

NOTTS UNISON NEWS

Web Site: <http://www.nottsunison.org.uk>

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UNIONS DEMAND 4% + £200

Trade unions have lodged a pay claim of 4% plus £200, on behalf of one million local government workers across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The claim, which could benefit 800,000 UNISON members, includes a demand for a £6 an hour minimum wage, increased annual leave, better maternity provision and improved parental leave. The pay bid could set up a tough confrontation between the unions and local government employers, who had already warned unions against asking for an "unrealistic" sum.

But UNISON head of local government Heather Wakefield insisted this was a "modest claim" on basic pay. "UNISON believes that now is the time to deliver for local government workers," she said. "The claim is a step towards meeting some of the key recommendations of the local government pay commission and in achieving UNISON's objective for a £6 an hour minimum wage. It tackles low pay, equal pay and better training for the workforce and is aimed at meeting the government's agenda for first class public services. And we hope to get a realistic response from the employers."

The claim calls for:

- => The abolition of spinal column pay points 4, 5 and 6 (currently £5.33/£5.45 and £5.53 an hour);
- => An increase of 4% plus £200 on all remaining pay points;
- => An increase of 4% on all allowances;
- => Completion of equal pay audits and pay and grading reviews in every council within two years, in accordance with the single status agreement, and with additional ring-fenced funding to enable councils to carry them out;
- => The urgent completion of the training and workforce development agreement, with targets and deadlines for implementation and additional ring-fenced funding;
- => An increase to the basic annual leave entitlement to 25 days per year;
- => An increase in paid maternity leave to eight weeks full pay and 14 weeks half pay, and a reduction in the qualifying period from 52 weeks to 26 weeks;
- => Two weeks paid maternity support leave;
- => In respect of a premature birth, additional paid maternity leave for a specified number of weeks, to be calculated as equivalent to the period dating from the actual date of the child's birth to the due date;
- => Paid adoption leave (in line with paid maternity leave) for all adoptions of children under 18.

The national employers will be consulting all councils, before responding to the claim at the next scheduled NJC meeting on 11th March 2004. We will keep members informed of developments.



You can contact your Branch of
UNISON at:

**Nottinghamshire County
UNISON**
39-41 Loughborough Road
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 7LJ

Tel: 0115 981 0405

Fax: 0115 981 5697

E-mail:

branch.office@nottsunison.org.uk

RETIRING SOON?

If so, you can join UNISON's Retired Members Section for a one off lifetime payment of just £15. Retired Membership is open to all who have at least 2 years continuous membership of UNISON at the date of retirement. But you must sign up within 3 months of retiring. Unfortunately we do not get provided with details of our members retiring or approaching retirement age. So the onus is on the retired member to let us know. So if you are about to retire and would like to join our Retired Members Section, please contact the Branch Office for further details.

MOVED HOUSE OR WORKPLACE?

It is important that we have an accurate record of members' home and work addresses. This is so we can send you UNISON information and to comply with legal restrictions should we ever need to ballot members for industrial action. If you have recently changed address, please don't forget to inform us at the Branch Office.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

We have set up an e-mail news service for the branch.

If there is a press release, some urgent news or changes to the branch web site, we can send you an e-mail. If you are interested could you please send your name, department/ employer, and e-mail address to the Branch Communications Officer, Bob Watt, at the following e-mail address: **branch.office@nottsunison.org.uk**



**UNISON NO RACISM
NO THEM & US**

BNP 'poison' must not spread in June elections

UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis has called for zero tolerance for the "politics of hate" peddled by the British National Party. Appearing at a Unite Against Fascism rally in London at the end of February,

Prentis spoke of the union's major offensive against racism. And he challenged the media to be more responsible in its coverage of the asylum issue, which he said was currently adding fuel to the BNP cause. *"There is a real danger that the BNP could make further gains in the European, London Assembly and local elections this year,"* he said. *"We have to make sure they are stopped in their tracks by exposing their real intentions."*

He told the crowd that UNISON's 1.3 million members *"do not want the poison of racism spreading. We must also say loud and clear to certain sections of the media that the hysteria it is whipping up around asylum seekers is playing right into the hands of the Fascists. It should start acting responsibly and help generate a climate of tolerance, not ignorance."*

UNISON's national executive, meeting on 26th February, launched the union's offensive against the growing threat of racism and the British National Party. Its campaign will focus on encouraging UNISON's 1.3 million members to vote against the BNP in the European and local elections, and alerting the wider public to the danger. National and regional advertising and publicity materials will be used, and the union will be working closely with local communities and other anti-racism groups.

