

Outlines



UNISON NEWCASTLE CITY BRANCH NEWSLETTER

July 2012



The timetable for the pension's ballot has now been released and it is vital that as many members in Newcastle City branch take the opportunity to register their vote. Pensions are deferred pay and many of you have paid into the various schemes for some time, if you don't take up the opportunity to vote then you won't be able to influence the ballot's outcome.

Local government and national delegate conference took place in Bournemouth recently and the branch delegation lived up to the high expectations of previous years. Conference is the sovereign body of our union and sets the policy of the union for the year ahead and this branch has consistently helped shape the national union's direction in the past and we are committed to do so in the future.

Even missing luggage for a few days couldn't dampen the spirits of Cath; one of our first time delegates.

I would like to offer my thanks to the delegation for the exemplary way they represented the branch on a regional and national stage.

PGJ

Paul Gilroy
Branch Secretary

Pensions Briefings

The branch has undertaken to offer as many members as possible the chance to receive a briefing on the LGPS 2014 proposals and over 23 separate briefings have already taken place. If there is any workplace we haven't been able to get to and staff would like us to visit them, please contact the branch office.

The latest Pensions briefing newsletter 21 has been released which includes the following:

Key Facts about LGPS 2014 Proposals and LGPS Members

- 90% of members will pay the same or less contributions as now
- Most part-time workers and those with actual pensionable earnings between £15,801 and £21,000 will pay **less** in LGPS 2014
- Over 55% of local government workers work part-time
- Only those earning over £43,001 will pay more
- They make up just 4% of LGPS members
- 95.6% members earn less than £43,000 - the point at which contributions increase
- The LGPS 2014 will for many members deliver a better pension than LGPS 2008, especially for those with less than 20 – 25 years of membership
- But the average length of membership in the scheme is just **7 years**, so most members will do better in LGPS 2014
- From 1 April 2014 the Normal Pension Age (NPA) will be at least 65 and will then increase in line with the State Pension Age – which is set to rise to 68 between 2044 and 2046. All pensionable service before 1 April 2014 will retain a Normal Pension Age of 65
- The existing Rule of 85 protections will remain. Members aged 55 or over at 1 April 2012 will be protected by an underpin, which ensures that those people will be no worse off as a result of these changes. Under the proposals there are no plans to remove the pension protection for those made redundant from age 55
- Those who have to work longer will get a bigger pension because they will be paying contributions – and benefitting from employer contributions for longer
- Because all earnings will be pensionable – including non-contractual overtime and additional hours for part-time workers – members will have bigger pensions than now

Most UNISON members not in the LGPS give cost and low pay as the reason. The “50/50 option” will help them to join

LGPS 2014 Ballot Timetable

The pension's ballot has to be completed before the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) starts its formal consultation on the new scheme from 2014 in September. Therefore UNISON members will be balloted between:

Ballot opens – 31st July
Ballot closes – 24th August

The ballot will be a postal ballot, to member's home addresses and there will also be a ballot helpline open during the ballot period to answer any questions you might have about the ballot.

Pension's Information

The UNISON website has updated information available on the following page:

<http://unison.org.uk/pensions/lgps.asp>

Members are strongly encouraged to take the time to assess the impact of the proposals on them prior to casting their ballot. If any member has a query, please contact the branch office.

LGPS 2014 Queries

A number of questions were asked at the briefings regarding the underpin protection negotiated, and what exactly does it protect. The following explanation was provided by Alan Fox, national pension's officer:

“The underpin means that members within 10 years of their normal pension age at 1 April 2012 (i.e. members over 55) will accrue at least the same pension that they would otherwise have accrued had they been able to remain in their current pension scheme.

if a member wishes to retire at their current Normal Pension Age of 65, they will get the better of the LGPS 2008 pension if they had stayed in this to 65 or what they would get under the new LGPS 2014”.

Conference

Local government (LGC) and national delegate conference (NDC) took place in Bournemouth 16th – 22nd June. The branch delegation was selected by branch committee, taking note of UNISON's fair representation criteria, from a list of members who'd indicated they would like to attend on behalf of the branch.

The following delegates represented the branch:

Nicky Ramanandi / Lynda Hardie / Cath McGuinness / Angela Hamilton / Simone Doyle / Rizwan Sheik / Conor McArdle / James Imhoof / Bethany Coyle. 3 were first time delegates.

In addition, **Josie Bird** and **Paul Gilroy** attended as NEC and NEC / SGE delegates respectively.

The branch had submitted 5 motions for LGC and 7 for NDC; we were one of only 2 branches in the northern region to submit motions.

Of the 12 motions the branch submitted, **3** were debated at LGC and **3** were debated at NDC.

All branch delegates spoke across the 2 conferences, some making their first speeches, and all delegates actively participated in the week's events; attending fringe events at lunch time and after conference, and attending the 2 regional delegates meetings in the evening.

Newcastle City Branch believes that conference is the key aspect of the union's democratic lay structure and that we should support the event by continuing to send a full delegation and the branch would encourage members to consider applying to be delegates for next year's conference to be held in Liverpool 16th – 21st June 2013.

UNISON and GMB – Closer working

UNISON and the GMB have announced that they will form a powerful new alliance to campaign against the Tory-led coalition's damaging austerity agenda.

