

## Contents:

- ◇ Message from the Editor
- ◇ Invitation for a drink
- ◇ 2018 Disabled members' Conference
- ◇ HE Seminar
- ◇ Lifelong Learning
- ◇ Winter fuel
- ◇ Health and Safety



# UNISON

December 2018

# Nottingham FOCUS

The magazine for UNISON members at the University of Nottingham

## Seasons Greetings!

I'm not sure how many of us actually celebrate the season of winter, but that is the official University of Nottingham greeting. Personally, I will be celebrating Christmas and the New Year in a couple of weeks and wish you well - whatever you choose to celebrate.

Many find winter a time of extra hardship. So it is good to see that people are contributing to foodbank boxes and other initiatives, both official and informal across the University.

You will notice that the magazine is much longer this time, this is because we have given space to share some important initiatives that could benefit you directly.

This year, the branch has fought hard to convince management that paying a living wage is something they should be proud to do, not a begrudged favour. We have won some concessions, but the fight will go on. Even though the hourly rate for the living wage is currently being paid to all staff, we know that there are members who will struggle to cover their bills this winter. So we have included details of how members can apply for help with their fuel bills

Each New Year we make resolutions to give up our bad habits and do things that are good for us. The Branch Officers will not judge your bad habits, but this year we have taken a leading role in the region to support members who want to learn a new skill through our *Lifelong Learning* course programme. This offers a range of subjects free to all members, so have a look at the programme.

In this edition you will also find reports from a couple of national events. We always encourage members to volunteer to attend, but it is rare that anyone actually takes up that offer. A few weeks back Lisa went to the Disabled members conference in Brighton, you can read a very brief report of the effect that had on her.

There is also a report from the Higher Education (HE) Seminar which is run in preparation for the HE conference that will be held in Nottingham on January 10 next year.

If you would like to attend the HE Conference or any other national event email the Unison branch [www.unison@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:www.unison@nottingham.ac.uk)  
Merry...

Steve

## MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM YOUR BRANCH

We are, once again, holding a UNISON Christmas get together, to which all members are invited. We'll be meeting up at the Hemsley Staff Club on University Park on Wednesday 19th December from 4pm onwards. All members are entitled to a free drink on us (please bring your membership card), and we also plan to provide some nibbles.

Please come along, help us to celebrate the end of another busy and challenging year and relax as we look forward to 2019 and all it may bring!

Spread the word to your UNISON colleagues and we look forward to catching up with you on **19th December.**

*Merry Christmas  
and a safe and  
happy New Year  
From all the  
Branch officers*



## Contact the Branch:

[www.unison@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:www.unison@nottingham.ac.uk)

Branch Secretary

Tracy O'Shea

07508 454 837

Health and Safety Officer

Martyn Tring

07799 695 871



*"People with disabilities are so much more than benefits!" Emma Lewell-Buck*



If you would like to get more involved with UNISON by becoming a rep or Branch officer or to find out about how you can attend a UNISON national conference or event please get in touch.

The HE Conference on 10 January will be held in the Crowne Plaza in Nottingham if or any other national event email the Unison branch

[www.unison@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:www.unison@nottingham.ac.uk)

## 2018 Disabled Members' Conference

**2018 Brighton 27-29 October**

Some time ago, our Welfare Rep said to me that if I ever got the chance to attend a UNISON conference I should because she thought I would love it. So I put my name forward to go to the Disabled Members Conference.

### Getting it right

As a neurodiverse\* person, attending a conference is both exciting and anxiety provoking. In reality I didn't find it confusing, too noisy, too busy, too big, too hot, too cold, too bright, or anything else. It was just right - lots of space, lots of opportunity to escape or be alone but still with other people doing something that felt really meaningful and important. There was time and space to adjust to surroundings, and all provided literature was clear and easy to navigate my way around.

