

Winning together in UNISON

UNISON Community

Annual Report 2023/24

Introduction by Malcolm Gray

It's a pleasure to write the introduction for the 2022/2023 Community Annual Report. I am looking forward to meeting many of you at Community Conference soon.

These are tough times for so many people. At the time of writing, the UK Government is failing to deal with hospital waiting lists and Accident and Emergency departments are often overwhelmed. There are still huge numbers of vacancies in the social care sector and many workers in our public services are striking to secure a pay rise which keeps up with rampant inflation. Tragically, the UK government often seems more interested in sowing division than dealing with the huge problems facing our country.

But despite this grim situation, there are reasons for optimism. UNISON has been leading campaigns, both industrial and political, which put pressure on employers and politicians to address the issues that matter. As this report shows, our members, reps and staff have been very active this year, showing the UNISON difference.

Many workers in our sectors have negotiated for better pay to help them deal with the cost-of-living crisis. The National Care Service is now central to the debate of the future of care. And, where necessary, we have taken strike action to force employers back to the negotiating table.

By working together, we work effectively to meet the challenges we face. This report also shows the variety of work undertaken by our various branches, and its effectiveness, in protecting and advancing our members' interests.

Please do share this report within your branches, as this outlines work undertaken on behalf of our members and sets out the work, we have taken forward over these two extraordinary years. This work has been delivered thanks to the commitment of our lay activists, with the support of full-time staff at both Regional and National level.

I hope this report is informative for you in your work for the union and our members. Thank you on behalf of the entire UNISON Community Service Group Executive, who have worked tirelessly on your behalf and for all the hard work you have done and for what you will do in 2023.

Malcolm Gray
Chair of the Community Service Group Executive.

Recruiting, organising, representing and retaining members

Encouragingly, Community continues to be an area of membership growth for UNISON. Over the past 12 months, the number of overall Community members has increased substantially.

Increasingly UNISON is being approached by groups of prospective Community members who are seeking more information on what UNISON and unionising their workplace can offer them. As a result of this we are currently working towards getting recognition agreements with several Community and Voluntary employers, including the Trussell Trust.

In line with developments in the wider charity and non-profit sector post-Covid pandemic several of these organisations' ways of working is increasingly home-based or hybrid working, away from the traditional office base. We have therefore been exploring how we can best support members in these circumstances – members who may be working for the same employer but across various nations and regions and without regular in-person contact with colleagues in an office environment. This new way of working brings a fresh challenge to organising and supporting these members, something that the national CVS sector committee has been raising and leading our work on.

We are responding to this challenge by working alongside colleagues in Bargaining Support and Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) and piloting a variety of one-off national webinars, trainings and 'lunch and learns' throughout 2023. These are short, online events with the intention of reaching, engaging and supporting Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) members who may not be actively engaged in their branch/region. These include:

- A Lunch and learn on examining charity accounts to submit pay claims
- A webinar on Negotiating Reasonable Adjustment passports in the CVS sector
- A lunchtime 'U in UNISON' event specifically for CVS members new to UNISON.

LAOS are developing a short course on negotiating recognition agreements in the CVS sector, which will be made available to regions and branches to adapt and run in their local contexts.

Furthermore, following our pilot training of stewards for members in Dimensions, we are planning to run further national stewards training for members working for a larger charity employers across various nations and regions. This is in addition to continuing to promote our member and activist learning offers to members which we are doing nationally through our regular e-bulletins to all Community members.

In the regional reports later in this document you will find more examples of excellent organising and recruitment initiatives in the Community Service Group, including Northern Ireland Community branch's recruitment campaign and the Greater London Community and Voluntary Organisation branch's organising efforts.

Negotiating on behalf of members

The primary challenge in negotiations this year has been to secure pay deals which reflected the huge challenge of the cost-of-living crisis. In pay claim consultations, members consistently made it clear that rising prices, particularly energy, were causing significant challenges.

The average 2022-23 pay rises in Community according to various sources were:

- Xpert HR – say the average rise in the not-for-profit sector was 3% (sample of 106 organisations)
- Income Data Research – say the average rise in the not-for-profit sector was 4% (sample of 70 organisations)
- Labour Research Department – say the average rise in the not-for-profit sector was 4% (sample of 18 organisations)

There have been lots of examples of regions and branches doing great work on behalf of our Community members. These include:

- In East Midlands, UNISON negotiated a pay rise for MHA members which means staff will receive a minimum of £11 per hour (and £12.55 in London).
- In the North West, The Greater Manchester Care Workers Demand a Pay Rise was campaign has achieved stunning results. After campaigning from members and reps, commitments to the Foundation Living Wage have been secured in six out of the ten Greater Manchester councils. This will deliver a pay rise to over 25,000 workers.
- In Eastern region, Herts County targeted social care employers where sick pay was not paid from day one. They campaigned and won, forcing the local authority to pay it.
- In London, UNISON negotiated a new

recognition agreement with Stonewall and they are in the process of reaching an agreement with Opening Doors and GALOP.

- In Scotland, UNISON created new lay structures to enable care workers to drive change in their sector and are now on the verge of a series of major breakthroughs.
- In Cymru/Wales, UNISON was the leading trade union voice on the expert panel set up to advise the Wales Government on the creation of a national care service, winning major concessions in the report eventually published.

National Employers

Action for Children

Supported by the excellent work of our Convenor, Kate Sharkey and National Officer, Andrew Dobbie, UNISON pushed Action for Children hard during the 2022 pay round.

The deal which was eventually accepted by members was for a new wage floor of Real Living Wage, benefitting 500 staff, 100 of whom received an 11% increase and 400, some 8%. All other staff received a 3% rise plus an additional 1%, which will be consolidated into next year's pay if Action for Children achieve certain financial targets. This is in addition to an interim pay rise of 3% for the 500 people who work in residential settings, paid in December. We also negotiated for sleep-in payments to go up from £33 to £50.

For the 2023 pay round, UNISON launched our pay claim consultation in November with good engagement from members. Unite conducted a similar survey. Our pay claim was submitted just before Christmas and, at the time of writing, we will be holding initial pay negotiations in January 2023, aiming for staff to receive their pay award in April 2023. The joint TU claim focussed on "A pay rise in line with inflation (RPI) on all pay points."

Throughout 2022 we have continued to work hard for members in Action for Children, though membership has been fairly static. There has been a reluctance from management, post the pandemic to encourage travel, which has made it more challenging to recruit and organise across the charity. However, the joint unions (UNISON & Unite the Union) have held online all staff drop-ins to promote the unions.

We are currently working on a joint organising plan for 2023/24, targeting specific geographical areas and our commercial arm – Developments Ltd – to extend our partnership agreement and achieve recognition for both unions in these services, which are mainly nurseries and out of school care services.

Barnardo's

In April 2022 the Barnardo's branch secured a 5% pay award for all Barnardo's staff, followed by a £700 Hardship payment in October 2022.

We have also been focusing pay progression this year, an issue that has been increasingly challenging since 2016 when Barnardo's took all staff into a Pay & Reward Consultation. As a result of this Consultation, Barnardo's deleted increments and staff pay then, as we predicted, fell well below the average pay scales, when compared to similar organisations. This has resulted in failures to both recruit and retain staff from all areas of the organisation. The Branch has continued ever since to insist that Senior Management address this issue and whilst they did listen and agree to progress a review, it has only just come to fruition.

This was meant to be a positive move by the organisation and the Branch had high expectations, following our recent pay deal. We were informed that following Barnardo's finances being better than expected, monies had been set aside to reduce the number of job roles, enable them to ensure that none of the lowest paid staff would fall below the National Living Wage and uplift remaining salaries to make them competitive, particularly when recruiting. During the pandemic many roles had morphed into something else, with a subsequent change in expectations. Unfortunately, this also meant increased responsibilities and nothing to reward staff for going above and beyond in a crisis.

This review has created so many issues that we are currently requesting either an extension to the Consultation period, or that Barnardo's consider some kind of interim action that evidences their intention to finally address the disparity but defer the process until a number of job evaluations are carried out. Whilst we do not wish to delay members receiving any uplifts, we need to ensure that whatever is embedded at this time has no detriment in the future.

The Branch are currently negotiating next year's (2022/2023) pay claim. The monies allocated to this review will undoubtedly impact on our pay

negotiations and at a time when our members are already struggling with increased living costs and a very uncertain financial future.

At the time of writing this report, we have still not submitted our claim, as the consultation has received a negative response and it will require additional monies to address all the issues. The main area of contention is the lack of acknowledgement for experienced, loyal staff. By trying to reduce the number of roles and the haphazard way grades have been 'lumped' together, the proposal as it stands, would create situations where Managers are actually paid the same as those they line manage and in some cases, less!

It is a very fine balancing act in negotiating the needs of members and avoiding future job losses.

Hopefully, there will be better news to report when we attend Conference!

Dimensions

Helen Couchman, as the National Convenor for Dimensions, on behalf of National Forum members and colleagues welcomed the opportunity on several occasions to speak in the House of Commons on pay and the social care crisis in 2022. Support workers are very often considered non-skilled, non-professional workers. But you know that support workers have many of those skills that a health care professional trains and gains a recognised qualification for. Support workers in residential homes check blood pressures, change stoma bags, draw up syringes for PEG feeds and monitor the devices, prepare specialised foods, check diabetes levels, administer controlled drugs, record and then audit the drugs in store at the home, order more, call the GP when things are not right, stay with people in hospital to support the medical staff. All those things and much more, require constant updating of training. We mentor new staff while they learn but we still don't have a professional qualification. A support worker's role is tiring, stressful with long hours as well as rewarding. How do we distinguish the priority — work or family? Those are some of the concerns put to many MPs during 2022.

