ANNUAL REPORT

The Work of the NI Regional Committee 2015/2016
Who’s Who on the Regional Committee in 2015/2016

The following is a list of Regional Committee members and a record of attendance for the quarterly meetings during 2015/16.

### Joint Regional Convenors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Position</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gabrielle Carton</td>
<td>Classroom Assistant, Ardnashee School &amp; College, L/Derry</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denis Keatings</td>
<td>Customer Care Officer, Mater Hospital, Belfast</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Committee Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Position</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flora Alfante</td>
<td>Senior Care Assistant, Rosemount Care Centre</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aine Brennan</td>
<td>Medical Secretary, Mater Hospital, Belfast</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Brown</td>
<td>Assistant Operational Manager, Belfast City Hospital</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roisin Byrne</td>
<td>PCSS Domestic, Royal Hospitals, Belfast</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline Campbell</td>
<td>Domestic Assistant, Causeway Hospital</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Campbell</td>
<td>Day Care Worker, Muckamore Abbey Hospital</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorraine Clyde (1)</td>
<td>School Crossing Patrol - Supervisory Assistant, St Comgall's PS, Antrim</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie Downey</td>
<td>Nursing Assistant, Holywell Hospital</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn Emerson</td>
<td>Maternity Support Worker, Craigavon Area Hospital</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ferris</td>
<td>Retired Members’ Forum</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siobhan Gallagher</td>
<td>Supervisory Assistant, St John's PS, L/Derry</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene Graham</td>
<td>Clerk/Nursery Assistant, Tudor Lodge Nursery School</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonia Graham</td>
<td>Resource Care Assistant, Ardview House</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Greenwood</td>
<td>Higher Clerical Officer, Antrim Area Hospital</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela Gribben</td>
<td>Nursery Nurse, John the Baptist PS, Belfast</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Hall</td>
<td>Domestic Assistant, Causeway Hospital</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daphne Harper</td>
<td>Cleaner/Supervisor, Craigavon Senior High School</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Hillick</td>
<td>Caretaker, Poleglass Youth Club, Belfast</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerrina Law (2)</td>
<td>Service Assistant, Ulster Hospital</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinead Liddy</td>
<td>Nursing Assistant, Muckamore Abbey Hospital</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Lynch</td>
<td>Day Care Worker, Everton Centre, Belfast</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunjunm Lyochen</td>
<td>Fitter, Belfast City Hospital</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roberta Magee</td>
<td>Homecare Co-ordinator, Belfast Trust</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niall McCarroll</td>
<td>Deputy Manager, First Housing, L/Derry</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy McComish</td>
<td>Community Care Worker, Ulster Hospital</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul McCormick (3)</td>
<td>Care Assistant, Beeches Resource Centre, Ballyclare</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorna McDade</td>
<td>Domestic, Mater Hospital, Belfast</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maura McKenna</td>
<td>Staff Side Officer</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roisin McKinley</td>
<td>Cook, Youth Justice Agency</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel Muldoon (4)</td>
<td>Porter, St Luke's Hospital, Armagh</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene Newton</td>
<td>Ward Liaison Officer, Mater Hospital</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Quigley</td>
<td>Paramedic, NIAS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eoin Stewart</td>
<td>Staff Nurse, Mater Hospital, Belfast</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Sweetlove</td>
<td>Emergency Medical Technician, Antrim Ambulance Station</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marjorie Trimble (5)</td>
<td>Chair, Staff Side, Whiteabbey Hospital</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NEC Members in Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Position</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Margaret McKee (6)</td>
<td>Catering Assistant, Royal Hospitals, Belfast</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucia McKeever</td>
<td>Community Ambassador, Meningitis Trust</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alastair Long</td>
<td>Ambulance Personnel, Larne Ambulance Depot</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Lorraine Clyde tragically died in a road traffic accident on 25th July  
(2) Maternity leave  
(3) Resigned  
(4) Retired  
(5) long-term sickness  
(6) elected as UNISON Vice President in June 2016
Contents

Introduction

UNISON objectives and plan

Objective 1: Building our union

Objective 2: Bargaining and bargaining for equality

Objective 3: Campaigning, public policy and supporting the peace process

Objective 4: Regional resources and management
Regional Committee is pleased to present our Annual Report covering the period October 2015 to October 2016.

Our report marks yet another year of hard work, dedication and commitment from our members, activists and staff. We have increased our membership and grown our activist base. Thousands of our members have directly participated in the life of the union through industrial action, political lobbying, public protest, international solidarity and humanitarian aid for those facing worse circumstances than us.

It records some significant successes, ranging from the campaigns to protect NHS services and jobs, to the transfer in-house of some outsourced medical services, and to preventing the privatisation of jobs in schools and youth justice. Several thousand UNISON members in support services and social care have witnessed the power of the union being used to protect their pay frequency.

More than 1500 members and activists have taken advantage of UNISON’s excellent education, lifelong learning and development programmes. For many this is the chance they never had in their youth.

In May 2016 we elected a new Government in the form of the NI Assembly. We remain determined to convince it to turn from austerity and to begin to work collectively in the interests of all of the People.

We have commenced engagement on all the core issues we set out in our 2016 UNISON NI Manifesto. We are beginning to see some success on commitments to ending zero hours contracts and support for the UNISON Living Wage campaign.

Thankfully, the Trade Union Bill did not apply to NI but, in support of our colleagues across the rest of the union, we lobbied NI MPs to oppose it. Many did.

In June 2016 the EU Referendum resulted in a vote for exit by a narrow margin. The people of NI and Scotland voted to remain. The implications of EU exit are profound for our members and we are now demanding answers on how the jobs, services, rights and other protections deriving from EU membership will be protected. We are supporting legal challenges, in particular those which challenge on the impact of EU exit on our peace process. This is an issue which will dominate the UNISON agenda for some time to come.

Regional Committee is pleased to report significant progress on the bargaining agenda across the sectors in which we organise. We are also moving to the next stage in the roll-out of our unique partnership programme.

2016 is a significant centenary for the whole island. We have taken part in many cultural and trade union events and it has been an important opportunity to rekindle interest in our own labour history.

Our successes have also been accompanied by great loss. Throughout the year many key figures in the UNISON family have died, some in very tragic circumstances. We pay particular tribute to Jonathan Swallow. This year’s Council will be the first in 23 years not to hear his words of wisdom and motivation. We have also lost dedicated activists who will be remembered at Council.

We now face 2017 with renewed vigour and concrete evidence that we can achieve change when the whole UNISON team acts together in solidarity. We extend thanks to all members, activists, staff and allies who make this possible.

Patricia McKeown, Regional Secretary
Denis Keatings, Joint Regional Convenor
Gabrielle Carton, Joint Regional Convenor
UNISON Objectives and Plan

NI Regional Council

The NI Regional Council comprises delegates from branches, service groups and self organised groups. It meets annually:

- to debate union policy;
- to measure our progress on the national and NI objectives; and
- to set out the forthcoming work programme on behalf of our members.

Throughout the year the decisions of the Regional Council are acted upon by the Regional Committee, UNISON staff and branches. This report to NI Regional Council is a record of the work of the Regional Committee and all lay structures since the annual meeting of the Council in October 2015.

May Day 2016

The Regional Committee takes this opportunity to thank all UNISON members, activists and staff for their role in making the past year such a success.

The UNISON NI Plan 2015/16

Each year the National Executive Council sets its objectives and priorities. We in turn add our own priorities which are set by Regional Council resolutions, our own knowledge of the political situation, and priorities identified by branches and the UNISON team of activists and staff working in partnership.

The NEC objectives remain fairly constant but the priorities are revised each year. Our core priorities are protecting our public services and our members’ jobs, and growing the union. For UNISON NI this means engaging with our members, strong bargaining with the employers, political campaigning with equality and human rights at its core, and building the union through a strong organising programme.
Objective 1

Building our union

“Recruiting, organising, representing & retaining members”
Recruiting and organising

Recruitment and retention

Our achievements in 2015/2016

Fighting fund initiative and private homecare project: The number of branches co-funding these projects has significantly increased. We are pleased to report that funding has been secured for 9 posts covering 8 projects. The majority of these are multiple branch projects. This is a reflection of the success of previous FFO initiatives and is reflected in the recruitment achievements for 2015.

The private sector homecare project, which has continued throughout 2016, will now have a renewed focus with the allocation of 2 fighting fund organisers and the restoration of the 10 branch steering group. To assist recruitment in both the in-house and private sector, a handbook on NISCC registration and members’ rights has been produced. Regional Committee thanks Joe Lynch, Branch Secretary N&W Belfast branch, for his work. In addition, one project will deliver the additional help sought by our two University branches.

Throughout the year, the organising team has continued to work to detailed organising plans linking branch and regional campaigns to direct, sustainable recruitment. Our successful campaign of opposition to the blanket imposition of monthly pay for health service support workers is a real example of how encouraging member involvement around workplace issues can secure membership increase.

Infill recruitment in public services: Infill continues to be a priority for all branches. Our success in targeting it last year is reflected in the totals for 2015 in both the health and education sectors in particular. The picture for 2016 is more difficult in both sectors. Education is experiencing particular problems and education branches will have additional fighting fund support for the Autumn/Winter campaign and this will create a turnaround.

The target to be reached by branches for the Autumn/Winter campaign 2016 has been set. In the same period last year, branches recruited 700 members without fighting fund support. This will be a priority for November and December.

Special initiatives: NI-wide recruitment initiatives have continued in the private care homes and homecare sectors, and within contractors providing public services.

The work of our self organised groups continues to aid recruitment through direct recruitment; increased recruitment of young members; the organisation of events for members, their families and communities; and raising UNISON’s profile in key bargaining, campaigning and policy areas. Some notable activities in 2016 include:

- Women’s Committee direct action on the pay frequency and the living wage campaigns;
- recruitment initiatives at Pride events in Belfast, Newry and Derry; and
- special events to support our BME members and migrant workers.

The allocation of £700m for a public sector exit scheme in the Fresh Start Agreement was not supposed to apply beyond the civil service.
UNISON has robustly resisted the application of any exit scheme to our core areas in health and education where there is no scope for reducing the workforce. However, it is becoming clear that jobs are being cut and in some cases sold by stealth. This job loss is reflected in recruitment year to date in both key sectors. We anticipate a turn around by end December 2016 with the support of the fighting fund projects.

### Overall recruitment progress

Although we ran without fighting fund support for the most of 2016, and this is reflected in recruitment to date, a number of our branches consolidated last year’s good work into their 2016 programmes.

Some of our largest branches have clearly embraced the need to expand recruitment initiatives in order to tackle the number of leavers and non-replacement. The two largest branches, Royal Hospitals and Northern Health, are demonstrating success to date. With the return of the fighting fund project, we anticipate that we will meet the overall target by end December 2016.

A number of the branches that experienced recruitment problems will now be part of the forthcoming fighting fund programme. For those branches that have not joined the programme, but need support, the branch development group will consider what additional support is required.

Recruitment figures are a snapshot in time but also indicate trends. Regional Committee approaches them with caution. However, we are satisfied that our excellent RMS team achieve accuracy within 2%, despite the fact that we continue to be hampered by the problems in the NHS employer payroll system.

We continue to maintain centralised processing and database in partnership with all branches.

Table 1 shows that our final Jan-Dec 2015 total was 4562 new recruits, reflecting the success of the fighting fund project to August 2015 and the final push by branches in November/December 2015.

It further shows that the 2015 Autumn / Winter campaign was a success and brought in 693 new members. All but 1 branch improved position.

At last year’s Regional Council, 7 branches had exceeded their target. By the end of the year this had risen to 10 branches, with a further 4 branches ending the year within a few percentage points of the target.

At the other end of the scale, 4 branches fell below 50% and of these 1 was coping with outsourcing and another with transfer to the civil service.

As reported in the next section, we have conducted a three year review on recruitment and retention trends to better inform the 2017 organising strategy.
### Table 1 – UNISON NI recruitment by branch, 1 Jan 2015 to 31 Dec 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>2015 Target Recruitment</th>
<th>2015 Recruitment</th>
<th>% of target met</th>
<th>Jan to Dec</th>
<th>Jan to Sept</th>
<th>Oct to Dec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community &amp; Voluntary</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>378</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>189%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast Education</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>245</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>163%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craigavon Unison</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>204</td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>146%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Agencies</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>136%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N &amp; W Belfast Health</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>217</td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>163%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEELB</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>196</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>131%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causeway</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>207</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>122%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchard</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>191</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>119%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Ed</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>106</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>106%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down Education</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>154</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>103%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCHT</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>297</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South &amp; East</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>197</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derry Education</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>144</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Health</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>571</td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mater Hospital Trust</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>83</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sperrin Devenish</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down Lisburn</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>230</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foyle</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>207</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N I Ambulance</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omagh &amp; Fermanagh</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>162</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Park Health</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muckamore Abbey</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Hospital</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>224</td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordanstown Univ</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N I Blood Transfusion</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathgael</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newry &amp; Mourne</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast City Hospital</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>123</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coleraine Magee Univ</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4990</strong></td>
<td><strong>4561</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>693</strong></td>
<td><strong>3868</strong></td>
<td><strong>91%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moving to current achievement, Table 2 measures recruitment activity from January to end September 2016. The total required to meet the end year target is 1936.

The overall trend and the actual density are what determine union strength with any employer. Branches can see that analysing in this way produces a different picture from the snapshot in Table 4 in the development section. In 2016, to date one-third of our branches are showing growth, but the real picture taken over a 3 year period shows that more than half of our branches are growing.

It is clear from this exercise that existing branch targets must change otherwise they can give a false sense of security for branches with targets too low to match turnover and recruitment potential. Alternatively, some branches have recruitment targets which are too high given turnover and current density. Following Regional Council 2016, new targets will be agreed with all branches as part of the new assessment and planning process.

Table 2 – UNISON NI recruitment by branch, 1 Jan to 30 Sept 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Annual target</th>
<th>January 2016 To date</th>
<th>Same period 2015</th>
<th>No required to reach 2016 Target</th>
<th>3 year growth trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Health</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comm &amp; Voluntary</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCHT</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foyle</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down Lisburn</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craigavon Health</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast Education</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South &amp; East</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchard H&amp;SC</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Omagh &amp; Fermanagh</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causeway</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>North &amp; West</td>
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<td>183</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEELB</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newry &amp; Mourne</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>↑</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>↑</td>
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<td>37</td>
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<td>↓</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3054</strong></td>
<td><strong>3868</strong></td>
<td><strong>1936</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cuts and job loss are reflected in recruitment to date across the key sectors - Table 3. We are particularly concerned at the trend in education which reflects upheaval created by the formation of the Education Authority.

The community and voluntary sector continues to suffer from funding cuts with much more to come as a result of EU exit. In the private sector, recruitment has been steady but the poor terms and conditions, particularly in homecare, are producing a higher than average attrition rate.

In health, the relatively small drop year to date will be recouped by December

Table 3 - UNISON NI total recruitment by sector, 1 Jan to 30 September.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment figures by sector</th>
<th>Jan-Sept 2016</th>
<th>Jan-Sept 2015</th>
<th>Total for 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health and social services (excluding PNHS)</td>
<td>1605</td>
<td>1827</td>
<td>2191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and other NJC</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community &amp; Voluntary</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector (including PNHS)</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>1066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Young members 26 and under)</td>
<td>(639)</td>
<td>(755)</td>
<td>(652)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3054</td>
<td>3868</td>
<td>4562</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Building branch and workplace organisation

- **Branch Development**

Regional organising awards: Regional Committee recognises that the extraordinary volume of work and the dedication and commitment of elected union reps is what makes UNISON strong. However, we too often move from one challenge to the next without taking time to celebrate success.

We started the year by inviting our branches to do just that. The Organising Awards took place in April 2016 to celebrate the major achievements of our branches and activists over the past year.

A record 30 nominations were submitted from 13 branches with Silver award winners receiving a framed certificate and Gold award winners receiving a certificate and a UNISON ‘flame’ trophy. All gold award winners spoke and shared stories on what made their campaign or strategy so successful.

The awards covered:
- highly successful recruitment campaigns;
- innovative member participation projects;
- smart communications initiatives;
- campaigns to save services;
- campaigns to highlight the value of services;
- smart bargaining campaigns linked to industrial action, public support and political campaigning.

2 Excellence Awards went to Marjorie Trimble for outstanding service to UNISON and to Kevin Hillick for outstanding solidarity work.

8 new stewards from 8 different branches received Gold and Silver awards for their contribution to date.

The award winners are showcased on the following page.
Membership participation awards

Gold award
- Northern Health - Paediatric nurses campaign, Antrim Area Hospital
- Mater - Campaign to protect services at the Mater Hospital

Silver award
- Causeway - Pay campaign

Organising and recruitment awards

Gold award
- Northern Health - Residential care campaign
- Royal Hospitals - Organising and recruitment campaign

Communicating awards

Gold award
- Newry & Mourne - Campaign to save Slieve Roe Residential Care Home
- UCHT - Branch and member communications initiative
- Omagh Fermanagh - Creamery House Communications campaign

Silver award
- Belfast Education - Branch and member communications initiative
- Causeway - Branch and member communications initiative
- Northern Health - Branch and member communications initiative
- NIAS - Branch and member communications initiative

Omagh Fermanagh – Gold award winners for their communications campaign to save Creamery House

Northern Health – Gold award winners for their residential care home campaign

UCHT – Gold award winners for their branch and member communications initiative
Excellence awards

Gold award
• Northern Health – Marjorie Trimble for excellence during 28 years of service to the members of UNISON
• Down Education – Kevin Hillick for his outstanding international solidarity work in helping to organise the Belfast Anti-Racist World Cup

Silver award
• Causeway – Margaret Maxwell for excellence during the campaign to save Garvagh nursing home from closure
• Derry Education – Caroline McDaid for excellence campaigning for the rights of classroom assistant.
• Mater – Tommy O’Halloran for excellence as convenor for support services in the Mater Hospital

Outstanding new steward awards

Gold award
• Belfast Education – Sarah Campbell
• Northern Health – Roberta Thompson
• Omagh Fermanagh – Geraldine Beagan
• Derry Education – Noreen Robinson

Silver award
• BCH – Jeanette Cochrane
• Causeway – Sandra McKeeman
• Mater – Martin Maxwell
• Royal – Alan McClean

Negotiation and representation awards

Gold award
• Newry & Mourne/Orchard – Homecare contracted hours negotiating strategy
• Royal Hospitals - Negotiation & representation strategy

Silver award
• Mater - Negotiation & representation
• Causeway - Negotiation & representation
• Greenpark - Negotiation & representation

Marjorie Trimble – Gold award for excellence during 28 years of service to members of UNISON

Kevin Hillick – Gold award for outstanding international solidarity work

Newry & Mourne / Orchard – Gold award for their contracted hours negotiating strategy

Royal Hospitals – Gold award for their negotiation and representation strategy
**Branch Development Group**: The Branch Development Group comprises Regional Convenors, NEC members and elected representatives from the Regional Committee working with the Head of Organising.

During 2016, the Group contacted all branches highlighting the beneficial role that it can play in supporting the development of branches including recruitment support, special initiatives to rebuild the steward base, support on branch finance and support to develop branch committees. The Group also ‘trouble shoots’ on behalf of the Regional Committee when branches face difficulties. The group has assisted a number of branch committee this year and more meetings and support initiatives are set for the Autumn/Winter calendar.

Following Regional Council the Group will be reviewing the format and other arrangements for the Organising Awards that will take place in Spring 2017.

**Branch development strategies**: Our main aim is to grow the membership and develop the activist base in order to achieve UNISON’s core objectives. This requires us to Map, Measure, Plan, and Resource. To enable us to do this effectively, Regional Committee continuously reviews our use of the tools available to branches to support them. The core tools are:
- joint branch assessment;
- development of the branch plan;
- OLBA and branch budgeting to implement the plan.

In order to ensure that all our branches receive the necessary development support, our branch assessment, planning and budgeting activity is co-ordinated across the region. In 2016, the union centrally has been developing further tools to make this a more seamless process.