Presentations and debates were interpreted by sign language interpreters (yes more than one), speech to text on screen (completely in sync and mistakes were corrected immediately). There were screens broadcasting what was going on in the main assemblies in the break off areas (with subtitles). When I was late (I have little concept of time) I was included without fuss and the same for people leaving early. I was surrounded by a diverse mix of people who didn't pressure me, but if I wanted to speak and join in I worked out easily how to do it.

### Am inspirational guest speaker

Emma Lewell-Buck, the Shadow Minister for Education, Children and Families, revealed that she has Dyslexia and Dyspraxia. It was wonderful to hear someone who is clearly intelligent and successful, be open and honest about being neurodiverse. She spoke inspirationally about embracing her disability and not letting it define who she is. She also revealed how parliament marginalises disability by reducing discussion to statistics in an "us" and "them" idea of "able" and "disabled" and pushing the subject (inappropriately) into discussions of welfare and benefits.

### My highlights from the debates

- ◆ People speaking out for the need for UNISON to champion Mental Health First Aid training in the workplace.
- ◆ Discussion of the problems disabled people face with hot-desking.
- ◆ Finding out about the nature of sign language and how it compares to the spoken and written word.
- ◆ Debate on the effect of the menopause on workers' rights

### I propose...

I was so enthused that I even ended up bringing a motion in my Service Group meeting for the next Higher Education Conference in January, and then volunteering to do that in person!

### After the conference

My experience at the conference was so exciting and influential to me that I came back and immediately told everyone about it with great enthusiasm! I now have a true idea of what good practise means in reality, in terms of an inclusive environment for everyone.

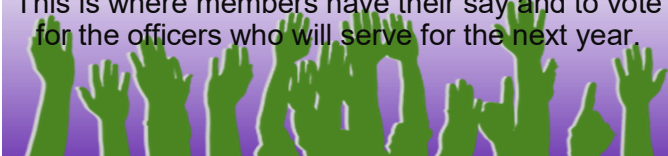
*Lisa Aspell*

\* Neurodiversity is a term that covers a range of conditions including autism, ADHD and Dyslexia

We invite all members to the  
**UNISON Branch AGM**  
**2019**

**A3, Humanities Building, University Park**  
**Tuesday 5 March, 10 am - 12 noon**

This is where members have their say and to vote for the officers who will serve for the next year.



# Higher Education Seminar

Cardiff: 7-8 November

Each year UNISON brings together representatives from the Higher Education branches to identify areas of policy that need to be updated that are specific to HE. This year the seminar was held in Cardiff, south Wales. An area that has been the stage for many of the great campaigns for workers rights for over 200 years. We should thank the south Wales mining communities for giving us the NHS. Even though the mines and the iron works are nearly all gone, the culture of mutual support and social responsibility remains.

## *Quietly doing a job*

Like most unions, UNISON works quietly to stand up for, and protect our members. Giving advice and attending meetings with managers and HR to ensure that our members are treated fairly and appropriately. However, there are occasions when an issue cannot be resolved by talking, or worse still when management will not talk, so the tactics must change.

## *Organisational change*

When most large organisations think about change it usually involves reductions in staff numbers, outsourcing to companies that have (even) lower standards and working conditions. Rather than doing better with what they have by developing staff they try to do the same, but cheaper. UNISON has been very successful in fighting such proposals, and provides support for branches to fight such moves. We heard several speakers talk about how to devise and run a successful campaign. But that only works where representation is strong. Of all the advice given, the golden rule is that we should fight the proposals, not be on hand to work out redundancy benefits.

## *Getting loud!*

We also heard the progress of a couple of campaigns that UNISON are involved with.



► In the week leading up to the seminar, the **University of Bradford Branch** had taken strike action following an announcement that up to 250 staff would lose pay or be made redundant. Minutes before their representative Patrick was due to speak, the news broke that management had



withdrawn their plans and agreed to work with UNISON to solve the problem. The news was greeted with a very emotional cheer from all delegates.

► Elsewhere, **Bangor University** management have made some poor financial decisions that may result in job losses. Staff and unions found out about the problem through a shock press release.

