



RETIRED MEMBERS POCKET GUIDE



Being a UNISON Retired Member:



Be an important part of your branch, and help to recruit new members



Campaign on important issues



Pass on knowledge of the trade union movement, and teach skills to new activists



Remain politically active in your retirement



Network with like-minded individuals



Continue to enjoy all the benefits of full UNISON membership

Are you retired, or due to retire soon?

In your retirement, you can still play an important role in your union, by becoming a retired member. Becoming a retired member means that you stay actively involved in issues that affect you and your peers. UNISON South East has a huge community of retired members – with almost 14,000 in the region alone.

UNISON is the only British trade union with a retired members group; we value the skills and experience of the retired members and acknowledge their hard work to help further UNISON's organising and campaigning agenda.

As a retired member, you can use these skills and experiences to help continue the hard work of UNISON, engage with UNISON's campaigns and pass on crucial knowledge to a growing base of younger activists.



“How?”

Retired membership costs £15.00

This is a one-off payment, and should be sent by cheque or cash to the branch. You can get a retired membership form from your branch, or your regional office. Retired membership entitles you to all the benefits of full UNISON membership.

Ways of contacting UNISON



Go online at unison.org.uk or visit our regional website at unionsoutheast.org.uk



Call us on **0800 171 2193**



Log in to update your details using my unison my.unison.org.uk

In exceptional circumstances, long standing, activists will be awarded honorary life membership, which entitles you to all the benefits of retired membership. If you would like to apply for honorary life membership, please do not hesitate to contact your branch.

How?

UNISON's Democracy

Our structure mirrors that of the working members structure. This means that retired members can participate in UNISON's democratic processes. Retired members can attend branch meetings and have representation on the branch committee and regional council. You can also send representatives to national delegate conference.

2016 UNISON Rulebook

2.6.1. A member may apply at any time for retired membership if she/he has had at least two years' continuous membership immediately prior to their retirement from employment within those areas of work set out in Rule C.1 and who are retired.

2.6.2. Retired members who return to paid employment, which falls within the scope of Rule C.1, will be obliged to pay the appropriate subscription rate to remain in UNISON membership. Such members will be able to resume retired member status on ceasing paid employment.

Retired members, who return to paid employment, which falls outside the scope of rule C.1 will cease holding retired member status. Such members may apply to resume UNISON retired member status when they cease paid employment.

Rule 2.6.3. Retired members shall be entitled to attend branch meetings and to vote on issues not relating to pay and conditions of members in employment. They will be entitled to stand for office and vote only for positions in the Retired Members Organisation unless otherwise determined by the National Executive Council or as otherwise provided for in these rules.

UNISON's Honorary life members hold all the same rights as retired members.

Regional Retired Members Committee

In the South East, we have a retired members committee, elected into their positions for two years at an AGM. This committee comprises twelve members from across the region who take on different roles and responsibilities and represent the retired members group on a range of committees and groups. We even have a liaison with our regional young members, to see how the two groups can work together and learn from each other on these issues.

As a retired member in the South East, you have an opportunity to attend our annual general meetings, and nominate and vote on these positions – these positions are open to anyone with retired membership.

Our regional retired members are represented on regional council and able to feed views to the rest of the union.

A national retired members' committee also meets regularly.

Each year our retired members' conference enables retired members from branches to debate the issues important to them and submit two motions to the agenda of the national conference.



Working in UNISON, beyond UNISON

Our retired members' work goes far beyond the organisation – connecting us to organisations in other parts of the UK, and even overseas.

South East Retired Members engage with numerous other groups in the country, who focus on fighting for the rights and campaigning on issues which disproportionately affect older members of society. Every year, delegates are sent to the National Pensioners' Convention, SERTUC Pensioners group and other key campaigning groups.

The South East retired members are also affiliated to French union, CGT, and communicate regularly with French colleagues to share ideas, similarities and of course differences. The affiliation seeks to identify ways in which unions overseas incorporate retired members – the fastest growing group – into their union's structure. Being a retired member in UNISON means you can too be involved in campaigning at an international level.



What are we fighting for?

The latest government figures show that 27% of pensioners live below the poverty line. UNISON's retired members campaign for better rights for retired workers in terms of a decent income in older age and good access to better public services.

Health and Social Care

Almost two million adults across the UK currently rely on social care services. Over the next 30 years, it is estimated that the number of people over 85 will increase by 180% and the number of people with dementia will double. A million more care workers will be needed by 2025 to meet the growing need.

Pensions

Pensions are an area of concern across our membership base – but particularly for those who rely on these pensions in order to survive. As a retired member, you are not only able to campaign for the equality and transparency of pensions, but will also still have access to all of our legal advice and services, should you require these.

Proud to be in UNISON

Celebrating all the positive achievements of the union – tell the world why you are proud to be in UNISON.

Have your voice heard!

Bring relevant, local issues that affect you and your fellow retired members to the centre of the union's democracy.



Enjoy yourselves!

Share ideas, celebrate successes and enjoy yourself with old and new friends. UNISON Retired members provides a great base for maintaining contact with colleagues, sharing ideas and meeting like-minded members.

We have various networking days in the region, engage in political activism such as marches and lobbying and some social events too! Many branches have organised groups, to share the free time of retirement with fellow trade union activists.

Through many of these events, retired members groups have raised money for charity – UNISON Welfare and beyond. It's a great opportunity to use a wealth of fundraising skills to support great causes; both within and outside of UNISON.



Keep in touch with your branch

- **Keep in contact with your branch** – they will support you, giving advice and guidance, providing training and mentoring opportunities.
- **Find out who your branch retired members officer is** – they can be a valuable source of information and advice and can identify issues that need raising at committee meetings. If your branch doesn't have one; why not think about taking on the role!?
- **The branch will also be able to assist you** – with identifying other retired members in your branch, and on issues that UNISON are campaigning for that may affect you. They will also be able to point you in the direction of any retired members events going on.
- **Send regular reports and updates** – the branch can only support you fully if you keep them informed on what is going on locally, and the issues that matter to you.
- **Find your branch welfare officer** – they will be able to assist you in getting any help you may need from UNISON.

Branch/Branch Secretary's contact details:



Membership services

UNISON Welfare/There for You

UNISON's registered charity provides a unique confidential service just for UNISON members and their families.

There for You offers:

- Debt advice
- Support and information
- Financial assistance
- Wellbeing breaks

Call on **020 7121 5620** or email **thereforyou@unison.co.uk** or visit **unison.org.uk/thereforyou**. For immediate debt advice call **0800 389 330**. Charity registration number: 1023552

Legal services for you at work and your family at home

UNISON's legal support includes free help with most work problems that members may have. This can either be from our specialist in-house lawyers and a team of trade union solicitors that are on hand to help, or by local union reps, branches and officers in the UK. But our help doesn't just stop when you leave work. We offer free initial legal advice to members on any matter not related to work, plus a range of other legal help for members and their family.

To find out more go to **unison.org.uk/get-help**

100% compensation for an accident or injury

If UNISON members are affected by an illness or accident that wasn't their fault, the union will help them. Our team of legal experts will give members the advice and support they need and the compensation they deserve – and it's all free. Members keep 100% of the compensation they are awarded, and won't pay a penny for our legal team's help and support.

Members should be advised to contact UNISON Direct on **0800 0857 857**

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