

Barnsley matters

Tribunal Fees Success for UNISON



On 29 June 2013 the Government introduced the charging of fees for employment tribunals.

UNISON wasted no time and that same day went to the High Court to seek permission to bring judicial review proceedings to oppose this attack on workers' rights. UNISON's argument was that the introduction of employment tribunal fees was unlawful because they interfere unjustifiably with the right of access to justice in disputes with employers.

Initial failure to win the subsequent court case did not deter UNISON who relentlessly continued the campaign citing

the discriminatory nature of the fees which had a disproportionate impact on women and other marginalised groups.

This culminated in UNISON's appeal being heard in the UK Supreme Court and in late July 2017 the Court unanimously ruled that the Government had acted unlawfully and unconstitutionally when tribunal fees were introduced.

A four year campaign by your union had defeated the Government. Any worker who needs to take their employer to court can now do so for free again and anyone who has had to pay for that access to justice over the last four years will be reimbursed.

Campaigns update

Local Government Pay Campaign

The momentum is growing across the nation for the Government to lift the Public Sector pay cap. However, what the Government seems to be indicating is that increases above the 1% cap may be applicable in areas of the public sector where retention and recruitment of staff is problematical, the NHS being the prime example. Whilst we completely agree that public sector workers from such areas deserve an increase in pay above the 1% cap, we need to ensure that Local Government workers, who are equally deserving, are also included. Between 2010 and 2016 public sector pay has risen by just 4.4% but the cost of living over that period has risen by 22%. UNISON is leading the fight to end the pay cap for ALL public sector workers:

- Over 100,000 people have signed the UNISON petition

Continues overleaf

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Local Government Pay *continued...*

on the parliamentary website calling for an end to the public sector pay cap which should lead to a formal debate of the issue in Westminster.

- With the Chancellors budget planned for 22nd November, a joint TUC/UNISON lobby of parliament was held on 17th October, with particular targeting of Conservative MPs, followed by a rally in Parliament Square.
- Branch representatives carrying the branch banner joined a number of other unions at a TUC rally outside Sheffield Town Hall on 23rd October, one of a series of similar events across the country.
- The Branch has written to the Leader of Barnsley Council, Sir Stephen Houghton, asking for the Council to move a motion calling for an end to the public sector pay cap. We eagerly await his response.
- Question Time is coming to Barnsley on 14th December. Why not apply to attend via the BBC website and if selected make the case for a public sector pay rise on live television?

Barnsley Council Updates

Don't fall foul of the Smoking and Vaping at Work Policy

There have been complaints recently about some BMBC staff continuing to smoke and vape in the immediate vicinity of council premises. You'll be aware that Barnsley Council's Smoking and Vaping at Work Policy stipulates employees should ensure they smoke or vape away from Council premises and ensure they officially record smoking breaks. We wouldn't want UNISON members to be formally disciplined for failure to follow the policy so please ensure you don't fall foul of the policy.

If you're trying to stop smoking the Council provides special leave for employees to attend smoking/vaping support if you sign up to a stop smoking/vaping programme. There's also more information on the Council's Well@Work teams' intranet page.

Absence Management Policy – don't leave it too late to contact UNISON

Since the Council's implementation of the revised Absence Management Policy the Branch have noticed increased numbers of UNISON members contacting the Branch requesting representation. However quite often UNISON members only make contact with the Branch once they have already progressed through the formal stages of the Council's Absence Management policy, having

previously attended meetings with managers without UNISON present. Unfortunately at this late stage it's often too late for the Branch to intervene.

Please ensure you always exercise your right to trade union representation at the first opportunity if you receive a formal letter from the Council asking you to attend an Absence Management meeting (or any formal meeting for that matter).

The sooner UNISON members make contact with the Branch the more chance UNISON can intervene at an early stage and hopefully prevent our members being placed on a formal sanction of the Absence Management Policy.

Barnsley Council Libraries Review

Have *YOUR* Say

A further round of public engagement is underway running from



the beginning of October to 31st December 2017 on the future provision of the library service in Barnsley.

In order to make your views known on the future of your local library you need to ensure you participate in the public engagement and encourage family and friends to do so.

