

Winning together in UNISON

UNISON Annual Report 2022–2023



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General Secretary's Foreword **Christina McAnea**

Non-stop campaigning, industrial action mandates in every region and nation, and formidable lobbying and negotiating, have all contributed to another year of massive wins for UNISON members. And this year, we celebrate that UNISON – the largest union in the UK – has been winning for members for 30 years. Our commitment to improving the lives of workers across our public services is as strong now as it was when UNISON was formed on 1 July 1993.

When I told delegates at our last NDC to get strike ready, I meant it. Our high-profile ballot results and strikes demonstrate how well members responded to that call. But there's so much more work that goes on across the union, that has a huge impact on public service workers, the services they provide and the trade union movement here in the UK and across the world. This report lays out all that we've achieved together in our 30th year, and I hope it gives everyone the inspiration to carry on into the future.

It's no surprise that pay issues have dominated our work. For 13 years, a public service pay crisis has been imposed by the Conservatives in Westminster. The soaring cost of living intensified the pressure on workers in every part of the UK. When we finished our National Delegate Conference (NDC) in 2022, we headed straight to London for the TUC's march and rally. And as usual, UNISON made up the bulk of demonstrators. In Parliament Square, I spoke on behalf of our 1.3 million members, and demanded better for public service workers. I then set off on my journey to every region and nation, supporting pay campaigns and disputes. Together we grabbed the attention of politicians, the media, and secured huge public support. Our case for fair pay stacks up, while the government's excuses only exposed that public services are not its priority.

Northern Ireland's health and care sector dispute erupted when paralysis in Stormont prevented any pay rise at all, despite a recommended pay award. Several days of UNISON strike action and action short of strike, over several

months, built up to a huge march and rally in central Belfast. I started on the picket line at Royal Victoria Hospital, then marched with our members, and addressed the crowds from the stage outside City Hall.

UNISON in Scotland secured better pay offers in Local Government and the NHS from their government. Our threats of strike action and tenacious negotiations secured millions of pounds of more investment in pay.

Our first wave of strike action in the NHS in England hit ambulance services in London, the South West, North West, Northern and Yorkshire and Humberside, and two hospitals in Liverpool. From Waterloo to Windy Nook, and from Soundwell to Sheffield, I stood shoulder to shoulder with our striking members. Media interest followed us, and public support grew every day. News channels, online stories and social media were awash with purple and green images from our picket lines. Pups on picket lines nearly stole all the attention and Billy Bragg helped keep spirits up in Yeovil.

Our hard work paid off when we secured a second wave of strike mandates in the South East, Eastern, West Midlands, East Midlands, several more hospitals and in NHS Blood and Transplant. Another blow for the government that helped force it to break its intransigence, open pay talks and put a better offer on the table. Cymru Wales ambulance service was also ready to take strike action, but their government found extra money for NHS staff too.

The NHS wasn't the only public service affected by a national UNISON strike in England. A momentous ballot result in the Environment Agency pushed the UK's wave of industrial unrest to the Thames Barrier and coastal and flood defences across England. It was the first strike over pay in the Agency's history.

I've welcomed members to our UNISON Centre in London and joined campaigns nearby. Our higher education members were on strike at City University, where they rallied outside calling for fair pay. We joined forces with the University and College Union (UCU) for another demo outside Kings Cross station – I and other trade union leaders spoke from the stage about our determination to improve pay and conditions in higher education. I welcomed our AQA exam board members who travelled from the North West on their strike day to lobby AQA's Chief Executive. And as Parliament is just down the road, I dropped off a huge petition to No.10 Downing Street. Nearly 200,000 people had signed up to demand an end to the pay crisis and an

increase to the minimum wage to £15 an hour.

All this work – and much, much more – has only been possible because of our amazing members and activists. And with so much experience, dedication and hard work in branches across the UK, it allows our work to reach further and further every year. We've campaigned for the Covid Inquiry that has finally started – we'll be submitting our evidence to gain justice and truth for everyone affected by the failings of governments. And our campaigns for a national care service, including Cymru Wales UNISON's work in putting us central to negotiations on the future of social care in Wales, our Year of Disabled Workers in 2022 followed by our launch of 2023 as the Year of Black Workers, are trailblazing examples of the power of UNISON. We are truly making lives better for everyone in society.

UNISON's mission extends past international borders. I witnessed the trial of Gonul Erden in Ankara's heavy penal court shortly after NDC 2022. A woman trade unionist imprisoned for genuine trade union work, and one of the indictments was visiting a UNISON conference. I lobbied our government and ambassadors, and was pleased to see that in March, Gonul was released from prison to house arrest. Sadly, others remain unjustly imprisoned. UNISON makes representations to ministers and ambassadors when trade unionists are treated unfairly around the globe, and we remain resolute in standing in solidarity with our Ukrainian trade union friends.

What a year it has been since we met last summer in Brighton. We have so much to be proud of, and I know how much energy and ideas we still have to drive us forward. I have every confidence that our members, and our union, will continue to improve the working lives of millions of workers for another 30 years, and many more.

In solidarity,

Christina McAnea
UNISON General Secretary

President's Foreword

Andrea Egan



We knew at the end of last year's conference things were going to get tough, but I don't think any of us could have predicted just how difficult things would become. The

bosses of the private companies are enjoying a profiteering bonanza whilst we have a government unmoved by the appalling predicament our members find themselves in. By contrast, public service workers are employed to support the vulnerable in society and serve our communities, yet all sectors find their pay falling further and members pushed onto the breadline.

I am proud to be involved with leading UNISON at this critical time with the challenges of this government's pay restraint strategy: a strategy we must fight against to end in-work poverty.

The Tories are on a renewed warpath. We are going to need every ounce of our energy, commitment and resourcefulness for the year ahead.

I am pleased as your President that our union has gone into 2023 with a renewed sense of member power, with industrial action either imminent or taking place across our sectors. It is clear a breaking point has been reached by members and as a union we are taking this seriously: shaping and building the power of our membership.

So many sectors are taking industrial action and some for the first time. Despite the Tory thresholds! Across Local Government, Health, Higher Education, WET, and Community, I have been proud to stand on so many of your picket lines, shoulder to shoulder with you in your struggles, conveying solidarity and support on behalf of our union. Activists are the lifeblood of our union, and I am amazed at

what you achieve for our members. An important message whilst we build our membership is to also grow activism, and we need to send out a clear message that every member has a part to play in our union.

To build member power we have reached out and shown our support for our comrade unions also taking action. That is important, to demonstrate to this government that we are strong and united. I have also attended strike and Trades Council rallies and have been proud to speak on behalf of UNISON at many fantastic events. Thank you to all our activists for all your work towards building our members' resistance.

We have a crisis in the National Health and Social Care sector. We need to be the union defending our members' pay, their terms and conditions, and their services from funding cuts and privatisation. Our response and campaigning have been especially ferocious.

We have also seen outrageous attacks on issues that impact our vital Equalities agenda. As President of this union, I have been determined to be involved and instrumental in changes we can make as well as defending our rights. As a union we have been at the forefront of defending and challenging racist attitudes to migrants, defending our Trans siblings under attack, fighting for dignity for disabled comrades, and raised our profile on women's rights in a world where misogyny and violence towards women is still prevalent. I want to acknowledge the ground-breaking work that our Self Organised Groups (SOG) are engaged with, it truly is inspirational.

The uncertainty for our devolved nations, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, is a worrying time for our members and communities as the Westminster Government continues to try to undermine the work of the devolved governments. However, it has been my great pleasure to visit each nation and in particular speak to politicians in Wales and Northern Ireland about our shared vision for our members, and the communities they live and serve in alongside seeing the fantastic work and results our members are achieving despite the obstacles in their way. I have also been afforded the opportunity to visit many of our regions up and down the country, to see first-hand some of the fantastic wins you have been making to better the lives of our members.

Being involved in some of the transformative work that is underway in our union's structures I think should also be a reason for us to be confident as we go into 2023. UNISON

is rising to the challenges, prioritising the needs of members and activists being our focus. Democracy and transparency is the key as we continue on our new path, every member has a part to play in our union and that is our challenge as we move forward.

I want to end by thanking our General Secretary, Christina, and our hardworking team of staff across all our structures for the amazing support and work you undertake, alongside all the lay leadership of our union.

And a special thanks to my comrades from this year's Presidential Team, Libby Nolan and Amerit Rait.

I hope you enjoy the rest of this annual report.

Andrea Egan
President

Chapter One

Speaking up for our members

Pay and disputes summary

Background

UNISON service groups and sectors won significant improvements in pay increases in the last year often linked to industrial action or threats of it. The cost-of-living crisis and double-digit inflation in the second half of 2022 and early 2023 in particular prompted increased industrial unrest amongst public service workers.

As the UK governments' warm words for public services over the Covid-19 pandemic have ebbed away, members have asserted their collective strength across a swathe of our bargaining groups to defend their standard of living.

The summary below sets out the main features of agreements and disputes across those sectors, showing the strategies deployed, improvements won and battles that remain unresolved. The activity across the UK is a testament to the determination and resolve of our members and the power of collective action.

More detail on pay claims and disputes are located in Service Group Annual Reports to their respective Conferences.

Local Government

The National Joint Council (NJC) unions received a significantly higher pay offer than in recent years in the first half of 2022. This included a flat rate increase of £1,925 from April 2022 and additional leave for staff across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This was accepted in a ballot of members.

Negotiations are now taking place on the 2023 agreement, with employers once more making a flat rate offer of £1,925. At the time of writing it seemed likely that UNISON would move to an industrial action ballot with a reject recommendation.

In Scotland for 2022/23 an initial derisory 2% increase was rejected, but after organising for industrial action, a

deal was won that delivered a minimum increase of £2,000 and resulted in a total pay bill uplift of 7.5% from April 2022. At the time of writing negotiations were underway for 2023/2024.

In the Care Quality Commission, members achieved above 50% turnout in an industrial action ballot on a pay offer that varied between 2.75 and 3.5% for 2022. At the time of writing the dates and type of action are still to be decided.

NHS

In July 2022 the NHS Pay Review Body (PRB) recommended a flat rate £1,400 increase for most staff in England, Cymru/Wales and Northern Ireland. In response UNISON triggered an all member disaggregated industrial action ballot in England and Cymru/Wales and an aggregated ballot in Northern Ireland. This was supported by extensive phone banking and texting over 140,000 members, plus intensive workforce organising.

Ballots returned huge majorities for strike action, but turnout thresholds were only met in eight English employers – five ambulance trusts, two provider trusts and NICE. In Northern Ireland, where the threshold legislation doesn't apply all employers were covered. Strike action began in December and continued throughout early 2023 along with action short of strike in Northern Ireland and some other areas.

Targeted re-balloting in England in early 2023 brought nine other employers into the action, meaning a total of 32,000 NHS workers in England were ready to take strike action. A re-ballot in the Welsh Ambulance Service also delivered a strike mandate.

In early March as extended strike preparation was taking place, the Westminster Government finally moved, inviting unions to pay talks through the Staff Council for England. Having secured commitments that talks would cover 22/23 and 23/24 and would have additional funding for both years, the Health Service Group Executive suspended the 8th March 2023 strikes. At the time of writing talks are ongoing.

For 2023 the NHS Staff Council unions decided not to submit evidence to the PRB. A motion was sent to UNISON Health Conference seeking endorsement of a proposal to replace the PRB with collective bargaining. The Government in its evidence to the PRB recommended a maximum pay rise of 3.5% in 2023/4 for health workers in England.

In Cymru/Wales, Welsh Government talks with unions resulted in an improved pay offer for 22/23 of an additional 1.5% consolidated and a 1.5% non-consolidated sum plus a package of other terms and conditions measures. The majority of UNISON members voted to accept in a consultative ballot and there was a majority in the Welsh Partnership Forum staff side to accept. The deal also included provision for further improvements should the Westminster pay talks produce additional Barnett formula funding.

In Northern Ireland, the PRB-recommended £1,400 increase was finally due to be implemented in February following a long delay linked to the lack of a devolved government. At the time of writing, it was hoped that the prospect of additional funding through the Barnett formula could provide a route for resolving the ongoing dispute in Northern Ireland.

In Scotland, members' clear rejection and balloting over an initial offer resulted in an improved 2022/23 outcome consisting of 11% at the bottom of the pay scale to 5% at the top, adding 7.5% overall to the pay bill and introducing a minimum hourly rate of £11.09.

At the time of writing, balloting is taking place with a recommendation to accept a 23/24 offer that would see the majority of Scotland's health workers receive an increase of at least 6.5% as well as a one-off payment between £387 and £939.

Higher Education

The 3% national pay offer for the majority of staff by the University employers in May 2022 was rejected by university support staff but implemented by employers in August.

Initial national disaggregated ballots covering most employers (with the exception of Wales, where an aggregate ballot was agreed) saw the majority fail to reach the TU Act 50% threshold. However targeted re-balloting eventually resulted in mandates for strike action at 22 Higher Education Institutions across England, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Several waves of industrial action took place from September. Employers then put forward an offer for 2023 that would vary across the pay scale between 8% and 5%, with part to be implemented in February and the remainder in August. After consultation with members this offer was

rejected. ACAS talks led to some progress in ongoing negotiations, but at the time of writing further industrial action ballots for 2023/24 were being planned.

Further Education and sixth form colleges

In England, consultation showed widespread rejection of the employer offer for a 2.5% increase with a £750 unconsolidated rise for those earning below £25,000 and an unconsolidated £500 according to local affordability. Six colleges received good turnouts and prepared for industrial action, though none moved to strike action due to a variety of factors, including improved offers in some cases.

In Scotland, a 2% offer was rejected by the joint trade unions and talks continued.

In Wales, the joint unions agreed to accept an agreement for a backdated increase in the lowest wage rate to the Living Wage Foundation's real Living Wage and a request to the Welsh Government to release funds for a 5% increase for all other staff while pay negotiations continue.

In Northern Ireland, where NJC pay awards apply to college staff, colleges have been in the process of implementing the award.

UNISON members in sixth form colleges accepted a pay offer of between 5 and 7.7%.

Environment Agency

Members rejected an offer of 2% plus £345 and an industrial action ballot returned overwhelmingly support for industrial action.

This resulted in members moving to strike action for the first time in the history of The Environment Agency and a rolling programme of strikes and action short of strike action has been taking place since December 2022.

Water Industry

Pay settlements across water companies in 2022/2023 averaged 3.5%. Most companies commenced negotiations for 2023/2024 with some offers around 7%.

Transport

In 2022/2023 Transport for Greater Manchester and West Midlands Combined Authority implemented the NJC pay agreement of £1,925 whilst West Yorkshire Combined Authority awarded a £2,000 flat rate with 4% for all pay points above SCP 43.

Police and Justice

In England and Wales, police staff accepted an initial 2.1% pay offer from April 2022. However, a reopener clause was triggered in July 2022 as a result of the Westminster Government accepting the police officer pay review body recommendation for a £1,900 flat rate increase in the pay of all police officers. Following negotiations during August and September, the Police Staff Council implemented the £1,900 flat rate increase for police staff.

In Scotland, members voted to accept a 5% increase for police staff.

In the National Probation Service for England and Wales, members accepted a three year pay deal covering 2022–24, delivering an average 3.2% increase in the value of pay points over each year of the offer and a non-consolidated award of £300 in years two and three of the offer for staff at the top of their pay band.

Energy

UNISON negotiated additional financial support for the vast majority of members in key energy employers.

Examples include – EON: brought forward 2023 negotiations, leading to an increased negotiated settlement of 4% consolidated from the original 2022 agreement plus an additional 7.5% for 2023 brought forward to Oct 2022 and a non-consolidated cash payment of £1100. EDF members agreed an 18-month deal of 4%, plus a further 2% consolidated and £750 unconsolidated in October 22, and then a further 5% consolidated plus £1250 unconsolidated in April 23 – in year worth around 14%. In National Grid we secured 9.5% plus a bonus of 2.75% unconsolidated for July 2023. Cadent Gas Distribution saw a consolidated deal worth average monthly RPI from 04/22 to 03/23 – currently projected to be over 12%. In MDS Ltd. 2023 will see 7% consolidated.

UNISON negotiated deals have all been above the sector average in Energy.

Social care

UNISON continues to fight for a National Care Service, with plans in place to intensify this work with a major public-facing campaign in England this year building towards an expected general election in 2024. UNISON has commissioned the Fabian Society to produce research on how a National Care Service could be brought about and how it would work. The report is due in June 2023.

There has been progress towards setting up a National Care Service in both Wales and Scotland. In Cymru/Wales, UNISON launched a new report in November 2022 on how this might be achieved. This follows from UNISON's membership of an expert panel to advise the Welsh Government on how a National Care Service for Wales could be established. The panel has produced its advice which is being considered by the Welsh Government.

In Scotland, considerable controversy has been created by the Scottish Government's proposals. UNISON supports the idea of a National Care Service in Scotland, but the Scottish Government's proposed Bill is not fit-for-purpose. The union has criticised the Bill for leaving profit at the heart of care provision and increasing insecurity among the workforce. UNISON Scotland continues to work hard to highlight the failures of the Scottish Government's plans and to win change.

At the Labour Party Conference in September 2022, UNISON's continued engagement with the Party on social care led to the shadow health team giving explicit backing to a National Care Service. Commitments were also made at the Conference to blocking private equity firms profiting from running care homes where they are failing residents or underpaying staff.

UNISON continues to push for national solutions to the recruitment and retention crisis in the social care sector. With proposals also emerging from Labour on the need for national pay bargaining in social care, UNISON has begun work to map posts in adult social care in England. This work aims to look at rates of pay and other terms and conditions, with a view to ensuring the union is ready to represent members most effectively if national pay bargaining is brought about.

UNISON helped coordinate the creation of a new partnership forum in social care, designed to replicate the beneficial aspects of partnership working seen in the NHS. The forum includes unions, employers and commissioners of care. Terms of reference have been agreed and the forum has had two constructive meetings.

UNISON organised a successful breakfast summit in Parliament in July 2022 to highlight the economic case for reforming social care. The event was well attended by politicians and featured contributions from an all-female panel of MPs, Councillors, think tanks and trade unionists.

UNISON continues to work as part of the Future Social Care Coalition (FSCC), the body which brings together a large range of social care organisations that agree on the need for improved funding and reform in social care. The FSCC organised an online lobby day in July 2022 and followed up with events at the 2022 political party conferences, including a rally at Labour Party Conference in Liverpool.

The union's Strategic Organising Unit and UNISON Cymru/Wales continue with organising work in social care, signing up new activists and recruiting new members. Lessons learned from this project and others will be fed into a new organising strategy subject to a wider review. UNISON is also working with the University of Surrey who are producing a report on the barriers to recruitment and retention for trade unions in social care. This will be fed into the wider strategy.

Living wage

The Living Wage has continued to form an important target in wage bargaining across the union, particularly where low pay is most heavily concentrated among contractors delivering public services.

The advance of the wage across the economy goes on, with over 12,000 employers signed up as accredited employers, including almost 800 public sector employers.

The gap between the highest National Minimum Wage (NMW) rate and the Living Wage has been diminishing as the NMW has closed on two-thirds of average earnings, but the Living Wage continues to translate into a salary worth over £900 more for a full-time worker on a 37-hour week.

UNISON developed a fresh set of campaigning materials and bargaining guidance to support branches and regions over Living Wage Week, when the new Living Wage rates were announced. Numerous breakthroughs have been achieved by local branches to pull members up to the Living Wage and the lessons from a sample of these victories have been added as case studies for the bargaining guidance.

The cost-of-living crisis has highlighted the vital importance of minimum rates of pay that are linked to inflation, so UNISON's evidence to the Low Pay Commission continued to make the case for raising the NMW to the Living Wage rate and bringing the youth rates up to the full adult rate, as part of a drive to achieving £15 an hour.

Together We Rise: campaigning on the cost-of-living

The cost-of-living crisis is the single most important domestic issue the public face. With inflation at an all-time high, pay stagnation and persistent levels of inequality, working people are struggling to cope with rising costs. It is a result of a decade of public sector pay restraint, cuts to funding for public services, rising inflation and a lack of investment and future proofing of sectors like food, energy, housing and transport to mitigate price increases. The crisis will in many respects define the experience of public sector and low paid workers for years to come.

UNISON members expect and deserve their union to be supporting and standing up for them during the tough days ahead. UNISON's cost-of-living campaign, Together We Rise, seeks to create an over-arching union-wide campaign around the cost-of-living crisis which highlights the lack of government support for public service workers and fight for fair pay. 'Together we rise' demonstrates there is solidarity and hope to be found in the collective with UNISON.

The campaign has sought to utilise a variety of channels and approaches to maximise impact.

Parliamentary activity has included a Westminster Hall debate with Dan Jarvis MP on the cost-of-living and its effect on public service workers. UNISON has written to new Chancellors when they are appointed and highlighted the cost-of-living crisis facing members ahead of fiscal events.

UNISON published a report in Autumn 2022 on the cost-of-living crisis and its solutions. The report used polling conducted by YouGov which showed that there was broad

public support for tax rises to pay for a public sector pay rise – 60% of the general public believed that public sector pay should rise in line with or above inflation. The report also used insights from a survey of members earning under £20,000 a year on the impact of the crisis on their everyday lives and mental health, and economic analysis into potential new taxation to pay for solutions to the crisis.

UNISON has also supported members to get involved in parliamentary activity. Over fifteen thousand members and supporters sent emails to Conservative Party leadership candidates Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak in Summer 2022 calling on them to promise to end the cost-of-living crisis if they won the leadership contest. Over thirty thousand members and supporters tweeted Liz Truss and Kwasi Kwarteng ahead of their disastrous “mini budget” in Autumn 2022 to let them know that “we urgently need pay rises for carers, nurses, cleaners - and everyone faced with the choice between heating and eating this winter.” When Liz Truss resigned, more than thirty-three thousand members and supporters wrote emails to MPs demanding a general election.

Throughout Autumn 2022, members and supporters were encouraged to sign a petition calling on the Prime Minister to end the pay crisis with inflation-busting pay rises and an increase to the minimum wage. The petition secured 189,323 (at the time of writing) signatures and was handed in at 10 Downing Street by the General Secretary Christina McAnea and a group of members.

Following the Spring Budget 2023, UNISON launched a petition on closing the loopholes in the windfall tax for oil and gas giants, pointing out that their profits and executive pay hit record highs while public service workers were told to exercise pay restraint. At the time of writing, this petition had only just been launched but had already attracted over thirty-eight thousand signatures. In the run up to the Budget, UNISON also asked members how they would spend the Budget if they were Chancellor – over seventeen thousand members took part and shared their priorities.

Online, the campaign has used video, interactive online tools, content across eight different social media channels and a campaign microsite, to promote the campaign and encourage members to get involved.

The video featured real, frontline members of UNISON sharing their personal experiences. It got over 1.5 million views, and short clips from the video were promoted on

a variety of social media channels. On social media, the campaign has earned over 21 million impressions.

The campaign microsite had over a hundred thousand unique visits. It included a cost-of-living calculator - 63,500 people used the calculator to see how much their pay would be if it increased at the same rate as energy bills were rising or the same rate that Chief Executive Officer (CEO) pay and shareholder dividends were going up. UNISON recently launched its local action map, showing where UNISON is in dispute, campaigning on local and national issues, and has secured wins, alongside member stories on how the cost-of-living crisis is affecting them. The map, although only recently launched, has been viewed by more than twenty thousand people.

Offline, the campaign used billboards to promote the campaign and highlight the pay crisis. These featured UNISON members with bold calls to action. The billboards ran across a number of 6-sheet and 48-sheet sites and earned 6.6 million impressions. UNISON also ran newspaper advertising. On the eve of the London local elections in May 2022, the union ran ads in the Metro newspaper to tell readers that “poverty is a choice made by the powerful” and to “vote today to protect our future”. Later in the year, UNISON ran wraps on the Metro regionally in the Midlands and Manchester, alongside core left-leaning titles and Northern Ireland media.

