

Unison National Executive Council Elections 2023

Nominate David Maples for Disabled General Seat

Membership No. 4533137 Branch Code 3435

Dear Branch Secretary

I am writing to ask for your branch's nomination for the Disabled General Seat on the National Executive Council (NEC) for the 2023 elections.

Disability

Six in 10 of all deaths from Covid 19 are disabled people. If you are disabled and male, you are 6.5 times more likely to die from Covid 19 than a non-disabled man. Disabled women are 11.3 times more likely to die than non-disabled women.

In the 2008/9 recession, disabled workers were more likely than non-disabled workers to experience negative changes to terms and conditions and working practices, such as wage freezes, reduced overtime and the reorganisation of work. Research after the 2008 recession revealed that during economic upturns disabled workers are the last to gain employment and during downturns we are first to lose our jobs.

Recent ONS data has shown that redundancy rates are 62% higher for disabled than non-disabled workers.

Disabled workers face double discrimination. Not only are we less likely to be in work, but when we are, we are paid less than non-disabled workers. TUC research shows that disabled workers face 20% lower pay. This is equivalent to earning £2.10 less an hour.

Changes to the welfare system over the past 12 years have left disabled adults four times worse off financially than non-disabled adults according to the Disability Benefits Consortium. Nearly half of those in poverty, a total of 6.9 million people, are from families which include a disabled person.

Multiple research reports show that sanctions do not move disabled workers closer to paid work, instead they often worsen many disabled workers' existing illnesses and conditions, particularly mental health conditions.

TUC research found that disabled people were more than three times as likely to have had to use food banks as non-disabled people.

Evidence shows that the pandemic worsened existing accessibility, isolation and disability rights barriers. Disabled women were already twice as likely as other women to experience domestic abuse.

Get Organised

Disabled workers need strong workplace organisation. The struggle for LGBT+ rights was driven forward by mass action like the Stonewall riots.

The Tory/LibDem coalition government from 2010 saw disabled people as a soft target. A strategy of whipping up prejudice against disabled people was designed to create a favourable climate for attacking the benefits disabled people need for a reasonable standard of living. But large campaigns by disabled activists, especially against the Welfare Reform Bill, helped to counter this. George Osborne, the then Tory Chancellor, was famously booed by 80,000 people when presenting medals at the Paralympics in 2012. Disabled people will return to the methods to protest. **We Demand:**

- Trade union control over health and safety and the 'Access to Work' service
- Reasonable adjustments as a collective issue
- A supportive benefits system with benefits based on the real cost of disability and compensation for restricted employment opportunities
- Trade union control over the benefit system to make it supportive rather than punitive
- Full pensions with no reductions because of lower pay or a shorter working lifetime

Fight the Cost of Living Crisis

Public sector workers put our lives on the line by continuing to work throughout the pandemic. Instead of rewarding us the Government has held pay increases way below inflation. This follows 10 years of austerity during which public sector workers pay dropped by nearly 20%.

Unison has had some successful ballots for strike action but these have only scratched the surface of what would be possible if the full resources of the union including its' 1200 staff were focused on this.

With the cost of living crisis stretching into another year Unison members need to strike with other unions to force a weak and divided government out.

Labour has failed to support campaigns for pay increases matching inflation. At the next general election Unison should only support candidates who will.

Fight Local Government Cuts

We must fight any cuts to services, jobs, pay and conditions. Branches must not be left to fight alone – we need to join up the struggles. We need co-ordinated UK wide action to fight council cuts. We must call on Labour councils to stand up against the cuts now and set no-cuts needs budgets, using reserves and borrowing powers.

Climate Emergency

Trade unions must lead the fight against environmental destruction. We must campaign to nationalise energy companies under workers control and management to develop sustainable energy supply and distribution at affordable prices. UNISON must demand no loss of jobs, pay, or conditions for any workers in the sector.

Unison Democracy

I am standing to continue the campaign to transform UNISON into a fighting and democratic lay led union. I support the election of Regional Secretaries and Senior Regional & National Officers on no more than the average wages of those they seek to represent. Members and activists must have full transparent, democratic control over the union.

I support an immediate increase in branch funding. Branches do 90% of the work that our members need. Branches are the frontline of austerity and our fightback against government cuts. We need to put the money where the work is! That is the way to grow a strong trade union.