

OUR NHS

75 YEARS ONE TEAM

Why are we marking the 75th birthday of the NHS?

Staff are the backbone of our NHS, with over 1.5 million people working as one team to deliver safe patient care. From wards to walk-ins, corridors to communities, offices to operating theatres, labs to laundries and everywhere in between, UNISON celebrates the dedicated and diverse team of staff who have steered our health service to its 75th birthday.

It's the pride of our nation and the envy of many others. And it's all thanks to NHS staff.

It's no coincidence that the 75th anniversary of Windrush on 22 June is within the same fortnight. Windrush Day marks the arrival of the generation of Commonwealth citizens who helped to transform our public services and build our NHS.

Branch celebrations are a great way to pay tribute to them and thank today's diverse workforce of over 200 nationalities.

So, is it all balloons and cupcakes?

Not exactly. Of course, this is an important milestone for our health service that deserves to be celebrated. But our union wants an NHS that is fit for the future, with every member of staff valued and rewarded for the work they do.

So, 5 July is also a key date for us to highlight the huge challenges facing our NHS 75 years after its inception, and to get the message out to patients and the public that we must all stand together to defend it.

Record waiting lists and a staffing emergency were never part of the vision, but they're the reality in our NHS right now. We must turn the tide on chronic underfunding which leaves staff burnt out and patients waiting months for vital treatment. We must end the scourge of outsourcing, which creates a two-tier workforce with privately contracted workers on poverty pay. And we must keep staff in the NHS by rewarding them fairly for all the hours they work, at the right band for the job.

We'll be showing all NHS staff – and the country – that UNISON continues to fight for:

- a publicly owned NHS that remains free for all at the point of use
- an urgent funding boost and proper staffing levels
- world class health and care services for everyone

What could our branch do to mark the occasion?

Plan celebration stalls or activities, and whatever you choose to do, make sure you have plenty of recruitment materials handy to support your conversations with potential members. Our 'one team' message couldn't be more important right now and it's vital that all the staff we represent know that we are the union for them. Use the posters to advertise any events you hold.

Post on your branch social media accounts in the lead-up and on the birthday itself – use the [75 year graphics](#) and include quotes from members about why they're proud to work in the NHS. Join in the nationwide celebrations by posting with the main #NHS75 hashtag.

Brand up your branch! In the weeks leading up to the big day, use our 75th birthday Teams/Zoom background in your online meetings and pop a graphic in your email signature.

Get our giant NHS birthday card design printed locally, and hold a stall in an area with plenty of footfall. Ask patients and the public to sign with messages of support and give them the leaflet which thanks them, celebrates the whole staff team and reminds them why we all need to defend our precious NHS.

Run a prize draw for members to nominate a colleague who makes them proud to work in the NHS. Share all the wonderful comments on your branch noticeboard to make the whole team feel celebrated.

Write a feature on your branch website interviewing any members with a birthday on 5 July, or retired members born in July 1948. What's been their experience of the NHS through their lives so far? Why did they decide to work in the NHS?

Make the Windrush anniversary visible as part of all your activities.

- You could invite retired members from the Windrush Generation to speak at a branch meeting about their experiences, or find out whether current members have retired family members who may take part. 2023 is [UNISON's Year of Black Workers](#) so this is a great chance to link up your events.
- Celebrate the international workforce in each workplace – you could set up a photo gallery of members with flags from the country they're from to show how many different nationalities keep the NHS running.
- Check whether there are [Windrush 75 events](#) happening in your local area that you could join in with.

Write to your local newspaper letters page on behalf of the branch, letting your local community know how you're marking the NHS and Windrush anniversaries. It's a good way to invite the public to events, if you want to.

Organise a quiz night for members, with NHS- and birthday-themed questions and prizes for the best team names.

Crowdsource a health-themed playlist for your event (think Achy Breaky Heart, Fat Lip, Red Right Hand...) or play the songs that were number 1 on 5 July each year.

Search out the hidden creative talents among members – hold a branch poetry competition inviting submissions on the theme of '75 years, one team'. Share the winning poems in your newsletter or even host a poetry slam!

Hold a birthday bake off. What's a birthday without cake?

Get snapping – get members together outside for a photo opportunity and form a big '75' shape. Take the picture from a few floors up for the full effect!

Organise joint events with the Trust/employers – we all know collaboration is a great way to get our important message out to even more people.

Tell us what you are doing

These are just a few ideas to get you started. We are sure you will have plenty more yourselves and we'd love it if you would share them with us! Your ideas may inspire other branches to plan events and make even more NHS staff feel seen and appreciated on this important anniversary. So, tell us your plans, and when you hold your events, don't forget to share pictures with us via social media.

Resources

- ▶ Order public-facing leaflets
- ▶ Order badges
- ▶ [Download branded graphics](#) for social media, web, emails and video calls
- ▶ Download and print posters advertising your branch events
- ▶ Send the giant card off to a local printer ready for the big day