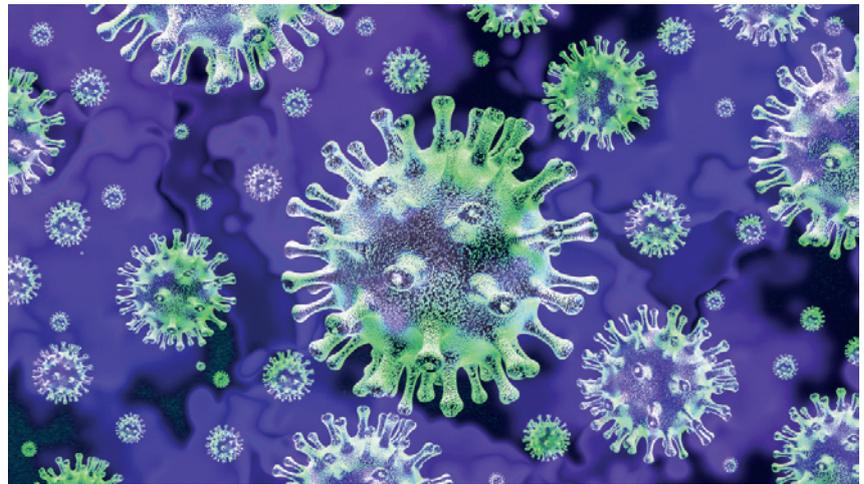


## Coronavirus: Guidance and support for branches

*It goes without saying that we are in awe of our members who are keeping the country going during this crisis. We are equally appreciative of the hard work that branch activists are putting in to support members at this challenging time.*



UNISON North West's regional office is closed in line with Government guidance – but we are still completely operational with regional staff working remotely. If you are a branch officer and need support, you should contact your regional organiser as you would normally.

All branches are receiving an increasing number of enquiries regarding what members and their employers should do to minimise the risk of Coronavirus infection. We have compiled some official guidance documents below, which we hope will be helpful.

If the resources do not answer your query, please get in touch by emailing [NWcovid-19@unison.co.uk](mailto:NWcovid-19@unison.co.uk). All enquiries regarding the Coronavirus situation, including requests for advice on individual situations, collective matters, or regarding employers' responses and implementation processes should be sent to this address.

### Incident Logs & Lessons Learned

All branches should keep a log of all COVID-19 related incidents and what action was taken by the branch and employer. In addition, please keep a log of all lessons learned, both for UNISON and for employers which will be useful when things get back to normal.

### Useful Links

*Find out more on page 2*

- UNISON guidance
- COVID-19 FAQs for School Staff
- TUC Resources
- Thompsons Solicitors & UNISON North West guidance

### Care Workers vs COVID-19

*Find out more on Page 3*



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# Useful Links



## UNISON GUIDANCE

Coronavirus: What are your rights at work? UNISON guidance here, updated daily:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/coronavirus-rights-work/>

COVID-19: UNISON Advice for Reps:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/coronavirus-rights-work/covid-19-advice-reps/>

Coronavirus: Care Workers: Know your Rights:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/care-workers-your-rights/coronavirus-advice-social-care-workers/>

COVID-19 FAQs for School Staff: <https://www.unison.org.uk/at-work/education-services/key-issues/covid-19-closures/>

Guidance on the Government's Job Retention Scheme:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/coronavirus-rights-work/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-qa/>

## OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

Follow the latest government advice from Public Health England here:

<https://www.gov.uk/.../coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-res>

Public Health England advice on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/874411/When\\_to\\_use\\_face\\_mask\\_or\\_FFP3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874411/When_to_use_face_mask_or_FFP3.pdf)

Local government, schools and care guidance here:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-councils>

NHS employers guidance on coronavirus:

<https://www.nhsememployers.org/.../new-nhs-staff-council-guidan...>

Department for Education guidance for schools, colleges and LAs:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

## TUC RESOURCES

Full video and slides from Trades Union Congress (TUC) webinar coronavirus at work here:

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/events/webinar-coronavirus-work>

Trades Union Congress (TUC) reps guidance on coronavirus here:

[https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/COVID-19 Guide for Reps.pdf](https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/COVID-19%20Guide%20for%20Reps.pdf)

TUC Protecting Workers' Jobs and Livelihoods report:

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/protecting-workers-jobs-and-livelihoods>

## THOMPSONS SOLICITORS & UNISON NORTH WEST GUIDANCE

Thompsons Solicitors' Briefing on Employer and Employees' Responsibilities in the Wake of Coronavirus:

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhnmx.cloudfront.net/unisonnw/pages/2461/attachments/original/1585840088/covid-19\\_Thompsons\\_\\_UNISON\\_NW\\_briefing\\_on\\_employers\\_\\_employees\\_responsibilities.pdf?1585840088](https://d3n8a8pro7vhnmx.cloudfront.net/unisonnw/pages/2461/attachments/original/1585840088/covid-19_Thompsons__UNISON_NW_briefing_on_employers__employees_responsibilities.pdf?1585840088)

Thompsons Solicitors' Briefing on Government's Job Retention Scheme:

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhnmx.cloudfront.net/unisonnw/pages/2461/attachments/original/1585840085/Covid\\_19\\_Thompsons\\_\\_UNISON\\_briefing\\_job\\_retention\\_scheme.pdf?1585840085](https://d3n8a8pro7vhnmx.cloudfront.net/unisonnw/pages/2461/attachments/original/1585840085/Covid_19_Thompsons__UNISON_briefing_job_retention_scheme.pdf?1585840085)

ACAS Coronavirus:

advice for all employers and employees (reviewed daily): <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus>

# Care Workers vs COVID-19

***Last month, UNISON North West launched the Care Workers vs COVID-19 Campaign. In just over a week, our survey was completed by over 2,500 care workers.***



The results paint a grim picture of social care during the COVID-19 outbreak. There is a chronic lack of personal protective equipment; workers fear having to live off £94 per week if they are forced onto Statutory Sick Pay through illness or self-isolation; and many care workers see over 15 service-users each day and are worried about spreading COVID-19 to the vulnerable people they care for. Unless there is serious intervention, the social care system risks collapse.

In response to this, we have launched a public petition calling on local authorities to adopt our campaign demands and ensure minimum standards and protection for care workers. So far, over 3000 people have signed the petition.

We have also written to all the Councils in the North West that commission social care services asking them to commit to and

enforce the campaign demands. We are delighted that **Halton Council** has become the first local authority to sign up to the Care Workers vs COVID-19 Campaign pledges. **Salford Council** has also committed to ensuring that no social care worker is out of pocket if they become ill or need to self-isolate because of COVID-19. These are huge victories for one of the most exploited workforces in the public sector. Meanwhile, many North West MPs and councillors have expressed their support for the campaign. We aim to turn this into concrete commitments by local authorities to protect care workers and those they care for.

We are also working to ensure that all non-members who filled in our survey or who signed our petition are contacted by an organiser so that they can join the union. This will help us to support them to campaign in their local area.

## How you can get involved in the campaign

### 1) Please sign and share our petition

<https://action.unison.org.uk/page/58242/petition/1>

**2) Ask Your Council to Sign the Campaign Pledge** – If your Council commissions social care services, please ask them to sign the Care Workers vs COVID-19 Campaign Pledge.

**3) Follow the campaign on social media**, sharing content with your care worker members. We are @CareVsCov19 on Twitter and Care Workers Vs COVID-19 on Facebook.

*Please keep an eye on the Campaign Page for updates.*

# UNISON North West: Fighting and Winning

In just 18 months UNISON members in the North West have fought 10 industrial disputes against their employers. The vast majority have ended in victory for the union. In this article, we take a look at two recent victories and another dispute that's still ongoing.

## Compass

Hospital cleaners, caterers, porters, security and reception staff at **St Helens and Blackpool hospitals** entered into dispute with private company Compass in July 2019.

At the beginning of the dispute, the hospital workers were paid the national minimum wage (£8.21 per hour), while colleagues employed directly by the NHS were earning at least £9.03 for carrying out the same work. This meant Compass staff were losing out to the tune of around £1,500 a year.