Campaigning on mileage rates

UNISON has worked hard to lobby HMRC and the Treasury to review mileage rates – which HMRC have failed to update since 2011. In the context of record highs at the petrol pumps in 2022, this campaign was especially relevant. UNISON organised a roundtable with frontline workers in health, local government and social care to discuss the effects of out-of-date mileage rates with cross-party MPs.

UNISON has written to all MPs about mileage rates, and worked with Bob Blackman MP to table an Early Day Motion on the cost of using vehicles for work, which at the time of writing had the support of 108 MPs, spanning every party that takes their seats in the Commons. UNISON also encouraged its members to write to their local MPs, and over ten thousand members took action, which helped to promote the Early Day motion further.

UNISON has worked with MPs to write to UK Treasury

ministers, drafting letters and providing policy support, as well as tabling written questions in the Commons and the Lords. MPs who have written to the Exchequer Secretary and Chancellor include a number of senior Conservative MPs who have helped to amplify the issue within their own party.

UNISON has also surveyed members who use a car to do their jobs – a thousand members have shared their driving habits during the working day to feed into some original research being conducted by UNISON in partnership with the RAC Foundation.

Local elections

Local elections were due to take place across England, including for some directly elected mayors, unitary authorities and district councils on May 4th 2023. There were also local elections scheduled to take place in Northern Ireland on 18th May.

The annual report was completed before 4th May. At the time of writing work was ongoing to encourage members to vote and for activists to get involved in local campaign activity. The union also ran a series of campaign ads on social media aimed at the general public.

This was the first set of elections at which voters were required to show ID at the polling station, before being issued with a ballot paper. UNISON has been clear that this requirement is a blatant attempt to suppress the vote.

A news feature in the weekly *Activist Digital* in March noted that the least well off were less likely to have permissible forms of ID such as passports and drivers' licenses. The story pointed out that even the government's own research found that those with severely limiting disabilities, the unemployed, people without qualifications, and those who had never voted before were all less likely to hold any form of photo ID.

In addition, the UK government's list of forms of ID that are permissible at the polling station was discriminatory – for example, by enabling over 60s to use their travel passes, while not allowing younger voters to do likewise.

Many of the union's pre-election communications have highlighted this injustice, and urged members to remember to ensure they are registered to vote, apply for

a postal vote to make voting more convenient or to ensure they have appropriate ID if going to the polling station to vote in person.

TUC “Britain Needs a Pay Rise” demonstration

On Saturday June 18th 2022 as UNISON national delegate conference finished, a major national TUC demonstration on pay was held in central London. UNISON branches gave considerable support to the large turn out and UNISON staff provided the majority of the stewards. The higher than expected numbers in London were a sign that workers were angry with rising prices and falling living standards.

“We Deserve Better” lobby of Parliament

UNISON members were among the hundreds of trade union members from around the UK who descended on Westminster in November 2022 to put pressure on MPs to take drastic action to boost workers' pay as the best solution to easing the cost of living crisis.

A number of individual members set up meetings with their MPs, in order to share their stories, describe how the crisis is affecting the lives of ordinary workers, and to make the case to for better pay for all who work in public services.

UNISON members were also out in force in the evening as the lobby culminated in a rally at the Westminster Central Methodist Hall, which featured moving speeches from UNISON members and others engaged in industrial actions as well as contributions from trade union general secretaries.

Campaigning Section

Year of the Disabled Worker 2022

UNISON designated 2022 the Year of the Disabled Worker and a key focus of this was our work on the Disability Employment Charter.

The charter is a ground-breaking campaigning initiative that aims to address many of the challenges our disabled members face at work, from waiting months if not years for reasonable adjustments to being stuck on the lowest rungs of the pay ladder.

UNISON worked with a small number of founding organisations, including Disability Rights UK, the country's largest disabled people's organisation, disability charities and academics, to put together the charter. UNISON was the only trade union founding member and we have been at the forefront of the campaign.

The charter includes nine campaigning "asks" of government, including a new right to responses to reasonable adjustment requests within two weeks, a right to time off for equality reps, stronger rights to disability leave and mandatory publication of the disability pay gap. So far over 130 employers have signed up to the charter.

We arranged a successful event in parliament in June to raise awareness of the charter amongst parliamentarians. Scores of MPs and peers attended with a strong showing from the Labour front bench team, including Deputy Leader Angela Rayner, Shadow Secretary of State for Equality Annalise Dodd and shadow employment minister Alison McGovern. Speakers included General Secretary Christina McAnea and Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Vicky Foxcroft.

UNISON met with the Disability Unit in the Cabinet Office in December 2022 to look at what aspects of the charter could be taken forward, bearing in mind the government's own Disability Strategy has been "paused" while they appeal the High Court judgment that the strategy was illegal. We also met with the Minister for Disabled People, Tom Pursglove, in February and focused on how stronger rights to reasonable adjustments can help retain disabled people in the workforce and deliver the growth agenda the government says they are so keen on.

We are working with the APPG on Disability to bring forward

a parliamentary Early Day Motion in support of the charter and we are also hoping to secure a parliamentary debate on the specific call in the charter for a two-week deadline to respond to reasonable adjustment requests, as this is a key concern for UNISON.

We are also influencing the Labour Party manifesto process and are very optimistic that we can secure a commitment to implementing the charter as part of the policy programme of the next Labour government.

The Year of Black Workers 2023

UNISON's Year of Black Workers was launched following the successful National Black Members Conference in January 2023. The endorsement of the NEC means there is full engagement from all sections of UNISON.

Given the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on Black workers and communities, layered on top of decades of institutional racism, this is an appropriate time to:

- celebrate UNISON's long history of achievement on Black worker's rights
- highlight the change that is still needed
- and develop practical steps to successfully bring about racial equality

As part of the Year of Black Workers events programme, we held a Parliamentary 'Round Table' event hosted by Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP on 21 February 2023. David Lammy MP, Anneliese Dodds MP, and other prominent MPs also attended. Invitations for ten UNISON Black members from across the twelve regions and self-organised groups were extended to come and talk about their lived experiences from the ethnicity pay gap, cost-of-living and post-Covid experiences.

The Year of Black Workers is intended to help focus our minds on challenging racism in the workplace and to have those broader conversations about the deep-rooted racism in society that are necessary for change to happen. Change can only come if we work together collectively to eradicate it.

This campaign is underpinned by the mission statement: "Establishing Legacy to Generate Change", with two main themes, Legacy and Change as an overarching strategic intent of UNISON. Legacy - builds on specific work and campaigns, which the National Black Members Committee (NBMC) is already leading to create an impetus for different

sector partners, branches and regions to identify practical and sustainable improvements - Change. In turn, this will create a new legacy.

When thinking about Legacy, the NBMC will consider the union's work on race equality based on the lived experience of Black workers in UNISON.

NBMC will work in partnership with all of UNISON's service groups and all Self-Organised Groups (SOGs), forum, and members:

- Women
- LGBT+
- Disabled
- Young Members Forum
- Retired members

The main legacy campaign strands that the NBMC hope will be developed in these sectors/SOG's are as follows:

- The Ethnicity Pay Gap
- Ending the Hostile Environment
- Challenging the Police Crime Sentencing and Court Act alongside the Discriminatory Stop and Search
- Modern Day Slavery
- Teaching Black History as part of the national curriculum across UK, just as the Wales Government commissioned report, and implement the recommendations
- The Race Discrimination Protocol
- The TUC Anti-Racist Manifesto
- The Workplace Race Equality Standards

There is something for all sectors and branches to get involved in. However, our ethnicity pay gap campaign is key, central to all campaigns and activities, whatever the sector – whether health, criminal justice, education, private and voluntary sectors, helping focus branches, regions, services groups, and SOGs on the factors that underlie the pay gaps for Black workers.

Reporting ethnicity pay gaps can be a collective bargaining objective, national and local and part of organising and recruitment strategies. Our Year of Black Workers is an important opportunity to attract young Black members.

Merchandise, leaflets and negotiating bargaining materials are available and we are also producing a campaign toolkit for branches on the ethnicity pay gap.

NBMC is calling on all of UNISON's democratic structures, committees, service (and sector) groups and branches to:

- Identify what you are going to do to contribute to the Year of Black Workers (YOBW)
- Ensure YOBW is part of every work plan

This could include:

- On Ethnicity Pay Gaps – a standard clause for pay claims on addressing the ethnicity pay gap. This could be a priority for the Public Sector Equality Duty work under the Equality Act 2010
- A Project on Racial Discriminatory Disparity
- Monitoring Employer Recruitment and Promotion
- Ethnicity Pensions Gap – working with the Pensions Team
- Ethnicity Pay Gap – linking this to evidence for submission to Pay Review Bodies

We hope the running theme 'Establishing legacy to generate change' will stimulate discussion - both practical and uncomfortable debate, to help develop campaigns on for example: the ethnicity pay gap, pay for Black workers and the cost-of-living crisis and in turn encourage and enthuse branches to achieve change and a lasting legacy for the Year of Black Workers.

Public Service and anti-cuts campaigning

A part of the union's campaigning against the massive rise in the cost-of-living was a complementary message that public services need to be rebuilt after over a decade of austerity. At a local level public bodies and other employers are still cutting jobs and services and the NEC, regions and service groups are supporting branches oppose cuts wherever possible. The value of public services and those who provide them had been proved during the COVID-19 pandemic and the union had run a "No going back to normal" campaign in 2021/22. Our Campaign Fund is supporting the campaign activities at all levels.

COP27 and the environment

Climate change policy in public services is inextricably linked to policies on public health, the cost-of-living crisis, education and skills and almost all other areas of public policy and UNISON has committed to engaging politically with current and prospective governments on ensuring the necessary changes and funding needed to meet their commitments.

UNISON's 2021 report on a fully costed set of measures for getting to Net Zero in public services by 2050 showed that most of these measures need to be front loaded to be cost efficient. However, the current government is not on track and is falling behind its own targets.

UNISON has members across all public services and all are affected directly or indirectly by climate change - whether it's in the health service managing the increased health impacts of excess heat or pollution – or the Environment Agency where our members role is to respond to the floods and droughts and other direct environmental impacts that erupt up and down the nations on an increasing frequent basis. UNISON members are absolutely at the frontline of what climate change means in the UK.

After the international disasters of 2022, and with gardens in the UK spontaneously catching fire in the summer heatwave, the issue is no longer climate denial but climate action. UNISON members are engaging on this issue in all regions and devolved nations and UNISON aims to encourage and enable that engagement where it is already happening and to encourage our members to get active and involved in the transformations and negotiations that need to happen at all levels.

Over the last year UNISON has:

- Continued to attend and engage in cross-union climate coalition meetings via the TUC as well as other key partner organisations like the Climate Justice Coalition
- Changed our rule book to include environment officer (also known as green reps) as part of the formal officer positions in each branch
- Re-established the UNISON Green Network for regular updates on what UNISON is doing in this area and how to get involved
- Published new guidance on being a green rep and how to get involved
- Developed new training modules for activists via UNISON College with a module intended for general understanding of the Climate Crisis and Green Skills and specific modules for Local Government and Health
- Supported a UNISON Green Week of activity at the end of September encouraging local branch and regional initiatives as well as a national webinar and workshops run by the Women's Environment Network tailored for UNISON women members
- Supported COP27 including supporting the Global Day of Action run by the Climate Change Coalition and, once again, UNISON was represented at COP by lay member

- Stephen Smellie attending as part of the ITUC delegation
- Set up a young members' Green Webinar to share experiences of, and encourage being a local green rep
- Launched the final report from our members survey on member attitudes on climate change and what challenges and opportunities arise from the responses
- Refreshed and republished our guidance on divesting from fossil fuels in public sector pension funds
- Engaged with Shadow Energy and Climate Change ministers aiming to influence the political debate in this area (including asking for explicit commitments to supporting facility time for green reps) and
- Responded to the Labour Party policy consultation process on their key strand on Climate Change Policy

UNISON aims to keep up momentum on this vital policy area in 2023/24.

Strikes Bill

UNISON launched a full-throated campaign against the UK Government's latest attack on trade union rights, the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill. It seeks to drastically curtail labour rights in Great Britain and allows employers to sack the very people on whose hard work and goodwill our public services depend. It gives huge powers to Government ministers to interfere and infringe on industrial relations at workplace and sectoral level. The bill will grant the government powers to set 'minimum service levels' for six key public services: health; fire and rescue; education; transport; decommissioning of nuclear installations and management of radioactive waste and spent fuel; and border security. There is no detail on the limit to these 'service levels' – the power to set this is given to the government, who may introduce legislation that imposes the restrictions without agreement with unions who represent the key workers affected. It also withdraws protections from individual workers exercising their right to strike, which could see workers facing dismissal for taking part in industrial action. It also makes unions financially liable unless they attempt to force striking workers to go to work.

UNISON is vigorously challenging the Government's plans both in Parliament and beyond, campaigning with sister trade unions and the TUC. UNISON has challenged the Government's misleading rhetoric about striking workers during parliamentary debates and submitted key evidence to the Joint Committee of Human Rights (JCHR). UNISON's written evidence on the implications of the bill for trade

union rights and the Government’s mischaracterisation of life and limb cover was quoted in the JCHR’s report on the Bill. The JCHR concluded that the Government had not adequately made the case that the Bill met our human rights obligations and that it amounted a serious interference into rights of freedom of association.

Together with the TUC and other unions, UNISON and our members sent emails to MPs, wrote to Peers, signed a petition presented to Downing Street and took part in over 84 rallies across the country.

At the time of writing, this Bill was still going through parliament and UNISON’s campaign to defeat or amend its worst provisions is still in progress.

Retained EU law Bill

The Retained EU law Bill, introduced by former business secretary Jacob Rees-Mogg, will have the effect of deregulating workplaces and stripping away protections that all UK workers rely on. If the bill becomes law, it will start a countdown that will see rights such as rest breaks, holidays, maternity, paternity and parental leave, paid time off for health and safety reps, TUPE protections and more expire by December 2023. The government will then give itself sweeping powers to rewrite, replace or simply let these rights disappear. There will be little opportunity for parliamentary debate or scrutiny over what these replacements are – if there is any time at all. Not content with ripping out protections, with no guarantees or credible plans to replace them, the bill would also create chaos in the legal system. It asks UK courts to depart from EU law and principles, which means that decades of legal judgements and case law will have to be re-litigated and reargued, at an immense financial cost to all the workers and employers bringing and defending claims. The UK’s court system is already under strain with long delays. If this bill becomes law, costs and delays will increase, meaning that only those with deep pockets can re-litigate settled principles. A sense of certainty in the law will be lost. The Retained EU law bill is also a serious danger for women’s rights at work. Protections for working women have been developed over decades through a mixture of EU legislation, UK legislation and case law. Separating out those decisions will reverse years of progress for women. For example, the ability to make equal pay claims for work of equal value done by different sexes, along with the clarity that the case law has brought to this area over many years, will dissolve

entirely. The removal of part-time and fixed-term contract protections, maternity and pregnancy protections, and the removal of family friendly policies that seek to ensure that childcare is not a ‘women’s issue’ alone, is an attack on all working women.

UNISON has been the leading trade union voice against the Bill. UNISON’s head of legal services, Shantha David, gave expert evidence to MPs on the dangers posed by the bill. The union has briefed MPs and Peers on the damage the bill would do to workplaces, the labour market, the legal system and to tackling discrimination in wider society. At the time of writing, this Bill was still going through parliament and UNISON’s campaign to defeat or amend its worst provisions is still in progress.

Human Rights Act (HRA)

The Tory government have continued to pursue an agenda to scrap the Human Rights Act and replace with a weaker Bill of Rights. The proposals would put further obstacles between potentially vulnerable individuals and their ability to enforce their legal rights specially for people already facing barriers in accessing justice. Worse, it frames basic rights as rewards for good behaviour by introducing a possibility that certain groups could be stripped of their ability to rely on their Convention rights which would essentially be deciding that certain groups are not ‘human’ enough for human rights.

UNISON members look after many people from disadvantaged groups in our society. Therefore, we know, first-hand that the UK’s Human Rights Act safety-net is a crucial source of legal protection for people across the country. It provides a means for those who have been mistreated or failed by the system to challenge their treatment and hold authorities to account. It provides essential protection for all of us when we need it most.

The positive obligations to protect the right to life and to investigate deaths is currently being used to hold to the Government and other public bodies to account for the decisions that led to the Grenfell fire and the appalling situation in care homes at the start of the Covid pandemic has highlighted how important the right to life and to dignity is as well as the right to safe working conditions and how accountable governments should be in protecting those rights.

Our devolved nations are embracing the full opportunities for positive social change that a human rights-based approach can bring to the provision of public services. Where the current Westminster Government appears to be entirely uncomfortable with the current reach of the HRA, UNISON is working alongside our devolved governments to embed it. Not to mention that replacing the current HRA with a greatly reduced 'Bill of Rights' as is proposed would negatively cut across ongoing processes underway to create a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, a major unimplemented commitment within the Good Friday Agreement.

UNISON has responded robustly, both in policy and in strict legal terms, to all consultations and to the proposed legislation. We are also members of a steering group covering a coalition of over 79 different organisations who oppose this attack on our rights and are sharing information, support and influence to challenge this agenda at all times. However, at the time of writing, this draconian legislation is still scheduled to continue its progress through parliament.

UNISON believes the HRA is working and there is no evidence-based case for change. Our current evidence-based policy position is to retain, protect and expand the current Human Rights Act in full.

International

The UNISON International Development Fund (UIDF) is currently supporting a range of projects including in Palestine, Qatar, Zimbabwe, workers in the garment sector across Central America and plantation workers in Costa Rica and Guatemala. The UIDF is also supporting PSI work on LGBT+ rights and organising workers across the social care sector.

We have worked with the Corporate Justice Coalition to grow the call for a new UK 'Business, Human Rights and Environment Act' to hold companies and the public sector to account should they fail to prevent harm to people and the planet because of their activities. This includes supporting the TUC to develop a policy position; working with a legal team to create draft legal clauses and UNISON's policy for the public sector, as well as promoting them to a diverse group of senior specialists; and consistently lobbying the Labour Party to include the Act in their next manifesto.

We have continued expanding public sector supply chain

work including: creating member guidance for preventing the purchasing of solar panels made with forced Uyghur labour; working to increase pressure on medical rubber glove companies; playing a strategic role on Electronics Watch's (EW) Board of Trustees; finalising a project with Industrial Global Union and EW to support Malaysian electronics unions to represent migrant workers and stop union busting, as well as contribute to the creation of a set of worker-driven remediation principles.

UNISON continued to campaign for justice and workers' and human rights in Palestine, in response to the continued deterioration of the situation and de facto annexation of the West Bank. In January members of the International Committee visited Palestine to meet with partners and build on our collaboration. We continued to call on Local Government Pension Funds to divest from companies involved in the illegal settlements and opposed government plans for legislation to stop this work. UNISON continued to play an active role in the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and the European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine, including by supporting PSC's trade union conference, national demonstration, and the "no way to treat a child" campaign.

UNISON campaigned for the acquittal of leading trade unionists in Turkey, who have been charged with terrorist offences for their trade union work. UNISON representatives, including Christina McAnea, attended court hearings in Ankara and we have consistently raised the trials with the governments of Turkey and the UK. In November UNISON hosted a delegation from the public service trade union federation KESK, who met with UK parliamentarians and trade unionists. We also supported the trade union response to the devastating earthquakes that hit Turkey and Syria in February.

UNISON continues to play an active role in the Trade Justice Movement and has lobbied both the government and opposition parties on proposed trade agreements with India, Israel and the Gulf Co-operation Council. UNISON is also represented on the Domestic Advisory Group monitoring the implementation of the Trade and Co-operation Agreement between the UK and the European Union.

UNISON was able to represent the TUC at the COP 27 negotiations on climate change in Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt.

Work also took place to support migrant workers in Qatar with the Building and Woodworkers International.

This included hosting a migrant worker leader in the UK, encouraging the TUC to increase their work on Qatar and holding several high-level talks with the English Football Association to attempt to increase the effectiveness of their actions in Qatar and publicly back the call for a permanent migrant worker’s resource centre as a legacy of the games.

UNISON remains affiliated to Public Services International (PSI) and the European federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU).

The Windrush Scandal

Justice for the Windrush generation continues to be a key priority for UNISON, given the failure by the Government to abide by its own commitments to those affected by the scandal. UNISON was extremely disappointed that the Home Secretary decided in January 2023 not to proceed with three key recommendations made by independent reviewer, Wendy Williams in her ‘Lessons learned’ Review. This is despite a previous Home Secretary giving an ‘unequivocal commitment’ to ensure all the recommendations were implemented.

The abandoned commitments included the appointment of a ‘migrants’ commissioner to engage with migrant communities directly and facilitate their feedback into the Home Office, a review of the remit and role of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, and reconciliation events with Windrush families. At the time of writing General Secretary Christina McAnea has written to the Home Secretary prior to the decision to abandon these commitments and after confirmation of the decision, expressing the union’s dismay. UNISON’s campaign to reverse this decision and fight for justice for the Windrush generation continues.

UNISON is also concerned about the shockingly slow progress in compensating victims, addressing historic wrongs and changing the culture that treated people so unjustly. The Compensation Scheme has placed victims under scrutiny, made heavy evidentiary demands, treated their claims with skepticism and placed their applications and lives in limbo. For too many of those affected, the compensation scheme feels like more of the same rather than restorative justice.

In addition to this, there is little evidence that the Home Office is building a more compassionate culture. With

desperate refugees risking their lives to cross the channel, an actual culture change in the Home Office would prioritise providing safe and legal routes, not ineffective and inhumane ‘get tough’ schemes. UNISON continues to lobby and campaign against the proposals contained in the Illegal Migration Bill.

Migrant workers

There have been significant changes to the UK’s policy and legal landscape around migrant workers, many of which have affected UNISON members directly. From the end of freedom of movement, the introduction of a new points-based immigration system, lockdown and pandemic through to supporting and guiding members through the EU Settled Status Scheme, UNISON has campaigned, advised, negotiated and lobbied with civil servants, the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), the Home Office, NHS employers and social care employers to protect and support our members.

UNISON also submitted detailed evidence of the consequence of new immigration rules for migrant workers, public services and everyone who depends on them to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Migration Advisory Committee, parliamentary committee inquiries and academic researchers. Through the extensive contact we had with our migrant worker members on the covid frontlines – particularly in the NHS, the social care sector, and social services – we were able to provide real-time feedback of the consequences of Government policies.

Repayment clauses

Many migrant healthcare workers are expected to sign contracts which require them to repay recruitment and training costs to their employers if they leave their post within a few years. UNISON is coming across many shocking examples of their use including many instances where migrant health workers are effectively being blackmailed by employers into accepting poor working conditions with the threat of taking on a large debt if they leave.

UNISON is also hearing from migrant workers arriving on the new route for social care workers who are experiencing exploitative working practices, harassment, substandard accommodation and threats of deportation and penalty clauses.

UNISON's campaign has highlighted:

- the use of exploitative repayment clauses in the health and social care sector
- employers threatening migrant health and care workers with deportation and legal actions
- concerns about standards of care and treatment of service users in social care settings. These were often precipitating factors for migrant workers wanting to leave their employers;
- racist discrimination experienced by migrant workers in the health and social care sectors

UNISON is calling for action to:

- Ensure that the UK Code of Practice on ethical international recruitment is enforceable so that unethical employers and recruitment agencies cannot operate freely outside of it
- Implement enforceable mechanisms which ensure overseas workers are not subject to unjust repayment clauses
- Raise pay for all workers across the social care sector.
- Dismantle the Hostile Environment - the Hostile Environment should be suspended as part of a major review of our immigration system.

