

Outlines



UNISON NEWCASTLE CITY BRANCH NEWSLETTER

February 2015

Thursday 7th May

The General Election in 2015 is the most important since the formation of UNISON.

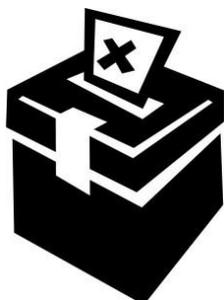
It also looks like being the closest election in recent history, with support for the main parties in decline. Against this backdrop the union is mobilising its political resources like never before, even though the coalition has introduced a new Lobbying Act to try and gag our union.

In terms of public services, the jobs of UNISON members and the ability of all working people to organise to protect and advance their living standards, there could not be more at stake. So we all need to do our bit to kick out the Tory-led coalition.

The Conservative Party's commitment to further cuts spells disaster for the most vulnerable in our society. The plans set out by George Osborne in the 2014 autumn statement propose reducing the share of our nation's wealth spent on public services and the welfare state back to levels last seen in the 1930s. This will result in:

- a further one million job losses across public services
- deterioration in the public services that we all depend upon
- a continuation of the draconian squeeze on pay that has already cut average public service employee pay by more than £2,000 a year since 2010
- even more outsourcing and privatisation, including in the NHS.

Alongside a further lethal dose of austerity, the Conservative Party want to make life harder for UNISON and other trade unions to stand up for people at work. Plans are being drawn up that would result in the introduction of a 40% minimum support threshold in industrial action ballots in the public sector and new anti-strike laws preventing rolling action. Attempts are also being made to prevent union subs being paid through check-off/ DOCAS.



**Are you
registered to
vote?**

UNISON activists and members have a key role as campaigners in the election: highlighting the impact of cuts and austerity on the public services in which we work; impressing upon our work colleagues and communities the case for a change; and engaging with candidates for political office on the need for an alternative agenda.



Voter registration: every vote really does count

Thursday 5 February was National Voter Registration Day. Spearheaded by campaign group Bite the Ballot, last year it encouraged more than 50,000 people to register. This year's target was 250,000.

When people are not on the electoral register and therefore not eligible to vote, it's democracy that suffers. Politics becomes less representative and less effective.

In the 2010 election, 35% of British adults didn't have a say in who would represent them over the next five years. This included 9.1 million women.

And when you consider that some seats were decided by as little as 50 votes last time, every vote really does count.

With less than 100 days to go until the general election, it's crucial that people who haven't registered to vote do so as soon as possible.

Millions of people risk missing out simply by not being on the electoral roll. Registering online takes just three minutes and all you need is your name, address, date of birth and National Insurance number.

<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

If you don't think you will make it to a polling station on 7 May, a postal vote will ensure your voice is heard. Anyone can apply for one postal vote, and you don't even need a reason.

<https://www.gov.uk/voting-in-the-uk/postal-voting>

If you're already registered to vote, you're in a good position to start a conversation about the election with your family, friends and work colleagues. Encourage them to register so that they too can have their say in May.

A YouGov poll last year made sobering reading, suggesting that up to two million young people would decide not to vote in the election.

This election could well be determined by a small number of votes in a few marginal constituencies, so there is no doubt that every missing vote could have an impact on who gets the keys to Downing Street.

Budget 2015 – Civic Centre Staff Canteen Closure Proposals

Resistance to the closure of the staff canteen in the Civic Centre is building, following a call from Branch members a campaign group has been set up uniting the staff working in the canteen, UNISON members across the Branch and staff who regularly use the canteen.

A letter has been sent to Cabinet members inviting them to a “Use your canteen day” on Friday 27th February where staff who work in the canteen can have their questions answered on the closure proposals.

UNISON would encourage all staff that use the Civic Canteen to join the campaign as the Council won't back down unless they are shown how important this resource is to staff.

A paper petition is available to sign in the canteen itself and you can also add your name to an electronic one:

<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-newcastle-civic-centre-canteen>

A Facebook page has been set up also, please “Like” the page:



<https://www.facebook.com/saveourcanteen>

Budget 2015 – Staff Car Parking Proposals

The Branch Secretary emailed all those members affected by the proposals and a meeting was held. A letter was sent to all elected members from the Branch's Disabled Members Officer and the branch has presented our views to the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader and the Cabinet members, and the Chief Executive who reiterated that the proposals were subject to consultation, and they were prepared to consider alternative points of view.