You can find out more at the website: **<http://www.uaf.org.uk>**

Council tax hysteria masks real problems

Popular press hysteria over council tax rises is masking the real difficulties facing local government and the members who work hard to provide vital services, says UNISON.

Particular press coverage has focused on pensioner Elizabeth Winkfield who has refused to pay an 18% rise in her tax. Ministers have pointed out Ms Winkfield is not liable for the tax anyway. But that hasn't stopped newspapers running headlines such as *"The council tax grand-martyr - Liz, 83, tells court; I'll go to jail rather than pay 18% rise"* and *"4ft 10in tall and angry as hell, Elizabeth, 83 vows; I won't pay - The tax rebel dressed in tweed"*. (It should also be noted that, unlike the Guardian, many in the national tabloid press have not found the space to report that Ms Winkfield is *"well known locally as a UK Independence Party activist"*.)

"These sort of headlines screaming out of the Sun and Daily Mail and whipping up hysteria over council tax rises, mask the real difficulties facing local government and our members who work in it," said UNISON national secretary for local government Heather Wakefield. *"Speculation from all layers of government leads to the confusion which fuels this kind of hysteria,"* she added. *"Decent services have to be funded properly. We have long pushed the case for central government to release more funds to councils and we will continue to do so."*

BRANCH APF COMMITTEE

At the Branch Committee meeting held on the 20th February 2004, a meeting was convened for APF payees of the Notts County Branch.

An election was held for the Branch APF Officer followed by nominations for two delegates to attend the Regional APF Committee. Barbara Miller was elected as the Branch APF Officer, proposed by Maggie Pilmore and seconded by Ingrid Browne-Wallace. Chris Tansley and Barbara Miller were nominated to the Regional Committee.



East Midlands Regional Labour Party Conference: Skegness, 8th/9th Feb

The UNISON delegation sponsored a "Public Service" debate held on the 8th while the GMB sponsored a "Big Conversation" debate on the 9th.

Overall, the debates were decisive and formed a positive Agenda for the Government and the European Parliament.

UNISON's delegation was organised and proactive throughout the Conference; in attendance were constituency delegates, Councillors from both County and District, also MP's and MEP's.

Introducing the Branch's APF Officer



As the elected APF for this Branch, I will strive to keep both GPF and APF payees informed.

Please contact me for any further information concerning the UNISON Labour link, also if you wish to be involved in the forthcoming European Parliamentary Elections in June 2004 and the possible General Election, 2005.

It is essential that the Labour Party win an historic third term in order to pursue a fair and equitable outcome for the Trade Unions and the members they represent both nationally and internationally in the world of employment sustainability and creativity.

Barbara Miller
Notts County APF Officer

UNISON WARNS LABOUR OVER TWO-TIER WORKFORCE PLEDGE

UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis warned the Government that a failure to outlaw the practice of private contractors cutting the pay and conditions of the workforce when it wins public sector contracts in the NHS, could become a "defining issue" in the union's relationship with the Government.

Speaking at a conference, in Glasgow, of senior UNISON activists and officials, he compared how Labour behaves in Scotland to how it behaves in Westminster. Scotland has extended the deal to end the two-tier workforce in PPPs to all public services, yet the Westminster Government has still not extended it beyond local government.

"There seems to be a creeping difference between the way Labour behaves in Scotland and Wales and how Westminster runs local government and health services in England where dogmatic ideology sometimes rules.

"Private sector delivery of our public services and the two-tier workforce is a major issue for our union. It is a defining issue in our relationship with the Government.

