shadow Chancellor, Annelise Dodds. The primary focus was to tell councillors about our Save our Services campaign and to secure more support for it, whilst also strengthening links with the shadow cabinet.

The Service Group secured funding for a new round of local government finance training for activists and organisers across UNISON regions, to be delivered

by the Local Government Information Unit in 2021. This follows a previous very well received training programme they delivered in 2019. The training helps branches and organisers scrutinise council finances and cuts proposals more effectively.

3.3 Anti-privatisation and Service Delivery

Despite the Tory government paying lip service to public services in the light of COVID-19, privatisation and outsourcing continue. The universally criticised Track and Trace system provided by companies such as Serco shows the UK Government’s love for private sector contracts, at great expense to the public. However, an increasing number of services are being brought back in-house, thanks to work across UNISON.

Examples included Islington and Lewisham Councils stopping outsourcing medical assessments to NowMedical, following revelations that sick and disabled people were wrongly denied housing support based on “flawed” assessments.

In Wrexham, a local authority trading company (set up to trade more openly with the private sector) was brought back in-house and a residential care home in Bridged came back in-house. Gwynedd achieved a 100% Social Care Wales registration amongst their in-house domiciliary care staff and have paid the registration fees for their team. The Wales Union Learning Fund will be working with the council to achieve similar amongst their in-house residential care home staff over the next two years by running digital skills courses.

After a two-year dispute, care workers, catering and domestic support staff working for Sirona Care & Health will be returning to Bath and North East Somerset Council.

Following campaigning by UNISON’s Middlesbrough branch and Labour Councillors Middlesbrough Council dropped a plan to outsource cleaners who feared their pay and pensions would be reduced as a result. Their opposition culminated in a mass demonstration outside a full council meeting. The campaign led to the independent mayor and cabinet withdraw the proposal.

The Central Arbitration Committee has given UNISON recognition for collective bargaining purposes at **PossAbilities**, a social enterprise that delivers support to vulnerable adults across several local authorities. Staff working on the Stockport Council-

commissioned learning disabilities contract will now collectively negotiate their pay and terms and conditions with their employer.

The Local Government Service Group continues to work with key allies, such as the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE). Their report 'Rebuilding Capacity – the case for insourcing public contracts' indicated that that 77% of UK councils are planning to bring services back in-house. The report noted that between 2016 and 2018, at least 220 local government contracts were brought back in-house, and 78% of councils believe insourcing gives them more flexibility – with two-thirds saying it saves them money. Over half of councils said quality improved after insourcing.

A **report** from the University of Leeds, which examined the effectiveness and accountability of outsourced public services found that, due to limitations of the Freedom of Information Act, taxpayers are left in the dark over outsourced services.

UNISON commissioned a UK wide report on social finance. This is the financing of public service delivery through methods like social impact bonds (SIBs), which seeks to put a financial value on public service and social delivery outputs, using more than £1bn subsidies from dormant bank accounts, and through the National Lottery's Community Fund. Our report along with several case studies from freedom of information requests to local authorities show the funding, modes of operation and claims of the success of social finance. A new social finance workshop was trialled in the Eastern Region for lay activists.

The Local Government Service Group continues to support regions and branches in their campaigns. Regular cross UK 'Privatisation Briefings', have provided research and guidance on procurement changes and privatisation for lay activists on what is happening around the UK. We are keeping a watch on Government plans to change how procurement is undertaken across the UK now that we have left the EU.

UNISON also wrote to the leaders of all councils providing leisure services, asking for their future plans for the provision in England and Cymru/ Wales. The SGE's Service Delivery Working Group is kept apprised of service delivery developments and advise on strategy towards fighting outsourcing and privatisation.

3.4 Recruitment and Organisation

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a whole new set of challenges for recruitment and organising in local government in 2020. Despite the severe constraints placed on our reps' ability to engage face to face with many membership groups, the Local Government Service Group underwent significant growth. With workers in councils, schools and other service providers feeling vulnerable and at risk, many looked to UNISON, and saw the great work our branches, regions and Service Group have been doing to protect and improve their safety at work and their pay and conditions.

UNISON recruited 86,000 new members in the Local Government Service Group in 2020 – a massive 15% increase on the previous year. By the end of 2020 there were around 588 thousand members in the Service Group across the UK. The vast majority of new joiners joined online.

For the first time in several years, the number of local government members leaving the Service Group in 2020 was lower than the number of new joiners – meaning that the Service Group saw net growth. Just under 70,000 members left, 10% fewer than in 2019.

Of those members who joined in 2019, 39% are schools' members, and 28% work in the private sector.

At the end of 2020, UNISON had around 7,071 stewards in the Local Government Service Group. This was a 5% drop compared to 12 months earlier, following similar drops in the three previous years. Similarly, there are 3,154 workplace contacts, representing a 10% drop. More encouragingly, no doubt related to the pandemic, there are 1,884 health and safety reps in the Service Group, representing a small increase on a year earlier. But overall, there remains an urgent need to arrest the decline in membership participation. The Service Group knows that branches are struggling to organise and represent members, as facility time is tightened, and members are increasingly wary of getting involved.

Falling activism among women members continues to be a concern. For example, over the last year the number of female workplace contacts fell by more than 10%, following a similar fall the previous year. The role of the workplace contact is vital as a first step in trade union activism for women members, who are more likely than men to be part-time and so may struggle to take on steward roles. We must reverse this trend if our activist base is to be representative of our predominantly female membership.

The SGE's Recruitment and Organising Working Group met regularly over the last year. In 2019 the Group received its first specially commissioned bespoke report based on the union's Organising Framework, including analysis of how well we are doing in Local Government against some key priorities: whether branches have mapped their public and private sector membership, activist development, regional variations, groups of under-represented members, and facility time.

The report revealed important strengths and weaknesses across the Service Group. For example on the plus side, branches provide a range of support for activists, aside from basic training – including mentoring and development opportunities.

Less encouragingly, we have a lot of work to do in organising young workers. Only 23% of branches have a Young Members Officer, and only half have a plan to increase participation among young members.

In 2020 the SGE consulted through regions on what practical solutions would help branches and regions build on successes and learn from each other on what works. At the time of writing the SGE was implementing a range of ideas that came out of this process. This includes new digital materials with ideas on how to organise, recruitment and organising awards, guidance on mapping, improving the information young members receive, and producing materials based on the sense of identity many local government workers feel for their occupation or service.

Also in 2020, materials aimed at district council workers have been developed, which, as with all materials, will be monitored for effectiveness.

We will commission an updated Organising Framework report in 2021.

3.5 Equalities and Diversity

The Local Government Equalities Liaison Committee meets twice a year, so that the Service Group and Self Organised Groups can discuss developments relating to equalities in local government, and practical measures to improve the way we represent, organise and campaign on equality issues.

Work includes campaigning on the disproportionate impact cuts to jobs, pay and conditions in local government have on workers and service users in protected groups across the

UK through the Service Group's [anti-cuts and save our local services campaigns](#).

The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black, disabled and other vulnerable workers was a particular focus for the Service Group in 2020. We made individual risk assessments for Black workers a strong priority in our negotiations with the national employers, and the Service Group [COVID-19 guidance for local government](#) includes important information for clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) or clinically vulnerable (CV). Where individual employees have concerns (for example due to their Black background, gender, age, physical or mental health conditions, other caring responsibilities, vulnerable members of the household or practicalities of uncertain childcare arrangements), branches were encouraged to work with employers to ensure they addressed concerns and carried out individual risk assessments. We pushed for protection for groups with protected characteristics in all negotiations and in talks with government about the 'return to work'.

The Service Group continued to assist branches to use equality legislation and principles to challenge cuts to jobs, pay, terms and conditions, and proposals to change how services are delivered. We continued to advise branches that employers should carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to demonstrate that they have shown "due regard" under the General Equality Duty and to assist them in doing so. We also advised branches that NJC guidance requires authorities to have regard to equality standards and use the [Equality Framework for Local Government \(EFLG\) 2020 Version](#) (England) and the [Equality Improvement Framework for Wales](#) (Wales), which promote EIAs. Most authorities are conducting EIAs on changes to terms and conditions of employment, thanks to the UNISON work at all levels.

The Service Group also researched, and collated details of the gender pay gap in every local authority, which was sent to regions to assist with local bargaining.

We work with UNISON's Equality Unit to ensure that the Service Group continues to support young members recruitment, especially young Black members. The Service Group and UNISON's Black members' Self Organised Group (SOG) worked together to produce new guidance [Empowering Young Black People in Local Government Workplaces Through Mentoring in UNISON](#) (sent to branches in January 2021) to help recruitment and support experienced Black activists to assist new and less

experienced young Black people to get more involved in the union. We presented this work at the Black Members Live Event and at a meeting of regional young member contacts and have received very positive feedback from Black members.

We continued to encourage the negotiation of inclusive language in agreements and policies and inclusive practices and procedures workplaces. We regularly promoted bargaining factsheets, surveys and events published by the UNISON Equality Group and the SGE's guidance on **Improving Trans Equality in Local Government Workplaces**. We have encouraged branches, regions, and sector committees to provide good practice examples of local government workplace agreements on trans equality, bargaining gains, and successful cases.

The Service Group will be undertaking research to identify the issues that matter most to disabled people in local government. We will produce and promote new guidance on our key findings and include steps that branches and regions can take to negotiate better workplace support, practice, and policies for disabled workers.

We will also collate examples of inclusive policies, agreements, and good practise in local government workplaces to support women with gender-specific health conditions such as menopausal transition and sickness absence. And then produce and promote new guidance to include our examples and include steps that branches, and regions can take to negotiate inclusive policies to help women continue to work.

4. Local Government Pension Scheme

McCloud and Sergeant Judgements

The 10-year protection period introduced across public service schemes for staff in service at April 2012 was found to be illegal on age discrimination grounds. It is expected that the government will confirm the remedy that all staff in service at April 2012 will be given the same benefit underpin regardless of age. This should be applied automatically, including to those who retired or left service, so we have advised members there is no need to apply to the Employment Tribunal. The remedy will apply from April 2022 and we await draft regulations to enable this. Members will find out whether they have benefited from the underpin when they retire or leave. The government has confirmed that the protection will only apply from 2014 England and Wales and 2015 Scotland and Northern Ireland to April 2022.

The government has also now un-paused the 2016 valuations for England and Wales and 2017 for Scotland. The government intends to add the costs that result from the judgement onto the cost share mechanism. UNISON will argue against this as it would undermine the funding available for the benefit improvements that were negotiated in 2019, just before the McCloud Judgment. Cost share is being reviewed and we expect changes to be announced shortly.

FE

Following the major UNISON campaign across the LGPS to oppose draft proposals to allow FE Colleges and HE universities to opt out of offering the LGPS to new starters in England, the government have still not been introduced regulations to deliver this.

Valuations

The reports that came out of the 2019 valuation for LGPS England and Wales and Northern Ireland funds showed a general trend that because the cost and therefore the value of scheme assets had increased at April 2019, deficits for benefits earned in the past have significantly reduced and many funds are no longer in deficit. However the cost of benefits being

earned now, and the future has gone up, so employer contributions for future service is increasing, even though assumptions on life expectancy and salary growth have been reduced. UNISON plans further analysis to ensure that members do not lose out. UNISON continues to oppose an increasing number of employers in the voluntary, careers and housing sectors leaving the LGPS.

Coronavirus crisis

The COVID pandemic caused serious falls in assets, particular the stock markets. We have assurances that because the LGPS is a Defined Benefit scheme the payment and entitlement to benefits and employee contributions is unaffected. UNISON monitored the effects on the scheme during this crisis and in general fund values have recovered with most just a couple of percent down on pre COVID levels

Governance and responsible investment

All the LGPS investment pools now have at least some nominal 'member representation' on their board. UNISON is pushing for meaningful representation and transparency on all the Pools. UNISON continues to push responsible investment including pushing for carbon neutral investments

Victory in reversing the £95 cap on severance payments

Legislation to place a £95k cap on redundancy payments including the cost of the early payment of pension for those over 55 in the LGPS came into force on 4 November 2020. UNISON launched a major campaign and organised members to write into Government and to oppose the law and MHCLG draft regulations for the LGPS England and Wales.

Following UNISON and other unions commencing a Judicial Review the government capitulated. The cap and the draft regulations were withdrawn in February 2021. UNISON is monitoring to ensure that members who left between the dates the cap was in force did not lose out. We expect that the government will try to re-introduce updated legislation.

Engagement

UNISON's Service Group Liaison Committee LGPS forum continued to meet virtually during the lockdown. A virtual conference was delivered on in December for UNISON activists. UNISON's pension unit continued to provide training for regions and branches as requested and dealt with considerable amounts of casework.

5. Sector Committee Reports

5.1 NJC Committee

NJC pay 2020

Following the rejection of the Employers' initial offer of a 2% pay increase by the three NJC unions (UNISON, GMB and Unite), the Employers eventually returned with an offer of a 2.75% increase from 1 April 2020, and an increase of one day in the basic annual leave entitlement for new starters. The Employers also suggested that a bid would be made to the Government for more money for local government pay. UNISON's NJC Committee agreed that we should press the Employers for a joint approach to Government for new resources for local government pay. When the Local Government Association ultimately rejected this suggestion, the NJC Committee agreed to launch a consultation of members on the final pay offer. Due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic, the consultation was conducted predominantly digitally, with most regions either running the ballots on behalf of branches or offering branches support in doing so, backed up by digital and financial resources from UNISON Centre. Despite the obstacles presented by the pandemic, the consultation produced a turnout of 22.4%, much improved on previous years, and 66.56% of members voted to accept the pay offer.

Consultation methods

In autumn 2020, the NJC Committee surveyed members on the consultation method used during the 2020 pay round. Following this exercise, it was agreed that a similar process should be used in 2021 if possible, with regions offering support to branches in running digital consultations. However, it was also agreed that additional measures would need to be put in place to help branches and regions reach members for whom we do not have email addresses.

NJC pay 2021

Following settlement of pay for 2020, the NJC trade unions began the 2021 pay campaign. In a consultation, members voted overwhelmingly for a pay claim of 10%. After agreement with the other unions, a pay claim for a substantial increase of at

least 10% was submitted in February 2021. A compromise with other unions meant that a separate conditions claim was submitted alongside the pay claim. This called for a reduction in the working week, an increase in annual leave, a homeworking payment, a national minimum homeworking policy, a best practice agreement on mental health, a joint review of job descriptions for school support staff, and a joint review of maternity / paternity / adoption / shared parental leave. UNISON's NJC Committee is clear that our priority remains the claim for a 10% pay increase., This will be our strong focus in the campaign and negotiations.

At the time of writing, the Employers were consulting local authorities on their response to our claim. In the meantime, the union at all levels has been campaigning in support of our claim. Resources have been developed to help branches get councils and councillors on side, recruit members, and get members more involved in the campaign – for example, model motions, and 'email your councillor' tool, recruiters' scripts, a webinar, PowerPoint presentations and a new web presence. A high-profile media and social media campaign have also been developed.

The NJC Committee has continued to make necessary background preparations for member consultations and any potential industrial action ballot. It is vital that branches and regions keep membership records up to date. Advice is being provided on which non-local authority employers can be included in any campaign. It is vital that branches and regions use the guidance to identify which non-local authority employers meet the tests, so that we can maximise the number of members covered by any potential industrial action ballot.

COVID-19 negotiations

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NJC Trade Unions and Employers' Side have been in constant negotiations. These have led to national level agreements to protect our members, whether they have faced heightened safety risks, been redeployed to help against the pandemic, suffered ill health, are shielding, or are caring for others.