Staff were understandably angry that they weren't receiving the same pay and benefits as NHS colleagues who did exactly the same job. Following the vote for industrial action in July, the Compass staff went out on strike for a total of 14 days.

The Daily Mirror coverage of the dispute quoted hospital caterer Jim Taylor (name changed for anonymity), who said: "We're working with people who are vulnerable or with low immunity so having sick people in work is not good." "One colleague had to arrange her chemo around her time off so she could carry on earning. No one wants to strike, but we have no choice."

The campaign was tough. Compass



refused to negotiate meaningfully with UNISON and victimised some of the striking members who spoke out. But after a five-month long industrial, political and communications campaign, the hospital workers had a breakthrough.

UNISON, the NHS Trusts and Compass finally reached an agreement to end the long-running dispute. The deals – voted for by 89% of the domestics at Blackpool and 75% of staff in St Helens – mean they'll now receive a significant pay rise, more money for working weekends and bank holidays and an improved sick pay scheme.

UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis said: "The big winners from the settlement will be staff and patients, who'll be pleased to

learn that Compass has put people before profits."

## Engie

It shouldn't be too much to ask that hospital workers get the agreed NHS rates of pay. But at Salford Royal there was a hidden workforce earning well below NHS Agenda for Change rates of pay and on worse terms and conditions than other Trust staff.

The hospital security guards employed by Engie put themselves in danger every day and work tirelessly to keep staff, patients and the public safe. But before entering into dispute, they earned well below the NHS rates. Like Compass workers, some were on the minimum wage.

The security guards sought to

resolve this through negotiation for well over a year, but to no avail. In the absence of progress, they held a ballot and voted unanimously to take strike action to fight for fair pay for all.

Ariel Luszcz, a UNISON rep and health care assistant working in accident and emergency, said: "It is sad but true that as clinicians we could not cope in A&E without the support and protection that our on-site security staff give us. They are a vital part of the team. "It is so unfair that they are not paid NHS Agenda for Change rates, and are singled out to earn less than other staff members. They support us every day and night - we must now support them in their fight for fair pay."

They called on Engie to pay the full NHS Agenda for Change rate for the job. The Engie security guards served notice for a three day strike beginning on Wednesday 6 November. They called off the strike at the eleventh hour as the pressure delivered results. Engie offered to move all Salford security guards onto NHS Agenda for Change pay and conditions.

This dispute was an example that sometimes the threat of action is enough.

## Addaction/ We Are With You

A hardy group of UNISON members who work as drug and alcohol support workers in **Wigan and Leigh** are currently engaged in a lengthy dispute with their employer *We Are With You* (formerly known as Addaction).



They used to work for the NHS and we were transferred over to *We Are With You*. Their employer repeatedly promised that they would receive all NHS Agenda for Change pay rises.

*We Are With You* have broken their pay promises and their support workers are now thousands of pounds out of pocket. Some of them could have taken different jobs within the health service, and only transferred to *We Are With You* as they were assured that their NHS pay, leave and pension would be honoured.

The striking members work incredibly hard supporting recovering addicts, often in very trying circumstances. They love their job but every year it's getting harder to get by on their stagnant wages.

Meanwhile, our members have become increasingly concerned about staffing levels and the impact this has on service quality. The support workers have been forced to take action to get the pay rise that they were promised and to improve the service for local people.

One worker said: "I cannot do the job I did when working within the NHS. It's very sad. We have lost a good, vital service."

In the midst of the dispute, Addaction spent £140k rebranding themselves as *We Are With You* - this cost is significantly higher than the amount it would take to settle the dispute.

The striking workers have taken sixteen days of strike action so far and they remain resolute. You can support the dispute by donating to the strike fund. You can donate via bank transfer to:-

Unity Bank, Sort Code: 60 83 01, Account No: 20244354.

Or send a cheque payable to 'UNISON Wigan Metropolitan Branch hardship fund' and post to: UNISON Branch Office, Wigan Life Centre, The Wiend, Wigan, WN1 1NH.

Please follow @WeAreWithYo1 on twitter and post messages of support on social media: please tag @WeAreWithYou and @NorthWestUNISON.

