

Thumbs up for Local Service Champions



Champions Day

Wednesday 7 December 2022

A guide to celebrating your local government champions

Message from Christina McAnea

UNISON general secretary

I know that workers in councils, schools, care homes, and in the community went above and beyond during Covid. Headlines may have told a story that schools and nurseries were shut, but staff made sure vulnerable children, and the children of key workers, were looked after and educated. Our streets were cleaned, and our communities kept safe by committed workers in local government and other public services. They were the glue that held us all together.

Life without local government is hard to imagine. When local government falls apart, communities fall apart, and lives are put at risk.

That's why it is so important that we celebrate the work of local government workers and highlight all that they do. I was on the judging panel for the 2022 local service champions awards and the stories of staff who make such a difference to their community were inspiring. Its time local government staff are given the recognition they deserve.

So, let's celebrate them on 7th December for UNISON's first Champions Day.





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UNISON in Local Government

UNISON is the UK's largest trade union for public service workers, representing 1.3 million members. We represent people employed in all areas of local government, including employees from councils, schools, and private contractors. We make sure that the needs and rights of workers in this sector and related public services are recognised and defended.

UNISON works to improve the employment, and the pay and terms and conditions of our members. We also promote and support good health and safety, workplace equality and fair treatment for local government workers.

Our local UNISON reps have expert knowledge of issues facing those working in specific sectors in local government and in turn, our members have access to union benefits tailored to their job. So, if members experience problems their local UNISON representatives are trained to help - they know the issues from first-hand experience.

UNISON members receive legal help, financial assistance, member discounts on a range of products, education and training, and dedicated advice to help them at work when they need it most.



Our Local Service Champions Campaign

Background

UNISON's Local Service Champions Campaign celebrates and defends local government workers for the everyday heroes they are. Over the past twelve years, local government has been an easy target for cuts and we need our members, their friends, colleagues and neighbours to help us defend it. People working in local services go beyond the call of duty to keep the country going, yet their efforts have often been overlooked. This isn't right – UNISON aims to raise the profile of these unsung heroes and everything that they do.

Local Service Champions Awards

A key part of the campaign is our annual Local Service Champions Awards. The awards celebrate the invaluable contribution local authority staff make to our lives and highlight why it is so important that local government is properly staffed and funded. Each year we ask for nominations for someone working in local government who goes the extra mile and a panel of judges selects one winner and two runners up – you can find out about this year's winner Paddy Toner [here](#).

Champions Day

On Wednesday 7 December, we will be holding our first-ever Champions Day, designed to raise the profile of local government workers and highlight how much we appreciate them and the work they do. All year, local authority staff play their part in holding our communities together, supporting us through every stage of our lives – this is the perfect opportunity to recognise and celebrate their contributions.

Paddy Toner, UNISON Local Service Champion.



Photo: Jon Super

How to get involved

Refuse workers, environmental health inspectors, youth workers, library workers, care assistants and many more who deliver vital local services, all deserve to know just how much their work is appreciated. Meanwhile, colleagues working in schools can recognise the work of school support staff in UNISON's popular [Stars In Our Schools](#) campaign which runs in the autumn.

Here are some ideas about how to get involved but you may well have your own:

- Hold a breakfast, coffee morning, lunch or afternoon tea for staff.
- Collect service users/colleagues comments about staff and include them in a thank you card, or in a 'word cloud' certificate.
- Write to your local newspaper to let them know you're celebrating local government staff in your area.
- Profile the work of a couple of your local champions so that the public find out about the important work that they do.
- Encourage the chief executive/heads of department to spend part of the day shadowing their staff to help them appreciate the work they do.
- Ask your employer to work with you to jointly sponsor Champions Day. Ask for the winner to be profiled in a staff newsletter/email and for an award to be given.
- Invite your MP and local councillor to your special event so they can see how important local government staff are.
- Share your own photos and videos of the champions where you work on social media, telling everyone all about the amazing work they do.
- Use your Twitter and Facebook accounts to promote the day.



Frequently Asked Questions

How can we promote what we're doing?

- Let UNISON know what activities you have planned by emailing sos@unison.co.uk or telling us via the UNISON SOS facebook page - @unisonLGcampaigns.
- Send us any photos you take during the event (ensuring that you have the relevant consent of whoever is photographed).
- Tweet us @unisondamage and use the hashtag #ChampionsDay.
- Spread awareness of Champions Day by sharing your support throughout your workplace and on social media.
- Inform local media of what activities you're planning.

I'm busy on the day itself – is that a problem?

Not at all. Any activities or events taking place around that time will encourage recognition of local government workers and an appreciation for their work – just make sure to tag us in any social media posts so we can share!

What resources are available to help?

A range of materials can be downloaded free from the UNISON online shop if you are a UNISON branch. Resources include:

- [Click here](#) for graphics to share online, including social media and email headers.
- [Leaflet](#).
- [Poster](#) to put up in your workplace.
- [Click here](#) for A3 printable photoboard/selfie frame.