**Joint branch assessments** – To ease the pressure on branches our organisers and RMS staff create up-to-date ‘maps’ and graphs to produce a picture of each branch. This enables branches to participate in informed assessments. These maps set out very clearly:
- the geographic spread of our members;
- the number of employers;
- the location and occupation of all members in each employer and workplace;
- the level of steward cover for each;
- the potential for recruitment;
- actual recruitment by employer, location and occupation;
- actual leavers on the same basis.

This enables branch committees to take informed and focused decisions during their branch assessment on the core issues to be addressed in the forthcoming branch plan.

Each branch plan focuses on recruitment and organising, core bargaining issues, relevant campaigns, and the resources allocated to deliver the goals.
Branch activity-based budgets: For many years our branches have been producing paper based budgets with varying degrees of detail. Some branches have been prepared to share their budget detail at training and good practice sessions to assist other branches. The union as a whole is moving to a new computer based budgeting system which enables a great deal more detail on resource allocation to implement the plan. Initial training has commenced and further training packages using digital platforms to access membership and financial detail are being rolled out by UNISON centrally. The OLBA system is designed to make financial management easier for all branches, but also to enable branches to monitor and measure their decisions on resource allocation.

Implementation: Regional Committee keeps implementation of branch plans under continuous review. We provide support on both the general branch management of funds and on budgeting. Where the use of OLBA becomes inactive, the Committee instructs that special support be given to the relevant branches. Our organising team works in partnership with branch teams and, where necessary, the branch development group steps in to give additional support where difficulties arise.

One of the biggest problems on implementation occurs when branches develop good plans arising from the assessments but do not adjust the branch committee business agenda to measure and monitor progress. Regional Committee recommends that the core headings in the JBA are reflected in the branch plan and that each heading forms the core of a branch committee agenda rather than the branch plan appearing as a stand-alone item at the end of the agenda. A number of branches have adapted agendas to make implementation more effective and via the branch development programme, are assisting others to do so.

Branch Secretaries Forum: The Forum meets quarterly and has been operating successfully for seven years. During 2016, members have shared best practice recruitment initiatives across branches, and highlighted the importance of utilising branch and regional bargaining successes as a core recruitment tool. Experience has also been shared on tackling current problems in health, education, the community and voluntary and private sectors and identified patterns of cuts and closures across the services.

The regional pool: The Regional Pool Group was established by Regional Committee under guidance from the NEC to consider proposals from, and to make financial awards to, branches and lay structures to advance our organising agenda. The Group works to criteria established under both national and regional guidelines. To date the pool has disbursed additional financial support to branches for a large number of successful projects. Past projects have included:

- pop-up UNISON stalls in shopping malls;
- coffee mornings for new members;
- film nights linked to union campaigns on issues such as women’s rights, tackling racism, and international solidarity;
- new types of publicity materials linked to member meetings around campaigns;
- special welfare benefits clinics;
- street theatre linked to recruitment;
- special events for hard to organise workplaces eg private sector and voluntary.

Following debate and agreement on Motion 121 at 2016 NDC (supported by all NI delegates), new NEC guidance is being produced. This will include arrangements for additional financial support for branches that may need it having demonstrated effective deployment of existing branch resources. Regional Committee will re-open Pool applications as soon the guidance is available.

General political fund: As reported to last year’s Council the GPF is now open to NI branches and applications have been invited.
Measuring organising success: To assist with joint branch assessments and the branch development programme, we use a range of branch development indicators.

Table 4 shows the paid release resources available to branches and the current position on branch assessment and plans. It also tracks attendance at the branch secretaries forum where much information is exchanged. We also track progress on the stewards’ base and the extent of proportionality.

Democracy in decision-making is tracked in section on branch minutes and is essential to ensure that decisions are democratically taken and recorded including decisions relating to budgets, income and expenditure. FA indicates formal agreement including full time release. A&W indicates as and when release.

A number of branch assessments took place between November 2015 and June 2016. However, post NDC it became clear that branch assessments will now take a new form and Regional Committee has made arrangements for the next round to commence with all branches from November 2016.

Table 4 - Branch development indicators, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Paid release</th>
<th>Branch Assessment</th>
<th>Attended Branch Sec Forum/Team UNISON</th>
<th>Mapped</th>
<th>Recruitment trend 2016*</th>
<th>New stewards from Oct 2015</th>
<th>Branch minutes on File</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belfast City Hospital</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

* This indicates the recruitment trend for 2016 only and not the overall branch trend as described in Table 2
As can be seen from Table 5 branch participation in those areas required by Rule is high. We use a traffic light system. No branches are in the red. The final columns relate to branch participation in their own local public meetings and demonstrations, those organised by UNISON on an NI-wide basis and participation in marches and demonstrations organised under the umbrella of ICTU.

Participation in our ‘Team UNISON’ events is not mandatory but commands a high turn-out from branches. In 2016 most branches directly organised their own protests and demonstrations on a range of issues.

Overall branch and membership engagement in local and regional campaign activity has been extremely high throughout the year.

### Table 5 - Branch participation, 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Submit Financial return on time</th>
<th>Attend NDC to rule</th>
<th>Attend Service Group Conf</th>
<th>Attend Regional Council</th>
<th>Attend Regional Service Group</th>
<th>Quorate AGM</th>
<th>Took part UNISON NI Demos</th>
<th>Attended Team UNISON</th>
<th>Attended May Day Event / ICTU demos</th>
<th>Held Branch public events/ demos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belfast City Hosp</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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### Membership participation and building the stewards base

**Annual General Meetings:** All AGMS were completed by end March 2016. However, some of the experimental initiatives which were successful last year did not prove to be so this year. Some branches failed to reach a quorum but, in dialogue with regional officials, have agreed new formats for 2017. Most branches produced financial reports for the AGM in compliance with NEC guidance.

Where this was not done in the correct format, the branch development group is recommending special discussion sessions with the relevant branch committees.

**Direct member involvement:** Thousands of our members have been directly involved in demonstrations and lobbies throughout 2016.
Our branches have engaged extensively in members’ meetings, public meetings, petitions and political lobbies. Many branches also held hustings in the run up to the Assembly elections in May 2016.

The use of social media by members, branches and self-organised groups has again increased. All branches now have either Facebook pages or websites and most are linked in to the UNISON NI Facebook and website. The extent of member activity is documented and advertised and has resulted in increased direct involvement of members in the life of the union. Branches have also taken advantage of the bulk emailing system and the text messaging services available from the regional centre. Activity throughout the year has included lobbying MLAs on proposed closures in health, libraries and the community and voluntary sector, extensive demonstrations and lobbies on the attempt to change pay frequently for the lowest paid members.

Steward base: The “Get Elected” campaign was launched at last year’s Regional Council. Each branch is working to a programme with organising staff to encourage members to stand for election as local shop stewards. The programme will continue on a rolling basis across workplace and sectors to ensure an increase in workplace steward cover.

The model for steward networks developed for education branches, which provides for town-based steward networks, is starting to work and our largest branch, Northern Health will pilot a return to local convenors.

Data cleansing of the stewards base took place post-AGMs. However, it is clear from a number of discussions with branch officials that some branches are retaining the information on changes without amending the system. On Regional Committee advice direct meetings with all branch committees to verify the base has commenced. On information from the organising team and the education programme, we estimate a 13% gap in accuracy, ie more stewards than appear on the system. Updating work is underway and Table 6 will be updated for the incoming Regional Committee. However, proportionality continues to improve and the challenge of converting contacts into workplace stewards is ongoing.

Table 6: Proportionality by activist post

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activist Position</th>
<th>Total 2016</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Total 2015</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branch Secretaries</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch Chairs</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch Treasurers</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other branch posts</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace stewards</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacts</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1234</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>1413</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Branch funding

Total income returned to branches for 2015 increased to £930,129.62. This represents an increase of £67,782.62 (7.7% year on year). An increased number of branches made contributions to the Fighting Fund initiative for 2016/17 totalling £159,000 which was matched by £209,000 from the fund itself. Contributing branches have been congratulated by both Regional Committee and the UNISON centre. Several consultations on branch funding were held in the run up to NDC 2016 including one with the NEC finance team. Training sessions on branch finance arrangements have been held for both the core branch officer teams and the organising team. Further training sessions will be held for all branches following production of the new guidance on budgeting.
Participation & Structures

Proportionality and fair representation and operation of UNISON NI structures

The gender distribution of our membership in NI is 83% women.

The Constitution of Regional Council ensures proportionality. Branches and other lay structures fully co-operate to ensure that delegates are proportional on the basis of gender. Self-organised groups and specialist groups participate and the average turnout for Regional Council is more than 85%. Women’s participation at the 2015 Regional Council was 78%.

The Regional Committee met in formal session 4 times since last Regional Council. The Committee has 38 members and its composition currently stands at 76% women. All meetings were quorate. 5 members did not attend throughout the year for a variety of reasons.

Table 7 – Regional Committee sub-structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch development group</th>
<th>Education group</th>
<th>Regional pool group</th>
<th>Regional implementation group (also GPF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gabrielle Carton</td>
<td>Gabrielle Carton</td>
<td>Gabrielle Carton</td>
<td>Gabrielle Carton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denis Keatings</td>
<td>Denis Keatings</td>
<td>Denis Keatings</td>
<td>Denis Keatings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margaret McKee</td>
<td>Dawn Emerson</td>
<td>Margaret McKee</td>
<td>Margaret McKee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucia McKeever</td>
<td>Irene Graham</td>
<td>Lucia McKeever</td>
<td>Lucia McKeever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alastair Long</td>
<td>Daphne Harper</td>
<td>Alastair Long</td>
<td>Alastair Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aine Brennan</td>
<td>Maura McKenna</td>
<td>Roisin Byrne</td>
<td>Roisin Byrne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Brown</td>
<td>And representatives from Branch Education Officers, ULRs, lay tutors</td>
<td>Angela Gribben</td>
<td>Roisin McKinley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberta Magee</td>
<td></td>
<td>Maura McKenna</td>
<td>Noël Muldoon</td>
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</table>

Our joint Regional Convenors, Gabrielle Carton and Denis Keatings, were re-elected at last year’s Regional Council and have presided over all formal meetings of our regional lay structures and a series of important engagements at HQ level. The Convenors have been active in securing commitments on resources, the development of the GPF, and better arrangements with the centre on handling political devolution.

The Regional Implementation Group comprises the senior activists listed above. The Group oversees implementation of Regional Committee and NEC policy between meetings of the Regional Committee.
The Group also has responsibility for decisions on local applications to the General Political Fund (GPF) and carries out a Standing Orders function for Regional Council.

NEC: Margaret McKee, Alastair Long and Lucia McKeever are the NEC members for NI.

UNISON Vice-President: Following NDC in June, we are pleased to announced that Margaret McKee, our NEC member representing low paid women workers, was elected as UNISON Vice President. We wish her good luck on behalf of all members.

Self organised and special issue groups

‘Giving voice to tackling disadvantage and combating discrimination’

The Regional Committee continues to support and take strategic advice from our self-organised and special interest groups. All have played a vital role in UNISON-wide campaigns over the past year while continuing to deliver on their own extensive work programmes. The following brief reports highlight their key activities.

Women’s Committee

The Women’s Committee has 45 members representing all branches in the region. In 2016, Committee members again participated extensively in a wide range of organising and campaigning activity. The following is a synopsis.

UNISON National Women’s Conference: Committee members fully participated in all UNISON national and regional seminars. The NI motion for the national Women’s Conference 2016 called for the creation of an new Agenda on Equality and Human Rights and called on the national Women’s Committee to work with UNISON regional women’s committees to move the issue of equality and women’s rights from silo to centre stage in all aspects of UNISON policy making and implementation. The Committee continues to work on all the key issues in the motion impacting on our women members including:

- the campaign against welfare & benefit cuts;
- the campaign to eliminate zero hours contracts;
- the campaign for a living wage;
- domestic violence partnerships;
- women’s health;
- women in prisons;
- UNISON women’s participation, and
- our positive action training programme.

The ICTU Biennial Women’s Conference took place on 3rd and 4th March 2016 in Mullingar and a full UNISON delegation attended. The UNISON delegation played a prominent role at the conference and fringe events. A record number of new first time delegates and speakers participated. The conference theme was ‘1916 -2016 celebrating a century of women’s struggle and history’. The UNISON motion on calling on both governments to end zero hours contracts, north and south, was carried.
ICTU Women’s Committee: UNISON women members are represented on the ICTU Committee by Anne Speed and Margaret McKee. Both, along with the Regional Secretary, have been active participants in the TU Women’s Council of the Isles covering the ICTU, STUC, Wales TUC and TUC which is scheduled to meet in Belfast in November 2016.

A work programme based on the motions passed at the NIC ICTU Biennial Conference was adopted by the Committee and included themes such as:

- austerity and the impact on women;
- tackling violence against women;
- caring roles and women;
- flexible working patterns;
- equal pay; and
- reproductive rights.

International women’s day: UNISON women participated in a wide range of activities in the lead up to the IWD march in Belfast on 5th March. The theme was Pledge for Parity focussing on pledges to take a concrete step to help achieve gender parity more quickly - whether to help women and girls achieve their ambitions, call for gender-balanced leadership, respect and value difference, develop more inclusive and flexible cultures or root out workplace bias.

Regional education programme: Committee members continued to deliver a significant element of the regional education programme with 133 women members attending our building confidence for women; pathways; women’s health and history; and women here and now courses. These courses are particularly designed to encourage more women to become active. The large majority of new women stewards in the steward’s induction programme again came through this route in 2015/2016. Committee members have also contributed to the increase in women stewards becoming accredited health and safety representatives.

Launch of the Inez McCormick RVH Women’s Committee: In early 2016 the Regional Committee supported the Women’s Committee recommendation for the establishment of local women’s committees on flexible boundaries. We were pleased when a similar motion was carried at NDC. The Royal branch launched their RVH Women’s Committee on the 8th March this year to correspond with International Women’s Day and named it in tribute to Inez McCormack. Membership is open to all women branch members. Its main focus is on the living wage campaign and ‘abolish band 1’ campaign. Other branches have been organising local events to encourage women to become involved in localised campaigning.

The impact of welfare cuts on women: The Committee have set up UNISON welfare clinics and workshops across various branches. These have attracted major support from the members.

Women in prisons: Over the past year Committee members have completed 3 sessions of the Health and History course with women prisoners at Hydebank. Additional members are now being trained as lay tutors to take part in these sessions.
Violence against women: The Committee continues to monitor and promote UNISON’s domestic violence programme. Trained UNISON women stewards continue to provide domestic abuse support to staff across Health Trusts. The Committee is monitoring the success of the project and developing a new initiative with Onus. Pamela Dooley and Roberta Magee will present our progress to a fringe meeting at NDC 2017.

Campaigns & demonstrations: Throughout the year Committee members continued to play a full and active role in UNISON demonstrations. We have been actively involved in the public marches and demonstrations in support of the campaign for a living wage, the move against single to monthly pay and the May Day rally.

UN Committees: Following its involvement last year in preparing evidence to be incorporated into the UNISON submission to ICSECR, members have also been involved in the recent visits by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racism (CERD) and the recent hearing on abortion by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Assembly Elections: The committee endorsed the Women’s Manifesto and incorporated it, along with its own policies, into the UNISON Manifesto. Committee members participated in hustings both regionally and locally.

UNISON Vice President and TUC Women’s Gold Badge Winner: The Committee is enormously proud that our NEC member and women’s activist Margaret McKee has been elected to serve as UNISON Vice president. This news was only surpassed by the news that she had won the TUC Women’s Gold Badge in September 2016. In what has been a year marked by deep tragedy for Margaret we are delighted that her commitment has been recognised in this way.

Margaret McKee receives TUC Gold Badge for outstanding services to women and the trade union movement from Francis O’Grady, TUC General Secretary

Tributes: The Committee was deeply shocked at the death of its member Lorraine Clyde. Lorraine was a member of the North Eastern Education Branch and a new member to the women’s committee. She had spoken at the ICTU Women’s Conference earlier in the year but was killed in a tragic road accident. She will be missed.

We also pay tribute to Barbara Mullen, UCHT - our long-standing member who recently retired and died shortly afterwards. We extended love and condolences to Margaret McKee on the murder of her son Conor and we will miss our champion Jonathan Swallow. On a happier note, we wish our long-standing women’s activist Marjorie Trimble well on her retirement and hope she will continue to support our work.

LGBT Group

Since last year’s Regional Council the LGBT group has delivered a full programme of activity. 4 members attended UNISON National LGBT Conference and the key priorities for work this year were:
- supporting transgender members;
- increasing LGBT visibility in workplaces;
- campaigning for civil marriage equality.

As part of this, UNISON members attended a wide range of events and worked with other allies and branches. We also increased our LGBT member circulation list and issued 10 LGBT ebulletins. This year our visibility and contribution has been recognised by a nomination in the Gay NI Magazine Awards in a LGBT friendly facilitator category with winners being announced at a gala event.
Summary of activity

- We sponsored an event at Outburst Arts Festival in Belfast in November.
- UNISON members, LGBT and straight, attended a range of events to show support for people past and present and contribute to discussions within the wider community.
- We participated at International Transgender Day of Remembrance (20th Nov) events in Belfast & Derry to remember transgender people all over the world murdered because of their gender identity.
- We attended the Act of Remembrance in January at the Belfast City Hall Cenotaph to those LGBT people who were murdered as part of the Holocaust.
- We hosted joint information event with HSC LGBT Staff Forum on the HSC Pension Scheme.
- We attended the Belfast City Hall vigil in June in the wake of the massacre at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando.
- In June we participated at the roundtable LGBT sector discussion held by the US Consulate to explore how Obama’s pro-LGBT agenda could support groups in NI.
- We attended a meeting of LGBT organisations in August with the Finance Minister Máirtín Ó Muilleoir to identify the needs of the sector.
- UNISON Community and voluntary sector branch organised a fundraising disco for Foyle Pride as part of its launch in August and members took part in the football v homophobia 5 aside event.
- In September we were represented in September on the Newry Trades Council discussion panel as part of Newry Pride on LGBT issues in the workplace.

Supporting Trans Issues: As part of our commitment to the transgender community we facilitated 3 meetings of organisations from the transgender sector which is going through some conflict to help them work towards a collaborative approach. We also circulated the new updated Guidelines for Activists Supporting Trans Members to take account of non binary and other identities.

The BSO, on behalf of the health service, is drafting a transgender employment policy and we inputted into the pre-consultation phase with the formal consultation phase due later this year. We also inputted into the Equality Commission gender equality seminar to feed into their gender equality policy priorities.

In partnership with Middletown Centre for Autism in September we brought over a renowned transgender academic and campaigner, Dr Wenn Lawson, and hosted a seminar on Gender Dysphoria and Autism, which is an emerging area of research.

Increasing Visibility: UNISON hosted an event for older LGBT people as part of LGBT Awareness Week in May. The evening, focused on benefits, was supported by Agnes Fraser and Age NI.

There were 3 Pride parades - Belfast on 6th Aug, Foyle on 27th Aug and Newry on 3rd Sept. To promote each festival and encourage people to support it, over 10,000 emails were sent out to members along with information via social media. UNISON had the largest contingent of any trade union in each parade. Photographs and videos are available on www.facebook.com/LGBT-Unison-NI-138564629499730 and were shared via the main Facebook page.

In addition, UNISON supported the HSC LGBT Staff Forum info stalls in 13 hospitals and health venues local to each Pride – Mater, Antrim, Lagan Valley, Knockbracken, HSCB/PHA, RVH, BCH, Musgrave, Tyrone County, Altnagelvin, Craigavon, Downe and Daisy Hill. The group extends thanks to our health branches who supported the stalls. Over 800 rainbow lanyards were distributed to staff to increase visibility and promote inclusive workplaces.

Love Equality – Campaign for Civil Marriage Equality: ICTU, Amnesty International, NUS-USI and the LGBT sector are partners in the NI campaign for civil marriage equality. It aims to engage with political and civil society to bring about the introduction of same sex civil marriage.
UNISON LGBT has actively promoted the campaign and events, encouraging members to contact MLA candidates prior to the Assembly election and attend rallies to show support. With the new Assembly a Private Members Bill will be introduced in late 2016 and we will seek support from UNISON members to lobby their local representatives. Motions have been passed at Regional Council and will be going to the UNISON National LGBT Conference in November 2016.