UNISON negotiated helpful joint guidance for employers on areas like arrangements for those who are shielding, safeguards for people who are redeployed, risk assessments, and leave arrangements. For the most part, these national agreements have been well received locally and they have been followed. Where we could not reach agreement with the National Employers, chiefly on our campaign for individual risk assessments to be mandatory for many workers, we issued our own strong guidance to branches to aid them with local negotiations. Our thanks go to the branches and regions who have kept national negotiators informed about what has been happening locally, letting us know what works and what areas of protection and guidance need more work.

Job Evaluation Technical Working Group

The NJC Job Evaluation Technical Working Group (JETWG) has updated guidance on the NJC job evaluation scheme in line with Equality and Human Rights Commission recommendations. JETWG has now revised the original scheme in 2013 and 2020.

The NJC is clear that the scheme is sound and robust and enables employers to produce appropriate job hierarchies based on relevant components. The aim of the review has been to ensure that the operation of the scheme is set out as clearly as possible. No changes have been made to the scheme's factor level structure and associated weighting / scoring. Changes have been made to the accompanying guidance to provide clarification to scheme users, so it is easier to use and reflects the changes in local government roles. Some of the scheme's language around technological advances (e.g. use of social media / software packages) and in measuring commissioning skills was outdated and so has been updated. Any local conventions must be checked carefully to ensure that they remain internally consistent and non-discriminatory over time.

In 2020 JETWG also issued guidance to those Multi-Academy Trusts intending to undertake job evaluation and pay and grading reviews. The guidance recommends that a partnership approach is taken to undertaking job evaluation exercises.

The Local Government Service Group seeks to put equality issues at the heart of its agenda. Accordingly, it has circulated to English and Cymru/Wales regions, the Government Equalities Office gender pay gap report for all local authorities, along with an action plan to address gender pay disparities.

NJC term time only working group

Since the publication of updated NJC guidance on Term Time Only Workers (TTO) in February 2019 it has become apparent that many councils were unfairly calculating the pay and leave of TTO staff. Addressing this has been priority work for the union. We have submitted collective grievances on behalf of TTO staff in over 25 local authorities who were underpaying staff. We have settled claims for back pay in many of these authorities and are pursuing legal action against authorities where we believe the offer from the employer is unacceptable. We have secured around £45m in back pay settlements for staff. Where branches have organised campaigns around term time only pay, we have had considerable success in recruiting new members to the union.

The NJC working Group on Term Time Only (TTO) worker continued to meet to consider further guidance around the issues of sickness and sick pay for term time only staff and all types of parental leave and pay. It is hoped that guidance on this will be available later this year

We also intervened in the Court of Appeal Case, Harpur Trust versus Brazel and UNISON, which secured the right of all part year workers to at least 5.6 weeks paid leave. The case has been appealed to the Supreme Court and is scheduled to be heard in November 2021. We will work to ensure that the implications of the judgement are applied to all employees on term time only contracts.

Public health

COVID-19 has been at the heart of the challenges for the local government public health workforce. If the Government had involved local authorities earlier than it did, the programme would have been very much more efficient, saving more lives. Public health professionals, environmental health officers (EHOs) and trading standard officers have made significant contributions to the testing and tracing process, despite the workforce having been cut to the bone.

Through a Freedom of Information request, we established what the public health workforce looks like in local government and have continued to lobby government to restore the swingeing cuts in public health funding.

UNISON has sole trade union representation on the Standing Group on Public Health along with the Association of Directors of Public Health, Health Education England, the Local Government

Association, North West Employers, UK Public Health Register and Public Health England. Over the last year, the Group has taken up the issue raised by UNISON of the treatment of pregnant migrant workers who are forced to pay for treatment.

In the future, the Standing Group on Public Health will focus on public health workforce capacity; its ability to meet pandemic surges, and making sure that new organisations coming into the public health arena adopt the highest employer standards and mobility and careers – ensuring seamless movement around the system through continuity of employment between deliverers of public health.

5.2 Scottish Joint Council Committee

Pay 2021

The SLGC have worked with branches and local authorities across Scotland to deliver the commitment made in the previous pay agreement to fully consolidate the living wage by 1st April 2021. This has seen a significant investment of money being made, benefiting our lowest paid, predominantly female, members and a number of new pay models being delivered.

The Scottish Joint Council (SJC) pay claim for 2021/22 was submitted on 16th December 2020 and sought a one year settlement of £2000 or 6%, whichever is greater; an underpinning minimum rate of £10.50 per hour; a separate element for restoration; no less than parity with other local government bargaining groups; professional costs associated with the role to be met by the employer; and a commitment to exploring ways in which to achieve a no-detriment reduction in the working week.

An offer was made by COSLA on 15th March. The offer was for a flat rate payment of £800 (to be applied to SJC set hourly rates based on a 37 hour working week, giving an underpinning minimum rate of pay of £9.75 per hour) for all employees remunerated up to £25,000; a 2% uplift for those earning £25,000 to £40,000; and a 1% rise for those earning up to £80,000 with a cap of £800; and all nationally negotiated allowances, not including First Aid allowance, uplifted by 2%.

The Scottish Local Government Committee consulted members on this offer via electronic ballot between the 12th April and 28th April 2021. The result was that 88% of members voted to reject the offer and

74% voted in favour of taking some form of industrial action, up to and including strike action, in pursuit of an improved offer. Negotiations continue at the time of writing.

The SLGC continue to argue that employers pay members directly the home-working allowance they are entitled to via the HMRC.

5.3 Chief Officers and Senior Managers Committee

The Chief Officers and Senior Managers Committee continued to meet during 2020, using virtual platforms to ensure essential business was discussed during the pandemic.

COVID-19

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, UNISON members in Chief Officer and Senior Manager roles showed how indispensable they are to local government and the communities they serve. Often working long hours in stressful circumstances, our members showed leadership in dealing with the new responsibilities local authorities took on, while managing complex services and large staff groups. This work highlighted a need that UNISON has long highlighted, for better work-life balance for members in senior roles.

Pay and conditions

In August 2020, members covered by the Chief Officers Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) voted to accept a pay increase of 2.75% from 1 April. The pay settlement included an agreement between the employers and trade unions to conduct work to improve members' work-life balance and to explore the gender pay gap among Chief Officers in local government.

For 2021, members agreed the Chief Officers and Senior Managers Committee's proposal for a 10% pay claim.

Recruitment and organising

Recruiting and organising chief officers and senior managers in local authorities has long been a challenge, and the pandemic further increased the obstacles we face. However, in 2020 we launched a series of targeted digital recruitment initiatives, aimed at recruiting more members, getting existing members more involved and developing our network of active and interested members.

The Chief Officers and Senior Managers Committee remains committed to working with regions to improve our profile and density among this membership group.

5.4 Youth and Community Workers Committee

The Youth and Community Workers Committee met four times last year.

Pay, conditions and the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC)

The pay claim for 2020 was submitted in the spring and an offer was received from the Employers' Side in July. UNISON consulted members on the offer in August and September, and the Youth and Community Workers Committee met in September to consider the response to the consultation.

The pay offer was accepted and resulted in members being awarded 2.75% in October, backdated to September, and the removal of pay points 3 and 4. The Employers' Side also agreed to other, non-pay elements of the pay claim, and work is being conducted jointly with the trade unions on these elements. These include an analysis of the race and gender pay gaps in youth work, and a review of the levels and effects of workplace violence.

Discussions began with the joint unions on the 2021 pay claim in February, with an aim to achieve an offer to consult members on during the summer.

UNISON continues to be represented on the Education and Training Standards Sub-Committee (ETS) for England. For some years UNISON's seat has been held by the Chair of our Youth and Community Workers Committee Robin Konieczny. Robin will be retiring in 2021 after a distinguished career in youth work and many years' service to UNISON. We wish him all the best and thank him for his dedication.

In early 2021, UNISON obtained a seat on the Wales ETS, and a sector committee member was elected to the seat.

Recruitment and organising

Opportunities for recruitment and organising activity were greatly reduced due to the pandemic. However branches and regions have been establishing new ways to reach non-members, supported by UNISON's 'Stand up for youth services' materials.

Cymru/Wales

UNISON continued to be involved in the work of the Interim Youth Work Board's (IYWB) in Cymru/Wales. Its two-year lifespan has been extended for another year due to the pandemic. Its remit is to work towards developing a sustainable delivery model for youth work in Wales. The development of the Youth Work Strategy in 2019 has led to a vision for the future of youth work in Wales, focusing efforts across five aims: young people are thriving; youth Work is accessible and inclusive; voluntary and paid professional youth work staff are supported throughout their careers to improve their practice; youth work is valued and understood; and Wales has a sustainable model for youth work delivery.

5.5 Schools Committee

Across the four nations the Covid pandemic dominated the union's work in schools and early years and saw a phenomenal effort across the union to support members.

During the earliest stages and the first lockdown, government policies and actions were closely aligned across the UK. However as the year moved on governments increasingly diverged their policies, in particular when schools and early years settings re-opened, with pupils required to attend. The variance was also reflected in levels of engagement with unions, as governments in Scotland and Cymru/Wales engaged earlier and were more willing to work in partnership than those in Northern Ireland and England – although even their engagement improved in 2021.

Across the UK we campaigned and negotiated with governments and employers to protect staff, pupils, and communities. UNISON materials, websites and social media sites were constantly updated and we issued regular advice and guidance to members and branches. Our work also featured regularly in the media. Schools staff issues have been a key focus of the ongoing negotiations with National Employers' bodies throughout the pandemic.

Devolution and different term dates meant that guidance was often different across the four UK countries and updates were announced at different times. UK-wide and England-specific updates were placed on the UNISON website. UNISON Cymru/Wales had updates on its website and Facebook page. UNISON Scotland put updates on its website and Facebook page and UNISON Northern Ireland had updates on its website.

During the first lockdown from March to June only the children of key workers and vulnerable children were in school. These pupils were mainly supported by support staff. UNISON worked with other education unions to try and ensure schools were as safe as possible for the reduced numbers going in. We also set out our position that schools should only fully reopen when the science said it was safe to do so and published specific advice and guidance for education workers who were subject to furlough.

For the autumn term UK governments opted for full reopening with, in UNISON's view, insufficient safety measures in place. We published further guidance including risk assessment checklists for schools, which went further than government guidance, particularly on airborne transmission – which UNISON highlighted before governments made recommendations. We were proved right as infections rose through the autumn term.

In response to the November 2020 lockdown, UNISON's schools committee called on the Government to open schools only for key workers' children and disadvantaged pupils, with online learning for other pupils. Alongside updated guidance UNISON published an escalation letter for branches that highlighted concerns over serious health and safety failings.

Our Stars in Our Schools celebration of school staff moved to an online event in November 2020 with a focus on their work supporting pupils and families through the pandemic.

Over the Christmas holidays it became clear that the Westminster government intended to fully reopen most schools in England on a phased return from 4th January, despite rising infections. In response UNISON and NEU advised members that it was not safe to attend schools and issued a template section 44/100 letter for them to send to employers. Within 24 hours the government backed down, closing schools to all but keyworker and vulnerable children.

In a significant difference to the first lockdown, nurseries in England and Wales were told that they could remain open to all children, leaving staff fearful and vulnerable. UNISON called for early years settings in those countries only to open on the same basis as schools, as they were in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Some branches were able to negotiate this. Advice was sent to branches and early years members about additional safety measures and their rights under section 44/100.

Further guidance was issued including specific guidance for special school members due to reports that TAs in special schools were seven times more likely to contract COVID-19 than the general population.

As UNISON improved its IT functions online mass meeting for activists and members were held across the UK focusing on re-openings, health and safety, and areas such as early years and special schools.

Our focus on health and safety over the year has seen increasingly improved health and safety measures, with governments being forced to improve advice on the use of face coverings, better ventilation, and PPE. Contentious approaches to use mass testing in place of isolation at the start of 2021 before they had been properly assessed were fought off. We also launched an online action for members to email their MP to lobby the government on prioritising school staff for the vaccine.

UNISON called for phased re-opening of schools as the 2021 lockdown began to ease, which was agreed in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Cymru/Wales, while England took a big bang approach – although tougher health and safety guidance was introduced. We have made clear to governments that tougher measures should not be lifted too soon.

Outsourced school meals workers were hit hard by the pandemic as many staff were furloughed on lower wages and some laid off. UNISON ran a high-profile campaign against attempts by one catering company DOLCE Ltd to force through cuts (between 20% and 60%) to the core contractual hours of school meals workers. Press and parliamentary activity made the company back down in some areas. We are working with the Local Government Association on an awareness campaign on low paid women bearing the brunt of cuts and campaigning through the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) and the Shadow Cabinet on the failure of the outsourcing model. We are also running a campaign to secure full pay for all contracted out staff in schools who need to self-isolate.

During the pandemic workforce restructuring and outsourcing of was generally halted. For instance in Northern Ireland discussions with the Department of Education on Transformation were stalled, although privatisation remains a threat as the Education Authority deficit has widened.

UNISON funded University College London to produce a report on the use of Teaching/Classroom assistants during the pandemic, highlighting their

vital role. Other professional work included Cymru/ Wales UNISON playing a leading role in a Task and Finish group of the Schools Social Partnership Forum, reviewing job descriptions, routes for career developments and pay banding for school support staff.

The impact of the incredible work throughout the pandemic was a significant growth in school membership with significant spikes in March and April/ May last year, which saw the union ending with 8,500 more school members by the end of 2020. A further 6,000 increase linked to our action in January 2021 saw two-thirds joining over the first weekend as UNISON battled the government to stop early re-opening, which led to UNISON's website crashing under the demand.

5.6 FE and 6th Form Colleges Committee

Pay

In England a pay recommendation of 1% or £250 (whichever is greater) was made by the employers. This was very disappointing as they had promised a significant increase this year following the £400 million funding increase into the sector by the government in 2020. The employers claimed that this money was spent on the COVID response. The employers did offer to set up two 'mini-commissions' to look at the cost of all colleges becoming Foundation Living Wage employers and on reducing the gap between teachers' pay in FE with pay in schools. UNISON's FE committee set up a consultation of members with a recommendation to reject the offer, which was underway at the time of writing.

In Scotland a claim submitted by the support staff unions called for a four-day working week with no loss of pay, a £1100 flat-rate increase and other proposals around annual leave and breaks, home-working and first aid. An offer by the employers of 2% or £750 (whichever was the greater) was with members for consultation at the time of writing.

In Wales the employers made an initial offer of 2.75% to support staff and leaders with more for some (newer) teachers. Negotiations led to an improved offer of 3.1% for support staff. A consultation with a committee recommendation to accept took place in January resulting in 79% of members accepting on a 27% turnout.

In Northern Ireland support staff pay in FE is determined by NJC pay scales. The offer of 2.75% was consulted on during November 2020 and accepted by members.

Policy and campaigns

Our campaign for clean and safer colleges mirrored a similar one in the schools' sector, calling for an increase in the number of cleaners, proper sick pay for all so they could afford to self-isolate if needed, and adequate provisions of PPE.

UNISON analysis indicated that a permanent move to blended learning could lead to big changes in their way of working and problems for many support staff members in colleges. Those employed in lower paid roles, for example cleaning, catering, and security, could lose their jobs whilst those employed in IT services could see a huge increase in workload. The FE committee has begun research into how learners would be affected by a lack of on-site attendance and we are working with the National Union of Students.

Following the 2019 FE motion to the Local Government Conference, calling for all apprenticeships to be delivered by colleges, a survey of apprenticeships across UNISON service groups was undertaken. The results found that while many apprentices had interruptions to their learning and working, in most cases a solution was found (e.g. delayed assessments, redeployments). The need for public services in the pandemic cushioned some of the potential negatives of completing apprenticeships during national lockdowns. However, many colleges are seeing a slowdown in apprenticeships, due to a drop in economic activity in many sectors.

Meetings

All meetings were held online last year, initially as informal catch ups, with formal sector committee meetings resuming at the end of 2020.

