

JO COX WAS ONE OF US

P28 Our tribute to a much-loved mother, MP and UNISON member

UNISON ACTIVE!

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS IN YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE



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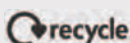
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the public service union

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**DAVE PRENTIS**
**GENERAL
SECRETARY***Dave Prentis*

YOUR CRUCIAL ROLE

After a tough few months, it's a good time to reflect on what we've been through and where our union is going.

Together we fought the Trade Union Bill (now the Trade Union Act) and won some crucial concessions.

This is still a dreadful piece of legislation – a politically motivated and ideological crusade against working people – but we should still take pride in the changes we won.

Without UNISON, we'd be facing a world without facility time, with irreparable damage done to our

campaigning through attacks on our political fund and an existential funding crisis through the abolition of check-off.

UNISON has fought and come through this battle stronger, ready to take on the challenges of the future.

And despite everything that you and other members have gone through as the public sector has been cut to the bone, your union has carried on fighting for you, carried on growing and carried on winning the arguments from local authorities to 10 Downing Street.

In the year ahead we must move forward as one union, showing the public the vital difference that you all make to your communities.

We'll fight and win on the issues that matter to you, putting your voices at the heart of the conversation wherever decisions are being made.

And this region – where I am from and which means so much to me – has such a crucial role to play in that.

Thanks as always for your support – it's an honour to serve as your general secretary.

**WENDY NICHOLS**
**REGIONAL
CONVENOR***W. Nichols*

I know we're up to the task

It has been a battleground for us since the Conservatives achieved a widely unexpected majority at the General Election.

How the Tories achieved that victory is open to question – and a number of police forces across the country are actively scrutinising their expenditure in the run-up to polling day.

We eagerly await the outcome of these inquiries, and whether they will result in legal action against the Conservative party and its candidates.

But meanwhile, we have shown our strength and determination in challenging the very worst policies of this government.

We can all be proud of how

UNISON led the way in opposing the proposed cuts to tax credits for the lowest paid workers.

We were also at the forefront of the campaign against the most draconian anti-trade union legislation in history. Our efforts were a major factor in forcing the government to drop many of the most damaging sections of the Bill.

We have held our nerve and held our ground, despite thousands of job losses in our public services.

But there are many more battles ahead of us to protect members' rights.

And as a former president of UNISON, I know we are up to the task.

**WE CAN
DO IT!**

All eyes on us

UNISON's leading role in fighting the proposed closure of accident and emergency facilities in Huddersfield has attracted attention from branches all over the country eager to learn from our example.

The plan to shut the A&E department at the Royal Infirmary would result in 965 job losses over five years and would deprive people in Huddersfield of vital and easily accessible emergency care, *writes Peter Carroll.*

The proposals were announced in January and since then there have been a number of public meetings demonstrating widespread support for the "Hands off HRI" campaign. A large march and rally is planned for September 4.



UNISON regional organiser Natalie Ratcliffe (below) said: "The local MP Barry Sheerman has backed the campaign and called on the clinical commissioning groups in Huddersfield and neighbouring Calderdale to drop the planned closure.

"We are making it clear that the closure would also affect acute services in Oldham, Barnsley and Wakefield.

"We have been contacted by branches all over the country seeking advice on how they can run similar campaigns in their areas.

"We will continue campaigning to save the service in Huddersfield, and encouraging the public to get involved."

● P14 A Closure Too Far

Thank You!



Active! magazine seems to be doing a good job. A survey conducted among activists showed that around eight out of ten of you thought it was important the region had a magazine and a similar proportion said Active! should be posted to members as well as activists.

Nine out of ten thought the magazine should continue in its current format and the same number said we covered the right issues. Thanks very much for that. It was great for our morale, but we aren't complacent. If you have any further comments or suggestions, please email the editor at barriejohnclément@gmail.com

BUPA to close Barnsley care home

Private care company BUPA has announced it will close a highly-regarded care home in Barnsley.

Management says there is insufficient demand to make the Hall Steads home in Grimethorpe viable. Now UNISON is talking

to the staff and the elderly people in the community who will be affected by the closure, *writes Peter Carroll.*

But BUPA refuses to recognise UNISON in the consultation it is carrying out, which ends on June 31.

Lorraine Fitzsimons

said: "Public services are shrinking all over the country while the need for them increases.

"This is another example of the cuts to care services for elderly and vulnerable people. Hall Steads has a good reputation with dedicated staff providing quality

care to residents.

"Residents now have to find alternative care as soon as possible, causing enormous worry for them and their families.

"Grimethorpe would also lose a valuable local resource and a source of employment for the community."

Healing the divisions



Delegates to UNISON's national conference in Brighton woke to the final day's session to the news that the UK had voted 52 per cent to 48 per cent to leave the European Union.

Outgoing president Wendy Nichols (above), was 'disappointed' at the result, but said the 'people have spoken' and a new relationship with Europe had to be developed, *writes Mary Maguire*.

Yorkshire and Humberside voted to leave, but in some areas the vote was very close. Wendy said: "We have to work to heal the

divisions in our society. And we must make sure in the coming months that we hold the new prime minister and cabinet to promises of more money for the NHS and protection of workers' rights.

"Low pay, insecure jobs, housing, the impact of relentless public service cuts will not go away and must be tackled."

Earlier in the week, Wendy spoke of her presidential year, the support she had received and the huge challenges facing UNISON.

The union had to keep fighting job losses and battling against the

'steady encroachment of privatisation' in increasingly fragmented workplaces.

But UNISON recruitment had been second to none.

"We are fighting the trend of shrinking membership across the union movement with everything at our disposal.

"And while we can never be complacent, we are in a far better position than I am sure the Government thought we would be back in 2010."

- P16 Another day, another battle
- P24 Brexit: damage limitation

...And it's FREE!

UNISON gives all members the opportunity to develop new skills, build self-confidence, experience the enjoyment of learning and enjoy the satisfaction of achievement.

All free of charge. Return to Learn courses will run in the Leeds, Sheffield, Hull and Huddersfield areas; Women's Lives in Doncaster and York.

The evening courses are delivered by friendly, experienced tutors with students working in small groups. There are no exams and all students receive a Certificate of Achievement on completion. Sessions begin in September.

● For further information please contact: Tanya Shearer on 0113 2182330 or email: t.shearer@unison.co.uk

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ODDS-ON
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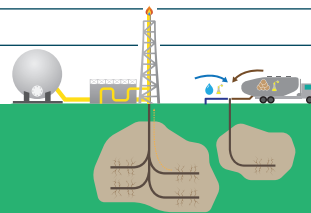
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FRACKING FRACAS



The media has a new word to play with. But to frack - or not to frack - is an extremely serious and increasingly heated debate, says **Mary Maguire**



EVERY DAY
YOU LEARN
SOMETHING
NEW
ABOUT
FRACKING,
AND IT'S
ALWAYS
BAD



Wordsmiths love new words. Usually imported along with a group of new citizens, they keep the language alive. In the olden days, though, they took a long while to get a foothold.

'Berserk' and 'husbands' were left behind by the Vikings. The Romans gave us 'bona fides', 'Status Quo' and 'Procol Harum', as well as 'viaducts', 'taxis' and 'wine' (and the taste for it). India sent us 'pyjamas', France gave us 'cafés', 'garages' and 'champagne'. Thomas Edison, or was it the Spaniards? gave us 'hello' to answer the new-fangled telephone.

Nowadays, new words are assimilated into our language in a flash with 24 hour news, social media and the constantly buzzing internet.

Editors embrace them. Well, they get bored using the same old words day in day out. Particularly welcome is the one that invokes heated debate and anger, like 'fracking'. It quickly spread across the globe and passed into everyday lingo (a word derived from Latin or possibly Portuguese).

Where the word 'frack' came from is the subject of heated debate. Did it come from the 1978 TV series *Battlestar Galactica* where 'frack' or 'frak' was used as a euphemism for a word not used in polite society? Was it a corruption of hydraulic fracturing?

Wherever it came from, and wherever it goes, controversy follows. North Yorkshire council's decision to allow fracking put Kirby Misperton on the world map and provoked a prolonged media scrum. Northallerton, the scene of colourful protests with colourful characters, became a godsend to editors wanting a break from the ins and outs of the in-out EU referendum.

One such, was hunger striker Geza Tarjanyi, aka Gayzer Frackman who, quoted in *Bradford Telegraph*, *Hull D Mail*, *Guardian* declared: "Every day you learn something new about fracking, and it's always bad". The media said he was told

by Tory councillors to 'stop now, please, we're not listening to you any more'. Nor did they listen to the 4,000 local residents who said 'no fracking here'.

The anti-fracking rabbit hopped onto TV screens. Pictures of the green fields and pleasant land of England were juxtaposed with pictures of gigantic machinery, pipes and nodding donkeys.

The *Yorkshire Post's* verdict was: "Fracking farce. North Yorkshire lions betrayed by council donkeys". Harsh words. Decision 'reignites intense debate' declared the BBC, echoed by most.

Headline writers had enormous fun as the new word became their new best friend. *Mirror*, *Sun*, *Wakefield Express* and numerous others gleefully reported 'frack off' protests and a new and exciting character was born – the fracktivist.