Asylum seekers and refugees

Through last year's Nationality and Borders Act and this year's 'Illegal Migration' Bill, the Government has sought to reduce the right to seek asylum in the UK to a technicality. Virtually all asylum seekers will be deemed 'illegal' and denied sanctuary in the UK no matter how compelling their case. UNISON campaigned against the Nationality and Borders Act at every stage in Parliament and will do the same for this year's 'Illegal Migration' Bill arguing that it:

- violates our international humanitarian obligations and damages the UK's reputation on human rights
- reduces the ability to seek asylum to a mere technicality, amounting to a virtual ban on asylum in the UK
- leaves asylum seekers in a terrible legal limbo of being indefinitely detained in the UK with no hope of being given secure refugee status
- renders asylum seekers even more vulnerable to unscrupulous people smugglers, exploitation and modern slavery
- gives ministers unprecedented powers and strips vital legal protections away from a group of extremely vulnerable and unprotected people
- creates a knowingly unworkable and ineffective

response to a crisis created by the Government's own policies

- is being promoted using inflammatory rhetoric that gives succor to far-right groups who are targeting asylum seekers in violent attacks.

UNISON is not alone in our concerns about the Illegal Migration Bill. We are joined in our concerns by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the UNHCR, the European Union, the Refugee Council, Liberty and many more. The Bill is still going through Parliament at the time of writing and UNISON's campaign continues.

Resist the attack on our Right to Protest

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill is being rushed through parliament at speed and represents the biggest attack on free speech and the right to peacefully protest that we have seen in our lifetimes.

The NEC believes that these proposals are a draconian attack on fundamental rights that have been hard-fought and hard-won by trade unions and other brave individuals and organisations throughout history.

These proposals significantly lower the legal test for the police to issue conditions on protest that can restrict:

- where a demonstration goes
- whether it moves or
- how many people can be present.

With a new legal definition of 'nuisance' being as little as being likely to cause 'serious annoyance' or 'serious inconvenience' creating a subjective new low bar for interfering with fundamental rights.

Conditions that can be imposed if it 'appears to the officer' that the restricts are necessary to prevent, amongst other things 'impact' - the point of a demonstration is to be heard and to have an impact.

Worryingly, these conditions can be placed dependent on the amount of 'noise' anticipated. The Bill also includes astonishingly harsh new criminal penalties of up to 10 years imprisonment, unlimited fines (or both) and opens the door to an increased use of the most intrusive covert surveillance for people planning protests.

Almost unnoticed, this Bill also opens the door for increased

use of covert surveillance as it interacts with covert surveillance laws operated by the police who are now tasked with targeting ‘aggravated activists’ for intelligence gathering by means of covert surveillance.

Covert Human Intelligence Sourcing (CHIS) is classed as an intrusive tactic. Currently, it is authorised mostly for National Security issues. General policing (such as for protests) can only normally use it in ‘prevention and detection of crime and disorder’. Currently, what amounts to ‘disorder’ is defined unclearly and affected by common law rulings, so it should be rare as justification for using CHIS for protests.

The new Bill significantly changes the definitions of ‘nuisance’ and ‘disorder’.

Under these new proposals it makes ‘seriously annoying’ someone a new definition for ‘disorder’ which raises a concern that this may lead to attempted use of CHIS for protest organisers where it could not have been used previously.

The NEC will continue to oppose the Bill.

Procurement, Anti-Privatisation and Insourcing

In 2022/23 UNISON has worked both to promote insourcing as a viable alternative when contracts come up for renewal as well as seeking to prevent contracts being outsourced in the first place. Work has taken place both internally, with the provision of new campaign resources for UNISON branches, as well as within the wider union movement and in political work in relation to the progression of the Procurement Bill through parliament.

Over recent years UNISON branches across different service groups have secured victories in relation to the ‘insourcing’ of public service contracts. To provide more branches with the resources needed to take a proactive approach to insourcing, UNISON published a ‘Bargaining for Insourcing’ guide which sets out a clear approach to help branches run successful campaigns to bring contracts back in-house. Alongside this, UNISON has set up an insourcing website hub under the campaign slogan ‘Bringing services home’. This webpage has a range of resources, including leaflets, digital graphics and videos, to enable branches to run campaigns aimed at engaging members, potential and the public/service users. UNISON local government has also recorded a podcast profiling a successful insourcing

campaign. At the time of writing UNISON is developing online and in-person activist courses on insourcing campaigns. It is hoped that in the coming year UNISON will be able to focus on this campaign, sharing wins and developing a more strategic campaign to insourcing public services in the interests of our members and service users.

UNISON has been a key player within the wider trade union movement in relation to promoting insourcing. UNISON has worked with the TUC and other UK trade unions to oppose the Procurement Bill as well as working with Public Services International (PSI) as part of their Public Futures project. This brings together unions from across the world that are seeking to challenge privatisation and outsourcing and looking at how unions can share experiences of insourcing.

In parallel with this work, UNISON has been seeking to secure amendments to the government’s Procurement Bill that is currently going through parliament in Westminster. UNISON has provided all Labour MPs and Lords with a detailed briefing on the bill and our suggested amendment on the introduction of a Public Interest. This would require contracting bodies to evaluate the implications of outsourcing on jobs, the impact on the service being outsourced, the local economy, the environment, transfer costs and the pursuit of the contracting bodies equalities policies before going ahead. The test would also be applied when contracts come up for renewal. At the time of writing the Bill is about to reach its report stage in the House of Commons.

The NEC is currently working to publish a report with a clear vision for how procurement can/should be handled by a future Labour government at Westminster. This would set in-house provision as the default and provide for far greater transparency in the processes and require a national register of contractors to be established – including a list of those contractors who fail to deliver.

The UK COVID 19 public inquiry

The inquiry

Along with bereaved families' groups UNISON was instrumental in calling for a public inquiry into the government's handling of the pandemic. A motion passed at the Special Delegate Conference in 2021 called for the inquiry to hold government to account, give members a platform to share their experiences and ensure the right lessons are learned.

An independent UK inquiry was established and Baroness Hallett was appointed as chair at the end of 2021. In 2022 the inquiry team consulted over their terms of reference and set out the proposed scope and shape of the inquiry. It was subsequently announced that the inquiry would be modular in structure. Each module would focus on a different aspect of the pandemic. At the time of writing work on three separate modules has begun. These deal with preparedness, decision making and the health service. The decision-making module has separate streams of work on what also happened in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. There is also a separate inquiry in Scotland and there is a hope that there will eventually be one in Northern Ireland too.

Further inquiry modules are expected on Personal Protection E, Education, Social Care, key workers and the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on Black communities.

Every Story matters

In parallel with the modular structure, the inquiry is establishing a listening exercise called Every Story Matters. The purpose of this is to enable any member of the public to share with the inquiry what happened to them during the pandemic. A website has been set up to facilitate this, although the inquiry is making it clear that this is a first step and that Every Story Matters will also involve opportunities for participants to engage with the inquiry team in person.

How UNISON is engaging with the inquiry

UNISON made a full submission to the consultation on the draft terms of reference. The union made it clear that the inquiry must address issues around supply of PPE, the way in which austerity and fragmentation of public services made it harder for them to respond, the impact of poor sick

pay provision, the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on Black and disabled workers - and those on lower incomes who could not work from home. Although still not perfect, the union is now confident that the final terms of reference and the structure of the inquiry cover the ground that is of most importance to UNISON members.

The TUC has secured core participant status for the initial three modules on behalf of the trade union movement as a whole. This gives them the ability to propose witnesses and questions through counsel on behalf of all trade unions. UNISON is working closely with the TUC, providing evidence and analysis which will inform the TUC's own official witness statements. It is expected that UNISON will receive a formal request to provide an official witness statement for a number of modules – starting with module three, for which the union has already been asked to complete a preliminary questionnaire.

Collecting evidence

The union has been collecting and preserving evidence to submit to the inquiry from the beginning of the pandemic. This process continues. A number of appeals have been sent out to branches via the weekly Activist Digital e-mail. An in-box has been set up Covid19inquiry@unison.co.uk. All evidence submitted is treated in strictest confidence.

In addition, UNISON has been making representations to the inquiry team to ensure that the Every Story Matters component of the inquiry works for our members. We need to ensure that this process is properly accessible and that the experiences members submit are not sanitised before being submitted to the inquiry's Chair.

Housing

Housing continues to be a campaigning priority for the union.

Over the past year, UNISON has raised awareness of housing issues facing our members and lobbied politicians on reforms needed to improve the supply, quality, affordability and stability of housing.

UNISON has undertaken research and written policy and parliamentary briefings on a range of housing policy issues, setting out our key demands, including on Social Housing Investment; The Social Housing Regulation Bill;

Building Safety; and Private Rented Sector (PRS) reform, including ending Section 21 evictions in England, in line with Scotland. In our briefings we have made the case for improved housing rights, protections and quality standards across the social and private housing system; and we have called for more investment in existing and new genuinely affordable and social rented homes that can be available and accessible to public service workers and people on modest incomes.

The union responded to a range of Government consultations, including on Extending the Decent Homes Standard to the Private Rented Sector, in which we welcomed proposals to introduce minimum regulatory standards in the PRS to improve on housing quality and to expand on enforcement powers for councils to hold poor performing private landlords to account. UNISON also called for councils to be given discretionary powers allowing them to introduce borough wide licensing schemes, to help incentivise private landlords to be more proactive in managing and maintaining their properties to a decent standard in accordance with the law to help drive up quality standards and safety in the PRS.

UNISON has engaged directly with ministers and through parliamentary questions to draw their attention to the impact that the cost-of-living crisis is having on our members' household budgets, housing options and living standards, as many are struggling to meet their rent or mortgage costs. UNISON recently took part in an online round table discussion and Housing Day of Action organised by the Homes for All Campaign Group, which we are affiliated to, in which we supported calls for renters to be protected from eviction and inflationary rent rises during the current cost-of-living crisis. UNISON also called for additional Government funding to safeguard social housing services and budgets for maintaining and delivering new and existing homes, as well as the pay and conditions of the housing workforce.

UNISON has carried out a major housing survey of our membership across all nations in: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This closed in February 2023. Initial analysis of the survey data has revealed that the high costs of housing is putting a major squeeze on our members' household incomes, and many are struggling to manage financially. The survey results, which will be fully analysed and a report published later this year, will help the union to continue to build-up a body of evidence of how the housing and cost-of-living crisis is affecting our members, and also

help us identify trends that are emerging which we can then raise with policy makers – and call for solutions to address their housing needs.

Equalities

The pandemic exposed existing disadvantage and increased inequality. Now, spiraling costs-of-living and below inflation pay awards are reinforcing social disparities and injustice in the workplace.

Disadvantaged and undervalued groups of workers are concentrated in low-paid and insecure work. They are more vulnerable to the impact of economic volatility and to the social pressures this generates.

The current economic and social challenges have reinforced the importance of UNISON's long-standing equality campaigns, as follows:

- Measures to tackle pay inequality, including ending the discriminatory lower minimum wage rates for young workers and mandatory publication of pay gap data, including the disability and ethnicity pay gaps
- A day one right to flexible working
- Strengthened rights to homeworking as a reasonable adjustment
- Improved carers' leave and the expansion of accessible, affordable, high quality and publicly provided childcare
- Campaigning for the groundbreaking Disability Employment Charter
- Embedding legislative gains on tackling sexual harassment and domestic abuse
- Tackling violence against women and girls – including campaigning for the necessary national laws and policies to implement ILO C190, which mandates the eradication of violence and harassment at work
- Improvements to rights/ benefits for pregnant workers/ new mothers
- A complete ban on conversion therapy and reform of the Gender Recognition Act
- Challenging the myths, prejudice and disinformation around trans rights
- Pensions equality – retaining the state pension age, the earnings link and triple lock and improving employer rates for workplace pensions, particularly for the low-paid
- Better enforcement of the Equality Act and improved resourcing of the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Our campaigning work sits alongside bargaining on equality matters. UNISON equality bargaining guidance is widely promoted and used and is increasingly valued in the face of the attack on hard-fought for rights in the workplace.

The introduction of the Retained EU Law Bill could see many workers' protections automatically vanish in December 2023 unless the government decides to produce new and equivalent UK laws.

Agreements on equality priorities may be a way, or the only way that some improvement in working conditions can be achieved at local level: on challenging racism in the workplace; the health specific Race for Equality and Disable Inequality campaigns; on domestic abuse; menopause; flexible working; reasonable adjustments and access to work; accessibility passports and disability leave; mental health; challenging LGBT+ harassment and discrimination; trans workers' rights and developing trans allies.

Our equality groups continue to meet regularly. The lifting of pandemic restrictions has brought a welcome return to in-person decision making conferences.

Women Members

Women make up the majority of UNISON members. They are more likely than men to be in low paid jobs and they have been hit hardest by out-of-control inflation. Women are disproportionately affected by spiraling living costs. They tend to have the main responsibility for caring for their families and for household budgets. Our campaign about the cost-of-living, 'Together we Rise', shines a spotlight on the gendered impact of escalating prices and inadequate pay rises.

The failure to increase maternity pay to keep up with the cost of living is driving some pregnant workers and new mothers into acute financial hardship. UNISON is funding a research project undertaken by Maternity Action which is helping to develop the evidence base about the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on pregnant workers and new parents. Building on the work that UNISON has done over recent years to highlight the need for improved maternity and parental rights in the workplace, the research will help us to identify strategic legal cases and lobby and campaign to improve both investment in maternity pay and benefits and maternity and parental rights.

UNISON is also working with Dan Jarvis MP on his Private Members Bill (PMB), which seeks to improve redundancy provision for pregnant workers/new mothers and with the charity Bliss to support Stuart McDonald MP's PMB on neonatal leave.

Nursery costs have risen four times faster than wages, so many public service workers are having to take second or third jobs to pay for childcare. Women, especially, are leaving work altogether because they cannot afford nursery fees.

UNISON is working within a broad coalition which includes the TUC, other trade unions, charities, research organisations and academics to campaign for reform of the childcare sector including better pay and conditions for the early years workforce.

Unless the support and caring jobs that women do are properly valued, the gender pay gap will remain stubbornly wide. Pay inequity for working women extends into retirement. Over two thirds of pensioners living in poverty are women. UNISON continues to campaign for a new legal requirement for employers to report on their action plans to reduce gender pay gaps. UNISON also continues to call for maintenance of the triple lock on pensions and supports the WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) campaign – pension justice for thousands of women born in the 1950's whose retirement age was raised by the government with inadequate notice to make alternative plans.

Violence against women and girls escalated to unprecedented levels during the pandemic and increased working from home now means that some women have become more vulnerable to abuse. We have updated our guide on domestic violence and abuse to include UNISON's successful amendment to the Domestic Abuse Bill, which protects victims at work from their perpetrators, and produced new guidance on ending violence against women. The guidance was published in November 2022 to coincide with the start of the World Cup and the UN's International Day to End Violence Against Women and Girls.

Our focus now is on ensuring that workplace policies are put in place so members can receive practical support from their employer.

A Women's Health Strategy for England was published in July last year. UNISON provided written evidence to the initial Inquiry focusing on women's health and welfare in the workplace. The strategy provides an opportunity to repeat

our asks on menopause, reproductive health, pregnant workers and also, sexual harassment and violence.

At a minimum, sexual harassment is experienced by 40% of women in the workforce, over the course of their career. UNISON is working with the TUC in a coalition of trade unions, charities and research organisations to support Wera Hobhouse's Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) PMB. This aims to help tackle the structural drivers of workplace sexual harassment by introducing a preventative duty on employers so, rather than being seen as isolated incidents perpetrated by a few individuals, sexual harassment will be seen as a pervasive cultural problem. Employees would be protected from actions of third parties once the Bill is passed into law.

UNISON's National Women's Committee has worked with the International Committee to defend abortion rights in the UK and internationally and lobbied successfully along with British Pregnancy Advice Service (BPAS) and other organisations on an amendment to the Public Order Bill to introduce buffer zones around abortion clinics.

Black Members

We estimate UNISON has 185,000 Black members, mainly in health and local government services, with significant numbers working in social care and schools. Many deliver frontline services, and many are low paid.

UNISON continues to prioritise work on race equality and has agreed that 2023 should be UNISON's Year of Black Workers. Given the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on Black workers and communities, this feels like an appropriate time to both celebrate UNISON's long history of achievement in respect of Black worker's rights and highlight the change that is still needed.

UNISON's Year of Black Workers campaign was launched at the National Black Members Conference 20 – 22 January 2023 and is underpinned by the following Mission Statement: "Establishing Legacy to Generate Change". As this suggests the focus is very much on practical and sustainable changes to the experience of Black workers.

Our participation in the Notting Hill Carnival and Black History Month celebrations facilitated by UNISON's Campaign Fund will reinforce the importance of race equality for the union and highlight our anti-racism

campaigns programme to ensure a special year for Black workers.

Our main national campaign in 2022-23 has been calling on the UK Government to introduce mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting.

UNISON held the following events to promote the campaign internally in the union and externally, focusing on MPs:

- A drop-in sign-up session for members in May 2022
- and a fringe event "Levelling Up? Tackling Racial Disparities" at last year's National Delegates Conference 2022
- A well-attended roundtable parliamentary discussion in February 2023

We are also campaigning on the disproportionate impact of escalating costs-of-living on Black members and the broader Black community.

The nature of the debate around immigration and the hostile environment with growing right-wing rhetoric has underlined the importance of UNISON's priority of challenging racism and discrimination in every form. UNISON's national Black members committee (NBMC) works hard to ensure race equality is at the heart of UNISON's campaigns. This includes highlighting decades of institutional racism that resulted in the Windrush scandal and the suppression of research contradicting the Sewell report. We mobilised ahead of the UN anti-racism day of action on 18 March in London, Cardiff, and Glasgow, to ensure a big UNISON turn-out.

Recruiting Black workers is key to ensuring that Black members remain visible and vocal within union structures. An organised Black membership means we can continue to support members and lead on achieving race equality and challenging racism in the workplace.

An exciting new development programme 'Developing Your Leadership Skills' for Black members was launched on 18th October 2022. An initial pilot scheme from Learning and Organising Development Section (LAOS) is being sponsored in conjunction with regions to help with the development and support to new activists. The programme also includes inviting experienced activists to be part of a 'buddying scheme' to mentor and support for a further 12 months once the course participants have finished.

National Executive Council & Rule Book Commitment to Fair Representation

National Delegates Conference in June 2022 agreed unanimously that the NEC ‘pay full attention to the rule book requirement to fair representation’. The National Black Members Committee are pleased that the NEC staffing committee now has Black representation.

Race Discrimination and UNISON inquiry

Concern about the increasing number of complaints about how race cases are handled in UNISON led to the NBMC seeking and getting agreement for a formal inquiry which includes examining the process of legal representation.

The inquiry, which is set to report in the Autumn of 2023, will hear evidence from Black members who experienced racism at branch and regional level. It is sponsored by the General Secretary and has been endorsed by the President and NBMC. The inquiry panel will provide reports on each phase of the inquiry to NBMC representatives and co-opted self-organised representatives who will report back to their regions. A regular report will also be provided to the NEC.

Disabled Members

By declaring 2022 the Year of Disabled Workers we took huge strides forward in ensuring our branches, regions and service groups see disability equality bargaining, organising and campaigning as a core part of their work.

The year focused on three key priorities. Our organising theme encouraged branches to elect and train branch disabled members officers and send them on our now regular online training. We trained over 100 branch disabled members officers in 2022, creating a network of strong voices for equality across all regions.

Our bargaining theme asked branches and service groups to negotiate Reasonable Adjustment Passports and Disability Leave policies with their employers. From Energy and WET to local government and from Community to Health, we have seen new disability policies achieved in 2022 thanks to the hard work of branch negotiators. Our final campaign theme focused on increasing employer sign-ups to the ground-breaking Disability Employment Charter. We held a highly successful parliamentary event on

the charter where we received great support from Labour’s front bench team.

All this work was backed by a host of events and webinars across all of our regions. From webinars on Access to Work and regional organising for disability equality, to stalls at equality events and debates in the Scottish parliament, activists across the country got involved.

Our focus now is on ensuring the legacy of the Year of Disabled Workers and we are continuing to encourage branches to work on our three themes, negotiating disability policies, electing and training disability reps, and backing the charter.

Mental Health is also a key issue for disabled members. A new Mental Health model policy has been developed which is included in our updated Mental Health bargaining guide.

We successfully piloted a new training session on using the Workforce Disability Equality Standard to achieve disability equality in the NHS in England in the autumn and have repeated this training in the spring, with further dates planned.

LGBT+ Members

The LGBT+ national committee successfully launched an overarching campaign plan for trans equality in July last year. There was a great turn-out and this enthusiasm has grown as the campaign has developed. This support for the campaign within UNISON is important given increasing attacks on and hostility towards LGBT+ people in wider society.

New trans equality bargaining, campaigning and organising resources for branches have been released and can be found on the LGBT+ website. Hundreds of UNISON members have now undertaken the trans ally training through it being run nationally, regionally and to branches. The training has been so successful, it has been difficult to keep up with the demand. There has been a rise in trans and non-binary activism as a result of this campaign, with the national trans, non-binary and gender diverse caucus has grown by 60%. Trans equality campaigning was front and centre of many of the local Prides where UNISON had a presence – we are united as a union that trans equality is UNISON business.

The LGBT+ national committee has also focused on encouraging young LGBT+ members to participate in their SOG through a national network. This network now has over 80 young LGBT+ members and is continually growing. As a result, we now have 5 young LGBT+ members that have stepped up and become active in their regional SOG with one setting up a new branch LGBT+ group. The committee will now look to create a mentoring programme for young LGBT+ members to encourage them to be more involved and active in the SOG.

The 2022 LGBT+ conference was a huge success, with many first time delegates that added a fresh perspective in the debates. Because of our priority campaigns, there were a noticeable number of new, young trans, non-binary and gender diverse members. Because of the committee's internationalist work on global LGBT+ issues over many years, we were fortunate enough to receive an inspirational keynote address by the Executive Director of ILGA World – Julia Ehrt, who is the first woman and trans person to hold the position.

Young Members

Last year UNISON's young members carried out a survey on mental health which revealed the huge impact of the pandemic on young members' mental health: 80% of UNISON's young members told us they had experienced a mental health problem in the previous year. Building on that, we campaigned for UNISON to support the Right to Disconnect (the right not to have to answer phone calls or emails outside of working time) and our motion on this was supported at National Delegate Conference in 2022.

We continue to work across Self-Organised Groups and Service Groups to build organisation and engagement with younger workers. In 2022 the LGBT+ young members network was launched – a collaboration with UNISON's National LGBT+ Committee to give young LGBT+ members a space to meet, network and support each other. We also launched our new email newsletter, which goes out quarterly to all 64,000 young members with updates on campaigning, surveys, education and opportunities to get more involved and active.

In December 2022 Young Members met for their second decision-making conference in Bournemouth. On the agenda were issues including organising and recruiting young members, trans rights, bargaining issues like pay,

flexible working, facility time and bereavement leave, and broader issues like the housing crisis and international solidarity. We were also able to hold a full programme of caucus and regional meetings and training workshops, including Trans Ally Training, Pensions for Young Workers, and Organising for Climate Change.

Retired Members

The government continues to fail pensioners. The derisory increase in the State Pension by 3% compared to the far greater increase in the cost-of-living means many of our retired members are faced with impossible choices.

UNISON's National Retired Members Committee (NRMC) continued to campaign nationally on cost-of-living issues for pensioners including energy costs, alongside employed members in UNISON and with other pensioners' organisations. UNISON's policy is to ensure that the living standards of older people are not the price paid for the cost of the pandemic.