Dimensions UNISON members voted by a very small majority to accept the pay offer for 2022. It was agreed that uplifts should benefit as many colleagues as possible rather than focusing on individual roles within the organisation. For the first time all TUPE colleagues were included in the uplifts.

It is acknowledged that Dimensions had to wait many

months for Local Authority uplift agreements as have many non-profit social care organisations with a varying picture across different parts of the country in awaiting the confirmation of uplifts. The uplifts have brought about a higher level of recruitment in Dimensions but it is still the case that front line workers are not earning enough to cover their bills and the rising costs. Agency use is still high due to illness absence as well as short staffing. In November 2022 Dimensions reintroduced the first three day absence no pay policy (suspended at the start of lockdown). Understandably colleagues are angry and disappointed at this, covid is still very much with us.

It's simply not good enough that people doing the vital role of caring for people who are not quite as able are needing to use food banks and pay day loans to survive. The UNISON National Forum in Dimensions continue to fight and campaign for better pay.

RNIB

UNISON and Unite balloted on an offer from the employer in April 2022. The offer was rejected and another offer was made and then accepted in the ballot that took place in May/June 2022.

The 2022 pay award was an uplift of between 2.75-4% and an additional £350 one off cost of living payment for staff earning less than £30,000 FTE per annum. In addition, the employer agreed to reduce contracted working hours from 36 hours per week to 35 hours without a loss in pay. Contractual home workers were entitled to a £320 homeworking allowance for this year.

We submitted our pay claim for 2023 in November 2022 earlier than previous years as we are intending for members to get their pay uplift in April 2023.

We are currently working with the employer and Unite to develop a new pay progression scheme that is transparent and fair. Currently there is no pay progression scheme in place. We are also working through outstanding issues with the employer, including the application of London Weighting Allowance.

Marie Curie

UNISON and RCN balloted on an offer from the employer over the summer of 2022. This included both pay rises and proposed new terms and conditions, including reducing sick pay entitlements and making them partly discretionary. RCN members rejected and the UNISON vote was exactly equal between members wishing to accept and wishing to reject the offer made.

We then went into a new set of talks which resulted in a significantly revised offer, with the sick pay proposals removed, alignment with NHS Agenda for Change conditions for those in patient-facing roles, and further pay improvements for those in other areas of MC.

UNISON's second ballot ended on 5th January 2023. The outcome was a narrow rejection, but with a low turnout. We have now informed Marie Curie that, while the ballot process has shown that members are not content with the offer, nevertheless we should look to address concerns through negotiations over the next pay period which starts on 1 April 2023. We are now drawing up the pay claim for the coming year. We will seek to address the concerns members have expressed in that pay claim.

Together

UNISON's organisation in Together requires a refresh. We have recruited two new reps to help represent members and the employer has re-confirmed its commitment to working with us. New pay talks are due to start in mid-January, with new reps fully engaged.

Campaigning and promoting UNISON on behalf of members

Social care

National Care Service: Labour Party Conference in September 2022 continued UNISON's engagement with the Labour front bench over the proposal for a National Care Service (NCS). Wes Streeting has now explicitly backed an NCS and is highlighting Fabians' research, commissioned by UNISON, due to be published in March 2023. This will be a key document which will directly inform Labour policy and their manifesto commitment. The research is aimed at fleshing out the nature of an NCS and how it might be funded. UNISON has also launched our own public facing campaign for a National Care Service in England, including new branding and a plan to hold a series of events to highlight the union's position. This should mean we are well placed to promote this issue during the coming year.

Moves towards a national care service in Wales and Scotland respectively have made significant progress. 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 says the Bill the Scottish government is proposing 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 work force. UNISON Scotland continues to work hard to highlight the failures of the Scottish Government's plans and get them addressed. In Wales, UNISON launched a new report in November 2022 on how a National Care Service might be achieved in Wales. 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.

Social Care National Partnership Forum (SCNPF): UNISON has organised the creation of a new body to replicate the beneficial aspects of partnership working seen in the NHS. This culminated in the creation of a new Forum including the social care trade unions, all major employer bod and the LGA. The Forum held its first meeting in July 2022, which was constructive and agreed a terms of reference. The second meeting of the forum will take place in late January 2023.

Social Care Organising: The Strategic Organising Unit and Cymru/Wales continue to move ahead with successful organising work in social care, signing up new activists and recruiting new members. Lesson's learned from this project and others will be fed into a new organising strategy to be announced in 2023.

New research on social care pay

Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Wes Streeting, recently described Labour's plans for social care pay bargaining should Labour be elected. He said, "The moment Labour wins the general election we will be getting employers and trade unions around the table to introduce the historic fair pay agreement for social care." Even if Labour does not form the next government, UNISON will push the those in power to a national solution to the recruitment and retention crisis in the sector

UNISON wants to be ready for national pay bargaining in social care. We have successfully bid for funding to commission a report which maps the posts in adult social care in England. This will cover all areas of adult social care in England, including care homes, domiciliary care, personal assistants and any other elements of ASC commissioned by local authorities where people are employed to deliver services. For each of the identified roles, we want an indication (based on a representative sample of employers) of the range of current pay rates.

In additions, the report will cover sick pay, annual leave, sleep-in shift allowances and pension provision. The report will also compare the standard

availability of these conditions of employment in the care sector with provision of conditions for NHS workers, under agenda for Change.

The Community Service Group Executive

The committee are elected on a two year cycle, the term of office began following the 2022 National Delegate Conference. The committee have four full meetings per year plus one pre-conference meeting to discuss conference related issues only.

The Committee is serviced by Donna Rowe -Merriman, National Secretary, Gavin Edwards, Senior National Officer, Haifa Rashed, Assistant National Officer and Tas Georgiou, Team Secretary.

The members of the Community Service Group Executive are:

Seat	Name
Cymru/Wales General	***Vacant***
Cymru/Wales Female	Sian Stockham (from June 2022)
Eastern General	Paul Turnbull (from June 2022)
Eastern Female	***Vacant***
East Midlands General	Michael Hancock (from June 2022)
East Midlands Female	Anjona Roy (from June 2022)
Greater London General	John Gray (from June 2022)
Greater London Female	Barbara Zagrodnizcek (until June 2022) Omolola Oyewusi (from June 2022)
Greater London Reserved	***Vacant***
Northern General	Malcolm Gray
Northern Female	Clare Penny-Evans (from June 2022)
Northern Ireland General	Niall McCarroll
Northern Ireland Female	Pauline Lagan (from June 2022)
North West General	Hassan Ortega
North West Female	Hanna English
North West Reserved	***Vacant***
Scotland General	Tracy Hill
Scotland Female	Audrey McCabe (from June 2022)

Scotland Reserved	***Vacant***
South East General	Michelle Lincoln (from June 2022)
South East Female	Helen Couchman
South West General	Francis O’Ryan (until June 2022)
South West Female	***Vacant***
West Midlands General	James Hawker
West Midlands Female	***Vacant***
Yorkshire & Humberside General	Hywel Robinson (from June – September 2022)
Yorkshire & Humberside Female	***Vacant***

Sector Representatives

Seat	Name
CVO sector reps (up to 3)	Graeme Ellis (until October 2022) Lesley Discombe Pat Jones (until October 2022) Joe Kirwin (from October 2022)
Housing Association sector reps (up to 3)	Mark Jones Lynn Gillespie Carla Williams
Major Charities sector reps (up to 3)	Pat Jones (from October 2022) Kate Sharkey Karen Rickards Denise Thomas (until October 2022)

NEC members

Saoirse Fanning
Kevin Jackson

Reports from Regions and Nations

Cymru Wales Community Service Group

UNISON's work by and for members in the service group has continued in the aftermath of the pandemic in much the way it started. With meetings, disciplinaries,

grievances, pay negotiations etc. etc. taking place online. As elsewhere the challenges have been to rapidly change focus on the issues as they have come up.

The service group forum has continued to meet mostly online.

UNISON Cymru Wales commissioned a report into the social care sector by APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence)

The report concludes that people receiving care, as well as care workers, are being let down by the current system of commissioning, outsourcing and the need to turn a profit, and years of underfunding.

APSE describe how the requirement to create a profit or, for the third sector, to compete with for-profit providers, means corners are cut, so care workers are allocated too many service users and are not paid travel time and this impacts on service user care. In-work poverty is commonplace, staff turnover is high and vacancies, huge. It says the £1.2 billion care market in Wales is dominated by private companies and no-one knows how much money is disappearing from the sector in profit or is wasted in the commissioning process.

The ASPE report says that whilst there are many small private care providers, a handful of multinationals occupy a powerful position. Ultimately owned by private equity firms, they target around 12 per cent profit return for investors, with a further 20 per cent or more of earnings going to fund interest, tax, depreciation, amortisation, rent and management costs.

APSE says this means front line care providers are left struggling to make ends meet, so they minimise costs by squeezing care worker wages and undermining the quality-of-care provision.