Disability Group

Concerned at a fall off in attendance at the Disability Group, the Regional Committee took direct action to remind branches of the importance of participation and the requirement to ensure that issues affecting our members with disabilities are prominent on the bargaining agenda, as well as the policy agenda.

To assist reorganising the Group and involving more members with disabilities, a new UNISON Disability Rights leaflet was issued in August. As a result, more branches have now nominated to the group.

Conferences and events: In the course of the year, Group members have participated in the UNISON National Disability Committee, and events, seminars and training courses through UNISON and with ICTU.

Bargaining agenda: As reported in Section 2, UNISON negotiators have challenged public sector employers to demonstrate stronger commitment to screening and equality impact assessments. This is of particular importance for our members with disabilities who have frequently found themselves in the front line of cuts to both jobs and services.

Work programme: The Group’s work programme includes:

- initiatives on wider branch participation given that many current Group members already hold senior positions within the union;
- the development of a disability newsletter setting out the issues being raised by UNISON negotiators on both the bargaining and public policy agendas and encouraging participation;
- wider involvement of UNISON members with disabilities in the campaign on welfare reform;
- joint work with NGOs tackling disability hate crime; and
- joint work with the Women’s Committee on the impact of disability on women.

Black and Migrant Workers’ Group

The Black and Migrant Workers group (B&B&MW) met bi-monthly since last Regional Council and continued to send an e-bulletin to all black and migrant worker members in the region after each meeting. Updates are also posted regularly on our UNISON Migrant Workers page on Facebook.

The group held an information session on pensions for migrant workers after its November meeting.

Black Members’ Conference: In January 2016 a delegation attended the Black Members Conference in Llandudno, North Wales. A report on the conference was prepared by all the participants and distributed to all migrant worker members. Our delegation had 2 regional delegates and 3 branch delegates (from North and West Belfast; Royal Hospitals and Belfast Education).
The Group supported motions on the negative impact of immigration legislation and on the UNISON support to a devastated area in Nepal. Our own motion asked once again for pressure to be put on the NMC to revise the English language criteria and was supported unanimously.

**Conferences and events:** Members of our Group attended various conferences and seminars throughout the year, including an ICTU employment seminar in March and the annual May Day rally. The group was also involved in some of the activities around the refugee crisis including collections and fundraisers. Links were established with a Kenyan community group. KANI’s chairperson attended one of our meetings and a delegation from our group went to their Madaraka Day Celebration 2016. A member of the group was part of the UNISON delegation of nurses to receive the Freedom of the City in Belfast City Hall in June.

**Education:** The group linked with the education team to organise some revalidation workshops in early 2016 in two Kerala community groups in West Belfast. Both workshops were very well attended and appreciated.

We hosted a ‘Belonging’ project public exhibition in the UNISON building in March 2016. The exhibition was launched with a workshop timed to be part of the events surrounding International Women’s Day. The Workshop used different forms of media and interactive activities to foster discussion about integration, diversity and identity in NI.

**New Survey:** The group is currently circulating a questionnaire to our black and migrant workers in the region to see what new issues are emerging for that group and to try to identify new activists.

**Campaigning:** The group was pleased to see progress at last on the IELTS issue. The NMC introduced an English criteria for European nurses in January and went on to accept that the IELTS result could be consolidated over two sittings of the exam. Although this is a very small change, it will make a significant difference to many and falls in line with some of the recommendations our group had made in its consultation response and in the various petitions and letters sent to the NMC over the last two years.

**EU referendum and rising racism:** Although NI voted to remain, the overall referendum result dealt a serious blow to many migrant workers living here. The debates pre and post referendum have contributed greatly to a dangerous normalisation of racist discourse. The number of racist incidents during and since the vote also soared. UNISON NI has called on all members to remain vigilant to support our European, black and migrant workers in these dangerous times.

While most of the activists in the B&MW group are from outside Europe, all were very supportive of their European colleagues who are now likely to discover the many pitfalls of having to deal with immigration restrictions. UNISON’s materials giving advice to European members has been widely circulated.
Our group will also endeavour to organise access to advice locally from our allies in the network. The group is also involved in contributing and circulating the many petitions asking for reassurance as to the right to remain for European migrant workers living here.

CERD and NICEM: Recently our allies in the NI Council for Ethnic Minorities hosted the Chair of the UN CERD committee at Stormont to receive the committee’s recommendations to the UK Government on action it needs to take to tackling racism. Many of the recommendations relate directly to NI. We are concerned that at a time when these recommendations are being highlighted and the Government is yet to give real effect to a race strategy, our colleagues in NICEM face protective notice because of funding problems. We are pleased that UNISON has moved swiftly to support them.

Immigration advice clinic: Our immigration advice clinic became increasingly busy in 2016. Sadly, this also coincided with our solicitor leaving us to move back to England in August. The group struggled to find a new immigration advice provider but was delighted to finally get an agreement with Stephen Hollywood from ArcoLaw solicitors. Stephen has years of experience in immigration law and the clinic started again at the beginning of October.

The immigration clinic is a very important service for migrant workers. It has been a useful recruiting tool for activists and an essential service for members. The recruitment of new international nurses along with the consequences of EU exit will make this service all the more invaluable in the coming months and we are hoping the it can be expanded.

English classes: The English classes have been ongoing and are still very popular (and a useful recruiting tool to approach newly arrived migrants). We continue to provide a general English class in the afternoon and an IELTS preparation class from 5.00 to 7.00 every Wednesday. There have been three batches of classes since last October with 71 attendances.

Special issue groups

Retired Members’ Forum

The Retired Members Forum met quarterly this year. The Forum has 41 members and its composition currently stands at 73% women.

Recruitment and organising: The Forum continues to offer its services to branches to assist in recruitment and organising campaigns. Northern Health, Royal Hospitals and UCHT branches have taken up this offer.

Public service cuts: Forum members continue to participate in all UNISON rallies, strikes and demonstrations in opposition to cuts in public services, the welfare state and pensions. Members have continued to distribute UNISON information on this issue across wider trade union structures and community networks.

Campaigns and lobbying: The Forum has continued to campaign and lobby on a series of key UNISON priorities throughout the year including:

- opposing cuts in health, education, social care, and the welfare state;
- highlighting the implications of pensions reform and fuel poverty;
- domestic rates and corporation tax;
- community safety;
• building relationships with the UNISON Youth Group and the ICTU Young Members Group.

Conferences and meetings: Members are active on a variety of UNISON, ICTU and NGO bodies. In the course of 2016, a range of group members have participated in the Pensioners Parliament which brings together 200 pensioners on a wide range of campaigns and is organised by the Age Sector Platform.

Angela Boorman and Mary Ferris were delegates at the inaugural ICTU North/South retired workers’ seminar that took place in Dublin in February.

The Forum members listed in Table 8 represent UNISON NI on both union bodies and external campaign initiatives.

We were saddened by the death of our long serving member and former National committee rep, Dorothy Hutton. We send love and condolences to her family, our members Pamela Dooley and Caroline Butler – all part of the UNISON family.

### Table 8– Representation on structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Representatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National UNISON Retired Members Committee</td>
<td>Angela Boorman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNISON Retired Members Standing Orders Committee</td>
<td>Joyce Griffin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNISON NI Regional Committee</td>
<td>Mary Ferris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Sector Platform</td>
<td>Martin Gallagher, Sarah McKeown &amp; Victor Murphy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Pensioners Convention</td>
<td>Rosaleen Davidson &amp; Martin Gallagher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Retired Members Committee</td>
<td>Angela Boorman &amp; Archie Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNISON National Conference</td>
<td>Bernadette Johnston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Northern Biennial Conference</td>
<td>Sarah McKeown &amp; Mary Ferris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNISON Retired Members Conference</td>
<td>Martin Gallagher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Young Members’ Forum

The Young Members’ Forum met 8 times over the year and has increased its membership by 50% over the year. However, activists continue to come from a small number of branches and Regional Committee has renewed the call for full branch participation and the formation of young members groups at branch level.

To facilitate increased attendances, a decision was taken to hold meetings in a different workplace each quarter. This has been successful in getting support from branches and also in generating interest from new members.

Events and conferences: 6 young members attended the National Young members weekend in Leicester and considered campaigns on homelessness and low pay. Throughout the year young members were also highly visible in all lobbies and demonstrations and again took part in a range of events organised by ICTU Youth during the 2016 May Day Festival.

National Young Member’s Forum: Sinead Liddy was re-elected as chair of the national young members forum and continues to be an exceptional representative for young people and UNISON NI at a national level.

The Forum met recently with representatives from the retired members forum and have agreed a joint recruitment initiative.
The Health & Safety Group met twice before its Secretary, Nuala Conlon, suffered a serious accident at home. We wish her a speedy recovery. Meetings are due to resume in November 2016. However, the Regional Committee programme of training and re-training all UNISON reps in health & safety continues apace.

Health & safety training: Our health and safety group continues to co-ordinate and encourage participation in training and activity. The health and safety training and retraining initiative is now in its second year and more than one quarter of existing stewards have undertaken the accredited training.

The Open College Network accredited ‘Training Safety reps’ courses for 2015/16 trained a further 83 reps bringing the total trained in the past 3 years to 218 participants. This course provides an opportunity for students to undertake workplace inspections. Uptake on the stress course remains high.

Austerity and health & safety: Attacks on public services continue and we continue to press for legislation similar to that in Scotland. This was a key demand in the UNISON Assembly election manifesto 2016. ICTU negotiations with the new Minister are scheduled for November.

Service groups

Our two service groups are the Health Service Group (covering all health care workers in the public and private sectors) and our Local Government and Education Group (covering the entire education service, local government and other public bodies).

Health Service Group: There are 52 members of the Health Service Group and its composition currently stands at 54% women. Overall attendance this year averaged 55% The attendance of women members averaged 55%, compared to 45% for men.

In the workplace, our health & safety reps have returned to challenging staffing shortages, non filling of posts and cutbacks in materials and equipment using health & safety inspections as a tool and the legislation as leverage. A range of branches report local successes despite the cutbacks.

We have called on the H&SE to investigate the death of 2 care workers in a road traffic accident. One of them was our own activist. We have previously highlighted the dangers of forcing care workers in the private sector to double and treble up on clients in the same time period and the failure to allocate travel time in the daily schedules. We intend to pursue this issue to the full.

Workers memorial day: A UNISON delegation again participated in the ICTU event at Stormont to mark Workers’ Memorial Day.

HSE/ICTU safety rep award: We are disappointed to learn that this award which has been won several times by UNISON activists may not be repeated. We await the outcome of discussion between ICTU and the Health and Safety Executive.

Following the motions adopted at 2015 Regional Council, the Group has:
- reviewed its constitution to ensure inclusion and proportionality;
- continued the challenge function of our representatives on Trust negotiating bodies;
- led the challenge to regional pay;
- contested cuts to NI services at every level;
- taken new initiatives to align UNISON bargaining with campaigning;
- challenged and opposed privatisation, and worked to protect direct provision of
domiciliary care and resist NHS residential home closures;
- held special meetings to develop a response on the pay deficit;
- developed a work programme in the regional nurses and social care forums;
- developed our negotiating and campaigning agenda in these areas;
- encouraged the recruitment and development of new reps;
- established an Industrial Action Strategy Committee.

From August 2015 ROs now have a clear co-lead alongside UNISON Trust JNC Chairs.

The Social Care Forum has
- responded to attempts by employers to shift responsibility for the administration of medicines to domiciliary care staff;
- worked with the Head of Bargaining and the Head of Organising on the publication of a UNISON guide for NISCC registration and the code of conduct;
- worked with Area Organisers on the campaign to resist a move to a Single Pay Frequency.

Local Government and Education Service Group: There are 21 service group members and its composition currently stands at 67% women. Overall attendance at the Group averaged 41%. The attendance of women members averaged 45%, compared to 19% for men. In its work programme the Group prioritised:
- supporting the UNISON campaign to lift NJC pay;
- securing implementation of NJC pay awards;
- managing negotiating demands on the impact of a transition to the Education Authority;
- protecting our members in school mergers and amalgamations;
- defending catering, cleaning and school based staff against threats of privatisation;
- organising and recruiting new members across the education sector.

The service group has prioritised networks to focus on the issues facing the largest groups of members – school cleaners, school caterers and classroom assistants and is encouraging branches to combine to bid for GPF support for a school meals campaign in particular.

Our service groups met separately and jointly throughout the year to plan the campaign to protect services. The main vehicle for joint meetings of the groups is Team UNISON which also involves all branches and our other lay structures to ensure coordination.

The service group has initiated a Support Services Forum to tackle the growing problem of job cuts, casualisation and precarious contracts faced by our largest group of members. The forum will also play a role in growing the support services steward base and fair representation of these occupational groups in union and bargaining structures.

The Nurses Forum has:
- led briefing sessions in a number of branches on NMC nurse revalidation;
- produced specialised materials aimed at our nursing membership, including information on nurse revalidation and nurse registration;
- produced another edition of the Nurses Forum Bulletin aimed at nurse members;
- extended the representation of UNISON nurses in a number of professional policy forums (NIPEC).
UNISON NI is represented by a wide range of activists on UNISON national structures.

The Regional Committee thanks all our reps for their work throughout the year.

**Table 9 – UNISON national structures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNISON NATIONAL STRUCTURES</th>
<th>NI REPRESENTATIVES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNISON Vice President</td>
<td>Margaret McKee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEC</td>
<td>Lucia McKeever, Margaret McKee and Alastair Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Govt Service Group Exec</td>
<td>Gabrielle Carton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Govt Sector Committees</td>
<td>NJC – Maggie Montgomery and Irene Graham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Service Group Executive</td>
<td>Roberta Magee, Maura McKenna &amp; Jill Weir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Sector Committees</td>
<td>Ambulance - Alistair Long; Operational Services - John Murray; Nursing - Eoin Stewart; Science &amp; Technical - Stephen McNeill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>Vacant as a result of privatisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Committee</td>
<td>Ann Brown and Roisin McKinley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability Committee</td>
<td>Ann Donnelly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT Committee</td>
<td>Election scheduled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Young Members Forum</td>
<td>Sinead Liddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Safety</td>
<td>Claire Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Black Members Committee</td>
<td>Election scheduled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Social Care Forum</td>
<td>Sharon Woods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Retired Members</td>
<td>Angela Boorman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developing membership services

The UNISON College

Our re-branded UNISON College encompasses our trade union Education and Training Programme, our Life Long Learning Programme and our Continuing Professional Development Programme. It continues to be identified by members as one of our most important areas of work.

Over the past period we recruited for 58 courses in our activist programme with 55 continuing professional development workshops attracting a total of 1447 participants.

Government funding for elements of trade union education is being withdrawn in England and Wales and this will have a dramatic impact on provision. The NEC is currently considering new models of funding and support. The UNISON NI model of direct branch financial support is being considered as a possible model for the union as a whole.

The value of our UNISON NI programme was recognised by Prof. Michael Marmot, Head of the World Medical Organisation (extract below) in his highly influential review of the English Health Service.

Case Study: Improving lifelong learning opportunities for low-paid workers

In Northern Ireland, the union UNISON has developed a partnership programme with Health and Social Care Trusts and the Open University. Staff from across disciplines in health and social care are eligible, including those working in direct care provision, administration, catering, cleaning, security and labs. The programme aims to support health and social care staff to improve their practice, develop knowledge and skills and to award them with a qualification that would support them to improve their skills and job possibilities.

The academic course engages learners who may never have considered university study an option for them. Approximately 70 per cent of those coming onto the programme left school with fewer than five O’Levels/GCSEs. UNISON developed a study skills course and an exam preparation day as part of the programme and negotiated release for staff to attend tutorials. Additional support was put in place for learners with dyslexia and close contact between UNISON and the Open University during each course ensured that extra support could be provided for learners if needed. This has resulted in a much higher retention rate than the UK average.

Participants have used the course to enter preregistration nurse training, gain job promotions (for example, a kitchen stores worker [band 1] applied and succeeded in gaining a position as a rehab worker [band 3]) and pursue further study with the Open University towards a full degree.

The partnership has supported over 500 low-paid workers to access the level 4 Health & Social Care certificate, which awards 60 credits towards a degree.

For more information see www.ulearnni.org
Progress of the 2015/2016 Education and Training Programme

To publicise more fully what is available to members, and to aid recruitment, we used a variety of promotional tools including the current course programme book, an A4 format, social media, direct emails as well as postal mail for those not on email. We also now have a bespoke email address for education, so any member of the team can respond to enquiries.

While the majority of our courses take place in the UNISON centres in Belfast and Derry, we have offered training in Coleraine, Enniskillen, Bangor and Omagh.

ICTU have developed new arrangements with the South Eastern Regional College which is now providing accreditation for our 6-day Organising Stewards and Health & Safety training. In order to offer it as an accredited course, a minimum number of participants is required. At times this has been challenging.

We are seeking to map the activist training more closely with the branch assessments, supporting branches to identify what skills they need and allocating activists to training.

We have had very positive feedback from ICTU’s short courses on employment law and equality which are run in partnership with the Equality Commission and Labour Relations Agency. We hope to encourage more participation from UNISON activists in the coming year.

Education and training uptake by course and main topic

The organising steward: We trained a further 118 new stewards in the Organising Steward Module 1 and 2. As we increase our membership in private organisations and the community & voluntary sector, the 6 day model is a challenge for activists in those sectors. This will require specific outreach and models of delivery to accommodate a growing membership which does not yet have access to release. We are now preparing to run one programme across 12 evenings to accommodate those in the schools sector in particular.

Negotiation & representation: On advice from the Regional Committee’s Education Group we are currently reworking many of our specialist negotiating courses. Our colleague Jonathan Swallow’s untimely death has left a significant gap in this area and we are identifying several new trainers to take on board the task. The new programme will be available from Autumn 2016.

Campaigning: 2015/16 was a busy year for campaigns and to support branches PPR delivered ‘Developing a Campaign for Change’ which utilises models from international trade unions and human rights organisations. In addition to running one course as part of the education programme, the Ulster Community & Hospital branch invited PPR to run a session for their activists. Another session is planned before the end of 2016.
Health & safety: Involvement in these programmes continues to grow with a significant number of experienced activists and newer stewards having now completed their training. Over 50% of those who undertook the course were women. Feedback from branches has been very positive and it has greatly increased engagement around health and safety in many workplaces.

Branch officer training: This year’s programme offered training for a range of branch officer posts. As many of the longer standing post holders did not require training, a new workshop was developed to support the working relationship between branch secretaries and branch chairs. This worked particularly well where both office bearers attended, and it is planned to re-run it in 2017. We also had a particular focus on branch finance, running 3 sessions aimed at supporting branch officers to plan their spend and align it more closely to branch plans as well as ensuring compliance with the rule book. Further courses on the new budgeting process will be run in Autumn 2016.

Development education for women: Once again, particular outreach and the direct involvement of the Women’s Committee and the Head of Organising has ensured that this is one of the most effective parts of our Education Programme.

Regional Committee identifies our Development Education for Women programme as one of the essential core elements of union building.

Pathways continues to be a lynchpin of developing the women member activist base with 41 participants this year. This course now targets new women stewards as well as those who are interested in getting more involved.

Communicating with members and the public: UNISON activists are in increasing demand by the media as we raise concerns about workplace issues and cutbacks. Dealing confidently with both radio and television has become a crucial skill for senior activists. The UNISON HQ Comms team delivered a day’s training limited to five participants giving them hands on experience in front of a camera and in radio interview situations. We also brought in a journalist to work with branch officers on writing effective press releases.

We have a group of lay activists who are highly competent in dealing with the press, but this resource needs to be expanded.

General member courses: We offered our dealing with stress and bullying at work course in both Coleraine and Enniskillen this year. Our Planning for Retirement course remains one of our most popular with over 66 members attending. Another session is scheduled before the end of 2016.

