

Inside this issue:

- TUC cost of living protest
- Election for the SGE
- Discharge of COVID patients illegal
- Support for UNISON members in financial difficulty

Join the TUC Cost of Living Protest on June 18th

Inflation has hit a 30-year high. It's no longer just gas prices or petrol prices that struggling families are having to worry about. The cost of living crisis is affecting every part of our lives and pushing more and more people into extreme poverty and hardship.

UNISON is calling on members to join the union and the rest of the union movement on a [national day of action](#) at events across the UK on Saturday 18 June.

Organised by the TUC, the national demonstration will culminate with a rally in Parliament Square and is an opportunity to tell the Westminster Government that it needs to do more to support people through this financial maelstrom. But there are events happening across the UK. As UNISON's assistant general secretary Jon Richards said just last week: "Prices are racing ahead, leaving wages far behind. Struggling households can no longer make their money stretch to cover the basics. Wrong-headed tax increases this month have added to the misery. Ministers with little idea of living on a tight budget must do more to support hard-up families. That means boosting benefits and public sector wages to levels that will help families keep the wolf from the door. Above-inflation pay rises won't just ease financial hardship for employees in the NHS, schools, care, councils and police. Decent wage increases will protect essential services too by ensuring experienced staff stay and new recruits keep joining."

So join UNISON on Saturday 18 June, as the whole of the trade union movement takes to the streets to demand action on the cost of living, a new deal for working people and a pay rise for all workers.

The government needs to act now. Let's come together on 18 June and make them listen.

If you want to join the protest please contact Rochdale Unison 01706925952. We will be arranging transport for members who want to attend but we need to know numbers as soon as possible so that we can decide on what transport to book.

The election for the SGE's of our union is underway. What is happening, when and why is voter turnout important?

Here's our guide to everything you need to know.

The Service Group Executive (SGE) is elected by our members every two years.

All full members who were on the union's membership register as of 28 January 2022, will be entitled to vote in this election.

The member ballot opened on 28 April 2022 and closes on 25 May 2022. The results will be announced on 10 June 2022.

The Member Liaison Unit runs the election. Civica Election Services (CES) is the returning officer and the independent scrutineer.

UNISON is run for and by its members through its democratic and lay structures.

All of our elections are important, as they allow the union to function in the best interests of our members.

The SGEs you elect will make important decisions about the future of our union, so it's important that as many members as possible have their say.

The more people that vote, the better for our democracy, and the better the union can serve our members.

The current pandemic presents unique challenges for this election, with reduced access to some workplaces meaning less direct contact with members.

Is there any support?

As usual, there is a ballot helpline. The helpline will open on 5 May. Phone: 0800 0 857 857. Text phone: 0800 0 967 968.

What happens next?

Voting packs will be sent to members' homes direct from CES.

If you've not received yours by 5 May 2022, then contact UNISONdirect on the number above.

High Court rules that government orders to discharge untested Covid patients was illegal, says UNISON

Covid spread like wildfire as untested but positive patients were discharged from hospitals.

Commenting on the High Court judgment on 27th April that the discharging of untested Covid patients into care homes was illegal, UNISON general secretary Christina McAnea said: "The government promised to put a protective ring around care homes. But ministers' actions in the early days of the pandemic meant the exact opposite. Covid spread like wildfire as untested but positive patients were discharged from hospitals. Thousands of elderly people died well before their time, and many care staff lost their lives too. Families have been left devastated. Staff were begging for personal protective equipment and making their own when none was forthcoming. Testing was extremely poor too. With no proper sick pay, staff went into work poorly as they didn't have the money to stay at home. Shockingly, two years on, the government has yet to raise statutory sick pay to a level that low-paid staff can afford to be sick. Ministers should be hanging their heads in shame and allowing the public inquiry to start hearing evidence immediately so bereaved families can have the answers they deserve."

Support for UNISON members in financial difficulty

You may have financial difficulties for all sorts of unexpected reasons, such as:

- Loss of income
- Relationship breakdown
- Bereavement
- Suffering from a long illness
- Needing to buy equipment because of a disability
- Caring for someone with special needs or an illness

What we can help with

There for You is proud to support thousands of members and their families every year with things such as:

- General living costs
- Household appliances
- Urgent repairs
- Disability equipment and adaptations
- Utility bills
- Funeral costs

Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for financial assistance, you must have been a member of UNISON for at least four weeks and up-to-date with your subscriptions. Also, that the financial difficulties that led you to apply occurred after you joined. Partners or dependents can also apply.

To apply, please download an application form, fill it out and return it to us along with scans, screenshots or photos of your supporting paperwork.

[Download application form](#)

If you have difficulty completing the form, email us at thereforyou@unison.co.uk or call 020 7121 5620 and leave a message with your contact details. We will be in touch as soon as possible to help you through the process.

Please check that your UNISON colleagues have received this newsletter electronically—if not please ask them to contact the branch on 01706 925952 or email.unison@rochdale.gov.uk so we can update their membership record