Boffins were wheeled out to explain the process: "blah, blah, inject chemicals and water, blah, blah, fissures, extraction, blah, blah, shale gas". Experts argued among themselves about what it sounded like, whether it caused earthquakes and who would benefit. Fracking pioneers from the new world returned to share their experience on *Radio Humberside* and all points north, south, east and west.

Reporters and snappers were despatched to find out how lives had been 'devastated' by earlier fracking experiments. And they found 'fracking hell' (*Guardian*), 'a colossal fracking mess' (*Vanity Fair*), 'sobbing residents' (*Y E Post*).

The Beeb analysed the decision thus: "It may not set a legal precedent, but local councillors facing a decision in the future can point to the Conservative majority-led planning committee in North Yorkshire." Whatever the rights and wrongs, one group will certainly benefit. The *London Evening Standard* reported a shares surge for 'London-listed fracking firms - hot property after a huge boost for the UK's shale gas industry'.

To frack or not to frack: that is the new question. ■



Mary Maguire
- Shares surge
in fracking firms

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| £17,001–£20,000 | £11.50 |
| £20,001–£25,000 | £14.00 |
| £25,001–£30,000 | £17.25 |
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SALLYING FORTH



Sally with Bradley Wiggins, her musical Airedale

Whether it's taking UNISON training courses or travelling the world, shop steward Sally Smith believes in broadening her mind. reports

UNISON steward Sally Smith has been in some extremely frightening situations over her years working for the charity International Rescue Corps (IRC). As a volunteer 'human guinea pig' she has been thrown into the muddy currents of the Humber then hauled out again further down-river by trainee rescue workers.

She has also been buried alive in rubble for five hours before being dug out and has endured temperatures of minus 22F on the top of Mount Kilimanjaro.

But the occupational therapist (she is a member of the UNISON-affiliated British Association of Occupational

Therapists) says the most shocking experience she had was on a trip to New York several years ago.

UNISON paid for a group of members to spend a week working alongside their counterparts in the city and Sally worked with an occupational therapist.

"That was a real eye-opener," said the 58-year-old who currently works for the East Riding Council.

"The USA is the richest country on earth but you wouldn't know it from the standard of their health service.

"If you haven't got money, the treatment you get is terrible. I saw occupational therapists making improvised toilet seats from old chairs,

“THE USA IS THE RICHEST COUNTRY ON EARTH BUT YOU WOULDN'T KNOW IT FROM THEIR HEALTH SERVICE”

sawing out holes in the seats.

"They have all the necessary medical kit but most people simply cannot afford to buy it. It's like a third world country.

"While I was there, the hospital discharged a man they had been treating because he had no money to pay for any further medical care. They left him outside near an air vent because it was the warmest place they could find.

"It would be horrible if we allowed our NHS to end up in that state because of privatisation and lack of funding. Seeing it for myself was a real shock. It is something you seldom see addressed in American films and television."

KILIMANJARO

A former UNISON branch secretary for East Yorkshire Hospitals, Sally lives in Beverley with her partner Ray Gray. Also part of the household is Bradley Wiggins, a large Airedale who howls when she plays the recorder to him. Apparently the dog is even more vociferous when she plays her saxophone.

It was Ray who enlisted her into the ranks of International Rescue and persuaded her to take part in the training.

Which is why she found herself a couple of years ago shivering in a leaky tent on the top of Mount Kilimanjaro.

She said: "On the final day the temperature was down to minus 22, there was an avalanche warning and our expedition guide hadn't been up the mountain before.

"We were raising money for International Rescue Corps but that was by far the worst experience of my life.

"The first time I went abroad for the charity was to Bhuj in Eastern India where Ray and his colleagues had rescued survivors of an earthquake in 2001.

"Ray never re-visits places where he has been on rescue duty but following an invitation from the people of Bhuj he wanted to know how the re-construction work was progressing so I went with IRC to inspect the re-build.

"We also took cases of books to give to schools which the Books Abroad charity had collected."

Her intrepid nature has amazed friends and

colleagues. With her 'travel buddy' Julia Lee, she has cycled across Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Cuba and canoed down the mighty Zambezi River.

"People ask me why I don't just go and sit on a beach instead but I really like adventure," said Sally.

"And if you do that you don't get to meet the people in the place you are visiting. I try to get to know something of a country's culture.

"If you just fly into a place like Cuba for example, then sit on the beach and in a hotel for the whole time you don't experience any of the real culture and the real people who live there."

CONFIDENCE

A self-confessed 'gobby and opinionated' UNISON member, Sally was encouraged to go on the union's stewards training course and has never looked back.

She went to university, aged 38, on a four year 'in-service' degree course, working half the week and studying the rest.

She said: "At the time I was an occupational therapy assistant but UNISON's training gave me confidence and I certainly wouldn't have gone to university otherwise.

"Confidence is the main thing UNISON training gives you. It also gives you an understanding of how organisations work and I would recommend the course to any member out there.

"It is excellent and it changed my life. It gave me opportunities I would never have had if I had not been in



**CONFIDENCE
IS THE
MAIN
THING
UNISON
TRAINING
GIVES YOU**



UNISON." Two years ago she completed an MBA, showing what can be achieved if you have both the confidence and the dedication to get involved with learning.

As East Riding Council's disability resource team manager, Sally is fully aware of the effect on services of the Government's austerity cuts.

And her warning about the dangers of privatising the NHS after her experience in New York will resonate with UNISON members who are fighting to save the service all over the country.

Meanwhile she is still involved with raising money for International Rescue and planning her next adventure.

So you won't find Sally next to you on a sun lounger. That's just not her style. ■

NewChapter

Books Abroad promotes literacy, education and understanding as a long term escape route from poverty.

The charity recycles used books by sending them to schools and other institutions in developing countries.

The organisation believes that, in the long term, education will help solve the world's problems.

With the power to read and write, children will have a better understanding of the issues confronting them.

The charity believes that better communication skills will help people avoid conflicts and resolve disputes by negotiation. To donate go to www.booksabroad.org.uk



Active! reporter **Ryan Fletcher** meets brave UNISON shop steward Amanda Eastwood who fought tooth and nail to give her son a chance to defeat cancer

“

I'VE HAD
TO HOLD
MY
EMOTIONS
FOR THE
LAST
FEW
YEARS

”

For more than three years, after her son Kye was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2012, Amanda Eastwood was living every parent's worst nightmare. UNISON senior steward Amanda, from Hull, was told repeatedly by doctors that nothing more could be done for Kye, 24, and that her son should just 'enjoy the time he has left'.

But even when things were at their darkest, when it seemed that every avenue had been exhausted, Kye, Amanda and the rest of the Eastwood family never stopped looking for

a cure. Their prayers were answered after they found a state of the art cancer treatment trial in America last summer. Now Kye, after receiving more than £30,000 from the public to help pay for his initial treatment and travel expenses, is in partial remission and his doctors are confident that he will make a full recovery.

"We were put in touch with the National Institute of Health (NIH) in Washington DC and after they'd run lots of tests they said they thought they could cure it," explained Amanda, who has worked in children's and young people's services

at Hull City Council for 36 years. "I was sceptical at first because the doctors here had said Kye needed to be in remission before he could have the bone marrow transplant (needed to help fight the cancer) but NIH said the new approach was part of the trial."

AGGRESSIVE

Since 2012 Amanda had been careful not to communicate her feelings, replacing them instead with a new lexicon that included numerous medical terms and procedures. "I've had to hold my emotions for the last few years," says Amanda. Dread

and anxiety had consumed the whole family, especially when it was discovered that Kye also had a second rare and aggressive type of cancer, after a large tumour in his chest failed to respond to treatment.

But the meeting at the NIH was the first sign that life might return to normal once again. "I was really elated. The whole family was and you can guess how Kye felt. Before that we didn't think he was going to live for another year. It gave us hope again," said Amanda.

GIRLFRIEND

In autumn 2015, Kye became the first person in the world to receive a combination of the cancer fighting drugs sirolimus and idelalisib, which shrank the tumour in his chest by 70 percent. During this period Kye even felt well enough to propose to his girlfriend, Chanelle Urquhart, and was able to enjoy what his family had feared might be his last Christmas.

However, when Kye returned to the US in January this year tests revealed new cancer 'hotspots', which doctors feared had grown because the medication was allowing the disease access to new pathways through his body. Kye was taken off the drugs and instead treated with stem-cells harvested from his sister Rebecca's bone marrow.

A few weeks later further tests showed that his sister's cells were working to kill the tumour. Kye should learn within the next few weeks if he is in full remission. During this

period Kye has relied on the kindness of friends and strangers who have donated more than £30,000 for him to receive the treatment.

Amanda said: "The Hull UNISON branch gave £500 and we've had donations from Unite and the GMB as well. I'm a senior steward and I'm taking over as education officer for the next year, so I work quite closely with the other unions on collective issues, and I have to say they've all been great.

"I can't knock the support we've had from everybody really – people we don't know, people we do know. Everybody has been so supportive, it's been amazing."

APPALLED

There are some people that Amanda is angry with, however. "Just before we came back from Washington last year, it was announced that the Government were cutting NHS access to drugs used to treat Hodgkin's lymphoma, which mainly affects young people like my son.