Union learning reps: We now have 25 trained ULRs and the Programme is currently being surveyed and evaluated by ICTU. Regional Committee and the education group have both prioritised an increase in ULRs for 2016/17 given the value of the role and the fact that statutory release for this function is being under utilised by most branches.
### Table 10 – Attendance by Course, 1 Oct 2015 to 30 Sept 2016

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>No. of Sessions</th>
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<td>The Organising Steward (Module 2)</td>
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<td><strong>STEWARDS &amp; REPRESENTATION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing representation skills</td>
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<td>Repres. members at sickness absence</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>Shared Learning - Working Time Directive</td>
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<td>Shared Learning - Understanding School Sectors</td>
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<td>Branch Based Budgeting</td>
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<td>Writing Effective Press Releases</td>
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<td>Pathways</td>
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<td>Women's health &amp; history</td>
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<td>Women seen and heard</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
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<td>2014/15 (%)</td>
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<td>45 (81%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014/15 (%)</td>
<td>11 (19%)</td>
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<thead>
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<th>GLOBAL SOLIDARITY</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2014/15 (%)</td>
<td>1 (16%)</td>
<td>5 (84%)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>682</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160 (23%)</td>
<td>191 (23%)</td>
<td>612 (77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>522 (77%)</td>
<td>612 (77%)</td>
<td>612 (77%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progress of the UNISON Lifelong Learning and Workplace Learning Programme 2015-2016

Union Learning Fund: During the year UNISON continued to deliver successfully on the Union Learning Fund outcomes, surpassing many of the targets. The fund supports key areas of the lifelong learning programme including Open University provision and the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Programme. Over the past twelve months we have supported members to access over £75,000 worth of education grants, negotiated with employers to part fund £50,000, secured external funding of £34,000 and spent approximately £35,000 of branch contributions on learning programmes including K101 and Continuing Professional Development.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD): We aim to give our members the opportunity to develop professionally and personally so they can reach their potential within their role. In the last year we delivered 55 workshops across a range of topics. Due to the new NMC Revalidation processes we offered revalidation workshops in nine locations across NI. We also offered a number of nurse specific workshops to support nurse members to meet their revalidation requirements.

Essential skills: Essential skills programmes have continued in the Western, Northern and Belfast Trusts. However, numbers have been low apart from those which have been embedded into QCF qualifications. We have promoted Essential Skills and directed members to their local colleges. The numeracy module has proved popular particularly by those who wish to apply for the pre-reg nursing programme.

Open University: The K101 Introduction to Health & Social Care module continues to offer our members a real opportunity to progress into new roles. 105 people from Belfast, Western, South Eastern, Northern & Southern Trusts completed the Open University K101 Introduction to Health & Social Care in June 2016. This continues to give us the highest retention and pass rate in the UK. Some of the learners secured places on the pre-reg nursing programme which commenced in October. Others are continuing study with the Open University working towards degree programmes or to gain sufficient credits to apply for QUB or UU.

Recruitment for the 2016/17 intake took place in June with a record 141 applications. Not all of these followed through mad some were diverted to more suitable courses. We undertook negotiations with the Department of Health and the Minister as there was no funding available this year for K101 via the Department or the Trusts. This resulted in additional funding being secured and 117 students commenced in October. 80% of these identify as bands 1-3.

UNISON also promoted the K117 Advancing Your Healthcare Practice which is the second module in the pre-reg nursing programme and the Department of Health made funding available to enable those who complete to apply to enter the nursing programme at Year 2. As a result, 36 of our members who completed K101 with us last year gained places. This module is £2500 so is too expensive to undertake on a self funded basis.

The lifelong learning agenda has continued to raise our profile across NI, has resulted in direct recruitment of new members and has supported retention of current ones. We are continuing to work with the British Association of Occupational Therapists and have hosted three events to promote specialist practice areas.
Partnerships and representation

In each Trust, local UNISON reps are involved in education/learning groups. The nature of these committees does vary from Trust to Trust. UNISON has a number of seats on each one.

These partnerships are serviced by local branch reps. However, the ‘partnership of equals’ which we originally established now needs to be restored and the partnerships need to comprise of UNISON Union Learning Reps (ULRs) and Education Officers. We have commenced work to bring this change about. The focus of these partnerships is widening participation and developing new pathways for staff to progress.

UNISON is also represented on a number of external bodies relating to learning and career development including:

- NI Social Care Council Social Work/Care Strategy Implementation Group;
- Regional Palliative Care working group;
- Dementia Learning & Development Framework;
- Regional Pressure Ulcer Prevention working group;
- NIPECP Developing Healthcare Support Roles working group;
- DHSSPS Domiciliary Care Workforce Development group.

Communication

The current UNISON course programme book has continued to be very popular with members and is distributed personally by branch reps and is also accessible on-line. Bespoke A4 flyers for the CPD programme have proved an effective tool for member meetings, workplace walk arounds, student recruitment and for member mailings. It has been particularly useful for members working in nursing homes who often have less access to training through their employer. Courses are promoted on the main UNISON Facebook page and a bespoke Education Facebook page has been set up. There is now an education section on the UNISON NI part of the national website and it has been very useful for members downloading forms and programmes. Some branches were able to promote our courses directly on the intranet which yielded enquiries from members/managers who were unaware of what we offer.

Programme Delivery

Open University: K101 was delivered across five Trusts supported by the UNISON study skills programme and paid release from employers.

Essential Skills Literacy, Numeracy & ICT: Essential Skills through IT and Essential Skills Numeracy courses have continued to run with Western Trust, Belfast Trust and Northern Trust. However, numbers have decreased.
### Courses run through employers

Table 12 highlights courses run through the employers with the majority of staff receiving release to attend. These courses are open to all employees, not just UNISON members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belfast Trust</td>
<td>4 x ES Literacy 2 x ES Numeracy 1 x ES ICT</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Trust</td>
<td>2 x ES Literacy 1 x ES Numeracy</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Trust</td>
<td>2 x ES Numeracy 2 x ES Literacy</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Eastern Trust</td>
<td>4 x ES Literacy</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>166</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Continuing professional development

The CPD programme continues to be a key organising and recruitment tool. Feedback from branches and individual members has been very positive about the quality and content of the provision. In addition to meeting some professional needs of our members, the programme also delivers on the UNISON equality agenda offering sessions around disability, sexual orientation and gender. Our programme is recognised by Queen’s University to meet the requirements of their student social workers’ flexible learning days as well as meeting CPD registration requirements for members who are registered with the NI Social Care Council, Nursing & Midwifery Council and the Health Care Professions Council.

This year we offered workshops on revalidation including working in partnership with two Indian Associations where we ran them in local communities. We have continued a focus on workshops which aim to support members to develop their own resilience and enable them to support others. These sessions are relevant to all members regardless of profession or sector. Workshops have included emotional resilience, leadership, mindfulness and positive thinking.

Over the past twelve months this programme offered 55 sessions attracting 801 learners (Table 13). Over 80% of those who access our programme are women members. We have delivered courses in partnership with the Association for Real Change, Genderjam Trans Project and Middletown Centre for Autism. This means they are not just for UNISON members but offers an opportunity for us to encourage non members to join. It also allows our learning to be profiled more widely.

An ongoing benefit for UNISON is that we are still engaging members who have previously not accessed learning opportunities. We gain a captive audience
to talk to about the work of the union, the importance of local activity and encourage people to become stewards and workplace contacts.

When the CPD programme was first developed, it was funded via the Union Learning Fund. However, as the number of workshops has grown substantially, it is now also funded by the branch contribution to the overall education programme.

In developing our offering, we utilise course evaluation forms, input from the branch education officers as well as the education sub-group. We also welcome suggestions for courses which would be of interest to members. A continuing challenge is the difficulty in many members getting time off during the week to attend, particularly those in our education branches or those in admin roles.

The 2017 programme will include more evening and weekend courses and we will explore with branches options around increasing local provision.

Table 13 - Continuing Professional Development Programmes Oct 2015 to Sept 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autism - Relationship and sexuality education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism - Mental health and anxiety management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism - Sensory processing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autisms – Fundamentals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical effectiveness for nurses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating effectively to support staff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating and maintaining support for service users</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dementia - Core skills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dementia - Learning disability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting stuff done: Being more productive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling complaints and concerns</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview skills (via branches)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to coaching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing difficult situations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medications management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness - Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness for health and social care workers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OT specialist practice workshops</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palliative care - Dealing with emergencies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palliative care – Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palliative care - pain assessment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palliative care - Talking about death</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power of positive thinking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional accountability and record keeping</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective practice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revalidation for Nurses</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of occupational health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sepsis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoma Care</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide awareness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting staff through challenging times</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNISON NI Welfare Group: The group met twice in formal session this year with 13 branches participating. It has 36 members (75% women). The Group encourages all branch welfare officers to attend meetings in order to share information and good practice. The AGM is scheduled for November.

Our There for You newsletter is issued 3 times per year updating members on grant successes; encouraging branches and members to sign up to the Octopus Lottery and advertising winter fuel and school uniform grants - both of which are proving to be effective recruitment incentives.

The Group undertook welfare officers training (2 days) and domestic abuse training. It is also scheduled to undertake Debt Counselling training before year end.

Two Group members, Margretta Chambers and Irene Newton are taking part in the UNISON There for You Catalan Pyrenean Challenge in May 2017. This involves walking 40km in the Pyrenees for 3 days to raise much needed funds for this vital service.

We have not been provided with a breakdown for branches covering the past year. The overall statistics are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed cases</th>
<th>49 cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total grants</td>
<td>£17,801.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel grants</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniform grants</td>
<td>data awaited – NI branches report high activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial services

Membership Services has been rebranded from UNISON Plus to UNISON Living. We are currently waiting for new flyers to reflect this change.

LV visited the region once since last year’s Council meeting. They currently hold 219 policies for NI which represents a year on year increase.

Vauxhall liaise directly with branches to attend branch events.

UIA visited once in 2016 and report 1,124 live policies in the region. This represents a year on year increase of 5%.

Grand Opera House: A local arrangement has been negotiated with the Grand Opera House and discounts are now available to all members for all shows via a promotional code. The success and uptake of this will be monitored and reported to Regional Committee.
Abbey Insurance were very active in 2015/2016, attending 29 AGM meetings and a further 8 branch and recruitment events. This resulted in the following policies:

- Motor – 4515
- Home – 967
- Travel – 65

This is a year on year increase in every area.

Stewart Travel: It is anticipated that the company will follow up on the invitations to visit branches throughout the year. We await further information.

Legal services

The following is an update report from our solicitors Thompsons on cases and activity to the end of August 2016.

Regional Committee had a routine update meeting with Thompsons in September 2016. At the meeting we reviewed the new arrangements for telephone line contact and UNISON’s updated guidance on stress cases.

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**UNISON Personal Injury Cases From Sept 2015 to Aug 2016**

**Table 14 - UNISON Personal Injury Cases from Sept 2015 to Aug 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2015-2016</th>
<th>2014-2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cases received</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases closed</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases won</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases lost</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases discontinued/turned down</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases where no contact from client</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnaround time average</td>
<td>17 months</td>
<td>16 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damages</td>
<td>£603,929</td>
<td>£673,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Damages</td>
<td>£5,075</td>
<td>£6,873</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following are some notable outcomes:

£15,500 for Paramedic. The member received damages for injuries sustained when they tripped over a pothole.

£10,000 for Nursing Auxiliary. The member sustained repetitive strain type injuries to their hands.

£25,000 for Nursing Assistant. The member sustained injuries when they were assaulted by a patient.

£6,500 for Porter. The member sustained injuries when they were struck by the lid of a large bin during the course of their employment with a Health and Social Care Trust.

£10,000 for Classroom Assistant. The member received an injury to their left index finger.

£15,000 for Grounds Maintenance Operator. The member developed hand and vibration syndrome during the course of their employment with a Council.

£37,500 for Staff Nurse. The member tripped over a cable and fell sustaining injury during the course of their employment with a Health and Social Care Trust.

£4,500 for Support Service Worker. The member sustained a needlestick injury during the course of their employment with a Health and Social Care Trust.

## Employment Rights

In common with all offices of Thompsons Solicitors in the UK, Thompsons NI has an Employment Rights (ER) Unit in its Belfast office staffed by solicitors who specialise in employment and discrimination law and provide a range of services to support the work of union officials as below:

### Advice to Officials:
Advice and assistance is provided to full-time officials in dealing with industrial relations, employment law, and discrimination issues in the workplace.

### Advice to Members:
Where appropriate, advice is provided directly to members when they are referred by a full-time official.

### Individual Cases:
A number of more complex cases including discrimination cases are referred to the ER team to provide representation at Tribunal or in court. Cases in the last year include:

- A sectarian harassment case for three members who worked in the private sector was settled for a total of £35,000.
- A disability discrimination case for an employee in the private sector relating to a failure to make reasonable adjustments was settled for £4,500.
- A race discrimination case for a public sector employee was settled by way of an agreed severance payment of £7,500.
- A trade union discrimination case for a public sector employee was settled for £10,000.
- A significant write off of debt and reduced repayments by way of deductions from wages were achieved for a member who owed his public sector employer a considerable sum in relation to an overpayment of wages.
- A Unfair Dismissal claim for a manager of a private sector organisation was settled for £15,000.
- A redundancy payment of £2,500 was awarded by the Tribunal to an employee of a voluntary organisation.
- A Health Professional who was represented in proceedings before the Health and Care Professions Council and was threatened with being struck off for alleged dishonesty was cleared of all charges.
A number of members employed by a Health Trust who had been employed for more than 4 years on a series of fixed term contracts were granted permanent status under the Fixed Term Workers legislation following threats of legal action.

Sleepover Cases: Claims have been lodged with the Industrial Tribunal for over 250 UNISON members who work in residential facilities across various Health Trusts in relation to payments for sleepovers. Test cases should be heard in the Spring of 2017.

### Extended legal services, training and events

**Free wills service:** 68 members availed of the Free Wills Service. Solicitors attended a number of branch functions to advise on free wills.

**Criminal Law:** Criminal representation was provided for members at police stations facing both work (e.g. fraud) and non-work (e.g. road traffic) criminal allegations. For those charged, representation was provided at Court where required.

**Conveyancing:** a reduced price conveyancing service was provided to members.

**Advice service:** Legal advice was provided to individual members on a range of matters including family law and property matters. Surgeries were operated from Derry, Coleraine, Ballymena, Portadown, Omagh and Newry to enable members from outside the Greater Belfast area to access personal injury and other legal services.

**Training & events:** Solicitors from the ER and PI Departments act as tutors on courses organised by UNISON and provide speakers and information material for union seminars and events, including attendance at branch meetings to discuss particular aspects of union legal services.
"Negotiating and bargaining on behalf of members, and promoting equality"
Our bargaining sectors

Our key priority in 2016 has been to respond to significant developments in the health and education sectors and to continue the realignment to ensure local and regional negotiating bodies reflect UNISON’s bargaining priorities.

As can be seen from both sections 2 and 3 of this report, our bargaining, public policy and campaign strategies are interlinked and require us to challenge at government, public body and individual employer levels.

Health: The major announcements by the previous Health Minister on reform in the health service, focusing on the commissioner provider split and his subsequent establishment of the Bengoa Review, has impacted on all bargaining agendas. There is now widespread difficulty in securing positive employer responses to trade union demands.

However, we have scored some significant successes in strengthening employer compliance with Agenda for Change terms and conditions and in advancing maternity rights for women workers in both health and education.

The Fresh Start Agreement opened up opportunities for employers in health and education to delete posts. We have resisted giving any official support to the so-called Voluntary Exit Scheme. So far we have contained its application in health but a bigger challenge awaits us in education where large numbers of workers, demoralised by the long battle around ESA, have signed up to leave their posts.

The Westminster Government’s retreat on the removal of working tax credits gave us some respite on its impact on the pay front.

However, the NI Executive’s failure to maintain pay parity in health continues to leave us in a pay and pensions deficit. Given that NI experienced the smallest £ increase in discretionary incomes in 2016, pay remains a huge issue for our members.

Education: In the controlled and maintained sector in education we have maintained NJC pay parity for support service staff. However, in the voluntary grammar and independent sector the absence of a regional bargaining structure means we have to pursue each school as an individual employer. As in health we have committed to lifting the lower pay bands to the level of a real living wage.

Other sectors: We continue to bargain for recognition agreements in the community and voluntary sectors, GP sectors, nursing homes, and private contractors. In the private and voluntary sectors we continue to face anti-trade union attitudes; resistance to trade union recognition; disregard for workers’ rights and takeovers, mergers and contract laws.

As required by Council 2015, we have reviewed all structures responsible for bargaining strategies and their implementation.

- The Health Service Group is finalising a revised constitution which will now include protocols for the nomination and election of members to the post of chairs of health service TU joint negotiating bodies.
- Team meetings of UNISON Trust JNF Chairpersons, Regional Organisers and the Head of Bargaining and Representation are now organised on regular basis.
- The Local Government Service Group has taken on a stronger co-ordinating role with Education branches on regional bargaining priorities.
- The nurses and social care and support services forums have increased their membership and developed their co-ordinating role by responding to the Service Groups regional bargaining priorities, developing organising initiatives and encouraging branch involvement.
Bargaining for equality

In both main public sector negotiating bodies we have now moved bargaining for equality to the top of the negotiating agenda. In our other areas of organisation in the community, voluntary and private sectors, almost every issue confronting our members derives from inequality or discrimination. In the public sector it is increasingly clear that employers are side-stepping their statutory duties resulting in:

- unsafe staffing levels;
- casualised employment;
- emergence of zero hours contracts;
- attempts to encourage staff to volunteer on an unpaid basis.

As the following report indicates, these are now our priority bargaining issues.

Education Authority and related employers

Key issues

Resistance to cuts in the education budget: Since last Regional Council we have made strong representation to the department to protect and maintain the education budget. Further details on the budget are contained in Section 3.

Education Authority: The Authority has advised that there will be a funding shortfall of approximately £50m. It is currently reviewing all areas of its business and how services are delivered across its four key directorates – financial planning, children & young people’s services, operational and support services and education services. Consequently, UNISON is now on full alert and we recognise that privatisation is on the agenda of the new education minister.

The largest bargaining group is the Education Joint Negotiating Council and the Head of Bargaining leads the UNISON education bargaining team. We have been steadily developing and strengthening the UNISON team.

Service group negotiating priorities:

- Equality bargaining: We have raised a demand through the regional bargaining structure that all four directorates in the new EA fully comply with s.75 of the NI Act to implement the statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity. This requires a proper place on the negotiating agenda for monitoring and evaluation.
- Living wage: Negotiators are developing a strategy to secure the real living wage as the lowest point on NJC pay and conditions. This is linked to the UNISON (England, Wales and NI) review of the Green Book) and proposals around term-time working.
- NJC pay: We have been responding to the UNISON mandate to secure an enhanced NJC pay award for 2017/18.
- Privatisation alert: To date we have been successful in protecting and securing delivery of support services in education but are on alert.
- Voluntary exit scheme: Negotiators are resisting the extension of the civil service voluntary exit scheme to facilitate redundancies on the cheap in education.
• **Job roles:** Following the extensive work we undertook in the lead in to the creation of the Education Authority, we are now protecting and defending the job roles agreed over a long number of years including resisting the exploitative use of 2 different contracts and job roles over a working day.

• **Temporary contracts:** Negotiators are challenging the overuse of temporary contracts particularly in schools.

• **Collective agreements:** We are currently negotiating policies on public holiday entitlement, maternity leave and dignity at work.

• **Shared services:** We are currently preparing our response to a proposal for an expansion of shared services across the education sector.

• **Integrated transport scheme:** Negotiators are responding to a proposal for an integrated public transport scheme in health and education.

• **Youth services:** Negotiators are responding to a review of outdoor educational centres and its impact on our youth worker members and support service workers.

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**Further & Higher Education & Libraries**

### Association of NI Colleges (ANIC)

Our members in FE continue to come under pressure of privatisation and we continue to resist. Direct employees remain on NJC pay terms and conditions.

UNISON along with other unions who form the Trade Union side of the ANIC negotiating council submitted a pay claim for:
- the application of the two year pay award for 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 with effect from April 2016;
- allowances to the levels paid in other parts of the education sector;
- commitment to take account of developments of the joint reviews of term time working, with particular reference to the real living wage.