Other important campaigns for retired members groups in UNISON include effective social care; fair pay for those who provide care; retaining the Bus Pass and free prescriptions. Sadly, the campaign for the reinstatement of the free TV licence for the over 75s was lost.

NRMC successfully made the switch to on-line meetings during the pandemic and was able to continue campaigning on the range of issues and concerns highlighted by retired members at our conferences. UNISON's retired members were also able to continue an active role in other pensioners' organisations including the TUC Pensioners Committee. The Chair of NRMC was nominated by UNISON, PCS, Unite, Aslef, TSSA and various National Pensioners Convention (NCP) for the position of President of NPC and was duly elected at the Biennial Delegate Conference in 2022. The National Committee also works with the Scottish Pensioners Forum and Age UK in campaigning on behalf of older people.

NRMC was delighted that UNISON's annual national retired members conferences in 2022 was able to be held in-person in Telford.

The conference passed a motion calling on the Government to establish an Older People and Ageing Commissioner for England and UNISON is now supporting the National

Pensioners Convention, working in coalition with the Centre for Ageing Better, Independent Age and Age UK to campaign for this role to be created.

Health and Safety Campaigning

Over the last year UNISON members have faced major health and safety challenges within public services. Our health and safety reps have tackled critical health and safety matters, working tirelessly to ensure public services are delivered in a safe and healthy way. Through a multitude of campaigning and bargaining approaches, UNISON members from across our union have placed a spotlight on the often-devastating failures by the government and employers in safeguarding the health and wellbeing of workers and the wider public.

Following the launch of the ‘Be on the Safe Side’ campaign in early 2022, the central tenant of work has been to ensure the health and safety issues faced by women are front and centre of our activities. We reflected this approach in our decision to make the theme of the biennial safety seminar ‘Building safe and healthy workplaces for women’. The event held at the Excel building in London on the 24 May 2022 was a success, receiving an attendance of over 200 members. Workshops and plenary sessions received excellent feedback. In addition, the National Health and Safety Committee held two fringe events during the week of the national delegate conference 2022, delivering one event jointly with the national women’s committee on violence against women at work, this was received well by attendees, hearing from global experts in gender equality and gender-based violence.

In partnership with the TUC, UNISON pushed for the United Kingdom’s ratification of the International Labour Organisations Convention 190 (Violence and Harassment), which was later signed by the UK government in March 2023. However, this passive ratification by the government has not been followed by meaningful policy and legislative changes required to see this international agreement implemented. UNISON remains steadfast in its determination to ensure a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment.

UNISON Health and Safety has been focused on the government’s Retained European Union Law Bill, which poses a huge threat to all workers. The Bill creates a countdown to the expiry of vital protections in the

workplace by the end of the year. This could remove vast swathes of health and safety legislation in one fell swoop. The unit has contributed to several rounds of political engagement from a UNISON wide platform. We will continue to apply pressure and pursue every opportunity available to safeguard these fundamental rights.

Following the 2022 National Delegate Conference, motion 49 (covid recovery and rehabilitation) has driven our efforts in tackling the legacy of the covid pandemic, which continues to pose significant risks to our members. This has included supporting the Independent Sage COVID-19 safety pledge, which asks employers to commit to best public health advice in relation to COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. The health and safety unit has continued developing other guidance and information on areas such as appropriate ventilation in public service buildings and other workplaces.

UNISON continues to play a central role in the submission of evidence and participation in the UK Covid-19 Inquiry. UNISON sits on the TUC working group for the inquiry where we continue to work towards attaining greater support and recognition for our members that have made enormous sacrifices, putting their lives on the line during the pandemic, all whilst demonstrating dedication and resolve to deliver frontline public services in the most difficult circumstances.

UNISON continues to call for Covid to be recognised as an industrial disease and its subsequent classification. Although we welcome health and social care workers (with complications following exposure to COVID-19) eligibility for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB), we know this does not go far enough, we continue to call for a significant expansion to more workers, alongside calling for those suffering with long-covid to be entitled to IIDB.

In November 2022, UNISON hosted an online Work-related Stress seminar, launching a new organising toolkit, designed to turn the approach from stress being seen as an individual issue to that of employers needing to take responsibility. The seminar heard why Suicide is a work-related issue, as well as how to support members using the UNISON stress claims protocol.

As we entered the year of the Black worker in 2023, we will ensure that our projected research into violence at work will have a significant focus on the health and safety issues faced by Black workers. We have worked closely

with UNISON equalities, not only to attract members from under-represented groups into becoming health and safety representatives, but in escalating concerns to the Health and Safety Executive.

We have worked closely with service groups, supporting activity on several health and safety issues including long covid, work related stress, mental health and violence at work. UNISON health and safety has delivered numerous workshops and seminars jointly across our service groups.

In collaboration with the bargaining unit we have created a new UNISON and Maternity Action Toolkit to support Pregnant Members, updated the UNISON sickness absence guide, the home and hybrid working guidance and contributed to mental health at work guide. We have produced a video guide to promote risk assessment tools and created a quick guide series' for temperature at work, alongside developing guidance for branches around concerns over hot weather with the first ever Met office Amber alert.

Our wider stakeholder engagement with government, public bodies, employers, and campaign groups has placed UNISON in a solid position to influence decision making. For example, we have escalated and actively challenged the HSE's approach on the removal of guidance and restated the continued need for risk assessments for new and expectant mothers.

The H&S unit continues to deepen its existing partnership relationships with the TUC, working jointly in key areas of health and safety. Our cooperation with other trade unions has allowed us to develop strong positions alongside other stakeholders in matters such as asbestos and building safety issues in hospitals and schools. As a member of the Joint Union's in Asbestos Committee and the TUC Union Health and Safety Specialists group, we continue to engage on crucially important issues within the world of health and safety, such as the International Labour Organisation's amendment to paragraph 2 of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at work.

Pensions

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

There has been little change to the benefit Regulations for the three UK LGPS. UNISON continues to push for long

awaited regulations on introducing New Fair Deal to give greater protection for outsourced staff and regulations to backdate service for widowers' pensions in the light of the Goodwin case for LGPS England and Wales.

At the time of writing the Government has made no move to bring back any mandatory cap on severance payments since revoking the £95,000 cap in LGPS England.

UNISON continues to oppose employers especially in the Housing, Community and University sectors leaving the LGPS. In a number of cases, it has led to a strong campaigning response. There is a specific threat to LGPS members in the Care sector working in Scotland from the way it is proposed to set up a National Care Service in Scotland. If future access is denied to Care workers, it could destabilise the funds.

UNISON through the relevant committees has been working on agreeing the scheme assumptions to be used at the next cost share valuations across the LGPS.

National Health Pension Scheme

The NHS Pension Scheme (NHSPS) will be changed to improve scheme flexibilities. It has been confirmed that Regulations will be changed in England and Wales, Scotland (announcement expected for Northern Ireland) and will take effect throughout 2023. UNISON supported the recommendations which were aimed at recruiting and retaining experienced staff. UNISON's Pension Unit is developing further materials. The main flexibilities are allowing members who are in receipt of an NHSPS pension to re-join the NHSPS (2015 Section) on re-employment in the NHS and allowing members of the 1995 Section to partially retire without having to leave service.

NHSPS England and Wales member contribution bands were re-adjusted, and a further change expected soon. UNISON voiced concerns over the marginal increases at lower grades but supported contributions for part-time members to be based on actual pension earnings since October that should reduce contributions for many part-time staff.

UNISON has worked on agreeing the cost assumptions for the current NHSPS valuation 2020. Treasury announced that the assumption on the discount rate (long term assumption on how the value of the scheme will increase) for the 2020 Valuations for Centrally funded Public Service

Schemes is to be 1.7% (down from 2.4%). This could lead to very significant increases in employer contributions and government needs to deliver on its commitment to reimburse employers for the increase. (It is not part of cost share so members will not be immediately affected).

McCloud Judgement

Draft Regulations allowing the remedy for the McCloud Judgement age discrimination have just been issued for the NHSPS and draft regulations for the LGPS are expected very soon. The target is that the remedy should be applied from late Autumn this year to eligible members who have retired/left since April 2015 (2014 for LGPS England and Wales).

The remedy for the LGPS will be a test to see whether the previous LGPS final salary section would provide higher benefits than the current LGPS for service from April 2014/2015 to April 2022.

The remedy for the NHSPS is to give members at leaving and retirement the choice as to whether they want the benefits earned between April 2015 and April 2022 to be in their legacy NHSPS sections (either 2008 or 1995) or the 2015 NHSPS.

The Judicial Review that challenged the decision to pass on the costs of McCloud to the members through cost share was recently lost in the High Court. The decision whether to appeal to the Supreme Court is awaited.

Investments

UNISON is pushing for more representation on LGPS Funds and Investment Pools as well as supporting examination into Fund Mergers, two funds have announced outline proposals to merge in Scotland and a number of funds in England and Wales are looking into possible merging.

Local Pensions Forums bringing together reps in UNISON regions and nations have met regularly throughout the year. The national UNISON LGPS forum has restarted. A number of topics have been discussed including how the LGPS can limit the effect of climate change through its investment strategies.

UNISON is developing how it can support socially responsible investment in private sector schemes both Defined Benefit and Defined Contribution.

Private Sector Pensions

The trend towards replacing Defined Benefit (DB) pension schemes with Defined Contribution Schemes (DC) continues. UNISON continues to oppose this and there have been some successes including at Dundee University retaining the DB scheme but with reduced future benefits for existing members. UNISON is continuing to develop organising strategies to assist branches and regions facing pension attacks.

UNISON's campaign to improve Defined Contribution schemes has intensified following the recruitment of staff to the Pension Unit. Across all pension sectors the Pension Unit is assisting regions and branches recruit branch pension champions and to provide simple presentations to engage members at local level.

UNISON has responded to consultations supporting the introduction of Collective Defined Contribution Scheme (CDC). This is where there is a target pension specified and investments are pooled. This should lead to better outcomes over pure DC schemes but not a replacement for solvent DB schemes.

UNISON is pushing for higher employer contributions to the basic auto-enrolment schemes where the minimum employer contribution is a derisory 3%.

State Pension

At the time of writing the government has not announced plans to further increase State Pension Age. UNISON will continue to oppose any increases, and with life expectancy not increasing, continue to push for possible reductions and greater flexibility as to when the State Pension can be paid.

UNISON has supported the retention of the way state pension is increased in line with the higher of prices, average wages and 2.5% (the triple lock) and was weary of the government further tampering with it in the light of the 10.1% increase this April.

Capital stewardship

The contributions which pay members' pensions, whether made by them or their employers, are invested in companies and investment funds so that the money will be there when needed to pay the pension. The sums involved are extremely large – for example, the English and Welsh Local Government Pension scheme has assets of over £360

billion. UNISON members on pension funds and committees have a key role in overseeing investments, ensuring that they are invested wisely. And also, invested in things which our members would approve. UNISON supports our reps in this vital work.

At the end of 2022, a full-time national officer was appointed to carry out this work. They will be coordinating briefing and information for our network of reps involved in pension fund governance. Priorities during 2023 will be forming networks of reps with common interests (for example, who are particularly interested in climate, environmental or workforce issues). This will include supporting reps and branches pressing for divestment from fossil fuel companies and working with colleagues from unions across the world to press big companies for specific improvements in how they do business.

UNISON Cymru/Wales Campaigning

Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill

The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill is (at time of writing) immediately post-stage 3 of the legislative process at the Senedd. Stage 4 will be a Senedd vote to pass the final text of the bill.

The bill is expected to pass into legislation in summer 2023 and is a progressive move within the context of UK politics. It cements workers representation alongside public sector employers and Welsh Government in a tripartite body – the Social Partnership Council, irrespective of who is in government. Ensuring the bill passes into legislation and that UNISON's influence on the proposed Social Partnership Council is a continuing priority. Additionally, we will continue to develop our branches understanding of the bill and to ensure that they are equipped to work in partnership with employers when setting objectives that contribute to both social partnership and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) act.

Social Care

In November last year, we launched our APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) commissioned social care report in the company of ministers, Members of the Senedd, council leaders and our care members.

The report (link) shows the private sector is the barrier to

improved social services in Wales.

We see this report as us taking the initiative on what we want a National Care Service to look like and the Deputy Minister for Social Services, Wales TUC and various councils want to work with us on the report's findings.

UNISON has played a highly active role on the Social Care Fair Work Forum and our campaigning work contributed to the Welsh government's decision to ensure all registered care workers receive the Foundation Living Wage by April 2022. The work of this Forum and our further discussions with Welsh government, have the potential to lead to some form of sectoral pay bargaining which could transform the livelihoods of thousands, majority female, low paid workforce.

Schools

On schools, like social care and other areas, we see the benefits of having a more progressive, Labour government in Cardiff. The Welsh government sought to include trade unions representing school staff to plan how education might continue in lockdown and how children were best protected. Though there are disagreements, this collaborative approach continues in a working group to examine how school staff employment conditions could be enhanced and the roles of teaching assistants, professionalised.

Most significantly, this much needed piece of work includes improving access to training and professional development, standardising the current out of date job descriptions for Teaching Assistants (TAs) across Wales and exploring a common set of pay scales accordingly. Welsh Government has provided funding to support this group through international research to identify whether responsibility for TA's pay sits better regionally or nationally. Eight UNISON TA members are engaged in this project board and progress is fed into the Schools Social Partnership Forum.

Further Education and Higher Education

It is anticipated a new Welsh Government sponsored body, the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, will come into being in 2023. Its creation formed part of Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act, which also dissolved the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. UNISON will engage with the Commission which will be responsible for the strategy, funding, and oversight of FE (Further Education), HE (Higher Education), adult education and adult community learning, apprenticeships, and training.

In October 2022, the Senedd Children, Young People and Education Committee announced an inquiry into the mental health support provided by universities to their students. We took the opportunity to survey our Higher Education members as to the support they are provided with by their employers, and this shaped our response.

Cost-of-living campaign work

We surveyed Cymru Wales members in September last year, with an enormous 6,000 people taking part – this is the biggest survey of its kind that we know of in Wales, or even the UK.

The findings were very troubling and garnered plenty of good press coverage and sectoral breakdowns have been incorporated into a briefing for Members of the Senedd and provided to organisers to assist in ongoing negotiations.

The data was a key point of reference in our successful cost-of-living rally in October.

Constitutional future of Wales

With the dissatisfaction amongst many Welsh citizens with Wales' place in the United Kingdom, compounded by twelve years of austerity policies of Westminster Conservative led governments, and the continued question of Scottish independence there has been an increased desire for a different approach to politics in Wales. Moreover, the current devolution arrangements are becoming increasingly viewed by UNISON members and Welsh citizens as unfit for purpose.

In response to these constitutional questions the Welsh Government established 'The Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales.'

In 2022, UNISON Cymru/Wales submitted its response to the commission's formal consultation asking the commission to explore in detail what the greatest devolution of powers and taxation to Wales within a federalist UK would look like and how that might be achieved (<https://cymru-wales.unison.org.uk/policy-unit/>).

Amongst other things, the Commission could identify how more powers over policing and justice, welfare, equalities, employment law (including minimum wage enforcement), health and safety and industrial relations law and their enforcement could be devolved to the Welsh Government.

Equality

Trade unions in Wales enthusiastically supported the Welsh Government's publication of a Race Equality Action Plan last year as demonstration of its commitment to achieving racial equality. The UNISON Cymru/Wales Black Members Committee were heavily involved in the drafting of our submission, which was also guided by a series of workshop sessions and the experiences of lay members. Although we urged Welsh government to go further around employability and apprenticeships and to bring forward legislation, we noted at the time that Wales was the only nation taking a proactive stance on race equality in the UK.

Similarly, the Welsh Government has also published a LGBTQ+ Action Plan and established the Disability Taskforce.

International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

Our Cymru Wales Black Members Group held its annual event in August 2022 in the company of the Minister for the Economy for Wales, Vaughan Gething and others. It featured speeches on the slave trade, its relevance in the modern world, and how we overcome the injustices it still fuels.

Influencing policy

The Welsh Government publicly consults on many issues related to our members' working lives and citizenship issues to which the union responds. UNISON Cymru/Wales responded to twelve separate consultations across a range of areas.

One Welsh Public Service

The Welsh Government have reiterated the ambition for a 'One Welsh Public Service.' The aim is to have the many institutions and bodies delivering public services in Wales working "in unison to design and deliver effective, simple, and citizen-centred public services."

UNISON and the Welsh Labour movement

Our historical exhibition, 'UNISON, and the Welsh labour movement,' continues to win praise from members visiting our Cardiff office and in March 2023, we were pleased to give incoming TUC general secretary, Paul Novak, a guided tour.

Wales Union Learning Fund

The Wales Union Learning Fund (WULF) Project goes from strength to strength, supporting over 1300 learning instances (covering accredited provision, essential skills, Union Learning Rep (ULR) training and green provision) and working with over 40 different employer and Branch partnerships in the last year alone.

The Project has 2 more years of funding which will allow the excellent UNISON team to continue to offer our learning opportunities until March 2025. They will be looking at exciting new learning opportunities for those across public services, but particularly those in schools, health and social care.

Northern Ireland campaigning activities

Bargaining: As the cost-of-living crisis continued throughout the year, our bargaining and negotiating activities demanding pay justice on behalf of members became even more critical.

In our integrated health and social care system in Northern Ireland (NI), UNISON members have been taking industrial action seeking a decent pay award that protects them and their families from the impact of inflation and the cost of living crisis. UNISON members have taken strike action in December 2022, January and February 2023, and have been taking action short of strike from December 2022. In the absence of a Health Minister and NI Executive, we have sought that the NI Secretary of State engage with us to discuss resolving the dispute, but he has not done so. Following the announcement of a pay offer for NHS staff in England, UNISON members in NI cannot be left behind.

In social care, UNISON campaigned successfully for the creation of a Fair Work Forum in NI to deal with longstanding issues of low pay and poor terms and conditions.

In education, our negotiating teams continued to engage across all the directorates in the Education Authority.

Campaigns – Devolution: Assembly elections were held in NI in May 2022. Following the election, the Executive however has not yet been reformed.

The cost-of-living crisis continues to be felt across our membership, particularly the lowest paid, and this

reality faced by our members underpins our policy and campaigning work. In NI, our work on tackling the cost-of-living crisis is combined with and supplements the ongoing Northern Ireland Committee (NIC) of ICTU ‘Workers Demand Better’ campaign. UNISON NI took the lead in the ‘Workers Demand Better’ rally at Stormont in June 2022.

The current cost of living crisis underlies the critical importance of an Anti-Poverty Strategy for NI that can provide the systemic change needed across society to fully address poverty. UNISON NI has represented NIC ICTU on the Co-Design Group established by the Communities Minister on development of the anti-poverty strategy. In contributing to the development of the strategy, we have highlighted the importance of tackling low pay and precarious work and ensuring greater collective bargaining coverage across all employers, as measures to genuinely tackle poverty. Whilst we understand that development of a draft Strategy remains ongoing, in the absence of an Executive it cannot proceed to be publicly consulted upon and adopted.

Our UNISON ‘Free School Meals for All’ campaign is a further important intervention aimed at reducing poverty for our members and their families.

In health policy UNISON NI has continued, in the current absence of a Health Minister, to maintain our calls for a public health model that delivers for all the people. We continue to seek to protect our right to be consulted and involved in shaping decisions before they are taken, an issue that grows increasingly important as various Health Trusts proceed to seek to make changes to how services are delivered. At the Departmental level we have challenged on changes made to oversight structures that occurred without consultation. Of growing concern as the 2023/24 financial year approaches is the potential that the health budget for NI may be significantly short of estimated funding requirements.

Our Regional Committee is currently developing a new campaign aimed at protecting and developing the health service in NI, challenging on issues such as funding, privatisation, unacceptably long waiting times, significant health inequalities and the thousands of vacant posts across the system. This will be coordinated with our ongoing bargaining and campaigning activity to secure some of the solutions needed to improve services, including redirecting the increasingly high level of resources used on agency staffing, enhancing the staff bank, and reforming the approach taken to recruitment.

UNISON continues to lead trade union engagement with the Department of Health on developing safe staffing legislation that would place clear duties on the Department and employers to workforce plan and secure sufficient staff numbers across the system. We continue to lead engagement with the Department on developing a public consultation on the proposed legislation.

In education, UNISON, alongside the NIC ICTU Education Trade Union Group, has campaigned against the attempts made to require the EA to make cuts of £110 million during the 2022/23 financial year. These cuts would have impacted on the provision of special educational needs services, school meals services, transport and maintenance. We are increasingly concerned that the 2023/24 financial year will bring the prospect of further cuts to the education budget.

UNISON NI 'Free School Meals for All' campaign continues to call for the real change needed to address poverty and improve the health and educational outcomes of our children. Throughout the year our branches across NI continued to come together to support the campaign, highlighting the vital role played by our members in schools catering. UNISON NI continues to be represented in the Department for Education review of eligibility criteria for free school meals and options to provide universal free school meals. We await the outcome of this review, and continue to press for the adoption of a universal approach.

In the community and voluntary sector UNISON NI is currently challenging the UK Government on a potential funding crisis due to the ending of European Social Fund (ESF) funded projects. ESF funded projects have had a significant impact in addressing social exclusion, poverty and deprivation across NI, assisting young people, women, the long-term unemployed, persons with disabilities and ethnic minority communities. We are increasingly concerned that from 1st April 2023 ESF funded services and projects may cease, impacting around 1700 jobs if the necessary replacement funding has not been secured. We are already supporting members engaged in redundancy consultations. Whilst we understand that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is intended to act as a successor to EU funds, concerns exist around the delivery of this funding in NI and the risk of a financial 'cliff-edge'. Through NIC ICTU, we have met with the Minister of State for NI Steve Baker MP, to call for an urgent resolution to this issue.

Throughout 2022 UNISON NI continued our work on the climate emergency and ensuring a just transition. The new

Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 sets a target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. UNISON NI Regional Council 2022 agreed a motion to progress campaigning on decarbonising public services, and this issue formed one of the UNISON motions to the NIC ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference 2022. Our Regional Committee continues to encourage all our activists to explore green initiatives with their employers, getting their workplace to declare a climate emergency and asking employers to establish a green budget. A UNISON NI Green UNISON Network has been established and Regional Committee will be working with branches to develop the branch Environmental Officer role. We will be calling on public sector employers, to give agreed workplace facility time for Environmental Officers to negotiate on just transition and decarbonisation plans.

We continue to campaign on a wide range of equality and human rights issues alongside our allies across civic society. UNISON NI acts as co-convener of the Equality Coalition alongside the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ), which has over 100 members organisations working to promote equality of opportunity. This work is supported by the UNISON Campaign Fund.

2023 marks the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement and we continue to seek the delivery of the unimplemented commitment to a Bill of Rights for NI. UNISON NDC has repeatedly supported our continued campaign on this issue. We remain very concerned at the impact that proposals to replace the Human Rights Act will have on the Good Friday Agreement. The incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into NI law, including direct access to the courts and remedies for breaches, is a core provision of the Good Friday Agreement, and is currently provided for via the Human Rights Act.

Whilst employment and equality laws are devolved in NI, we are mindful of the interventions by the UK Government to curtail the right to strike and the current absence of the devolved institutions at Stormont. We are keeping a close watch against any efforts to undermine workers' and trade union rights in NI.

Scotland campaigning

Outwith our major campaigning on public service pay, the other major campaigning effort has been around the Scottish Government's National Care Service Bill. This – despite what the name might lead people to think is a full-frontal attack on publicly delivered public services. The aim is to take a huge range of services – social care, social work and community health, out of local government and the NHS to be run by ministerially appointed quangos – which will procure and commission rather than deliver services.