## Mandela 8 My 67 campaign

**18 July is Mandela Day, which celebrates Nelson Mandela's values, dedication to the service of humanity and struggle for peace throughout the world. UNISON North West will once again honour Mandela Day by taking part in the Mandela8 My67 campaign.**

Nelson Mandela's fight for justice began in 1942 and for 67 tireless years he continued to fight for social justice and human rights. The My67 programme encourages people to give 67 minutes of their day to help someone else, ideally on Mandela Day or in that week.

It is a day where Nelson Mandela's life's work is celebrated annually through acts of kindness and 67 ways for people of all ages to get involved are suggested in the Mandela8 Mandela Day Resource Pack. You can also download a range of resources from the Nelson Mandela Day website.

Last year, several UNISON branches took part in Mandela My67. UNISON Liverpool worked with Liverpool

City Council and the Inclusive Cities project to pay for refugees, migrants and asylum seekers to undertake a free 67 minute taster session at local leisure services. The branch also distributed 67 free passes to Liverpool's leisure facilities which allowed 2 months free entry.

UNISON Liverpool Branch Secretary Babs Hennessy said: "Liverpool City UNISON branch are proud to be involved in the My67 project and to help celebrate Nelson Mandela's birthday."

UNISON Merseytravel organised a 67 minute concert by a local choir and dedicated 67 minutes to securing donations for local food banks.

Here are some ideas for how your branch may be able to take part in Mandela My67. Of course, we hope that the lockdown is over by mid-July, but this may not be the case, please ensure your My67 project follows Government guidance on social distancing if still applicable:

- Organise a community event in Mandela's memory in order to

bring people together. This could be done via video conference.

- Donate funds or resources to those in need in your local community.
- Do a 67 minute activity to raise money for a charity e.g. sponsored silence or sponsored run.
- Spend 67 minutes with isolated or lonely people in your community. This could be done over the phone or by video conference.
- Give away 67 spaces for a local activity to those who may not be able to afford it.

Some schools are creating oil barrel gardens in honour of Mandela's oil barrel garden at Pollsmoor Prison. You could collaborate with a local school on one or create your own. Get in touch with your employer about their plans for My67.

Be creative! If you are interested in taking part then please contact Lynne Morris: [l.morris@unison.co.uk](mailto:l.morris@unison.co.uk)



## UNISON Free Wills Service

Sadly, demand for UNISON's free will service has increased since the outbreak of coronavirus. It is understandable though that some of our members will want to take advantage of this service. Full details follow, and can be circulated to your members sensitively and where appropriate.

UNISON offers a free standard wills service for members and their partners (if doing a mirror will).

We also offer reduced rates for members' complex wills. The simplest way to obtain your will is to use our bespoke on line wills service.

UNISON's online wills service is very straightforward to use, just complete the online questionnaire. The questionnaire with its online

guidance will carefully take you through the process.

We have also negotiated a low-cost wills service for members and their families.

Click through the following link for more information:-

<https://wills.bblegal.co.uk/kbxhtml/KBXWEB.aspx?ST=THWS&SC=Start&KBXP1=PB&KBXP2=US>

## Didn't they do well? **NW activists make the grade**

**Three of NW UNISON's brightest stars continue to shine in a much bigger universe.**

Congratulations to **Angela Rayner** the Labour Party's new Deputy Leader who replaced Tom Watson in the role from 4 April 2020.

Angela was our UNISON NW Convenor until she was elected as MP for Ashton-under-Lyne in 2015. She'd left school at 16, became a care worker and joined the union becoming Stockport's Branch Secretary before taking up the top lay post in the region. Since becoming an MP she has served as Minister for Pensions, Minister for Women and Equalities and between 2016 and 2020 Shadow Secretary of State for Education. Her proposals for a National Education Service to mirror the NHS found widespread support.

When Angela left UNISON for Westminster the Convenor's role was taken on by **Paula Barker**. Paula worked in a variety of roles for Liverpool, Knowsley and Halton

councils before becoming Halton's Branch Secretary. After five years of trying to convene the North West she clearly felt a bigger challenge was needed. We are delighted to say that Paula was elected as MP for Liverpool Wavertree in the last General Election being elected by a massive 72.2% of the vote.