UNISON argues that every pound of public money spent on social care should go towards the provision of that care and it has called on Welsh government to examine if the Welsh taxpayer is getting value for money. Our members provide a vital service to service users and their families and yet carers are receiving

wages so low that many struggle with in-work poverty.

It is essential that we have a National Care Service for Wales that puts the welfare of carers and their service users at its heart and not the profits of private companies and their shareholders.

In 2023 we will need to continue to positively progress our aim to get all our Community members "strike ready", improving our contact and communication with all our members to ensure they are able to fully engage in our consultations, decisions and struggles in the year ahead.

We would also like to take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to Sian Stockham OBE on being recognised in the New Year honours list for her long and distinguished service with UNISON, representing UNISON Wales on our National Executive Committee and serving as vice president of our union during the height of the covid pandemic. Sian is a Community member of the Ymlaen branch and a social care worker.

Most Community members in Wales are held in the Ymlaen Branch. The branch has continued its work in the aftermath of the pandemic. Many of the day-to-day issues have been around TUPE, Members returning to workplaces and Covid safety, testing and vaccinations, as well as restructures and redundancies.

The branch and region have worked proactively with UNISON's Strategic Organising Unit (SOU) and Innovate Trust around terms and conditions issues. Whilst this work is still ongoing there are signs that the employer is recruiting 55 staff to tackle carer vacancies. This is one of the major stressors highlighted by our members during consultations and negotiations with the employer. This is a great victory for the branch, sector, and of course UNISON.

The branch is restructuring and currently in the process of recruiting two caseworkers. Whilst nothing has been finalised, we hope to move towards a virtual branch as the physical branch office is under-utilised at present. This will lead to a better way of working and supporting the Community members.

Community is the fastest growing sector and a lot of work has been going at a Regional level to try and engage with those Community members who are not lucky enough to be in a Community Branch.

It is hoped that the new branch structure will be dynamic and peripatetic enough to ensure that UNISON will continue to be paragon for Community members.

East Midlands

We have 3,916 members in the Community Service group in the East Midlands this is a 1.9% increase in membership since 2020. There has also been an 1.5% increase in trained reps across the region. Local campaigns included UNISON's End Violence at Work Charter, standing in solidarity with workers from other sectors taking industrial action & taking the voices of community members in the East Midlands to The House of Parliament to lobby Members of Parliament on the cost of living crisis.

At MHA UNISON have negotiated a pay rise with the employer which means staff will receive a minimum of £11 per hour (and £12.55 in London). Implement an uplift of 10% for all roles under a salary of £70,000 and an uplift of 8% for all roles over £70,000 to provide a cost-of-living increase from 1st April. Additionally overtime rates will improve and overtime pay at time and a half for 7 days over the Christmas and New Year period for all those who are on the roster to work. From 1 December 2022, all other overtime above full-time equivalent or contractual hours (whichever is the greater) will be paid at time and a third until 1 May 2023 when they will review the impact on retention, recruitment, and agency usage. From 1 November 2022 until 31 November in the first instance, they will make a Discretionary Isolation Payment for those with proof of a positive Covid test who are unable to work from home and need to isolate.

Overall Aims for 2023

- Increasing membership in the sector
- Increasing reps in the sector
- Increasing recognition agreements
- Increasing facility time

Eastern

This past year continues to see demands put on our Community and voluntary sector members. Our members on the frontline are still impacted by the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and continued underfunding in these sectors. One of our areas of campaigning work this year has been in the Social Care sector. Across the region branches have been campaigning for their Local Authorities to become Foundation Living wage employers. Suffolk County branch has led the way with this work. The branch has held on-line and in-person rallies outside the full council meetings, they have marched through Ipswich and they have engaged the public to support their call for the living wage. All this work has generated new members and reps from the social care sector, but also

featured in high profile regional media reports. Other branches like Herts County have targeted social care employers where sick pay was not paid from day one and campaigned and won for the local authority to pay it. Regional projects in social care have included boosting recruitment and reps in NORSE care and taking a delegation of social care members to Parliament to meet with decision-makers and highlight their campaign for higher wages and better conditions in the sector.

Other Community and Voluntary work in the region has included targeted recruitment in Housing Associations and this year UNISON Essex branch has run recruitment events in Estuary Housing which has boosted membership and reps.

Greater London

Within the Community service group in London, we have more than 8000 members across the three stand-alone community branches. There are additional members within the service group in other branches, taking the total number of members in community to 9976. This year recruitment in Community has been positive although the service group has ended the year with a very small net loss of members.

As in all sectors, pay and the cost-of-living crisis has been high on the agenda. Pay negotiations are almost concluded. Part of this process involved an in-depth online survey carried out at the employer level which allowed us to create pay claims which are relevant and targeted to each employer – for example by demonstrating that large numbers of members at a particular employer are considering leaving for better pay elsewhere. Pay deals confirmed to date include:

- 5% at Barnardo's
- 4.9% at Notting Hill Genesis Housing
- 4% at London & Quadrant Housing
- 3.1% and 1 extra wellbeing day at One Housing group,
- 2% plus £800 unconsolidated bonus pain in 2 instalments at Look Ahead.

A number of housing associations are in the process of merging including:

- Optivo merging with Southern Housing Group,
- One housing merging with Riverside and
- Peabody merging with Catalyst.

These mergers will have an impact on the way we operate as a union, particular when it comes

to cross-region employers spanning a number of UNISON regions. There is also the threat of potential de-recognition at some which the branch, with support from the region, will challenge.

The Housing Associations branch has more than 3000 members spread across more than 150 employers, in the larger housing associations, where we have higher membership density. An organising project was established to recruit new UNISON reps with a view to establishing an employer-based committee for each. Employer Based Committees have been successfully established at every major employer at the Housing Associations Branch including Optivo, L&Q, One Housing and NHG. This has enabled us to have a much more structured approach to local negotiations, with communications built at the employer level around JNCs and ongoing workplace issues and the project is ongoing.

Across the Housing Associations branch, we have successfully negotiated major concessions for members regarding reorganisations at employers such as SBHA and Yarrow Housing. We have also negotiated with employers to ensure that the legal changes to mandatory vaccinations impact our members fairly, such as by ensuring time off is given to take and, if necessary, recover from the vaccine without members of staff hitting sickness triggers or having to take leave.

The Community and Voluntary Organisations (CVO) branch has more than 4000 members and covers nearly 1000 employers making recruitment and organising challenging. However, the CVO branch has significantly increased its organising functions and has already seen increase in membership in organisations that we met with. We have held open meetings to recruit members and spread information about UNISON, the benefits of joining and answered pressing questions. Organising, Recruitment and Retention Initiatives include:

Open meetings — bi-monthly introduction to UNISON online meetings have been running since April, where members and non-members can attend a 15-minute session can learn about UNISON and the benefits of being in a union.

Organising activities — recruitment and organising activities have taken place in Mind in Camden, Coram, The Brilliant Club, Community Southwark, Involve, Action Tutoring resulting in recruitment of members and reps. The branch have also attended meetings to present UNISON at staff forums where staff were 'shopping' for unions in Green Alliance and Island

Advice — this seems to be a new trend in the sector.

The CVO branch has recruited 22 new stewards, 2 equality reps and 3 H&S reps. However, we are constantly losing reps and members as many change jobs frequently. A large proportion of these activists do not have any facility time.

Green Reps Network — the branch is in the process of establishing a Green Reps Network.

Reps network — monthly activist meetings have been a good space for reps to share ideas and provide support and materials to reps. These meetings also give reps a chance to meet others and discuss issues they have. As a result of these meetings, the branch has done a wellbeing survey with members and as a result are now aware of some of the key areas of concern by branch members as a whole, as well as local issues at specific employers. Where a particular local issue has been identified, local reps have been supported to raise this with the employer, one example is on implementing the UNISON Menopause policy.

Recognition agreements — We have negotiated a recognition agreement with Stonewall. We are also in the process of an agreement with Opening Doors and GALOP.

All of these initiatives are delivering results and the initiatives will continue moving into 2023.

Northern

The ongoing impact on public sector cuts, rising costs and increased demands for services provided by the community and voluntary sector continue to impact our members daily lives both in work and at home.

Many smaller employers still attempting to recover from the impact of COVID-19 and others impacted by the ongoing austerity enforced by the government

Throughout 2022 members in social care have been faced with increasing demands as staffing levels fall but demand increases and the complexity of illnesses develops in the wake of the pandemic. COVID 19 allowed an opportunity to expose the risks and pressures our members face on a daily basis, many of whom are paid minimum wage and should have been the wake up call for government to properly fund and nationalise the care system.



Recruiting, Organising, and & Retaining members

As well as ongoing recruitment, retention and organising activity the northern region identified some key dates to allow issue or event based activity in 2022 this included heart unions, learning fortnight and increasing activism these dedicated focused fortnights gave as an opportunity to engage with current and future members and activists with a conversation starter and incentives. The learning fortnight in particular was really successful and this will become an annual focus.

A priority in the Northern region is on increasing participation from our members in the community and voluntary sector and this year has seen this in action.

As COVID restrictions finally eased we were able to take part in some of our historic wider activity and its been great to see increased support from activists within the Community and voluntary sector at some of our higher profile events this year including the Durham miners Gala and UK Pride which was hosted in Newcastle and we look forward to continuing to build on this in 2023

Our regional group has been a little less active this past year as personal and work demands on our members have taken priority but we are excited to relaunch our group in 2023 following the work to identify new activists in the sectors.