"We want a third term for Labour so that improvements to our public services can continue, but we expect the Government to honour a commitment freely given to this union nearly three years ago by the Prime Minister and the Secretaries of State for local government and health. There can be no excuse for further delay.

"How can the Government be so half-hearted about a commitment given so publicly? Low paid workers in health and education are being exploited and that cannot be allowed to continue. They are employed by exactly the same companies as in local government. So why let them get away with doing down health workers when they make profits of 20% to 30%? Exploiting low paid workers should not be our way."

He also challenged the Government to introduce some joined-up thinking into the privatisation debate:

"Alistair Darling says privatisation has been a disaster for our railways. Why doesn't he tell that to his mates in the other Government departments?

"We are making the same mistakes in health, in local government and in our schools that have been made on the railways. It's time to recognise that and put it right".

UNISON WOMEN'S CONFERENCE 2004

This year's Women's Conference was held in Harrogate from 5th to 7th February. Our branch delegates were Maggie Pilmore (Women's Officer), Jenny Hogg, Ingrid Brown Wallace and myself.

On the afternoon of the 5th, delegates were invited to attend seminars that discussed issues particularly relevant to women. These were:

- => Best Practice in Childcare;
- => Breast Cancer Advocacy;
- => Endometriosis;
- => Local Government Pay Commission and
- => Women's Environmental Network



Separate reports for some of these are on the page opposite.

FRIDAY 6th FEBRUARY

Conference proper began on Friday morning with a Welcome to Conference speech by Jan Shortt, Chair of the National Women's Committee. Jan said that it had been a year of hard work and change for the National Women's Committee. This was followed with an address by Dave Anderson, President of Unison. Dave paid tribute to women trade unionists of the past and present, referring to Ellen Wilkinson and her involvement in the Jarrow March. Dave moved on to talk about issues of today which are important to the trade union movement, warning of infiltration by the BNP; the need to end discrimination against women in branches; the future of the trade union movement.

The Annual Report was then presented to Conference. The East Midlands Region had submitted a list of questions in advance to the National Women's Committee, about the annual report, and had received incomplete answers. These were now challenged at the rostrum and the response from the National Women's Committee on the day, was in my opinion, dismissive and very disappointing. The answers tended to be "don't know" and the timescale for information was always "shortly".

We then proceeded to the main debates of Conference - the motions. The motions discussed in the morning were Women at Work and Women at Home. Issues included Work-Life Balance, Women and Equality in Pension Provision; Domestic Violence and Legal Aid and an emergency motion following the Angela Cannings trial and Unexplained Infant Death.

Jenny spoke to the motion "Women and Pensions", submitted by the East Midlands Region which expressed concern that women today are facing a considerable pensions gap: for every pound of income received by men in a pensioner couple, women receive less than 32 pence. Female single pensioners are one of the poorest groups of the older population and nearly a quarter live in poverty. The motion called for more information to be made available to women about pension provision and called upon the Government to restore the earnings link to the state pension.

The afternoon session began with a guest speaker – Frances O'Grady, Deputy General Secretary of the T.U.C. Frances' speech emphasised how the number of women in the trade union movement was increasing. Her main themes were equal pay, pension consequences, the gender pay gap and expensive childcare.

Motions debated in the afternoon included Breast Cancer Awareness; the Hidden Homeless (Maggie and I worked together on the speech for this motion on Thursday evening and it was presented to Conference by a colleague from the East Midlands Region); Dying, Death and Bereavement. The final motion of the day was the one that caused most debate and led to a card vote at the end and this was on the Campaign to Legalise Prostitution. There were a lot of speakers for and against the motion, which was carried eventually after a very close vote.

SATURDAY 7th FEBRUARY

Saturday morning began with guest speaker Carol Brown who is a nursery nurse in Lincolnshire. Carol is a relatively new steward and spoke about recruitment and organisation within the union and gave the example of how she and her colleagues had campaigned during a dispute with their local authority. Through a lot of hard work and initiative, they won a very successful campaign and gained a lot of new members.



The motions this morning were all to do with Women in Unison: women's organisation, discrimination of women within the union, representation on outside bodies and ten years of women in Unison.