Regional FE forums that struggled to attract delegates in the past have found that a move to online meetings has helped. Two regions who had not been able to hold meetings for some time both held several successful meetings, whilst those that regularly hold regional meeting found attendance improved with the online model. Two regions that previously had not held meetings were now planning to do so.

Seminars and Conferences

The seminar due to take place in 2020 was postponed due to the COVID crisis. As it is clear that a face-to-face seminar would not be able to take place at its usual time (Mar/Apr), the committee is considering options for 2021.

The committee agreed that the two motions submitted to the 2020 Local Government SGE, calling for a reduction in agency working and for urgent investment in adult education, were still relevant and that updated versions should be submitted to the 2021 conference.

Guidance

Joint risk assessment guidance was produced with the employers in all four nations and updated as the situation changed and printed on the FE web page. This has generally led to positive industrial relations in the FE education sector as staff safety has been prioritised.

Due to the ever-changing nature of delivery in colleges over the past year, the UNISON in Colleges web pages have been kept updated, including an FAQ section.

5.7 Care Quality Commission Committee

UNISON members at the Care Quality Commission (CQC) have delivered hugely important services throughout the pandemic. This included inspectors making sure that infection control procedures are followed in health and care settings, contact centre staff processing a huge spike in care home deaths and concerns about poor employment practices, through to digital and data analyst workers providing information and support for the organisation. UNISON helped to ensure that this work was recognised in part by delivering a 2.5% pay increase, following negotiations that convinced the CQC to deliver a pay rise as high as Treasury pay guidance would allow after their initial offer of between 1.75 and 2%.

UNISON significantly improved its relationship with CQC following a major dispute in 2020 where the organisation removed broadband provision for all their homeworkers. Regular meetings with HR throughout the pandemic allowed us to improve relationships and to work more collaboratively to resolve problems. This included the provision of Personal Protective Equipment to inspectors and support staff who were forced to become home based workers. We also held a successful one-day workshop focused on trying to improve our working relationship.

Another significant achievement came when following the resumption of physical inspections of health and care settings UNISON ensured that CQC inspectors were given access to regular testing for COVID-19. As the time of writing we are lobbying

the Government and CQC for inspectors to be prioritised for the vaccine given that they often work in environments with high infection rates, such as care homes.

5.8 Ofsted Committee

When the pandemic struck, all routine inspections by Ofsted were suspended. Many Ofsted staff were re-deployed, either to support local authorities in children's social care, or in supporting staff in the DWP with the backlog of Universal Credit cases. Some regulatory inspections continued, particularly where there were child safeguarding concerns. We have been working with Ofsted to ensure that where these inspections are necessary, they are carried out in the safest possible way.

An additional home working allowance was agreed for those staff now required to work from home.

In September 2020, there was a partial return of monitoring inspections. These were done predominantly on a virtual basis. In January it was announced that there should be a change in presumption to on-site visits for these monitoring visits. The joint trade unions strongly objected to these proposals and they were later withdrawn.

We are currently working with Ofsted on agreeing a safe return to more normal working from the summer term.

UNISON members in Ofsted agreed a 2% increase in pay for 20/21.

5.9 FSA / FSS Committee

The Food Standards Agency (FSA)/Food Standards Scotland (FSS) sector committee continued defending members' rights and fighting privatisation last year.

We have recruited new members, including office-based staff and in the National Food Crime Unit, to add to our membership working in slaughterhouses.

Negotiations on improving pay remain a key priority. FSA members voted to accept an improved pay offer (2019-2021), from which some members hugely benefited, while others did less well. Increases ranged from 3% to 16% over two years.

Pay negotiations for 2021/22 are postponed as the UK Government imposed a pay freeze on civil

service pay. The sector is finalising its response at the time of writing.

During the COVID pandemic FSA members working in slaughterhouses continued to work on-site to safeguard the food supplies. Members and activists achieved several positive outcomes, including shielding on full pay for Meat Hygiene Inspectors (MHIs) and Official Veterinarians (OVs) who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) and Clinically Vulnerable (CV). We also achieved the same result for those members shielding someone who is CEV or CV at home. The sector worked with the Health and Safety Executive to change the risk assessment analysis from a desktop exercise to a site visit. The work of UNISON activists has saved lives.

UNISON is working and building alliances with other like-minded organisations, such as Sustain and Unchecked. We also submitted evidence to the Labour Party's food strategy and the Government's National Food Strategy. Our work with the Nash Family, who tragically lost their daughter due to e coli, remains a priority. Our joint petition, which has now reached over 217,000 signatures, was handed in to the new Chief Executive of the FSA in 2020. Our alliance and work with Change.org extended to Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) working in local authorities. Using the campaign message of 'farm to fork', UNISON has led a broad campaign to highlight the work of essential workers like EHOs, Meat Hygiene Inspectors, Official Veterinarians, and administrators.

This impact is shown in the results of our public polling of more than 2000 people in 2020. This showed a huge majority in are worried about meat quality standards being relaxed by ministers following Brexit and over half believe that government regulations for meat quality standards should be tightened. The poll also found that most of the British public would lose confidence in the safety of meat if the Government were to privatise the regulation of the industry and ditch independent inspections by meat hygiene inspectors and vets employed by the FSA.

The public is equally unhappy with private inspections for restaurants and takeaways, which local councils currently undertake. There are also concerns about health risks because of financial cuts to council budgets across the UK that have scaled back safety inspections and seen widespread redundancies.

Finally, UNISON launched the Protect Our Food Campaign to showcase the work of FSA and environmental health members. The new campaign website is www.protectourfood.org.

6. Occupational Groups

6.1 Libraries and Cultural Services

UNISON members in libraries continue to face the threat of cuts, closures, and the transfer of libraries to community groups and volunteers; on top of the strain of libraries opening during the pandemic and the workforce being classed as essential workers. The financial situation facing libraries can be expected to worsen as council budgets are further constrained by the financial pressures of dealing with COVID-19.

Prior to the pandemic, UNISON conducted a survey of members into violence, harassment and abuse towards library staff receiving 1,560 responses. Almost a third of members have been threatened with violence or assault, sometimes involving knives and over half had witnessed a colleague being physically intimidated. The findings of the survey were used in UNISON's library campaign to call for safer libraries, to further push UNISON's End Violence at Work Charter and in negotiations with the Government and Libraries Connected.

With the outbreak of COVID-19, UNISON set up an advisory group of library activists to oversee discussions with The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Libraries Connected on the impact of the pandemic.

UNISON has been a crucial voice for library workers throughout the pandemic. We successfully lobbied for three seats (including a frontline UNISON library worker) on the DCMS Libraries Taskforce: the COVID-19 Recovery Working Group, established in June. Frequent lobbying of Government and Libraries Connected continued outside of the taskforce as policy on library opening evolved rapidly across the UK during repeated lockdowns. UNISON lobbied and scrutinised proposals and draft guidance prior to publication. This led to many improvements, including a clear instruction on the duty to consult, stricter rules on the types of surfaces and furnishings, and strong arguments around the use of face coverings in libraries.

Regular advice and support have been provided to regions, branches and reps throughout the pandemic and made available online and via social media. Issues covered included additional risks to Black

members, social distancing, test and trace and the use of PPE. In July, nearly 200 library reps registered for a UNISON webinar on the impact of COVID-19.

The Libraries Taskforce evolved into a stakeholder group discussing the role of libraries in post-COVID recovery alongside its role of providing advice and guidance on the pandemic. Issues covered include the role of libraries in local economic recovery and community wellbeing, digital inclusion, the contribution of libraries to broader government priorities and funding strategies, as well as workforce issues such as test and trace, mental health, morale and ensuring COVID safe workplaces.

During the pandemic, UNISON issued two editions of the Library Campaigner Magazine to all branches.

6.2 Social Work

UNISON's priorities on social work changed in response to the pandemic. Our campaign against the introduction of the National Assessment and Accreditation Scheme wound down when the DfE suspended the programme.

Early work in the first lockdown included participating in the government 'return to social work programme' and establishing a social work COVID-19 webpage. The Social Care Forum (SCF) quickly moved online, held bi-monthly catch ups, and then started meeting formally online in the autumn.

UNISON supported the campaign to scrap the flexibilities introduced by Government through the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (Statutory Instrument 445). These regulations were introduced as emergency legislation and bypassed consultation with representative parties and parliamentary scrutiny. The flexibilities diminished the rights of children and watered down what social workers could provide. Most flexibilities were not renewed in September.

UNISON's survey of 1122 social worker members indicated they were finding working in the COVID-19 world very stressful. They said their jobs had become

more complicated through social distancing rules and added PPE. Home working was leading to a sense of loneliness and isolation. They missed having peer support to solve complex cases. Traumatic and negative conversations in the home environment were making it hard to switch off.

A social worker rights at work webinar for members in England and Cymru/Wales was held in August, informed by feedback from the survey. This led to a wellbeing digital guide produced in conjunction with Community Care to support UNISON social workers in 2021. The guide was emailed directly to members in March. It is aimed at every level of social worker, covers all social work settings and is applicable to all nations. It signposts members to further UNISON support and resources.

Social worker training vanished in the COVID-19 world and we brought together as a web resource the CPD, personal development and training opportunities UNISON and our learning partners provide to enable social workers to develop in their work. Details were cascaded to members in the summer.

Early in the first lockdown UNISON and the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) started holding weekly meetings with the profession's regulator Social Work England's (SWE) fitness to practice team to discuss how they were operating. These have developed into a formally constituted representative forum for SWE to consult us on improving their procedures and processes. SWE guidance we commented on or took up with them has covered virtual hearings, triage, case examination, medical consent forms, voluntary removal, employers' referral guidance and social workers self-referral guidance. We pressed SWE hard about the slow progressing of legacy cases and unacceptable delays in investigations. We took up with SWE instances of registrants falling foul of an unclear online registration renewal process and secured a fast track way to restore them onto the register.

The TUC asked UNISON's view on a request for affiliation from the Social Workers Union (SWU) – the trade union arm of BASW and the Scottish Association of Social Workers. We have taken a strong line in opposing SWU's application.

The SCF is prioritising strengthening social worker recruitment and organisation. The pandemic has emphasised the need to develop online connections with social worker members. UNISON is the social care union and we need to rebuild our profile as a radical voice for social work. A social

worker subgroup will steer this.

UNISON was approached by the National Centre for Excellence in Residential Children's Care to discuss unionising children's residential care. RMS mapping confirmed a lack of numbers and density. It was reluctantly concluded initiating this campaign would be too resource intensive for stretched local government branches.

Social work issues in Scotland and Cymru/Wales are outlined in their separate nation sections of the annual report.

6.3 Social Care

The social care sector bore the brunt of COVID-19 and saw many thousands of deaths. UNISON has treated social care as a top priority area over the year, with officers from the Local Government Service Group playing a key part in the union's cross-service group response to the crisis.

In England UNISON was involved from the outset in all the social care workforce related groups that were hastily established by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in England. UNISON has been the only union involved in these high-level meetings and the only organisation able to speak with authority about workforce issues. As well as overarching workforce meetings and the high-level adult social care COVID taskforce, more specialist task and finish groups looked at issues such as testing and PPE. We highlighted many problems, including access to testing, a lack of sick pay for staff who were self-isolating or shielding, PPE shortages and problems with employers not distributing PPE to staff. Consequently, in summer 2020 all care home staff in England began to be tested weekly. The government also created the Infection Control Fund to help ensure care workers were paid in full when they could not work. We have continually put pressure on the Government to take more steps to ensure this money is paid to eligible workers. Separately we have pressurised councils to ensure that Infection Control Fund monies are paid to eligible care workers. We positively influenced and contributed to Public Health England guidance on PPE usage. We also played a key role in developing and strengthening the Adult Social Care Risk Reduction Framework for care workers in England. We are hopeful that this unprecedented level of government engagement will ensure that we have a voice when discussions about the longer-term reform of the social care sector begins.

We have worked closely with the adult social care directors' body, ADASS, and the CQC on launching a new whistleblowing forum for care workers, as many cannot raise concerns with their employers. We have also focussed on ensuring that care workers get access to vaccines and be paid for the time they take to have their injections. Whilst we support vaccination we have countered employers who have tried to make the vaccination mandatory.

Similar levels of high-level engagement took place with the governments in Scotland, Cymru/Wales and Northern Ireland. In addition to similar working with the government and employers and productions of country specific guidance, care workers in Scotland and Wales were awarded a bonus of £500 to recognise their efforts during the pandemic and the union has provided advice to ensure members can protect their benefits or tax credits when claiming the payment.

UNISON Scotland also fed into the Feeley report, an Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland, which produced several positive recommendations. The review calls for a National Care Service, which UNISON has been championing for many years. The review highlights the structural challenges in the social care sector that inhibit workers' ability to collectively bargain for improved pay and conditions. The report is critical of the market-based approach to commissioning and cites UNISON's Ethical Care Charter as a route to driving out profit motive and delivering Fair Work standards across the various types of care. Pressure will be put on the Scottish government to make the recommendation a reality.

UNISON worked closely with Paula Barker MP (a former UNISON regional convenor), who put forward a Private Members' Bill aimed at improving pay transparency for care workers and improving how councils commission homecare services. Unfortunately routine parliamentary business was postponed, but we hope it will be brought back before Parliament soon. If not, we will work with the Labour Party to find other ways for it to become law.

Ten Haringey UNISON local government homecare members were collectively awarded over £100,000 following a successful tribunal judgement primarily related to non-payment of the minimum wage. The judgment came after a four-year legal struggle and drew significant media attention to the poor working conditions that many homecare workers endure and the problems with homecare services. The tribunal judgment gave a clear definition of what constituted working time, which should

inform how councils commission and pay for homecare services in the future.

6.4 Housing

Housing remains a key issue for UNISON. We are the largest union for workers in the social and council housing sectors, and for all members access to affordable housing is a major concern for members who continue to see their pay squeezed.

At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, social housing providers were told by the government to stop visits to tenants' homes – unless for emergencies. Council housing staff delivering homelessness services were instructed to house all rough sleepers, primarily by placing people into hotels as usual temporary accommodation or shelters were not safe/suitable. UNISON published a briefing at this time on the measures introduced by the Government to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on social housing and setting out what more needed to be done to support members.

A housing survey for UNISON members was conducted over the summer of 2020, looking at the effect of COVID-19 on an already serious housing crisis. The survey found that many members and their families were deferring rent and mortgages, and many were at risk of eviction, even homelessness. Nearly two-thirds said they were really struggling or just about managing financially with a third considering looking for somewhere cheaper to live and work. These survey results were highlighted on UNISON's website used as the basis for parliamentary questions.

When the second lockdown started in November 2020, the Government took a different approach, saying all visits to tenants' homes could continue (if they were conducted in a COVID-secure manner). A UNISON survey found housing staff were very concerned about returning to work in tenants' homes and said the Government should have continued to pause non-essential works. UNISON wrote to the Secretary of State outlining our concern and developed risk assessment resources in collaboration with the UNISON Housing Forum.

UNISON's housing manifesto was published in 2020 entitled "Safe, decent and affordable homes for all". It will be the basis for UNISON's ongoing housing work – as a citizenship issue and a campaigning and workplace issue for housing members.

UNISON participated in the national 'Homes at the Heart' campaign, calling for a once-in-a-generation

investment in social housing in October 2020. UNISON used the event to highlight the affordability crisis facing public sector and local government workers - providing examples of how long it would take key public sector/local government occupations to save for an average home in their area.

The Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) conducted research on behalf of UNISON over 2020 and into 2021, looking at the barriers and opportunities for development of directly built council homes.

This included several roundtable virtual meetings between APSE and UNISON housing members, which helped direct the focus of this work. A finished report is due to be presented at an online event later in 2021 and will be used to promote the good value in allowing councils to build more homes (and to celebrate the good work of council staff directly involved in the delivery of new council homes.)