The common thread is senior management refusing to treat their lower paid colleagues with the respect they deserve. As a result, they create stress and suffering and continue to make poor decisions about the best way out of the problem. All of which could have been reduced or even avoided if only they were honest, open and wanted to behave as honourable individuals.

## *The gender pay gap*

Simply put, the *gender pay gap* is the difference between the average pay of all women and the average pay of all men in an organisation - not the difference a woman is paid for doing the same job as a man. With one or two exceptions, this disadvantages women.

A large gender pay gap indicates that the organisation is acting as though there are certain roles that are women's work and those jobs are less valued. It also shows an inability to cope with career breaks and is far less likely to promote women.

To put things in context: last year, the BBC were criticised for a 9% gender pay gap. Most universities are nowhere near this figure. In Nottingham it is 20.7%

## *People are not trees!*

Will Sullivan the TUC Race Equality Officer spoke about how immigrants are treated as numbers in political discourse, not as individuals who often have legitimate UK citizenship, or whose skills and economic contribution are necessary to our way of life. Universities are already suffering because of fears on restrictions to academics, students and support staff caused by Brexit. He summed up the attitude of many to immigration as follows: there are people who talk as if people are trees, they should grow up, live and die in the same place - people who move are the exception.

## *Unions are alive and still needed*

Right from the opening speaker to the end of two inspirational days we heard about the ways in which the trades union movement is still working hard to improve the working conditions and welfare of millions of members.

**PLUS** - while celebrating its first 25 (busy) years UNISON has become the largest union in the UK!




# FREE COURSES FOR UNISON MEMBERS

Check out the great selection of free courses available to  
UNISON members across Nottinghamshire

	Date	Course	Time	Location	Application deadline
J a n	Thurs 10th	<b>Personal Brand -</b> Because you're worth it	09:30 to 12:30	Nottingham	27th Dec
	Tues 26th	<b>"Bish, Bash, Bosh -</b> <b>Lets make some dosh"</b> How can I safely buy and sell my unwanted stuff online?	09:30 to 16:00	Nottingham Uni	12th Jan
	Sat 26th	<b>Confidence and Assertiveness</b>	09:30 to 16:30	Mansfield	12th Jan
F e b	Sat 23rd	<b>Intro to Excel</b>	09.30 to 16.30	Nottingham	19th Jan
	Fri 8th	<b>Dementia Friends</b>	12:00 to 13:00	Notts County	25th Jan
	Wed 6th	<b>Understanding Depression</b>	09:30 to 16:30	Newark	23th Jan
	Wed 27th	<b>Men's Health</b>	09:30 to 16:30	Nottingham	13th Jan
M a r	Mon 11th	<b>Holding up the Mirror</b>	09:30 to 12:30	Nottingham	25th Feb
	Thurs 21st	<b>Women's Health</b>	09:30 to 16:30	Nottingham	7th Mar
	Sat 23th	<b>Excel improvers</b>	09:30 to 16:30	Nottingham Uni	9th Mar

## How to apply

Send your completed application form (available either electronically or from your branch) to [unisonnottslearning@gmail.com](mailto:unisonnottslearning@gmail.com) or return it to your local Union Learning Rep or your branch office (University of Nottingham Branch)



# UNISON & LIFELONG LEARNING

**Do you want to help others  
to return to learning?  
Become a Union  
Learning Rep (ULR)**

As a learning rep you will be trained to:

- ◆ Give advice to people at work about how education can help
- ◆ Provide information about courses
- ◆ Support people who are nervous about going back to learning
- ◆ Find out what learning needs there are in your workplace
- ◆ Talk to the employer about training needs

Training to be a ULR will take place over three days but **new laws mean that you will get** paid time-off to attend. In addition you will be allowed up to half a day per week to carry out your work as a ULR.