Conference ended with a speech by Unison's General Secretary, Dave Prentis, who praised the role women play in the union. Dave Prentis said that although a lot had been achieved by women in Unison over the past 10 years, there was still much to be done and he hoped that the next 10 years would be even more successful.

Jane Gannon

WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK SEMINAR

I didn't know anything about this subject but thought that it sounded interesting so I volunteered to attend on behalf of our delegation. It was a real eye opener!

The Women's Environmental Network (WEN) was set up in 1989. It campaigns and researches on environmental and health issues from a woman's perspective, such as the Real Nappy Campaign, promoting Local Food Growing Networks, setting up Women Taking Action for a Healthier Planet and Ending Cosmetic Cover Up.

This last one particularly interested me when we were told of the amount of chemicals used in cosmetics and the amount of money spent to promote them, for example in 2001, £32 million was spent on advertising make up!

The majority of modern cosmetics are complex mixtures of industrially produced synthetic chemicals. Some of the "nastiest" are Parabens, Phthalates and Triclosan which are found in toothpastes, shampoos, make up and deodorants amongst others.



Although individual products contain very small amounts of chemicals, it is the combined and cumulative effect of applying these ingredients in

every day products that gives WEN cause for concern. For example, some commonly used chemicals can cause allergic reactions or affect the immune or nervous systems. Using more expensive products doesn't protect you either as they can still contain risky synthetic material. Interesting stuff!



Jane Gannon

Women's Environment Network can be contacted at:

PO Box 30626, London E1 1TZ

or visit their website

<http://www.wen.org.uk>

BREAST CANCER ADVOCACY SEMINAR

I attended this seminar, where the main speaker was Joanna Nunnery from the Breakthrough Breast Cancer Campaigns and Advocacy Network.

Around 40,000 women and 300 men are diagnosed with breast cancer every year. The Advocacy's aims are that everyone should have prompt access to the best and most appropriate treatment. There should be increased spending on research and a higher priority to causes and prevention. They have published a booklet called "*The Best Treatment - guidelines for women with breast cancer*". It covers every aspect of treatment and care - from diagnosis to surgery, and from radiotherapy to hormonal therapy. It gives professional guidelines and waiting time standards.

UNISON's role was also discussed and how we can support members by negotiating time off (treatment can trigger sickness absence) and return to work. Members can be affected by fatigue, nausea, depression and lack of self-esteem. There are also financial implications: not only things like loss of bonus payments, loss of pay, or decrease in pension, but also extra costs such as additional hospital travel and parking, and heating costs.

The seminar heard that the Government proposes to amend the Disability Discrimination Act. If the Bill is passed, people with cancer will become legally classed as disabled, and will be guaranteed rights in areas like employment, access to buildings and services, health and social care and education.

Jenny Hogg

Breast Cancer Advocacy can be contacted on:

020 7557 6590

joannan@breakthrough.org.uk

or visit their website

<http://www.breakthrough.org.uk>



WILL I GET A STATE PENSION?

*Do you work part-time?
Do you job share?
Do you work variable hours?
Have you been on long term sick?
Have you had a job break to bring up children or care for a relative?*

If so, you might be short of National Insurance contributions. This could affect bereavement and other benefits but more importantly it could affect your entitlement to a state pension.

If your hours are reduced, or you are on long term sick, your earnings might go below the lower threshold for National Insurance (this is currently £77 per week). Even if this for a week or two, your whole year's contributions are lost.

At the moment, the State Pension age is 65 for men and 60 for women but this is being increased to 65 by 2020. The number of qualifying years for a woman will also go up to 44. If you retire with less than 25% of the qualifying years you will not get ANY state pension on your own record.

In 1996, the Inland Revenue stopped informing people if they were short of NI contributions. They are currently in the process of sending out 10 million deficiency notices. It has been reported that they have lost the addresses of a further 3 million who might be affected. You have until April 2008 to make up contributions, and you can pay by instalments. A member has recently contacted me. She has been told that she owes £1300.