The employers responded with confirmation that they accept the terms of the NJC pay spine as binding on non teaching staff. They undertook to review the first aid allowance. Commitments were made that the pay uplift, together with the pay retrospection due, would be paid in September.

### Higher Education

*Justice for workers who have been outsourced (Higher Education):* Now that the NJC Pay agreement for 2016/2018 has been implemented, a pay claim is being submitted to restore NJC equivalent pay and conditions.

*Pay and the direct workforce:* UK wide negotiations on pay for the direct workforce in higher education went to the wire with the offer of 1% rejected. While members in University of Ulster and St Marys College were prepared to take on a fight, the UK wide ballot, set against the low morale of workers in this sector, did not translate into a strong mandate for industrial action. The 1% pay rise reflects the UK Government’s cap on public sector pay.

*Privatised services:* We continue to press for NJC terms and conditions. There are issues which could easily be resolved in proper negotiation as evidenced by UNISON’s
partnership work in other areas. Local stewards have also challenged on health and safety issues using their legal entitlement to facility time. The new Belfast campus for the University of Ulster is nearing completion which will result in major relocation of the workforce.

To support our members in the University of Ulster and related employers, we have allocated a Regional Organiser to take a lead on negotiations with the contractors and the University.

As reported in Section 1, an additional organising resource has been allocated to our university branches to tackle the two private contractors.

### The NI Library Authority

We have developed a Libraries bulletin which is distributed on a quarterly basis to our members.

In July 2016 UNISON responded to the public consultation on cuts to library opening hours. We challenged the proposal to reduce opening hours in the 14 busiest libraries from 54 or 50 hours to 45 hours. We said that the proposals to reduce opening hours:
- will result in further inequality in access for local communities and vulnerable groups;
- will have a detrimental impact on the social cohesion of local communities and will increase social exclusion;
- have been made without thought for the real social and economic benefits that a local, accessible, modern library service can have for local communities;
- ignore the transformative potential that local libraries have for increasing literacy and educational opportunities in our most disadvantaged areas.

We demand that:
- adequate resources and funding are needed to maintain book stock, embrace technological advances, improve all existing premises and extend opening hours;
- staff, users and local communities should be fully involved in shaping services - all libraries should ensure they are responsive and welcoming to all members of their local communities, as the best already do;
- staff training should be expanded and professional development encouraged, to support the delivery of a responsive and high quality service.

The proposals are now on hold. However, Libraries NI has stated its intent to make savings of £2.143 m (7.28%) in 2016/17.

### Youth Justice Agency

A big challenge for our membership was completion of transfer of the Youth Justice Agency to the civil service staff structure. This raised questions about pensions and UNISON membership. This continues to prove controversial as another union holds bargaining rights in this area.

Our members within Woodlands have now transferred to civil service terms and conditions. UNISON will now be requesting a seat on the Whitley Council negotiating body. UNISON has successfully resisted a threat to outsource cleaning at the Woodlands site. We have also organised recruitment events for all staff employed by private contractors at the agency’s Belfast office. Current negotiating issues include staffing levels and health and safety.

UNISON has also organised briefing meetings for all members within Youth Justice Agency private contractors. We have also made challenges to these employers on staffing levels and health and safety issues.
NILGOSC pension scheme

Our education membership and many in related agencies are members of the NILGOSC pension scheme. In compliance with legislation reviewing and amending public sector pension schemes, NILGOSC has now established a new Governance Board and training for union reps on pensions governance bodies is being provided by ICTU. UNISON has a seat on this new pension board. We are currently assessing the impact of Government changes to pension governance and their potential impact on NILGOSC.

Health

Key Issues

2016 has been another challenging year for our membership in health. In Section 3 we set out in detail the concerted and co-ordinated UNISON campaign to protect the health service. Led by the Regional Secretary we continue to produce the most comprehensive analysis of the overall health budget and the health service governance and delivery model as a whole. Our activists and lead negotiators use this analysis in both negotiations and public campaigns.

In 2016 we strengthened our influence on the bargaining agendas across all health Trusts and have significantly reduced our involvement in endless meetings with management project teams on an employer’s agenda. The UNISON bargaining teams are comprised of reps on full-time release, reps on partial release and lead negotiators from the staff team. We have worked consistently to improve communications across and within our teams.

The universal principles that guide our negotiations are detailed below.

- The abolition of the internal market in health and social care and its replacement with a public health model delivered on NHS founding principles.
- An end to outsourcing jobs to the private sector, and an end to “the consultation farce” and its replacement with real and democratic engagement.
- Transparent funding; open, honest and transparent information and an end to the manipulation of financially imposed measures and targets.

Success

Single pay frequency: UNISON opposed the proposed change from weekly or fortnightly pay to monthly pay at the bargaining table and in campaign activity at workplace and community level. This resulted in the new Health Minister deciding not to proceed with the Health Department’s proposal. We take this opportunity to pay tribute to our health support and our social care members who fought the change with great dignity and determination. They have secured a victory on behalf of the lowest paid workers in the health service and women carers, cleaners and caterers in particular.

Our mission now is to ensure that all staff in the affected grades and jobs are respected, valued and properly rewarded for their important contribution to the health care team.
This win was secured by a combination of firm negotiating, challenges on equality, public and political campaigning, and the threat of strike action across support services.

As a result of the win, membership has increased in this sector and the morale of UNISON activists received a boost.

**Mental health closures:** Earlier this year Belfast HSC Trust proposed the closure of day centre provision for people with mental health and learning disabilities in the north and west of Belfast, with a view to transfer day centre provision to the independent and voluntary sector. UNISON strongly opposed these proposals and mounted a successful campaign with other trade unions, community groups and local politicians to stop the closures. Representations were made to Belfast Health Trust Board and in July of this year Trust Board withdrew the proposals.

In 2015, UNISON Regional Council confirmed that pressure needed to be exerted to ensure that existing services in the Omagh area were retained. Following campaigning and lobbying by UNISON Omagh and Fermanagh branch, the decision was taken by the previous Health Minister to locate acute mental health services in Omagh.

**The NHS statutory care homes campaign:** Our campaign to retain the homes has entered its third year. Following the previous Minister’s decision to halt closure, our bargainers have led demands for the re-opening of admissions lists. We challenged the employers excuse that the Minister had delayed a final decision on the future of the remaining homes. Most recently, UNISON activists and members have publicly protested the closure of Pine Lodge in the Belfast HSC Trust. We continue with determined commitment to fight for the homes.

**Paediatric nurses:** A move by senior nursing management in the Northern HSC Trust to implement change for our paediatric nurses without negotiation and agreement was successfully overcome. Our members, with strong support from our senior lay reps and regional staff, rose to the challenge and were prepared to use industrial action to defend their right to negotiate. Management proposals were finally amended and UNISON members views and interests were taken on board. This strong stand led to an increase in our nurse membership.

**Muckamore Abbey:** We have long supported the change of use of Muckamore Abbey and the process has finally commenced. As traditional units close and patients are resettled into the community, UNISON negotiators have been protecting members to ensure that suitable redeployment options and pay protection arrangements are in place with the reduction in service provision on the site.

**Mater in-house win:** The Mater hospital branch has succeeded in bringing the operation of MRI scanning into public provision. Those currently employed by the service provider will be offered the option of transferring to HSC employment on AFC terms and conditions. We are encouraging the rest of our health branches to take similar action.

**Strategic health partnership:** In response to high profile UNISON lobbying, the new Minister has restored the health partnership which is scheduled to meet in October 2016.
Anne Speed, Head of Bargaining, is the lead secretary in the NI Joint Negotiating Forum. We bargain on a joint union basis through this, but also as UNISON directly with employers on a wide range of issues. The following is a summary of both.

We have linked up with the UNISON central team mandated to implement a UK wide health pay strategy. We have pushed for incorporation of removing Band 1 into their Agenda for Change refresh discussions at NHS Staff Council.

Challenging the use of agency staff and volunteers in the health service: We have reinstated an obligation on employers to provide regular stats on the use of agency staff and their costs on all bargaining agendas at Trust level and regional level. We have questioned and challenged the use of so-called volunteers wherever we have found this happening and have prevented their use as a replacement for direct employment.

Disability and sickness absence policies: We have succeeded in neutralising a previous negative policy and continue to work on strengthening the clauses protecting workers with disability related absences.

Nursing & midwifery: In 2015, Regional Council called for pressure on the NMC to create consistent requirements to standardise the level of training and English expected of all nurses. This remains an ongoing issue and the recent overseas recruitment drive to meet nursing staff shortages has thrown this issue into sharp focus once again. UNISON continues to raise challenges to these standards at the policy and bargaining levels.

Challenging the ever increasing privatisation of domiciliary care: The proportion of private homecare provision is increasing. On the in-house side we have forced all Trusts to reintroduce contracted hours. To challenge the rise in outsourcing, we are developing new rights in the procurement process, starting with the Belfast HSC Trust which, unlike others, is prepared to co-operate. In the private sector we continue to recruit and to negotiate where we can but the majority of employers are hostile and anti-trade union.

Additional challenges: There are challenges to be pursued at the bargaining table on a number of fronts.

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Restoring pay parity and ending the pay deficit: The announcement by the Minister in June that she would implement the recommendation of the pay review body and increase pay to health staff by a consolidated 1% was not new news. The previous Health Minister, Simon Hamilton, made this announcement before the election and that decision was simply being implemented.

Many changes need to be made to health service pay including the introduction of a real living wage and the need to tackle the fact that health workers in NI have fallen behind the pay levels of their counterparts in GB. This pay deficit still leaves workers in NI the lowest paid in the whole of the NHS compared to England, Scotland and Wales. The Minister’s decision to retain weekly and fortnightly pay now clears the way for meaningful negotiations on these key issues.

Reinstating equality on the bargaining agenda: The UNISON team on regional health bargaining structures has demanded from all the reinstatement of reports on equality and human rights compliance. In addition we have opened up a conversation with BSO procurement management on its equality and human rights obligations.

Pay matters – the living wage and making band 1 history: As part of UNISON’s Assembly election intervention our health branches lobbied candidates to support our campaign for a real living wage across the health service – statutory and independent sector.
This includes:

- challenging the collusion of the Dept of Health in facilitating the private sector;
- demanding policy commitment to the provision of in-house services;
- demanding a regional and Trust based workforce planning model based on a public model.

In addition we are leading a demand for an agreed regulatory framework for the administration of medicines by social care staff.

**Protecting and strengthening support services in all Trusts:** Regional organisers have been engaged in discussions with Trusts to identify and agree staffing establishment control of agency and temporary staff and an end to zero hours contracts. We have raised the issues of staffing levels, the use of agency and temporary staff, and have called for an end to zero hours contracts. We now have some statutory basis to challenge zero hours as a result of the Employment Act (NI) 2016 that introduced a new power to create regulations to prevent abuses arising from the use of zero hours contracts.

**Workforce planning:** The abandoning of whole NHS workforce planning during the early days of Transforming Your Care has been a big issue for UNISON and all Health Trade Unions. The outcome of such neglect has been nursing staff shortages and wholesale use of temporary contracts and agency staff leading to huge overspends by Trusts. UNISON has raised this issue at every bargaining table and has led delegations at Trust and Health Departmental levels and to the Assembly Health Committee.

**Private Sector**

We have reorganised bargaining responsibilities in the UNISON organising team, concentrating on the 30 employers with largest UNISON membership in the private sector and a similar number in the community and voluntary sector.

One Regional Organiser now has overall co-ordination responsibility and all regional organisers have direct bargaining responsibility for a named group of employers. This approach only works if the relevant branches co-ordinate to support the organising agenda and assist with the development of steward teams within each employer. Anti-trade union attitudes and refusal to negotiate voluntary recognition is our greatest obstacle in this sector.
Where we are recognised, we have successfully brokered some partnership agreements to the benefits of our members and the services they provide. We have also secured bargaining successes on pay and conditions. UNISON was successful in achieving a 2% pay award increase for our members in Arjohuntleigh. Negotiations are continuing with them on harmonising terms and conditions, developing a pay structure and reducing unsociable working hours across the workforce.

### GP surgeries

GPs are essentially private contractors within the NHS. We have recently lobbied the health minister to consider a project on direct recruitment of GPs in-house. Over the past year UNISON has undertaken work to organise members in GP surgeries across NI and raise awareness of their rights. This organising campaign continues.

### Private contractors

Contractors delivering services within UNISON’s sphere in the public sector have a small minority of the work and we intend to keep it that way. However, we are pursuing these contractors in order to protect workers’ rights.

Our core Noonans membership is in the University of Ulster (UU) and we are negotiating to protect them in the impending campus move. Mount Charles is the main catering contractor in UU. It does not yet formally recognise the union but we are in dialogue with management.

Increasingly workers in G4S are joining UNISON. The company has also secured cleaning contracts in various government buildings and we are pursuing the workforce to recruit and secure TUPE rights in a sector where we have not traditionally organised.

We continue to represent members in Interserve and are organising in United Cleaning Services and Aramark.

### Private sector nursing homes

We continue with our campaign to organise the workforce in this sector. Our branches have again achieved success on pay and conditions in some of the individual or smaller groups of homes.

The largest group is Four Seasons and we are the largest union within the company. Over the past year, 8 Four Seasons homes have been closed and more closures are anticipated despite an assurance from the company to our members that their jobs are safe for 12 months.

On a more positive note, through the joint working committee we have successfully negotiated additional paid hours for staff who cannot complete e-learning within their working time. We have also secured payment when staff are receiving handovers from their work colleagues.

Currently, 3 of their homes are on the market. One home has been bought by Domestic Care Ltd. We continue to monitor the situation and to protect our members’ rights.

In both the private nursing and private homecare sectors we anticipate further takeovers and closures in response to a rise in the minimum wage and the introduction of auto-enrolment for pensions.
Pensions

The health service has established a Board to oversee the pension scheme. UNISON has membership on the Board and ICTU continues to support and train Board members.

The phasing in of auto enrolment is almost complete. Employers with fewer than 30 workers are now being contacted on an individual basis. Every employer must enrol workers into a workplace pension scheme.

Community and Voluntary Sector

This year has been an extremely difficult one for many of our members in the community and voluntary sector. Our membership in the sector ranges from mental health and learning disability organisations to housing associations, Age NI and local community groups. Whilst our membership has significantly grown in the sector, cuts to government funding alongside severe reductions in grant aid from funders has resulted in redundancies, reduced staffing levels, pay freezes and service closures.

The majority of individual and group representation on protective notice, redundancy payments, TUPE transfers and reorganisation arising from loss of funding is handled by the full staff organising team. In many cases employees have continued to work without pay due to delays in funding from government departments. At the time of writing the latest members to receive protective notice are the staff of NICEM.

Our lay members in the sector work extremely hard to deliver representation but in most cases are constrained by the inability of most of the organisations to give sufficient paid release and facilities. The activist group is, however, highly visible in campaigns and political lobbies.

In spite of financial difficulties that many of the organisations are facing, our bargaining strategy is to secure the equivalent of the 2016/18 NJC pay award. Our task now is to grow our steward base and strengthen our ability to bargain at employer level.

In Choice Housing we are currently consulting our members following pay discussions; and in Apex Housing we are negotiating on a series of health & safety concerns, staffing levels, and terms and conditions of employment. In supported living UNISON continues to bargain in relation to sleep-ins across the workforce.

In April 2016, the branch took advantage of the location of the ICTU Biennial Conference in Derry to submit an emergency motion calling for a halt to the closure of the Foyle Haven which provides shelter and personal support for those dealing with alcohol and addiction in the city. The branch had been running a sustained campaign following the collapse of national lottery funding.

Within days of the debate at ICTU, the ‘Haven’ was granted a reprieve with various statutory bodies providing funds for it to continue its work with street drinkers for another year. The branch will continue to lobby and campaign for better funding and protection of workers in the sector.

Housing associations: UNISON continues to monitor on-going negotiations on mergers within the housing sector with the likelihood that there will be only 5 major housing associations in control throughout NI.

In Redeveloping our activist base in the greater Belfast area (the origins of the branch) is a priority for 2016/17. The incoming Fighting Fund Organiser will concentrate in this area.
Objective 3

Campaigning, public policy & supporting the peace process

“Campaigning and promoting UNISON on behalf of members”
WHY CAMPAIGN?
As a union everything we do is about creating a better life for our members. Because of our direct involvement with our membership we are acutely aware of the issues which are important to them and the future. In the current climate, where a massive attack is being launched on the public services, campaigning has never been more important.

Regional Committee is aware that much of our detailed work at the negotiating table and in political lobbying can seem remote from the everyday issues which affect our members’ lives. We are determined to get the message across to ALL our members that the union is campaigning about issues such as:

- the overall economic situation and the impact of welfare reform;
- their rights as workers and their jobs and conditions in specific sectors;
- the health and education of their children;
- reforming our health and social care system to create a public health model for them and their families which aims to eradicate health inequalities;
- care for older people and their families;
- mental health care for them and their families – with a particular focus on suicide;
- job opportunities and career development for them and their families;
- better use of public money to create local jobs;
- better delivery of public services to tackle poverty, unemployment, ill health, and lack of skills and qualifications;
- building human rights and equality to tackle the discrimination they face;
- working together to build the local movement on peace;
- protecting our members, their families and communities from the negative effects of any exit from the European Union.
- targeting social need so that no one gets left behind.

All of our work in this section is about advancing the position of our members, their families and their communities.

Current political context

Unfortunately, the subsequent negotiations between the political parties and the UK and Irish Governments led to the Fresh Start Agreement and represented a further austerity programme and a major attack on the welfare state and public services.

Major welfare cuts are being implemented which will affect thousands of families including our members. Poverty in NI continues to grow. The mitigating measures put in place in relation to welfare cuts will only last until 2020 and neither the 2015 Fresh Start Agreement or 2014 Stormont House Agreement have been assessed for their impact on promoting equality.

Independent research commissioned by the Equality Coalition (co-convened by UNISON and CAJ) has found that these agreements are likely to widen and deepen inequality. The areas hardest hit by conflict and deprivation will be those hardest hit by the implementation of further austerity and welfare reform.
Assembly Election 2016: In advance of the May 2016 NI Assembly Election, we highlighted the key concerns of our members across a wide range of campaigns within an Election Manifesto, supported by UNISON GPF. This was distributed amongst all candidates and parties and used extensively for hustings events hosted by the Regional Committee and branches. We delivered the message that our members are not prepared to accept sustained attacks on public services and on their pay and conditions, or to accept growing poverty and inequality within our society. We sought clear commitments from all candidates, irrespective of party, that they would work together to produce the cross-cutting policies, strategies and outcomes required to improve the social and economic position of all people in NI.

Following the election, some parties went into opposition, although the terms of this arrangement remain unclear. We are working to ensure that the concerns of our members are addressed within the Executive’s new Programme for Government, whilst also working with the opposition parties to ensure that it is properly scrutinised and that the Executive is held to account. UNISON stands ready to work with all our political representatives who will seek to put the rights of the people first and address the issues faced by our members, their families and their communities. We will not hesitate to act where they do not.

We remain very concerned at the lack of commitment from the UK Government to the equality and human rights agreements which are core to the Good Friday Agreement. EU referendum: UNISON campaigned for a vote to remain a member of the EU. The people of NI and Scotland voted to remain. There is now a range of legal challenges both in NI and GB centering on some of the key issues such as the rights of devolved governments and the relationship between our peace process referendum and the EU referendum. The Good Friday Agreement draws heavily on European equality and human rights law and conventions.

All unions are working through ICTU and the Congress itself is working closely with the Trade Union Council of the Isles to explore the protections necessary in the event that Article 50 of the Treaty of Rome is activated. We are pressing for Congress to also have access to the all island forum being established by the Taoiseach.

All political leaders must think about how to address the issues that people in our communities care most about – falling incomes, insecure jobs, unaffordable housing and the huge challenges facing our public services after a decade of cuts.

