

Campaigning for a Living Wage

UNSION Northern Region Newsletter

Summer 2014

Local Government and National delegate conference

This years Local government conference delegates started the debate on low pay with our very own Shirley Scott speaking and saying "I am a low paid woman in local government. I moved into the public sector because at the time it was better paid and more secure. Now I earn £6.53 an hour– just above the minimum wage. "I work three jobs to make up full time hours. This must be the year when we all pull together for a decent pay increase."

Nicky Ramanandi, delegate of Newcastle City branch and our deputy convenor said: "We know there is a job to do. Our branches have campaigned hard on the need to vote and why we are recommending a rejection of the offer. But once the ballot is closed, we must continue to campaign to ensure a show of strength in July."

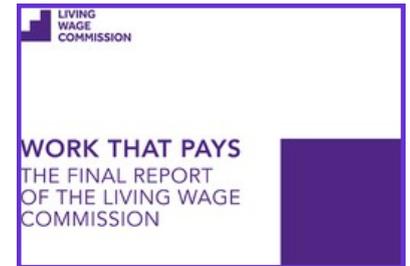
The discussions around low pay continued at national delegate conference when delegates discussed the Living Wage and WORTH it campaigns with a motion submitted by national young members and moved by our own young member Andrew Anderson, Andrew said ' "The Living Wage does not discriminate on grounds of age in the way that the minimum wage does. The idea that a group of people doing the same work can be paid different levels depending on their age is a nonsense enshrined in law."



Living Wage Commission issue final report

The Living Wage Commission, chaired by the Archbishop of York Dr John Sentamu, have released their final report.

The commission spent a year investigating what potential the increasingly popular concept of a Living Wage holds for the UK's 5 million low-paid workers



The report highlighted the massive impact being up rated to the Living Wage for low paid workers can have on an individual with comments from workers such as one young man, Godfrey, who said before he was paid a Living Wage, he had to travel from Portsmouth to London and back every day on the coach. He woke at 3am and returned home from work at 10.30pm. The Living Wage allowed him to move his family to the city he worked in so that he could see more of his three children.

Within the report were a number of recommendations three of which are listed below:

- The UK government should make it an explicit goal to increase the take-up of the voluntary Living Wage to benefit at least 1 million more employees by 2020.
- The UK and devolved governments should ensure that all directly employed public sector employees are paid a Living Wage.
- Central and local government should support the Living Wage by championing it to employers across the UK.



I want to **live** not just **exist**
Campaigning for a Living Wage

Local government members say enough is enough and vote YES to industrial action



Following the ballot of members in Local Government the results are in and the vote is a YES for strike action. The action will take place on 10 July with a possible further 2 days in September if an agreement is not reached. Members will show their feelings over the measly 1% pay offer the employers have made. The 1% offer is nowhere near the pay claim UNISON jointly submitted which aimed to bring back some of workers lost pay and raise the lowest paid workers up to the national Living Wage level. The constant attack on Local Government workers must end, and it needs to end now. Local Government workers provide a plethora of services both public facing and behind closed doors, They don't just empty your bins or cut the grass, they are the Sure Start worker, who spotted a child had speech and language difficulties and made sure the family got the right support, they are the social worker who helped a mother and her children who were fleeing domestic violence stay safe, they are the food inspectors who make sure the food establishments we eat in are clean and safe.

They are the teaching assistant who gives your child that little bit of extra help and encouragement they need to reach their full potential and they are the home care worker, who looks after our elderly relatives, allowing them to stay in their own homes and so much more. These workers deserve decent pay. Dave Prentis, general secretary said, "These workers care for our elderly, clean our streets, feed and educate our school children and keep our libraries running, but they receive no recognition in their pay packets. They are mainly low paid women workers, stressed and demoralised, and they deserve better from their employers and from this Government. This is the group that has borne the brunt of the Government's austerity agenda"

It is important that the strike action is effective so we need to have everyone taking part, so use this as an opportunity to recruit new members, and make sure attendance at pickets is high.



Living Wage Champions

Congratulations to the recent group of members who completed the Living Wage Champions training. We now have 35 trained Living Wage Champions in the region.

Finally a farewell from me

The fighting fund post is coming to an end though the battle is not. I am confident branches will continue to campaign and continue to succeed in achieving the Living Wage for our members.

Natasha Nicholson

For further information on the Living Wage campaign visit www.livingwage.org.uk or <https://www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/unison-campaigns/a-living-wage/home/>

The logo for UNISON Northern, featuring the word 'UNISON' in a bold, sans-serif font with a green swoosh above it, and the word 'Northern' in a smaller, italicized font below it.