Completing our illustrious trio of ex-activists is **Kim Johnson**. Kim joined the union at the age of 18 and worked in a variety of roles including as a community development worker, in early years education and developing Sure Start programmes for Liverpool City Council before working for

the adult social care team. Kim was a UNISON rep for more than

10 years and was elected Deputy Chair of the national Black Members' Committee and the North West Women's Committee. We are elated to reveal that Kim was elected with a whopping 78% of the vote - one of the largest majorities in the country. Kim is the first Black MP to represent a constituency in Liverpool- a truly historic moment.

Well done to all three of you. There were many other NW activists who stood in the General Election and who didn't quite cross the winning post. Commiserations to you all. Angela and Paula's success should tell us all to persevere!



**Paula Barker MP** for Liverpool and Wavertree



**Angela Rayner MP** Deputy Leader of the Labour Party



**Kim Johnson MP** for Liverpool Riverside

## Membership Recruitment and Retention

**COVID-19 has brought with it a significant surge in membership recruitment across the union. In the NW, the rate of new members in the second half of March was 42% above that of the same period last year. Overall our rate of joiners is 17% above previous year to date figures, leaving us with net membership growth of 2,062 (as of 6th April 2020).**

In the first weeks of the pandemic

many of the new members came from schools. In recent weeks the new members have been predominantly from health and social care with a disproportionately high number from the private sector.

COVID-19 has affected all workers across all service groups and it is right that we ensure that UNISON is as accessible as possible to those who want to join and build a stronger union in their workplace.

Branches should make use of the UNISON Easy Joiner system. The system is simple, easy to use, and enables branches and activists to send workers part-completed online joiner forms and then track whether they have finished the joining process. Further details of how to log in and use the system remotely are available here <https://joining.unison.org.uk/easy-joiner/>.

*Continued overleaf >*

## Domestic abuse is a trade union issue

***Domestic abuse is widespread across the entire country and our region is no exception.***

***Although the majority of victims are women the National Study of Domestic Abuse reported that it doesn't matter who you are, your circumstances, your social group, age, race, class, disability, sexuality or lifestyle, domestic abuse can happen to anyone.***

UNISON recognises that domestic abuse is a trade union issue and this year at our National Women's conference motions were passed to ensure that we emphasise the importance of training in the workplace specifically designed to identify possible domestic abuse. This training will help to identify those women who present with other problems but which are potentially linked to domestic abuse.

Along with additional training and support for reps that are supporting members who are victims of domestic violence, the conference asked for specific training to help us negotiate for better policies

to support members affected by domestic abuse and violence.

Figures from the National Statistics Office found that in the year ending March 2019 an estimated 2.4 million adults had experienced domestic abuse, which was an increase of 24% on the previous year. It is not known why the increase happened but it could be put down to increased reporting by victims. What is certain is that domestic abuse is often a hidden crime and the figures shown can only provide a partial picture of the level of abuse being suffered. It was already widely expected that this year would see a further increase in domestic abuse reporting.

Charities supporting those abused are now reporting large increases in abuse following the lockdown arrangements for coronavirus.

With partners and families forced to remain at home the tragic reality is that the risk of domestic abuse increases with vulnerable victims finding it difficult to escape abuse and protect their families. Now

more than ever it is important that we encourage victims to speak to people who can help them when they need it most. In our region there is a website which has been re-launched specifically during this period of lockdown. It is run in conjunction with Cheshire local authorities, the Cheshire Constabulary and other partner agencies and is called 'Open the door'. It is designed to help and support those who are suffering abuse and provide advice for those who suspect someone they know is suffering from domestic abuse.

You can find local and national support on:-

**[www.openthedoorcheshire.org.uk](http://www.openthedoorcheshire.org.uk)**

If you are under lockdown with an abusive partner, dial 999, wait to be connected, press 55 and hang up. If you need to talk to someone about abuse you're experiencing, call the National Domestic Abuse helpline on 0808 2000 247.