**Courses in 2019 will be taking place at:**

Location	Course Code	Course Dates	Closing Date
Nottingham	02190046	28 Jan & 4, 11 Feb	4 Jan
Mkt Harborough	02190022	28 Feb & 7, 14 Mar	31 Jan
Nottingham	02190047	24 June & 1, 8 July	27 May
Lincoln	02190048	3, 10 & 17 Oct	5 Sept
Nottingham	02190049	11, 18 & 25 Nov	14 Oct

**If you'd like to find out more contact:**

Gavin McCann

Tel: 0115 8475446

E-Mail: [g.mccann@unison.co.uk](mailto:g.mccann@unison.co.uk)




## UNISON

*Lack of*  
**MyView is not  
acceptable!**

For those of us with regular access to a computer accessing My View can be frustrating, even if you remember your three words there is no guarantee that you will be allowed to see your payslip. But we are the lucky ones!

Even though the paperless office has still to materialise, the **computer-less office** is still a reality for many colleagues. The official HR line is that all members of staff should have access to a computer during working hours. We hear that individual managers do not always respect that and many members have not seen a payslip since the introduction of My View.

If you do not have regular access to a computer and would like to have a printed payslip, sign the petition there should be a copy near where you clock-in, if not ask your workplace rep.

We recognise that this is an issue for all colleagues, not just UNISON members, so let others know about the petition.



there  
for you

Supporting UNISON members when  
life gets tough

# Get help staying warm this winter

Members living on a low income constantly struggle to make ends meet – and this can be particularly acute in the winter when the cost of heating homes rises as the outside temperature falls. But it's not all bad news – help is available. The union's welfare charity There for You has once more set up a limited fund to help members on low incomes towards the cost of their winter fuel bill through a one-off payment of £60.



**With rising fuel costs and another cold winter many members are worried about how they're going to pay this year's winter fuel bills.**

## Help is on hand

"There for You" has set up a limited fund to help UNISON members on low income by way of a one-off payment of up to £60.

To apply and download the application form visit [unison.org.uk/thereforyou](https://unison.org.uk/thereforyou) or simply contact UNISON Direct on 0800 0857 857 between 6am-midnight Mon-Fri and 9am-4pm Sat.

**UNISON**  
the public service union

There for You is the working name of UNISON Welfare, a registered charity supported by UNISON the trade union. Registered charity no.1023552/SC038305

## Winter fuel grants 2018 -19

### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

#### What are UNISON There for You Winter Fuel Grants?

In addition to our normal range of services and in response to the growing difficulty many members on low income are experiencing paying their fuel bills, a programme has been put in place that will assist our most vulnerable members.

#### How much are the Grants?

They are one-off grants of up to £60 per household.

#### Am I eligible?

You must be a UNISON member and have paid 4 weeks subscriptions before the launch date of this programme (3/12/18)

Have a total net annual household income of £18,000 or less. (Note: By 'net income' we mean all salary including your partner's after tax, national insurance, superannuation and trade union subscriptions only. Your calculation **should include** any Tax Credits, Universal Credit or child maintenance received. **Do not include** Child Benefit, the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment.

You are responsible for meeting the household fuel bills and are struggling financially

#### Is there anything else that may affect my entitlement to apply?

You and your partner (if applicable) must not have combined savings, or rolling bank balance, of more than £800.

You must not have received financial assistance from UNISON There for You during the previous six months (excluding School Uniform Grant)

Applications are limited to one per household and priority is given to those who have not previously applied for the Winter fuel grant

#### How do I apply?

- ♦ To apply for a Winter Fuel Grant simply: Print out and complete the short 1-page application form attached to this e mail  
Alternatively, download from our website [www.unison.org/thereforyou](http://www.unison.org/thereforyou); or  
Contact UNISON Direct on 0800 0857 857 between 6am-midnight Monday-Friday and 9am-4pm Saturday for a form to be posted to you
- ♦ Then provide us with evidence of you/your partner's entire income by sending copies of the supporting paperwork depending upon which statement is applicable to you:

Please ensure you send all requested paperwork with the form or the application cannot be accepted