Subsequently a meeting took place with Andrew Lewis Assistant Chief Executive who confirmed that the Council was proposing a couple of amendments to their original proposal. **UNISON** is awaiting formal confirmation of those changes before arranging a further meeting for staff affected by the proposals.

Now is the time to continue pressurising the council, a petition has been set up at:

<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/say-no-to-unfair-parking-charges-in-newcastle>

Childcare Disqualification Regulations

The Department for Education (DfE) has recently published supplementary guidance to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' updating legal requirements on schools and nurseries concerning the disqualification of people from working with children aged eight or under. These regulations only apply in England.

It appears that the government has now interpreted the Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2009 as being applicable to schools and staff working with children aged eight or under are now likely to be asked for further disclosures concerning not just themselves, but also the people that they live with.

Scope of the regulations – In response to a legal challenge from trade unions, the DfE has clarified the scope of the regulations. It now confirms that for schools, during school hours, the regulations only apply to staff routinely working with children aged five and under. Staff who only work with children aged 6-8 during school hours are not subject to the regulations. This is because activity for pupils of compulsory school age during school hours is specifically excluded from the childcare regulations by section 18(3) of the 2006 Education Act.

However, the regulations do apply to staff who work in out-of-hours provision, i.e. breakfast and afterschool clubs, who work with children up to the age of eight.

The supplementary advice issued by the DfE did not make it clear that staff working with pupils aged 6-8 during school hours are not covered by the regulations. As a result of this, many schools and local authorities have sought declarations from this group of staff.

It has been reported by Ofsted that around a third of the waiver applications received to date have been in cases where there was no need for the member to apply for a waiver because either they were not part of the workforce covered by the regulations or the offence declared was not relevant to the Childcare Disqualification Regulations.

UNISON believes that all schools and local authorities will need to revise the scope of the staff they are seeking declarations from, that any staff who are suspended should be allowed to return to work and any information collected in respect of this group of staff should be destroyed.

Disqualification by Association – The guidance highlights the separate and additional requirements on schools and nurseries placed on them by the Childcare Act 2006 and the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009. These include 'Disqualification by Association'. This means that staff can be barred from working in a school or nursery if someone who they live with or who works in their household is disqualified from working with children.

The guidance advises schools that they should be asking staff about whether they or anyone who they are living with is disqualified from working with children. If someone is living with someone who is disqualified from working with children they too can be disqualified by association.

Staff who are disqualified by association are able to make representations to Ofsted to seek a waiver to allow them to continue to work with young children. Ofsted have published guidance on applying to waive disqualification.

Staff who are applying for a waiver are not allowed to work with children aged eight or under while their application is being considered.

It is an offence for a school or nursery to knowingly employ a member of staff barred from working with young children, including anyone disqualified by association.

This advice has only just been sent to schools and it is likely that many schools and nurseries will begin asking staff further questions about convictions and seeking declarations from staff that they are not disqualified, including questions about people that they live with and any convictions that they have. It appears that Ofsted are beginning to inspect school safeguarding procedures to ensure that schools and nurseries are complying with these regulations. The guidance also states that schools and nurseries may ask staff to sign a written declaration concerning the people they live with although this is not a requirement.

UNISON advice – UNISON is seeking further legal advice on whether these arrangements are appropriate for schools and as to whether they meet the requirements of the human rights and data protection acts. Whilst we regard the safety of children as paramount, we believe these new requirements are a disproportionate response and will do little to enhance safeguarding practice.

However, because these are statutory requirements it is highly likely they will be enforced by schools and local authorities and staff will be required to comply with requests for information until further advice is received.

Any UNISON member with a query relating to the above, please contact the School's Organiser **Lori Ashbridge 211 6980** if you work in a school or **Lynda Hardie 211 6980** if you work with children but not in a school.

UNISON loses ET fee challenge.