Prior to the appointment of the new UK Prime Minister, UNISON backed a campaign seeking a specific commitment from all five Tory leadership candidates that EU migrants, currently living in the UK, are welcome to stay here. It is deeply concerning that the new Prime Minister has not made such a commitment and we have called on the Executive in its discussions with the UK Government to ensure that EU migrants living in NI are protected.

There is a special responsibility on the new NI Secretary of State, in relation to preserving the free movement of people, goods and services across the border, as well as in relation to a series of policy matters, some devolved to the NI Executive and some not. Employment law is a core issue for our members and is wholly devolved in NI. These issues will all present significant challenges to the Executive over the course of the new Programme for Government. UNISON believes that the impact of the EU Referendum result makes it even more crucial that the Executive now works collaboratively in the best interests of the people.

We have stated that the impact and workings of the Referendum result must be factored into the development of the new Programme for Government.
Economic strategy

There continues to be no effective economic strategy in place, though a ‘refreshed’ strategy is expected to be in place by the end of 2016. As in 2015/16, the NI Executive produced a budget covering a 12 month period from April 2016 to March 2017 with little consultation. It was anticipated that the new approach to the Programme for Government would be accompanied by a new budget covering a 4/5 year period but already the Minister for Finance is suggesting a further 1 year budget which would make many of the aspirations in the new programme for Government framework unachievable.

Fresh Start Agreement: In November 2015, the DUP and Sinn Féin and the UK and Irish Governments signed the Fresh Start Agreement, a further regression from the Good Friday Agreement, imposing further austerity and attacking the welfare state and public services. The Fresh Start Agreement will continue significant changes to the economic and public sector model, reducing the size of our public sector and spending, imposing welfare cuts and leading to cuts to taxes paid by corporations. Following the Assembly election, the new Executive has indicated that they will continue to implement the Fresh Start Agreement. We have indicated that we will continue to oppose it.

The financial package agreed within the Stormont House Agreement in December 2014 included £700 million in borrowing which is being used to cut 20,000 thousand public service jobs as part of ‘public sector reform and restructuring’. Thousands of civil servants have already gone through a voluntary exit scheme. The result will be a devastating blow to the NI economy, to local services, local businesses and local communities.

As our own trade union unit, the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI), has recently noted, the prospects for the NI economy in the short to medium term will be dominated by the negotiations for the UK’s exit from the European Union, with the outlook for the NI economy having weakened following the referendum result.

Proposed cuts to corporation tax, predicted to take place in 2018, have been estimated to come at a cost over £500m in public spending over 2 years from 2020, with the exact costs not yet known. In addition, following the EU Referendum result, the then Chancellor George Osborne raised the prospect of the UK cutting its own corporation tax rate. Whilst such a move could make it cheaper for the Executive to cut corporation tax here, it would also remove the potential benefits of doing so.

The Executive is due to consult on a new budget in Autumn 2016. UNISON will continue to press for the Executive to collectively reject austerity and protect public services and jobs, for the benefit of all the people. We will continue to highlight the vital contribution that public sector workers make to the economy, and will argue that boosting public sector pay, such as committing to paying the real Living Wage and addressing longstanding inequalities in pay for health and social care workers, will boost the economy.

We will also continue to argue the case for ensuring that investment, jobs and resources are allocated based on objective need, so that inequalities in our society are not further entrenched or exacerbated. Recent comments made by the Finance Minister however suggest that rather than preparing a multi-year budget to last until the next Assembly election in 2021, as was anticipated, the Executive will produce a one-year budget for Departmental spending for 2017/18 due to economic uncertainty following the EU Referendum result.
OECD public governance review NI: Last year we reported on our engagement with the OECD on this review which was the first of its kind it had undertaken at sub-Government level. In July 2016 the NI Executive published the OECD review.

As reported to Regional Council last year, UNISON had given evidence on the lack of transparency, lack of governance and lack of public engagement on public services by the Executive and specifically the Department of Finance and Personnel.

It appears that the Executive has accepted all but 2 of the 30 strategic recommendations made. The status of 103 sub-recommendations and 25 recommendations from six case studies (including one relating to commissioning of health and social care) is still unclear.

The OECD recognises that the public sector in NI has traditionally been the lead economic actor; still accounts for 30% of all economic activity and 30% of all employment; and that reductions in public spending therefore affect not just the public sector, but the economy as a whole.

They note that the business sector in NI described the public sector as a significant source of their income, both as a major purchaser of goods and services as well as from the money it injects into the economy through wages.

The OECD also highlights:
- that austerity can have long-term consequences on the ability of the public sector to meet the public’s expectations;
- that austerity makes the public sector a less attractive employer, through lowering morale, damaging the perception of public sector careers, and limiting government’s ability to attract and retain highly qualified staff;
- that hiring freezes have an immediate impact on the ability of the public sector to deliver services, as well as limiting an organisation’s ability to restructure and re-skill in the longer term;
- that the voluntary exit scheme established under the SHA will result in 2,300 exits from the civil service, and up to 10,000 across the wider public sector;
- that as it is impossible to control who will volunteer to exit under the scheme, it is also impossible to control whose skills and experience will be lost, risking resource imbalances.

No reference is made to the need to equality monitor the operation of the voluntary exit scheme however, nor is the impact of this austerity measure assessed in terms of its impact on the wider NI economy. In the wider context, UNISON is also concerned that the OECD report, like the Programme for Government framework, can also give a green light to further privatisation.

Public Procurement Policy, Privatisation and PFI

Across the island of Ireland both Governments spend £billions every year buying goods and services and building public infrastructure. If Governments were to attach the right conditions to the contracts it would create an economic upturn, decent jobs, help tackle discrimination and disadvantage, regenerate our communities most in need, and strengthen our society.

It is estimated that NI public procurement is around £2.7 billion per year and as such represents significant economic activity. It is of concern that the recent OECD review made no reference to the recommendations of the NI Human Rights Commission on Human Rights and Public Procurement in NI.

There is growing concern that the privatisation agenda is moving ahead, despite pre-election commitments from some of the
key parties in Government. In recent months new scandals have emerged regarding the letting of some Government contracts and the operation of some key privatised civil service functions, particularly relating to welfare.

Companies with a proven record on fraud and the exploitation of workers remain in control of some contracts or on the select lists. Outsourcing of residential care and homecare has reached untenable levels.

UNISON continues to play a lead role in challenging Government and the public sector to conduct its procurement processes based on the Equality Commission for NI /Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) Guidance on Equality and Sustainability in Public Procurement. Through ICTU we have now engaged in a direct process with CPD on the steps it needs to take to comply with the NI Human Rights Commission recommendations. In addition, we have placed this matter on the agenda for all health service and education sector employers.

We continue to press for:

- an end to the two-tier workforce which we have partially secured;
- disclosure of all relevant procurement documents;
- inclusion of Living Wage clauses;
- disclosure of all potential transferring liabilities pre-tender;
- options appraisal that includes the benefits of the continued delivery of services in-house;
- implementation of the recommendations of the NIHRC, including our priority for human rights violating companies such as G4S, Serco and Hewlett Packard to be excluded from public procurement.

### Employment law

Employment law in NI is devolved. Previously, the Department of Employment and Learning had lead responsibility for employment law in NI, but following the 2016 NI Assembly Election the Department of Employment and Learning no longer exists. Instead, employment law is now the responsibility of the new Department for the Economy. We have made extensive submissions through ICTU and UNISON is a member of the joint TU/employers round table.

We currently have stronger TUPE protections than GB. During the previous NI Assembly mandate, the Minister for Employment publically stated that he would not introduce the Tory Government punitive proposals on trade unions contained in the Trade Union Act 2016. However, a new Executive has now been formed and we will continue to monitor this.

The Employment Act (NI) 2016 was passed before the end of the last Assembly mandate. Proposed clauses to reduce the notification period for redundancies, to extend the qualifying period for unfair dismissal from one to two years, and to cap awards for unfair dismissal at 12 months salary were not taken forwards, unlike in GB. The Act does however include new requirements to seek conciliation through the Labour Relations Agency before lodging claims with the Industrial Tribunal or Fair Employment Tribunal, though there will be a requirement to review these new provisions after one year and three years.
The Act has also introduced a new power to create regulations to prevent abuses arising from the use of zero hours contracts and a requirement on the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (now the Executive Office) to create regulations requiring employers to publish information on the gender pay gap.

We have called on the Executive to build on this framework by ensuring mandatory reporting and clear action plans for compliance. Regulations relating to the gender pay gap must be made under the Act by 30th June 2017 and a strategy and action plan on eliminating gender pay differences must be published, in consultation with trade unions, by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister by October 2017. We will monitor the impact of the 2016 Act as its provisions come into force.

The environment and the green economy

It is disturbing to note that past promises made by Government on the development of the green economy and new sustainable employment have not been followed through. In its place we have seen attempts to increase harmful activity such as fracking. We continue to support ICTU proposals for investment in the green economy which has the potential to positively contribute to the NI economy.

Regional Council continues to support our branches in Fermanagh in opposition to fracking in Belcoo. We made this an issue in our 2016 NI Assembly Election Manifesto and stated our opposition to fracking in responding to the new Executive Programme for Government framework.

Drilling proposals have now extended to Belfast and County Antrim and we support the Stop the Drill Campaign calling on the Executive for an independent Environmental Impact assessment (EIA). In particular, we support the campaign for the removal of Part 16 of the Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (NI) 2015 (GDO) for Mineral Exploration which denies the public its right to be consulted on proposals for exploratory drilling.

We will continue to support the community campaign of opposition and are committed to playing an active part in responding to environmental problems within NI. We will continue to call for the development of our economy through genuine investment in green jobs and green energy.

Low pay, poverty and targeting social need

The state of poverty and low pay in NI

Poverty and inequality in NI continues to dominate. It is a core issue for UNISON with our members, their families and communities becoming more impoverished as a result of damaging decisions by both the UK and NI Governments and irresponsible decisions by many employers.

For this reason, Regional Committee made Challenging Poverty one of our two regional motions to National Delegate Conference 2016. It was the first motion debated at NDC and received huge support from branches, self-organised groups and the NEC indicating that it is also a major issue for UNISON members across the UK.
We have reported in Section 2 on our main bargaining interventions on low pay and poverty. Our policy interventions are being taken in co-ordination with our allies in the Equality Coalition and the NI Anti-Poverty Network.

NI Anti-Poverty Network: UNISON Head of Organising, Thomas Mahaffy remains on the Board of the NI Anti-Poverty Network. Following the withdrawal of Public Health Agency funding in 2013 and subsequent loss of staff, UNISON has facilitated the continued existence of the Network to ensure that it continues to make connections between poverty and the wide range of Government strategies and policies that directly impact on the lives of our members, their families and communities.

Despite the clear court judgement that the Executive is in breach of its legal obligations to produce an anti-poverty strategy (as reported last year) no strategy based on objective need has yet emerged. As a result, the Network and the Child Poverty Alliance organised a conference in April 2016:

- to highlight the impact of current policies on those currently experiencing poverty;
- to explore different approaches to reducing poverty – including equality and human rights-based perspectives; and
- to examine potential strategies to ensure the development of a robust, effective anti-poverty strategy for NI based on objective need.

Thomas Mahaffy, Head of Organising; Fiona McCausland, NI Anti-Poverty Network; and Pauline Leeson, Child Poverty Alliance opened the conference and set the scene for the contributions to follow. Daniel Holder, CAJ outlined the history behind the CAJ legal challenge and the obligations on Government to develop an anti-poverty strategy based on objective need.

Mike Tomlinson, Poverty & Social Exclusion Research Project; Paddy Hillyard, Child Poverty Alliance; and Dr Ann Marie Gray, JRF Anti-poverty Strategy Task Group outlined a series of approaches to reducing poverty. Goretti Horgan, University of Ulster; Marie Cavanagh, Gingerbread NI; and Dessie Donnelly, PPR highlighted the issues faced by people actually experiencing poverty that must be heard and taken into account.

Koulla Yiasouma, NI Commissioner for Children and Young People; Dr Michael Wardlow, Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission NI; and Grainia Long, NI Human Rights Commissioner spoke on the inherent link between poverty, inequality and human rights.

The conference agreed a set of principles (below) that must inform future strategy. These principles had been drafted by The Common Platform - a civil society network including UNISON who have campaigned for the effective implementation by the NI Executive of the strategy to tackle poverty, social exclusion and patterns of deprivation based on objective need as required by S28E of the NI Act 1998 (as amended). The report from the conference will be launched later this year at Stormont.

The network has also been active in raising public awareness on the issue of welfare reform – particularly among those already experiencing poverty and social exclusion. It will also continues to support the work of the Equality Coalition, Human Rights Consortium and Participation and Practice of Rights Project in campaigns focused on tackling health and other social and economic inequalities.

UNISON continues to pursue funding for this important NGO in meetings Government and public agencies.
Common Platform: Key principles that must inform an anti-poverty strategy for NI

1. **Define Poverty:** Similar to our neighbouring jurisdictions the strategy should include a proper definition of poverty, consistent with international standards on socio-economic rights, which reflects material deprivation and an income that falls below an adequate standard of living;

2. **Define Objective Need:** The strategy should equally ensure proper definitions of objective need which remove or reduce the scope for discrimination by tying the allocation of resources to neutral criteria that measure deprivation irrespective of community background or other affiliation;

3. **Overarching, targeted outcomes and monitoring progress:** The strategy should be overarching, covering and interconnecting Executive policy rather than being limited to a list of existing or proposed initiatives. As such it should also contain measurable targeted outcomes to reduce levels of poverty overall and among specific groups.

   This includes measures to meet targets set for the reduction of child poverty. The monitoring framework should ensure desegregation across equality categories including gender and ethnic groups (including community background).

4. **Countering austerity:** The strategy should recognise the context of, and seek to challenge and minimise the impact of the budget cuts on the NI Block Grant in relation to poverty, including gender-specific poverty. This includes the examination of progressive revenue raising measures, including rates for the better off, rather than primacy to further regressive cuts.

5. **Rights-based approach:** The strategy should reflect state responsibility rather than charitable benevolence and should follow a ‘rights-based’ approach, and hence further the realisation of human rights as laid down in international standards.

6. **Policy Appraisal:** The strategy should incorporate mechanisms to ensure that all new and revised policies are consistent with the aims of the strategy to tackle poverty on the basis of objective need. Such a process is already implicit within, and could be accommodated within, the existing equality impact assessment process.

7. **Childcare:** The strategy should incorporate a childcare strategy that implements comprehensive provision & boosts the economy by allowing parents to stay in work and increases the economic participation of women.

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**Welfare reform**

The trade union campaign of resistance to welfare reform continues. The welfare state is still being used as a scapegoat for the current economic crisis, with the spin around welfare cuts being deliberately distorted to foment intolerance of people covered by the welfare system. It has been a deceitful campaign which has failed to highlight who will be disadvantaged. As we have previously highlighted, the unemployed and the disabled are the minority in the welfare system. Pensioners and low paid workers are the majority.

The Fresh Start Agreement reached by the DUP, Sinn Féin and the UK and Irish Governments in November 2015 paved the way for the introduction in NI of the types of welfare reforms that have taken place throughout GB

- The Benefit Cap has now been introduced here, with thousands of households predicted by our own Executive to be negatively affected. Whilst short term mitigation measures have been agreed to support those negatively affected, these will only last until 2020.
- Universal Credit is due to be introduced in NI in 2017, replacing six other current benefits, such as Jobseekers Allowance and Child Tax Credits. Whilst the Executive has agreed that support will be available for families claiming Universal Credit, the exact nature of that support has yet to be agreed.

UNISON co-convenes the Equality Coalition with the CAJ. In March 2016 the Coalition has published research on the equality impacts of the Fresh Start and Stormont House Agreement finance and welfare provisions, undertaken by Prof Christine Bell and Dr Robbie McVeigh.
The research found that even if a hardship fund approach ‘works’, the approach looks more like a temporary stalling of the cuts rather than a continuation of the social security commitments of the welfare state.

As outlined in last year’s report, plans had been announced to cut tax credits, which would have left over 90,000 low to middle income working families across NI (inc 175,000 children) significantly worse off. Tax credits represent the difference between families keeping their heads above water and going under and due to a successful campaign by UNISON across the UK, the then Chancellor George Osborne climbed down from the cuts at the November 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review.

We continue to alert our membership, and our retired members in particular, to the fact that the remaining element of the welfare system, state pensions, may well be the next area designated for cuts and we will continue to monitor this. Regional Committee and branches also continue to provide welfare clinics run by Agnes Fraser and this activity produces some extraordinary levels of membership participation – indicating the significance of this issue for our members.

As welfare cuts continue, poverty levels within NI continue to rise. Regional Committee has consistently reaffirmed its commitment to continue to campaign against the impact that welfare cuts will have in increasing poverty and widening inequality within our society.

Community & voluntary sector

Thousands of jobs continue to be lost in the sector as a result of funding cuts and many thousands more are now projected to be lost as a consequence of exit from the EU. As reported last year the limited protections UNISON secured in the Department of Social Development budget have expired and government and the public sector continues the spin that it is creating jobs in social enterprises which are in fact job substitution for decent public service employment.

We have engaged with the Department of Health around the ending of the its core grant funding budget and its proposed replacement with an innovation grant fund scheme, challenging the removal of core funding and highlighting our concern that the community and voluntary sector should not be used as an avenue to outsource public services, but instead should be supported to deliver innovative, complementary services.

Core issues facing the community & voluntary sector and UNISON members

Linked to our anti-poverty, equality and human rights strategy we have continued our political lobby and direct negotiations with Government and the public service to challenge:

- the continued erosion of core costs funding;
- the increased use of contracts as opposed to the giving of grants;
- defective contracts awarded on the basis of the lowest price, even if not economically viable;
- contracts which fail to specify correct application of TUPE rights of workers and allow bidders to evade legal obligations and transfer liabilities;
- the increased trend for the sector to be misused to substitute for existing directly delivered public services;
- the increasing damage being inflicted through private sector hedge and vulture funds, raiding the budgets of independent providers of services;
- the failure of governance models such as CLEAR to make any allowance or recommendations for good employment processes including failure to pay the living wage.

Regional Committee has provided access to additional training for members in the community and voluntary sector on the use of equality and human rights tools.
A significant bid to take this programme forward with the Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR) Project was approved by UNISON’s GPF Committee.

Within its review of public governance, the OECD noted that recent trends have seen civil society organisations become more and more providers of public services, almost being seen as arms-lengths bodies of the public sector, undermining their advocacy role.

The report notes that the shift from advocacy to service delivery could be restricting the role of civil society to contractors, and reducing their ability to exert unbiased influence on policymaking. However, the OECD disturbingly encourages the delivery of services via the third sector in NI and recommends that the third sector deliver services ‘in partnership’ with the public sector.

It is not clear whether the OECD view this ‘partnership’ as a need for the third sector to be supported to deliver innovative services, which compliment the public sector – a proposition supported by UNISON - or to be used as a vehicle for the outsourcing of existing public services – a proposition opposed by UNISON.

We will monitor the out-workings of the recommendations made by the OECD closely, including through the development of the new Programme for Government, to ensure that it is not used to further encourage or justify the outsourcing or privatisation of public services.

Following the EU Referendum result, concerns have also been expressed at future levels of funding which will be available to community projects which have been funded by programmes such as Peace IV. The UK Chancellor has offered a guarantee that any projects signed before his Autumn Statement (expected in November) will be guaranteed by the UK Treasury after the UK leaves the EU. However the Executive Finance Minister, Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, has stated that this will still result in the loss of £300 million of funding which had been offered by the EU until 2020 and could result in the loss of hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs.

UNISON campaigning for health and social services

- Radical reform of health and social care

It is universally accepted that current structures in health and social care are not fit for purpose, and cannot deliver performance, standards of care, financial stability or address inequalities.

In December 2015, the then Health Minister proposed the closure of the Health and Social Care Board and a move away from the current commissioning model. It was proposed that the Board’s staff and functions would move to either the Department of Health, Public Health Agency, and/or to the five health and social care Trusts.

In submitting evidence to this proposed reform of the health and social care structure, UNISON took the position that it would only be a fig leaf to the cuts created by the Executive and departmental budget strategy unless there was genuine consideration of the points made by UNISON and a clear commitment to engage with us and other relevant stakeholders.