Eligibility for a pension is complicated. You can get credits if you are on Incapacity Benefit or Home Responsibility Protection (HRP) if you stay at home to look after a child or sick relative. You might also be able to use a spouse's contributions. It might not be worthwhile to pay additional contributions.

ASK for a State Pension forecast NOW by telephoning

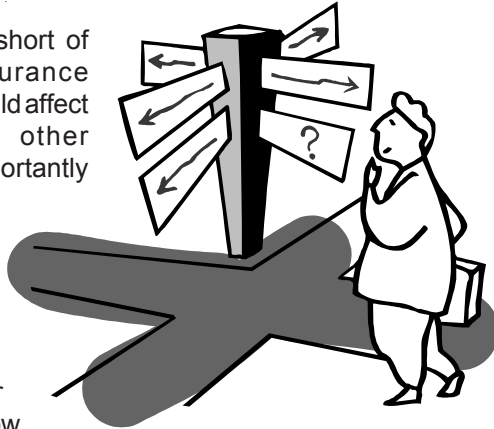
0845 300 0168

They will tell you what your contributions have earned and if you can improve your pension.

**If you think you could be affected,
do not wait until you retire - it will be too late.**

Jenny Hogg

Joint Environment Convenor



Key to Nations Good Health is to "Start Young" says UNISON

You may have heard about of Wanless Report that says that smoking and being overweight are the two biggest problems facing people in the UK.

In response, UNISON has pointed out that schools and education are the key to encouraging people to adopt a healthier lifestyle. We are calling on the Government to introduce a national, comprehensive, adequately funded school meals service to help tackle the dangers of obesity and bad health linked to diet.

UNISON has stated that ill health through smoking and being overweight is putting an enormous strain on our NHS and the problem looks set to become worse in the future. The key to tackling the problem is to start young and schools and school meals can play a key role in educating children about how to avoid the dangers of an unhealthy lifestyle.

Sometimes tough decisions have to be made and that may include schools banning junk food, fizzy drinks and sweets. UNISON wants to see sound food policies in adopted by schools with nutritious affordable meals, breakfast clubs and after school cookery classes and fruit schemes. The costs of introducing such schemes are peanuts compared to the growing cost of treating ill health through poor diet later in life.



In addition too many schools have sold-off playing fields or have no places for the children to get out and exercise or play games. This is storing up trouble for the future. We need to encourage youngsters away from their computer games and into enjoying healthy sports.

Application for Membership – Nottinghamshire UNISON

I apply to join UNISON and agree to pay the appropriate subscription, to comply with the rules and constitution, as in the UNISON rule book.

BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

Title (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss): _____ Surname: _____ Forename: _____

Payroll No.: _____ ES (establishment code) _____ N.I. No.: _____ Scale/Grade: _____

Home address: _____

Home Post Code: _____

Home Tel: _____

Employer: _____

Department: _____

Work Address: _____

Work Post Code: _____

Work Tel: _____

Email address: _____

Job Title: _____

Date of birth: _____

Subscription rates

Annual Income	Weekly	Monthly	SubsBand	Subscription
			(tick box)	
Up to £2000	£0.30	£1.30	A	<input type="checkbox"/>
£2001 - £5000	£0.81	£3.54	B	<input type="checkbox"/>
£5001 - £8000	£1.22	£5.30	C	<input type="checkbox"/>
£8001 - £11000	£1.52	£6.60	D	<input type="checkbox"/>
£11001 - £14000	£1.81	£7.85	E	<input type="checkbox"/>
£14001 - £17000	£2.24	£9.70	F	<input type="checkbox"/>
£17001 - £20000	£2.65	£11.50	G	<input type="checkbox"/>
£20001 - £25000	£3.23	£14.00	H	<input type="checkbox"/>
£25001 - £30000	£3.98	£17.25	I	<input type="checkbox"/>
£30001 - £35000	£4.68	£20.30	J	<input type="checkbox"/>
over £35001	£5.19	£22.50	K	<input type="checkbox"/>

Retired members £15(for life) Students £10pa Unemployed £4pa

Conditions of Service

(tick all those boxes appropriate to you and your post)

Full Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	DISABILITY*	
Part Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Term Time only	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Job Share	<input type="checkbox"/>	ETHNIC ORIGIN*	
Permanent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Afro-carib	<input type="checkbox"/>
Temporary	<input type="checkbox"/>	African	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
CAR ALLOWANCE*		Other Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Essential	<input type="checkbox"/>	White Euro	<input type="checkbox"/>
Casual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>		

* This information is entirely voluntary, however it will help the branch ensure that minority groups are kept informed of any National or Local events that might effect them. Any additional information provided will be completely confidential.

