

South East CAMPAIGNER

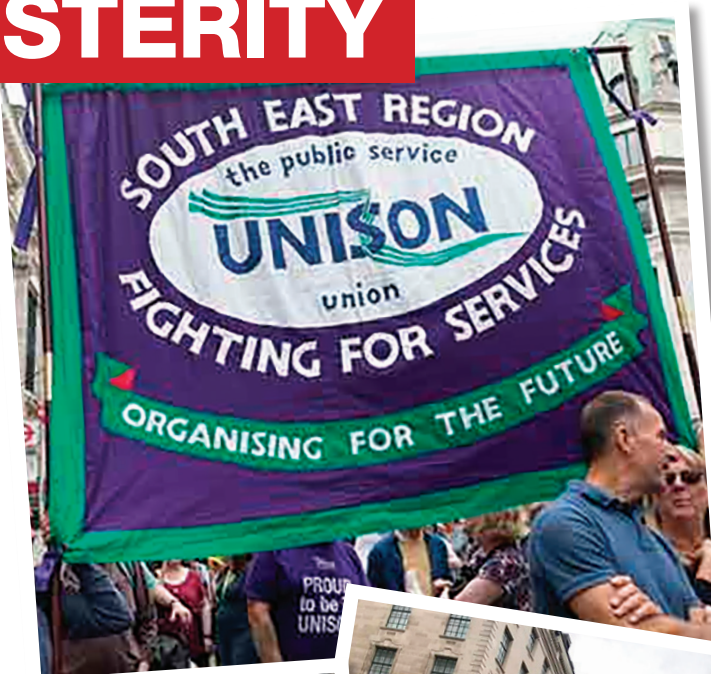


#ENDAUSTERITY

On 1 July 2017 UNISON members from across the South East – cooks, cleaners, carers, nurses, teaching assistants, housing officers, hospital porters, and many more – joined tens of thousands of others in a call to end austerity.

We marched together through the heart of London to the seat of power in Westminster, with banners held high and balloons swaying in the wind, with a simple message: end the pay cap, end austerity, enough is enough.

Our branches, members and activists were out in force. And it was UNISON members – public service workers from across the full spectrum of society – who made a very visible purple and green contribution to the march.



UNISON LEGAL VICTORY SEES EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL FEES SCRAPPED

UNISON has won a landmark court victory against the government, which means that employment tribunal fees will now be scrapped.

The Supreme Court – the UK's highest court – has unanimously ruled that the government was acting unlawfully and unconstitutionally when it introduced the fees four years ago.

From today, anyone who has been treated illegally or unfairly at work will no longer have to pay to take their employers to court – as a direct result of UNISON's legal challenge.

The government will also have to refund more than £27m to the thousands of people charged for taking claims to tribunals. This is since July 2013, when fees were introduced by Chris Grayling, the then Lord Chancellor.

Anyone in England, Scotland and



Wales wanting to pursue a case against their employer has had to find as much as £1,200. This has been a huge expense for many low-paid employees, says UNISON.

UNISON Regional Secretary Maggi Ferncombe said: "UNISON has campaigned against these fees from the beginning and today's decision confirms UNISON's belief that the government acted unlawfully

and unconstitutionally when it introduced the fees.

"For almost four years thousands of staff treated unfairly by their employers have been denied access to justice because they couldn't afford the employment tribunal fees introduced by the government. But no longer – thanks to UNISON's historic legal victory.

"It's a major victory for workers everywhere. UNISON took the case on behalf of anyone who's ever been wronged at work, or who might be in future. We have made justice accessible again, unscrupulous employers no longer have the upper hand."

The decision marks the end of a four-year fight by UNISON to overturn the government's introduction of fees.

SCRAP THE CAP PORTSMOUTH PAY RALLY

UNISON members joined hundreds of people in Portsmouth on Saturday 22nd July to demand the government scrap the pay cap and give public sector workers a decent pay rise.

For years now public service workers have seen their pay held back by government in the name of austerity. First a freeze then a cap, resulting in public sector pay rising by just 4.4% between 2010 and 2016 while the cost of living rose by 22%.

With inflation much higher than wages, nurses, teaching assistants and care staff are getting poorer. The government's harsh approach to public sector pay is completely out of step with the public mood.

