

# UNISON 2026 AGM NEWSLETTER

## NEWRY AND MOURNE BRANCH

### Newry and Mourne Branch AGM 2026

#### It's about You, Your Branch, Your Say and Your Vote

Our Branch AGM is the single most important meeting of the year. Every year UNISON requires its branch officers and stewards to stand for re-election. The AGM is your opportunity to have a say in how the branch is run and who will represent you in 2026.

It is also a great opportunity to meet with other members and UNISON stewards and to find out how UNISON has been active on your behalf during the year. This year the AGMs will take place online and in the workplace.

If you would like to become more active in UNISON: Representing your colleagues or becoming involved in solidarity or welfare work, please contact your branch.



#### AfC Pay Campaign 2024/25

UNISON has continued to lead the way across health unions in pressing for Agenda for Change pay uplifts in NI. Following the announcement of the Pay Review Body (PRB) recommendations for 2024/25 in July 2024, UNISON pursued their full implementation in NI against the context of a funding crisis across health and social care. In December 2024 we secured a commitment in relation to AfC pay in NI for 2024/25 to maintain pay parity with England, but with payment in two phases, reflecting the financial constraints on the health budget. Following the PRB recommendations in May, the Health Minister stated that he had begun a process to secure the funding required to implement the 3.6% pay uplift by issuing a Ministerial direction that the pay uplift be approved without delay. It was made clear to the Minister that delays in securing funding for a pay uplift are unacceptable to our members, particularly considering that it took until March 2025 for the 2024/25 pay uplift to be put in place.

Following NHS workers in England receiving the recommended 3.6% pay uplift in August, we made clear that the link to pay parity was broken. Through continued negotiation with the Health Minister and Executive to maintain pay parity with England the Minister confirmed in November that the Department will proceed to put in place the consolidated 3.6% pay uplift and fully backdated to the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. The Department has stated this will be paid in February 2026. However UNISON remains absolutely clear that much more needs done to tackle the problem of low pay. UNISON will hold the Minister, Department and employers to account if they do not move forward to address the serious problems of low pay. UNISON is demanding that progress be made to implement the Real Living Wage and to ensure pay is prioritised in the 2026/2027 budget. The unacceptable cycle of delay seen in putting pay right for the workforce cannot be allowed to continue any longer.



### AGM MEETING DATES 2026

**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

**Venue: UNISON office DHH  
Time: 10am-8.30pm**

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

**Venue: Kilkeel Health Centre  
Time: 10am-1.30pm**

**Venue: Slieveroe  
Time: 2pm-6pm**



**Not yet a member? JOIN UNISON TODAY!  
Call 02890270190 or go to [www.unison-ni.org.uk/join](http://www.unison-ni.org.uk/join)**



## **BRANCH NEWS**

Our UNISON 'Free School Meals for All' campaign is a further important intervention aimed at reducing poverty for our members and their families. The Free School Meals Campaign has continued with the restoration of the Executive and Assembly. We are demanding universal free school meal provision for all children and young people.

The campaign objectives are:

- to seek universal, nutritious, free schools meals for all pupils to both reduce poverty and improve public health,
- to safeguard and promote the vital work of our members within schools catering - school meals should be publicly provided,
- to build support for the implementation of a public health model across Government that is aimed at dealing with health and educational inequalities.



Check out the full list of UNISON College courses here:  
<https://shortl.at/KocGt>

## **Membership services**



Members experiencing financial and emotional difficulties can contact UNISON Welfare (There for You), which provides confidential advice and support services for members and their dependants.

<https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/>



THOMPSONS  
SOLICITORS

Receive free legal advice and support on non employment matters from Thompsons, our specialist employment solicitors

<https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/legal-services/>



Request free expert financial advice from Quilter Financial Advisers, UNISON's financial services partner

<https://benefits.unison.org.uk/home/money/lighthouse-financial-advice/>



AbbeyAutoline offers discount for UNISON members.

<https://www.abbeyautoline.co.uk/>

### **Agenda for Change**

As part of our 'AFC Pay Max'/Refresh Strategy, UNISON negotiators have secured bargaining successes in the Southern HSC Trust. In the Southern HSC Trust, our 3 branches have continued with success in AfC grading uplifts for members including electricians and plumbers moving from band 4 to band 5, early pregnancy nurses moving from band 5 to band 6, and upward movement for admin staff in St. Lukes and across the Trust. Further job descriptions have been submitted for regrading for other posts including mental health and learning disability support workers, day centre managers and community admin posts and occupational therapists. Ongoing successes also include moving temporary support staff to permanent posts.

### **Engagement with nursing sector structures:**

UNISON maintain our regional representation on the Central Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Committee and the NI Professional Education Council. A commitment was secured from DoH as part of the 2023 pay settlement to discuss expanding movement of nurse posts through the banding system. We are seeking to progress this work through our regional bargaining structures and will be seeking to build participation in our Nurses Forum alongside this.

### **Safe staffing legislation:**

UNISON continue to work alongside other health trade unions to progress the development of safe staffing legislation, further to the commitments made by the Minister for Health in the 2020 Framework Agreement that led to the suspension of our industrial action on pay parity and safe staffing issues. In October 2024, UNISON made a comprehensive response to a public consultation on proposals for the legislation.

### **Mileage subsidy issues:**

Following the mobilisation of the workforce at employer and community level, we managed to secure an enhanced subsidy for directly employed NHS staff. The issue of mileage subsidies continues to be on the agenda at NHS Staff Council.

## **Update your Details**

Changed name, moved house or have a new number?  
Update your details using our online form at:  
<https://www.unison-ni.org.uk/update-your-details> or  
contact membership services on 028 90270190.

### **Branch Contacts**

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