6.5 Careers

COVID had a big impact on careers services, affecting the ability of staff to deliver face to face services – the best quality interactions. School closures had a significant impact on members' ability to provide guidance, a particular worry for school leavers. UNISON branches worked hard to help members adapt to working differently and new technology. For instance UNISON's Skills Development Scotland (SDS) branch worked closely with management to ensure the health and safety was paramount, leading to the introduction of Perspex screens in offices, face masks, greater hygiene measures and special leave and office furniture for home workers.

UNISON's national Careers Forum met three times during the year. In the autumn we highlighted the importance of careers services with the Labour Party and produced a report for MPs on UK careers services for a planned debate on the future of work.

In England Schools led provision led to great variance of practice, with some simply referring to websites, whilst others employed careers advisers direct or 'bought in' self-employed advisers or a Careers Company. The result has been difficult for workers to navigate and for UNISON to recruit in. UNISON's long standing criticisms of the school based system were acknowledged in the government's Skills for Jobs white paper. This stated that "there is no single place you can go to get government-backed, comprehensive careers information", and that careers

can be "confusing, fragmented and unclear". It indicated that the National Careers Service (NCS), has not worked as a single source of support as intended, that the NCS and Careers Enterprise Council have not worked well together, and the DfE's careers strategy, published after much delay in 2017 as an "ambitious plan", is struggling.

Members working on the Adult Contract (via the NCS), have found themselves working on a highly bureaucratic, payment by results model that ostensibly puts the client first, but in reality what matters is triggering payments in a system designed to generate income for the contract holder.

Skills Development Scotland offered a 3% increase for the 20/21 pay round in line with Scottish Government pay guidelines, plus incremental progression arrangements and the commitment to no compulsory redundancies continued. UNISON recommended rejection as the employer wouldn't pilot the Scottish Government recommended progressive four-day week. On-line member pay sessions saw unprecedented attendance. The ballot will close at the end of April.

A review of Careers Services in Scotland with a focus on client experience of the careers support "eco system". UNISON branch representatives and partner agencies are heavily involved with recommendations due in November. SDS have also added more than 20 staff to their front-line Partnership Action for Continued (PACE) team. PACE is an SDS/Government Initiative to support businesses and employees facing redundancy. Extra staff are needed due to anticipated high level of need with withdrawal of financial support to employees currently furloughed.

In Careers Wales, (owned by the Government) a pay rise of 2% including the deletion of the bottom pay point and agreement for the company to research moving from a 37 to a 35 hour working week with no loss of pay was agreed. UNISON's 2021 claim is for a 5% increase (£10 minimum) and a further call for a cut in hours.

6.6 Craftworkers

Whilst UNISON is not a recognised union for Craft Worker bargaining and negotiating many UNISON members belong to the Craft bargaining group.

Agreement was reached between employers and the JNC Trade Union Side on a 2020 pay award for craft workers, back dated to 1 April 2020.

This pay award was for 2.75% on basic salary and allowances. The JNC also agreed that from 1 April 2020, minimum annual leave would increase from 21 to 22 days for employees with less than five years' service.

A significant number of craft members work in housing and building repairs/maintenance services within councils. A primary issue for those workers in 2020 was working in tenants' homes during COVID lockdowns. A UNISON survey of members working in this sector found that: 71% of respondents did not feel comfortable working in/visiting tenants' homes during lockdown; 60% thought the government should have paused non-essential repairs and maintenance during all lockdowns; 54% were not confident their employer was ensuring all visits were carried out in a COVID-secure manner; and most agreed that the proper use of risk assessments was key in tackling this issue. UNISON wrote to the Secretary of State, outlining these concerns.

A new UNISON risk assessment tool is being rolled out for members, and reps working in this sector have contributed case studies for further use.

We are surveying UNISON Craft members to help determine their priorities, how we can best support them as members, and to look for members who may be interested in becoming active as Craft reps.

7. Regional Service Group Reports

7.1 Eastern

COVID-19

For many branches and members one of the initial challenges of 2020 was the closure of council workplaces and the move to 'agile' working from home. Members who could not work from home faced other challenges, such as the practicalities of social distancing whilst working on a refuse round or while providing care for the elderly. Much early work focussed on ensuring social distancing and adequate PPE was available, and that government and NJC guidance was followed. Across the region branches worked tirelessly to support members to ensure that the critical front-line delivery of public services was undertaken safely.

For other members the conversations with their employers and reps focussed on their workplaces closing or the prospect of being furloughed. Members in leisure services, tourist information and theatres to name just a few. Across the region members opted to be redeployed rather than be off work, so that they could continue to support their communities, but in a different temporary role. Branches in numerous instances were able to intervene and reduce the impact on members such as loss of pay, job security and work location.

The impact of COVID and the toll on the mental health of our members was of great concern. Working from home was beginning to take its toll and some councils' vision of selling off or decommissioning council buildings to save money will not help in the longer term. Payments to acknowledge the increased costs incurred for staff working at home have been negotiated in some councils, in addition to funds for upgraded IT equipment. The financial impact on members of still having to deduct the normal home to workplace mileage from their journeys, despite their workplace not being open, remains an issue in many branches; successful negotiations took place in Suffolk Council on this matter.

Regional teams and branches set up a phone bank system, with every single social care member in

Eastern receiving a phone call from an organiser to ask specific questions on PPE, health and safety issues, home working arrangements for clinically vulnerable staff, and sick pay. Over 7,000 phone calls to members were made over the period of three months, resulting in us identifying new activists and organising for PPE to be delivered to care homes across the region.

Eastern region branches signed up to the stop the spread pledge and engaged with local MPs, councillors, and commissioning bodies to sign up. Branches also engaged with their employers on the infection control fund, ensuring the money went where it was needed. As well as the pledge the region facilitated a webinar in July 2020 where branch secretaries were invited to discuss the future of social care and the UNISON policy paper setting out what a national care service could look like.

For schools' members and activists in Eastern region, work has largely been responding to collective issues relating to COVID, to ensure schools were safe for all staff and pupils to attend. UNISON has been reviewing schools' risk assessments and ensuring individual ones are undertaken for staff who need them. Norfolk County UNISON has also been meeting virtually with Labour MP Clive Lewis, resulting in him raising questions in Parliament on testing, PPE, and vaccines for all school staff.

Cuts and redundancies

The initial pause in many council cuts and redundancy exercises soon ended and reorganisations generally justified by council finances, rather than an improvement in service delivery, recommenced. Unfortunately, procedural, and legal requirements were not always adhered to and where our members were affected, we moved to legal advice and action where necessary. In Norfolk some school employers carried out restructures despite the pandemic. Naturally this caused a great deal of upset among school staff and the branch acted, successfully pressing employers to stop – though some restructures resumed later when lockdown eased.

Pay and conditions – including public health

Some business as usual activities continued despite the pandemic. Consultation on the 2020 NJC pay offer was conducted electronically, which worked well for branches in the region. We saw a marked improvement in the turnout compared to previous years and will build on this when further consultations or ballots are required. Local claims which mirrored the NJC claim were submitted and successfully negotiated (at non NJC authorities). Towards the latter half of 2020 consultation on the 2021/22 claim began, and utilising electronic methods in the main, members' overwhelming preference was for a 10% claim.

Despite the relentless COVID related work, branches with schools' members still managed to secure other positive outcomes for members. Suffolk Branch successfully challenged proposed changes to the calculation of holiday pay for school staff, which for some resulted in an increase in pay. And following a botched organisational change exercise UNISON secured failure to consult payments in one employer in Norfolk, resulting in money in the pockets for UNISON members.

Privatisation and service delivery issues

Most privatisation plans being considered prior to the pandemic were put on hold.

Recruitment and organising

Despite the obvious challenges of workplace closures and in-person access to non-members, many Eastern branches saw significant membership increases in 2020. Branches reviewed how and when they engaged with members and e-bulletins, social media and issue-focussed member and non-member meetings contributed towards this. Recognising the awe-inspiring contribution of UNISON members across the region – e.g. through Stars in our Schools events – boosted morale and the increased membership at Huntingdonshire District Council resulted in voluntary recognition.

Regional teams took on projects around the Infection Control Fund and Essex ran a successful project following up national employers on their failure to fund pay during COVID related absence – this work is still ongoing. Herts County are engaged in a successful project, organising care workers and engaging them on other issues including race equality and migrant workers, which has resulted in several new activists. Suffolk County Branch are running a project

to engage social care members and a county wide race equality project, similar to that in Cambridgeshire.

Any other items which are of particular significance in your Region

An emphatic result in an industrial action ballot at Poplars School in Lowestoft, to stand up against longstanding workplace issues, resulted in the employer presenting a solution which members accepted.

7.2 East Midlands

COVID-19

All East Midlands branches adapted quickly to the challenges of COVID-19. Across the region UNISON ensured policies introduced by employers in response to the pandemic were fit for purpose, applied correctly, and kept our members safe.

Leicester was the first city in the UK to be put into a local lockdown and has had high rates of COVID-19. Both Leicester City and Leicestershire County Branches are supporting members, including several cases of severe long-COVID. Like many of our branches, the six branches making up Northamptonshire Local Government UNISON have held weekly meetings with employers, informing and challenging how risk is assessed and managed across schools, care services and councils. UNISON secured an increase in sick pay entitlement for County Council adult care staff.

North East Derbyshire Branch highlighted COVID issues with management, who had not been sufficiently stringent on isolating or social distancing in certain areas. UNISON's actions prevented further outbreaks and kept our members safe. Ashfield Branch raised concerns with the employer when one department demanded employees attend the workplace despite the ability to perform all duties from home. This led to an investigation which uncovered bullying. Nottinghamshire County Branch was successful at ensuring early vaccination for special school staff.

Cuts and redundancies

Leicestershire County Council are one of the worst-off councils in the UK under the current funding formula and have been lobbying government to address this. The council estimates a maximum of 150 redundancies over next four years and the branch is campaigning against compulsory redundancies.

Nottingham City Council has announced savings of £15.6 million in the next year alone. The cuts are part of a 'recovery plan' released after a non-statutory review commissioned by Government following the fallout from the collapse of Robin Hood Energy. Nottingham City Branch has launched a campaign to lobby government for more funding and to mitigate against redundancies.

Pay and conditions

Many branches have taken part in our regional 'Protect Our Jobs' campaign, with the aim of negotiating agreements with employers for no compulsory redundancies for a fixed period to recognise the stress that job insecurity puts upon our members, particular in the face of COVID-19. Chesterfield Branch was the first in the region to secure an agreement to protect their members.

The Northamptonshire Local Government branches launched a campaign in response to a plan to abolish eight local councils and form two unitary councils. UNISON has demanded no compulsory redundancies or loss of terms and conditions for existing staff and a return to nationally agreed terms and conditions.

Another theme of the last year is the move towards more permanent changes to home working policies across. Charnwood UNISON Branch have balloted members on the council's introduction of a new Agile Working Policy which has been much improved by UNISON's negotiations.

Privatisation and service delivery issues

Derbyshire County Council has established two Joint Venture Companies – Vertas Ltd and Concertus Ltd. UNISON has established a formal consultative body, the inclusion of recruitment material in induction packs for new staff and agreement to pay the 2020 NJC Pay Award.

Recruitment and organising

Membership across the region increased over the last year, particularly in schools and academies. Several branches have embarked on steward recruitment to ensure good organisation of members in local government. Derbyshire County Branch has used the pandemic to recruit Health & Safety reps and stewards. Recruitment has been positive for the branches and a new focus on Health & Safety has been found. Derby City Branch is targeting five employers where there are no stewards as priorities for rep recruitment. Leicester City is one of several

branches that improved online communications during the pandemic to improve retention, with several direct communications to Young Members, Black Members and Women Members.

7.3 Greater London

COVID-19

We are incredibly proud of our local government members' response to the pandemic, many working extra hours and double shifts to support communities and ensuring the delivery of vital public services. We are also very proud of our local government branches and activists who moved so quickly to set up systems so that our members could concentrate on their jobs and still receive support when needed, regardless of whether the branch office was physically open or not, for example the huge amount of work done in getting our members risk assessed during the earlier part of the pandemic especially those who worked in the frontline from day one and also those in schools. In local government many members are having to work from home which presents its own challenges as well as those who have continued to put themselves at risk every day.

A local government forum was held in October 2020 to which all branches were invited to send representatives. The normal committee meeting pattern is back in place for 2021, albeit with virtual meetings – our AGM is due to take place on 30 March. Branch briefings are also planned. Branches have been very innovative in using video technology to hold branch committee meetings and many have used it to hold meetings with members in different sectors. It has been particularly successful in schools with individual branches and the region holding regular on-line events.

Cuts and Redundancies

The impact of COVID and the long-term funding crisis is being felt in all local authorities (LAs) and schools where restructures are taking place or anticipated which will likely result in redundancies. The funding gap resulting from the lack of government support to LAs for the last 10 years and not delivering on their promise to fund the cost of COVID is likely to see an estimated £700m funding gap across the London boroughs at the end of this financial year. We expect the situation to worsen over the next year as LAs consider which services they can deliver and where further cuts may have to be made. Training sessions on dealing

with restructures and redundancies for activists will be available to branches. Previous cuts have seen us lose many long-standing experienced activists, so we aim to recruit as many new activists as possible to support members going forward.

Pay and conditions

Following the initial term time only claims success in Greenwich a similar settlement has now been agreed with Lambeth Council after lengthy negotiations, which will see members receiving on average £2-3,000 in compensation. Lewisham Council have also recently agreed a settlement which includes six years' back pay to staff. It is likely there will be other claims forthcoming in other boroughs.

In Tower Hamlets the Council issued a final set of 'Tower Rewards' proposals in September 2019 and issued a Section 188 notice which led to all members employed directly by the Council being balloted and successfully reaching over the 50% threshold. Strike action was held off due to COVID, but members were forced to invoke their right to take industrial action. Following three periods of strike action and an extremely well organised campaign by the branch, the employer would not move. Discussions have been taking place with the Council and it is hoped a resolution to the on-going dispute may be found shortly. On NJC pay, most branches who took part in the consultation on the 2021 pay claim opted for 10%. Branches are being encouraged to use the nationally produced branch template to campaign at a local level and raise awareness of the pay claim with members. If an offer is made that can be put to members the region will aid setting up electronic consultations, as happened in 2020.

The region continues to participate in the Greater London Employment Forum and Greater London Provincial Council where a range of issues are discussed and debated including apprenticeships, pensions, workplace support for parents with premature or sick babies, menopause policies and the EU settled status scheme. We have been exploring collaborative working between the NHS and local government around an 'employment service passport' with the aim of retaining the knowledge and skills of workers within public services via recognition of service for annual leave and sickness entitlements.

Privatisation and service delivery issues

Veolia pay offers in Haringey and Southwark were originally rejected but following further negotiations and an improved offer, members in both boroughs

voted to accept. The main private contractors engaged in the provision of leisure services in London are GLL and Everyone active. Technically a social enterprise rather than a public limited company, Fusion Lifestyle made staff redundant across contracts in London and elsewhere due to a significant drop in income as a result of the pandemic. Fusion have lost several contracts in London which have been taken over by GLL which delivers a number of services including libraries. GLL is owned by Greenwich Council and it was hoped a national recognition agreement could be achieved. This is proving to be more difficult than hoped, particularly given Greenwich is a Labour borough. Issues have been raised directly with GLL's CEO around redundancies, annual leave, zero-hour contracts and industrial relations which continue to be pursued to gain recognition.

Recruitment and organising

Recruitment has been at an all-time high in local government with a net gain for the first time in many years. Regional work to contact members and encourage them to become active has seen a higher number of new stewards and health & safety reps appointed and trained. Work is being done on how we retain members and increase organising and participation among them. It is hoped we can reach a wider and higher number of potential activists using video technology.