UNISON has called for radical reform in which the voice of health workers is heard loud and clear. It is the formal position, not only of UNISON, but of all health unions affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions that the commissioner/provider split and the resultant local commissioning groups should be abolished and that there is also no need in the system for the current Trust structures.
In place of the current system, which is clearly not fit for purpose, we have called for a single unified health and social care system which is resourced to be a public health system, and which has eradicating health inequalities as a central goal.

We further highlighted the inadequacy of the Department’s consultation, the absence of change protocols to protect the existing workforce, and bad faith on the part of the then Minister and the Department in failing to engage with trade unions in a genuine partnership model, which has been a root cause of many difficulties.

In calling for radical reform of health and social care, we have stated the following key principles for reform:

### Key principles for the reform of health and social care in NI

1. The abolition of the internal market and the costly commissioner/provider split.
2. The replacement of commissioning and provider structures, including Trusts, with a public health model:
   - that incorporates the creation of a single unified health and social care system and model for healthcare planning and delivery;
   - that is delivered on NHS founding principles within the public sector;
   - that has eradicating health inequalities as a central goal.
3. Transparent funding and resource allocation not only in health but across Government Departments.
4. Workforce inclusion on the basis of respect for trade unions and their members.
5. The immediate restoration of the Partnership Forum, which enables trade union input and contribution into all key policy issues, including those addressed by the Donaldson Report.
   The new Health Minister, Michelle O’Neill, has recently acted to address this by establishing a strategic Health Partnership Forum.
6. Smart and strategic responses to the financial crisis imposed on the healthcare system by collaborative working with unions and staff to improve service delivery and terms and conditions of employment - both of which have seriously deteriorated.

In our submission to the Department’s consultation around proposed reform of the health and social care structure, we highlighted that the problems facing the system are not just simply a problem of complex administrative structures, although we have repeatedly raised the fact that the health service decision-making process has been made arcane and obscure - in our view deliberately so. However, the issues are wider than this and necessitate a change in organisational culture.
This is one of the key areas which we had hoped to address through the now abolished Partnership Forum and which we will be pursuing through the newly established Health Partnership Forum.

**Bengoa report:** Separate to this process, in January 2016 the outgoing Minister appointed an expert panel led by Prof Rafael Bengoa, to conduct yet another review of the configuration of health and social care. UNISON engaged with the Bengoa panel in March 2016 setting out our position as above. The panel promised further engagement but this did not materialise.

Since last year’s Regional Council we have once again seen the post of Health Minister change. It is currently being held by Michelle O’Neill of Sinn Féin. We have had some initial positive engagement with the Minister and will press her to take action in relation to our ongoing campaigns outlined below.

We will continue to press for this radical reform and await the Minister’s response to the Bengoa recommendations which have not yet been made public.

**OECD Review:** As part of its review of the public sector in NI, the OECD examined health and social care commissioning. The report highlights wide agreement that the system is underfunded to meet current and future demand and that the funding gap will be exacerbated by continuing austerity.

The prevailing view was that the current commissioning process and associated structures are not fit for purpose, but there was no preference expressed for a particular alternative model.

Whilst the OECD has suggested abolishing the commissioner/provider split as one option for reforming the commissioning process, moving the functions of the HSCB into the Department and adopting an integrated purchaser-provider approach, this is only one of numerous options presented.

The report does not consider the prevalence of health inequalities in NI, levels of unmet need, or differential access. The OECD states that data and information collection needs to be improved, but does not criticise the failure to use existing data to for any disaggregated analysis of these issues.

There is no attempt to examine the level of administrative costs associated with the commissioning process, no attempt to examine how much could be saved by adopting a single, unified public health model which has eradicating health inequalities as its central goal, and which would be responsible for both planning and delivering services. Nor was there an attempt to quantify the negative effects of commissioning.

We reject the OECD view that there is ‘compelling evidence’ that competition can drive improvement. We are concerned that this element of the report, which is also reflected in the draft Programme for Government framework is another attempt to increase privatisation in health. We have made UNISON’s views explicit to the Minister. We note that the Scottish Health Minister, following their election, made a clear anti-privatisation statement.

**Partnership Forum:** In response to the UNISON campaign against the abolition of the Partnership Forum by a previous Health Minister, in August the new Minister announced its re-establishment. The first meeting of the forum is October 2016.

**UNISON led partnerships:** As reported elsewhere we are moving ahead with innovative UNISON-led partnerships with various health employers. We have advised the Health Minister that this will form an important agenda item for the new strategic partnership forum.
Care homes campaign: Throughout 2016 we have continued to prioritise our NHS care homes campaign. Branches have taken the lead in local campaigns, public meetings, demonstrations and lobbies of Stormont. Eight of the threatened homes received a stay of execution. As a result of the campaign the former Minister announced that the proposal had been put on hold.

However, the doors of the homes remained closed to new residents and in October 2016 Belfast HSC Trust announced the closure of Pine Lodge. This resulted in immediate UNISON response at local and regional level. UNISON negotiators challenged the Belfast Trust, the local branch organised a public demonstration, and the Regional Secretary raised the matter directly with the Minister for Health. We await the outcome.

Homecare: As reinforced by last year’s Regional Council decisions, we have continued with the twin track campaigns to protect in-house homecare, organise private sector homecare workers and hold private sector providers to account. Our campaigns encompass objectives 2 and 3 and this has been both a bargaining and political priority.

We are concerned that despite the raft of evidence on failings in the private sector provided by UNISON, this matter has not yet resulted in a proper strategy from Government and Trusts. The relentless drift to private provision, irrespective of the consequences, still dominates. We have continued to bring the evidence collected by branches and organisers to the range of parties holding responsibility. These include, employers, Trusts, the HSCB, the Public Health Agency, the RQIA, NISCC, the Department of Health and the Assembly Health Committee. The core issues continue to be that:

- clients do not receive the quantum of care allocated to them in care plans;
- care workers effectively earn below the minimum wage as travel time is not factored into their rota and paid accordingly.

The evidence we submitted to the healthcare system on potential fraud in billing for care from many of the private sector organisations has not yet produced an outcome report and we continue to pursue this. As reported last year we detected resistance to our evidence on the private sector from the leadership of the health system.

Regional Council priorities are:

- to improve both the pay and terms of conditions of domiciliary care workers, including advocating for the real living wage;
- the abolition of zero-hours contracts;
- through the procurement system; securing in-house return of domiciliary care;
- the development of in-house services as a model of best practice.

We were disappointed that these issues were not adequately reflected within the terms of reference of the 2015 Review or within the subsequent review report itself.

The HSCB published the final review report ‘An Agenda for Change’ in November 2015. The review reported that:

- 68% of domiciliary care is now provided by the independent sector;
- spending on domiciliary care in the statutory sector has fallen by 4%, whilst spending on domiciliary care in the independent sector has risen by 14%;
- spend on domiciliary care in the private sector now exceeds the statutory sector with the highest private sector expenditure in the South Eastern HSC Trust;
• there are currently 82 registered domiciliary care providers, with an associated 122 agencies, in NI, including the 5 Health and Social Care Trusts. We are seeking information on the 122 presumably ‘unregistered’ agencies. We await this data.

We have made extensive recommendations to Belfast Trust on the development of a better procurement model. In a recent meeting with the CEO we secured agreement that the stalled engagement with the Trust’s procurement section must recommence. In addition, the Government’s Central Procurement Directorate intends to use homecare procurement as a pilot project on implementation of the Human Rights Commission’s recommendations and we have proposed that UNISON’s model becomes part of this exercise.

Campaigns in our Education Services

**Budget cuts**: The education budget was cut once again for 2016/17. Cleaners, transport drivers, technicians and classroom assistants have been the hardest hit. In many cases the choice has been stark – cut hours or lose their job. Pupils, students and education workers alike have suffered. Key education services for our children have been cut back. With the emergence of the new Education Authority we are now particularly concerned that the school meals service, which UNISON has retained in-house for 30 years, may again come under attack.

The unacceptable cuts that have been made to our education services were a key message that we delivered as part of our 2016 NI Assembly Election Manifesto. We asked what steps parties and candidates would take:

• to support an education system that delivers to disadvantaged areas, is non-selective, and ensures equality of outcomes;
• to challenge disadvantage and support improvement by taking forward a new approach to the funding formula that not only restores recent cuts, but targets objective need and inequality of outcomes;
• to respond to the clear evidence that nutritional meals for all pupils will raise outcomes and public health;
• to protect and strengthen the work of classroom, nursery and special needs staff;
• to reverse plans to curtail special educational needs services for pre-school children;
• to maximise access to higher education by restoring grant funding & sustaining grants for those in need rather than conversion to loans;
• to guarantee that graduate nurse training will still be grant funded;
• to remedy the ongoing gaps in literacy and numeracy outcomes;
• to promote the training and development of the next generation of social care workers.

We have met the new DUP Minister and have emphasised the importance of championing education in the Executive and securing the resources needed. We will continue to press him to take action on the priority issues within education which we outlined within our manifesto. It is disappointing to note that his current emphasis is on the return of an 11+ type model.
Education Authority: Since coming into operation in April 2015, we have been concerned that further cuts to services and jobs have been planned through the Education Authority. Evidence of this has begun to be seen through its attempts to cut specialist nursery and pre-school provision for children with special educational needs (SEN), a decision which it has been forced to review.

Activism: Cuts in our education services are often confined to local campaigns centering on local schools and services. They do not attract the same high profile from the media as do health cuts. Nevertheless, UNISON members campaigning with PTAs and local communities can be powerful, as evidenced by the response to the recent proposed SEN cuts.

In all UNISON’s submissions challenging growing health inequalities in NI the need to invest in and develop our education services, particularly for children in areas of greatest objective need has been a central feature. With the opening up of the General Political Fund to branches we are confident that better resourcing for our members and branches in the education sector will bring a much higher profile for core service provision and policy issues in education.

Education funding: Unravelling education funding, and in particular school’s funding is always a challenge in NI. The Common Funding Scheme for the local management of schools is the means by which the education budget is distributed. The total amount to be spent on schools is called the General Schools Budget (excluding special schools). It is made up of three specific categories of spending.

- The Aggregated Schools Budget is the total amount delegated to individual schools under the LMS common formula;
- Resources Held at Centre are amounts allocated to school budgets other than by means of the common formula (for example, for the payment of substitute teachers in certain circumstances.
- Centrally Held Resources Attributable to Schools are amounts held by ELBs for services provided to schools in their area - for example home to school transport and school meals.

The percentage of the 2016-17 education budget currently allocated to the aggregated schools budget is just over 60%. An additional 12% of the overall 2016-17 budget is allocated to schools from centre budgets held by the Education Authority. 13% is allocated for attributable services such as school meals. UNISON made detailed recommendations to the last review of the common funding formula, some of which were taken on board by the previous Minister. The new Minister has stated his intention to review the formula yet again and it is his stated intention to give greater freedom and autonomy to schools over how they spend their budget. From past experience UNISON is only too well aware of the danger this presents for our core support services.

As previously reported, the initial Assembly debate on the new formula was the subject of attempts by certain politicians to sectarianise the agenda and we vigorously challenged these moves to attack objective need. It is clear that the funding formula will now not address the growing poverty of our children and this will be taken forward in the UNISON 2017 programme.

Special needs: The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (NI) 2016 was passed earlier this year. UNISON supported submissions to the draft legislation from our allies on children’s rights and the NIHRC. The fact remains that the special educational
needs budget has been adversely affected by
main budget cuts and we will continue our
union campaign for full rights and resources.

United Nations Committee on the Rights of
the Child: We supported colleagues in the
Children’s sector, led by the Children’s Law
Centre and Save the Children, in attending
the UN Committee on the Rights of the
Child’s examination of the UK, held in
Geneva, Switzerland in May 2016. UNISON
met with the Committee and inform them of
how educational inequalities are affecting
children’s rights and how child poverty
continues to rise in NI. As a result of this
input, the Committee made numerous
important recommendations which can be
used to influence policy and legislation
relating to children in the future.

Time for Change - UNISON Partnerships

Following the ‘Time for Change’ conference
in October 2015, UNISON has continued to
lead a wide range of groundbreaking union
partnership projects with employers in the
NHS. These are producing real outcomes on
improved care and satisfaction for patients,
clients, health and social care workers alike
and are based on true inclusion; real equality
of decision-making, resources and support;
as well as trust and respect for UNISON
members.

This section summarises the development
and key outcomes from a selection of these
partnership over the past year. Core to our
participation in them is the fundamental
concern that joint work must be to the
benefit of care standards and our members;

must help to secure their jobs; and must
create increased opportunities for frontline
workers to have a voice in how quality care is
delivered.

UNISON / Employer partnership training

We have a achieved a breakthrough by
securing agreement from the Department of
health and health employers for the launch
of UNISON’s bespoke training programme for
union activists and managers to take the
partnership programmes forward.

The programme, delivered by Pamela Dooley,
concentrates on the principles and processes
of partnership working and will be launched
at a special breakfast seminar in November
at the HSC leadership centre. Speakers will
include the Regional Secretary; Michael
McBride, Chief Executive, Belfast HSC Trust;
and Susan Wasstrom, former Director,
Labour Management Project, New York.
The seminar will highlight to the wider system the transformative potential of union management partnerships:

- to enhance the delivery of health and social care services;
- to improve outcomes for patients, clients and other service users;
- to improve the working lives of staff through change interventions to improve their job satisfaction, health and well-being.

Speakers will also reflect on international best practice and, given the complexity of health and social care and the many challenges facing the system, the seminar will give participants the opportunity to reflect on how we can work differently and think differently in order to create real change both inside and outside the system.

### Western Area Care Homes Project

This UNISON initiated partnership with the Western HSC Trust; Age NI and Four Seasons is currently being evaluated. It is focused on improving care standards and improving the working lives of staff within three care homes in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors (Seymore Gardens in Derry; County Care Home in Enniskillen; and Meadowbank in Omagh).

Following detailed survey work, staff work groups were established and action plans for improvement were developed within each home. Key interventions over the past two years within specific homes have included:

- improvements to the physical environment such as the redevelopment of the outdoor garden at Seymore;
- the use of memory boxes;
- new activity programmes;
- improved staff training with support from UNISON’s Education Programme;
- improved communications through the use of newsletters and other media;
- increased use of staff meetings to ensure that staff have more input into decisions that are being made;
- new and improved laundry facilities.

The report of the project will be launched in 2017 with a series of recommendations for the wider system focusing on how care can be provided in a way that:

- empowers residents to “thrive” in the context of person-centred care and the protection of their human rights, and
- ensures that the working lives of our members are improved through actions that have a positive impact on their job satisfaction.
The UNISON led Southern HSC Trust laundry project

This project is focused on demonstrating that prioritising the development of a healthy, satisfied and well-trained workforce is core to the future efficiency and effectiveness of the in-house laundry service.

Our partnership model for this project has included the establishment of a joint steering group including the union, workers and employer representatives taking joint decisions on an agreed set of interests and objectives.

The project is currently being evaluated following a series of interventions that have included:

- training and team building sessions focused on resolving key work issues;
- information sessions for staff on the impact of welfare reform measures such as changes to Working Families Tax Credit;
- the development of a staff Charter where staff agreed the set of behaviours that would ensure more effective working relationships; and
- an improvement to management practices.

This project has taken on the challenge of creating better workplace relationships - not only between union and management and staff and management, but also between peer groups of workers. An evaluation report will be available in 2017.

UNISON led homecare projects

Standards of homecare provision continue to be at risk due to political decisions to outsource the majority of homecare. At present there are just over 5,000 home helps/homecare workers now employed in the NHS and more than 12,000 employed in the private sector.

We halted the majority of partnership schemes with Trusts because of increasing concern at continued outsourcing and the ducking and diving by the Department of Health and the HSCB. We have placed the issue back on the table with the new Health Minister.

CEO of the Belfast Trust has endorsed a UNISON / Trust partnership and work will commence after the launch of the new training programme and resolution of outstanding bargaining issues including proper allocation of hours to the in-house team and constructive negotiations on the homecare procurement model.

UNISON / Belfast HSC Trust mental health project

UNISON and the Belfast Trust have initiated a 3 month pilot partnership project to reduce the number of patients with mental health issues leaving the Mater Hospital A&E before receiving the care they require. The project will also seek to identify related staff training and other workforce development needs.

This project is a response to high rates of poor mental health and suicide in North and West Belfast, and will initially involve the introduction of a volunteer ‘befriending’ service provided by PIPs (Public Initiative for Prevention of Suicide and Self Harm).

The key objectives of the project are:

- to reduce AWOLs from the Mater Hospital Emergency Department of those experiencing thoughts of suicide or self harm; those experiencing psychosis and...
other mental health issues; and/or those who may have already self-harmed;

- to reduce subsequent readmissions of patients who go AWOL;
- to reduce pressure on the A&E by reducing time spent monitoring and accompanying those at risk of flight;
- to provide additional training for all staff (reception, nursing, porters, security, doctors, cleaning and catering staff) on mental issues including suicide awareness;
- to make other relevant interventions that improve patient and staff satisfaction with A&E services.

It is expected that the achievement of these objectives can only have a positive impact on reducing suicide and self-harm rates; will increase public confidence in the Mater Hospital A&E; will reduce pressure on related services such as ambulance and GPs; and will improve the working lives of all groups of staff.

Meetings are currently being held with A&E staff to outline the project in more detail. The service will start in December for a 3 month period with full evaluation to follow.

Equality and human rights

The Good Friday Agreement contained extensive commitments on equality and human rights. These permeated all 3 strands of the Agreement and the codes and operation of devolved Government. These commitments were central to UNISON support in the 1998 referendum. The St Andrew’s Agreement in 2006, while less vocal on the commitments, still retained equality as central. It also committed to a statutory anti-poverty strategy on the basis of objective need. Further Agreements such as Stormont House and Fresh Start, arising from continual political crisis have radically demoted equality and moved away from a Bill of Rights for NI thus reflecting the rollback on equality and human rights which we highlighted in previous reports.

Fresh Start Agreement: In our submission in response to the Stormont House Agreement (SHA), UNISON highlighted the flaws from a human rights and equality perspective and our concern that the measures proposed were likely to generate further sectarian inequality and therefore undermine the peace process.

We also highlighted that the SHA and its financial annex provide for significant and adverse changes to the economic and public sector model in NI. These include:

- public sector reform and restructuring;
- a voluntary exit scheme for an estimated 20,000 jobs in the public sector;
- implementation of wide-reaching changes to the welfare state; and

- devolution of powers over Corporation Tax with any reduction funded from public service cuts.

The implementation of the SHA was quickly derailed, however, by disagreements over the scale of mitigations for social security cuts. In November 2015, following further talks between the political parties and the British and Irish Governments, a further agreement, the ‘Fresh Start’ Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan, was reached with the aim of implementing the financial measures outlined within the SHA, including welfare reform.

It is of particular concern that neither Agreements have been Equality Impact Assessed or tested against a human rights framework for the impact that austerity is inflicting on large sections of NI society.

We, and allies such as CAJ, have raised concerns at the impact of such austerity measures and whether they will entrench
and exacerbate inequalities. The social security cuts put in place by the SHA and Fresh Start Agreements will disproportionately affect those in disadvantage. Independent research commissioned by the Equality Coalition concluded that the economic model made explicit in the financial annex of the SHA is likely to widen and deepen inequality – both generally and in terms of the differences between Protestants and Catholics.

It is also of concern that the Fresh Start Agreement continues to suggest that local political consensus is required for a Bill of Rights for NI. Within our 2016 NI Assembly Election Manifesto we called on all parties and candidates to agree that the UK Government must implement a strong and enforceable Bill of Rights and apply equality and human rights frameworks to its negotiations with the NI Assembly and Executive on resource allocation for NI.

Commitment from the NI Executive and UK Governments to conduct future negotiations in this context is capable of reversing austerity and delivering a better deal for the people of NI and in support of our peace process. Politicians who reject this need to explain to their constituents why they are blocking their entitlement to decent social and economic outcomes and justice in dealing with the past.

Our Peace Agreement is intimately interlinked with the UK’s EU membership and consequently exit from the EU now poses significant questions on core equality and human rights commitments which underpin the Peace Agreement.