Northern Ireland

The Community and Voluntary Sector branch continues to have active representation on and participates in Regional Council, Regional Committee, Regional Self Organised Groups, Belfast Trades Union Council and Derry Trades Union Council.

Complimenting all the above, Saoirse Fanning, our Joint Branch Secretary continues to take the National Community Female Seat on the NEC, 2021 -2023.

UNISON Community SGE Elections 2022

Pauline Lagan and Niall McCarroll were successfully elected from the UNISON NI Community and voluntary sector branch to the UNISON Community SGE for the incoming term of office.

Community Branch NI – organising successes

UNISON delivered significant successes for our members over the recent period, organising on a platform of radical trade union campaigning.

Building up a culture of solidarity across the region, reaching into and positively shaping an increasing number of workplaces and communities.

1 Apex Housing Association

In negotiations with Apex Housing, involving UNISON's Regional Organiser and Senior Lay Reps, we were able to achieve a 6% pay rise and a NJC payment of £1925 for our members.

This follows on from successfully negotiating an increase in sick pay protection from 1 week's full sick pay, in any 12-month period to 3-months full, 3 months half pay over the same 12-month period.

UNISON also successfully negotiated the introduction of a Menopause and Endometriosis Policies. They are also currently negotiating Parental Bereavement Leave and Special Leave for Domestic Abuse

UNISON is working with Apex Housing Association on a programme of job evaluations across the organisation using the GLPC job evaluation scheme. Three Branch Representatives have just completed GLPC job evaluation training with UNISON.

2 Choice Housing Association

Members in Choice Housing Association received a £500 Cost of Living Payment. Organising Reps will continue to provide a strong voice for our members.

3 First Housing Aid and Support Services

UNISON negotiated a £500 Cost of Living Crisis Payment for all staff.

This latest success follows on from the significant improvements UNISON have negotiated with this employer.

One off payments include:

- Nov 14 — £450
- Dec 15 — £350
- Nov 16 — 3% of gross annual salary
- Mar 17 — £150
- Nov 17 — 3% of gross annual salary
- Mar 18 — £150
- Nov 18 — 3% of gross annual salary
- Nov 19 — 1% of gross annual salary + £150
- Apr, May, June 20 — covid standby payment of £113 gross payment to frontline staff each month

In addition, **salary increases** include:

- a 2% salary increase was paid in April 19
- 3% salary increase in July 20 to Accommodation Support Workers
- 10% increase to all Accommodation Staff/ Floating Support/Night Support Staff and all Auxiliary Staff and Management Staff in those areas also in November 2021
- Travel allowance increased from 27p per mile to 45p per mile in November 21
- 10% increase in the Bank Rate of pay from Nov 21
- Dec 21 — Accommodation Support Workers 10% pay rise

The 20% pay award being the highest across all service groups in our region.

Annual Leave Increases included

- April 17 — additional day annual leave given to anyone with 3+ years' service

Additional Support

The implementation of a UNISON led Health and Well-being policy for our members in First Housing has been agreed with the following areas identified to be included in this new policy.

- IVF Assisted Pregnancy Leave
- Endometriosis
- Menopause
- Parental Bereavement Leave
- Special Leave for Domestic Abuse

4 De Paul Ireland

Negotiations with DePaul Ireland on their service review and a new service delivery model resulted in a 4% uplift to salaries of affected staff.

Extensive support from UNISON was provided for our members during this remodelling initiative - with the election of a new Workplace Rep also being a significant development.

5 Simon Community

Following negotiations with UNISON, Simon Community NI reversed their decision on a non-consolidated 2% pay award for staff which will now be a consolidated award back paid to April 2022.

Recruitment Retention And Organising

268 Community and voluntary sector members were recruited during 2022, with total full branch membership reaching 1901 by the end of the year. This is, a slight increase on the 1879 branch members recorded to the end of 2021.

During 2022, 3 new stewards were elected and a further 3 stewards completed their ERA accredited training.

The need for more Workplace and Health and Safety Representatives is always a priority.

Developing and maximising engagement and representation on a local and regional level remains an ongoing challenge.

Factors such as lack of union recognition, working time constraints and no full time release for our branch committee members all hinder Community and voluntary sector members from playing a more meaningful role in building and delivering on our union's aims and objectives.

Overcoming these obstacles is always a challenge, however the branch continues to develop and grow — being the most effective voice for Community and voluntary Sector Workers within our region.

In the latest national recruitment figures we are the only C&V Branch across the 12 regions that has overall plus membership when leavers and joiners are added together.

Branch structures 2022

The region has in place a Branch Committee with a wide range of skills and expertise across a varied group of employers and sectors.

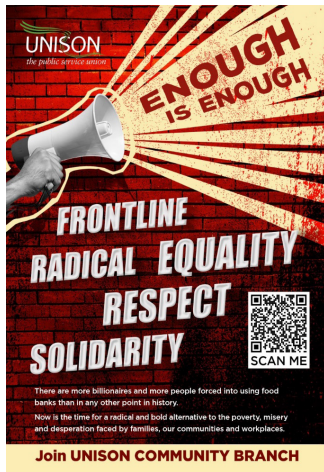
This varied knowledge and experience will further support and develop the branch across the C&V sector within the region.

The Branch has currently 13 ERA accredited Reps, 8 Health & Safety Reps, 1 Union Learning Rep and 2 Welfare Officers.

Branch recruitment / update your membership details campaign

The Branch Committee successfully launched a Branch Recruitment / Update Your Membership Details Campaign across our region.

Campaign Social Media Graphics are below.



UNISON — There For You

The Branch continues to contribute to the UNISON There for You charity and other worthy causes across our region.

Maintaining and further strengthening our commitment to stand as one and in solidarity with our fellow UNISON colleagues across all branches, service groups and regions.

Campaigns

Supporting people programme campaign

The Supporting People Campaign remains ongoing and active — organising and communicating with our branch membership, service providers, politicians, and government departments being a central theme and strategy.

A grassroots trade union campaign which continues to provide a vital voice for frontline workers employed through Supporting People funding, calling for improved terms and conditions of employment and demanding an end to the undervaluing of these essential frontline workers.

Womens sector campaign

Campaigning on behalf of women Community and voluntary sector workers, who find themselves largely low paid, overworked and undervalued. The campaign focuses on organising and recruiting within the women's sector - determined to improve the treatment of women in the workplace.

Fighting for enhanced terms and conditions of employment, better work life balance and life opportunities for our branch membership employed in this sector.

Community groups campaign

Community and voluntary sector members working primarily within specific community group settings are among the lowest paid frontline workers across the sector, with union membership density very low and trade union organising and recognition non-existent, or at the least ineffective in addressing the issues around pay and equality. This branch driven campaign aims to reach non-unionised workers across our communities.

Developing and amplifying their collective voice towards much needed change with an end to precarious and fix term contracts a major objective.

Representations and member support

2022 was a busy year for branch activists with a significant amount of resources used in safeguarding our members at work, ensuring their rights were protected and where necessary changes implemented.

- Brief synopsis of branch rep work in 2022
- Redundancies
- OH Referrals
- Sickness Absence
- Welfare Meetings
- Bullying and Harassment
- Verbal and Physical Assaults
- Disciplinarys
- Grievances
- Referrals to Thompsons
- Discrimination Cases
- Flexible Working Requests
- Reasonable Adjustments
- Supporting Pregnant Members
- Injury at Work
- Cost of Living Payments
- Pay Awards

Particular cases which are worth mentioning is the support UNISON provided to a female member over a three-year period. The member had been attacked in the workplace. UNISON attended numerous meetings over the years to support the member and ultimately she received a significant lump sum payment in 2022 from her employer for negligence and breaching health and safety laws. 2 male members also received significant settlements from their employer, as a direct consequence of bullying behaviour and unfair treatment from their manager.

Social media / branch logo relaunch

Extensive work is currently underway to relaunch the branch across various social media platforms including Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

Recognition agreements

Regionally we have recognition agreements with Apex Housing Association, Ballymagoarty, Hazelbank Community Partnership, DePaul Ireland, First Housing Aid and Support Services, Newington Housing Association and Simon Community.

Workplace Representatives are completing excellent progressive trade unionism within these employers, improving the lives of our members, standing up and demanding, respect, equality, safe working conditions, above inflation pay awards and challenging all forms of harassment and bullying.

International solidarity

Fundamental to our branch function is our commitment and solidarity with international calls for justice, equality, and worker's rights. Solidarity affiliations continue with - Justice for Colombia, Cuban Solidarity Campaign and Palestine Solidarity Campaigns.

Collaboration with the wider trade union movement

UNISON Community and voluntary sector Branch members take up key roles in the Belfast & District Trades Union Council and Derry Trades Union Council. Branch members when called upon, joined our UNISON colleagues in Health and Education and other union members in CWU, UNITE, UCU, and NIPSA, supporting their demands for fair pay and decent terms and conditions of employment.

Trades Council affiliated Branch Committee members played a central role in organising the first Town Hall meeting of the NIC ICTU Workers Demand Better Campaign, which was attended by over 100 people.

Subsequently organising a March and Rally in Derry City entitled We Demand Better which had keynote speakers from various sectors and was attended by over 400 people.

Our values

The Branch continue to grow our visibility in the region through social media, press statements and other forms of engagement with the wider branch membership. Declaring our position, values, and commitment to Community and voluntary sector workers, based on the values of democracy, working class unity, equality and social justice.