Pensions governance

UNISON has a minimum of one position on the majority of the 34 pension boards in Greater London. The regional pensions forum composed of UNISON members sitting on pension boards and committees meets regularly on a quarterly basis. Over 40% of London's pension assets are now pooled in the London CIV. We have one seat on the CIV shareholders committee and following representations from the trade unions the seat is now a full, voting seat and not just an observer as it was. We hope to secure three trade union full voting seats.

7.4 Northern

COVID-19

UNISON Northern has worked with all Local Authorities (LAs) across the region and had representation on local COVID-19 response task groups. The major issue initially was the lack of adequate and appropriate PPE, particularly for staff

working in domiciliary care services providing personal care. Councils were unable at times to source adequate supplies of PPE from the central government supply chain and instead worked across LAs and through Local Resilience Forums to source PPE from local businesses and other public sector organisations.

Social care homes faced significant challenges. There was a complete lack of government understanding and planning regarding the supply of PPE. NHS Trusts were directed to discharge people back into care homes resulting in COVID-19 being introduced into homes without infection control and risk management measures being in place. There was a complete shortage of PPE and members reported being asked to provide their own. There was a lack of individual staff risk assessments, so some staff who should have been shielding or self-isolating were asked to attend work to cover shortages. Lack of full sick pay also meant that some staff had to attend work rather than self-isolate. The region worked with LA Leaders, Public Health Leads, Social Care representatives and individual care homes to respond to the range of issues. Contact was also made via phone bank with all social care members.

Schools have also been a key area of concern. The region recorded over 500 COVID-19 incidents in schools during the September wider reopening. Regular meetings have been held with Directors of Education to address issues with risk assessments and DfE guidance throughout the pandemic.

Strong political relationships with Labour Leaders and Labour Groups have been particularly important and have enabled UNISON to escalate issues and work with employers to find solutions.

Cuts and redundancies

Councils in the North East, which were already struggling under austerity, have raised significant concerns about their funding gaps, compounded by increased COVID-19 expenditure. Through discussions with LAs the region estimated the financial impact of COVID-19 in the summer, which ranged from £63 million (Newcastle) to £12 million (Darlington). The average allocation of central government grants at this time was approximately £12m. Although none of these LAs are currently at risk of section 144 notices, these allocations do not provide the resources Councils need to meet the challenges of COVID-19.

Schools have faced significant challenges in

deploying detailed risk assessments to keep pupils and staff safe and have remained open throughout the pandemic. The additional adaptations and increased cleaning regimes have had a significant impact on school budgets with little support from central government. One large Multi Academy Trust (MAT) has estimated that 523 additional cleaning hours per term would be required in secondary settings. While restructures were largely paused during 2020, we are now seeing schools seek to balance their budgets and the concern is that support staff will be cut from within schools that are already operating under minimal staffing.

Pay and conditions

The region has undertaken mapping of all 12 LAs in order to benchmark terms and conditions across the North East and utilise this data to negotiate improvements and campaign against any detrimental changes.

To assist branches stretched in responding to members' concerns, the region conducted the local government pay consultation on their behalf. This was a hybrid of digital and paper ballots where email addresses could not be obtained. Branches provided positive feedback on this approach, with the electronic means increasing turnout to 28% in some cases.

Further Education have also faced the same issues as schools in implementing COVID-19 risk assessment and funding. In addition, pay negotiations are continuing in line with the recommended Association of Colleges pay increase of 1% or £250. Local ballots within colleges in the North East are currently active.

The expansion of MATs within the region has seen some larger trusts engage with UNISON on job evaluation exercises to harmonise pay and grading across several LA areas. UNISON Northern is currently leading on the evaluation of one of the larger cross-regional MATs.

Privatisation and service delivery issues

There have been no large-scale privatisations within the North East over the last year, but the pandemic has exposed the difficulties LAs have to address service delivery issues in previously privatised areas. Councils have been actively involved in assisting private care providers with infection and staffing issues to the extent of preparing to deploy their own staff to cover high sickness levels.

Recruitment and organising

Branches have sought innovative ways to engage with members under COVID-19 restrictions.

The region wide 'Get Active Plan' seeks to mentor new and existing activists to support branches address increasing workloads and grow the union. The virtual structured mentoring process allows the region to dedicate specific time to address any training or development needs. The new stewards training has also been adapted to online learning; within local government the region has 155 new stewards being trained and mentored using this approach.

There has also been an excellent response within the region to the national 'Be on the Safe Side' Campaign. Again, within local government, 115 members expressed an interest and 77 of these are women. Of these, 56 have attended their first webinar and are in the process for being mentored.

The region has seen strong recruitment in schools over this period and has increased the use of local and regional school forums to identify reps and develop existing activists. The use of virtual meetings has made it easier for reps to attend which has had a positive impact on participation.

Branches have also promoted and celebrated the contribution of key workers. In particular, Sunderland Branch launched an 'Unsung Heroes' campaign in partnership with the council to provide banners and digital displays across the city highlighting the contribution of local government workers with joint branding.

7.5 Northern Ireland

In Education the closure of schools during the first COVID surge presented bargaining challenges around the protection of employment rights for workers. During summer 2020 we engaged vigorously together with teaching unions in a challenge to the Department of Education's rushed plans.

We worked jointly with other education unions during each surge on implementing the development of guidance, firstly from the Department of Education, following that the Education Authority (EA). The resources made available through the work at UNISON Centre has been invaluable in supporting our members during these difficult times.

During this period when schools were open and also

during periods of closure we have worked closely with our lay bargaining team to protect and secure employment rights and health and safety standards for our members who work as Classroom Assistants, in School Transport, in Cleaning and in Catering, School Estates and Youth Services.

During all this we successfully balloted our members on NJC pay, terms and conditions on the 2020/2021 pay award. Most members balloted voted to accept the pay offer.

Cuts and redundancies

As a result of a review of EA provided youth services in several areas across the North, staff have been redeployed usually with agreement, however we are currently (March 2021) resisting compulsory redeployment in at least one area of Belfast. Members (with very long service) have indicated they would prefer to take redundancy. The EA have resisted based on lack of funding.

Developments on school mergers, amalgamations and closures are now coming to the fore again as we emerge from this phase of the pandemic and we are focusing on protection of existing staff and TUPE rights.

Pay and conditions

The existing commitment in 2019 by the Education Authority review to review pay in education has stalled. however we are pushing for discussions to recommence by autumn 2021.

We are preparing to work with UNISON colleagues across the regions on the fight to win a good pay award for 2021/22.

Additionally we continued to ensure local and regional negotiating bodies reflected UNISON's bargaining priorities, including:

- Implementation of the NJC pay award.
- Continuing to challenge the reduction in the pay of special needs staff by changing contracts.
- Working with the Education Authority to implement a new policy on Menopause (a result of bringing campaigning issues to the bargaining table).
- Pursuing ethical procurement, including the supply chain, in education.
- Challenging the Education Authority on their failure to auto-enrol at the appropriate date thousands of workers in the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation

- Scheme (NILGOSC) pension scheme
- Continuing participation in the new pension schemes governance bodies (both NILGOSC and Health and Social Care Scheme) and securing ongoing training for new lay trustees and pension board members.

Our members again presented to the Low Pay Commission during its 2019 visit. We highlighted low pay across our membership. Members presented personal testimonies and the event was captured in a UNISON video shared on social media. We again presented to the Low Pay Commission in March 2021.

Our review of the operation of joint agreements on handling domestic violence and abuse continues. All UNISON negotiators are mandated to insist that all change management proposals are subject to Section 75 of the NI Act and are scrutinised using equality impact assessments.

We have recently concluded agreement with the Education Authority on a policy on supporting women in the workplace during menopause. We are seeking additional leave as part of the roll-out of this policy.

Since the 2019 conference we have publicly challenged an attempt by some members on the EA Board to obstruct LGBT+ support resources for EA staff. This issue is not yet resolved.

Privatisation and service delivery issues

Discussions with the Department of Education on Transformation have stalled. We remain on full alert as privatisation is a very real threat in education and the EA budget deficit has widened. In 2020 our challenge to voluntary grammar schools is focusing on NJC pay. We are also keeping a close eye on the capacity of EA support services to be maintained during the Covid pandemic.

Recruitment and organising

Recruitment rose by 88% from January 2019 to January 2021, with increases ranging from 86% to 92%

Other items significant to Northern Ireland

Current issues under negotiation include the following.

- There is an ongoing EA review of contractual issues for classroom assistants.
- The database on temporary workforce numbers

and workers impacted by EU Exit across the EA has continues to be updated.

- Negotiations continue on school transport re-configuration.
- The DoE-led review of the school meals service has raised issues for school catering staff. Our emphasis is on restoring the nutritional meals service which was piloted by the first Education Minister as a result of UNISON intervention. The review includes increasing the take-up of school meals. The EA has taken some initiatives at the start of the 2019 school year to increase uptake of school meals.
- We have launched a major campaign to extend funding and provision for free school meals (see the UNISON NI website).
- We have served a claim on the voluntary grammar schools where we have members seeking application of the 2019/2020 NJC pay award. We have membership in less than 50% of the schools and this sector's employers are very resistant to engagement with UNISON.

The Impact of Brexit on the Workforce

The implications of EU exit dominate much of our work. In the Departments of Health and Education, civil servants previously involved in service discussions have been redeployed to work on impact assessments. We continue to engage in a range of activity aimed at protecting workers rights that are at risk through exiting the EU.

Several thousand workers cross the border each day to work. Although the continuation of the common travel area allows cross-border workers to continue to work in public services in NI, we are working with our allies in the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) to put pressure on both the Irish and UK Governments to ensure these arrangements continue unrestricted in the future.

Youth Justice Agency

Members in the Youth Justice Centres were TUPE transferred into the civil service structures and are now on civil service pay terms and conditions. The recent imposition of 1% was imposed on the civil service. We have managed to retain our membership and have a seat at local bargaining structures but are excluded from regional bargaining forums.

Weekend pay enhancements when on annual leave had been removed, but they have now been reinstated, with backpay to 2019.

Special educational needs

We have spent most of this latest surge fighting to secure vaccination for staff dealing with CEV pupils. While a commitment was given in principle the roll out has been very slow and will be overtaken by general educational worker access to vaccination (March 20210).

NI Library Authority

It has been agreed (end 2020) that Libraries NI staff will now move over to the new NJC pay points. Assimilation B was agreed and will include back pay to April 2019.

7.6 North West

For the last year it's seemed as though the work of the Regional Service Group has been driven or directed by Covid uncertainties, accelerated transformation and the emergent workforce split between a predominantly home-working model and a predominantly work-as-near-as-normal model. Challenges with the former included an abrupt office decamp, IT and systems, supervision and reporting lines, resources, access to support, isolation, balancing multiple people home-working/home-schooling simultaneously, defining working hours, gaining the self-discipline needed to 'switch off', and morphing into a 2-D landscape of screens, Teams and Zooms. Challenges. The latter have included adequate risk assessments, adapting working methods for social distancing, PPE, interface with administrative support, welfare facilities, service users who cannot fully comprehend the situation and dealing with a public practising varying degrees of compliance with the often confusing, sometimes contradictory and always fluid 'guidance' from the state apparatus.

It is an absolute credit to our members, who continued doing their substantive jobs or fulfilling other roles, that the lifeline and community services which underpin our social infrastructure have been maintained. Services - and the efforts of members to provide them - that are frequently unseen, often overlooked, sometimes derided, and nearly always undervalued. As demonstrated admirably by the Chancellor when he announced a 'temporary' public sector pay freeze in November. Local government saw the first 'temporary' pay freeze in the wake of the 2008 speculators crash, a year before other sectors. It was our members and ordinary working people who paid the price, under successive governments, for the

financier-capitalist 'solution' of socialising private and corporate debt and privatising public subsidy. We were far too reticent and far too timid with our responses back then - and over a decade later we see an ongoing loss of 20% in real-term wage value, jobs still went in their thousands alongside the terms and conditions that were compromised to supposedly save them, and local authorities, by and large, still face the annual budget origami.

Nobody in local government will be too surprised if this latest pay freeze also turns out to be a linguistically elastic take on 'temporary'. We shouldn't be too surprised if it is wrapped in a neo-austerity package in which local authority finances are, once more, nicked at the artery. Nor should we be too surprised when the establishment choir reprises "We Are All In This Together!" in a series of live-streamed, choreographed proms, bedecked in Dunkirk Spirit; but where 'Together' is really a land of smoke and mirrors in which our members face the fogged reflection of a carousel bleak winter, with protest muffled by a noise abatement order, whilst the rich pass through to the sunny side on a Stanley Johnson-clause ticket, all expenses paid. If this does transpire the response of our union, at all levels, must be far swifter and far more robust this time round.

The Region has seen a growing emphasis on virtual meetings, digital organising, bespoke training, capacity building and more varied communication strategies, given physical access to members has become far more limited and, in many instances, simply not possible at all. There are both advantages and disadvantages compared with historically traditional approaches, but all are likely to become permanent features as hybrid working will inevitably be part of the 'new normal'. Thus, hybrid trade union organising is a genuine and pressing developmental necessity rather than merely a reflex response. The Region has already used some of these tools for effective action, learning as we go, with continued successes in our focussed care worker campaign that brings together recruitment, organisation, representation, promotion, and political leverage.

Beneath the Covid canopy it appears that everything is in flux, many things are inverting, and the most consistent certainty is uncertainty. Yet beyond the canopy, at the fundamental level, the challenges for working people and unions remain resolutely familiar; employment opportunities, security, fair pay, decent conditions, safe environment, access to pensions, equitable treatment, balance of power in contractual

relationships, a representative in the workplace, a voice in the boardroom, an advocate in wider society. Descriptions will change, methodologies will develop, prioritisation will vary, the fulcrum will move along the bar, matte will become the new gloss and back again via satin, and lessons may be learned. Even focus groups may still, forbid, be invited to a metrowaffle. Our continued relevance and success certainly hinge in part on being open to new ideas and adapting to both meet and make change. But in doing so we must never lose sight of those perennial fundamentals or lose touch with our core beliefs, the things that wrought us and still ground us. In context, plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose is not always an expression of cynicism.

7.7 Scotland

COVID-19

The Scottish Local Government Committee (SLGC) and Education Issues Group have been engaged in discussions with COSLA and the Scottish Government throughout the pandemic through COSLA's Workforce Issues Group (WIG) and the Scottish Government's Education Recovery Group.

Both groups have been instrumental in agreeing protections for members forced to isolate or take time off with COVID, securing the PPE members require to do their job safely and the roll out of test and protect and the vaccination programme. Additionally the WIG has helped develop guidance around home-working and the working arrangements in schools, early years settings, libraries, galleries and heritage centres and the holding of events. We are currently engaged in detailed discussions around the treatment of acute COVID, ongoing symptomatic COVID and post-COVID syndrome going forward.

The Committee has led the campaign to have the Scottish Government's £500 COVID reward extended to other COVID responders across the rest of the local government workforce. We have persuaded COSLA Leaders to support our claim and our online petition gathered over 6000 signatories.

Our One Year of Covid survey secured the highest level of engagement from our local government membership in many years, with over 12,000 members responding. The survey produced a wealth of data that is being used to support our arguments in pay negotiations and discussions about the post-COVID legacy.

Recruitment and organising

The SLGC has regularly communicated with branches throughout the period of the pandemic, and has held regular meetings of the SLGC and branch secretaries. In addition our Chairs Group has met at least twice weekly and regular updates have been sent to branches directly.

A number of new activists were trained through the Region's Safety Reps campaign and went straight to work assisting with workplace inspections in their local areas.

The SLGC ran a 'Plug The Gap' campaign, aiming to secure greater long term investment in local government by the Scottish Government and to reward and recognise members' considerable efforts during the pandemic. This has seen a rise in recruitment and a focus on organising local government members around this campaign activity at local level, as well as greater engagement with elected members at all levels of government.