UNISON Scotland has been consistent and active in highlighting the many flaws in the Bill and campaigning for it to be scrapped. We have made that case directly to party members, MSPs and Scottish Government ministers in person at SNP annual conference and also the Scottish parliament. – where UNISON Scotland gave in person evidence to three separate parliamentary committees (the two who have produced reports so far have been highly critical of the Bill). We have worked jointly not just with the Scottish TUC but constructed a 'coalition of concern' of bodies worried about what the bill will do which includes not just the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities but a variety of third Sector bodies who are involved in Social Care.

More importantly we have got thousands of members to engage with their own MSPs highlighting the Bills fails and calling on them not to support the Bill until (at least) the key questions that we have about the future of staff (and their pensions) in local government are answered. The Bill was due to be voted on in March – but such is the level of criticism that the Bill has received that the Scottish Government has delayed this until the end of June. Whilst acknowledging that this is merely a breathing space – we can be proud of the role our efforts have played in making this happen – campaigning works.

Separate – but not completely unrelated – to that, we continue our campaigning to get the Scottish Government to take the steps they can to improve public sector finances. Not to meekly accept Tory austerity but to make more and better use of the revenue raising powers at their disposal.

Other campaigning also continues and our aim is that in Scotland we make the Year of Black Workers a similar success as last year's Disabled Workers focus was. Amongst other initiatives we are taking a motion to this year's Scottish TUC congress and are planning work involving the Scottish parliament.

Campaign Fund and Labour Link

Labour Link

Over the past year Labour Link's focus has increasingly turned to the next general election – campaigning for priority candidates and ensuring that the Labour Party's priorities for government match our union's.

A key priority over the past year has been a focus on improving training, both for branch Labour Link officers and UNISON activists who are considering standing for Parliament. Working in concert with partners including TULO and the Local Government Association (LGA) Labour Group, we have revised and enhanced the training available, and will continue to roll this out to more members over the year ahead.

Work to improve the awareness of Labour Link amongst the UNISON membership has continued, with a focus on branding and updating the Labour Link pages on the UNISON website. Meanwhile, in depth work through the Member Engagement Programme is targeted at ensuring that joining Labour Link is as easy as possible both for new and existing members.

Labour Link has increased the number of briefings for members of the UNISON Group of Labour MPs. This group, which continues to expand, having been reconstituted in 2021, has met regularly over the past year.

Labour Link Forums – both regional and national returned to be in person in 2022 and 2023 after the pandemic. The UK Forum in York was a successful event, with a wide range of policy areas discussed and well received guest speakers and panel members, including Labour Party Deputy Leader Angela Rayner MP.

Campaign Fund

The Campaign Fund Committee approved more than 30 bids from across the union in 2022. This resulted in expenditure of £1.3m on a range of campaign and political activity across the UK. This included funding for important strategic campaigns, such as the Together We Rise and Cost of Living Campaign, the union's work fighting racism and targeting the far right, Year of the Disabled Worker and the need to defend and support the role of Police Community Support Officers. In addition, funding was provided to important research related to the union's work

on a national care service and tackling insecure work.

All nations of the UK, and many regions, were successful in bidding to the Committee. The Chair and Vice Chair have visited regional councils and conferences to promote the Campaign Fund. Funding was provided for the Equalities Coalition in Northern Ireland, for UNISON presence at Scottish Political Party Conferences, the Together We Rise demo at Holyrood and a range of projects supporting the union’s engagement with Welsh Government equality initiatives.

The decision was also taken by the Committee to encourage more bids by branches in support of the cost-of-living campaign. A spot bid process, whereby branches bid for up to £500 to support the campaign locally, has been developed and was due to launch as the annual report went to press.

The Campaign Fund also continued to support the full range of the union’s equalities work. This included funding for Black History Month, UN Anti Racism Day and local and regional pride events.

Table: Political Fund membership by gender and proportions of overall UNISON membership

% Full Current members as at 31/12/22 by Gender	Female	Male	Not Known
Campaign Fund	77%	22%	1%
Labour Link	75%	24%	1%
% Full Current members payers as at 31/12/22 overall			
Campaign Fund	40%		
Labour Link	20%		
Others (No Election Made/Northern Ireland etc)	40%		

Local government funding and anti-cuts campaigning

The financial situation for local councils across the UK remains as bleak as ever. New UNISON research carried out in the summer of 2022 revealed the extent of the funding shortfall faced by councils for the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25. At the time of our research, we found that councils across England, Wales and Scotland were facing a predicted collective funding gap of £3.19bn in 2023/24, rising to over £5.2bn in 2024/25. Our research generated extensive coverage nationally in the Guardian and Mirror, as well as in regional press outlets.

The Westminster Government announced its Local Government Financial Settlement in early 2023. As well as failing to address the funding shortfalls faced by councils across the country it represented another one-year settlement, making it harder for councils to plan for the long term, and again provided no details of the long-awaited Fair Funding Review. Years of central government tacitly encouraging councils to generate their own income thanks to the huge levels of funding cuts since 2010 are seeing more councils becoming effectively bankrupt after botched investment schemes and financial mismanagement. Croydon, Slough and Thurrock councils all issued section 114 notices whilst other councils like Woking and Warrington are in major difficulty due to their levels of debt.

Campaigning on local government funding and cuts has remained a key priority for UNISON over the last year. We have worked through the media, social media, politically and through member participation to put pressure on the Government in Westminster to increase local government funding (and consequently the funding given to the devolved governments). We have worked with the UNISON Scotland and UNISON Cymru/Wales to support their work to put pressure on the devolved governments to direct more funding to councils there.

UNISON’s council cuts website (councilcuts.unison.org.uk) remains a key tool for campaigning, and was updated in the summer of 2022 following our extensive Freedom of Information requests to show the individual funding shortfalls that all upper tier councils across Scotland, Cymru/Wales and England are currently facing for the financial year 2023/24. UNISON members and members of the public were able to click on the map to see what the situation is like in their local area. We also provided details of the individual funding shortfalls faced by district and borough councils for the same financial year. The email action tool on the website has to date generated three and a half thousand emails being sent to MPs/MSPs and Senedd members (MSs) calling for more funding for council services. UNISON also provided template messages for regional activists and branch secretaries to use in order to increase the number of members who visit the council cuts website and go on to send emails calling for more funding to MPs/MSPs and MSs.

UNISON provided another round of local government finance training for activists and organisers from all UNISON regions, delivered by the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) throughout 2022. The training, which has been run

for a number of years remains very popular with activists. It helps branches and organisers scrutinize local authority finances, and cuts proposals, more effectively and is part of our long-term strategy to equip more people with the ability to understand and challenge local financial decisions.

UNISON worked with George Howarth MP to submit an Early Day Motion on the need for more local government funding to help identify MPs across Parliament who are supportive of our efforts. We are continuing to liaise with the office of Lisa Nandy MP, the Shadow Secretary of State for Levelling Up, to secure a parliamentary debate on council funding. We have continued to press successive Secretaries of State for Levelling Up, most recently Michael Gove, to engage constructively with UNISON on local government funding.

At the time of writing, work is underway to run a nationwide opinion poll that should demonstrate the strength of public support for greater funding for local councils. The results from the poll will be used in our campaigning work across the UK.

Local Service Champions

Last summer saw the launch of UNISON's Local Service Champions Awards. The awards are designed to raise the profile of local government workers and the vital, and often overlooked, work they undertake. This campaign links strongly to UNISON's arguments against cuts to services and jobs, and for fairer funding for local government services. The awards also enable UNISON to promote the work of our members to national and local politicians, the press, influential local government organisations and the public, and hence help make the case for better pay.

UNISON received nearly 1,000 nominations from across the UK in 2022. Winners received their awards at the Local Government Conference and Disabled Members' Conference. Films of the winners were produced and promoted, including an interview between the overall winner, Paddy Toner from Halton Borough Council and the actor, Christopher Eccleston. Involving celebrities in the campaign expands the campaign's reach beyond those normally connecting with trade union activism. During the campaign, UNISON's Local Service Champions web page had nearly 50,000 views.

The success of the awards led to UNISON's first Champions

Day being held on 7 December 2022, with materials produced to support branches. The day gave branches the opportunity to showcase the 'champions' in their own workplaces, promote recruitment and organising projects, and highlight the need for jobs and services to be fully funded. Champions Day also marked the launch of nominations for the 2023 awards.

There was widespread coverage of the day across UNISON social media, with lots of posts from branches and regions, plus messages of support from councillors and MPs. It is hoped that this year's campaign can build upon this initial success. Alongside UNISON's Champions campaign, UNISON is working with a journalist to capture positive testimonies from the public about the help and support they receive from local councils. The aim is to use the stories gathered to advocate for the crucial work UNISON members in local government do and the positive impact that work has on everyday lives.

The future of local government project

During 2022 UNISON continued work developing a positive vision for the future of local government. This piece of work is designed to complement and bolster the union's campaigning for better pay and more local government funding – strengthening calls for the defence of local government services, and for real terms pay rises for local government workers, along with proper funding and powers, by setting out how services and local economies could be safeguarded and transformed for the better with the injection of funding needed. This will advance the argument on pay and funding by moving it beyond a call to restore the sector to pre-2010 levels – putting forward the positive case for even greater funding, wider powers and a greater focus on urgent areas including climate change and the cost-of-living.

Externally, it is a chance to engage a wider citizenship audience in a discussion about the future of local government, and to persuade them of the need for better funding and pay. It can also help to influence decision-makers and Labour policy. Internally, it is an opportunity to grapple with some policy areas where UNISON doesn't have agreed policies such as English devolution and new forms of taxation – and to ensure policy positions on these emerging issues are carefully developed to reflect members' priorities and protect their jobs, pay and conditions.

In July 2022 the local government service group executive

organised a themed workshop at their seminar in Scotland to feed into project development, and developed plans for member engagement. Officers organised online meetings for members to be able to feed in their views, and also attended branch and regional meetings to talk with members about their priorities for the future of local government and the challenges they face in their daily jobs. UNISON's NEC has submitted to National Delegate Conference to be debated in June 2023 on this topic. Meanwhile, work to develop these ideas further continued – including positive engagement with the Shadow Levelling Up team and working with regions to respond to devolution proposals in their areas such as the proposed North East devolution deal.

Violence in Schools

UNISON was part of ground-breaking analysis to look specifically at the scale of the violence and aggression faced by teaching and classroom assistants in England, Scotland and Wales. University of Roehampton criminologist Dr Amanda Holt led the qualitative research that involved in-depth interviews with 16 teaching and classroom assistants. UNISON helped recruit the support staff who took part in the research. This report was covered on front page of the Guardian website. To accompany the report, UNISON produced a model policy for tackling, and reducing the risk of, violence in schools and a template survey for organisers. The Senedd's CYPEC asked UNISON for evidence on violence and sexual harassment towards staff in schools. Following a survey of members in Wales and the research already undertaken by UNISON we provided meaningful information and examples. Our research also enabled us to challenge the Welsh Local Government Association's response which painted a very different picture.

Teaching assistants

UNISON commissioned a headline piece of research from Portsmouth University that showed the changing nature of the teaching assistant (TA) role following the pandemic and the scale of the recruitment and retention crisis engulfing schools due to low pay. This report gained very good press coverage – including on the front page of Guardian website. UNISON also met with the Chartered College of Teaching who are opening up their membership to teaching assistants, with the aim of supporting their professional development.

The Schools Social Partnership Forum (SSPF) Support Staff Workshop Board was set up to ensure that all recommendations of the Task & Finish Group Discussion Paper (2021) are actioned in an appropriate timescale. UNISON continued to be the main union engaged in this exciting piece of work. The Board will co-ordinate effective communication with all TAs across Wales, work with TAs to create updated job descriptions, and liaise with the Association of Directors of Education in Wales on TA job descriptions. A piece of work to create new job descriptions is under way to make them fit for purpose and relevant for schools in Wales.

Stars in our Schools

With the risk of further government funding cuts, Stars in our Schools this year included specific messaging and campaign actions around school funding – in addition to the usual Stars activities. An event was held in Parliament in the run up to the day to highlight school funding pressures and the impact they are having on school staff along with the cost-of-living crisis.

A large number of celebration events took place across the UK to celebrate the vital contribution of school support staff to our children's education, with messages of support online from parents, schools, and MPs. Record levels of coverage were achieved for the cost-of-living crisis survey released on the day with national, local and specialist press interest.

We used Stars in our Schools to launch a new UNISON campaign on funding. In 2023 we developed plans for stepping up the campaign, including commissioning research schools funding gaps and producing campaigning and lobbying tools.

Health and safety in schools

Working with the health and safety unit and other unions we ran a high-profile media campaign calling on the Westminster government to urgently provide capital funding to make schools safe and fit for purpose. This campaign was in response to warnings from the Department for Education (DfE) that it had increased the risk of some school buildings collapsing from "critical – likely" to "critical – very likely". As part of the campaign we also continued to call for urgent action to be taken on the dangers of asbestos in schools.

During the summer extreme heatwave we provided advice and guidance for schools on keeping pupils and staff safe. In the Winter we produced guidance on the measures to be taken to reduce the risk to children and staff posed by scarlet fever and streptococcal infections; this followed the very sad news that a number of children had died of invasive group A streptococcal infections (iGAS).

COVID still dominated our education work at the start of the year. We continued our campaign to get the Government to improve ventilation in all schools. This included writing an open letter to the Children’s Commissioner who as a result agreed to take the issue up directly with the Secretary of State. We also continued to promote the Joint Unions’ Long Covid protocol to employers and we submitted evidence to the TUC for inclusion in the Covid Enquiry submission relating to UNISON’s work to protect pupils, staff and education.

UNISON Scotland represented members on the Scottish Government Covid Education Recovery Group (CERG) ensuring that members’ voices were heard at the highest levels of pandemic response planning. The group was stood down in March and our Education Issues Group (EIG) moved back to its quarterly meeting schedule. Work continued to ensure safe working condition in schools and early years settings.

School meals

In 2022 UNISON set up a Facebook community page to allow school meals workers in UNISON to communicate with each other more. This has been well received by members and makes them feel more part of a ‘group’.

We worked with the University of Hertfordshire on a detailed piece of research on the working lives of school meals workers. We also linked up with many external stakeholders to promote increasing the entitlement to free school meals and this issue has received much positive press coverage.

Many catering staff have been affected by the Brazel judgement and claims are ongoing in several large caterers. Many low-paid (mainly female) staff have seen an improvement to their holiday pay as a result with some successful cases paying backpay to affected staff as well.

In Northern Ireland our ‘Free School Meals for All’ campaign is a further important intervention aimed at reducing poverty for our members and their families. While

development of a draft Anti-Poverty Strategy remains ongoing, in the absence of an Executive it cannot be publicly consulted upon and adopted. In the interim we continue to urge officials to move as swiftly as possible to progress the strategy’s development. We hope a public consultation exercise will begin soon. During the consultation, our campaign will focus on maximising responses supporting a universal approach, and ensuring that our members and their families have the opportunity to have their voices heard.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The UNISON website now contains a specialist section on SEND. New guidance for members who work in special schools and alternative provision has been produced that was due to be launched at the Schools Seminar in April 2023. Colleagues in Wales have already shared the guidance and it has been well received by members.

We submitted a response to the SEND Review Green Paper (England) and the resulting improvement plan shows a recognition of the need for more focus on teaching assistants as a vital part of the SEND workforce.

UNISON will be in a stronger position to work on special needs issues as a result of its acceptance onto the Special Education Consortium, a stakeholder group of 40 organisations with a large level of influence on the sector.

The ALN Act and wider ALN Transformation Programme will transform the separate systems for special educational needs in schools and pupil referral units and create a unified system for supporting learners. UNISON Cymru/ Wales engaged with the Welsh Government to assess progress and share exercises from the perspective of practitioners as this programme started to bed in.

Term time only workers

Following the employer’s appeal, UNISON continued to intervene and led the arguments in the UK Supreme Court in Harpur Trust v Brazel & UNISON. In July 2022 the UK Supreme Court agreed with UNISON and upheld the decision of the Court of Appeal that all part-year workers must be entitled to at least 5.6 weeks’ leave with no pro-rata reduction.

Since the judgment, we have been working with and advising colleagues in branches and regions to ensure that all employers that employ term-time only staff are abiding by this decision. We have been particularly focusing on taking tribunal cases against private contractor employers where there have been instances of non-compliance.

Using this decision and the Part-Time Worker Regulations and employing a combination of legal action and negotiation, working with branches and regions, we have secured over £90m in back pay settlements for term-time only staff whose holiday entitlement and subsequently pay have been historically underpaid.

In January 2023, the government launched a consultation on changing the regulations for holiday pay for part-year, irregular- hours, and agency workers. These proposals could potentially amend the law in respect of statutory holiday entitlement for term-time workers and negate the decision of the Supreme Court in the Brazel case. The Government has estimated that this will cut the pay of part year workers by £113m per year. UNISON has vehemently opposed these changes and is committed to challenging any proposals that will cut the pay of these predominantly female staff.

We have sent further advice to branches on the additional day's leave that was awarded to all staff as part of the NJC settlement for 2022/23 and have been working with branches and Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) to ensure that all term time only staff benefit from the extra day's leave.

Techognition

UNISON again sponsored this year's Techognition day, an annual event run by Preproom which champions the role of school science technicians. Techognition aims to demystify the role of technicians in schools and colleges and gain them better professional recognition by encouraging those in the job to upload photos to social media demonstrating hugely diverse range of tasks they carry out. All MPS, MSPs and MSs were contacted about the event to help raise awareness.

Schools seminars

In 2022 UNISON held its first seminar for schools members and activists since before the pandemic. Delegates heard from Christina McAnea, General Secretary and Bridget

Phillipson MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education, and took part in sessions on a wide range of issues. Another seminar is set for April 2023.

The Cymru Wales Schools Seminar was held in January and was an enormously successful event. Speaker included Mark Drakeford, the First Minister, and Jeremy Miles, the Education Minister. Sessions covered violence at work, the workforce board and making schools LGBTQ+ friendly.

Living Wage in church schools

UNISON lobbied the Catholic Church and Church of England to meet their long-standing commitment to ensure all school staff in church schools are paid at least the real Living Wage. This included freedom of information requests, open letters to heads of the churches and a campaign lobby of the Church of England's Synod meeting. This pressure led to a commitment from the Church of England to work jointly with us to step up efforts to get all schools to pay the Living Wage.

Higher education campaigns

UNISON's work in higher education over the past two years has been dominated by supporting our members and branches in fighting for better pay and conditions for our members. Alongside our sister unions in higher education, we have taken significant strike action across the UK.

UNISON has continued to lobby the shadow higher education minister and the wider shadow education team on a variety of HE issues. The Shadow Secretary of State for Education spoke at the 2022 Higher Education Seminar and the Shadow Higher Education Minister spoke at the 2023 Higher Education Conference.

UNISON ran a series of workshops and plenary sessions at the 2022 HE Branch Seminar. The event was well attended and included the HE pay campaign, tackling hybrid working/agile working, under Higher Education Institution (HEI) finances, tackling racism, lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, local campaigning, trans rights, and challenging wholly owned subsidiaries. One online rally was held, attended by the General Secretary, to coincide with the ballots and strike action on the 2022/23 pay offer. UNISON continued to deliver training on job evaluation schemes – training was delivered on Higher Education Role Analysis to branch activists from across the UK.

UNISON has continued to lobby and campaign for higher education to be well funded from general taxation, promoting the case for free tuition for all, with maintenance grants and measures to support participation for all students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. UNISON has worked with Labour Link to lay the building blocks for this campaign and plans to launch it on social media and encourage branch engagement and support from across service groups during 2023 when the research is published. UNISON scrutinised the government's response to the Augar report when it was published and shared these arguments with branches. UNISON mobilised HE activists to attend campaign events organised by the TUC for the We Demand Better campaign. UNISON HE activists attended the national demonstration in July, and the TUC Parliamentary Lobby in November.

Through joint working with the Higher Education Safety and Health committee (HESH) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) we have sought to learn lessons from actions taken by universities through carrying out a best practice review, considering what worked, what did not, what could be done differently in future and the likely effectiveness of universities to respond to another pandemic or outbreak. UNISON has consistently raised concern about current Covid-19 levels to ensure they are given adequate focus. UNISON has pushed for action on the underlying equality issues lying behind the adverse impact of Covid-19 on low paid, Black and disabled workers, as well as supporting branches to do the same in respect of individual employers. UNISON has sought to review the amount of overtime worked, including, if possible, the hidden hours done by staff not taking lunch breaks, continuing to answer emails into the evening, or on days off, and (in line with conference motion 14) sought sector-wide standards for flexible and hybrid working that include a focus on health & safety, provision of necessary work equipment and for these standards to be extended to outsourced workers. We have raised concerns about the inconsistent approach to offering home/hybrid working across the sector. On staff mental health, UNISON representatives at HESH meetings have stressed the importance of how managers can recognise and prevent mental health crises, specifically by utilising the HSE Management Standards. UNISON has also highlighted the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on staff mental health.

Over recent years in Higher Education we have continued to see a number of successful campaigns to bring services back in house, with HEI's recognising that ending unfair

outsourcing arrangements is the right thing to do and bucking the national trend of continued outsourcing.

A campaign to bring cleaning and security staff in-house has been the major focus at the University of Suffolk this year. The University has historically always outsourced these services, and the campaign initially focused on pressuring the employer to deliver these services in-house as the contracts were due for renewal during the summer. Engagement of staff in these groups has been through workplace meetings, and recruitment stands, with wider University engagement of staff and students also at recruitment stands and presence at the Freshers Week. A petition was developed which attracted over 200 signatures in support of the campaign. Campaign material was produced in Portuguese, as English is not the first language of the majority of cleaning staff.

In August outsourced workers at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) were brought back in-house following the UNISON campaign and negotiations. These staff will now benefit from the same terms and conditions as directly employed staff which includes additional annual leave and access to a hugely improved pension scheme.

City University branch have, for a number of years, been campaigning to bring back outsourced workers in-house (cleaners and caterers employed by Julius Rutherford & Co and Sodexo respectively). As part of the campaign the branch have organised a petition, signed by nearly 2000 people to date, and a number of high-profile events and rallies. The campaign has resulted in successful negotiations of outsourced staff receiving parity on terms and conditions with directly employed staff including sick leave of up to six months, maternity and paternity leave, improved annual leave and much improved pension provision. The campaign will next focus on pay and securing a recognition agreement.

Members employed by Bouygues at King's College have taken two days' industrial action in their dispute over improving contractual terms and conditions. In 2019 the branch successfully campaigned to bring cleaners working for Servest and Security staff working for CIS back in-house but King's College did not agree to bring members of staff working for Bouygues in house at that time. Bouygues has a 25-year contract with King's College London (KCL) which comes to an end in August 2024. These members have worse terms and conditions than those working directly for

KCL so a claim to improve their terms and conditions was submitted pre-pandemic and resubmitted in January 2022. The employer made it clear they will not improve their terms and conditions. Running alongside the dispute the branch has submitted a claim to King’s College to bring these members back in house at the end of the contract; to date KCL has not made a decision and disputes are ongoing.

UNISON commissioned a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to go out to all universities in early 2023 which will ask questions about pension provision for staff, and results will be available and shared with branches during 2023. UNISON has received legal advice on local ballots around threats to pension schemes including those where outsourcing is threatened in order to change pension provision, with guidance from the Industrial Action Committee, and shared that with branches where such issues have arisen. The UNISON HE Branch Seminar included a presentation on an introduction to pensions with guidance on an organising response to such detrimental changes. A document outlining that organising strategy and guidance is currently being drafted and will be shared with branches during 2023, with guidance on a communication framework between branches and regions and relevant fact-sheets. UNISON is working with Labour Link to campaign for manifesto commitment to have Defined Benefit Pension Schemes in HEIs.