An influential workers movement which any worker can contact in the event they need advice, support, and representation.

North West

Regional Community Service Group

The Regional Service Group continues to have active representation on, and participates in the work of a range of regional bodies including Regional Council, Regional Committee and Regional Organising Committee. Our members also attend Regional Self Organised Group Committees and Labour Link to ensure that there is regular exchange of information and that our priorities inform their work and campaigns. Similarly, we also meet with other Service Group leads and our Regional Management Team on a regular basis.

Membership/ Recruitment and retention

Following a significant loss in membership at the end of 2021 our membership has increased with consistent month on month growth over the summer. The ERA and Steward count remains low and H&S reps needs improvement. However, our increased Workplace Contact figures demonstrate that the regional participation project has proved fruitful. Our regional objective is to improve on our recruitment of pay contacts during the forthcoming year.

The region has set disaggregated joiner / leaver / growth targets for our service group for 2023 and we are utilising the regional "Adapt to Win" digital toolkit to improve our reach and address our recruitment and retention objectives. Emphasis will concentrate on retention.

Activity Fortnights

Community Activity Fortnights took place in November 2022 linking recruitment and retention with capacity building across our members in social care, charities and housing associations. Activity took place in Social Care via the Social Care project with focus on highlighting the work on around the Foundation Living Wage (FLW)

In Housing Associations, this included a new UNISON NW Housing Newsletter, the launch of a UNISON NW Housing Association Survey to identify the key issues housing staff face and to determine pay, campaigning and bargaining priorities.

Social Care

The regional social care organising strategy continues to prioritise campaigning for the delivery of the Foundation Living Wage (FLW) to secure material

improvements for care workers and to build towards our long term strategic aim of in-sourcing. The Greater Manchester Care Workers Demand a Pay Rise was launched in November 2021 and – following worker mobilisation, public pressure, a political campaign and council lobbies – commitments to the delivery of the FLW this year have been secured in six out of the ten Greater Manchester councils: Bolton, Oldham, Rochdale, Manchester Salford, and Stockport. This will deliver a pay rise to over 25,000 workers. Local organising campaigns have been run with target employers in GM who have previously refused to pay the FLW (including Creative Support and Lifeways) resulting in a number of employers agreeing to pay the FLW for the first time.

Further commitments have been made by Bury, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan Councils to introduce the FLW by 2023. However, the campaign continues to escalate to build pressure to bring forward these commitments and is focussing on the implementation and enforcement of agreements.

The Greater Manchester Care Workers Demand a Pay Rise won campaign of the year at the Living Wage Foundation's 2022 Awards.

The Merseyside Care Workers Demand a Pay Rise was launched in the autumn targeting five local authorities across the Liverpool City Region not paying the FLW namely Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and St Helens.

Elsewhere, Cheshire West and Chester and Blackpool have committed to pay the FLW from 2022/23, Wirral Council have increased pay for homecare workers to at least £11 p.h.

The Insourcing Commission in Salford has made its first recommendations regarding bringing social care back in-house. This followed a commitment by Cheshire West and Chester to bring over 500 outsourced care workers employed by Vivo back in house.

Our learning from this on-going campaign has informed UNISON's over-arching social care strategy and continues to underpin the union's work on keeping the issue of social care high up on our national agenda

UNISON North West believes that the Foundation Living Wage needs to be made an essential contractual requirement in all commissioning, and where providers refuse, councils need to take whatever action is necessary to guarantee that care workers receive a decent wage, including looking at options to bring services back in-house.

Housing Associations

Our organisation, presence and bargaining power in housing services across Local Government and Community has declined as a result of fragmentation from stock transfers and the creation of Arms-Length Management Organisations and other delivery models, highlighting the need for more intense recruitment and retention activity across both Service Groups. Regionally, we have been exploring joint working with the Local Government Service Group to address this and how we can base-build, both in statutory services and Registered Social Landlords. Across the region Housing Association membership has seen a reduction on previous years' figures - indicating definite scope for further organising and development activity for branches and the region.

Erosion of the democratic element within Housing Association boards in the region continues to be of concern, with some Housing Associations gradually reducing the number of local authority board members – a key indicator that they are following the general direction of travel within the sector.

Pay claims have also been successfully negotiated based on the model Housing Association pay claim produced by the Service Group Executive and meetings have taken place with Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign and examined the work being undertaken with GMCA housing providers around becoming Real Living wage employers.

During 2022 we surveyed Housing Association members across our 140 employers and are now holding regular Housing Association Forums which formulate and direct this work stream within in the regional work programme.

We are in the process of setting up a bargaining database, organised by employers within the Community Service Group. We have made the decision to initially focus on the Housing sector and have identified approximately 100 Housing employers in the North West covering a number of branches. This will hopefully be an important tool to access, aiding branches and the region to successfully negotiate future collective pay claims. It is an important building block in respect of the information we already hold with regard to existing pay claims and in conjunction with information we can access via the Labour Research Department (LRD) database.

We have already started to gather data of existing and historic pay claims and the outcomes negotiated,

giving the latest pay settlement details which contains the standard increase given, if the employer is paying the minimum/living wage, how many staff it will affect, types of workers ie: manual & non manual, when the pay claim started and the date to commence renegotiations. We also want to gather information on recognition agreements, terms and conditions, policies and the name of the person who negotiated the outcome as a reference point.

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing/Awaab Isak

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) came to national prominence in 2022 as a result of the local coroner's findings in relation to the tragic death of infant Awaab Isak after prolonged exposure to mould.

The case has sparked a national debate about standards in social housing and has echoes of the Grenfell disaster, which was preceded by a social landlord failing to properly listen to tenants' complaints. The coroner, Joanne Kearsley, said Awaab's death should be a "defining moment" for the UK's housing sector - noting that about 450,000 homes in England have problems with condensation and mould. It has resulted in further investigations including by the Housing Ombudsman, the removal of the CEO, with further calls from the solicitor of Awaab Isak's family for the removal of the entire current board.

Media coverage of the case has been widespread and includes a Manchester Evening News' campaign for a change in law following Awaab's death (supported by housing charity Shelter) calling for a strengthening of the Social Housing Regulation Bill passing through Parliament. This calls for an 'Awaab's Law' which would require social landlords to investigate the causes of damp and mould within 14 days of complaints being made and give seven days to begin work to repair a property if a medical professional believes there is a risk to a tenant's health.

At the time of writing UNISON members in the employer were being surveyed around the impact that this case and the resulting actions have had on them.

Charitable and Voluntary Sector

This is a massively fragmented sector with many of our members being either a lone member (or one of two) across a huge swathe of our 3,600 employers. Many small charities in sector are running on almost no reserves as the majority of their work was not considered to be pandemic-related and consequently lost funding.

The rise of minimum wage will close some of those organisations or reduced staffing levels. Adequate funding from grant-making bodies to accommodate this and the cost of living rises are essential if the sector and our members' jobs are to survive.

It is against this background, and the impact the cost of living crisis is having on organisations and staff, that our work in this sector is framed and has a major bearing on our ability to recruit and organise.

We are aiming to develop our reach and organising capacity within this sector through a series of on-line meetings beginning in 2023. Concentration will be on pay and campaigning for appropriate funding for the sector.

Communications

Our summer newsletter went out digitally to members in Community and print editions were circulated widely across all regional bodies. Response was good and from this we identified a number of potential activists and issues to take forward. Follow up was undertaken by regional staff. We are currently in the process of producing our winter edition which will concentrate on pay across all our sectors in Community.

Labour Link/Political

We continue to use our political lobbying and campaigning strength to support Community members in dispute with their employers and have successfully secured the support of the North West members of the Parliamentary Labour Party, Shadow Cabinet members and Labour elected Mayors on a range of disputes and initiatives involving Community members both locally and nationally.

Self-Organisation

North West Community members continue to play a full and active part in Women's, LGBT+, Disabled, Black Members and Young Members Self Organisation at branch, regional and national levels, ensuring that our priorities are reflected in their campaigning and bargaining agendas.

Wider community engagement

Community members have been active in support of a wide range of initiatives across the North West which has seen us participating in a host of digital events including LGBT+ Prides, the Climate Crisis/ Green economy, Mandela 67 events, international

solidarity webinars with the people of Palestine, Cuba and Venezuela, the Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign, Hazards Campaign H&S webinars, a number of GM Citizens UK initiatives and a range of other campaigns. In particular we are looking forward to working with the Runnymede Trust as they roll out their work with migrant workers in 2023. This participation enables us to extend the reach of our organising and recruitment agendas as trade unionists, enhances our capacity to effect change and positively influence the agendas of the community organisations we work with.

Scotland

Overview

Although devolution has offered some possible gains for UNISON's CVS members, the Scottish Government has plans for a National Care Service based on the destruction of local government. We face a battle to make long-awaited Fair Work gains while protecting fundamental rights of council workers who find their working conditions under attack. Our challenge is to develop our powerful organising response to new threats as well as longstanding CVS problems.

Recruitment

Net membership held up reasonably well in 2022 despite a mass exodus of workers from many services within the CVS service group. Vacancy rates in residential care are 43%. Over 20% of posts in care at home are unstaffed. And all community employers report intense difficulties recruiting in a post Brexit labour market. Building union density in that context is a challenge. Despite these difficulties we recruited nearly 1,500 new CVS members to UNISON Scotland and almost 700 of those recruits were in our target areas.