The Education Issues Group are running a 'Clean Schools, Safer Schools' campaign which seeks to organise members in these settings around keeping everyone safe at work.

Both of these campaigns have used new technology to host online webinars, a Local Government Question Time event and a Local Government Election Hustings to which all members have been invited and many thousands have engaged.

Feeley Review

The SGLC has engaged with other sectors and the wider membership around the union's response to the Scottish Government's review of adult social care, the Feeley review. UNISON Scotland will convene round table discussions following the May elections to discuss our next steps.

Devolution Protocol Review

The SGLC reported back to the review of the union's devolution protocol that we feel the protocol needs to take cognisance of the changed and evolving landscape since Scottish Devolution 20+ years ago and the facts that over 90% of UNISON members in Scotland are directly/indirectly impacted by matters determined by the Scottish Government; that the devolved nations require the appropriate resources to allow a similar type of lobbying/bargaining/campaigning used by UNISON

Centre directed at Westminster; that the protocol should differentiate between various forms of Devolution across the UK; and that any new proposals should continue the ability for those with devolved arrangements to take different or individual decisions when required and appropriate.

7.8 South East

COVID-19

COVID-19 placed enormous pressure on local government throughout 2020. Branches and the region saw an increase in queries coming in from members and the nationwide uncertainty was reflected in the increased joining figures we saw last year. Negotiations focused on health and safety, including issues like adequate PPE in social care, risk assessments for schools, redeployment and working from home or furlough arrangements for vulnerable staff, library openings and social distancing, as well as how policies like annual leave or sickness should be applied.

Cuts and redundancies

While a small number of restructures continued to take place, large scale reorganisation was placed on hold during the first lockdown. The last quarter saw an increase in voluntary redundancy schemes as a prelude to what will likely be some severe restructures with resulting redundancies through 2021 as Councils struggle to make savings against the financial impact of COVID-19 and ongoing local government funding concerns.

Pay and conditions

Pay in the South East remains a mixture of NJC and local pay with a large proportion of members working under local pay arrangements. Successful local pay negotiations took place across employers where we have agreements although these were conducted virtually due to COVID restrictions. We are seeing some evidence of attempts to erode conditions such as the removal of unsocial hours payments or the stopping of car user allowances. The region successfully adapted our engagement process to conduct the NJC Pay Consultation which resulted in over 70% acceptance of the offer.

Privatisation and service delivery issues

The region continues to see a small number of contracts returning in-house, however there has also

been an increase in smaller district councils looking at shared services arrangements, which will undoubtedly have an impact on members' jobs.

Recruitment and organising

The region saw an overall growth in recruitment from the start of 2020. Local government recruitment was the highest of all service groups, recruiting 9852 members out of a total of 17,362 across the region. Peaks in membership growth – notably among schools and libraries – can be linked to COVID restrictions and the health and safety implications of returning to workplaces.

Council reorganisation

Oxfordshire and Surrey County Councils are both exploring Unitary options although this process was put on hold during 2020 due to COVID. Both are expected to restart this process if/when the Government White Paper on reorganisation is published.

7.9 South West

Introduction

The Local Government Committee in the South West started 2020 with a clearly defined workplan of priorities for Local Government Service Group members, which included, NJC pay, violence in the workplace; the gender pay gap, pensions, consultant led change programmes and revising the constitution of the Service Group Committee. By March 2020, this workplan was superseded by our need to work together across the region to support branches and members dealing with maintaining services for the community in the face of a global pandemic.

COVID-19

The impact of COVID-19 has been felt in every corner of local government in the South West, from the closure of libraries and workers being redeployed into new emergency services such as deliveries of medications for shielding members of the public to the fight for social care workers to be paid full pay for COVID related sickness and self-isolation. We are very proud of how our members have gone above and beyond to protect the community whilst battling to get the right PPE and risk assessments that are fit for purpose.

We have had success with the Stop the Spread pledge with several councils following the lead of

Somerset County Council and signing the pledge to encourage all care providers to pay full pay for COVID related sickness. We worked with many schools and Multi-Academy Trusts to improve risk assessments for support staff. We also supported social care members who were shielding to take legal cases to enforce their right to full pay.

Cuts and redundancies

Many schools and councils put restructures on hold during the first part of the pandemic. Sadly, with the funding crisis in local government these are now being coming forward and moving at pace. Several councils have started procedures to make hundreds of staff redundant in 2021. Consultant led “transformation” programmes remain a challenge in the South West.

Pay and conditions – including public health

The NJC pay campaign 2020 was supported by regional resources, and the member consultation was carried out digitally for the first time. We learned valuable lessons which we will take forward into the 2021 campaign. Where councils merged over the last few years, employers are now looking to “harmonise” terms and conditions.

Privatisation and service delivery issues

Outsourcing and academisation remain high on the political agenda of many councils and is a priority for the Local Government Committee this coming year.

Recruitment and organising

Despite the pandemic recruitment and organising remained strong with significant numbers of new members joining from schools and social care employers. Work continues to organise these members and support new activists in these areas.

7.10 Cymru/Wales

The Cymru/Wales Local Government committee met regularly during the COVID-19 emergency, eventually adapting well to on-line meetings. In the first lockdown the LG committee’s secretariat (made up of the committee’s Chairperson and Vice Chairperson and the Wales representatives on the SGE and the NJC committees along with the Wales Head of Local Government) progressed urgent business until the committee started operating remotely. Wales sector forums covering FE, Careers, Social Care, BAOT and

Schools have functioned well over this last year.

The Wales Local Government Service Group works with the other NJC Trade Unions and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGGA) through the Joint Council for Wales (JCW) and with the Welsh Government through the Workforce Partnership Council – a tripartite public sector consultation and negotiation body bringing together Welsh Government, public sector employers and the trade unions).

COVID-19

From the start of the first COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020, UNISON and the other unions worked closely with Local Government employers, through the JCW, to deal with the evolving crisis. The JCW executive committee started to meet weekly to agree cross Wales protocols, and procedures and agreements on: Social Partnership Working during the emergency period; the appropriate provision and supply of PPE; establishment of publicly run contact Track & Trace services; safe working methods for refuse collection and recycling; provision of school meals during school closures; voluntary redeployment of staff into COVID-19 response services; managing annual leave flexibly; dealing with disputes during the crisis; terms and conditions for support staff working in education hubs; shielding and vulnerable workers; returning to work safely; self-isolation and sick pay; re-establishment of corporate Health & Safety committees and working from home assessments.

UNISON led the way in engaging with Government and employers directly and through the Schools Social Partnership Forum (tripartite body involving Welsh Government, LG employers and school trade unions) to address school support staff members’ concerns around the running of schools during the pandemic, including establishing and keeping under review schools’ COVID-19 Risk Assessments; reviewing and strengthening Operational Guidance on return to schools; negotiating flexible and phased returns; securing additional resources for strengthening mitigation measures (e.g. £5 million provided to employ additional staff to avoid movement across bubbles); improving the guidance relating to pregnant members of staff; agreeing clear messaging for staff, pupils, parents and wider community and scrutinising and challenging the robustness of public health advice.

UNISON had a seat on the Welsh Government Task and Finish groups implementing the COVID-19 Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) supplement and the £500 social care workers’ supplement.

Cuts and redundancy

UNISON extensively lobbied of the Welsh Government, ahead of the announcement of their 2021-22 budget and provisional Local Government settlement, including three meetings with the Minister for Housing and Local Government: presenting at a JCW briefing for Senedd Members and conducting an influential social media campaign. The result has been a better than expected local government settlement which saw an increase in Aggregate External Finance of £172m or an average of 3.8% increase for councils in Wales. In addition, the Welsh Government has committed to building on the £557m Local Government hardship fund provided to support councils during 2020-21. Councils have been able to claim against this fund for loss of income generation and to finance the £500 social care bonus payments; isolation payments (for low paid workers who couldn't work from home and had to self-isolate); SSP Enhancement Scheme and Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

These measures meant that council cuts and redundancies have been few during 2020 and the prospects for 2021 are promising.

However, UNISON Wales continues to engage in the Save our Services campaign as the medium and longer term funding situation is uncertain and pressures are building for a significant pay increase for staff and the need to tackle low pay in social care which will put additional pressures on Local Government finances.

Pensions, pay and conditions and negotiations, privatisation and service delivery issues

UNISON has member representatives on 7 of the 8 Wales LGPS Fund Boards and continues to scrutinise and positively intervene in the management of funds in Wales. UNISON pension activists are organised and supported in the UNISON Wales LGPS Governance Forum which puts out an annual newsletter. The eight Wales pension funds have a Wales Pension Partnership pooled fund and recently agreed a scheme member representative could be co-opted onto this board.

UNISON is the sole trade union organising in Careers Wales (a company wholly owned by the Welsh Government). In 2020 we won a pay rise of 2% including the deletion of the bottom pay point and agreement for the company to research moving from a 37 to a 35-hour working week with no loss of pay. In 2021, UNISON put in a pay claim for a

consolidated 5% salary increase, a reduction in the working week from 37 to 35 hours with no loss of earnings, and a minimum wage of £10 per hour.

In FE, through the Joint Trade Unions, UNISON Wales negotiates members' pay with the Wales employers' body Colegau Cymru (Colleges Wales). In 2020 UNISON members accepted a pay offer of 3.1% by a 79% yes vote after turning down the original offer of 2.75% and campaigning for an improved offer. The joint FE TUs, employer side and Welsh Government are working together on a COVID-19 safe return to workplace and the establishment of Operational Protocols.

UNISON is working in a Task and Finish group of the Schools Social Partnership Forum, reviewing job descriptions, routes for career developments and pay banding for school support staff.

UNISON is a member on the WPC's Task and Finish group looking at the feasibility of introducing a homeworking allowance for all staff in the devolved public sector required to work from home.

UNISON sits on the Welsh Government's Social Care Fair Work Forum, which aims to tackle low pay (Foundation Living Wage as the minimum) in the commissioned independent sector; increase the workers' voice through union recognition and the establishment of collective bargaining; a fair reward and recognition framework for the sector; a safe, healthy and inclusive work environment; and the end to non-guaranteed hour contracts. UNISON is campaigning for a National Care Service for Wales, one of three priorities in our Senedd manifesto for the 2021 elections.

The majority of the 22 councils in Wales have signed up to the Welsh Government's 'Code of Practice: Ethical Procurement in the Supply Chain' which covers combating modern day slavery; promoting trade union membership and recognition and commitment to progressing to the Foundation Living Wage for staff delivering service contracts.

Recruitment and organising

2020 was a record recruitment year with 18 of the 25 local government and FE branches outperforming their 2019 results and recruiting over 5000 new members. UNISON Wales has been organising around the COVID-19 crisis with particular focus on school support staff and social care members, utilising members only Facebook pages, live events, dedicated website pages, phone bank calls, webinars,

survey gizmo, media campaigns and expanding the involvement in our Schools Support Staff Forum and Social Care Forum.

The 'Be on the Safe Side' Health & Safety campaign was successfully utilised to identify new activists and increase the profile of UNISON's Health and Safety work.

UNISON runs a highly respected Wales Union Learning Fund project, which has adapted well to remote courses, focusing on relevant basic and professional learning opportunities, particularly targeting school support staff and social care workers across Wales. Courses have been extremely successful, supporting the core organising and campaigning work that we are engaged in during this pandemic.

Influencing the Welsh Government

UNISON holds the staff side secretary position for the JCW and the vice chair role on the Staff Side of the WPC. UNISON has delegates on the Welsh Government's Social Care Fair Work Forum (inputting into task and finish groups on collective bargaining; safety committees and reps; pay & progression and personal assistants); Welsh Government's Testing for Care Workers Working Group; Schools Social Partnership Forum (inputting into a task & finish group reviewing the job roles and deployment of support staff) and the Wales Negotiating Committee for FE (negotiating FE pay in Wales).

Over the last year UNISON Wales has submitted consultation and inquiry responses to the Welsh Government and other bodies on: Social Care Market Stability Reports; Education Workforce Council – interim suspension orders; Regulations to establish corporate joint committees; inquiry into COVID-19 and its impact on matters relating to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee's remit; inquiry into the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, and its management, on health and social care in Wales; Draft Tertiary Education and Research Wales Bill; Performance and Governance of Local Authorities: Draft Guidance and Alleged Misconduct of Local Authority senior officers.

UNISON Wales has had numerous face to face meetings with the Welsh Government's First Minister and lead ministers for all relevant departments, and with the Chief Executive and Leader of Wales Local Government Association and the Chief Executive of the Education Workforce Council.

7.10 Cymru/Wales

Cyfarfu pwyllgor Llywodraeth Leol Cymru yn rheolaidd yn ystod yr argyfwng COVID-19, gan addasu'n dda yn raddol i gyfarfodydd ar-lein. Yn ystod y cyfnod clo cyntaf, symudodd ysgrifenyddiaeth y pwyllgor Llywodraeth Leol (sy'n cynnwys Cadeirydd a Dirprwy Gadeirydd y pwyllgor a chynrychiolwyr Cymru ar y pwyllgor SGE ac NJC ynghyd â Phennaeth Llywodraeth Leol Cymru) fusnes brys nes i'r pwyllgor ddechrau gweithredu o bell. Mae fforymau sector Cymru sy'n cwmpasu AB, gyrfaedd, Gofal Cymdeithasol, BAOT ac Ysgolion wedi gweithredu'n dda yn ystod y flwyddyn ddiwethaf.

Mae Grŵp Gwasanaeth Llywodraeth Leol Cymru yn gweithio gydag Undebau Llafur NJC eraill a Chymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru (CLILC) trwy Gydbwyllgor Cymru (JCW) a gyda Llywodraeth Cymru trwy'r cyngor Partneriaeth Gweithlu – corff ymgynghori a thrafodi sector cyhoeddus tridarn sy'n uno Llywodraeth Cymru, cyflogwyr y sector cyhoeddus a'r undebau llafur).

COVID-19

O gychwyn y cyfnod clo COVID-19 cyntaf ym Mawrth 2020, mae UNSAIN a'r undebau eraill wedi gweithio'n agos gyda chyflogwyr Llywodraeth Leol, trwy'r JCW, i ddelio gyda'r argyfwng wrth iddo godi. Dechreuodd pwyllgor gwaith y JCW gwrdd yn wythnosol i gytuno ar brotocolau ar draws Cymru, a gweithdrefnau a chytundebau ar: Gwaith Partneriaethau Cymdeithasol yn ystod y cyfnod argyfwng; darpariaeth a chyflenwad priodol o PPE; sefydlu gwasanaethau Tracio ac Orlhain cyswllt wedi ei redeg yn gyhoeddus; dulliau gweithio diogel ar gyfer casglu sbwriel ac ailgylchu; darparu prydau ysgol tra bod ysgolion ar gau; ail-leoli staff yn wirfoddol i wasanaethau ymateb COVID-19; rheoli hyblygrwydd gwyliau blynyddol; delio gydag anghydfodau yn ystod yr argyfwng; amodau a thelerau ac ar gyfer staff cefnogi yn gweithio mewn hybiau addysg; cysgodi a gweithwyr bregus; dychwelyd i'r gwaith yn ddiogel; hunanynysu a thâl salwch; ailsefydlu pwyllgorau lechyd a Diogelwch Corfforaethol ac asesiadau gweithio o gartref.

