

Inside this issue:

- Pay Ballot
- United Against Racism and Fascism
- Winter Fuel Payments
- Unison Conferences
- Update Your Unison Membership Details

It's Payback Time

For over a decade pay has fallen behind inflation in the public sector. In local government and schools our pay is around 25% less than in 2010 in real terms. Our work has not gotten any easier. Many of us are still working hard trying to fill the gaps left by the jobs and services that were lost in the austerity years.

Its time to get our pay back up to the equivalent of the 2010 level. A worker earning £26,421 per year today would be earning **£33,026.25** if their pay had kept up with inflation since 2010. It is not fair that someone doing the same work is being paid much, much less than they would have been 14 years ago.

For 2024-25 UNISON asked the employers for a £3000 increase in pay or 10% whichever is higher. Their offer of £1290 is less than last year, less than inflation in 2023-24 and falls a long way short of a pay rise that begins to bring pay back up to what it was before austerity began.

Here are some examples of what a decent pay increase would mean for you:

Current pay	UNISON's claim	Employers offer	How much do I lose if I accept the offer?
£23,500	£26,500	£24,790	-£1,710
£26,421	£29,421	£27,711	-£1,710
£33,945	£37,339.50	£35,235	-£2,104.50
£44,428	£48,870.80	£45,718	-£3,152.80

Can we afford that?

The Government has said that it cannot afford to fund a decent pay increase because of a £20 billion black hole left in the budget by the last lot. There are many ways it could find money to fund public services.

While the rest of us have been struggling, the mega wealthy have been doing very nicely for themselves. The richest 50 families in the UK now have assets worth nearly £500bn. A wealth tax of 1% on the assets of those worth more than £4m, would raise £25bn per year. It's about taking tough choices to redistribute wealth to where it is needed most.

UNISON will begin balloting our members for strike action over the pay offer on 4th September. We are encouraging members to vote Yes to strike action. The ballot closes on 16th October so post it back straight away.

United against racism and fascism

The racist rioting and violence led and organised over social media by the far right last month was horrifying. Sickening scenes of mobs laughing and cheering as buildings housing vulnerable asylum seekers were set on fire were both terrifying and shameful.

The homes of those judged to be immigrants were attacked street by street. People were targeted and beaten up solely because of the colour of their skin. Mosques were attacked and besieged. Islamophobia plain for all to see. Nazi salutes, racist chants and violent language have polluted the streets of many towns and cities.

Public service workers, including nurses rushing in to provide emergency cover at a hospital, had missiles thrown at them.

Most repellent of all has been the excuse used by the far right that the rioting is a direct consequence of the terrible tragedy in Southport where three little girls were murdered and their families and a community were left grieving.

The far right and those they've misled are using the Southport tragedy to scapegoat Muslim people, asylum seekers, in fact anyone who doesn't look like them. In the name of "justice", shops have been looted, a library and a citizens advice bureau burned down, bricks, bottles and other missiles have been thrown at the police and communities terrified.

The mob has struck fear into the hearts of millions of people who are now anxious for the safety of themselves and their families at the hands of racist thugs draped in the union jack.

The politics of hate didn't just show up though. The rioters have been given encouragement by politicians, some in the mainstream. There will be those who seek to use this violence to advance the politics of hate. UNISON will challenge them too. That means standing up to these vile people wherever and whenever they show up with their ugly politics and racist hate. They do not speak for us.

We will support our members who are attacked by racists whether that's when they're at work or walking through their local community. We will defend migrant people in this country, many working in essential public services. They deserve thanks not racist attacks.

Tommy Robinson and his loathsome brand of politics have nothing to offer but division and hate. They destroy communities, they don't speak for them.

That is why UNISON is determined to challenge the politics of hate. Our members will lead the way, as they do, day in day out in our communities and in workplaces. The union movement is united in this. We will work with other unions across the country to call for an end to violence, intimidation and discrimination. Unity is our strength.

<https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2024/08/in-pictures-unison-joins-the-anti-racist-counter-demonstrations/>



HAVE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS CHANGED?



Moved house, bought a new phone,
moved jobs at work.... have you
updated your UNISON membership
record lately?

*It is important that UNISON has your up to date
membership details.*

Tell us what has changed here: <https://www.unison.org.uk/my-unison/>

Or contact the branch unison@rochdale.gov.uk

Don't cut Winter Fuel Payments

UNISON are supporting the campaign by the National Pensioner's Convention against the Government's plan to cut winter fuel payments for those who do not receive pension credit.

As many as 2 million pensioners could miss out on the payment of between £100-£300 either because they do not claim pension credit or they are just over the limit to claim.

If you have a pension income over £12,600 from your retirement pension and your workplace pension you may find you are not entitled to pension credit so you lose your winter fuel payment as well. (It is worth checking though because everyone's circumstances are different <https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/tax-credits-and-universal-credit/>).

The majority of UNISON's retired members have small workplace pensions that will put them just over the limit for pension credit so they will be hit by the cut in winter fuel payments.

Average energy bills are predicted to go up by 10% later this year. We do not want our pensioners choosing between heating and eating this winter. The cost to the NHS of treating large numbers of elderly people sick through exposure to the cold would far outweigh any saving from the cut.

Some politicians are trying to set public sector workers against pensioners by saying that our pay rises are being paid for by cuts in the winter fuel allowance. This is simply not true. We want to see pay justice for our members **and** an end to fuel poverty for pensioners. Both are possible. The money to plug the budget black hole should not come from the pockets of public sector workers or freezing pensioners.

The Government could raise £5 billion a year by ending interest rate subsidies to the banks. That is more than enough money to restore winter fuel payments. We know the bankers will say that they need this money to increase their profits. Sometimes governments have to make tough choices. Do they remove a subsidy from the bankers or winter fuel benefits from poor pensioners?

We encourage all of our members to contact their MPs about this issue. If you have parents, partners or relatives who are affected, ask them to do so as well. One of the things the National Pensioner's convention is also asking for is for people to sign this petition:

<https://campaigns.ageuk.org.uk/page/154268/petition/1?locale=en-GB>

You can read more about the campaign here:

<https://www.npcuk.org/post/npc-general-secretary-plea-to-chancellor-to-halt-ill-advised-winter-fuel-payments-means-test-plan>

Unison Conferences

The following conferences are available. If you are interested, please contact the branch to register your place

2025 National Black Members Conference

17 – 19 January 2025

Venue Cymru, The Promenade, Penrhyn Cres, Llandudno LL30 1BB, UK

Members can now request to be registered to attend the 2025 National Black Members' Conference Bulletin. The Online Conferencing System (OCS) is now open to allow branches to register delegates and submit motions in line with the rule-book requirements.

2025 National Women's Conference

13 – 15 February 2025

Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC), The Exchange, 150 Morrison Street, Edinburgh, EH3 8EE

Members can now request to be register to attend the 2024 National Women's Conference. The Online Conferencing System (OCS) is now open to allow branches to register delegates and submit motions in line with the rule-book requirements.

HOW TO UPDATE YOUR UNISON MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

1



Find your
membership
number

2



Sign-up or sign-in to
[www.my.unison
.org.uk](http://www.my.unison.org.uk)

3



Check your Name
and Job Title are
correct

4



Make sure we have
your current HOME
address

5



Let us know your
contact details -
mobile no / email

6



Ask your colleagues
who aren't in a union
to join UNISON

ANY ISSUES:

Contact your branch - Rochdale Unison
Tel: 01706 925942
Email: unison@rochdale.gov.uk

JOIN TODAY AT:
join.unison.co.uk



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](mailto:unison@rochdale.gov.uk) so we can update their membership record