

UNISON news

News from Central Sussex Hospitals Branch of UNISON

February 2019

Come to the AGM

Our **Annual General Meeting** takes place on **Friday 1st March at the Metropole Hotel, Kings Road, Brighton at 6.30pm.**

Our special guest speaker this year is Lloyd Russell-Moyle, MP for Brighton Kemptown and Peacehaven.



'I am grateful for the invitation to attend the AGM. I hope that as many UNISON-CSH members as possible can attend on the night so that I can hear from you first-hand what I can best do to support all our NHS staff in these very challenging times.' **Lloyd**

Lloyd was elected to Parliament in the 2017 General Election with a majority of 9,868 in Brighton Kemptown.

See unison-csh.uk/agm for further details.

UNISON provides a wide range of learning opportunities for our members. Our courses can help you:

- develop self-confidence
- teach you about yourself
- become more active and involved around issues that concern you
- tackle change and uncertainty at work
- progress your career
- learn for fun and personal development

Many courses are free and you may be entitled to time off work to attend them. They are designed to be friendly and informal, with practical exercises and no long lectures or exams. See learning.unison.org.uk

AGM Special

Welcome to this second issue. On 1 March 2019, Central Sussex Hospitals Branch of UNISON is holding its AGM. If you've never attended an AGM and want to find out more about what goes on then we hope that once you've read what this edition of the Branch Newsletter, then you will want to get more involved in making decisions on the future of the Branch.

Remember, UNISON is a member led union. We members make decisions for ourselves and, a bit like national elections – if you want to get more involved or put those forward who do, then you need to do this at the AGM on 1 March.

It's not all business, this year's social held straight after the AGM has a Race Night theme and, with a meal and a drink included, why not get a group together and let your hair down and meet other UNISON members from the Trust? Who knows, you may meet someone you already know but just didn't realise they are a member of UNISON?

Also in this edition – how you can get help to pay your fuel bill thanks to UNISON.

Marce Quinn & George Scott
Joint Communication Officers

Dates for your diary

UNISON Central Sussex Hospitals Branch 2019 AGM is on at The Hotel Metropole, Kings Road, Brighton on 1 March, at 6.30pm unison-csh.uk/agm

UNISON Health Conference:
8 – 10 April 2019
Bournemouth International Centre



Get active in your union!

Workplace reps are the heart of our trade union. UNISON's reps are the reason we win campaigns that result in better lives for our members and all working people. Reps help to organise colleagues into an effective, strong and welcoming membership.

They:

- Are the first point of contact for members in a workplace
- Talk to members about the union
- Talk to staff about their issues
- Offer advice on issues at work
- Represent members in cases (including at disciplinary and grievance hearings).
- Campaign for better working conditions
- Recruit and organise new members
- Encourage more members to get active in UNISON
- Raise your members' issues with the branch

Reps in workplaces where UNISON is recognised by the employer have rights to time off for training and to carry out their work.

Reps have a right to be involved in how their branch is run and are the most important link between the members and the union.

UNISON aims to have at least one steward in each workplace and department, more in larger departments and where members work shifts.

Reps are elected each year by the group of members that they represent and the post is open to job share.

**YOUR UNION
NEEDS YOU TO
BECOME A**

UNISON

**UNISON
REP**



Our AGM (on Friday 1st March) is the decision making body of the branch. Everything that happens in between annual meetings is overseen by the Branch Committee, but this is only operating on behalf of the members because we can't have an AGM every month.

The Branch Committee is made up of Officers, Stewards, Health and Safety reps and Equalities reps. Branch Officers are the key decision making members of the branch, each with a responsibility for one area, but all operate together to discuss and debate the way forward.

Among some of the Officer posts within the Branch that need to be filled each year at the AGM are:

Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
Health and Safety Officer
Membership Officer
Communications Officer
Equality Officer
Education Officer
Life Long Learning Officer
LGBT Officer
Young Members' Officer
Women's Officer
Welfare Officer

WINTER FUEL BILLS ARE A KILLER! But... you can get help...



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 is 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.

The process is very similar to

previous years and an amount of money has been ring-fenced to support this initiative. However, once it's gone it's gone!

So don't miss out. To apply and download the application form visit unison.org.uk/thereforyou or simply contact UNISON Direct on 0800 0857 857 between 6am-midnight Mon-Fri and 9am-4pm Sat.

Just one more thing: please don't keep details of this grant a secret.

Help us to help even more members and let your work colleagues know that help is at hand. There will be many, like you, worrying about how they will cope this winter.

Completed applications need to be sent to *There for You, (WFG) UNISON Centre, 130 Euston Road, London, NW1 2AY* by **Friday 15 February 2019** at the latest.

Come join in the fun!

Social for UNISON members including fine dining and race night.

**Friday 1st March 2019
Brighton Hilton Metropole**

How much does it cost? Absolutely nothing
See unison-csh.uk/agm for details



What's the point of a union?

Well...

1. Unity is Strength - unions provide workers with a powerful, collective voice to communicate to management their dissatisfaction and frustration. For example, in January 2017, Fast Retailing, parent company of fashion giant UNIQLO, bowed to public pressure and announced that it would make its supply chain public. This followed War on Want and its partner SACOM's campaign targeted at UK high street fashion brands and specifically UNIQLO.
2. Unions negotiate better terms and conditions - All aspects of working life should be the subject of discussion and agreement between employers and employees under the protection of a trade union. Trained representatives of the union lead these negotiations on behalf of employees.
3. You get more annual leave in a unionised workplace - Unions won the right for workers to have paid holidays. The average trade union member in the UK gets over 25% more annual leave a year, compared with a non-unionised worker.
4. You earn more in a unionised workplace - Trade union members earn on average 10% more than non-unionised members.
5. You get more maternity leave, paternal and carer leave - Unionised workplaces are much more likely to have maternity, paternal and carer leave policies in place which are more generous than the statutory minimum.
6. Better job security - Trade union members are more likely to stay in their jobs longer, on average five years more than non-unionized workers.
7. You have someone on your side when you need them - By being a union member, you are always part of something bigger, and have the support of the union when you need it.
8. Unions fight for equal opportunities in the workplace. They stand for equal pay and treatment and against discrimination - War on Want partner FTZ-GSEU in Sri Lanka has been at the forefront of battling for workers for over 30 years. Free Trade Zones have eroded rights for workers around the globe. In Sri Lanka, as elsewhere, it is mainly women who are exploited by their reduced regulations and minimal protection for labourers.
9. Union workplaces are safer - There are 50% fewer accidents in unionised workplaces. Local safety reps deal with issues ranging from stress and mental health issues to hazardous substances.
10. Unions offer legal services and advice - After a four year battle, UNISON won a landmark court victory and overturned the government's introduction of tribunal fees. Anyone who has been treated illegally or unfairly at work will no longer have to pay to take their employers to court. Employees no longer have to find £1200 and unscrupulous employers no longer have the upper hand. Even better, the government has to refund more than £27m to the thousands of people charged for taking claims to tribunals since July 2013, when the government introduced the fees.



*Thanks to War on Want
for this article.
<https://waronwant.org>*