You can find out how to get involved in the libraries public consultation on BMBC's website at:

www.barnsley.gov.uk/letstalklibraries

Stars in Our Schools



Stars in Our Schools is UNISON's national annual celebration of school support staff, organised to celebrate the wonderful work you do every day and to make sure the world knows just how vital you are to our children's education. On Friday 24th November 2017 schools across the UK will be recognising their

support staff in various ways such as holding ceremonies, putting on special assemblies or having coffee mornings.

As part of *Stars in Our Schools* we want to know how valued our members working in schools in Barnsley feel as part of the school team. Please complete

our quick online survey so you can tell us. It takes a couple of minutes to complete and you can do so anonymously. You'll also find out more about our recruitment scheme that could earn you at least £15 to spend.

You can easily access the survey on your phone, tablet or computer at this address: surveymonkey.co.uk/r/barnstars

Let us know if you want to get involved in *Stars in Our Schools* and liaise with UNISON to organise some much deserved recognition of the important work you all do – contact Local Organiser Richard Crowther on 07507 307527 or at r.crowther@unison.co.uk

Sponsorship Update Bag Pack and 50/50 Challenge

On the 19th August we held a bag packing event at the Penistone Branch of Tesco supermarket to help raise funds for our sponsored organisation for this year, CRISIS South Yorkshire.

Volunteers from UNISON and CRISIS spent four hours in store and thanks to their efforts and the kind donations of customers raised an impressive £434.76.

CRISIS are marking their 50th anniversary this year and whilst they do not see this a celebration (50 years of homelessness is hardly something to celebrate) they are marking the occasion with a 50/50 challenge. Full details are available from <http://5050challenge.crisis.org.uk> but basically the challenge is to cover 50 miles by whatever means in 50 days and raise funds in the process. The Branch Activists tackled this in a slightly different way by attempting to cover the 50 miles



collectively in one day, 4th November, at the Branch away day. If you'd like to make a donation or get involved in any way, please get in touch with the Branch via any of the usual contact details. You can make donations via the JustGiving page: www.justgiving.com/unisonbarnscrisis



Sports and Social Update

For many years the Branch ran a Lottery where members could pay an extra £1 per allocated number in their monthly contributions. The decision was taken some time ago to cease this scheme because of the administrative difficulties involved in running the scheme following the passing of the Trade Union Act 2016.

Ever since that decision the Branch has been gradually reducing the funds from the Branch Lottery account by carrying out regular monthly draws but without collecting the extra monthly contributions. We have also allocated funds from the Lottery account to run social events such as the recent trip to Scarborough. The last of these events funded via the Lottery account are the Chester Christmas shopping trip (now fully booked) and the Pantomime at Birdwell as advertised below.

The Branch is aware that these events are popular with UNISON members and we hope to continue with them in future years by allocating appropriate funds from the Branch Budget to partially subsidise them. If you have any suggestions for future social activities, the Branch and in particular the Sports and Social Officer, Owen Adams, would love to hear from you.

Pantomime: **Aladdin**



Saturday 2 December 2017, 10am

*The Academy Theatre,
Sheffield Road,
Birdwell, Barnsley
S70 5TU*

Tickets free to Lottery members and their children.
All other tickets £5 each.

To reserve places for the pantomime, please contact the Branch Office on 01226 772988 or email branchoffice@unisonbarnsleylg.org



Tell us your UNISON Story

We all joined UNISON for a variety of reasons. Now we would like you to tell us your story and you could help us to recruit new members.

Next year we plan to launch a new recruitment campaign and we would like our members to get involved. Send us your story of why you joined UNISON, or what your union has done to help you and we will select some of the best to feature in a series of videos that will be screened via our social media channels. Your story can be as long or as short as you like.

Members are the lifeblood of our union. Recent years have been some of the toughest in living memory for local government workers, seeing vicious cuts to government funding and the 1% pay cap. The more new members we can recruit, the stronger we are and the better we can represent our members' interests.

Whatever your reason for joining, we would like you to take part in our campaign. Please either speak to your workplace representative or contact the branch direct by emailing branchoffice@unisonbarnsleylg.org or phone 01226 772988.