Every day the pay cap stays, public sector employees are leaving for better paid jobs elsewhere. And it gets that bit harder for the NHS, police forces, schools and town halls to recruit new staff.



NATIONAL DELEGATE CONFERENCE HAILS

INSPIRING SPEECH FROM

JEREMY CORBYN

National Delegate Conference hails inspiring speech from Jeremy Corbyn

“The Labour Party and the labour movement: united for the many – not for the few. Be of good cheer – the election will come soon!”

That was the message from Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn when he spoke to UNISON's national delegate conference in Brighton in June.

Mr Corbyn praised UNISON and its members for the work the union does every day – and thanked them too for the work at election times.

Paying tribute to the heroic public service workers who have rushed to



help in recent terrorist attacks and at Grenfell, he noted that it was “not good enough to be grateful,” before

reaffirming that a Labour government would end the public service pay gap and would invest once more in our services.

Such a government would reinstate the NHS bursary to train nurses and would increase the number of police and firefighters who protect our communities.

He also pledged to reinvest in homes, the NHS, social care and education.

How would it be paid for?

A Labour government would “ask the top 5% to pay a small amount extra in tax,” he explained. “And they would still have a lower tax rate than they had under Margaret Thatcher.”

Voices from conference

“I attended as an opportunity to get involved in the important work that UNISON do, to see how it all works and to be a part of deciding what direction we take over the next year”.

Jennifer Hammond (Hampshire & Isle of Wight Police & Justice branch)

I wanted to have a voice in the union's work and priorities for the coming year and to make connections with other delegates from outside the South East Region.

Claire Ransom (Southampton District branch)

The passion and dedication people have towards UNISON – and the courage they have to get up and tell a load of strangers their experience and issues- surprised me the most.

Tansy Marshall (Southampton District branch)

CONFERENCE BACKS RANGE OF MEASURES TO BUILD ON GENERAL ELECTION RESULT

UNISON's national delegate conference backed a wide-ranging emergency motion on building on the work that brought about the general election result.

Among a raft of measures, delegates called on the NEC to:

- campaign with Labour, through

Labour Link, on nationalisation and anti-privatisation;

- use the hung parliament to campaign for fair funding for public services through progressive taxation and a Robin Hood tax.;

- call for, and plan, a joint trade union/TUC national demonstration

in support of policies outlined in the Labour manifesto;

- continue to promote the union's Public Service Champions campaign to highlight the importance of our public services and those who work in them, and the threats to those services.

LGBT PRIDE 2017

The UNISON South East LGBT Group has supported a number of Prides across the South East this year.

From Winchester to Eastbourne, Oxford to Canterbury, Reading to Folkestone, Brighton and the first ever Pride on the Isle of Wight; UNISON members have been out in force with banners, flags and bright colours to celebrate LGBT Pride.





BRANCH FOCUS

BASINGSTOKE

The ABC of helping others

The Basingstoke District LG Branch held "A Bring a Can to work day" on 12th July 2017.

This was in conjunction with The Basingstoke Food Bank, which comes under the Trussel Trust umbrella. The Basingstoke food bank was set up in 2012 and gave out 2,869 emergency 3 day food supplies to people in crisis during 2016.

A representative from the food bank joined UNISON Branch Officers at the event and spoke to staff who generously donated items. Karol informed members that low income is the second largest cause of emergency need accounting for nearly 1 in 4 of all food bank referrals. Many

in the area were unaware of this vital provision. This was a great opportunity to for UNISON to network and highlight the effects of low pay and other issues that affect people, necessitating them to seek help from the food bank.

UNISON members are also amongst the country's growing number of 'working poor' who also find themselves with no choice but to visit food banks. UNISON is calling on ministers to recognize the impact of the wage freeze on public sector employees. UNISON will be campaigning to keep up the pressure for this to happen.



The Branch collected an impressive 76KG of food stuffs in just under 3 hours. This was a great achievement. The Branch Chair Phil Harrison stated "the Branch is Proud to say we are in UNISON, helping to build community within our local area for a much needed cause. Thanks to everyone who made a donation. So much can be achieved when we come together, each playing a part. The branch will continue to support the food bank and we have left collection points for further donations within the Council".