Building on their existing joint work through the TUC and the Labour Party, this new partnership will give a strong new voice to the two million workers represented by the unions. Together, they will use their mutual influence to rally support for an economic plan that will safeguard jobs and vital public services.

Durham Miner's Gala

As usual the branch has organised a trip to the miner's gala in Durham on Saturday 14th July, there are still places on one of the coaches. Anyone interested in attending, please contact the branch office for details of times and costs.

TUC Demo – “A Future That Works” – October 20th – London

WHY WE'RE MARCHING

Austerity isn't working

Our country faces long-term economic problems. But our political leaders have failed to face up to them.

For the next five years or more, unless policies change the economy will not grow, incomes will not rise, and there will be almost no new jobs.

If the government keeps on with big spending cuts and austerity we face a lost decade. Even on their own terms government policies are failing. To close the deficit we need a healthy growing economy that generates tax income. But austerity has led to a vicious circle of decline.

Instead of just letting the banks go back to business and bonuses as usual, we need policies that promote new and old industries.

This new approach would create jobs, especially for young people.

Rather than deep, rapid spending cuts, we need to reverse our decline and build an economy that works for ordinary families.

We need a future that works.

The branch committee has decided that the branch will support this vitally important event and we intend to send around 100 participants. Any member who is interested in attending the event (and whose partner, children or family members would like to go with them), please register with the branch office. We'll supply more details at a later date.

Agile Working

The council is looking to save £1M in the next financial year through its use of buildings and offices. It is intended to achieve these savings without having an impact on frontline services if the council makes changes to the way we work, the space we use, or the location of our offices. UNISON is involved in these discussions and will ensure that staff are fully consulted on any proposed changes.

It is vital that any savings that can be achieved, without impacting on member's jobs or terms and conditions, are explored.

1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Please tick or fill in the boxes below

Mrs	Ms	Miss	Mr	Other
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First name	Other initial
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Surname/Family name	Date of birth / /
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Home address

National Insurance number (from your payslip)
<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

Please tick this box if you require materials in a different format (eg large print or Braille) – be sure to supply contact details below.

Please give a telephone number/voice/text/email address for UNISON to contact you – indicate if work or home

Contact tel/voice/text/email

2. YOUR EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Employer's name

Your job title/occupation

Directorate – Department - Section

Workplace name and address
Postcode

Payroll number (from your payslip)

PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO:
UNISON, Room 145, Civic Centre
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8QH

3. WHAT YOU PAY – RATES FROM 1ST OCTOBER 2003

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions.

	EMPLOYMENT (£)	PER WEEK	PER MONTH
Band A:	<input type="checkbox"/> Up to £2,000	£0.30	£1.30
Band B:	<input type="checkbox"/> £2,001–£5,000	£0.81	£3.50
Band C:	<input type="checkbox"/> £5,001–£8,000	£1.22	£5.30
Band D:	<input type="checkbox"/> £8,001–£11,000	£1.52	£6.60
Band E:	<input type="checkbox"/> £11,001–£14,000	£1.81	£7.85
Band F:	<input type="checkbox"/> £14,001–£17,000	£2.24	£9.70
Band G:	<input type="checkbox"/> £17,001–£20,000	£2.65	£11.50
Band H:	<input type="checkbox"/> £20,001–£25,000	£3.23	£14.00
Band I:	<input type="checkbox"/> £25,001–£30,000	£3.98	£17.25
Band J:	<input type="checkbox"/> £30,001–£35,000	£4.68	£20.30
Band K:	<input type="checkbox"/> £35,001+	£5.19	£22.50

Please tick this box if you are a student member in full-time education (including student nurses). Your subscription is £10 per year.

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid:

4. POLITICAL FUND

UNISON's **Affiliated Political Fund (APF)** is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliates to the Labour Party.

UNISON's **General Political Fund (GPF)** is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union and for research and lobbying in Parliament and Europe. It is independent of support for any political party.

It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes below, otherwise you will be allocated to a fund by the union. Your subscription shown above includes a political fund payment so you do not pay any more by being in one of the funds.

If you have been a member of a trade union before, please state which one:

The information provided by you shall be recorded by UNISON for statistical purposes and used for sending you UNISON publications, ballot forms and otherwise communicating with you. If you do **NOT** want any mailings from UNISON, besides those required by statute, please tick this box

To keep you fully informed of the services we arrange for members we want you to receive details of benefits offered by or in conjunction with UNISON's affinity partners. The affinity partners are organisations with close links to UNISON that share our ambition to provide you with the best possible range of benefits. Under the Data Protection legislation we can only disclose your details to our affinity partners with your explicit consent. Therefore if you **WANT** to receive details of the full range of benefits you **MUST** tick this box

5. YOUR AUTHORISATION

- I wish to join UNISON and accept its rules and constitution.
- I authorise deduction of **UNISON** subscriptions from my **salary/wages** at the rate determined by UNISON in accordance with its rules to be paid over to them on my behalf and
- I authorise my employer to provide information to UNISON to keep my records up to date
- I authorise deduction of the following Political Fund payment as part of my subscription: *Tick one box only*

Affiliated Political Fund **General Political Fund**

Now please sign and date below.

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