CVS Organising

The CVS sector is central to Scotland's programme to secure a 10% increase in our activist base by identifying new workplace leaders from our net growth of 8,415 for the region as a whole. And we look forward to 2023 with confidence.

Our CVS organising plan is being driven by the new CVS committee elected in 2022 and centres around residential Organiser Training targeted at lay reps and scheduled for February 2023. Our focus in 2022 has been ground work to build the base of more powerful campaigns in 2023 and that work is well advanced.

Social Care Organising

Although our branch and activist base in Housing remains strong, our presence in social care requires investment. Our BSOF project will draw on the many successes of Scotland's approach to organising during the pandemic – high profile digital organising, accessible short courses to introduce members to issues and activism, powerful campaigns to build momentum around key demands, and mentoring to support reps on the journey from membership to activism. The key focus of that work will be to advance our demands for immediate action on the staffing crisis fuelled by low pay, and, to build power behind our demands for UNISON's vision of an authentic National Care Service founded upon Fair Work and longstanding public service values. (see below)

Training & Activist Development

UNISON Scotland has a strong activist development function founded upon member learning, activist education and mentoring. Half our member learning budget was dedicated to social care in 2022 reaching hundreds of new learners and potential activists. We will further tighten that focus under the UNISON College in 2023 creating mentored pathways to CVS activism. We will also use our influence of the National Care Service to create new career pathways for UNISON members in social care, and improve access to learning through new learning agreements with employers.

Advice and Representation

The unfair work in social care and the wider CVS sector continues to account for a disproportionate number of requests for assistance and referrals to legal services. This includes a worrying over-representation of discrimination cases against not-for profit employers. One of our landmark victories was secured by Polly Jones who was sacked from her job with a housing charity for expressing an intention to stand as a parliamentary candidate for the Labour Party. Polly's win was a triumph over unfair work in the CVS sector, and a landmark win for all workers who want to engage in political activity without fear of victimisation.

UNISON Scotland has reviewed how we assist members facing such difficulties in 2022, and our new service will build a whole union response, drive collective campaigns in response to issues emerging from casework, and use a programme of training, surgeries and quicker access to legal assistance to strengthen the position of workers scattered across a large number of fragmented CVS and care employers.

Fair Work in Care

UNISON led the creation of Scotland's Fair Work Convention, and co-authored the landmark Fair Work in Care report [2019]. However, implementation of specific gains for workers has been tortuously slow.

In 2022 we created new lay structures to enable care workers to drive a faster rate of change and we are now on the verge of a series of major breakthroughs despite major weaknesses and attacks in Scottish Government's implementation plans.

Sectoral Bargaining

UNISON developed a strong position on sectoral bargaining in 2022, built a united trade union approach, and took those demands to Government and employers. In addition to national standards on pay and conditions our work will transform commissioning, procurement and the regulation of all registered care providers. It is vital that these demands are met through the powerful voice of reps from the CVS sector, and our recruitment, organising and activist development (above) have all been geared to that task.

Scottish Living Wage

UNISON secured the living wage in care over six years ago, but compliance has always been a problem. New data suggests that the majority of workers report no pay rise during the cost of living crisis despite increased funding. As living costs rise, and the staffing crisis deepens, organising campaigns for immediate action on low pay will be an urgent priority in 2023.

Maternity Rights and Sick Pay

Enhanced sickness and maternity rights will be the first products of sectoral bargaining in care thanks to lobbying and negotiating through the Fair Work in Care process in 2022. As with pay, the organising challenge in 2023 will be to build the workplace power to ensure these rights are applied and enforced for the benefit of all care workers.

Ethical Commissioning

UNISON longstanding campaign has now been accepted as a foundation for the National Care Service and the task for 2023 is to ensure that commissioning focuses on Fair Work in non-profit services and that procurement applies exemplar Fair Work standards to contracts for purchased services.

National Care Service Bill

Although the Bill carries key measures vital for sectoral bargaining and Fair Work in Care, those gains for staff in contracted services are dwarfed by the SNP/Green plan to create local care boards that have the power to remove all social work and social care from local authorities. Scotland's CVS and social care members are united with our local government members in our call to withdraw the Bill in its present form, and re-write the National Care Service with an emphasis on local government as a vital foundation for Fair Work, integrated social services and local democratic control.

Fair Finance for Housing Providers

The CVS Service Group has been closely monitoring the impact of the Scottish Government rent cap on housing associations, with a growing number of employers reporting financial distress arising from reduced income. Through the CVS committee our Housing reps will maintain pressure on Government in 2023 to ensure that the adverse secondary impact of the rent cap on the housing workforce is addressed.

Scotland's Social Care Committee

Our CVS committee remains as the strong voice for all members employed within the community service group. Social Care in Scotland crosses CVS, local government and NHS boundaries, so we have an additional committee that enables activists from social care to build a united voice across all sectors.

Given the divisive nature of the SNP/Green attack on local government services, this new committee enables UNISON to maintain a powerful demand for Fair Work in Care, while also maintaining a resolute defence of public sector services. Working with trade union partners and allies across public services, we have formed a powerful campaign against the National Care Service Bill during 2022. The year ahead will be a crucial year when we face this complex campaigning territory and win Fair Work for all our members.

South East

The year has been challenging as staff shortage is still a huge concern in all social care organisations. The pay crisis is affecting the lowest paid staff more than ever, decisions on whether to stay in the care sector or move to better paid commercial or retail employment is hard hitting and is happening leaving staff to cope with severe shortages. People having to make choices to heat or eat is just not acceptable.

The Dimensions union convenor, Helen Couchman had several opportunities to speak in The House of Commons in 2022 to highlight and call for better pay in the social care sector, to professionalise care worker training and to call on the HMRC to raise the 45p level re mileage payments.

Now that government covid guidelines have changed the reinstatement of sick policies (no pay for the first three days) is causing anger and stress. The guideline is do not work if you prove positive for covid but the three day no pay means choices must be made for low paid workers – do they test or don't they?

Social care has seen a small improvement for people we support. Some can get out again and recommence a few of their pre-pandemic activities, although many were unable to open up again due to loss of staffing and increased costs.

The service group committee is committed to increasing attendance at committee meeting and pushing to fill more seats on the committee at the next AGM. We have a passionate and dedicated base in the committee but there remain many vacant seats. The service group committee has been working to implement a strategy to increase communications with the members in community and voluntary sector.

It is clear that there are barriers for members participating at a regional level and the service group forum is committed to tackling this and increasing participation so the forum can make a real difference to members in the community and voluntary sector.

The group meets 4 times a year and will be moving to some physical and some virtual meetings in the new year to aid in maximising attendance and worthwhile, productive meetings. The forum will also be looking to introduce a new constitution at the next AGM which should provide a clear and strong foundation upon which the committee can grow.

We look forward to coming back to together in the new year and continuing our hard work for members in the Community and Voluntary sector.

South West

St Monica Trust Strike



The most significant UNISON activity taking place within the Community Service Group in the South West in 2022 was the St Monica Trust care home dispute in Bristol and North Somerset, during which members in four care homes took a total of seven days of strike action between June and August.

The strike was a response to St Monica Trust's attempt to impose new employment contracts on approximately 500 residential care home staff. Almost every aspect of the terms and conditions of staff were affected, including hours of work, basic pay, sick pay, and unsocial hours enhancements.

The strike, and the refusal of some care home staff to voluntarily sign the new contracts more generally, led to several concessions from the employer including two years pay protection and improvements to the evening rates. It received considerable publicity including on the BBC, ITV and in the Daily Mirror and Guardian.

The government's change to regulations allowing employers to use agency workers to undermine strikes was introduced in the middle of this dispute and was immediately utilised by the employer.

Members voted to end the strike in September. Unfortunately we had not been successful in getting

the employer to withdraw its proposed changes entirely, and over time most affected staff either left the organisation or succumbed to the pressure from management to sign the new contracts.

However for the minority who persistently refused to do so, the employer has so far still not gone through with its threat to fire and rehire, whilst also never agreeing to rule it out, and they remain on contracts which are in some respects superior to those of most of their colleagues over eight months after the employer's first planned implementation date. The employer has also not yet attempted to make similar changes to the contracts of its other staff in domiciliary care, maintenance and administration, and may have been deterred from doing so by the strong reaction from residential care home staff.

Our recruitment and organisation in the employer improved as result of the dispute, with membership more than trebling at the start of 2022.

LGPS Access in Housing Associations

At least two housing associations in the region – Bromford Housing and Alliance Homes – having previously closed access to the Local Government Pension Scheme to new starters, are now attempting to remove access from current members.

Annual Leave Calculations

Some branch-employed caseworkers are reporting that a lot of their cases in the Community sector over the past year has been about the fact that members' annual leave calculations are incorrect.

Because of the nature of much of the work in the sector - irregular hours, different rates of pay for day shifts, sleep-ins etc – annual leave can be difficult to calculate. The issue is further compounded by payslips only providing the bare minimum of information they are required to include, and unhelpful HR departments who do not provide employees or their union reps with a breakdown of their calculations when asked.

Dealing with these cases can often be time-consuming for members, reps and branch-employed caseworkers.

Social Care Funding

We have heard from some of the major charities in social care in the South West about how hard they are finding balancing the books because of serious

underfunding in the sector. We continue to raise our concerns at all levels about this developing crisis.