BRANCH FOCUS – ELMBRIDGE

The UNISON Elmbridge Branch held a 'tuck shop' as part of the employer's annual Big Staff Lunch event.

The branch used the UNISON marquee to provide free tuck to colleagues, provide information about UNISON and ask for donations to the Mayor's charity, OASIS Childcare. It was a beautiful summers day and the tuck was worthy of the very best sweet shop, with lots of support from members and non-members. The branch also provided a 'trolley service' to staff at their workstations as a follow-up, utilising the remaining stocks of goodies.



SE RETIRED MEMBERS

NATIONAL PENSIONERS' CONVENTION

Sue Pitter (Hampshire Health & Retired Members Committee) attended June's National Pensioners Convention (NPC) Pensioners Parliament in Blackpool on behalf of the region.

There were wide ranging workshops and guest speakers tackling some of the most pressing issues for Pensioners in the UK including: Causes of the housing crisis, Where next for State and Occupational

Pensions, and Brexit: What does it mean for Old People? UNISON's head of Local Government, Heather Wakefield spoke about the Social Care Crisis, and highlighted UNISON's Ethical Care and Residential Care Charter campaigns. As well as these vital discussions, intrepid delegates braved stormy weather conditions to march through Blackpool!

NEGOTIATING FOR

CARILLION MEMBERS

Anya Greig from Oxfordshire County UNISON says:

"I have recently overseen a number of redundancies for term time only staff working for Carillion on local government contracts. These staff work 44 weeks of the year but are paid over 52 weeks.

"Traditionally Carillion have paid redundancy based on 1/52 of staff

annual salary. I managed to dig out a little piece of case law around term-time employment and payment calculations; Gilbert and others v Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council: EAT 12 Apr 2002. Therefore, when the women received their final redundancy figures I contacted HR to challenge the calculations.

"The HR lead on the local contract

sent the case law through to their legal department to check. They agreed that the payments should be recalculated and that the formula would need applying across all Carillion contracts for term time staff from now on and that they will change their national policy as a result."

GENDER EQUALITY: NON-BINARY INCLUSION

There are increasing numbers of people identifying as non- binary and we're encouraging all branches to get educated and review forms and processes to ensure they're as inclusive as possible.

Gender is important in UNISON. We use gender monitoring and rules on proportionality to address historic, institutional discrimination against women and women's under-representation. But doing away with unnecessary gender divisions makes organisations and activities more inclusive for non-binary people. It can also benefit everyone. To download the factsheet please visit the regional website: <https://southeast.unison.org.uk/equality/lgbt-members/>



BRANCH FOCUS

CENTRAL AND EAST BERKSHIRE

UNISON representatives from Central and East Berkshire branch attended Wokingham Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 July to raise concerns about the Council's 21st Century Change Programme.

The 21st Century Change Programme aims to modernise the way services are delivered, improve customer service and deliver savings

of over £4m with a reduction of between 100 – 150 posts.

The programme involves a completely new operating model, major investment in new IT combined with a 10%-15% reduction in posts.

UNISON welcomed the opportunity to speak directly to Councillors and appreciates the challenging questions which were put to senior managers at the meeting in relation to Phase 1 of

the programme. However, a number of UNISON's key concerns were not addressed by the Committee.

UNISON will continue to press for answers to key questions about the 21st Century Council programme.

UNISON recognises that major changes, including job losses, are inevitable if the Council is to achieve the huge financial savings necessary as a result of the Government's austerity programme.

However, these changes will only succeed if the Council follows agreed procedures and ensures that residents and staff are consulted and treated with the respect they deserve.



PAY UP NOW!

unison.org.uk

Not everyone's feeling the pinch
Public sector pay compared with UK economy

Category	Percentage Increase
PUBLIC SECTOR PAY	4.4%
COST OF LIVING	22%
COMPANY PROFITS	26%
CHIEF EXECUTIVE PAY	32%
SHAREHOLDER DIVIDENDS	57%

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Strategy Weekend
29 – 30 September 2017
Arora Hotel Crawley

<https://southeast.unison.org.uk/events/regional-strategy-weekend>