Fe arweiniodd UNSAIN y blaen wrth ymgysylltu gyda Llywodraeth a chyflogwyr yn uniongyrchol a thrwy'r Fforwm Partneriaeth Cymdeithasol Ysgolion (corff tridarn yn cynnwys Llywodraeth Cymru, cyflogwyr Llywodraeth Leol ac undebau llafur ysgolion) i ddelio â phryderon aelodau staff cefnogi ysgolion yn ystod y pandemig, yn cynnwys sefydlu ac adolygu parhaus o Asesiadau Risg COVID-19 ysgolion; adolygu a

chryfhau Canllawiau Gweithredol ar ddychwelyd i ysgolion; trafod dychweliadau hyblyg a fesul cam; sicrhau adnoddau atodol ar gyfer cryfhau mesurau lliniaru (e.e. darparu £5 miliwn i gyflogi staff ychwanegol i osgoi symudiad ar draws swigod); gwella'r canllawiau yn ymwneud ag aelodau staff beichiog; cytuno ar neges glir i staff, disgyblion, rhieni a'r gymuned a chraffu ar a herio cadernid y cyngor iechyd cyhoeddus.

Roedd gan UNSAIN sedd ar grwpiau Gorchwyl a Gorffen Llywodraeth Cymru yn gweithredu'r tâl atodol Tâl Salwch Statudol (SSP) COVID-19, a'r tâl atodol £500 i weithwyr gofal cymdeithasol.

Toriadau a diswyddiadau

Llobiodd UNSAIN Lywodraeth Cymru yn helaeth o flaen llaw i gyhoeddi ei chyllideb 2021-22 a'r setliad Llywodraeth Leol dros dro, yn cynnwys tri chyfarfod gyda'r Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol: cyflwyniad mewn sesiwn briffio JCW ar gyfer Aelodau o'r Senedd a chynnal ymgyrch cyfryngau cymdeithasol dylanwadol. Y canlyniad yw setliad gwella na'r disgwyl ar gyfer llywodraeth leol a welodd gynnydd mewn Cyllid Allanol Cyfun o £172m neu gyfartaledd o gynnydd o 3.8% ar gyfer cynghorau yng Nghymru. Yn ogystal, mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi ymroi i adeiladu ar y gronfa caledi Llywodraeth Leol £557m a ddarparwyd i gefnogi cynghorau yn ystod 2020-21. Mae cynghorau wedi gallu hawlio yn erbyn y gronfa yma ar gyfer colled gallu i gynhyrchu incwm ac i ariannu'r taliadau bonws £500 gofal cymdeithasol; taliadau ynysu (ar gyfer gweithwyr cyflog isel na allai weithio o adref ac oedd yn gorfod hunanynysu); Cynllun Ychwanegiad SSP a'r Cynllun Gostyngiadau'r Dreth Gyngor.

Golygai'r mesurau hyn mai ychydig iawn o doriadau a diswyddiadau a fu mewn cynghorau yn ystod 2020 ac mae'r rhagolygon ar gyfer 2021 yn addawol.

Fodd bynnag, mae UNSAIN Cymru yn parhau i ymgysylltu gyda'r ymgyrch Achub ein Gwasanaethau gan nad oes sicrwydd o ran y sefyllfa ariannu yn y tymor canolig a hwy, ac mae pwysau'n cynyddu ar gyfer codiad cyflog arwyddocaol i staff a'r angen i daclo cyflogau isel mewn gofal cymdeithasol, a fydd yn rhoi rhagor o bwysau ar gyllid Llywodraeth Leol.

Pensiynau, Cyflogau ac Amodau a Thrafodaethau, Preifateiddio a materion Cyflawni Gwasanaethau

Mae gan UNSAIN aelodau cynrychiadol ar 7 o'r 8 Bwrdd Cronfa LGPS Cymru ac mae'n parhau i graffu

ac ymyrryd yn gadarnhaol yn rheoli'r cronfeydd hyn yng Nghymru. Mae ymgyrchwyr pensiynau UNSAIN wedi eu trefnu a chefnogi yn Fforwm Llywodraeth LGPS Cymru UNSAIN sy'n cyhoeddi cylchlythyr blynyddol. Mae gan wyth cronfa bensiwn Cymru gronfa gyfunol Partneriaeth Pensiwn Cymru ac yn ddiweddar fe gytunwyd ar aelod cynrychiadol i'r cynllun y gellid ei gyfethol i'r bwrdd yma.

UNSAIN yw'r unig undeb llafur yn trefnu o fewn Gyrfya Cymru (cwmni sydd dan berchnogaeth Iwyr Llywodraeth Cymru). Yn 2020 fe sicrhau godiad cyflog o 2% yn cynnwys dileu'r pwynt tal isaf a chytundeb i'r cwmni ymchwilio i symud o wythnos waith 37 awr i 35 awr heb leihau cyflogau. Yn 2021, cyflwynodd UNSAIN hawliad cyflog cyfunol o 5% o godiad cyflog, lleihad yn yr wythnos waith o 37 i 35 awr heb leihau cyflogai, ac isafswm cyflog o £10 yr awr.

Mewn AB, trwy'r Cyd-undebau Llafur, mae UNSAIN Cymru yn trafod cyflogau aelodau gyda chorff cyflogwyr Cymru, Colegau Cymru. Yn 2020 UNSAIN derbyniodd yr aelodau gynnig cyflog o 3.1% trwy bleidlais 79% o blaid wedi gwrthod y cynnig gwreiddiol o 2.75% ac ymgyrchu am gynnig gwell. Mae'r Cyd-undebau Llafur AB, ochr y cyflogwyr a Llywodraeth Cymru yn cydweithio ar ddychweliad diogel i'r gwaith COVID-19, a sefydlu Protocolau Gweithredol.

Mae UNSAIN yn gweithio mewn grŵp Gorchwyl a Gorffen y Fforwm Partneriaeth Cymdeithasol Ysgolion, yn adolygu swydd ddisgrifiadau, llwybrau ar gyfer datblygiad gyrfa a bandiau cyflog ar gyfer staff cefnogi ysgolion.

Mae UNSAIN yn aelod o grŵp Gorchwyl a Gorffen y Cyngor Partneriaeth y Gweithlu yn edrych ar ddichonoldeb cyflwyno lwfans gweithio o gartref ar gyfer staff yn y sector cyhoeddus datganoledig sydd angen gweithio o gartref.

Eistedda UNSAIN ar Fforwm Gwaith Teg Gofal Cymdeithasol Llywodraeth Cymru, sy'n ceisio taclo cyflogau isel (Cyflog Byw Sylfaenol fel isafswm) yn y sector annibynnol a gomisiynir; cynyddu llais gweithwyr trwy gydnabod undebau a sefydlu bargeinio cyfunol; fframwaith wobrwyo a chydabyddiaeth deg ar gyfer y sector; amgylchedd gwaith diogel, iach a chynhwysol; a therfyn i gytundebau fesul awr heb sicrwydd. Mae UNSAIN yn ymgyrchu ar gyfer Gwasanaeth Gofal Cymdeithasol i Gymru, un o dair blaenoriaeth yn ein maniffesto Senedd ar gyfer etholiadau 2021.

Mae'r rhan fwyaf o'r 22 o gynghorau yng Nghymru wedi cefnogi 'Cod Ymarfer: Cyflogaeth

Foesegol mewn Cadwyni Cyflenwi' Llywodraeth Cymru sy'n cwmpasu trechu caethwasiaeth fodern; hyrwyddo aelodaeth o undebau llafur a chydabyddiaeth ac ymroddiad i sicrhau cynnydd yn y Cyflog Byw Sylfaenol ar gyfer staff sy'n cyflenwi contractau gwasanaeth.

Recriwtio a Threfnu

Roedd 2020 yn flwyddyn heb ei hail o ran recriwtio, gyda 18 o'r 25 o ganghennau llywodraeth leol ac AB yn cyflawni'n well na'u canlyniadau yn 2019 ac yn recriwtio dros 5000 o aelodau newydd. Mae UNSAIN Cymru wedi bod yn trefnu o amgylch yr argyfwng COVID-19 gyda ffocws penodol ar staff cefnogi ysgolion ac aelodau gofal cymdeithasol, yn defnyddio tudalennau Facebook ar gyfer aelodau yn unig, digwyddiadau byw, tudalennau gwe penodol, galwadau banciau ffôn, gweminarau, SurveyGizmo, ymgyrchoedd yn y cyfryngau ac ehangu cynhwysiant yn ein Fforwm Staff Cefnogi Ysgolion a Fforwm Gofal Cymdeithasol.

Defnyddiwyd yr ymgyrch lechyd a Diogelwch 'Bydda ar yr Ochr Ddiogel' yn llwyddiannus i ganfod ymgyrchwyr newydd ac i gynyddu proffil gwaith lechyd a Diogelwch UNSAIN.

Mae UNSAIN yn cynnal prosiect Cronfa Ddysgu Undeb Cymru sy'n cael cryn dipyn o glod, ac sydd wedi addasu'n dda i gyrsiau o bell, gan ganolbwyntio ar gyfleoedd dysgu sylfaenol a phroffesiynol perthnasol, gan dargedu staff cefnogi ysgolion a gweithwyr gofal cymdeithasol ar draws Cymru yn benodol. Mae'r cyrsiau wedi bod yn llwyddiannus iawn, gan gefnogi'r gwaith trefnu ac ymgyrchu craidd yr ydym yn ei gyflawni yn ystod y pandemig hwn.

Dylanwadu ar Lywodraeth Cymru

UNSAIN sydd â'r swydd ysgrifennydd ochr staff ar y JCW a'r rôl dirprwy gadeirydd ar Ochr Staff Cyngor Partneriaeth y Gweithlu. Mae gan UNSAIN ddirprwyon ar Fforwm Gwaith Teg Gofal Cymdeithasol Llywodraeth Cymru (yn mewnbynnu i'r grwpiau gorchwyl a gorffen ar gydfargeinio; pwyllgorau a chynrychiolwyr diogelwch; tâl a chynnydd a chynorthwyyr personol); Gweithgor Profion ar gyfer Gweithwyr Gofal Llywodraeth Cymru; Fforwm Partneriaeth Cymdeithasol Ysgolion (yn mewnbynnu i grŵp gorchwyl a gorffen yn adolygu'r rolau swyddi a lleoli staff cefnogol) a Phwyllgor Negodi Cymru ar gyfer AB (negodi cyflogau AB yng Nghymru).

Yn ystod y flwyddyn ddiwethaf, mae UNSAIN Cymru wedi cyflwyno ymatebion i ymgynghoriadau ac ymchwiliadau i Lywodraeth Cymru a chyrrff eraill ar:

Adroddiadau Sefydlogrwydd y Farchnad Gofal Cymdeithasol; Cyngor Gweithlu Addysg – gorchmynion atal dros dro; Rheoliadau i sefydlu cydbwyllgorau corfforaethol; ymchwiliad i COVID-19 a'i effaith ar faterion yn ymwneud â chylch gwaith y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a Llywodraeth Leol; ymchwiliad i effaith yr achos COVID-19, a'i reolaeth, ar iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol yng Nghymru; Bil Drafft Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil Cymru; Perfformiad a Llywodraethu Awdurdodau Lleol: Canllaw Drafft a Chamymddwyn Honedig gan uwch swyddogion Awdurdodau Lleol.

Mae UNSAIN Cymru wedi cynnal nifer o gyfarfodydd wyneb yn wyneb gyda Phrif Weinidog Llywodraeth Cymru a gweinidogion arweiniol yr holl adrannau perthnasol, a gyda Phrif Weithredwr ac Arweinydd Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru a Phrif Weithredwr Cyngor y Gweithlu Addysg.

7.11 West Midlands

COVID-19

One of the main COVID issues in the region was the publication of guidance by an organisation called West Mids employers (WME). WME is fully owned by 32 of the 33 councils in the region. Councils who are owners pay a fee based on population size of the council. WME guidance has been used to override NJC guidance, which was challenged at the highest level through the support of UNISON Centre.

Cuts and redundancies

Stoke-on-Trent Local Government branch won a campaign against the council, who proposed to cut over 1500 members' enhancement terms and conditions. This equated to a potential 20% cut in pay for a predominantly lower paid female workforce with some members losing between £3k and £5k in pay. The branch campaign saw over 400 people attend meetings and other lobbying included a protest at the council meeting due to ratifying the cuts. As a result, the proposal was voted down 22-19 – a brilliant result for the branch and its members.

Pay and conditions

25/28 LG Branches took part in the formal 2020 pay consultation, with turnout higher than in any previous consultation.

Members at Sandwell Leisure Trust entered into dispute in August 2020 due to the employer seeking to

end the NJC agreement and take over responsibility for the setting of employment terms and conditions, including pay. As members have been furloughed for periods of this dispute, it has been difficult to set strike dates – some have been cancelled. However, there has been a political campaign agitating with the Labour Group calling on the service to be taken back in-house.

Privatisation and service delivery issues

Privatisation has not been so prominent this year with councils prioritising their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recruitment and organising

All 14 of the region's branches with schools grew, with an overall net growth of 929 members.

The region has started a social care project in Stoke-on-Trent with the intention of organising these members to identify issues within their workplace and teach them how to win on these issues by building collective strength. The region is working closely with branches in the area. They have phone banked all social care members, launched an on-line survey, and set up a Facebook group to bring groups of workers together to discuss issues. A successful virtual meeting was set up and the organising and campaigning work will continue in 2021.

Reorganisation proposals in Warwickshire

Warwickshire County Council has proposed a Warwickshire Unitary Authority seeking an invitation to enter into conversation and consideration of the future structure for local government in Warwickshire with the Government. There has been resistance from the district branches who do not believe this would be in the best interests of the people of Warwickshire.

7.12 Yorkshire and Humberside

COVID-19

The Regional Local Government Service Group Committee met in January 2021 to share Branch experiences of COVID during 2020. Some of the shared challenges included the lack of consistency across Local Authorities around COVID-19 prevention measures (e.g. refuse collection). In Y&H local councils have been co-ordinating their responses, for example every council in the region refused to follow LGA/NJC guidance on Clinically Vulnerable employees (CV) and all councils refused to implement the tax

relief scheme for employees working from home.

In March 2021 Kirklees Council announced that they would pay a retrospective working from home allowance of £13 per four-week period (this rate is based on local handbook terms for permanent home workers).

Cuts and redundancies

Revenue Support Grant funding to local authorities has been cut by 60% since 2010 and now with soaring COVID spending, it has been estimated that in Yorkshire & Humberside there is currently an £847 million deficit for 2021. As a general observation there have been no significant cuts to services and/or jobs this year but some branches are starting to anticipate significant cuts next year particularly in the context of the financial situation discussed above.

Pay and conditions – including Public Health

Seven Local Authorities in the region have signed up to UNISON's Ethical Care Charter but the feedback from Branches is that in most cases the Living Wage element is yet to be implemented. Barnsley Council has launched an 'Excellence in Care' initiative covering both home care and residential care. The Council agreed to increase funding to private care companies so that they could increase pay by £1 an hour. This took the minimum hourly rate to £9.72 from 1 April 2020. All 8 home care providers accepted it and increased the pay rates but only 14 out of 46 care homes have accepted the money as they want the additional funding but don't want to pass it on to staff. This campaign continues.

Outwood Grange Academies Trust currently has 36 schools across 3 regions. Members are from 12 Local Authorities all with different job roles, pay and grading. This led to a job evaluation exercise covering 1700 members of staff and over 100 different support staff roles. Y&H led the negotiations and after 11 months of negotiations, including a formal dispute which was mediated by the LGA, members voted to accept the improved offer, which saw 24 job roles increase in grades and 32% of the workforce either gaining or not losing any money.

Privatisation and service delivery issues

At the beginning of this year, Sheffield Council insourced their Revenue and Benefits services and ended their relationship with the private company Capita. They have also insourced all their Youth

Services, including youth work, careers advice, youth involvement, child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation services and missing young people services. Sheffield Council has also insourced all their cleaning services this year.

In Kirklees, a decision has been taken that by April 2021, Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing will be brought back in-house and in Bradford, Human Resources Advisory Services and to be insourced. Barnsley Council has terminated their Joint Venture Company with Norse and Norfolk Property Services (NPS) and are insourcing facilities management, cleaning, property & procurement, catering, mobile catering, and courier services.