Schools Cuts

Schools continued to be a key priority for the union, with healthy recruitment figures driven by pay campaigns and other organising initiatives. For example the industrial action ballot in Scotland on Scottish Joint Council (SJC) pay led to a considerable increase in new joiners. Northern Ireland has seen a 140% increase in schools recruitment in the year to date, through initiatives like the integrated schools campaign.

Regions and branches once more held a variety of events to mark UNISON’s annual ‘Stars in our Schools’ day in November, highlighting the vital work our members in schools do. But with the risk of further government funding cuts, Stars in our Schools in 2022 included specific messaging and campaign actions around school funding – in addition to the usual Stars activities. An event was held in Parliament in the run up to the day to highlight school funding pressures and the impact they are having on school staff along with the cost-of-living crisis. Record levels of coverage were achieved for the cost-of-living crisis survey

released on the day with national, local and specialist press interest. Further schools funding campaign initiatives are planned for 2023 and beyond.

In Scotland, cuts to local government spending have a significant impact on members’ jobs. Tied to this are the impact of dysregulated behaviour on school support staff. Increasing reporting and reducing violence in schools will be a key part of our work in 2023.

UNISON was part of ground-breaking analysis to look specifically at the scale of the violence and aggression faced by teaching and classroom assistants in England, Scotland and Wales. University of Roehampton criminologist Dr Amanda Holt led the qualitative research that involved in-depth interviews with 16 teaching and classroom assistants. UNISON helped recruit the support staff who took part in the research. This report was covered on front page of the Guardian website. To accompany the report, UNISON produced a model policy for tackling, and reducing the risk of, violence in schools and a template survey for organisers.

UNISON also commissioned a headline piece of research from Portsmouth University that showed the changing nature of the teaching assistant (TA) role following the pandemic and the scale of the recruitment and retention crisis engulfing schools due to low pay.

In Cymru/Wales, UNISON continued to be the main union engaged in the Schools Social Partnership Forum (SSPF) Support Staff Workshop Board. The Workforce Board was set up to ensure that all recommendations of the Task & Finish Group Discussion Paper (2021) are actioned in an appropriate timescale. The Board will co-ordinate effective communication with all TAs across Wales, work with TAs to create updated job descriptions, and liaise with the Association of Directors of Education in Wales on TA job descriptions. A piece of work to create new job descriptions is under way to make them fit for purpose and relevant for schools in Wales.

In Scotland, COVID delayed government proposals to review the role of pupil support staff in schools but this was restarted late in 2022. UNISON representatives sit on the two main working groups.

UNISON continued to prioritise the health and safety of our members in schools. We ran a high-profile media campaign calling on the Westminster government to urgently provide capital funding to make schools safe and fit for purpose,

along with calling for more action on asbestos in schools, protection for members during heatwaves and risk mitigation measures to help combat infectious diseases.

We continued to prioritise our work on free school meals. Our 'Free School Meals for All' campaign in Northern Ireland is an important intervention aimed at reducing poverty for our members and their families. Northern Ireland have also led the way in developing an organising strategy for catering and cleaning staff in schools.

We continued to campaign on term time only issues, and UNISON intervened and led the arguments in the UK Supreme Court in *Harpur Trust v Brazel & UNISON*. In July 2022 the UK Supreme Court agreed with UNISON and upheld the decision of the Court of Appeal that all part-year workers must be entitled to at least 5.6 weeks' leave with no pro-rata reduction. Since the judgment, we have worked to ensure that all employers that employ term-time only staff are abiding by this decision. We have been particularly focusing on taking tribunal cases against private contractor employers where there have been instances of non-compliance. We have secured over £90m in back pay settlements for term-time only staff whose holiday entitlement and subsequently pay have been historically underpaid.

Throughout the year we continued to negotiate in national multi academy trusts (MATs) overseen by the Schools Committee. We also produced template materials to support implementation of the NJC pay award in academies, and legal guidance to challenge any employers refusing to backdate the award. In line with a motion passed at Local Government Conference, we established a working group consisting of reps from the Schools and NJC committees and regional schools leads. The group worked on updating guidance to support organising work in MATs that cross branch and regional boundaries.

Alongside our negotiations with employers, UNISON lobbied the Catholic Church and Church of England to meet their long-standing commitment to ensure all school staff in church schools are paid at least the real Living Wage. This included freedom of information requests, open letters to heads of the churches and a campaign lobby of the Church of England's Synod meeting. This pressure led to a commitment from the Church of England to work jointly with us to step up efforts to get all schools to pay the Living Wage.

Further education (FE)

No industrial action has taken place in colleges in the UK this year. A statutory ballot in Scotland on the 21/22 pay offer failed to meet the threshold with a 48% turnout. Some colleges in England met the turnout in statutory ballots, those being Bristol, Plymouth and Wirral which culminated in improved offers being made to members rather than statutory action taken.

Campaigning this year focused on the mental health motion that was passed at local government conference. We have continued to promote our mental health guidance for organisers in colleges by producing materials on supporting workplace reps and extending the FE chinwag to all reps. We have developed strong links with Citizens UK, we are running a mental health workshop for staff at the annual staff governors conference (for the second year running as the first one was very well-received) and we are running a fringe meeting at the 2023 Local Government conference on mental health of staff.

The Champions in our Colleges event was extended nationally on the 10th of February 2023 after a successful trial in Northern region in 2022. The event received good pick-up. Merchandise was developed and bought by a number of branches, the nominate-a-star competition received plenty of entries from every part of the UK and there was some activity on social media, mostly from Northern Region. This good start gives us a strong platform to build on for 2023/24.

In England, colleges have been reclassified as public sector organisations for statistical purposes, with an admission by the Westminster government that incorporation in 1993 was not the right decision for the sector. This reclassification will limit colleges' borrowing and they will have to abide by the public sector senior pay controls.

Early years

Full-time nursery provision for children under the age of two costs almost two-thirds of a parent's weekly take-home pay in England. Childcare costs on top of rising household bills are putting working parents, but particularly women, in a very difficult position.

UNISON's research shows that many public service workers are having to take second or third jobs to pay for childcare.

Some are leaving work altogether because they cannot afford nursery fees.

The government needs to fix the broken childcare market, with proper funding and universal access and address the acute staffing issues in the sector. UNISON has around 50,000 members working in childcare/early years, the majority of them are women. Valuing the jobs that women do is important. This means paying them properly.

UNISON supported the ‘March of the Mummies’ of 29 October, organized by Pregnant then Screwed. UNISON members volunteered to be stewards and speakers in cities across the UK.

UNISON is working with the Women’s Budget Group in a coalition of 28 voluntary sector early years and childcare organisations, academics and unions representing women who work in childcare to lobby and campaign for accessible and affordable childcare.

The coalition seeks a short-term Government intervention to ‘rescue’ the sector, but believes that this must also be combined with long-term ‘reform’ so that our early education and childcare sector delivers for everyone and ensures that:

- All children have equal access to high-quality early years education
- All mothers and fathers can get into and get on in work
- All businesses can access the talent and skills they need to boost their productivity and help to grow the economy
- All early years professionals receive decent pay and conditions for the education and care they provide
- All providers can operate at healthy, sustainable levels and support the demand for provision

We have briefed UK government Ministers and opposition MPs in the run up to the March 2023 Budget.

In Scotland, the early learning and childcare expansion has now been fully implemented; as predicted the funding mechanism for the private, voluntary and independent sectors has affected the financial viability of many providers. They are lobbying hard to have local authorities removed from the process. Low pay remains an issue in this sector. Scottish Government funding only provides for the living wage for funded hours. The government has set up a working group on fair work in the sector with UNISON representation.

Energy and the Cost of Living Crisis Campaign

The work of the Energy Service Group in 2022/23 has taken place against a backdrop of a cost-of-living crisis which has seen energy prices to consumers rocket. The energy price cap which regulates the default energy tariff has risen from £1971 for an average dual fuel customer in April 2022 to some £4279 in April 2023. Such an unprecedented increase required the Government to intervene to support customers. This has softened the increase considerably, but the response was short term and will be phased out in 2023. Consumers will still be paying more for energy and the levels of household energy debt are on the increase. In fact, recent coverage of the pre-payment meter scandal has shown that self-disconnections are a big challenge for many low-income households and this data is not collected.

In addition to the increase in energy costs, the energy standing charge has also increased and is passing on cost from energy supplier failures through its mutualisation of loss policy.

UNISON has met on a regular basis with the energy regulator OFGEM and throughout the year has raised a number of key issues that impact our members. Not least the financial instability of the system, customer debt, future employment, decarbonization plans and future resilience.

We have continued to campaign for a big increase in investment in energy efficiency via a national program of door to door works to ensure UK homes are fit for purpose. UNISON have continued to press this policy response at every opportunity and have worked with various stakeholders to push this policy response. We have also supported the concept of a right to energy for all citizens and an end to self-disconnections.

Energy Retail Supply

The UK continues to operate a very fragmented and liberalised energy market. As a result the key employers UNISON have recognition agreements with and who are mostly legacy suppliers, have remained under pressure. Thousands of unionised jobs have disappeared from this sector and those employers who remain are investing in ever more advanced technology to be more efficient without employing more people. This can be seen at British Gas, EON and EDF who have adopted new technology

platforms that are less reliant on people, so jobs are being reduced. We have worked with employers to manage these transitions working to avoid compulsory redundancy.

In the past year we have seen yet more suppliers go under including the largest to date – Bulb Energy. As yet, the full costs to consumers is unknown but has been predicted at some £200 per customer.

UNISONs largest energy employer is British Gas and because of the closure of smaller rivals and transfer of customers it has managed to grow its customer base for the first time in years. As a result, some recruitment is now taking place after many jobs had been lost.

Energy Transmission and Distribution

We are seeing yet more changes in energy transmission and distribution both in Gas and Electricity. National Grid has completed the sale of its Gas Transmission operations to the Macquarie group. This standalone employer is now called National Gas Transmission and UNISON is the largest trade union in this important energy infrastructure business. In selling the Gas Transmission business National Grid completed the purchase of Western Power Distribution and this is now known as NGED. The Electricity System Operator function within National Grid is also separating and being taken in public ownership as a strategic national resource. This is likely to complete in 2024.

Energy Policy

In the past year, UNISON worked with both British Gas and EDF to develop a charter of good practice to support women in energy workplaces make progress in developing operational careers. The development of the charter culminated in a parliamentary launch event at which members, employers and MPs participated. The charter is now being used as a building block to develop a better policy framework, around which women in office-based roles will be able to take up operational opportunities to develop careers.

We continue to engage heavily with a range of stakeholders on the matters of energy policy, affordability, climate change and the impact on the energy sector of decarbonisation and the need for a just transition for energy workers.

We continue to progress 3 key priorities:

1. A national program of energy efficiency measures in domestic properties to ensure they reach EPC C rating, fully funded
2. Public ownership of retail supply to support customers with the energy transition and reduce fuel poverty
3. Progress the development of green Hydrogen Gas to support the hydrogen economy and hydrogen heat in homes.

UNISON remains deeply concerned that present policies in place to support decarbonization are inadequate and set to fail. Without more significant support from the Government, the UK will also be squeezed out of necessary international investment and progress as a result of developments in the USA and the EU on financial subsidies for green development.

Water, Environment and Transport

The Water, Environment and Transport sectors face the same challenges as other sectors which is rising inflation and cost-of-living crisis, exacerbated by energy price increases. Unfortunately, pay settlement for 2022/2023 has not risen in line with inflation, in recent months they have been increased in industrial disputes caused by years of real term cuts in wages over a decade. An example is the Environment Agency (EA) took strike action for the first time at the back of a poor pay award of 3% (2%+£345). UNISON in conjunction with other recognised trade unions are campaigning on this matter to showcase poor remuneration in the Agency which is having a massive impact on recruiting and retention, and the inability of the EA to deliver on its environmental policy due to cuts to funding.

UNISON held regular members and activists' webinars to keep members updated on the campaign, and bulletins are published on a weekly basis. We have used different platforms to escalate our dispute such as parliamentary questions, a roundtable event in Parliament with MPs and other stakeholders, also letters from the General Secretary to previous and present Secretary of States (SoS) and last but not least through the media to raise public awareness on the important jobs our members do for the environment. We meet regularly with the employer, together with other

union colleagues to assess the impacts of the industrial action through which we continue to press for a resolution of our dispute.

On other areas of our collective bargaining we continue to challenge the employer on issues that are pertinent to our members such as lease car eligibility review which has been going on in the last 12 months, at the time of writing.

Water Industry

Pay settlements in this sector for 2022/2023 on average was 4% which again is nowhere near rising rate of inflation. We have also seen a lot of reorganisations across water companies as a result of Ofwat final determination and companies fined for sewage slippage into rivers. So far, the reorganisation has not resulted in job losses with the exception of one employer (Anglian Water) that cut 33 jobs, only one member was affected in this process. 2023/2024 pay talks have commenced in some companies, the offers ranges from 7%.

In the Transport sector, over the years the three employers covered by the National Bargaining Framework submits their response on pay collectively which they align to Local Government NJC awards, but 2022/2023 settlement was made by individual employers – which are WYCA flat rate of £2000, WMCA and TfGM mirror LG NJC award of £1,925 and an extra day annual leave. For background, we negotiate on pay and terms and conditions within three employers: West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA). This used to cover all 6 metropolitan transport authorities, but they have dropped off over the years, and as they are now becoming increasingly different from each other they are looking to exit from the bargaining arrangements. No formal notice has been served, yet.

There is a period of stability amongst most bus companies at the present time. However, this may be the calm before the storm. The Government's £2 single fare scheme came into effect from 1 January initially to end on 31 March but has been extended for three months. Most companies are participating but are cautious about its success. There are some companies who are not participating, most notably Rotala in the Midlands and South East and some large independent operators. This is mainly because of the reduction in revenue and inadequate funding.

Police and Justice

2022 saw the 20th anniversary of the creation of the role of police community support officer (PCSO) by the then Labour government. The Police and Justice Service Group seized this opportunity to run a major campaign to celebrate and defend PCSOs. The PCSO workforce in England has declined by nearly half since 2010 following government funding cuts. Our PCSO20 Campaign, which was supported by UNISON's Campaign Fund, was launched in both the Westminster Parliament and the Welsh Senedd in July 2022. We lobbied national and local politicians, organised celebrations in many forces, produced English and Welsh language commemorative booklets and badges for members and co-hosted an awards ceremony with the National Police Chiefs Council and the College of Policing. In the Probation Service we continued to campaign to in-source the failing double waking night cover contracts and have had success in respect of work at some locations.

Chapter Two

Supporting our branches

Mass Mobilisation – Movement tool

It was identified, as part of the Organising Tools workstream within the Member Engagement Programme (MEP), that the union needed to modernise its “Get Out The Vote” (GOTV) operation to meet the challenge of potentially having to mobilise a large number of members in a short period of time. Emergent learning and approaches from other organisations and campaigns were taken on board, as well as existing learning from within UNISON from historical disputes and our own operational experiences. A new system was rapidly sought, commissioned and piloted called “Movement”. The new system attempts to remove historical frustrations and constraints enabling a large number of activists and staff to participate in supporting GOTV campaigns. It also underpins UNISON taking an increasingly data driven approach to strategy and tactics, as well as giving members a more structured, secure and personalised engagement with UNISON around participating in industrial action ballots.

Branch Support And Organising Fund

The Branch Support and Organising Fund (BSOF) launched in Spring 2022 and projects have started to be approved by regional committees and staff advertised for and appointed where appropriate. This fund aims to kick start new projects led by Branches and across Regions. NEC Guidance has been produced and an on-line application form created. Conference in 2021 set the Fund at 2% of subscription income each year and for 2023 this will see about £3.45m shared between twelve Regions, dependent upon their membership size. Funds can carry over from year to year and the balance of historic Regional Pool accounts are still available. Branches are encouraged to use their Organising Framework returns to indicate their interest in applying to the fund. Bids can be received from individual branches, groups of branches and regional Self Organised Groups and young members. Decision making is led by regional lay bodies. Regional Secretaries decide how to resource the successful bids for regional staff. Bids are encouraged to promote growing the union through branch and collective organising and recruitment initiatives and campaigns; as well as developing long term sustainable organisational capacity.

Member Contact Tool for activists

The Member Contact Tool (MCT) continues to support organising and recruitment activities both via phone and importantly on the ground by activists and staff. This has proven especially beneficial in capturing information and updating membership details to support industrial action ballots.

Organising Framework

The annual organising framework continues to be a key partnership working tool to help branches and regions develop organising initiatives and campaigns. Work is underway to explore how to make best use of the data and consideration into how the organising framework can be improved to support organising recommendations arising from the ORSD project and MEP.

CaseWeb system for branches

The implementation of the 50% CaseWeb subsidy for smaller branches (2000 members or less) went smoothly in 2022 and there has been an increase in take up. The full fee is £72 per month for the UNISON case management system and signing up is voluntary. 254 branches have signed up. These represent about 30% branches but cover about 40% of UNISON members. Promotion to branches will continue in 2023. Caseweb is also used by regional offices, Professional Services Unit, Pensions Unit and Managers in Partnership (MiP).

An Expenses System for Branches

Branch Resources Review and the subsequent motion passed at Conference promised the provision of an online branch expenses module within the Online Branch Accounts systems (OLBA). This new tool was designed to help and support branch treasurers and activists by making end to end expense processing quicker and easier to save time and effort. The online expense system links directly into banking records and the reconciliations process as well as the accounting and reporting functions.

The system was developed and was being piloted as reported this time last year. Branches were encouraged to sign up for the pilots with the training help and support that

was provided by colleagues in Finance. After a slow start, the pilot was relaunched, with over 100 branches signing up to participate. This enabled more robust testing leading to further developments and enhancements and we thank all the branches that came forward. A training session was organised which encouraged more active participation and better feedback, this session was recorded and shared with those unable to attend. The feedback received from the pilot has been very useful and largely positive, leading to a comprehensive log of required improvements but also an understanding that the system is heading in the right direction. The expense system subsequently required some modification as OLBA was migrated onto a new platform recently as a priority and further testing is being undertaken post the OLBA systems migration. It is anticipated that the expenses system will now be available to early adopters in April/May of 2023 with a full or phased launch thereafter.

Bargaining support

Over the last year, the Bargaining Support Group has developed cross-service group guidance that seeks to provide negotiators and branches with concise practical advice on all key aspects of staff terms and conditions.

The guides are continually being remodelled to highlight the best terms achieved across the union as a reference point for negotiations, as well as offering model letters, surveys and agreements or policies as ready-to-hand templates in conducting negotiations.

Highlights over the year have included new guidance on insourcing, lodging pay claims that incorporate the latest economic data, obtaining the best terms for any shift to home and hybrid working, ensuring vehicle allowances respond to escalating petrol prices, addressing to the advance of new technology in the workplace, and negotiating for race equality as part of a raft of fresh materials for the Year of Black Workers.

In addition to its publication of general guides, Bargaining Support continually responds to enquiries from branches and officers, offering particular assistance in account analysis to help with the assembling of pay claims.

Bargaining Support's other major areas of work over the year have included the development of UNISON's evidence to the Low Pay Commission on the National Minimum Wage rates, maintaining the Bargaining Database as a central

repository of agreements and promoting our services across the union.

Strategic organising unit (SOU)

The SOU defines strategic organising as “building member participation and power within an escalating plan to win a specific material change”. The SOU seeks to increase strategic organising activity and capacity across the union by working in collaboration with Service Groups, Regions and Branches to deliver campaigns in line with national organising priorities. Although a relatively small team, the SOU aims to have a big impact by testing organising initiatives, capturing key lessons and sharing best practice across the union.

SOU activity in 2022/3 has been primarily in support of the pilot organising initiatives of the Organising, Recruitment, Strategy Development project (ORSD). See Appendix for separate ORSD report. Organising projects in targeted English Multi Academy Trusts (MATs), devolved national social care, and NHS pay fair for patient care campaigns across the union have tested UNISON's organising capacity and captured key lessons to inform national organising strategy recommendations. Successes include significant numbers of new workplace activists in Wales social care, a successful dispute with a Wales social care provider around real living wage payments, a new national activist forum in MAT United Learning Trust, and support for Health Care Assistant re-banding campaigns in Eastern, South East, and North West Regions.

In addition to ORSD pilots, the SOU lead an NHS ballot turnout campaign in Luton & Beds to learn key lessons from an organising approach to ballot turnout. The activity achieved the highest national increase from pledge to turnout, engaged 27 active members in phonebank activity, and recruited 12 new workplace activists. A full evaluation was circulated to help inform future ballot activity.

SOU has supported activity in Lancashire County Council Branch to take a campaigns based approach to activist identification and development. Active campaigns include the real living wage, mileage rates, re-banding for Social Care Support Staff and a new Social Worker forum, with significant organising lessons to be shared across wider Local Government Service Group.

Outside of employer organising campaigns, SOU continues to run the online “Organising Space” and the “Mobile Organising Unit” Van. The SOU also has responsibility for developing UNISON’s work on organising amongst migrant workers. Members can now identify and update their membership record as a migrant worker using the following link, which will enable UNISON to target advice, support and information more effectively. UNISON Migrant Worker Network

Organising & Recruitment Strategy Development project recommendations

The strategy consists of a 10 Point Plan to deliver successful organising to scale:

1. A UNISON definition of ‘organising’.
2. ‘One UNISON’ organising priorities with effective planning and resourced implementation.
3. Equality as a workplace organising priority.
4. Communications that emphasise collective participation and action, in addition to expert advice and support.
5. A culture of high member participation.
6. Urgently increase activist identification and recruitment.
7. A renewed focus on activist support and development.
8. Increased member recruitment.
9. Improved member retention.
10. Consistent and best practice organising tools, techniques, and training.

*see appendix 3 for more detail on ORSD.

Merlin system replacing RMS

RMS upgrade

The union’s new membership system – MERLIN – is a modern, flexible and efficient system that will be available for all Branches and Staff this summer. It means everyone accesses the same system and thereby promotes collaboration between Branches, Regions and UNISON centre.

The scope of the MERLIN project is far reaching and complex, with multiple dependencies. Not only is the union implementing a new membership system, we are also adopting the latest security protocols, linking Merlin to a modern e-learning platform called Totara and upgrading our reporting tools. As part of this ongoing infrastructure upgrade, Branches can now deliver, automated secure workplace reports to their Stewards.

All of this must be done whilst ensuring system continuity for all other union applications such as CaseWeb and the online conference system, which are dependent on the union’s membership data.

The live Merlin system will be launched during National Delegate Conference and demonstrations will be available. The Merlin rollout is over three phases, the first consisting of Branches and Staff in the North West and Northern Ireland Regions with other Regions, Branches and UNISON Centre following.

Conferences After Lockdown

National Conferences have resumed after the pandemic. See Appendix for Conference attendances. Initially these conferences were delivered using an online platform but have now resumed fully to face-to-face conferences.

Online Travel booking for Conferences

The Conference Office have worked with our current travel provider to upgrade the online booking service to include conference travel.

Branches and Regions have had access to the online platform for some time, but with the upgrade of the system, they are now able to book travel directly on the system for conference travel. Using the system should save branches time and represent some cost savings to the Union.

Reasonable Adjustments at Conference s

All reasonable adjustments at Conferences are currently processed through the OCS on a conference-by-conference basis.

The Conference Office has started some work on the system, to give it the ability to “hold” the information, and to automatically pre-populate when the delegate registers for conference the next time. This reasonable adjustment mini-passport will save delegates time and support our Disabled members at conference.