As always you can find information about UNISONs 'there for you' on the website.

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## Membership Recruitment and Retention (continued from page 7)

The membership surge makes retention work all the more important. Experience shows that members who join for a specific issue are far more likely to retain their membership long-term when they receive a phone call from their union branch to welcome them to the union in the early weeks of their membership.

Branches should also continue to check WARMS leaver reports to identify any significant patterns of leavers and wherever possible make direct contact to ensure that they are "conscious" leavers (rather than payroll error or lapsed DD), identify the reasons and wherever possible encourage them to retain their membership. The surge in new

membership clearly demonstrates an increased need for a strong and well organised union of public service workers. We all must do everything we can to recruit, retain and organise new members and help them to build strong workplace unions to defend their interests throughout and beyond this pandemic.



## Skills for Strength 2020

***“The outcome of December’s General Election was a serious setback for our campaign to restore trade union rights and workplace justice. But there are no easy solutions from above and no short cuts. We need higher membership levels, hundreds more trained and active stewards as well as proactive organising campaigns linked to collective action.” So said Kevan Nelson, Regional Secretary, in his introduction to this year’s Skills for Strength – a convention dedicated to union organising in the workplace***

More activists registered to attend the convention than ever before. It was a great success, packed full of interesting and engaging discussions and workshops. The opening plenary on the challenges of organising heard from Councillor Laura Smith, who fired up attendees immediately. Living Wage expert Professor Edmund Heery, heroic striking workers Michelle Tymon and Paul Almond, along with Regional

Convenor Rena Wood and Regional Secretary Kevan Nelson each made passionate contributions.

Delegates then had their pick of workshops covering topics including the Green New Deal; the UNISON NW Organising Academy; community organising; campaigning on LGBT+ issues; how to deliver powerful industrial action; the NHS earnings max campaign; the Birmingham home care workers’ victorious dispute; digital organising; power mapping and organising young workers and developing activists.

The convention then heard from Ethel Buckley of SIPTU, Ireland’s largest trade union, via video link about their powerful national campaigns.

Skills for Strength concluded in a closing plenary, which was chaired by UNISON NW President Glen Williams and featured barnstorming speeches by Assistant General Secretary Roger McKenzie and Regional Convenor Rena Wood.

Proceedings were brought to a close as Salford Health and Cheshire Police branches received organising awards for their excellent campaigns on in-sourcing and bullying/harassment.

Despite growing concerns about the coronavirus pandemic, this inspiring day of workshops and presentations was enjoyed by around 120 activists from across the region. Some activists who registered were unable to attend because of the emerging public health crisis.

As a result, we’re keen that the presentations and resources from the day are made available online. You can find many of this year’s presentations at: [http://www.unisonnw.org/skills\\_for\\_strength\\_2020\\_resources](http://www.unisonnw.org/skills_for_strength_2020_resources)

Do download the information and more importantly use and share the resources in your own workplace.

We look forward to Skills for Strength 2021.

## Employment Tribunal Limitation – a timely reminder

***At the present time the time limit (limitation period) for individuals wanting to pursue a claim to the Employment Tribunal remains the same. This is three months less one day from the date of the incident that the individual is complaining about.***

UNISON's protocol for dealing with case forms from branches on behalf of members also remains the same. To remind you the process is:

- Branch completes the case form with the member - obviously you may not be able to have direct face to face contact with the member but branches must still ensure that all parts of the case form are completed
- Branch must identify the date of incident which in turn informs the limitation; this is very important as limitation rules have not changed
- All cases must still be discussed

with the Regional Organiser prior to being sent to the Case Unit; ROs are available via telephone or email.

- Branch Secretary must sign off the case form
- Submit the case form to the Case Unit with all the requisite documentation which should be scanned over to the case unit inbox [nwcaseunit@unison.co.uk](mailto:nwcaseunit@unison.co.uk)
- Identify and flag up any urgent limitation
- Unsigned case forms and/or lack of information may result in case forms being returned to the branch; this may cause an unnecessary delay in the member obtaining advice

Remember: Employment Tribunals have strict time limits; individuals have three months less one day, from the date of the incident being complained about in which to lodge an ET1 Claim Form. So be cautious: work on the basis that the 3 months less one day time limit applies - as some cases may have more than

one potential claim. For example if there is a discrimination claim and then a subsequent dismissal you need to identify the dates of earlier discriminatory acts in addition to the date of dismissal. The clock is ticking from the date of the incident – NOT the date of any appeal hearing.