"I was appalled. I've worked in Hull City Council's children's services all my life and I've seen reductions for them there as well. To me it seems as if David Cameron just thinks young people are nothing, like they don't count anymore," she said. "There's also the element that the NHS doctors didn't know about the trials. We've now found out that these trials are going on in Germany and Italy as well as in Texas and Washington. Why don't our doctors know? In the end, for me, it comes down to there



DAVID CAMERON JUST THINKS YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOTHING



not being any resources."

The Eastwoods are still raising money for Kye. Even though the £700,000 fees for the treatment have been waived because it is an international trial, Kye still needs funds in order to live between the UK and America over the next five years.

Amanda said: "We've got flights backwards and forwards, he's got to live over there and use transport, so we're still having to fund-raise to help with all of that." ■

To make a donation visit www.gofundme.com/helpkyefly or contact Amanda directly through Hull's UNISON local government branch.

RareCondition

Hodgkin's lymphoma is an uncommon cancer that develops in the lymphatic system, which is a network of vessels and glands spread throughout the body. The lymphatic system is part of the immune system. Clear fluid called lymph flows through the lymphatic vessels and contains infection-fighting white blood cells, known as lymphocytes.

In Hodgkin's lymphoma, B-lymphocytes (a particular type of lymphocyte) start to multiply in an abnormal way and begin to collect in certain parts of the lymphatic system, such as the lymph nodes (glands). The affected lymphocytes lose their infection-fighting properties, making you more vulnerable to infection. The most common symptom of Hodgkin's lymphoma is a painless swelling in a lymph node, usually in the neck, armpit or groin.

BATTLE OF BATLEY



It took six months to convince a community health care employer that its plans were bad for staff, patients – and for the company. **Annie Mitchell** reports

“PATIENTS
END UP
GETTING
ADMITTED
TO
HOSPITAL
”

In Yorkshire and across the country, UNISON members are all too often faced with employers determined to force through changes to their pay, terms and conditions. When Batley-based social enterprise Locala tried to do the same last year, they discovered they had a battle on their hands.

Locala had won a five year £238m contract in July 2015 to deliver community health services across Kirklees. Losing the contract was a bitter blow to Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust, who suffered a £5m loss in valuable income.

And nursing staff at Locala

were soon to be hit by news of damaging changes to their terms and conditions.

Not only would staff be worse off, but many believed the quality of patient care would suffer.

DISGRUNTLED

UNISON members were up in arms and regional organiser, Natalie Ratcliffe, began hearing disturbing reports about the way services were being delivered: “As part of their contract Locala was supposed to be providing physio, occupational therapy, rehabilitation services etc. closer to patients’ homes, but this was failing because the infrastructure simply hadn’t

been set up. In addition, nurses were worried that patients weren’t getting a good enough service because there was insufficient staff to meet the demand for help.”

As one member of staff, who wants to remain anonymous for fear of repercussions, said at the time: “I am, like all my other colleagues, constantly visiting disgruntled and dissatisfied patients and relatives who feel they have been let down by the service in their time of need.

“Patients have to wait lengthy periods for their visit, often in pain and discomfort, due to the fact that we are so overrun with work we have to prioritise,



and our planned calls then end up at the end of the queue.

"Many times these patients end up calling the emergency services and get admitted to hospital. Surely this is not helping Locala meet their targets?"

DISHEARTENED

On top of fears for patients, Locala was failing to engage with staff over its plans to implement major changes to their working conditions including 24/7 contracts, lone working, and altering the hours of evening staff - leading to cuts in pay.

Another nurse described the difficulties she was facing even before the proposed

changes: "We charge around on nights, often with no break or even a drink, to try to catch up with all the calls we have had passed onto us, where evening nurses have not been able to visit due to their own workload. When we finally get there either the patient has gone to bed, or they are abusive and rude due to the hours they have waited for their call. By the time we have done our 10 hour shift we feel wrung out, despondent and disheartened, only to be told that our shift is going to be extended."

EXPERIENCE

One staff nurse responded angrily saying: "I find myself unable to understand why, when Locala had such a fabulous out of hours service, it was deemed appropriate to annihilate that service to the wreck you have now. In the past six months staff who have worked out of hours for over 25 years, have been left disappointed and disheartened by the way they have been treated and felt unable to continue when the future looks so bleak. I fear that many more will follow due to the lack of respect for their loyalty, hard work and experience."

ARDUOUS

With morale at a low, Natalie found her work cut out trying to get Locala to consult fully with members and to listen and act on their concerns.

Taking a hard line, the company initially planned to go ahead and impose new contracts on staff.

“
BY THE
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Repeatedly challenged by the union, they finally agreed to talks. A period of long and arduous negotiations followed before a settlement was finally reached. UNISON members had provided the ammunition needed to convince Locala that the fears of their employees were justified.

AGREEMENT

Natalie says: "Locala agreed to scrap 24/7 contracts for existing staff, although new employees will be expected to work them.

The company has also paused the lone working proposals because of fears from staff over their safety - particularly in the evening and at night. They are carrying out a review but until then staff will continue to work in pairs where appropriate.

"It took from November until April to get an amicable agreement with Locala, but we had to make them see that staff were really worried.

EFFECTIVE

In the end we won, we got them to move and we recruited big time off the back of the dispute.

"Not everything in the garden is rosy at Locala, but lessons have been learnt and new tactics employed. UNISON set up a Facebook page to engage with staff because of the difficulties contacting workers who are out all the time. This proved an effective way to keep everyone up to date throughout the dispute and was popular with members.

"We still keep in touch and that is what keeps UNISON moving ahead." ■



Natalie Ratcliffe

A CLOSURE TOO FAR



A threat to close Huddersfield Royal Infirmary and replace it with a centre for treating non-urgent cases has led to a wave of protest. **Annie Mitchell** reports

Plans to shut the A&E department at the busy Huddersfield Royal Infirmary have sent shock waves around the hospital and across the local community.

Serving an area of more than 250,000 people, the closure would mean that patients in Huddersfield would have to travel to Halifax, Wakefield or Barnsley for emergency treatment.

Under the massive shake-up the existing infirmary would be demolished with a loss of 800 beds and replaced with a smaller 120-bed hospital that would only deal with elective surgery. A walk-in centre would treat only minor injuries, leaving the town without an A&E.

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TO DEATHS
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Stunned staff have variously described the proposals as ‘criminal’, ‘devastating’ and ‘total madness and a risk to patients’ lives’.

The community-wide ‘Hands Off HRI’ campaign has attracted massive public support with more than 48,000 people on its Facebook page, thousands turning up at rallies and special events, while a parliamentary petition against the closure had attracted almost 63,000 signatures by the time Active! went to press.

RECKLESS

A UNISON survey of all staff at the Huddersfield Royal Infirmary and Calderdale Royal Hospital revealed that more than 92 per cent of those

who responded rejected the contention that the removal of the A&E department at Huddersfield is the ‘safest, most sustainable option’ for patients. As one staff member said: “This decision will lead to deaths and I think the A&E in Calderdale will be unable to meet patient care needs”.

UNISON regional organiser for the Calderdale and Huddersfield Foundation Trust, Natalie Ratcliffe, says the campaign against the closures is doubly important to her and her family because they live in Huddersfield. She describes plans to leave the whole of Kirklees without an A&E department as ‘reckless’. “Staff and the public worry that people will die.

When you look at the locality and the traffic, if

someone goes into cardiac arrest and gets caught in a bottleneck, the consequences could be fatal. We already have ambulances queuing in traffic as well as outside the hospital, parking is horrendous and bad weather can cause huge difficulties across the region with blocked roads.

"Calderdale and Greater Huddersfield Clinical Commissioning Group control the local NHS budget and their plan will axe 965 jobs over the next five years. Staff are deeply concerned and consultation has been minimal.

"Many believe that the reason behind the closure is more about cutting costs than serving patients."

Calderdale Hospital in Halifax was built under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) scheme and is locked into a costly 60-year contract. The hospital is leased back from the private sector under the PFI deal, which contains a £200m 'break clause' penalty, putting funding across both sites under enormous pressure. A UNISON survey threw up strong feelings among staff who were invited to make comments anonymously.

Natalie Ratcliffe



One health care assistant said: "I have spoken to quite a few of our consultants, I have yet to hear one of them say they are in favour of this proposal. This is going to be driven by cost-saving and not patient care."

HORRENDOUS

The plans will also have a serious impact on ambulance services and patient survival with one paramedic commenting:

"It is too large an area to be covered by one A&E. Ambulances will have longer journey times thus reducing the number of available ambulances. Yorkshire Ambulance Service has no capacity for this additional pressure."

And this was the verdict of a nurse in Huddersfield: "Waiting times already exceed the recommended four hour wait on both sites at weekends and holidays. Patients already travel up to 45 minutes to the Huddersfield A&E. A further 30 minutes to Calderdale will mean a reduced survival rate for all age groups of the critically ill."

UNISON members have been campaigning strongly against the plans and many joined an 8,000 strong march and protest in St Georges' Square, Huddersfield in February this year.

The event, organised by "Hands Off our HRI", was described as the biggest gathering the town has seen since the end of the second world war.

The following month saw thousands of angry protestors shut out of a public consultation meeting set up

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by local NHS bosses.