Recruitment and organising

Recruitment performance for 2020 was unprecedented. The Service Group recruited 9379 new members, a 34% increase on 2019. For the first time in many years, 80% (16/20) of branches ended 2020 with a net gain, growing their influence. Most of these new members were in social care and schools and the challenge for branches in 2021 is organising and retaining those members and building workplace organisation in new workplaces.

The region has approximately 15 thousand members employed in social care and over 2020 the Local Organiser team contacted these members, by phone to have an organising conversation with them. Colleagues have done about 5000 social care calls including all members in Barnsley, Leeds, and Kirklees.

Local government reorganisation

The reorganisation of the North Yorkshire Councils is an enormous project. Public consultation is underway and UNISON representatives are working hard to protect the interests of UNISON members.

In West Yorkshire, leaders of the five West Yorkshire councils of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, and Wakefield have secured a devolution deal with the Government. It will give local control of at least £1.8 billion of funding. It will also mean a directly elected mayor for West Yorkshire with elections being held in May 2021.

Yorkshire and Humberside Regional NJC Joint Council has not met for at least 20 years. The Service Group has written to the Joint Secretary to express its desire to re-establish this committee and despite resistance from the Employers' Side, talks are due to start in March 2021.

Appendix A: Composition of National Service Group Committees and UNISON Representatives on National Negotiating Bodies

Local Government Service Group Executive

Amanda Brown (NJC Committee),
Andrea Egan (NEC), Angela Waller
(Yorkshire & Humberside, Ann
MacMillan-Wood (East Midlands), Carol
Garfield (West Midlands), Carolyn
Thompson (Ofsted Committee), Clara
Mason (Greater London), Daphne
Harper (Northern Ireland), Dave Rees
(Youth and Community Workers
Committee), David Hughes (West
Midlands), Diana Leach (NEC), Diane
Peacock (Northern), Edwin Jeffries
(NJC Committee), Gabrielle Carton
(Northern Ireland, Gavin Cartwright
(FE and 6th Form College Committee),
Gerald Talty (East Midlands), Glen
Williams (North West), Hugo Pierre
(Schools Committee), Inez Kirk
(Scottish Local Government
Committee), Jane Doolan (NEC), Jane
Gebbie (Cymru/Wales), Janet Green
(NJC Committee), John Hughes Chief
Officers and Senior Managers
Committee), John McLoughlin (Greater
London), John Price (FSA Committee),
Jon Woods (South East), Joy Taylor
(South East), Karen Fisher (FE and 6th
Form College Committee), Ken Curran
(Yorkshire and Humberside), Kevin
Trewweeks (South West), Lorraine
Thomson (Scottish Local Government
Committee), Mark Evans (Cymru/
Wales), Mark Ferguson (Scotland),
Mark Johnson (Eastern – until 16 April
2021), Mary Moore (NJC Committee),
Mary Quigley (Scotland), Pam Howard
(Schools Committee), Polly Smith
(Eastern), Rena Wood (North West),
Rita Mistry (Yorkshire and
Humberside), Sarah Barwick (South
East), Shazziah Rock (West Midlands),
Shirley Scott (Northern), Stephanie
Kearns (Eastern), Teresa Connally
(North West)

National Secretary: Jon Richards
——
Senior National Officer: Mike Short
——
Committee Administrator:
Indira Patel

Sector Committees

FE Sixth Form and Colleges Committee

Samina Grant / Jacqui Bufton /
Andrew Wade (Eastern), Yvonne
Costello (East Midlands), Alan Copley
(Greater London), Gavin Cartwright
(West Midlands), Sarah Jan Robertson
/ Peter Sharma (Scotland), Mair Wyn
Jones (Cymru/Wales), Joanne
MacMillian (Cymru/Wales), Michael
Wilson / Maxine Rowden (Northern),
Graham Walmsley / Fran Murray
(North West), Karen Fisher / Nikki
Fabry (South East), Andrew Beech
(HESGE observer) Linda Holden
(substitute)
——
National Officer: Leigh Powell

FE Support Staff Trade Union Side

Michael Wilson, Gavin Cartwright,
Maxine Rowden and Karen Fisher
(substitute)
——
National Officer: Leigh Powell

Sixth Form Colleges Trade Union Side

Jeanette Kitteringham and
Nikki Fabri
——
National Officer: Ben Thomas

UNISON NJC Committee

Wendy Bond (West Midlands), John

Bond (Community & Voluntary),
Alison Boshier (Cymru/Wales),
Linda Boyer (North West), Elisabeth
Brennan (Eastern), Amanda Brown
(South West), Sarah Carter
(Yorkshire and Humberside), Sean
Fox (Greater London), Juan-
Antonio Garcia (Cymru/Wales),
Jane Gebbie (Cymru/Wales), Helen
Gray (Yorkshire and Humberside),
Janet Green (Northern), James
Hawker (Community & Voluntary),
Alan Howarth (Public Sector), John
Hughes (Chief Officers), Edwin
Jeffries (Northern), Mark Johnson
(Eastern), Caroline Johnson (West
Midlands), Robin Konieczny (Youth
& Community), Mary Lancaster
(Greater London), Diana Leach
(South East), Debbie Lydon
(Northern), Ann MacMillan Wood
(East Midlands), Janet McKenna
(East Midlands), Catherine McKenna
(Northern Ireland), Heather
McKinstry (Northern Ireland), Rita
Mistry (Yorkshire and Humberside),
Mary Moore (South East), Shazziah
Rock (West Midlands), Zoe Rodgers
(South West), Chris Tansley (East
Midlands), Peter Thorne (Private
Sector), Glen Williams (North
West), Rena Wood (North West)

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National Secretary: Jon Richards

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Senior National Officer: Mike Short

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National Officer: Abby Kimantas

——
Assistant National Officer: James Bull

——
Committee Administrator:
Simon Jackson

UNISON NJC Trade Union Side

Wendy Bond (West Midlands), Alison

Boshier (Cymru/Wales), Linda Boyer (North West), Elisabeth Brennan (Eastern), Amanda Brown (South West), Sarah Carter (Yorkshire and Humberside), Sean Fox (Greater London), Juan-Antonio Garcia (Cymru/Wales), Jane Gebbie (Cymru/Wales), Helen Gray (Yorkshire and Humberside), Janet Green (Northern), Edwin Jeffries (Northern), Mark Johnson (Eastern), Caroline Johnson (West Midlands), Mary Lancaster (Greater London), Diana Leach (South East), Debbie Lydon (Northern), Ann MacMillan Wood (East Midlands), Janet McKenna (East Midlands), Catherine McKenna (Northern Ireland), Heather McKinstry (Northern Ireland), Rita Mistry (Yorkshire and Humberside), Mary Moore (South East), Shazziah Rock (West Midlands), Zoe Rodgers (South West), Chris Tansley (East Midlands), Glen Williams (North West), Rena Wood (North West)

National Secretary: Jon Richards

Senior National Officer: Mike Short

National Officer: Abby Kimantas

Assistant National Officer:
James Bull

Committee Administrator:
Simon Jackson

UNISON NJC Trade Union Side Executive

Jon Richards (National Secretary), Mike Short (Senior National Officer), Abby Kimantas (Assistant Trade Union Side Secretary), Seán Fox (Greater London), Diana Leach (South East), Mary Moore (South East), James Bull (Trade Union Side Secretariat), Simon Jackson (Trade Union Side Secretariat)

Scottish Local Government Committee

General Seat: Scott Donohoe, Mark Ferguson, Steven Larkin, Phil McGroggan, William Shearer, Kenny McCallum, Arthur Nicoll, Tom Connolly

Women's Seats: Brenda Aitchison,

Margaret Gallacher, Inez Kirk, Alison MacCorquodale, Pam Robertson, Lorraine Thomson, Marie Quigley, Roz Ronan

Low Paid Women's Seat:
Kathleen Kennedy, Brenda Kelly

Chief Officers and Senior Managers Committee

John Hughes (Cymru/Wales), Lianne Dallimore (Cymru/Wales), Vacancy (South East), Vacancy (South West), Vacancy (Eastern), Vacancy (East Midlands), Vacancy (Greater London), Andrew Haysey (Northern), Vacancy (North West), Vacancy (West Midlands), Vacancy (Yorkshire & Humberside)

Senior National Officer: Mike Short

Assistant National Officer:
Marilyn Bailey

Care Quality Commission Committee

Lee Sears/Stephanie Richards (Eastern job share); Taofik Balogun, (Greater London); Susannah Cooke, (Northern), Holly Sutherland (NCSC); Darren Smith, (South East); Alison Mesher (South West); vacancy, (West Midlands); vacancy (Yorkshire and Humberside) Yin Naing (East Midlands) James Hedges (NHS Professionals)

National Officer: Matthew Egan

Assistant National Officer:
Sharan Bandesha

Administration Support: Colette Whitehead

FSA/FSS Sector Committee

Graeme Anderson (FSS), Richard Collier (FSA-Northern), John Price (SGE), Alan Colson (FSA-South East), Graham Cross (FSA-Cymru/Wales), John Rowland (FSA-South West), Mark Haylett (FSA-East Midlands), Martin Hope (FSA-North West), Darren Hough (FSA-West Midlands), Alan Howarth (FSA-Yorkshire & Humberside), Wayne Parker (FSA-National Food Crime Unit), Chris Tozer (Eastern) and Christine Price (FSA-Official Veterinarians)

National Officer: Paul Bell

OFSTED Committee

Melissa Cox (South West), Carys Millican (North West), Keith Riley (South East), Carolyn Thompson (West Midlands), East Midlands (vacant), Northern (vacant), Yorkshire and Humberside (vacant), Eastern (vacant), Greater London (vacant)

National Officer: Ben Thomas

School Sector Committee

Vacant (Eastern), Becky Everett / David Wand (East Midlands), Avril Brady / Lorraine Thomson (Scotland), Hugo Pierre, Tracey Anan (Greater London), Kim Convery / Tom McCully (Northern), Cath Baggaley / Pam Howard (North West), Keith Manville / Baker / Mary Moore (South East), Kim Newstead / Rauf Rawson / Steve Saywell / Grace Lawlor (South West), Jonathan Lewis Sara Allen (Cymru/Wales), Carol Garfield / Nigel Brindley / (substitute David Williams) (West Midlands), Wendy Bond (West Midlands), Julie Toyne / Lisa Smith (Yorkshire & Humberside)

National Secretary: Jon Richards

National Officer: Chris Fabby

National Officer: Natalie Ntim

Assistant National Officer:
Jennifer Mitchell

Youth and Community Workers Committee

Dave Rees (Cymru/Wales); Robin Konieczny (Eastern); Jenny Hart (South West); Eddy Redmond (North West); Julie Tudor (North West – additional seat)

National Officer: Abby Kimantas

Service group wide forums

Careers Service/ Connexions Forum

Ali Sheriff (Eastern), Andrew McGregor (North West), Charlie Friel (West

Midlands), Derek Cheyne / James Corey (Scotland), Gareth Jones / Tony Mclean (Cymru/Wales), Vacancy (Local Government SGE), Paul Hohn (Yorkshire and Humberside), Sarah Etherington (South East).

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National Secretary: Jon Richards

Fire and Rescue Forum

Janet Farrell (Eastern), Tony Philips (Greater London), David Drummond (Northern), Jonathan Cooper (North West), David Beavis (South West), Ian Smith (Cymru/Wales), Angela Johnson (West Midlands), Vacant (SGE)

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Senior National Officer: Mike Short

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Committee Administrator:
Simon Jackson

Home Care Forum

Polly Smith (Eastern); vacant (East Midlands); Caroline Firmin (Greater London); Joan Laverick (Northern); Vacancy (Northern Ireland); Maggie Hindle (North West); Christina Graham (Scotland); Joan Richardson (South East); vacancy (South West); Isabel Jukes (Cymru/Wales); Mandy Buckley (West Midlands); vacancy (Yorkshire/Humberside); vacancy (Service Group Executive); vacancy (Private Agency Representative - 1); vacancy (Private Agency Representative - 2); vacancy (Social Care Forum); Graeme Ellis (Community & Voluntary Representative)

—

National Officer: Matthew Egan

—

Administration Support:
Colette Whitehead

Housing Forum

Tracey Sutton Postlethwaite (Cymru/Wales); Gail Taylor (Cymru/Wales); vacancy (East Midlands); vacancy (East Midlands); Tony Weaver (Eastern); vacancy (Eastern); Liz Wheatley (Greater London); Phoebe Watkins (Greater London); vacancy (Northern Ireland); vacancy (Northern Ireland); Christine Jackson (Northern); Beverley Trenholme (Northern); Scott Donohoe (Scotland); Tracy Hill (Scotland); Adey

Jemmott (South East); Gavin Thomas (South East); Stuart Dark (South West); Patricia Gaffney (South West); David Hughes (West Midlands); vacancy (West Midlands); Michael Binks (Yorkshire & Humberside); vacancy (Yorkshire & Humberside);

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Assistant National Officer: James Bull

Social Care Forum

Vacant (Eastern); Chris Tansley, (East Midlands); Kerie Anne, (Greater London); Juliet Giddins (Northern); Vacant, (Northern Ireland); Carl Greatbatch (North West); John Watson, (Scotland); Yve White (South East); Tara Thomas, (South West); Michaela Hawkins, (Cymru/Wales); Tracey Mooney (West Midlands) Carol Ring, (Yorkshire/Humberside); Mark Fisher, (Additional Seat 1); Lorna Smith, (Additional Seat 2); vacant (Additional Seat 3); Kevin Jackson, (Community & Voluntary); vacant (CAFCASS) Felicity Larter (Health); Polly Smith, (Homecare); Glen Williams, (Service Group Executive); Sarah Barwick, (Service Group Executive)

—

National Officer: Gill Archer

Working groups

Devolution Working Group

Glen Williams (SGE Chair) and Lorraine Thomson (Vice Chair), Mark Ferguson and Inez Kirk (Scotland), Gabrielle Carton and Daphne Harper (Northern Ireland), Jane Gebbie, Mark Evans, Dave Rees (Cymru/Wales)

LGPS Working Group

Glen Williams (SGE Chair) and Lorraine Thomson (Vice Chair) and Clara Mason, Mary Moore, John Hughes, Kevin Treweeks (England and Wales), Inez Kirk, 1 vacancy (Scotland), Gabrielle Carton and Daphne Harper (Northern Ireland)

Pay and Service Conditions Working Group

Glen Williams (SGE Chair) and Lorraine Thomson (Vice Chair), Edwin Jeffries, Clara Mason, Stephanie Kearns,

Angela Waller, Polly Smith (English Regions), Mark Ferguson and Marie Quigley (Scotland), Gabrielle Carton (Northern Ireland), Mark Evans, 1 vacancy (Wales)

Recruitment and Organising Working Group

Clara Mason, Stephanie Kearns, Shazziah Rock, Glen Williams, Inez Kirk, Angela Waller, Dave Rees, Karen Fisher

Service Delivery Working Group

Glen Williams (SGE Chair) and Lorraine Thomson (Vice Chair), Clara Mason, Polly Smith, Kevin Treweeks (English Regions), Inez Kirk and Marie Quigley, 1 vacancy (Scotland), Gabrielle Carton, Daphne Harper (Northern Ireland), Jane Gebbie, Mark Evans, vacancy (Cymru / Wales)

Local Government Equalities Liaison Committee

Pam Howard (SGE), Polly Smith (SGE), Shazziah Rock (SGE), Stephanie Kearns (SGE), Jackie Lewis (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender + Committee), Bev Miller (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender + Committee), Carol Sewell (National Black Members' Committee), Lilian Adani (National Black Members Committee), Elizabeth Cameron (National Women's Committee), Nathalie Birkett (National Women's Committee), Paul Davis (National Disabled Members Committee), Kathleen Kennedy (National Disabled Members Committee).

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