POLITICAL FUND

I authorise the deduction of the following Political Fund payments as part of my subscription.

Affiliated Fund ☐ General Fund ☐

Affiliated Political Fund (your subscription includes 6.5% contribution to this fund) campaigns for members through affiliation to the Labour Party both locally and nationally. Those paying the affiliated levy can take part in the APF activities and make their contribution on policy issues, including labour party policy.

General Fund (your subscription includes 5p per week or 22p per month contribution to this fund) is independent of support for any Political Party but liases with MP's from all party's to pursue UNISON's interests. It is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union.

You must indicate at least one option as the NEC will automatically allocate you to the APF if this section is not completed

AUTHORISATION FOR DEDUCTION OF SUBSCRIPTION

I hereby authorise the deduction from my salary, for payment to UNISON on my behalf, of the subscription appropriate to my annual earnings.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Actioned by Branch Office: LAF 02305
Allocated to Branch: NOTTS COUNTY

Please return your completed application form to:
Notts UNISON, FREEPOST, Nottingham, NG2 1BR

BRANCH OFFICER ELECTIONS

RESULTS

At the deadline of noon on Friday 27th February 2004, the following nominations had been received:

Assistant Secretary: Jane Gannon
(Social Services, ACFS, Penn House)

Communications Officer: Bob Watt
(Environment, Property, TBH)

Education Officer: Tina Carnachan
(Education, Student Support, County Hall)

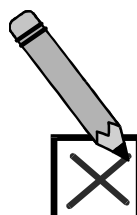
The number of nominees matched the number of posts and no elections are required for these posts for 2004.

The role of Equalities Officer was filled by Ingrid Browne-Wallace at a recent Branch Committee.

MORE NOMINATIONS

This means that the following roles are still available for election via the AGMs.

Vice Chair
Assistant Treasurer
International Officer
2 Welfare Officers
Development Officer
Membership Services Officer
Voluntary Sector Officer



If any posts are not filled at the AGMs, they will be open to any interested members and be subject to verification at a Branch Committee. Any available posts will be listed in the next edition of Notts UNISON News and on the Branch website: www.nottsunison.org.uk

IT PAYS TO BE IN UNISON

Notts County branch Member is awarded £29,565 compensation for injuries sustained in a traffic accident.

Paul Dunn was cycling to see a friend in February 2001 when he was knocked off his bicycle by a car. He sustained a serious injury to his leg requiring surgery, a dislocated right shoulder and a cut to his head.



Thompsons solicitors, working for UNISON, dealt with the claim and succeeded in securing the award. And the good thing is that Paul receives the entire award in full and doesn't have to pay the solicitors a penny because he is a UNISON member.

Paul told Notts UNISON News *"I would like to thank UNISON and Thompsons for the help and support I received with my case"*

Not many members realise that UNISON will offer legal representation for injuries that occur outside of the workplace. Obviously it would have been better for Paul had he not had the accident at all but it's good to know that UNISON is there to support you at times of need.

Chris Tansley
Joint Branch Secretary

UNISON
the public service union

Notts UNISON News DEADLINES 2004

The deadlines for items for inclusion in this newsletter is 12 noon on the following Fridays:

30th April (May/June edition)
25th June (July/Aug edition)
27th August (Sept/Oct edition)
29th October (Nov/Dec edition)
31st December (Jan/Feb '05 edition)

Each newsletter takes about a week to typeset (provided everyone who promises and article gets it in on time) and two weeks to print before being distributed. So please allow for this if, say, you want to put a notice of a meeting in your newsletter.

Bob Watt
Branch Communications Officer