"Two thousand people turned up, but the space they had booked was for just 400. You could hear the angry chants in the meeting room. It shows the enormous concern local people feel," says Natalie. While space at public meetings has been squeezed, the situation for staff is even worse. Fears over the closure have been heightened by the lack of any meaningful local consultation.

Natalie says: "Our members' futures are at stake as well as the lives of people across Kirklees. Our survey shows just how many staff from both hospitals believe that closing the A&E at Huddersfield would be a big mistake.

"There is already massive public support for the 'Hands Off HRI' campaign, which is still growing. Raising funds to keep it going has involved a huge grass roots effort with music events, a half marathon, dance parties, comedy nights and raffles. There is real determination out there and it has taken over my life. This is one campaign that we need to fight, and fight to win." ■

WorthSaving

Huddersfield Royal Infirmary is about three miles from Huddersfield town centre. The main hospital first opened its doors in 1965 and since then many millions have been invested in the site to modernise and extend it. It offers a full range of day case and outpatient services and an accident and emergency department. It is also the specialist centre for emergency surgery, planned complex surgery and emergency paediatric surgery for the people of Huddersfield and Calderdale.

ANOTHER DAY ANOTHER BATTLE

Regional convenor **Wendy Nichols** looks back on her hectic year as president of Britain's biggest public service union and prepares for her next challenge

What a challenging year it's been for our union. When I was

elected your president last June, I knew the going would be tough, because we were faced with a majority Tory Government.

Well the Government chucked plenty our way. But we chucked some back. For a start, we had the Tory anti-union Trade Union Bill, now an Act, that threatened the very existence and ability of our union to protect and defend members. This Act is dangerous; it's a spiteful piece of legislation, make no mistake about that, but with hard work, determination and solidarity, we have dulled its teeth. No mean feat.

POSITIVE

The whole union pulled together for our week of action 'Heart UNISON week' back in February and that brought the issue to life and gave us a focus. It helped us emphasise the positive impact unions have. And, you know what? People listened. Not just those on the left; some on the right recognised the strength of our arguments. Together,

with other unions and many organisations, we made a difference.

And it's thanks to all those members who answered the call and pitched in to come out with me and others to march, rally, lobby and protest. It just showed that when every part of the union works together, when we unite around a common cause, we can win, we can make a difference.

We were never going to get rid of it completely, but we won important changes. Gone is the plan to scrap the right for members to pay union subscriptions direct from their pay. That was a huge victory. Gone is the restriction on facility time. Gone is the need for members to opt back into political funds. Gone are increased powers for the Certification Officer. Gone is the restriction on our right to picket and protest.

We also won a review into the use of electronic voting in industrial action ballots. That could bring our processes into the 21st century and vastly increase turn-out.

Throughout the year, the Tories continued their attacks on working people and the most vulnerable in

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our society, while rewarding their rich friends with tax hand-outs. The Chancellor's budget shamefully continued in this vein – ideological, divisive and demonising the poor as scroungers, giving a helping hand to the rich. At the same time, starving local government of funds and plunging our National Health Service into crisis.

SUCCESS

I played my part in the campaigns our union has been running on achieving a real living wage – not the phoney one the Tories are always banging on about. It's been a feature of all our pay claims and we have had some success. We've still got loads of work to do to improve public sector pay that has fallen way behind and to help our student nurse members defend their bursaries.

Part of the president's role is to argue the case for the union and its members and I took our arguments to the heart of the Labour Party, to parliament, to the employers and community groups. Working with partners we exposed the deceit behind the Government's plans for tax credits and on turning all schools into academies. I know that the work we



Photo: Marcus Rose

Wendy (standing) with Y&H colleagues at conference

all did in UNISON was instrumental in forcing the Government to change tack.

I've spoken at UNISON meetings from Hamilton to Harrogate, from Suffolk to Sheffield, from Bradford to Brighton. I've visited our regions and led UNISON delegations to the TUC, Labour Party and other conferences in places such as Llandudno, Glasgow, Belfast, Brighton, Vancouver, Vienna, London and Manchester.

At the UNISON women's conference, I attacked the Government's record targeting the most vulnerable and the impact on women, many at risk of violence or abuse. And I stressed our responsibilities to hold out a helping hand to refugees fleeing violence, often women and children, starving and frightened.

At our health conference, it was moving to remember all those who died because of unsafe practices at work as we marked International Workers Memorial Day. A key date in the trade union calendar to

remind us what a vital role is played by health and safety representatives.

'Elf 'n safety' is often held up to ridicule by the right-wing media, but they would say that wouldn't they? Anything that smacks of looking after the workers is a target for attack.

As I pointed out, though, good health and safety practices benefit everyone – because a safe and healthy workplace is also a safe and healthy school, a hospital or a building site.

Early in the new year, I was so pleased to be president as UNISON became the first union to partner with NHS Blood and Transplant, to promote awareness of blood and organ donation. It's a cause really close to my heart, because organ donation was life-changing for my daughter Rachel.

And I have used my time to promote my charity. It's the Bijilo School Project in the Gambia. Over the years, this region has raised money

to provide such basics as tools and equipment for the school's kitchen garden, a water pump and a freezer. When we got a bit more money, we built toilet blocks, cleaner kitchens and a water storage tower. With more, we can help it expand to allow more children to go to school.

Of course chairing our annual delegate conference – the supreme policy-making



WHEN
WE UNITE
AROUND
A COMMON
CAUSE,
WE CAN
WIN



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- body of our great union – was the culmination of my year as president. It's a week where we thrash out our policies and our ideas; sometimes we fall out a bit, but I believe we are always united in our aims and ambitions for our union and its members.

I've had a lot of practice chairing different conferences and events. I've learnt so much about our union, our members and the problems they face through that, and it's great seeing our democracy at work.

IMPRESSED

I've met some really fantastic people. Unsung heroes who are the life-blood of our union. Every day they work to make life better for others or face personal challenges with courage and determination.

Wherever I have gone, I've been impressed by the sheer dedication, commitment and hard work put in by our activists. It was an eye-opening pleasure to go to the self-



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organised conferences that I had not attended before.

I learnt so much about the issues affecting black members, disabled members and LGBT members. And wherever I went I was made to feel so welcome and that is a great feeling.

And, of course, I've had the support of the most fantastic people in my convenors team: Helen, Bella, Emma, George and Paul. In my branch, Anne and her team, Barbara, Denis and Linda, and in the region our great regional staff.

It's been a hectic year.

A challenging, but rewarding year. I've missed my family and they have missed me. But all of them were able to make it to conference to support me.

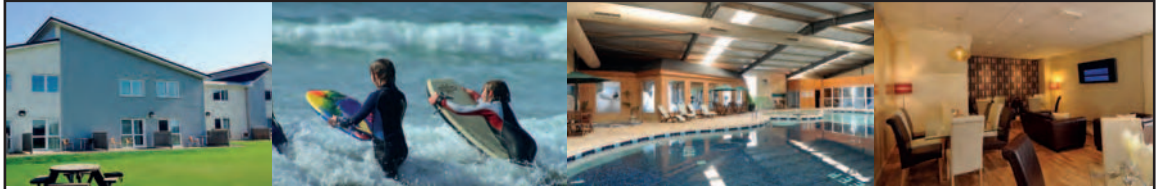
At the end of our conference I was able to have a free weekend and go out to lunch with the family. But I knew it wouldn't be long before I was off again to fight another battle. Because if there's one thing that being in UNISON has taught me: another day means another battle. ■

TheProject

Wendy's charity is Bijilo School Project, which provides essential equipment and improved amenities for a school in Gambia, West Africa.

Over the years, UNISON's Yorkshire and Humberside region has raised money to provide such basics as tools and equipment for the school's kitchen garden, a water pump and a freezer. Toilet blocks, cleaner kitchens and a water storage tower have also been built. The more money the project gets, the more places for children can be provided.





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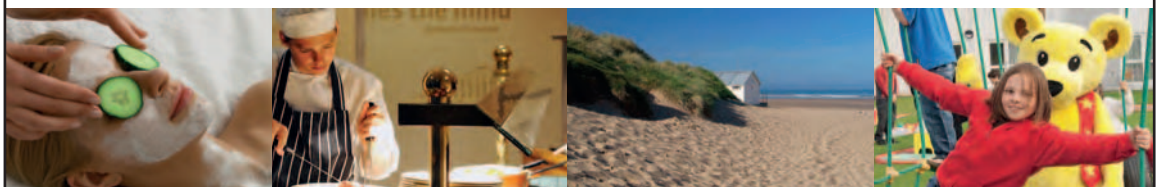




Photo: Mark Harvey

Award winners - Hextrope Primary

IT'S **NOT** GONE AWAY

There's been a sea change in attitudes towards ethnic minorities in sport, but racists still routinely target Muslims and immigrants. **Ryan Fletcher** reports

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YOU
DON'T
SEE
KIDS IN
NURSERY
SCHOOL
BEING
RACIST



JOHN
CAMPBELL



They say football is a microcosm of society. If so those disgraceful ‘monkey’ chants that rang out at black players at many grounds across Yorkshire during the 1990s reflected a nationwide problem.