#### EITHER

You currently receive housing benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit – then enclose all of the following paperwork\*:

Most recent payslip(s)\*\*

Proof that this benefit is paid

Last month's full bank statement(s) detailing all income and outgoings

#### OR

Your net household income is £18,000 or less – then enclose all of the following documents:

Most recent payslip\*\*

Partner's most recent payslip (if applicable)

Last month's full bank statement(s)\*\* detailing all income and outgoings

Tax credit award letter where element given towards childcare costs

If you want any further help please contact the  
Branch welfare Officer:

Tracy Leavesley

[tracy.leavesley@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:tracy.leavesley@nottingham.ac.uk)



## Health and Safety Rep : is this a job you could do?

Where a union is recognised by an employer, that union has the right to appoint health and safety representatives. It is up to the union, not the employer, to decide who should be a health and safety representative.

Union health and safety representatives make a huge difference because they know the workplace, help promote a good safety culture and allow employees to raise issues that concern them.

Being a health and safety representative can be a very rewarding experience.

A trade union health and safety representative, by law, can perform certain functions, these are not legal duties, which include:

(i) investigate potential hazards and dangerous occurrences at the workplace and examine the causes of accidents

(ii) investigate complaints by any employee relating to health, safety or welfare at work

(iii) taking up health, safety or welfare issues with the employer

(iv) carry out inspections, including following any substantial change

(v) representing workers in talks with the employer, the HSE or other safety enforcement agencies and get information from them

(vi) attend meetings of safety committees in their capacity as a safety representative in connection to any of the above functions.

The employer has certain legal duties to representatives, they must;

(i) consult health and safety representatives in good time on any health and safety matters, including changes to the workplace or organisation

(ii) give representatives necessary information to enable them to fulfil their functions or respond to any consultation, such as risks arising from their work, measures in place or control proposals and what they should do if they are exposed to a risk, including emergency procedures

(iii) give health and safety representatives the paid time they need to carry out their functions and



undergo training in those functions  
(iv) provide any facilities and assistance needed to carry out their role.

It is important to know that the law says it is the employer who is responsible for health and safety, not the health and safety representative who has no legal duties placed on them. This means that a health and safety representative has no greater liability in law for health and safety breaches than any other employee.

If your employer does not comply with their health and safety duties, or their duties to reps, they will be committing an offence.

### Is this a job you could do?

If **yes**, get in touch with Martyn on 07799 695 871



To join UNISON contact Laura Sun [laura.sun@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:laura.sun@nottingham.ac.uk) or visit the Branch website [unison@nottingham.ac.uk](http://unison@nottingham.ac.uk)

### Branch Officers

Branch Chair .....	Vicki Morris
Branch Secretary .....	Tracy O'Shea
Branch Treasurer .....	Anne Kilker
Black Members Officer .....	Kathleen Stokes-Bonner
Convenor for Estates .....	Kevin Hodges
Education Officer .....	Stella Fuller
Equalities Officer .....	Liam Jones
Health and Safety Officer ..	Martyn Tring
Membership Officer .....	Laura Sun
Welfare Officer .....	Tracy Leavesley
Communications Officer ....	Steve Fuller
Young Members Officer ....	Vacant
Labour Link Officer .....	Vacant

### Accredited Stewards

• Stella Fuller	• Anne Kilker	• Tracy O'Shea
• Robert Gach	• Brian Launders	• Kristiyan Peev
• Kevin Hodges	• Tracy Leavesley	• Kathleen Stokes-Bonner
• Rupert Holman	• Vicki Morris	• Louise Stonard
• Liam Jones	• Diane Moss	

### Workplace Reps

• Dean Atkins	• Eleanor Dumbill	• Pauline Cresswell
• Lauren Barker	• Kirsty Hatton	• Christopher Magee
• David Clarke	• Dorothy Kurpanik	• Michele McNab
• Matt Colver		• Margaret McPhee
• Judith Lally		



— This Branch is run by and for its members... — ... let us know if you want to become involved —