Chapter 3

Supporting our Members

Member Engagement Programme

The Member Engagement Programme (MEP) is an ambitious series of projects aiming to improve members' experience of the union. It is deploying technology and data to offer better support in a variety of ways, including helping members become active in our organising and decision-making structures, in accessing representation, or in participation in our political campaigns. The programme has been conceived with member needs at the heart of its delivery and a key objective is to ensure systems and data are integrated so that interaction is seamless, relevant and intuitive.

The new membership system, known as Merlin, is a key MEP project in the delivery of the programme enabling improvements to digital services and tools and overall membership administration.

Alongside this, a digital project is looking at substantially improving UNISON's digital capabilities, for example the ease of use, access and functionality of MyUNISON and other self-service portals, the UNISON website, and the communications content and tools we use. The intention is for communication to be more purposeful, better personalised to members' needs and interests - while improving overall quality and standards of professionalism.

A data project is looking at what information UNISON captures, how and what it is used for and how we can become more data-driven in supporting UNISON's aims and objectives. At the end of the programme, the union will be in a position to measure, understand and improve through targeted interventions area such as membership recruitment and retention, member satisfaction, participation in democratic processes, campaign engagement and activist engagement.

The programme is working closely with the Organising and Recruitment Strategy Project (ORSD) to ensure that necessary technology and data are in place to underpin the aspiration of the union's new Organising and Recruitment Strategy.

Recruitment and membership statistics via the 2022 Annual Line Count Process

Our full Membership as at 30th September 2022 was 1,210,250 whilst the membership for 2021 was 1,229,000. Therefore, membership decreased by 18,750 or 1.5% in the reported period. We expect this figure to be within a tolerance of $\pm 0.5\%$ so UNISON's membership figure is between 1,216,178 and 1,204,076.

It is important to note, our growth during Quarter four of 2022 will not be reflected in these figures as we take the membership snapshot on 30th September.

Throughout 2022, as business as usual, DOCAS records are cleansed by the IMPS unit, Regions and Branches. We have 6,533 valid DOCAS employers. Those employers with less than 200 members and not cleansed by September 2022, were targeted for cleansing between October and December 2022.

On 30th September 2022, a snapshot was taken of all the records we hold on RMS, including the lapsed members. Our current membership is spread over 36,800 employers, a slight increase from last year. The only variable to ensure we have an accurate count as at 30th September, is the DOCAS membership as we receive the September paying membership in the fourth quarter.

Regions and the national IMPS unit then DOCAS cleanse those employers who have not been cleansed as at 30th September. The IMPS unit cleanse all the largest DOCAS employers in the fourth quarter. Once complete we then retrospectively amended the snapshot DOCAS members who were lapsed or reinstated in the fourth quarter.

National employers

The membership figure for national employers is around 235,600 and is split across the Regions as shown in Table 1. The Regional allocation is taken directly from the RMS system.

Table: Distribution of national employer members by Region

Region	Membership
Eastern	22,351
East Midlands	24,790
London	36,254
Northern	18,393
Northern Ireland	1,911
North West	30,091
Scotland	6,932
South East	21,803
South West	15,812
Wales	6,225
West Midlands	26,325
Yorkshire & Humberside	24,731

Regional membership

On completion of the process, the Regional membership for 2022 is shown in Table below.

Table: Membership by Region

Region	2022 Full members
Eastern	80,500
East Midlands	79,000
Greater London	114,750
Northern	71,250
Northern Ireland	44,250
North West	176,500
Scotland	159,750
South East	96,000
South West	77,000
Wales	84,750
West Midlands	104,750
Yorkshire & Humberside	121,500

This excludes retired members.

Service group membership

Table 3: 2022 Membership by Region and service group

Region	Community	High Ed	Health	Police & Justice	Local Government	Energy	Water, Env, Trans
Eastern	5,250	1,500	29,750	3,750	39,250	250	750
East Midlands	3,750	2,000	27,500	3,500	39,750	2,250	-
London	10,000	5,500	45,500	500	51,500	500	1,250
Northern	4,500	1,750	30,250	2,000	31,500	500	500
Northern Ireland	2,000	250	33,250	-	9,000	-	-
North West	11,000	4,750	71,250	6,500	78,750	1,500	2,750
Scotland	10,500	3,250	56,000	2,250	84,750	1,500	1,500
South East	7,000	3,250	31,750	5,000	47,500	1,000	750
South West	6,500	2,250	29,000	4,250	33,750	500	750
Wales	5,000	1,750	30,500	3,250	42,500	500	1,000
West Midlands	5,250	2,250	42,000	3,500	49,250	1,000	1,500
Yorkshire	7,250	4,000	45,750	4,500	57,500	750	2,000
Total	78,000	32,500	472,750	39,000	565,250	10,000	12,750
2021 Total	82,250	32,250	477,000	39,000	575,000	10,750	12,750

Turnover rate

The membership turnover rate is between 15% and 15.3% in 2022, and this is a rise compared to the previous year's 13.4%. Historically our turnover rate has been around 14%.

JCWI Immigration help line

One membership service that has been growing in importance is our immigration advice line provided through the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI). Members can access the service by contacting UNISONdirect and it is available for any member who has an immigration related query. The helpline has provided vital advice to members on issues ranging from their work visa renewal, EU Settled Status application, right to family life issues and dealing with chronic Home Office delays processing paperwork. The helpline is an important strand within UNISON's organising, recruiting and campaigning work around migrant worker rights.

Organising migrant workers

Migrant workers experience the same issues as other workers but also face the intersecting challenges of government legislation and policies which make them more vulnerable in the workplace and in wider UK society. To ensure expert advice, support and solidarity for UNISON migrant worker members, UNISON has renewed our funding commitment to the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) advice line, ensuring access to migrant rights advice for UNISON members and their families.

In 2023 the UNISON Strategic Organising Unit also launched the UNISON Migrant Worker Network. An informal network of UNISON members with a first-generation immigrant background including overseas and migrant workers, EU settled status workers and workers who have subsequently naturalised as British citizens or who have indefinite leave to remain. Members can now update their membership record as a migrant worker using a simple link / QR code below. The network will enable UNISON to target relevant migrant right advice and updates more effectively and encourage and support migrant worker members to increase UNISON membership and participation within their own migrant worker communities.

For further details and / or organising materials relating

to migrant worker organising please contact the Strategic Organising Unit at s.organisingunit@unison.co.uk

Using the law to fight for our members

Introduction

UNISON's in-house legal team saw another busy year in 2022, continuing to defend our members in court and advocate for worker and trade union rights.

The in-house legal team also facilitates the legal services scheme which provides representation and support to our members on an individual basis in a number of different areas, including employment, criminal, and personal injury.

Additionally, the team supports and runs large scale and groundbreaking litigation in the highest courts in the UK, as well as challenging the laws and regulations that are introduced by the UK government which threaten individual and collective rights.

Success at the UK Supreme Court

Following the employer's appeal, UNISON continued to intervene and led the arguments in the UK Supreme Court in *Harpur Trust v Brazel & UNISON*.

In July 2022 the UK Supreme Court agreed with UNISON and upheld the decision of the Court of Appeal that all part-year workers must be entitled to at least 5.6 weeks' leave with no pro-rata reduction.

Since the judgment, we have been working with and advising colleagues in Branches and Regions to ensure that all employers that employ term-time only staff are abiding by this decision. We have been particularly focusing on taking tribunal cases against private contractor employers where there have been instances of non-compliance.

Using this decision and the Part-Time Worker Regulations (a piece of EU derived legislation that this Government may eradicate in 2024), and employing a combination of legal action and negotiation, Legal Services and the Education Services' team, working with branches and regions, have secured over £90 million pounds in back pay settlements for term-time only staff whose holiday entitlement and subsequently pay have been historically underpaid.

In January 2023, the Government launched a consultation on changing the regulations for holiday pay for part-year, irregular-hours, and agency workers. These proposals could potentially amend the law in respect of statutory holiday entitlement for term-time workers and negate the decision of the Supreme Court in the Brazel case. The Government has estimated that this is likely to make a net saving to business of £113 million pounds per year. This is therefore likely to result in significant cuts in the pay for part year workers. UNISON has vehemently opposed these changes and is committed to challenging any proposals that will cut the pay of these predominantly female staff.

Personal injury settlements

The UNISON legal services' scheme provides legal advice and representation to members who have suffered work related personal injuries, as a result of their employers' negligence, including injuries arising from assaults at work, manual handling, trips, falls and needle stick injuries.

The legal support our members receive through the scheme is vitally important as it enables them to obtain damages for their pain and suffering as well as for their financial losses. Settling their case against their employer, allows them to focus on their recovery while still holding their employers to account and receiving the right compensation for what they have been through.

For example, a UNISON member suffered a severe injury to their foot and ankle at work, eventually leading to the termination of their employment. The member's employer strongly resisted the claim for compensation, but eventually offered the member £190,000, which was accepted.

In another case, a member was assaulted at their place of work, leading to significant physical and psychiatric injuries. UNISON commenced litigation on their behalf, and following extensive negotiations, the case settled with the member receiving £315,000.

Pursuing these personal injury claims (and obtaining these damages) not only assists those individual members to obtain what they are entitled to, but also promotes very important wider benefits, such as safer working conditions for all public sector workers.

Between November 2021 and November 2022, UNISON assisted both its members and members' families to secure just under £30 million pounds in personal injury

settlements, spread between roughly 2000 claims.

Upcoming judicial review of Government regulations

In July 2022, the Government amended the law that previously prohibited companies from temporarily replacing striking workers with agency workers. This law change was made without consultation, undermines trade union action, and could have dangerous consequences, as skilled workers will be replaced by less experienced agency workers.

UNISON applied to the High Court for permission to bring a legal challenge against the Government for these regulations, arguing that they are unlawful and violate fundamental trade union rights. In December 2022, the High Court granted permission to UNISON to bring this challenge at a High Court Hearing which will be held on 3 and 4 May 2023.

The case brought by UNISON will be heard alongside cases brought by the NASUWT and the TUC, on behalf of eleven other unions.

Fire and Rehire Victories

UNISON Legal Services represented one of its members in Wales to obtain a ground-breaking pair of judgments to prove an employer's attempt to force a reduction in annual leave entitlement by fire-and-rehire was unlawful.

UNISON Legal Services will be opposing the Government's consultation on the 'fire and rehire' code which we say will penalise good employers, without any sanctions for bad employers.

Supreme Court considering claims of historical underpay at Northern Irish Police Service

UNISON Legal Services also intervened in a case that was heard by the Supreme Court, which may result in arrears amounting to approximately £30 million being paid to Northern Irish Police Officers for historical underpayment of holiday pay.

UNISON led key submissions to the Supreme Court on whether historical annual leave taken by employees of the Police Service could form an unbroken 'series' of deductions. If the Supreme Court accepts these arguments,

the Police Service could be liable to pay all underpayments relating to that series of annual leave stretching back to 1998. A decision is due soon on this judgment that will apply to all employers.

Gearing up for round four at the Supreme Court

Following a problematic Court of Appeal decision handed down in March 2022, in November 2022, UNISON was successfully granted the right to appeal UNISON member Fiona Mercer’s case to the Supreme Court. The hearing will take place on 12 and 13 December 2023.

Currently, due to the Court of Appeal decision, there is potentially room for organisations to impose detriments on their workers (short of dismissal) for participating in strikes. If successful, this UNISON-led appeal will potentially expand the protections provided to striking workers so that along with protection from dismissal, they cannot suffer from unfair detriment for taking part in strike action.

Legal Advice and Representation

UNISON is running employment tribunal claims on behalf of 5,300 members – this includes individual and group claims.

Between January 2022 and January 2023 Thompsons concluded 244 matters for UNISON members. Over two thirds (178) resulted in a settlement and recovery of nearly £3.2m for members including over £1.3m for unfair dismissal and almost £400,000 for race discrimination.

In 2022, Thompsons advised on 129 completed discrimination matters for UNISON members across a wide range of protected characteristics including disability (42), race (62), and sex (14) sexual orientation (3), and maternity (5). Of these, nearly 100 were successfully concluded in settlements, recovering over £1m.

In addition, the legal scheme extends to criminal law matters and in 2022, UNISON assisted 476 members under our criminal law advice and assistance scheme. This service supports UNISON members who are in the harrowing position of defending work-related criminal allegations.

Other parts of our legal scheme are also of great value to our membership. Last year alone, we helped over 5,000 (5169) members through our free initial legal advice scheme which deals with non-work-related issues. We also assisted

over 5,300 (5061 wills, 268 conveyancing) members under our wills and conveyancing service, offering free standard wills to our members and discounted more complex wills and probate services as well as discounted conveyancing services to our members and their families.

Aside from the comprehensive assistance members are given with employment law issues, one other big benefit of our scheme is the UNISON personal injury legal scheme. This covers personal injury legal assistance following an accident or injury at work, as well as injuries arising from work related stress and bullying, and other industrial diseases such as asbestos and work related upper limb disorders. The personal injury service also extends to members and their families for non-work-related accidents – such as road traffic accidents and slipping and tripping injuries. Additionally, it covers initial legal advice and assistance for cases involving clinical negligence.

In 2022, we supported around 4200 members and their family members within this part of the legal scheme. During this period, we also successfully concluded thousands of these personal injury cases, ensuring our members and their family members received the compensation they deserved. Last year this amounted to just under £30m (£29,413,736) of compensation.

Industrial Action Ballot Summary

As set out in the pay and disputes summary of Chapter [1], the cost-of-living crisis and soaring inflation in 2022 prompted increased industrial unrest. 2022 saw one of the busiest years in UNISON’s history for industrial ballots, with over 750,000 ballots sent to members.

This included major disputes and ballots in higher education, health in Northern Ireland as well as Scotland, England and Wales, local government in Scotland and ballots at major employers such as AQA and SQA, Glasgow City Council and the Environment Agency.

UNISON won significant improvements in pay increases in 2022 linked to industrial action. At Sandwell Leisure where the employer returning workers to national pay, terms and conditions after a 20-month campaign of industrial action and lobbying local politicians.

In Yorkshire staff at the National Coal Mining Museum – including ex miners who took part in the strikes of the 80s

and 90s – won a 10.5% pay rise after 5 days of strike action. The UNISON NCMME strikers were joined on the picket line by Arthur Scargill.

The Government’s attack on workers’ rights through increasingly draconian anti-trade union legislation means it remains hard and is getting harder to reach ballot thresholds through postal-only ballots. However, the success and lessons learned in strategic disputes, for example in the ambulance sector, demonstrates that at its best UNISON can organise to win despite the conditions in which we operate.

The Member Liaison Unit which coordinates and administers industrial ballots across the union remains committed to working with our sectors and service groups to ensure we can secure the best outcomes for our members through industrial action and continues to work with the NEC Industrial Action Committee to produce and update guidance to ensure that members are properly supported during the difficult process of balloting and taking strike action.

UNISONdirect

In 2022, UIA insurance – the company which ran UNISONdirect (UD) – informed UNISON that they were in financial difficulty following the pandemic and would be running down their business in the hope they could sell their insurance policies to another company. Therefore, they could no longer honour the contract to provide the UNISONdirect contact centre. UNISON moved swiftly to protect this service and considered a number of options for UD including seeking a third-party provider or bringing the service in-house. Following protracted negotiations, it was agreed that UNISON would purchase the UNISONdirect holding company for a nominal fee. UNISON completed this purchase in September 2022.

UNISON’s priority was always to protect the UD service for members, as well as protecting jobs of the approximately sixty staff who work for UNISONdirect in Stevenage. A management board made up of NEC members and company directors have been appointed. Operationally, UNISON is now bringing together its senior officers to deal with management and operational issues, including splitting the technology and telephony from UIA insurance without affecting the service to members.

In the meantime, UNISONdirect has had one of its busiest years on record both in terms of calls and web contacts. In 2022 UNISONdirect dealt with 331,506 contacts from members. The busiest month for phone calls was November 2022 – during the health ballot – when UNISONdirect agents handled 13,706 contacts in a single month.

Web queries continue to increase in popularity as a way for members to get in touch. In 2022, we handled 78,351 online queries, an increase of 72% on 2021. In 2022, 12,869 members spoke to an agent via webchat. As before, UNISONdirect remains a key channel for people joining the union – with the option of being able to discuss joining or ask questions about the application in real time with an agent via webchat while completing the form online.

In 2022, UNISONdirect triaged and completed 89% of all queries without needing to refer the member to the branch. Branch referrals accounted for 11% (36,658) of our contacts.

Of the types of calls we received this year, UNISONdirect received 25,300 enquiries about members’ workplace contracts, which is an increase of 20% from 2021. Over 11,000 calls were for information on sickness pay and absence. Meanwhile, almost 5,000 members were put in touch with Thompsons to access free legal advice. We issued over 3,000 replacement membership cards and updated the personal details of 29,168 members and assisted 15,000 members to change employers, ensuring that they remained in membership and ballot ready.

There for You

UNISON’s charity, There for You, supports UNISON members and their families in times of unexpected financial hardship. 2022 saw us witnessing the consequences of the cost-of-living crisis. Rising living costs meant that many members were forced to change their spending, cutting back wherever they could while others had to rely on increased borrowing just to make ends meet.

During 2022, we spent £1,024,739 helping 5,196 members: providing financial help to those who needed it most. Although this represents an 18% decrease in grant expenditure from last year. It is a 48% increase from our pre-pandemic (2019) grant awards: reflecting the impact that both the increase in energy costs has had, as well as the pandemic continued to have. Once again, our grant

programmes prove to be a critical means of support for many of our most vulnerable members. However, none of this would have been possible without the additional financial support and donations from UNISON, and the generosity of branches, regions, and individual members.

Grant type summary	£
Crisis payments (member has no money for food or fuel)	£8,989
CoVid Response Fund	£281,960
Energy Support Grants	£145,575
Special payments including hospital travel, car repairs	£13,189
Help with essential living costs	£154,356
Housing costs	£16,170
Household items – white goods and furniture	£70,181
Disability, health, medical, wellbeing	£12,614
Household maintenance & services	£16,362
Clothing	£5,920
Priority debt including rent, mortgage, council tax, debt relief and bankruptcy	£52,404
School uniform grants	£124,020
Winter fuel grants	£101,200
Funeral costs	£17,351
Other	£4,448
TOTAL	£1,024,739

Member feedback:

“Please may I offer you a huge heartfelt THANK YOU. I emailed at my lowest point in my life feeling I was begging for money, both yourself your teams are the most caring, compassionate and none judgemental service and people I have ever had the pleasure in having to talk and communicate with, the grant I received is more than I ever imagined it would be, my family will GREATLY appreciate all your help and advice all of which I’m taking and accepting of now, thank you for everything.”

“Many, many thanks for processing my application and getting back to me. This has taken a massive weight off my shoulders, and I am honestly so very thankful.”

“We would like to say a big thank you to Unison for helping. The £500 grant was totally unexpected and much appreciated. The information you provided about other organisations that might help is also useful and we will be looking into those.”

“Speechless. I have tears streaming down my cheeks.”

I have just looked at my bank waiting for my wages to go in and just noticed your amazing funds that were credited to my account. Xx wow. Xx I can not thank you enough. That will put me on the road to recovery. Xxx I will sleep with smile. xxx blessings. Thanks again ...wow”

“Thank you so much for your help and support during this difficult time. The communication from you was excellent and you really made me feel at ease. I cannot thank you enough for the grant I received to help me through my financial struggles, whilst I am still unable to return to work.”

UNISON College

A highlight of 2022 was the formal launch of UNISON College at a special fringe meeting at National Delegate Conference. Since then, our programmes for member learning and activist training have continued to grow and are now well embedded in the ‘business as usual’ workload of UNISON Learning and Organising Services and of Regions.

A wide range of new courses, for activists and for members, has been introduced. These include: Sexual Orientation Discrimination Law; Gender Identity Discrimination Law; Negotiating a Learning Agreement; Exploring the Imposter Phenomenon; Maths for Nurses; and Bereavement by Suicide. Further courses are under development.

During the summer of 2022 we piloted an innovative careers information, advice and guidance service in partnership with Learning Curve, and opened this up to all members in early 2023.

The national Organising School and the leadership development programmes for Black members and Women members were piloted successfully in the autumn. The templates for these have now been made available to regions.

The UNISON College programme continues to be delivered in a hybrid format, with courses being run both online and in the classroom. Feedback from learners regularly indicates that this mixed provision is welcome. Generally speaking, online courses have been more likely to attract sufficient numbers to be run than classroom ones have.

Activist training

1,271 new stewards attended the new stewards' induction course in 2022, 309 new health and safety reps attended their induction training, and 765 reps attended the Employment Relations Act (ERA) refresher training. While this has been a challenging year for the delivery of the core programme, with figures down slightly across the board compared to pre pandemic data but the early indicators for 2023 look more positive.

However, the uptake of follow-on, advanced and e-learning by activists has exceeded expectations in 2022, demonstrating that the UNISON College is delivering what our activists need and want to upskill and expand their knowledge. A total of 3,550 activists attended a follow on or advanced training course, there were 450 courses in these categories. A further 4,447 activists completed an e-learning module in 2022, taking the number of users registered on UNISON's e-learning site to over 10,000.

Motion 12, passed at National Delegate Conference 2022, strengthened and broadened the existing Scheme of Accreditation and Training of UNISON Stewards/Workplace Reps, requiring all activists to receive appropriate induction training for their role within one year of appointment, and also introducing mandatory equality training for all activists. To this end we have produced a new course, 'Making Equality Central To Your Union Practice'. This, alongside the existing 'Equality and Your Branch' course, allows activists to understand the basic principles of equality and apply them to their work with UNISON.

Member learning

3,482 members attended a formal workshop or course. These included sessions delivered by The Open University, the WEA (Workers' Educational Association), Cruse Bereavement Support, and many other national and local providers.

In the autumn of 2022, the successful Financial Wellbeing Week was expanded to a Fortnight, and proved very popular with members affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Providers including Lighthouse Financial Advice, FLIC, and Debt line delivered sessions alongside UNISON learning staff. Regions and Branches have organised similar events, meeting a very real need while raising awareness of the union's campaigning work around the issue.

The Skills Academy platform saw 2,148 members registering on a course between January to December 2022 and other activity such as attendance at a learning event of 60 to 90 minutes duration, e.g. short workshops / webinars, were very popular, with over 1,500 members participating in this type of learning.

Activist Training Courses	Reps Attending in 2022
New Stewards	1271
Health and Safety	309
Union Learning Representatives	30
ERA Refresher	765
Follow-on Courses	482
Advanced and Other Activist Training	3068
UNISONs e-learning site (GDPR, mapping and other online modules)	4447

For further information on the full range of new courses and opportunities for activists and members please see our UNISON College page on the website:

<https://learning.unison.org.uk/>

UNISON Living

'Unison Living' represents our Affinity Partner model of endorsed third party Providers' services and products to bring added value to UNISON membership and resources to support membership recruitment and retention.

Our Unison Living partners continue to be selected and actively monitored through our due diligence processes to provide for stability, trust, confidence and real value. The Unison Living Partner standard Contract underpins the endorsement, obligations and partner relations, with scheduled review meetings with each partner throughout the year.

All Unison Living Partner contracts have been the subject of review, monitoring and renewal throughout 2022/23.

2022 saw our longstanding Provider UIA Mutual go into solvent run off and UNISON has as a matter of priority sought, through a strict procurement process, a new Provider for 'Home', 'Travel' and 'Pet' Insurances; 2023 will see the launch of this new Provider offering.

The Partners have continued to commit resources through an annual marketing plan to support National, Regional

and Branch activity to raise awareness and engagement. The Partners Teams attending many Regional and Branch events throughout 2022 and ongoing in 2023.

The Marketing and Communications Plan includes resources to promote and raise awareness of the offerings through UNISON magazines and digital channels, UNISON fund raising (sponsorship and prize draws) specifically in support of UNISON Welfare.