It was the same in Newcastle and by 1995 a small group of Magpies supporters were sick of the vile racism disfiguring the beautiful game. Along with other anti-racism and trade union activists, they decided to make a stand.

The group's first step was humble; creating and distributing an education pack on Newcastle's black history in order to change the poisonous narratives being

spouted at St James' Park games.

TARGETING

Little did they know that their local initiative would snowball into one of the UK's largest and most successful anti-racism campaigns – Show Racism the Red Card (SRtRC). This year the campaign celebrates its 20th anniversary.

Despite a sea change in attitudes towards black and ethnic minority people over the last two decades, racism hasn't gone away. It has simply found new groups to pick on, particularly Muslims and immigrants. That's why the work done by SRtRC, which is supported by UNISON, is as important as ever. This is especially

true in Yorkshire, explains John Campbell, UNISON deputy convenor and chair of Unite Against Fascism in the county.

John says he knows many members who have been compelled to take action due to the recent increase in the presence of the far right in the region.

“In Rotherham for example there have been over 20 visits from far right groups in the last two and a half years and they're targeting other places as well. There are a lot of UNISON branches that have been active in campaigning against them,” he said. “Part of the reason is that we have a government which has attacked public services.”

Those attacks have had an impact on the NHS,

education and housing. Some politicians do not recognise the damage caused by the cuts and instead blame it on immigrants. It's an easy but very damaging thing to do."

Education is vital for stopping the spread of racism, said John, which is why SRtRC's work with young people is so essential. "You don't see kids in nursery school being racist.

PANDEMONIUM

It's as children get older that they become susceptible to indoctrination. Using the mass appeal of sport and especially football, as SRtRC does, is a brilliant way to educate against that. I congratulate them on 20 years of fantastic work."

The organisation's work began in earnest after it received a letter from Newcastle's then goal keeper, Shaka Hislop. The seemingly innocuous letter still hangs in SRtRC chief executive Ged Grebby's North Shields office.

Its promise to bring footballers into schools on behalf of the campaign dealt a huge blow to those who wanted to spread hate through racism and deceit.

Shaka's second outing for the campaign, when he attended Gosforth High School with Newcastle striker Les Ferdinand, went so well the pair nearly caused a riot, Ged recalled.

"They had to abandon the classes and close the school because the kids went absolutely crazy."

The staff had to call the police in the end because the players couldn't get

to their cars. There was pandemonium. It was so big it ended up on TV across the country. That's when we knew we really had something," said Ged.

The experience catapulted the organisation into the national consciousness, as well as providing a steep learning curve on the potential consequences of taking famous footballers into schools.

Ged said: "We decided it was better to harness their appeal by producing videos instead." Over two decades, the organisation has become Britain's largest anti-racism charity and continues to produce videos and education packs and run competitions.

PIONEERING

This year, the overall winners of the SRtRC national school competition was Hexthorpe Primary in Doncaster, for their film about the life of pioneering black sportsman Arthur Wharton.

The winners attended a ceremony at the West Ham football club in London, which was attended by West Ham players, as well England women's forward Gemma Davison and UNISON vice-president Eric Roberts. The campaign has also broadened to include other sports, including the Yorkshire mainstays of rugby league and cricket.

Again in Doncaster, as well as in other towns and cities across Yorkshire, SRtRC has held events with the local rugby league team to turn children away from racism.

Yorkshire cricket, which

has struggled for years to attract players of South Asian origin despite the community's passion for the sport, is now making concerted efforts to drive recruitment and weed out racism from its ranks.

PIVOTAL

The Yorkshire Cricket Board has implemented numerous strategies to reach out to schools and communities and promote inclusion, participation and anti-racism within the game.

The campaign's remit is simple and effective: to educate against racism. Although it doesn't take action against specific acts of racism, it works closely with unions, such as UNISON, which have been pivotal in combatting prejudice at work and in society. Ged said: "Since the beginning trade unions have always played a massive role within Show Racism the Red Card.

There's a natural synergy. Racism is a tool used to divide people, but there's strength in unity and the trade union movement is about solidarity." ■



Show Racism the **Red Card**

Show Racism the Red Card is the UK's anti-racism educational charity and was established in January 1996. The organisation uses the high-profile status of football and football players to help tackle racism in society. The majority of the campaign's output is the delivery of education to young people and adults in their schools, their workplaces and at events held in football stadiums. Across Britain, Show Racism the Red Card delivers training to more than 50,000 individuals a year.



Photo: Mark Harvey

“WE PUT A LOT OF PRESSURE ON THE COUNCIL. THEY KNEW CARE WORKERS WERE NOT BEING PAID FOR TRAVELING TIME”

A substantial number of local authorities all over Yorkshire and Humberside and the UK are knowingly presiding over breaches of the law, according to UNISON convenor Leon Kirkham.

Cynical chancellor George Osborne is driving through massive cuts to council budgets knowing full well many councils are forced to award ruinous contracts to external home care providers which can only result in breaches of the law.

Companies cannot possibly

pay their employees the £7.20 an hour statutory minimum Osborne has introduced, make a profit and provide a decent service, says Leon.

It means that tens of thousands of dedicated care workers are on illegally low pay, largely because contractors are not paying them for the time they take to get from one service user to another.

One Labour-controlled local authority in Yorkshire has broken the mould. After a dogged campaign by UNISON, Leeds City Council became the first authority in the region to introduce the

union's Ethical Care Charter.

Launched nationally in 2012, the charter establishes a minimum standard for the quality of care delivered by properly trained staff working on decent terms and conditions.

It seeks to ensure that carers are not forced on to zero hours contracts and that they are able to spend a reasonable amount of time with each of the people they care for. It will also mean that carers are paid for the hours they spend traveling from one assignment to the next – a success for UNISON's "Pay up for Travel Time" campaign. As part of the Leeds agreement, signed in May 2015 but starting on June 1, external homecare workers will get the new Leeds Living Wage of £8.01, rather than the £7.30 originally proposed by the council. Leeds has also committed itself to move towards the rate set by the independent Living Wage Foundation, which currently stands at £8.25.

POSSIBILITIES

The Leeds deal means that thousands of employees working for private contractors will benefit from the pay rise - the overwhelmingly majority of them women. Other councils in Yorkshire and Humberside are edging towards an agreement, but Leeds was the first in the region to introduce the charter.

"Elected representatives were open to the idea when we approached them, but were not fully convinced to begin with," says Leon, a UNISON convenor at the city council.

"We put a lot of pressure on the council. They knew the care workers were not being paid for travelling time and were therefore not getting the national minimum wage. They knew employees could not provide the necessary care in the 15 minute visits they were allowed. They knew corners were being cut."

Eventually the council agreed to set up a project team to examine the possibilities. Members of the group included councillors, external providers, council commissioning staff, service users and Leon as a representative of UNISON. "I kept pushing the Ethical Care Charter and slowly but surely we got there," said Leon.

IMPOSSIBLE

But how was the cash-strapped council able to introduce the charter at a time when other local authorities claim it is impossible because of unprecedented cuts to budgets?

Some councils are paying companies as little as £11 an hour which means it is impossible to pay legal wages and provide proper care, says Leon who is also chair of UNISON's regional local government service group. Leeds have agreed to pay providers up to £16 so they can fulfil their responsibilities, he said.

"The reason Leeds have been able to adopt the charter, is because they have made it a priority. It's as simple as that," says Leon.

Regional organiser Dean Harper said that by adopting

“THE REASON LEEDS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ADOPT THE CHARTER, IS BECAUSE THEY HAVE MADE IT A PRIORITY”

the charter, Leeds council was 'leading the way' in eradicating poor terms and conditions in homecare.

He said the scheme would be monitored to ensure that providers stick to the agreement. "I hope other councils will follow suit by rewarding these valued and committed staff," he said.

"It will mean some staff will get a significant pay rise as a direct result of the pressure UNISON brought on the council and it will mean that they should no longer be paid less than the minimum wage."

He said thanks were due to Councillor Adam Ogilvie, previous executive board member for adult social care and current board member Councillor Lisa Mulherin for their help in getting the charter adopted. He said thanks should also go to

UNISON member Mick Ward, interim chief officer for commissioning adult social care.

Leon points out that UNISON now has to ensure that as many of the care workers as possible join the union. "We're trying to arrange a meeting with providers so that we can gain access to employees." Home care workers are notoriously difficult to contact, because they do not attend one workplace.

One option is that UNISON could help companies provide proper Care Certificate training to employees via the government-backed Union Learning Fund. In return employers would be expected to provide UNISON with access to their workers.

Joining the union is a no-brainer. ■

The Deal Maker

Fifty five-year-old Leon Kirkham was born and brought up in Cornwall and has lived in Leeds for 30 years.

Active for more than 20 years in the union, he used to work as a Leeds council employee in hostels for the homeless which are now run by the voluntary sector.

Leon was born into a trade union household. His father was a docker and secretary of his local branch of the old Transport and General Workers' Union. "I am active in UNISON for the benefit of others, not for myself," says Leon. "Hopefully I can make sure that people are not taken advantage of. I believe in the principle that we

should help other people. I don't think anyone should work for a cabbage a week. And I believe everyone should have the chance to improve their education." Leon played rugby union in his home county before discovering the delights of the 13-man code in Yorkshire.