West Midlands

2022 was a challenging year across the Community Sector in the West Midlands. Looking back at past annual reports we can see that many of our members faced the same problems again, as in previous years, but with a number of additional pressures. Staff shortages across the sector has had an effect on our members, employers and service users. The cost of living crisis affected all members both in their private lives and at work. The fragmented nature of how our membership operates means any problems are effectively hidden as many are employed by smaller employers when compared to the wider public sector. The Government and Media seem unable to recognise the scale of these problems let alone demonstrate a willingness to address them.

Housing Association employers' income is tied to the level of rent increases. This means the employers argued any pay claims had to be limited to those inflationary figures. By the time we got to the negotiating table inflation had risen above those levels and members were seeking pay rises in line with the current rate of inflation. This has led to tensions across the Region with most pay rises below inflation. The outlook for next year is even worse as many employers have advised they will see a cap on rent increases irrespective of inflation.

A number of Voluntary Organisations saw a reduction in income due to the cost-of-living crisis. This led to restructures and reorganisations that proved challenging for all involved. The diverse nature of services our members provide means that underfunding affects the most vulnerable in society.

We saw a small reduction in membership across the sector which was disappointing following a few years of actual growth. Early indications are that this is driven by the cost-of-living crisis rather than any service deficiencies on UNISON part. Members have indicated they would prefer to stay in membership but they have no choice but to make every saving possible and monthly subscriptions are one of many choices they feel they have no option but to take.

Our ability to organise continues to benefit from the single branch structure we have in the Region. This means we can react to the ever changing employer structures and diverse roles our members undertake.

The range and number of individual cases continue to be high when compared to other branches of a similar size in other UNISON Sectors. The problems we have highlighted above have the effect of creating this casework. This can sometimes affect our organising ability due to the workload. It is hoped we can look at developing our organising ability through 2023 within the Region by targeting larger employers.

Yorkshire and Humberside

It has been another very challenging year again in the Yorkshire and Humberside region. Resources both of branches and of the regional structures have as expected been focused on supporting members. The region continues to struggle to gain rep engagement with the regional democratic structures however we are optimistic that things may now be improving with one or two new individuals showing an interest.

Regional community members have played an active part in the Service Group's Community and Housing Association sector committees, bringing the experience of members in our region to these sectors.

Negotiations across a range of employers have been supported by both branch and region with a range of different outcomes having been achieved.

The region is expecting the new year to be equally as challenging as last however we remain optimistic and positive about the future and will continue to do our very best to achieve the best we can for our Community and voluntary sector members.

Action on motions from Community Conference 2022

Motion 1

Social Care Fairer Pay in Social Care

This conference asks the SGE to:

1. Develop a plan for recruiting new stewards and for support from the regions
2. Ensure support to new stewards and activists, through training and education, mentoring etc
3. Play a full role in developing UNISON's cross sectoral Social Care Strategy and campaign, pressing for a minimum sectoral wage of £12 an hour.
4. Call for all social care to be publicly owned and managed, particularly where organisations claim they cannot afford to pay a fair wage
5. Disseminate briefings for the social care campaign, including the key facts and main issues to branches, along with materials that can be used on social media and newsletters
6. Work with the Regions to support the running of activists workshops, as part of the campaign, to ensure consistent key messages and support to activists.
7. Coordinate pay campaigning where appropriate with Local Government and Health, ensuring developments in pay approaches in those sectors are taken into account in bargaining with community employers.

Actions taken

1. A new 'Social Care Stewards Training Course' has been developed and trialled in Scotland and Cymru/Wales with great success. The course is modular and better suited to social care workers. This resource will be available to all UNISON regions in 2023. All Regional Social Care Leads have been briefed and a number are already planning on holding courses soon.
2. The Strategic Organising Unit has been working with UNISON Cymru/Wales on organising social care workers in Wales. A lessons learned report has been considered Development and Organising Committee. Full plan for social care organising to follow.

2. Social care workers in nationally recognised employers have been targeted as part of UNISON's roll-out of UNISON College
3. Future Social Care Coalition held meetings with care minister, Jeremy Hunt (when he was on the backbenches), held fringe meetings at Tory and Labour Conferences. We have secured a commitment to social care national fair pay agreements in the event of a Labour government. Ran two targeted campaigns led by regions to secure pay rises in the sector on the release of short-term government funds.
4. Social care members have been kept fully updated with this work via regions and regular social care national emails.
5. Fabians research on national care service commissioned. Labour Shadow SofS publicly referencing it as key shaping document for NCS

Motion 2

Social care recruitment and retention crisis

Conference calls upon the Community Service Group Executive to:

1. Play a full role in developing UNISON's cross-sectoral social care strategy and campaign, to advance structural reforms and a level of funding for the sector which would enable the payment of decent, attractive wages to retain staff within the profession.
2. Work with the NEC and other service groups to promote terms and conditions improvement in the short term, including extending occupational sick pay schemes and barring zero hours contracts except where desired by the worker concerned.
3. Provide all support possible to groups of members in individual employers seeking to improve either their own terms and conditions or their pay levels.
4. Continue to support UNISON's campaign for a reversal to "no jab, no job" in English care homes, and oppose its extension to home care workers.

Actions taken

1. Multiple press releases and media appearances from UNISON to highlight chronic understaffing in the sector, both in broadcast media and print.

2. These issues raised directly with ministers and officials at the DHSC
3. Full pay bargaining guidance issued to all branches, including model data and pay claims.
4. No Jab, No Job - 100% reversed and defeated. UNISON *the* lead union in media and in meetings with government resisting this policy. Close co-ordination with Health colleagues. Keeping a close eye on any attempts to re-introduce this policy.
5. See also actions from Motion 1

Motion 3

Put women at the heart of the recovery by investing in social care

Conference calls on the Community Service Group Executive to work with the National Women's Committee and NEC to:

1. Lobby UK governments to invest in social care recognising the importance and value of the social care sector to increasing the participation of women in the labour market more generally.
2. Lobby for the development of a women's employment strategy which identifies the labour market issues facing women, in particular caring responsibilities, with a robust action plan to tackle these.
3. Campaign with the national Social Care Forum to improve pay and conditions for the thousands of mainly female low-paid care workers.

Actions taken

1. See actions on motions 1 and 2
2. Held event in Parliament with a women only panel on the future of social care (funded via the campaign fund). Very well attended by both sector stakeholders and politicians of all parties. Event panel included UNISON General Secretary, Christina McAnea and female UNISON care worker member.
3. Set up Social Care National Partnership Forum. Held two meetings.

Motion 6

Future of Adult social care for LGBTQ+ people

Conference therefore calls on the Community Service Group Executive to:

1. Liaise with the National LGBTQ+ Committee to identify and highlight aspects of best practice in the provision of adult social care to LGBTQ+ people;
2. Engage with appropriate UNISON structures to raise awareness of the needs of LGBTQ+ disabled and older social care users requesting that these are included in any UNISON response to the White Paper on the future of adult social care in England;
3. Continue to work with the National LGBTQ+ Committee to raise awareness among Community members of the Ethical Care Charter and UNISON's campaign for a National Care Service.
4. Highlight through all appropriate media work being undertaken by specialist LGBTQ+ Charities in pursuit of these objectives as part of the Community Service Group's ongoing recruitment and retention work.

Actions taken

1. Met with National LGBTQ+ Officer to discuss actions.
2. Re: National Care service – see actions from motions 1, 2, and 3.
3. Included updates for Community members on these issues in the national Community members e-newsletter.

Motion 8

In-sourcing adult social care

1. Continue to work with the National Executive Council (NEC), Local Government Service Group Executive and other appropriate stakeholders such as UNISON's Social Care Steering Group to examine the case for in-sourcing of adult social care and to formulate a position reflecting the existing policies of Community Conference which reflects the national bargaining agenda of Community members within this sector.
2. Work with UNISON Labour Link and other stakeholders including lobbying political parties in positions of power and influence in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to promote the

need to secure appropriate levels of funding to secure the future of adult social care.

3. Continue to work with civil society partners and lobbying/campaigning organisations such as the Future Social Care Coalition to advance the objectives contained in this motion.

Actions taken

1. UNISON Wales produced “A National Care Service for Wales” Report with APSE. Report presented to all regional social care leads.
2. Fabians research due out in early 2023 on a national care service.
3. New Future Social Care Coalition workplan developed post conferences focussed on new Sunak government. New strategy includes social care summit.
4. See actions from motions 1,2,3.

Motion 10 **Organising to end the crisis in social care**

1. Campaign for a social care system that is publicly delivered, free at the point of need and paid for by universal progressive taxation. Such a system should ensure proper methods of accountability to the workforce and those in receipt of care and support, with the principle of co-design at its heart, so that we do not repeat past injustices, where recipients have been denied their right to control over their own lives;
2. Work with the NEC and other stakeholder Service Groups to demand the requisite resources to properly resource a national social care organising campaign aimed at not only recruiting social care workers into UNISON, but doing so in way designed to empower those workers to realise their collective strength;
3. Work with service groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders including by lobbying political parties in positions of power and influence in Scotland, Cymru/Wales and Northern Ireland to continue to highlight the gross under-funding of adult social care and the impact this has on society.

4. Continue to work with civil society partners and lobbying/campaigning organisations such as the Future Social Care Coalition to advance the objectives contained in this motion.