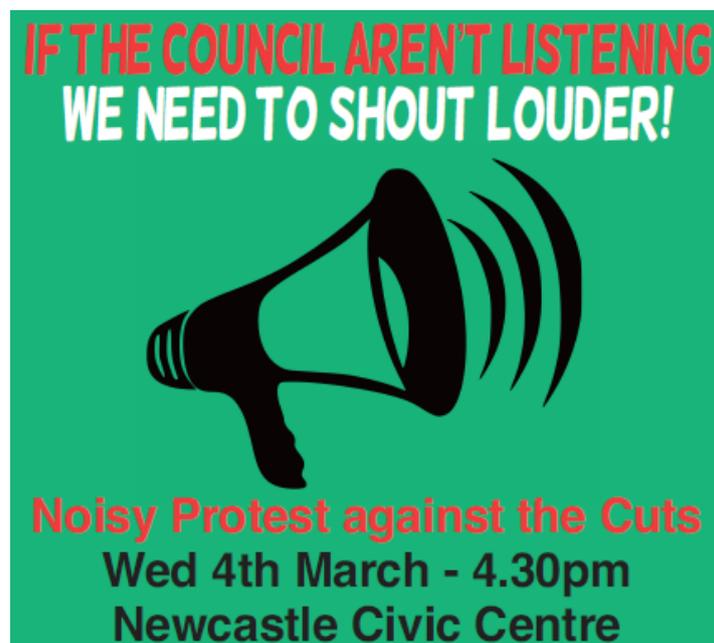
Employment tribunal fees will live on. UNISON has lost its second judicial review challenge to the fee charging system, despite being in a position to produce compelling statistics to indicate a notable drop in tribunal applications. The High Court did not agree that the introduction of charging fees to access the tribunal system was in breach of the principle of effectiveness. UNISON was unable to show that individual applicants were unable to bring claims because of the system.

Lobby of Council - 4th March 2015

“If the Council aren't listening, then we need to shout louder!”

UNISON invites members to attend a “noisy protest” on the evening of 4th March to show our objection to a further cuts budget being voted on by the elected members. While the branch has consistently raised our concerns at the Council's budget cuts which have led to hundreds of redundancies over the last 3 years, and only a change of Government can halt the destruction of Local Government; this council has presided over millions of pounds of cuts delivering:

- Significant redundancies
- Closure of Services
- Increased workload for staff
- Decreased staff morale
- Services transferred out of Council control
- The increased use of volunteers to deliver services once delivered by paid staff



12 month Secondment Opportunity

April 2015 – March 2016

Assistant CVS Organiser

Newcastle City Branch has over 1000 members in the Community & Voluntary Sector (CVS), across a range of employers ranging in size from small organisations, with 1 or 2 members, to national organisations with 10's of members.

The Branch currently organises these members through the efforts of one of the Deputy Branch Secretaries but an increase in members in this area, and (we believe), the impact of austerity, has brought a significant increase in workload.

To that end the Branch has decided to offer a 12 month secondment opportunity for a member of the Branch to take on the case work and representation of members across the CV sector, which will allow the current officer to concentrate on organising and recruitment.

It is crucial that any applicant confirms their employer will support their release for a 12 month secondment PRIOR TO APPLYING. The post holder must be available to start from 1st April 2015

Job Description – (based on UNISON's Area Organiser post)

Work Areas

- Representation
 - Individual representation that covers:
 - Grievances
 - Disciplinarys
 - Local workplace issues
 - General advice and guidance to members
 - Mentoring and building individual capacity of activists
 - Collective bargaining at workplace level that includes negotiating of
 - Shift rotas
 - Working Patterns
 - New working arrangements
 - Health and safety issues
 - Training and learning agreements
 - Local facilities agreements
- Organising – The post holder will support the Branch CVS Organiser in:
 - Recruitment Planning and Campaigning
 - Recruitment in Greenfield and Infill sites
 - Membership Mapping across Branches
 - Research and information to support campaigning
 - Co-ordinating campaigns and activities
- Undertakes other duties as required by the grade definition or job profile of this post.

Person Specification and Selection Criteria

UNISON Newcastle City Branch is an equal opportunities employer, committed to providing equal opportunities regardless of race or ethnic origin, gender identity, family situation, sexual orientation, disability, religion or age. This person specification is designed to help members of Interviewing Panels judge the qualities of interviewees in a systematic and consistent way and in accordance with UNISON's equal opportunities policy. It is given to all job applicants for information.

Heading	Selection criteria
Thinking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experience of developing solutions to resolve problems including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 analysing information and statistical data 1.2 research including carrying out workplace mapping 1.3 drafting action plans 1.4 developing materials e.g. publicity 1.5 developing campaign plans 1.6 drafting statements of case. 2. Learning and Development <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 ability to identify training needs of others 2.2 can demonstrate continuous personal learning development.
Interpersonal and Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Experience of motivating people to participate in activities including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 making presentations 3.2 influencing outcomes at meetings 3.3 mentoring and coaching 3.4 writing newsletters, leaflets etc. 4. Experience of giving advice and representing members including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 conciliation skills to resolve disagreements 4.2 responding effectively to people who are angry or upset 5. Experience of effective team working.
Initiative and Independence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Experience of prioritising own workload including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6.1 decision making within guidelines 6.2 following policies and procedures 6.3 devolving work to others appropriately.
Resource management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Experience of project co-ordination including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7.1 time management 7.2 controlling expenditure 7.3 maintaining confidential information.
Physical Skills <i>(with DDA modification where necessary)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Occasional light lifting of materials 9. Ability to travel

General knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none">10. An understanding of and commitment to the principles of equality and democracy.11. A Working knowledge of Employment Law.12. An understanding of the role of trade unions and the social and political environment in which the union operates.13. ICT packages including Microsoft Office suite.
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Other Information

The closing date for applications is **Friday 7th March 2015 at 12 noon.**

Please send a expression of interest, no longer than 2 sides of A4, stating why you think you would be suitable for the post to, **Derek Muse, UNISON, Room 145, Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8QH** or email to: derek.muse@newcastle.gov.uk

The applicant appointed will receive their existing salary, but the Branch will cover travel costs and legitimate expenses in line with UNISON's scheme. Car drivers will receive mileage rates in line with UNISON's scheme, although there is currently no parking at the Branch office at the Civic Centre. The workplace will be the Branch Office in the Civic Centre.

ESSENTIAL COVER WHEREVER YOU WORK

Worried about your job? In these uncertain times there's never been a better time to **join UNISON.**



NEWCASTLE CITY BRANCH

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MONDAY 16th MARCH 2015 - 5.00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBER, NEWCASTLE CIVIC CENTRE
Buffet available from 4.00 pm, Pandon Room**

A G E N D A

- 1. Introduction - Chair's Welcome**
- 2. a. Minutes 2014 AGM
b. Matters Arising**
- 3. Branch Annual Report
a. Branch Secretary and Branch Officer Reports
b. Member's Questions**
- 4. Financial Report
a. Branch Accounts
b. Member's Questions**
- 5. Guest Speaker – Ged Grebby Show Racism the Red Card**
- 6. Election of Officers**
- 7. Confirmation of Stewards**
- 8. Lottery Draw**
- 9. Branch Review Proposals**
- 10. Motions - tbc**
- 11. Constitutional Amendments
a. Branch Rules Review**
- 12. Raffle Draw**

Join UNISON – essential cover if you work in public services

Simply complete the form below and hand it to your branch rep or post it to the address on the back page

1 Tell us about you

Title First name

Surname/family name Date of birth / /

Home address

Postcode

email

Phone number (please indicate if home, work or mobile)

National insurance number (from your payslip)

Please give your ethnic origin. (tick one box)

Bangladeshi Pakistani Black African Black UK White UK

Chinese Asian UK Black Black other Irish

Indian Asian other Caribbean White other

2 Tell us about your job

Employer's name

Your job title/occupation

Workplace name and address

Postcode

Payroll number (from your payslip)

3 What you will pay each month

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions.

Annual pay	Your subscription
Up to £2,000	£1.30
£2,001-£5,000	£3.50
£5,001-£8,000	£5.30
£8,001-£11,000	£6.60
£11,001-£14,000	£7.85
£14,001-£17,000	£9.70
£17,001-£20,000	£11.50
£20,001-£25,000	£14.00
£25,001-£30,000	£17.25
£30,001-£35,000	£20.30
over £35,000	£22.50

4 Choose your political fund

One of the ways UNISON works on your behalf is through political campaigning. Your subscription includes a political fund payment so you won't pay any extra, but in UNISON you choose how you want that money to be used.

Please tick one box only.

Our Affiliated Political Fund takes UNISON members' views directly into the Labour Party, working to promote UNISON policies.

The General Political Fund is used to pay for branch, regional and national campaigns but is independent of any political party.

5 Choose how you wish to pay Please tick ONE box only

EITHER deduct from salary:

I wish to join UNISON and authorise deduction of subscriptions from my pay by my employer.

Signature

Date

OR pay by direct debit:

I wish to join UNISON and authorise deduction of subscriptions by direct debit.

Please go to unison.org.uk/privacy-policy to see how we will protect and use your personal information

Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the form and send to UNISON, 130 Euston Road London NW1 2AV



Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

To: The Manager Bank/building society

Address

Reference number (for office use only do not complete)

Service User Number

Postcode

Name(s) of Account holder(s)

Please pay UNISON Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with UNISON and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Bank/building society account number

Branch sort code

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

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 ROOM 145, CIVIC CENTRE, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE,
 TEL: 0191 2116980, FAX: 2114958, WEB: www.unison-newcastle.org.uk
 Twitter: @Newcastleunison