He supports the Leeds Rhinos in rugby league and the Leeds United football team. He is the father of three sons and grandfather to two 18-month-old toddlers. ■



DAMAGE LIMITATION

The Tories will use the 'Out' vote to cut even more public services and jobs in the region, but the union will fight them all the way. **Paul Routledge** reports



David Cameron's referendum on Europe was a high-risk gamble that failed. He lost his job, and so will many others.

The impact on public services in our region is likely to be severe, as economic pressures intensify and the Tories impose even greater spending cuts.

UNISON regional secretary John Cafferty warns: "Chancellor Osborne will use this as an opportunity to bring forward further austerity measures, and that will inevitably have a major impact on Yorkshire and Humberside.

"We're already in serious difficulties with planned cuts over the next four years. Osborne was planning an emergency budget if there was a Brexit vote.

"There is a serious likelihood that this will happen. I see real problems for NHS trusts and council services, and social care is already in crisis. Difficult times lie ahead."

UNISON general secretary

Dave Prentis made clear that the union respects the 52-48 per cent victory for the Leave campaign. Brexit was not the policy of the union, but it was the view of many of its members, he told the annual conference in Brighton last month.

As Active! went to press it was thought that the political fallout of the 'Out' verdict might even claim the scalp of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, after a revolt by his MPs.

Across Yorkshire and Humberside, Leave won in Barnsley, Bradford, Calderdale, Craven, Doncaster, the East Riding, Hull, Kirklees, North Lincs, Rotherham, Ryedale, Scarborough, Sheffield and Wakefield.

The highest Leave figure was 69 per cent, in Doncaster, the most marginal – 51 per cent – was in Sheffield.

Only three authorities recorded a Remain majority: Leeds, by the narrowest of margins, 50.3 per cent; Harrogate, 51 per cent and York, 58 per cent. [Full figures, see Table]



I SEE REAL PROBLEMS FOR NHS TRUSTS AND COUNCIL SERVICES. DIFFICULT TIMES LIE AHEAD



JOHN CAFFERTY

The outcome was a shock to the trade union movement. However, UNISON will continue to fight cuts, austerity and racism, Dave Prentis promised. "Public servants cannot and will not be made to pay for another crash they didn't cause," he declared.

"We will fight to hold Boris and Gove to the promises they've made to the public – like more money for the NHS, and that our rights at work will remain intact.

"We are deeply sceptical of their claims, but we will fight to ensure they are held to account."

DISASTROUS

In the short-term, it was thought that a recession was virtually certain. And with 'billions less' coming in, Chancellor Osborne claimed there was a £30 billion black hole in government finances.

He planned a £15 billion raid on taxes, and £15 billion spending cuts on the NHS, education and defence. But Brexit has forced him to postpone the emergency Budget for at least three



months, when a new - and possibly more Right-wing - Chancellor will be in office.

Yorkshire could fare badly under Brexit. Before the poll, Osborne predicted that withdrawal from the EU would cost 43,000 jobs in the county and drive down wages by three per cent for workers. The region's economy would shrink by £3.9 billion, and house prices would fall by £21,000.

Also at risk is £600 million of funding for regional development in Yorkshire in the period up to 2020. And there's a question mark over Britain's claim for £125 million from the European Solidarity Fund to help cope with last winter's disastrous flooding in Leeds, York and Calderdale.

It's the impact on people that counts most. Nationally, an estimated 130,000 European nationals work in the health service. They account for 40 per cent of nursing, medical and associated professional staff in our region.

Their future, and that of many others like them in

public services, may now be seriously in doubt, as is the outlook for those who wish to come after them.

Dave Prentis gave this reassurance: "There are people in all of our communities - especially those who have come from around the world to work in our public services - who are frightened today.

"I assure them that they are welcome in our union and they are welcome in our country.

"As we all reflect on the referendum result, it is important that we think about how we move on from here. Jo Cox's prophetic words, that there is more that unites us than divides us, should be our starting point.

"Over the coming weeks and months, all political leaders need to think about how to address the issues that people in our communities care most about - falling incomes, insecure jobs, affordable housing and the huge challenges facing our public services after more than half a decade of cuts."

Shortly before polling day, the Leave gang came clean

about their intentions if they won power. In their first Parliament, they would end the free movement of labour, and repeal the 1972 Act that took Britain into Europe.

They also promised an extra £350 million a week for the NHS, although after the poll Ukip leader Nigel Farage confessed that 'we got our sums wrong'. It was a blithe admission of a deceit that must have won Leave many votes.

In the May local elections, Labour easily retained control of Leeds, Sheffield, Wakefield, Hull, Bradford and Barnsley, and defied a Ukip threat to its hold on Rotherham.

Calderdale remains under no overall control and Kirklees continues under a minority Labour administration, though without a council leader as we went to press. ■

“WE WILL FIGHT TO HOLD BORIS AND GOVE TO THE PROMISES THEY’VE MADE”

DAVE PRENTIS

TheVote

LEAVE (%)

Barnsley 68.3
Bradford 54.2
Calderdale 55.7
Craven 52.8
Doncaster 69.0
East Riding 60.4
Hull 67.6
Kirklees 54.7
N Lincs 66.3
Rotherham 67.9
Ryedale 55.3
Scarborough 62.0
Sheffield 51.0
Wakefield 66.4

REMAIN (%)

Leeds 50.3
Harrogate 51.0
York 58.0



Paul Routledge



Active! reporter **Peter Carroll** meets the UNISON activists who led the 12-year-long campaign to win justice for emergency ambulance crews and the people they serve

This dispute might well rate a mention in the Guinness Book of Records. It took ambulance paramedics in Yorkshire and Humberside 12 years to win their battle over pay grading. Twelve long years.

But it was vital UNISON activists and officials stayed the course. Under the previous system, dozens of paramedics were leaving the service every month.

UNISON finally won the argument and paramedics were moved up to Band 6 last April – a grade that fully recognises the skills required to be part of the emergency team.

Since then hundreds of

people have applied to join the service and UNISON's Yorkshire ambulance branch has led the way for colleagues in other parts of the country.

INSPIRED

UNISON's lead negotiator in the dispute, Kevin Fairfax (above right), current secretary of the branch and his predecessor Bryn Webster (left) point out it was never only about money; "Our members are very proud of their jobs as paramedics," says Kevin.

"But they refuse to be taken for granted and would not stand by and see the service they provide to the public being run down because of unfair pay, which

“
WE
BELIEVE
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BY OUR
SUCCESS”



KEVIN
FAIRFAX

was driving people away from the service. "What UNISON has done is to protect and improve a service which central government is starving of funds, and we believe other ambulance trusts across the country will be inspired by our success."

UNISON members working for the Yorkshire Ambulance Trust had been balloted over the issue in January. The result was unequivocal and sent a strong message to management.

Almost 100 per cent were in favour of industrial action in support of pay grades which properly reflected paramedics' level of skill and

Photo: Mark Harvey

responsibility.

The threat of industrial action brought the employers back into negotiations, but only at the very last minute.

The saga started in 2004 with the Agenda For Change pay system, which members felt had placed paramedics in a lower grade than their skills deserved, says Kevin. Members in Yorkshire insisted it should be a national issue on the basis that paramedics all over the country should be on a higher pay band.

"Our members were the catalyst and we decided to increase the pressure on the Yorkshire Ambulance Trust. We said that we all believed this was right and discussed what we needed to do about it. "So the branch, led by Kevin and Bryn, pressed for the upgrade.

But the employer offered to upgrade members, and then repeatedly withdrew the offer every time it was about to be implemented. This cynical tactic only strengthened the resolve of the branch.

That is what persuaded members to 'go early' and ballot on the issue before any other ambulance branch in the country had reached the same stage.

One of the conditions the trust wanted to put on the upgrade was that paramedics would be required to use shock treatment, known as 'cardioverting', to restore patients' normal heart rhythms.

But UNISON said no, arguing that such a procedure should always be carried out in specialised hospital units and conducted

by doctors.

Kevin said: "I think that was the straw that broke the camel's back.

"We knew the trust was trying to load more and more clinical work on paramedics. It went to the 11th hour before they asked to meet us and they did try it on even at that stage but we weren't prepared to give in to it.

"We understand the pressure all NHS trusts are under because of central government cuts.

But we had submitted Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and found out what they were spending on private providers and we weren't going to let them pull the wool over our eyes. They are shelling out millions of pounds every year."

DEDICATED

Bryn believes what has been achieved in their trust, will help ambulance branches across the country win their own battles for fair pay and protect the service in their area.

"The evidence is clear that fair pay for skilled and dedicated staff leads directly to improved services to the public," said Bryn.

"In this trust we are able to ensure that every ambulance has a trained paramedic on board when dealing with emergencies.

"The figures show that we are now able to retain existing staff and recruit vitally needed new staff.

"Before this dispute, the opposite was happening. We have seen an immediate improvement in the service as a result."

Bryn said the branch's

“WE ARE NOW ABLE TO RETAIN EXISTING STAFF AND RECRUIT VITALLY NEEDED NEW STAFF”
BRYN WEBSTER

success in the dispute was partly due to making sure all members received regular and accurate information about the negotiations.