Actions taken

1. See actions on motions 1,2,3,6 and 8.

Motion 11 **Care workers from abroad**

We therefore call on the SGE with to work with the NEC and the National Black Members Committee:

1. Continue to and conduct research into the experience of our Black members in care homes and other settings to highlight the need to campaign for appropriate pay and conditions.
2. Encourage recruitment campaigns across the sector to further provide support to a vulnerable workforce.
3. Conduct an awareness raising campaign for care workers and migrant workers particularly, of their rights at work, and human rights.
4. Explore and consider use of appropriate (varied e.g., Gujarati, Farsi, French) language translation in our information to such workers, recognising the diversity of the workforce and our growing membership in this sector.
5. Highlight the free immigration advice line run by JCWI for UNISON members.

Actions taken

1. UNISON policy lead on migrant workers and international recruitment in social care is Narmada Thiranagama. Narmi secured a recommendation from the Migration Advisory Committee in April 2022 that “Carers should be paid a higher minimum wage and made permanently eligible for work visas under immigration rules to help tackle staff shortages, according to Government advisers.” This is being implemented.
2. Co-ordinating closely with TUC on this to engage with DHSC and ensure dangers of worker exploitation are recognised and prevented.

3. See also organising work above.
4. JCWI helpline will be highlighted in next all member social care email.

Motion 12

Fair pay for all social care workers

We ask the Service Group Executive to campaign to:

1. Have all social care workers, in Scotland, paid at least this minimum rate (£10.02 an hour) and to campaign across the rest of the UK for social care services to introduce minimum standards in pay, terms and conditions, training, with a view to have social care workers on same/similar contracts to NHS staff.

Actions taken

1. See actions on motions 1,2,3,8 and 11.
2. Regular updates on social care reform in Scotland and Wales given at regional social care leads meetings.
3. Commissioned research to map pay, terms and conditions of workers in the social care sector to ensure UNISON is ready for the possibility of national pay bargaining after the election in 2024.

Equality

Motion 4

Trans Equality in the community sector

Conference therefore calls on the Community Service Group Executive to work with the National LGBT+ Committee and other parts of the union as appropriate to:

1. Explore ways to increase the strength and visibility of UNISON's work to promote Trans equality in the community sector
2. Encourage community sector branches to urge employers to join the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme if they are not already members.
3. Promote the UNISON factsheet 'How to be a Trans ally' and the UNISON trans ally training widely.

4. Produce and promote materials to help members in the community service group counter the 'gender critical' narrative, provide information on links between the gender critical movement in the UK and the far right.
5. Promote the UNISON transgender workers' rights factsheet and the UNISON model trans equality policy to branches organising within the community sector.

Progress

1. LGBT+ Committee member, Emma Proctor addressed the Oct SGE meeting.
2. Promoted factsheets and relevant materials via December 2022 Community e-newsletter.
3. Distributed materials encouraging joining Stonewall diversity champions scheme to branches.
4. Emailed to Community branches.

Motion 5

COVID-secure workplaces for disabled members

Calls on the Community Service Group Executive to:

1. Encourage branches to negotiate around hybrid and home working, including with small employers.
2. Raise awareness that people with Long Covid could be defined as disabled under the Equality Act.
3. Circulate guidance for branches to use when negotiating COVID secure workplaces and COVID policies including specific reference to issues faced by Disabled Members and members with long COVID.
4. Promote the current range of resources available to support branches, including:
 - i. Quick guide to Reasonable Adjustment.
 - ii. Reasonable Adjustments Passport and policy guide.
 - iii. Disability Leave bargaining guide and model Policy.
 - iv. Bargaining to support those with Long Covid guide.
 - v. Hybrid and home working.

- vi. Mental health guidance.
- 5. Publicise TUC disability pay gap analysis and encourage branches to negotiate with employers to carry out disability pay gap analysis and should a pay gap be identified, produce an action plan on closing the gap.

Progress

- 1. Distributed relevant guidance to branches for their use, and to members via the disability focused e-newsletter. Disability focused e-newsletter sent in November 2022.

Motion 7

Reasonable adjustments for disabled members in Community

Conference calls upon the Community Service Group Executive to work with the National Executive Council and the National Disabled Members Committee to:

- 1. Campaign for stronger right to home working as a reasonable adjustment for disabled workers who want it;
- 2. Continue to publicise UNISON's Reasonable Adjustments bargaining guide, which includes a model policy and Accessibility Passport that can be used to negotiate locally, and our Disability Leave bargaining guide;
- 3. Publicise UNISON's homeworking bargaining guide and Stewards Guides to representing disabled and Deaf members;
- 4. Develop Community-specific recruitment materials targeted at disabled workers highlighting UNISON's achievements.

Progress

- 1. Deirdre Costigan (NO Disability Equality) presented to July SGE on the year of the disabled worker and the asks for branches
- 2. Included these products and guides within a disability-focused newsletter in second half of 2022.
- 3. Disability focused e-newsletter sent in November 2022.

- 4. Emailed Community branches 22 Sep.
- 5. Negotiating reasonable adjustment passports and disability leave in the Community and Voluntary sector webinar scheduled for 1 Feb 2023.

Motion 16

Fair sickness absence for all

- 1. Conference calls on the SGE to work with regions and local branches to develop a toolkit to support members, stewards and other reps such as Workplace Contacts to work with their organisation to strive towards amending sickness absence policy and negotiating disability leave to better support disabled members and members who may become disabled in the future.
- 2. Conference also calls on the SGE to circulate UNISON's guidance on sickness absence and our Disability Leave Bargaining Guide which includes a model disability leave policy.

Progress

- 1. Included links to Disability Leave bargaining guide and UNISON's sickness absence policies in November e-bulletin.
- 2. Worked with bargaining support to develop such further products as will be useful; and distribute those already developed.

Organising

Motion 20

Supporting and organising Community members

- 1. Build a comprehensive current picture of the organisation of our membership in UNISON highlighting the various models of organising with an evaluation of these.
- 2. Consult widely with Branches and Regions, Regional Community Service Group Committees, Self Organised Groups, Young Members, Retired Members and all parts of the Community membership on the barriers to participation and inclusion of our membership at all levels of UNISON's structures.

3. Begin the process for formulating a strategy for developing and organising the future work of the Service Group and present recommendations to 2023 Community Service Group Conference.

Progress

1. Formed sub-group on organisation.
2. Developed work programme for report in the light of Beth Bickerstaff review work.
3. Planned for 2023: New Community National Officer to carry out structured interviews with key people responsible for different organisational models, as basis for report.

Motion 21 Learning and Organising in Community

1. Work with the National Executive Council (NEC) and LAOS to develop appropriate training, development and organising opportunities that meet the needs of members in Community.
2. Ensure that the training, development and organising needs of Community members are met through national Organising School initiatives.

Progress

1. U in UNISON lunchtime session for Community members will be delivered in March 2023.
2. Looking at Charity accounts for pay claims lunch and learn for CVS activists – Jan 2023

Motion 18 Countering fragmentation

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

1. Support training aimed at cohorts of members from our service group to enable them to build relationships and form networks.
2. Seek through regional community structures to strengthen support for Community reps and members at the regional tier.
3. Support the development and dissemination

of resources enabling activists to seek recognition from their own employers.

4. Use all available communications channels and technologies to facilitate the development of networks of activists from our sectors, able to share knowledge and build solidarity across geographical and branch boundaries.

Progress

1. Ongoing – a LAOS section to be in each Community mail out.
2. Working with LAOS to trial national reps training for Community in April/May 2023.
3. CVS Sector committee in collaboration with LAOS to offer a peer-to-peer support network for CVS members. In progress.

Campaigning

Motion 19 Charitable sector emerging from COVID

1. Work with the NEC, service groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders including by lobbying political parties in positions of power and influence in Scotland, Cymru/Wales and Northern Ireland to continue to highlight the funding crisis within the charitable sector and the impact this has on society and statutory services.
2. Utilise all appropriate media to highlight the work of our members in the charitable sector and the valuable work they do in creating and developing community cohesion.

Progress

1. Ongoing social media and media work to highlight reports stories etc on this theme.

Motion 17 Time to recognise all CVS workers in NI

1. Call upon the Community Service Group Executive to work collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders, joining the campaign and demanding that all essential frontline community sector workers in the North of Ireland are duly recognised for

their work, commitment, and dedication during the ongoing public health emergency.

Progress

1. As directed by UNISON NI, use SGE and UNISON Centre resources in support of the campaign.

Motion 15

Stop bosses from encroaching on your spare time

1. Continue to work with regions and branches and the National Bargaining Unit to develop model negotiating guidance and policies around good practice in relation to hybrid, home and new models of working.
2. Highlight and publicise this work to members and within the Service Group through all appropriate media and training events.

Progress

1. Circulated bargaining guidance on hybrid, homeworking and new models of working to branches and members – feature in a newsletter. Included homeworking guidance in November e-newsletter.

Motion 22

Contractual sick pay campaign

1. Launch a campaign across the community and voluntary sector, calling for contractual sick pay to be incorporated into all contracts of employment.
2. Work with the NEC, Service Groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders including lobbying political parties in positions of power in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Cymru/Wales and England to highlight issues affecting our members, specifically the absence of contractual sick pay allowances and wider substandard terms and conditions of employment, across the Community and Voluntary sector.

Progress

Ongoing.

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