The return, post Covid, to Unison Living Partners Exhibiting at UNISON National Conferences has been welcomed with increased footfall, engagement and a lively atmosphere. The Conference Delegate bag sponsored by

UNISON Living, the main sponsor being LV, continues to raise significant funds with the proceeds going to UNISON Welfare 'There for You'.

Partners have also continued to participate in Regional Webinars to engage with branches and reach out to members. Feedback from Regional

Webinar participants is positive and supports this platform as good practise going forward.

Providers management information reports indicate that business trends were relatively good during 2022, recovering and on target for 2023.

The challenges posed by the current 'cost of living' climate are front of mind when considering UNISON Living member offerings, benefits and value. For example:

Lighthouse Financial and Mortgage

Advice services ran 172 webinars/seminars and 228 surgery events for members; and as at February 2023 a further 26 webinars/seminars and 31 surgeries have been held.

Throughout 2022 the Webinar 'Navigating the Financial Squeeze' was the most popular amongst members due to the rising cost of living.

SHEPHERDS Friendly – Savings Plans

UNISON has partnered with savings provider, Shepherds Friendly to bring members a variety of tax-efficient plans, offering savings solutions for the whole family – interest and take up continues to grow year on year:

- From 2021 to 2022 Shepherds Friendly saw an increase in sales to UNISON members of 39%.
- As a result of a successful limited time offer ran in 2022, Shepherds Friendly are increasing the amount of limited time offers they are running for UNISON members to 4 in 2023.
- Shepherds Friendly continues to provide sustainable investment options as well as committing to being a sustainable business.

Free online Shopping Discounts and Cashback with UNISON Rewards

- Free to UNISON Members
- £10 Welcome Bonus
- Hundreds of retailers
- Thousands of offers
- FREE UNISONProtect £5,000 Accidental Death Cover

'649,273 policies have been issued to UNISON members since its introduction (lasts 1 year & can be renewed for free (it's always FREE))'

"It's free, which is perfect right now considering the current financial climate for a lot of people. And it covers me in an out of work" UNISON Member

"It takes one less stress off me and the family knowing that if something does happen to me, that my family will have some money to help them and also it's free" UNISON Member

"When speaking with UNISON members across the North East, they have told me how reassured they feel to know that UNISON's Free £5,000 Accidental Death Insurance would help their family in a time of need, grief and uncertainty" BRANCH Rep'

"When recruiting it's always useful to highlight the many benefits of UNISON membership; I use the UNISONProtect Free £5,000 Accidental Death Cover leaflets on my monthly recruitment stall, it's a great conversation starter for recruitment and talking to existing members..." BRANCH Rep'

UNISON Prepaid Plus Cashback Card

A valued budgeting Tool 'spend what you load' and earn cashback.

“...it’s a brilliant way to manage what you’re spending as you only spend what you put on the card. It’s great getting cash back when spending money on everyday things....”

Reason for applying (at 31 December 2022)

1. Link with my union	47%
2. Security	3%
3. Discounts	23%
4. Budgeting	17%
5. Holiday	2%
6. Convenience	5%
7. Other	3%

LV Car and Breakdown Insurance

LV’s GI Partnerships Regional Team has supported both National and Regional activity across the Regions during 2022 attending Conferences and Events; providing (through their Sponsorship of England Test Match Cricket) Test Match ticket prizes for fund raising in support of UNISON’s There for You Energy Support Appeal. LV’s planned activity for 2023 will ensure its visibility and engagement at UNISON events throughout 2023.

NHS dental costs – insight from UNISON Dental Health Plan Provider

- If you have a NHS dentist, it is becoming essential to keep up attendance to remain registered.
- The number of new members joining the NHS dental plan continues to grow each quarter.
- Just under two-thirds of our NHS dental plan policyholders have already made a claim this year.
- Not visiting the dentist because of the pandemic has left an increased amount of policyholders requiring more treatment e.g. what may have been treatable with a filling has required a crown.
- We have seen the number of policyholder claims in both higher NHS dental charge bands “2” (£65.20) and band “3” (£282.80), increase significantly.
- This was anticipated in 2020 when we requested from the insurer a relaxation of key policy restrictions ensuring policyholders would not be penalised for being unable to visit their dentist.
- The relaxation of these policy restrictions continues as does the support for those policyholders experiencing problems in meeting their insurance premiums due to financial difficulties.

UNISON Health and Dental Plans Partner continues to support UNISON’s fund raising activity through prize sponsorship and contributions to UNISON’s ‘There for You’ Welfare Fund.

The UNISONLiving Affinity Partner Model and select group of endorsed Providers continues to be a valuable resource that is regulated through contractual obligations and actively monitored through routine joint meetings, ‘day to day’ relations to ensure a benefits package offering that is ‘fit for purpose’. The very low incidence of complaints through both the Providers ‘customer complaints’ process and UNISON direct referrals suggests that there is member and customer general satisfaction with the current offerings.

In summary, the UNISONLiving model continues to provide for a select group of Partners that meet UNISON’s strict code of supplier conduct and due diligence criteria.

Information on the endorsed partner offerings is posted on the benefits.unison.org.uk site with links to the partners microsites to ensure access to accurate and compliant information at all times.

There is an ongoing commitment to review and explore the market for new partners to grow the package of benefits to bring added value to UNISON membership with ‘lifestyle’ and ‘wellbeing’ offerings being a key aim.

The NEC Services to Members Committee and Providers Annual Seminar will take place in May to review the UNISONLiving package and work programme priorities.

UNISON Croyde Bay Holiday Resort

Croyde Bay is wholly owned by UNISON, but is self-sufficient and operates at a surplus so it is not a drain on member subscriptions.

Taking bookings from the general public as well as UNISON members enables us to give a 20 per cent discount to members via cross-subsidy. We also offer holidays at 50 discount to low-paid members, based on UNISON There For You’s income criteria, and a £99 per night bed and breakfast offer for a family of 4.

After a bumper year in 2021, when Covid restricted overseas breaks, income returned to normal levels in 2022.

Some surplus income is reinvested in improvements

at Croyde Bay; as well as regular refurbishment of accommodation, in 2022 we upgraded the kitchen to better suit our modern more flexible catering model. We also installed a new crazy golf course and children’s playground, and upgraded the indoor play area for families.

Located in the North Devon Area of Natural Beauty (AONB), environmental concerns are paramount. Use of plastic on site has been virtually eliminated, and all waste goes for recycling (none to landfill). We provide litter pickers and encourage beachgoers to remove plastic from the beach. UNISON’s Property team have successfully resisted successive planning applications unsympathetic to the area.

This year for the first time UNISON Croyde Bay Holiday Resort has been awarded a 5-star rating by Visit England.

Professional Services Unit (PSU)

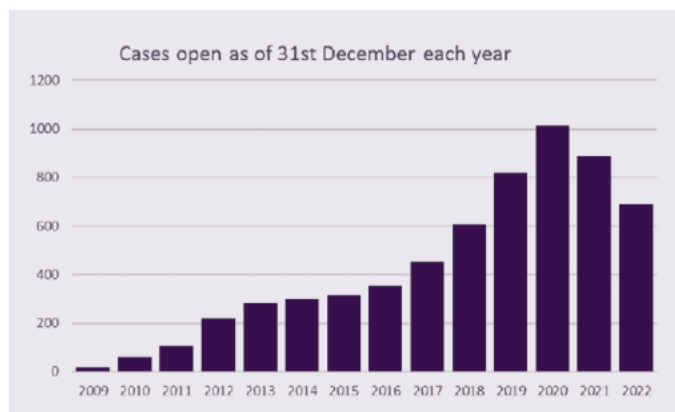
A comprehensive review of professional services was completed in July 2022 and a report presented to UNISON’s staffing committee. As a result of this the unit was provided with additional temporary resource to cope with the current case load and reflect the changing shape and nature of regulation across the 4 countries.

As part of the review a systematic assessment of all job codes used by RMS was undertaken across each of the service groups and by country. Unless there was clear evidence it was a regulated role it was not counted. Currently 250,000 of UNISON members are required to maintain professional registration as a condition of their employment. This is the first time such a figure has been identified. The table below evidences the current landscape of professional regulation across the regulators.

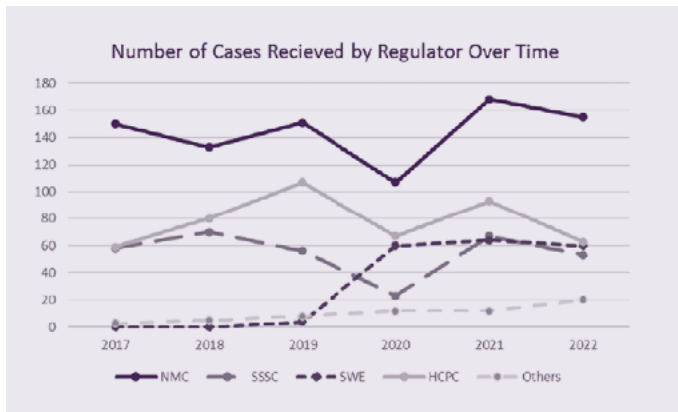
Regulators covered by Professional Services Unit

Regulators	Abbreviation	Numbers on the Register
British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy	BACP	43,324
Social Care Council Wales	SCCW	37,779
Education Workforce Council (Wales)	EWC	89,769 of which 45,068 would be occupations which can be in UNISON membership
General Dental Council	GDC	116,000 of which 70,000 would be occupations which can be in UNISON membership
General Pharmaceutical Council	GPC	81,290
Health Care Professions Council	HCPC	287,438
Nursing & Midwifery Council	NMC	681,527
Scottish Social Services Council	SSSC	216,000
Social Work England	SWE	99,702
	Total in Registration	1,562,128

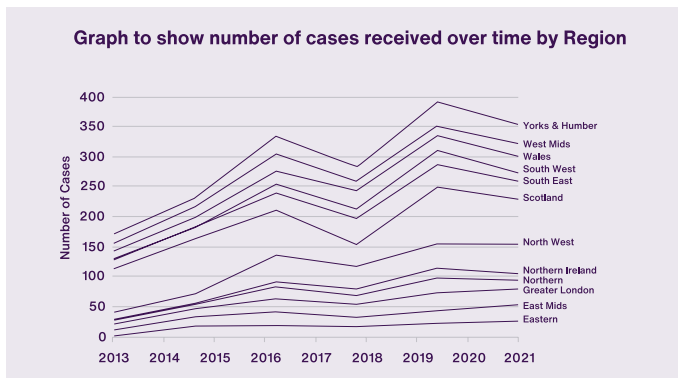
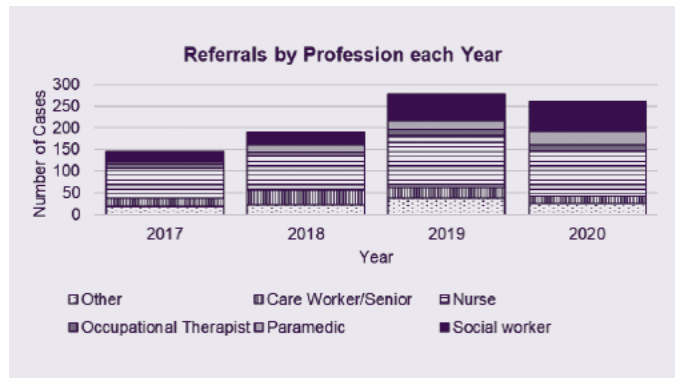
The following graph evidences the numbers of cases open at 31st December covered by the review period.



This graph evidences case numbers by regions over the review period.



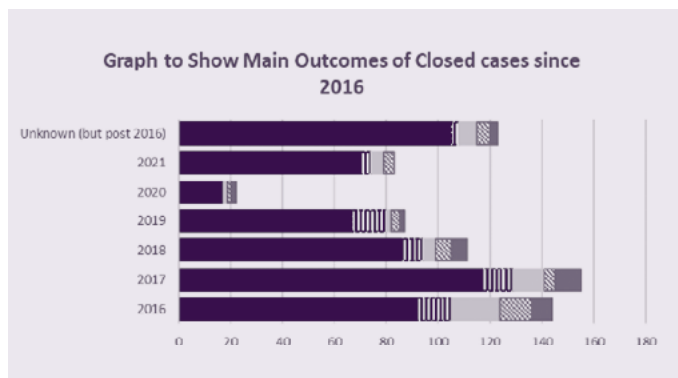
This graph evidences outcomes achieved by both UNISON PSU and Thompsons who act on our behalf in some cases



In addition to the review the unit actively responded to a number of consultations by the Department of Health (England) Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Social Work England (SWE).

The review made a number of recommendations to better support regions and branches including in relation to Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and the devolved equivalent.

We have provided additional support to regions and branches in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in relation to serious and high-profile public cases and inquiries.



Motion 15 Implementation

Motion 15 passed at Conference in 2022 asked the NEC to review the participation of women in the union in our 30th year. This review has started examining the experience of women and low paid women, particularly those working for private contractors and the community service group. A summary of the progress made is set out in more details in Appendix Five of this report.

Appendix 1

2022 National Delegate Conference – information on delegates

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

Female	68%
Part-time workers	26%
Black members	13%
Disabled members	28%
Young members (under 27)	2%

Service group breakdown

Local government	49%
Water, environment, transport	5%
Health care	29%
Energy	2%
Police and justice	3%
Community	2%
Higher education	10%

Subscription band

A Up to 2,000	4%
B 2,001 – 5,000	2%
C 5,001 – 8,000	0.3%
D 8,001 – 11,000	2%
E 11,001 – 14,000	3%
F 14,001 – 17,000	6%
G 17,001 – 20,000	9%
H 20,001 – 25,000	21%
I 25,001 – 30,000	14%
J 30,001 – 35,000	15%
K Over 35,000	23%
Member in education / apprenticeship or on unpaid leave	0.3%

Appendix 2

National Executive Council monitoring information

97% of NEC members responded to the 2021 survey at the start of the NEC period of office.

Female	68 %
Male	30 %
Other	2 %

Ethnicity

Black Caribbean	2%
Black African	5%
Black UK	2%
Asian	2%
Other Mixed Heritage	2%
Irish	12%
White UK	68%
White Other	7%

Disabled

Yes	48%
No	52%

Service Group

Local government	42%
Health care	30%
Community	8%
Energy	2.5%
Water, environment, transport	2.5%
Higher education	10%
Police & Justice	10%

Subs band

A – D (up to £11k)	9%
E – G (£11,001 – £20k)	31%
H – K (above £20k)	60%

Age

16-26	2.5%
27-39	9%
40-49	18.5%
50+	70%

Appendix 3

Organising and Recruitment Strategy Development (ORSD) Review report

Organising to Win!

Organising and Recruitment Strategy Development (ORSD) Project

Introduction

The Organising and Recruitment Strategy Development project was commissioned by the General Secretariat in autumn 2021 to meet the changing demands of the union. The delegates at UNISON's 2022 National Delegate Conference recognised these changing demands when debating the motion "Building the union organising for our future".

This motion called upon the union to develop a joined up national organising strategy with a clear vision for a stronger UNISON and a resourced plan to build workplace organisation, grow our activist base especially elected workplace representatives, increase member participation, and achieve sustainable membership growth. It also encouraged internal solidarity in respect of organising between all parts of the union.

UNISON must be a union that delivers on individual protection but also delivers on big collective issues. We know that until members understand they are joining a collective and are prepared to participate in and develop that collective endeavour, UNISON will struggle to make major gains for workers and change the balance of power in the workplace.

Organising & Recruitment Strategy Development project vision for UNISON

This strategy sets out a vision for a well organised union.

A well organised UNISON has high and growing membership density with a culture of participation in pursuit of shared goals. A strong organisational base

ensures effective individual and collective support and representation at workplace, employer, sectoral, and national level. Partnership with employers, politicians and other decision makers is conducted from a position of strength, ensuring members win and maintain high standards of pay, conditions, safety and dignity at work.

A well organised UNISON reflects and represents the diversity, values and aspirations of the public service workforce, and empowers and improves the lives of members through community, solidarity and effective collective activity.

To achieve this, a comprehensive unionwide organising strategy will consider sectoral and workforce trends, organising tools, techniques and best practice, and the skills, capacity, coordination, and leadership required to deliver a 'One UNISON' approach to successful organising to scale.

Background to the Organising & Recruitment Strategy Development project

UNISON can only truly realise its strength when our 1.3 million members act together; the more active UNISON's members are, the more that can be achieved.

Despite a history of success, UNISON faces a climate that is extremely challenging, as these statistics show:

- members joining the union have been overtaken by members leaving UNISON for 12 out of 16 years (2007-2022). In 2021 UNISON's membership declined by approximately 30,000 members. There has also been a decline in members being active across all our activist roles; an 18.9% decrease in ERA accredited activists from 2016-2021.
- our membership is aging with 47% of members now over the age of 50. The age profile of our activists is also aging; 43% of our activists trained in 2021 as ERA accredited representatives were over the age of 50.
- UNISON's full membership was 1,228,903 at the end of 2021, with women making up 76% of this total figure. This was a reduction in membership of 2.3% from 2020 (1,257,618). Joiners have been below leavers for 12 out of the last 15 years (2007-2021). Only in 2018, 2019 and 2020 did joiners outstrip leavers.
- The number of ERA accredited activists has been decreasing since 2016, with a 6.9% decrease from

2020 to 2021. 43% of the activists trained in 2021 were over the age of 50. Graph 6 shows the total number of ERA activists from 2016 to 2021.

Research from Britain Thinks in 2022 indicated that while 23% of UNISON members were interested in getting more involved, there were limited opportunities for meaningful participation. Existing opportunities such as AGM attendance did not provide much value for members, and there was a lack of understanding about what members' roles in the union were. This in turn had an impact on the union's ability to mobilise members for key times such as industrial action and internal democracy ballots.

The second issue that became apparent very quickly is that UNISON does not have a common and consistent understanding of organising. This is a barrier to effective planning and delivery of organising objectives.

Organising is any activity that builds collective worker strength. There are many definitions of worker power, but we define it here as the ability of workers to get employers or the government to do something that they would not otherwise do.

Recruitment is an important element of organising because of the power of numbers but recruitment on its own is not organising. Recruitment is an organising activity when it is part of a strategy to build strength. The question from an organising perspective is: recruitment for what purpose?

Organising is something we do to bargain successfully but bargaining on its own is not organising. Bargaining is an organising activity when it actively engages the members as a collective and seeks to move them towards some form of action.

Workers and trade unions may exercise strength in the workplace, in the political sphere and in the society. However, whatever form power takes and wherever it is exercised, all worker strength ultimately stems from collective organisation. Every organising campaign should have clearly defined goals (i.e., a recognition agreement, winning specific terms and conditions of employment or legislative change, etc). Projects need a proper plan against which implementation needs to be monitored. Each 'win' needs to be consolidated through on-going work to integrate new members, retain existing members, and develop new activists and leaders through engagement in branch activity.

There is no ‘one size fits all’ strategy. Effective strategy is context-dependent, recognising that what works well in one sector or workplace may be very different than what works well in another sector or workplace. This is an especially important principle for multi-sectoral unions like UNISON – there is a need to understand how organising challenges and opportunities differ across the sectors where the union is active and the implications for an organising strategy. What works well in long-established parts of the public sector (i.e., local government) may look very different from what works well in new organising areas in the private sector (i.e., social care).

This strategy identifies two branches of organising which UNISON must distinguish between:

Base organising – the routine development and maintenance of a strong and functional union at workplace and branch level.

Strategic organising – member participation within an escalating ‘plan to win’ to build the strength to achieve a specific material change.

Both are required and are complimentary. Base organising builds and sustains effective workplace organisation to maintain high membership density and activism and ensure individual and collective support for members. Strategic organising, which requires member participation for success, delivers significant membership growth, identifies, and develops new activists through activity, achieves collective material gains for members and the ‘narrative resource’ of a union that wins. However, there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to either. Environmental factors such as union recognition, existing union presence, precarity of employment, and employer hostility will all have a significant bearing on the strategy, skills, and resource requirements for successful organising.

Organising & Recruitment Strategy Development pilot projects

After careful consideration, it was decided to run three pilot projects. The aim of these pilot projects was to:

- Test regional organising capacity and Branch Support and Organising Fund roles
- Co-ordination of multi-regional campaigns/targets
- Pilot and evaluate specific organising tactics and initiatives

- Review if national multi academy trusts in current branch set up is fit for purpose

Pilot 1 – Adult social care in the devolved nations

Pilot 2 – Multi Academy Trusts in England

Pilot 3 – NHS Core

More information and analysis of these pilot projects can be found in the full report ‘Organising to win!’ – Recommendations by the Organising & Recruitment Strategy Development Project 2023.

Appendix 4


UNISON Conference Attendance 2021/22


Conference delegate numbers 2021–2022

Del = Delegates + Sharer 1s, where appropriate

Year	Black		Women's		HE		Comm		Health		Energy		WET	
	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All
2021	37	40	2193	2243	10	18	251	275	402	551	33	98	77	147
2022	367	551	449	834	114	234	75	198	440	971	32	95	24	74

Year	Local Gov		National		Retired		Police		Disabled		LGBT		Young	
	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All	Del	All
2021	37	96	618	771	1231	1499	280	348	65	216	242	392	179	292
2022	620	937	1296	2550	308	440	89	258	298	557	264	464		176

 No conference held

 Virtual conference / seminar

Appendix 5

Motion 15 “UNISON at 30” (from NDC 2022) implementation

At National Delegate Conference in June 2022 delegates voted overwhelmingly to examine the make-up of our activist base. This decision directly links to the work that the General Secretary has commissioned to review how we ensure that the union is truly representative of all of our membership.

Following M15 being carried at National Delegate Conference Branches were provided with branch activists data in terms of gender. The figures show that despite our membership being 75% women; only 56% of branch officer positions are held by women and only 53% of stewards. This underlines the need to work together at all levels of the union to review our working practices and structures to ensure that we are supporting and encouraging women into activism in UNISON.

The UNISON rulebook requires proportionality so that our democratic structures reflect the make-up of our membership. Both under our Aims and Objectives in Section B (2.3) and in setting out the Structure of the union at national level in Section D 2.14, we affirm our commitment to ensuring that all voices are properly represented and heard throughout our union. However, the data published in September to branches demonstrates that we are failing to meet that standard.

Following discussions and feedback from various regional events and workshops it is clear that there are some common themes of key barriers to involvement that include:

- Time
- Complex structures and processes
- Roles
- Gatekeepers
- Agendas seeming irrelevant to certain groups of members

In order to bridge the gap between our current position and where our rulebook requires us to be, there are a number of current projects underway across the union that we could be rolled out. Some of the best practice in parts of the union include:

- Mentoring and shadowing all new activists
- Simplifying and demystifying our democratic processes

- Informal networking events for women
- Childcare/care provisions publicised
- Up front expenses made easier

However, to deliver significant change we need to consider more radical change. Therefore, to implement M15 it is recommended that a Task and Finish Group be established to consider the following:

- Simplified democratic structures standardised across branch, regional and national structures
- Review of our activist roles to ensure that they are compatible with caring responsibilities and part time workers.
- Succession planning for activist roles
- Formal Organisation of occupational groups
- Review of the Code of Good Branch Practice to incorporate supporting and encouraging women into elected positions within the Branch being a key function of the branch
- Review of the Rulebook and branch constitutions accordingly

The composition of the Task and Finish Group will be:

- all those holding reserved seats on the NEC and National Service Group Committees
- representatives from the National Self Organised Group Committee's that are low paid women.
- The Group should be Chaired by the National President or Vice President.

The group will seek submissions from all the National and Regional Self Organised Groups and Young Members Forums.

The Task and Finish group will produce best practice guidance for circulation throughout the union. Recommendations will be prepared for the December 2023 NEC meeting with a report and any necessary rule amendments to go to National Delegate Conference in 2024.

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