Early Conciliation (EC) –the limitation for EC is the same as for the Tribunal, i.e. three months less one day from the date of the incident being complained about. All individuals have to go through the EC process with ACAS before a claim can be lodged at the Tribunal.

Prior to legal assessment – it is the member's responsibility to ensure that any deadlines are not missed for the EC process or for Tribunal if EC has been completed. If time limits are missed the ET may refuse to accept the claim and the case will not progress to a hearing.

### UNISON North West Retired Members' Committee Statement

#### Solidarity in Practice!

Like all other parts of UNISON, the Retired Members' Committee has suspended face-to-face meetings during the current crisis: but that does not mean that we have ceased all activity. We are acutely aware that this virus poses particular problems for older people; as we age our immune systems weaken and older people are therefore more prone to infections than the general population.

Older people are also more likely to have underlying medical problems that can increase the risks associated with the Coronavirus.

We have written a joint letter to all North West branches urging them to use the WARMS membership system to contact all retired members to identify any who have no family or community support. They can then be put in contact with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies for appropriate assistance.

We have also been made aware of scam emails being sent to older people, purporting to come from Action Fraud and the North West Pensioners' Association. Please be

wary of unsolicited emails.

The Officers of the Committee had a telephone meeting on 2 April, and will hold an online meeting on 14 April at which we will discuss arranging a similar meeting for the entire Committee.

We are determined that this crisis will not silence the voice of Retired Members in UNISON, nor hold up the important work that we have to do at this difficult time.

In the meantime the Committee continues to meet on-line as we are determined that this crisis will not silence the voice of Retired Members in UNISON, nor hold up the important work that we have to do at this difficult time.

## There for You is for UNISON members who experience hard times.



In the current coronavirus crisis, that's pretty much everyone.

***UNISON's own welfare charity There for You is helping more and more members who find that their limited income has been hit by the crisis. For many members, asking for financial help from There for You is something they'd only consider on a rainy day that they hoped would never actually arrive...but it has.***

For too many UNISON members, this pandemic means the rain is pouring down and they risk being flooded out. Some are losing work and have no income because they are on zero-hour contracts.

Others are having their hours cut or being made redundant without redundancy pay. Many are also facing a situation where someone in the household is self-employed and family income has drastically dropped. Some members and their families are self-isolating. So

members need emergency grants from There for You.

Helping members in this situation is what UNISON and our welfare charity is here for. It's basic solidarity. Here is just one example of what we've done so far and why we need support from UNISON branches (names have been changed to protect the members' privacy).

### **Gloria's mum passed away on 26 March due to COVID-19.**

Gloria used all of her income to pay for healthy meals for her mum, and to travel a long way to support her, as care workers were not allowed to attend the property. This meant extending her overdraft and going into rent arrears due to increased and unforeseen expenditure. Gloria's only sibling is self-employed and currently unable to work. They have no other family

to call on for emotional or financial support. There for You was able to provide help with funeral costs.

Branches can help extend that solidarity by making a donation to There for You.

### **Your branch can make donations by direct bank transfer to:**

Account name: UNISON Welfare (Charity) There for You  
Unity Trust Bank  
Sort code: 60-83-01  
Account number: 20215147.

Please also include a reference, consisting of your branch number and the letters COV to identify the type of donation. To be doubly sure, it would help if branches email There for You's Paul Haylock on [p.haylock@unison.co.uk](mailto:p.haylock@unison.co.uk) when they've made a donation.

## Regional Council Annual General Meeting (AGM) – New date

UNISON North West Regional Council's AGM has been rescheduled because of the ongoing public health emergency.

The AGM will now take place at **11am on Saturday 10th October 2020** in the Marine Suite, Bliss Hotel (adjacent to Southport Conference Centre), Southport.