When the ballot papers were issued, everyone was fully informed of the facts and members were not misled by false information or groundless threats by the employer.

He said: "We knew that Yorkshire would more than likely be leading the way on this pay issue and the massive 'Yes' vote for strike action shows how effective that communication with members was - and continues to be.

"I think other branches will be able to see that this is the way to do it. We hope this will have encouraged UNISON colleagues right across the country.

"We kept up the pressure, we kept members briefed and stood firm against unfair conditions on what is a long overdue fair pay band for our members." ■

Upgraded

UNISON'S groundbreaking agreement with the Yorkshire Ambulance Service to regrade paramedics from band 5 to band 6 of the NHS pay system followed moves by the union to ballot for industrial action.

Regrading of paramedics in the trust will give them a pay rise ranging from £544 to £2,909, depending on where they are in the current grading system. UNISON represents 80 per cent of the trust's paramedics and has argued since 2004 that they should have been on the higher grade.

JO WAS ONE OF US



The dreadful murder of a mother, much-loved MP and UNISON member has shocked the world. **Mary Maguire** pays tribute to a wonderful woman

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HATE
DOESN'T
HAVE
A RACE,
CREED
OR
RELIGION
”

BRENDAN
COX

The brutal slaying of Jo Cox, MP for Batley and Spen, leaving behind two young children, has sent shock waves around the world and moved even the hardest of hearts.

Jo was part of our huge Labour and trade union family. She was one of us. A UNISON member. A public servant. Going about her duties as an MP with selfless dedication. Helping constituents. Giving advice. Campaigning for the poor, the sick and the vulnerable. Doing her best for others. She should not have been in harm's way.

Stabbed and shot to

death in broad daylight by a man reportedly shouting “Britain First”, Jo died on the street in Birstall outside her constituency surgery, a few days before her 42nd birthday.

The attack happened shortly after UKIP leader Nigel Farage unveiled a provocative anti-immigrant poster. That ‘vile’ poster has been reported to police by general secretary Dave Prentis as a breach of race laws – saying it incites racial hatred.

BRILLIANT

A few days earlier, Jo had been captured on camera with her husband, Brendan,

and their two children, on a boat on the Thames in London, disrupting the Nigel Farage ‘get out of Europe’ flotilla. It was a brilliant image that summed up Jo’s vibrant, enthusiastic campaigning style.

According to her companion activists, that image epitomised how she went full tilt at everything she did.

Her husband, Brendan, whom she met when they both worked for Oxfam, posted other images on twitter showing the Jo he knew. His tribute:

“She would have wanted two things above all else to happen now, one that our precious children are bathed



in love and two, that we all unite to fight against the hatred that killed her. Hate doesn't have a creed, race or religion, it is poisonous."

UNISON President and regional convenor, Wendy Nichols, laid flowers on the spot where Jo's life ebbed away. She told me:

"Jo was one of us. A UNISON member. She was an inspiration. A local lass who only wanted to serve. She shouldn't have had to pay for her humanity with her life. This was an unbelievably vicious attack.

VIOLENCE

"I despair at some of the hate being spouted at the moment, through the newspapers, social media and the internet.

Our democracy is big enough and has been around long enough for us to have debates and disagreements without resorting to violence. This hatred and cynical denigration of politics and politicians has to stop".

CAMBRIDGE

Wendy was the Labour Party NEC member on the selection panel that chose Jo as the candidate to stand for Batley and Spen in the 2015 General Election, when former MP Mike Wood stood down. Wendy recalls:

"What impressed me most was that all she ever wanted was to represent her home town. She was born here to working class parents, she went to school here and even though she went off to university in Cambridge, she never forgot her roots. And she returned to them and I was so proud to have supported her in that."

Dave and Wendy led tributes to Jo at the UNISON annual conference held a few days' after her death. The 2,000 delegates stood in silence and signed a book of condolence.

DISTINCTIVE

Although she had been an MP for just over a year, Jo made her distinctive mark on politics. And it followed on naturally from a lifetime of campaigning for women's rights, the plight of refugees, anti-slavery and against hatred, injustice and intolerance. She was chair of Labour Women's Network, campaigned tirelessly for a solution to the Syrian civil war, and supported the Labour Friends of Palestine

& the Middle East, calling for the lifting of the Gaza Strip blockade.

World leaders spoke of her 'selfless service to others'. A fund, set up in her memory, to be split between three charities close to her heart, reached £1 million in just a few days.

DEDICATION

Parliament held a special session in her honour. MPs assembled in silence in an emotionally charged chamber. In the gallery were Brendan, her two children Cuillin, 5, and Lejla, 3, her sister Kim and her parents. MPs wore the white rose of Yorkshire and on Jo's empty seat sat two roses – white for Yorkshire, red for Labour.

MPs of all parties spoke of her dedication, drive and commitment. Leeds West MP, Rachel Reeves urged people to carry on Jo's work. "To combat and guard against hatred, intolerance and injustice. To serve others with dignity and with love." She summed up with: "Batley and Spen will go on to elect a new MP, but no one can replace a mother". ■



BATLEY
AND SPEN
WILL GO
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A NEW MP,
BUT NO
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A MOTHER



RACHEL
REEVES MP

Please Contribute

To contribute to Jo Cox's favourite charities please go to GoFundMe/jocox

The money will go to the Royal Voluntary Service, which helps to combat loneliness in her West Yorkshire constituency; the White Helmets, volunteer search and rescue workers in Syria; and Hope Not Hate, which seeks to challenge hate and extremism in local communities across the UK.

THE ARCHBISH AND I

UNISON colleagues were sceptical when **Peter Carroll** said he'd chatted with the former Archbishop of Canterbury... Until our resourceful reporter produced a 'Selfie'

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AS HE
WAS
WEARING
HIS DOG
COLLAR I
THOUGHT
HE
WOULDN'T
MIND
TALKING
ABOUT
RELIGION
”

Never talk about religion or politics in a pub. That is the advice that generations of young people have been given by concerned elders.

When the young reach the stage of life where the lure of socialising in licensed premises trumps the attractions of video gaming and ad hoc social gatherings outside the local off-licence, they need a few tips on how to behave.

Of course it's not going to end well if, for example, you hold forth loudly - in a Belfast pub you have never been in before - on who was to blame for all the violence of the Troubles.

And it would be just as foolish to stand at the bar in Barnsley and declare your admiration for Margaret Thatcher's 're-shaping' of the British economy through her policy of destroying its core industries.

Deliberately provoking division and hostility in such circumstances can result in a visit to the local, underfunded A&E department.

Or worse, as has happened many times in the past when feelings have run very high indeed, a personal chilled box in the mortuary.

An 1840 publication,

The Corsair, includes the following advice on etiquette:

"Never discuss religion or politics with those who hold opinions opposite to yours; they are subjects that heat in handling, until they burn your fingers."

So it's well established that the danger of talking to people you don't know well about the realities of our lives outweighs the benefits of free speech in what some believe is the world's oldest democracy.

But surely, if we don't discuss (as opposed to fight about) politics or religion with others who are not necessarily like-minded, then we can't understand or begin to broach differences between us.

IMPRESSED

So there I was in a restaurant in Covent Garden when I spotted the former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams.

I should point out that I'm not a Covent Garden regular - I was in London to visit my daughter and sister, and an old friend invited me to the restaurant.

But I was pleased to see him. I have read some of his work in the press and was impressed by his depth of knowledge. I've also seen him on TV, in full regalia with mitre and

crozier, blessing the marital unions of the aristocracy in Westminster Abbey.

CORRUPT

So as he was leaving I asked the waiter to take a picture of us so I could have a chat with him. As he was wearing his dog collar, I thought he wouldn't mind talking about religion for a bit.

"I shouldn't really be talking to you because I am a Catholic and I'm only down here for my nephew's First Holy Communion," I explained.

He laughed at the old Reformation division and, I think, guessed that although I was born into Catholicism, I was unlikely to be a churchgoer in any brand of the faith.

But I had read a long article by him in which he spoke of reforming international financial and monetary systems to limit the damage they cause to the majority of people.

He wrote: "The Church of England and the Church Universal have a proper interest in the ethics of the financial world and in the question of whether our financial practices serve those who need to be served - or have simply become idols themselves that demand uncritical service." Not exactly a battle cry for



Peter Carroll

bringing down a shamelessly corrupt system, I know, but still a strong rebuke to politicians who warn the Church not to 'interfere' in politics.

I told him I worked for UNISON and he said we played a vital role in protecting the most vulnerable and fighting for fairness and social justice

It was a brief but enjoyable encounter and it prompted me to look at what other religious leaders have to say on these issues.

First up was Pope Francis, dubbed a Communist by America's right-wing commentators and politicians for saying that capitalism is a source of 'inequality at best – at worst a killer'.

Rowan Williams - a bit like Sergeant Wilson in Dad's Army - might well have told his friend that such a comment could be 'going a bit far' in provoking a right-wing backlash.

But the Pope has also spoken of the vital need for trade unions to fight for justice for the poor and the oppressed.

He came of age under the regime of the nationalist Argentine leader Juan Peron, when the working class and trade unions were at the heart of the political debate in the country.

INFLUENCE

The Jewish faith has a long history of fighting for similar principles and in the USA its members still vote overwhelmingly for the Democrats and against the right wing Republicans.

