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Introducing your new Branch Secretary

Maureen Howarth who has been Branch Secretary of Rochdale UNISON since 2014 retired in August. The branch committee have elected **Jon Harding** as the new Branch Secretary. Jon has been an Assistant Branch Secretary for over 15 years and before that he was a steward at Millfold Depot. Rochdale UNISON wishes Maureen all the best for her retirement and thanks her for her years of dedication and hard work on behalf of our members.

There will be elections for all branch officer posts open to all members at next year's annual general meeting (this happens every year). If you are interested in getting more involved in the union please contact the branch.



Current Officer positions available:

- Deputy Chair
- Education Officer
- Environmental Officer
- International Officer
- Lifelong learning Coordinator
- Membership Officer
- Social Secretary
- Women's Officer
- Young Members Officer

All positions are taken on a **voluntary basis** and you have to be elected into the position via UNISON members. Facility time can be requested to attend the monthly Branch Committee meeting and this is subject to your employer.

If you want further information on any of these roles - please contact the Branch

Three simple ways to join UNISON today:

www.joinunison.org

Call UNISON

0800 171 2193

Contact the Branch for an application form

School staff buckling under intolerable workloads and mounting stress, says UNISON

Drastic cuts, staff restructuring and rocketing stress levels are becoming the norm in UK schools, according to a survey of school support staff published by UNISON.

The findings – summarised *Lessons in Austerity* – highlight the funding crisis that is having a devastating effect on workloads and morale as pupils return to classrooms after the summer. The 12,120 school employees who completed the survey include teaching assistants, technicians, caterers and office staff. Almost nine in ten (87%) said that cutbacks in their schools have had a noticeable effect.

The negative effect of the cuts on staff workloads and morale was evident in the UNISON survey responses. More than 70% said they were carrying out duties that should be performed by someone at a higher level, and 35% that they were doing tasks without sufficient training. School employees reported feeling overwhelmed and anxious by the increased demands being made of them. More than four in five (83%) said they have experienced stress as a result of their workload in the past five years, with one in five (20%) having needed to take time off sick as a result.

The tendency for schools to embark on costly and time-consuming staff restructuring was highlighted by the report. Three quarters (76%) of staff said their school had undergone restructuring, or that it was planned soon.

More than a third (38%) of respondents said there had been more than one restructure in their school in the past five years, which UNISON says casts doubt on the efficiency of the initiatives. UNISON head of education Jon Richards said: "School support staff who haven't already lost their jobs are buckling under intolerable workloads and mounting stress levels. They play a vital role in keeping children safe and schools running smoothly, they shouldn't be seen as surplus to requirements when money is tight."

UNISON National Women's Conference

The UNISON National Women's Conference will be held at Bournemouth International Centre from 12 noon Thursday 14 February to 1.00pm Saturday 16 February 2019.

The conference is held every year and brings together around 650 women for a series of seminars, meetings, workshops, debates and guest speakers.

The topics debated are wide-ranging and have a massive impact on the direction of UNISON. They include:

- women's health
- equal pay
- sexual harassment
- women united against fascism
- surrogacy and IVF treatment
- the portrayal of women in the media

If you are interested in going please contact the branch on 01706925952. Accommodation is provided and travel costs paid. Crèche provision is available for children up to the age of 16 years.