And Islam has little time for the oppression of the

poor, with the Quran urging its followers to pay the workman 'even before his sweat has dried'.

These religious leaders have real influence across the world, whether or not we think they should, and they

know it's no good just talking among themselves.

They talk about religion and politics in the pub, so to speak, and take the risks that come with that. ■





PAUL ROUTLEDGE

Active! political columnist

Tories' Big Lie about trade unions



HUNT
WAS
LAUGHED
OUT OF
COURT



The long-running hospital doctors' dispute is finally drawing to a close, after many months of fruitless negotiations and strikes.

As I write, the outcome of a ballot on the peace deal is not known, but I hazard a guess it will be 'Yes'.

Both sides in this ground-breaking conflict – the doctors' union, the British Medical Association and Tory Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt – have been forced to give ground.

The resulting compromise gives doctors (I refuse to call them 'junior', they're dedicated adults with our lives in their hands) much of what they asked for in terms of working conditions.

It also gives NHS employers greater flexibility over their clinical workforce, with freedom to deploy staff across a seven-day working week.

Naturally, commentators want to portray this as a 'win' for one side or the other. Not me. I think the outcome is a victory for trade unionism, plain and simple.

The doctors took their case through the union. They held a secret postal ballot and won an astonishingly high majority for industrial action.

The Tories did this in the name of democracy, which is a blatant lie. Despite the promise of a review, so far they have refused to allow electronic voting, insisting on postal voting because it is expensive and often leads to a low turnout.

He was laughed out of court, but the Tories are determined to have the last laugh. Their Trade Union Act, which received Royal

Assent as the dispute was ending, will make it much harder for many groups of public service workers to emulate the example of the doctors.

Despite key concessions won by UNISON and other unions, the new law imposes a much higher threshold in strike ballots in 'important' services. Health, education and transport are singled out for tougher curbs on the right to strike. Ballots there now require a 50 per cent turnout, with 40 per cent of the total union membership involved in the dispute being required to vote in favour.

In other words, where there is a 50 per cent turnout, 80 per cent of those voting will have to say 'Yes' to industrial action for it to be lawful.

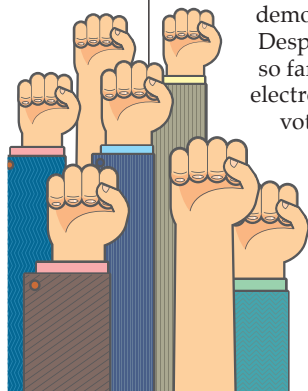
Votes that do not reach these arbitrary levels will be invalid, and the action deemed unlawful – leaving the union open to civil action in the courts.

The Tories did this in the name of democracy, which is a lie. Unions deserve congratulation for winning a review of the ban on electronic voting, but so far ministers have insisted on postal voting because it is expensive and often leads to a low turnout.

They want fewer strikes, not more democracy. It will be much harder for unions like UNISON to achieve these unreasonable targets, and it will therefore diminish the strength of union members. Which is what it's all about.

AIR RAID WARNING

It happens all the time. Enjoying an al fresco lunch on the prom at Scarborough, and a bloody great gull swoops down and steals your chips.





Frightening. But now you can report the avian thieves to the council on a 'gull-mugging' hotline.

It's not clear what happens then. Maybe they trap them and take them down to posh Filey, where visitors are less likely to scoff in the street. This may be called winging it.

TOUR DE FORCE

The Tour de Yorkshire was a great success. Organisers say it attracted two million spectators and boosted the local economy by £50 million.

I doubt both figures, but it was certainly a personal triumph for Sir Gary Verity, head of Welcome to Yorkshire.

Self-publicising Sir Gazza, ludicrously described by the Tory Yorkshire Post as a 'force of nature', also heads the Great Northern Exhibition to be staged in 2018. No doubt he will be among the major exhibits.

COUNCILLOR CULL

It's not just councils being hit by cuts. It's councillors, too.

Scarborough is the latest Yorkshire authority to consider significant reductions in bums on council chamber seats. Numbers could fall by 20 per cent to 40.

Similar reviews cut the number of councillors in Selby from 41 to 31, and in Hambleton from 44 to 28. Harrogate is looking at a drop of 11 to only 40.

I don't know what this does for local democracy. Not very much, I suspect.

SHAME ON YOU!

All in it together? Food bank use in Yorkshire has trebled to record levels in the last three years. More than a third of the 65,000 three-day food packages handed out by the Trussell Trust went to children.

Figures that should make politicians blush, if only they could remember how to.

BIBLIOPHOBES

What, read a whole book?

Academics say university students find it 'daunting' to do that. Their attention span is too short.

So, why bother getting into £50,000-worth of debt – rising from next year under new Tory policies – if they can't make the arduous journey from cover to cover?

Tony Blair's policy of 50 per cent of young people going to uni turned higher education into a business, as rapacious as anything capitalism has to offer. But I imagine he knew that.

TRUE YORKSHIRE GRIT

Scarborough College, a fee-paying public school, is giving lessons in 'Yorkshire grit' to its pampered pupils.

They'll learn surfing, sailing, rock climbing, public speaking and how to cope with stress.

Headmaster Charles Ellison claims this will equip foreign kids with 'important Yorkshire traits' so they flourish in the big bad world.

I've never heard such a parcel of sphericals in my life, and I've heard some.

Tyke grit isn't learned up a rock face or even giving speeches. It comes from fighting with others to sustain – improve, even – the basics of life: food, shelter, clothing, decent wages, respect from an employer.

These lucky brats would be better off listening to the women who took on Care UK in a dispute lasting the best part of a year. Then they might understand what Yorkshire grit is. Sticking together in times of adversity. Making a reality of that overworked word 'community'.

You can't buy lessons in solidarity. You learn it the hard way, with workmates, family and friends, in times of trouble. Here endeth the lesson. ■

NotSoFree

Free schools come at a heavy cost. Sometimes, they don't come at all, at huge expense to the taxpayer.

Some £79,900.57 was spent on The Elements primary school in Barnsley before funding for the scheme was withdrawn. Two other projects in Yorkshire never opened or were closed.

The total bill for the county is over £500,000, a staggering sum. Just imagine how many teachers and classroom assistants are paying with their jobs – and the pupils with their education – for this ideologically-driven folly.

Yorkshire is facing a crisis of school places, especially at primary level. But the Tories will not allow councils to build new schools, while allowing this waste to continue. ■



The views expressed in this column are not necessarily those of UNISON

GIVE US A BREAK!

A groundbreaking UNISON case in Leeds could mean more holiday pay for workers all over Britain. Employment rights lawyer **Haylee Chambers** of Thompsons Solicitors, assesses the implications of the decision and urges members to contact their UNISON rep if they believe they're being short-changed



A highly significant legal decision won by UNISON at Leeds employment tribunal could mean a big increase in holiday pay for workers all over the country.

The judgement puts pressure on employers to take all the hours regularly worked into account when calculating holiday pay. It is estimated that a startling five in six workers are not getting their full entitlement.

Earlier this year, a UNISON member from Wakefield, represented by Thompsons in a UNISON-supported case, paved the way for others to claim proper holiday pay. It was calculated that for the year up to March 31, 2015, the member's holiday pay failed to give him credit for an average of 39 extra hours worked every month.

The European Union Working Time Directive makes member states guarantee full-time employees at least four weeks' annual leave. But the UK government has been basing the calculation of holiday pay on an employee's basic rate of pay which often excludes

overtime. The UNISON member who brought the challenge to the Leeds tribunal pointed out that his holiday pay didn't reflect the number of hours he actually worked.

DILIGENCE

The tribunal ruled that the member's employer, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, should have taken into account the regular overtime he voluntarily worked when calculating his holiday pay.

The tribunal decided that the overtime was regular and not ad hoc. That meant he was entitled to higher holiday pay to reflect the time he voluntarily worked to cover gaps in staffing and colleagues' absences.

The member's diligence, professionalism, and commitment to his patients led to him to volunteer to work longer hours, but in return his employer - relying on the Government's interpretation of European law - underpaid him on holiday pay.

He contacted UNISON which instructed Thompsons to pursue the matter on his behalf. Following the

“
HIS
HOLIDAY
PAY
DIDN'T
REFLECT
THE
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HE
WORKED
”

tribunal's decision, the member was awarded his rightful pay.

Although the ruling does not set a formal precedent for other tribunal decisions, the Government's interpretation of European law - to include only the basic hours worked when calculating holiday pay - has been weakened.

CONTRACTUAL

It is estimated that only one-sixth of employees who work overtime are properly compensated for the hours worked. This tribunal ruling can be used by UNISON to make sure that members get a proper level of holiday pay that reflects the hours they regularly work in excess of their contractual hours.

From now on, the amount employees get paid for their holiday should be based on their basic pay plus any overtime that they regularly work. Thompsons will work with UNISON as necessary to support members who are not fairly remunerated.

If you believe you are not receiving full and fair remuneration, please contact your UNISON representative. ■

The team is happy to assist branches with recruitment activity and support recruitment events. We can also arrange:-

- A branch visit or workplace visit
- Offer a presentation to or 'exhibit' at a branch meeting
- Provide promotional literature and materials



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