**Human Rights Act:** The threat to the Human Rights Act remains. Whilst the UK Prime Minister has conceded that there is not a parliamentary majority for pulling out of the European Convention of Human Rights, her new Justice Secretary has recently reconfirmed that the UK Government still intends to replace the Human Rights Act with a British Bill of Rights.

Most recently, the Government has announced that it will remove the armed forces from the provisions. The incorporation of the European Convention of Human Rights into law in NI through the Human Rights Act was a key part of the peace process. The repeal of the Act would be a devastating blow to the protection of human rights and our peace process. Such a move would be incompatible with the Good Friday Agreement and would undermine it.

UNISON continues to make a major contribution to the debate. Throughout 2016, we have highlighted the key issues to Governments north, south and in the UK. We have participated in a range of conferences, seminars and round-table events discussing, in particular, the impact of an EU exit. We continue, with the support of the General Political Fund, to sponsor research and recommendations on steps necessary to reverse regression and to move forward.

We continue to develop the equality and human rights agenda with our allies in the Equality Coalition, the Human Rights Consortium, the CAJ, NICEM, and the Practice and Participation of Rights in particular.

Most recently the UNISON team has met with the Shadow Secretary of State, Dave Anderson, to emphasise the importance of these issues being prioritised by the UK Opposition.
The Coalition is co-convened by UNISON and CAJ and has nearly 100 member organisations, a number of which are themselves umbrella groups - the largest of which is the trade union movement. There has been and remains no other collective voice on equality in NI. There remains no other overarching consistent ‘critical friend’ of the equality oversight bodies, public authorities and local government.

Over the past year the Coalition has facilitated information sharing, capacity building and engagement across the diverse groups working on equality issues. It has also raised the public profile of the equality framework in NI.

Back in 1996, the Equality Coalition was instrumental in getting the ‘Section 75’ equality duty into the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and onto the statute books. More recently the Coalition and its members have been at the forefront of seeking to protect and effectively operationalise the equality duty.

Key Coalition work reported to the 2015 Regional Council continues to form the core work programme. UNISON GPF is supporting this work which includes:

- defining good relations and implementing a pilot project on putting equality into the heart of local government;
- developing a project to replace sectarianism with objective need and to challenge on the resource allocation; impacts of the austerity agreements
- developing a project to outlaw inciting hatred;
- an effective enforcement of s.75 programme.

Good relations: Over recent years the equality duty itself has been placed under considerable strain through subjective lay interpretations of its meaning in policy appraisal, and in particular its elevation outside of the terms of the legislation of the ‘good relations’ element of the duty in a context whereby this concept has not been defined in law. This has led to a situation whereby policy initiatives, including those promoting rights and equality, have been mistakenly deemed a ‘breach’ of the statutory duties, effectively as they are politically contentious. The Coalition will continue to monitor this trend and intervene where possible.

As a positive means of progressing this agenda, the Coalition has taken the opportunity of the creation of new local authorities as starting point. The ‘Putting equality into the heart of local government’ project has commenced with a series of policy interventions to mainstream the equality provisions into the workings of the 11 new council. This includes interventions to frame approaches to policy making, section 75 compliance, community planning and the new ‘call in’ mechanism.

Sectarianism, austerity and objective need: Having held a seminar to highlight the equality impacts of the Stormont House Agreement, the Coalition partnered with academic researchers Professor Christine Bell and Dr Robbie McVeigh who, with funding from the Irish government anti-sectarianism fund, produced a research report collaboratively with member-groups as a supplementary source of information to official statistics.
The report was published in March 2016 and considered the equality impacts of the Stormont House and Fresh Start Agreements. As the report was funded by the Irish Government’s Anti-Sectarianism fund, its focus was on the two largest communities in NI.

The report found that the economic model within the Stormont House Agreement was likely to widen and deepen inequality, both generally (between richer and poorer people) and in terms of differences between Protestants and Catholics. It presents a disturbing picture of growing disadvantage building up major fair employment problems. This significant work presents a framework for action and a real challenge to the Assembly and Executive on resource allocation, Government investment and inward investment.

It is not permissible for disadvantaged working class communities, Catholic and Protestant, to be left behind. It calls for genuine, cross-party support for new initiatives based on objective need.

**Activism:** The Coalition has taken an approach of maximising the impact of its interventions and those of its members in relation to policy development and implementation. We have moved away from the approach of large scale responses to formal policy consultation documents to much more of a tailored activist approach.

We use a range of methodologies including expert analysis of equality policy and practice; mobilisation of civil society organisations; shaping power through high level lobbying; and litigation.

Outlawing inciting hatred: Work is commencing on an ‘outlawing inciting hatred’ project to provide a critical assessment of the effectiveness of provisions to outlaw advocacy of hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (as required by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) in domestic incitement to hatred legislation (the Public Order (NI) Order 1987 on grounds of religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability.

Effective enforcement of s.75: At present, an effective enforcement of s.75 research project is underway. The project is considering the application and impact of the enforcement powers and will make recommendations to improve effectiveness. Oral evidence hearings are being planned with Equality Coalition member groups.

**EU exit:** The Coalition supported an expert seminar in September 2016 on the equality and broader rights implications of the EU referendum, including on equality and employment law. UNISON addressed the event as well as other experts from academia, government and civil society.

**Further political engagement:** The Coalition will also continue to engage with the Executive Office to ensure that it properly discharges its s.75 duties in relation to the development of the new Programme for Government.

The Coalition has already requested that the Executive Office review its screening decision not to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of the Programme for Government Framework. The Executive Office has refused at this stage to conduct an EQIA of the Framework and the Coalition will consider what further action can be taken in the coming weeks.
Conflict and dealing with the past

Throughout 2016, UNISON has continued to respond to approaches from families and victims of the conflict seeking support for independent inquiries.

Over the past year, progress on dealing with the past has stalled once again. The Historical Institutions Unit (HIU) and other institutions provided for within the Stormont House Agreement have yet to be taken forward, due to the UK Government wishing to impose a national security veto in relation to information given to victims’ families from HIU investigations. In addition, the Executive has yet to commit the resources requested by the Lord Chief Justice to create a Legacy Inquests Unit and complete all outstanding legacy inquests within the next 5 years.

Regional Committee believes that it will take political, community and trade union engagement to attempt to resolve these issues. But it cannot be regarded as entirely separate from a political process which is denying social and economic rights to the people. As detailed above we are engaged in a range of current and future projects which can make significant, positive contributions, provided we can secure political will from all parties in Government.

Bill of Rights and Human Rights Consortium

UNISON continues to be represented on the Consortium Board by Thomas Mahaffy and we are also direct members.

International Standards: the Consortium began the year by holding a joint series of briefing and information sessions with the Equality Coalition on the process for civil society groups to participate in the UK’s 6th periodic review under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

The Consortium drafted an initial shadow report and presented it to the ICESCR Pre-Sessional Working Group in October last year. Following the examination of the UK Government, the Committee made a series of recommendations in July 2016. These reflected concerns raised by UNISON in our submission to the Committee in relation to issues such as the real Living Wage, zero-hour contracts, a Bill of Rights for NI, childcare and poverty. We will pursue progress on the implementation of these recommendations going forward.

Following the EU Referendum result, the Consortium’s concern is that there should be no dilution of existing rights protection. To safeguard against the dilution of human rights standards, it has urged the UK government to fulfil one of its outstanding obligations under the peace agreements and to implement a strong and inclusive Bill of Rights for NI.
Human Rights Act (HRA): Since 2014 the Consortium has been attempting to gather evidence of the impact of the HRA in NI and continues to develop this work further in a number of key areas.

- It is developing a NI specific campaign to support the retention of the HRA, entitled ‘Keep the Act Intact – Defend the Human Rights Act’. In January 2016, in support of this work, it hosted a hugely successful conference in UNISON on ‘The Impact of the Human Rights Act in NI’.
- It is also developing a series of case study video interviews with individuals and organisational representatives who have used the HRA, either in advocacy, policy reform or through the court system to ensure the protection of basic HRA rights for themselves or their clients.
- In preparation for the consultation on a British Bill of Rights, it has been working closely with an expert team of local barristers to provide an analysis from a NI perspective on any forthcoming public consultation on this issue.
- It has been working in collaboration with its members to develop wider civil society preparation and consideration of the threat to the HRA.
- It has also continued political lobbying of local, UK, RoI and international stakeholders on this issue and have been an active civil society voice at a number of conferences and workshops, in addition to ensuring it was a central element of many of the NI Assembly election hustings events.
- In direct response to the results of the EU referendum, human rights groups, including the Consortium, have called on the Secretary of State to give assurances that the UK Government will now not walk away from the protections of the ECHR, which are available in NI through the HRA.

The threat to the HRA remains, and whilst the new Prime Minister and Government have indicated that they do not intend to withdraw the UK from the European Convention on Human Rights, they have also indicated that they intend to proceed with a British Bill of Rights.

NI Human Rights Festival: The fourth NI Human Rights Festival was held in December 2015. This week long series of events continued to build on the success of previous years and it is gradually growing in both size and broader public recognition.

Established to engage new audiences in conversation about human rights the 2015 festival contained 38 broad and diverse events with an audience of over 2000 people. The 2016 Festival will take place from 4th – 10th December.

- **Participation and the Practice of Rights**

  The Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR) organisation was founded in 2006 by UNISON’s Inez McCormack. UNISON is represented on the Board by the Head of Organising. PPR puts the power of human rights at the service of those who need it most and helps marginalised groups use rights in practical ways to make real social and economic change in their communities.
In early 2016 UNISON’s GPF made a significant grant to the Inez McCormack Fund. UNISON works collaboratively with PPR on a range of issues identified for action through our Regional Council and Regional Committee. The following are some of its key areas of work over the past year to support groups to make widespread policy change on the ground.

Training and summer school: PPR has delivered training on rights-based campaigning with UCHT branch as well as on UNISON’s activist education programme. PPR also delivered a presentation at the community and voluntary branch meeting and are beginning a project with UNISON community and voluntary sector activists.

PPR trained UNISON front line hostel staff at Simon Community NI in March to develop initiatives capable of supporting effective participation among homeless people they work with in order to deliver more targeted services.

PPR’s eighth ‘Tools for Action’ Summer School took place in August at Galway House with 35 attendees. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and PPR have been approached by 2 new groups who wish to use the approach on their issues.

Rights in action: In May 2016, PPR supported Rathcoole residents to hold a protest and handed in 1000 petitions to the Department for Communities Minister calling on him to open up 100 flats that had received £3m investment but remained vacant despite growing housing need in the community. The NI Housing Executive committed to opening 30 flats immediately following the protest. Residents involved in the Equality Can’t Wait campaign to tackle housing inequality impacting the Catholic community in North Belfast, supported the Rathcoole residents in their protest.

Right to Work: The Right to Welfare group designed new human rights based approach templates to benefits sanctions appeals and assisted 7 families to use the tools. 5 families successfully overturned the wrongful decisions made by the Social Security Agency and were reimbursed a total of £3230.40 in lost benefits.

The group worked with artist Zehnia Mahdi Nau and the Golden Thread Gallery to produce the film ‘Copies’ showcasing the group’s campaign for REAL JOBS NOW and protection from welfare sanctions. The film was screened at the Hillview site in North Belfast as part of Draw Down The Walls and Belfast Film Festival ‘Invisible Barriers: Moving Images’ programme and was also part of a four week exhibition at Belfast City Hall.

The Equality Can’t Wait housing campaign supported 82 families to monitor human rights failings in their housing and get solutions. 82 families (130 adults and 140 children) were awarded 2960 housing needs points. 39 received new offers of accommodation and 24 were re-housed. 5 families were awarded compensation of over £1678 and 12 families had rent arrears reduced at a total cost of £27204. 22 families had effective maintenance and repairs carried out at their homes.

The group launched ‘Surrounded by land, but no space for housing’ - a report which photo mapped available land for thousands of units of social housing in Belfast. The group then secured the written support of the NIFHA Chief Executive and NIHE Chief Executive to maximise social housing on the available land.

In December 2015 the families held a protest calling for homes at the Mackie’s site in West Belfast supported by a range of community activists and political representatives. In July 2016, PPR released the report ‘Funding for New Social Housing’ research which they commissioned Paul Gosling, the financial journalist, to write.
PPR supported several Sudanese and Somali families driven from their homes by racist attacks. With PPR support the families successfully challenged NI Housing Executive procedures which categorised their ordeals as ‘neighbourhood nuisance’ rather than ‘intimidation’ and refused to award them the waiting list points that would have them promptly re-housed. The families have also exposed through FOI the failure of the Housing Executive to accurately record the levels of attacks across the city.

A ‘Homeless not Voiceless’ event convened in March to mark the close of the Participation project with Simon Community NI. Keynote speakers included Jon Sparkes from Crisis, and NI Assembly Social Development Committee Chair Alex Maskey MLA. UN Special Rapporteur on Housing Ms. Leilani Farha sent a video message of support. The projects evaluation was also launched and called the work.

Following the PPR submission to the International Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Committee called for the issue of Catholic Housing Inequality in North Belfast to be tackled, and for ‘due process’ to be respected in the social security system so that claimants were not arbitrarily deprived of their entitlements through ‘sanctions.’ PPR also spoke at a Council of Europe Conference entitled “Promoting Equality and Social Inclusion” in Helsinki, Finland in December on grassroots implementation of Human Rights.

PPR continues to work on their project alongside the Scottish Human Rights Commission and Edinburgh Tenants Federation to use PPR’s HRBA with residents in high rise flats in Leith, Edinburgh.

In March 2016 PPR held the event ‘The People’s Proposal: The Right to Social Security’ to hear evidence from those directly impacted by social security reductions and put forward a set of rights-based proposals to ensure claimants are not arbitrarily deprived of their social security entitlement.

The REAL JOBS NOW motion (requiring Belfast City Council to ring fence real jobs for the Long-Term Unemployed through its procurement processes) has led to 116 jobs so far. However much more is possible. The Right to Work: Right to Welfare group forced a further review of social clauses policy at Belfast City Council when the group revealed that the £10m Girdwood investment created only 4 jobs for the long term unemployed in the surrounding communities.

100% of carers surveyed by the Mental Health Rights Campaign in 2015 reported that they didn’t have enough information on where to seek help for mental health issues. Alongside Family Voices, the Mental Health Rights Campaign successfully campaigned for the inclusion of a ‘Family Guide’ on the HSCB Care Pathway to provide information on the care available for those who have self-harmed or have suicidal thoughts.

The group held a Stop the Sanctions protest in November 2015 to point out the clear abuses of people’s internationally recognised human rights to social security and due process. ‘Sanctions’ were served on Ingeus, the lead contractor in Belfast involved in sanctioning Job Seekers on the ‘Steps 2 Success’ government back to work scheme, and the Social Security at Royston House which carries out Work Capability Assessments for breach of human rights standards. The Minister for Employment and Learning and Social Development Minister also received copies of the human rights sanctions.
**Women at work and in society**

**Discrimination against women:** Women in NI are still concentrated in lower paid, lower status, often part-time work. They have higher rates of economic inactivity due to family and home commitments. They are the greatest losers in the event of cuts to the welfare system. They form 84% of UNISON NI membership.

Many of the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) remain to be implemented. As reported in the employment law section, we welcomed the initiative on gender pay but now need to see implementation.

A range of women’s organisations are actively pursuing the equality and anti-discrimination agenda and are also putting a focus on the rights of rural women. UNISON Women’s Committee is encouraging direct involvement of women members in a range of programmes promoted by these important groups.

**Women’s right to choose:** UNISON, alongside a range of women’s organisations, human rights campaigners and ICTU gave evidence in 2016 to the CEDAW committee at hearings held in Belfast on abortion and the failure of the NI Government to act. Throughout 2016 we supported the ‘Trust Women’ campaign calling on political parties:

- to trust women to make decisions about their own lives;
- to ask for legal change to allow greater access;
- to push for a free vote on any progressive changes.

The campaigns in both NI and the Republic of Ireland were extensively debated at the 2016 ICTU Women’s Conference in Mullingar which affirmed support for both campaigns. UNISON delegates extensively contributed to the debate. Most recently, UNISON has agreed to co-sponsor alongside other trade unions, a workplace survey on abortion across NI.

**International Women’s Day 2016:** In March 2016 UNISON hosted events in Galway House to mark International Women’s Day and a strong UNISON delegation participated in the annual IWD march.

**Violence against women:** As reported in Section 1, we continue with our programme to challenge violence against women by seeking to influence Government, employers and through awareness raising within the union. Much of the policy work is co-ordinated alongside allies in the women’s movement and in the field of equality and human rights. Roberta Magee and Pamela Dooley have been invited to present our UNISON/employer domestic violence projects to a fringe at the 2017 NDC.

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).** We have commenced work on our shadow report for the 2017 examination of the UK Government by CEDAW. Our main priorities on eliminating discrimination against women were set out in summary form in the UNISON Manifesto prepared for the 2016 Assembly elections.

**Impact of conflict on women:** We continue to press the UK Government to include women in NI in its action plans for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 on women in conflict. We made this one of the core demands in both the 2015 UNISON NI General Election and 2016 Assembly election manifestos and will continue with this work until the goal is achieved.
UNISON Solidarity Group continues to go from strength to strength. Group members met consistently throughout the year in both formal session and in an extensive series of workshops, seminars, actions and public demonstrations.

In September 2016 the joint regional seminar, hosted in Belfast last year, was hosted in Glasgow by the Scottish region. All four regions attended and the seminar focused on Palestine, Colombia and Cuba and the exploitation of garment workers in south-east Asia.

Group members and branch delegates took part in the ICTU global summer school 2016 in Letterkenny where UNISON’s Eamonn McMahon and Kevin Hillick were part of the team presenting on work on Palestine.

In addition, group members have hosted and participated in fringe meetings at ICTU conferences; the TUFP conference; a range of seminars, film nights, and public demonstrations; in addition to hosting international delegations.

In July 2016 the group was delighted to host the head of UNISONs international department, Nick Crook.

Cuba

The group continues to support Cuba and in particular to work with the health union SALUD.

Earlier in the year, we were unfortunately unable to accept an invitation from the Cuban Ambassador to the UK Teresita Vicente to participate in a discussion on the future. However, several delegates were able to attend a range of activities as part of the 1916 commemoration involving the Cuban Ambassador to Ireland, Dr. Hermes Herrera Hernández.

Group members attending the 2016 Durham miners’ gala heard from the Cuban 5 on their freedom tour of the UK.

Palestine

2016 has yet again been a year of intensive action to progress UNISON’s policies on Palestine and the rights of the Palestinian people. Throughout the year we hosted visiting Palestinian delegations, sponsored TUFP activity and took part in a series of actions in support of Palestine.

We sponsored visits to the occupied territories and to Brussels. In April 2016 our group Chair, Conor McCarthy, took part in a UNISON UK-wide delegation to the occupied territories. Conor reported on his experience to the group, to the Regional Committee and at the Palestine fringe at NDC 2016. The report is available on the main UNISON website.
In the same period we sponsored Deidre Murphy on a joint TUFP / Norwegian trade union visit in preparation for the launch of the Ambassadors programme reported to previous Regional Council. Delegates included reps from NIPSA, INTO and Belfast Trades Council. UNISON subsequently hosted an event to enable delegates to report back to the wider trade union movement and a report was also given to the joint seminar in Glasgow 2016.

UNISON branches extended solidarity work throughout the year. In Newry and Mourne branch Deidre Murphy managed to lobby US Vice President Joe Biden on his visit to the area. Royal Hospital branch continued with humanitarian fundraising and the now well-established hill-walk as part of Feile 2016.

Kevin Hillick of Down Education hosted a large delegation of young Palestinians as part of the anti-racism world cup 2016 and also received an ‘excellence award’ for his solidarity work at the UNISON organising awards. Several senior activists hosted children from the delegation in their homes. A range of branches have participated in fund-raising activity.

At the 2016 ICTU Northern Biennial Delegate Conference, we supported TUFP at a well-attended fringe meeting with Elaine Bradley highlighting Gaza and the desperate position of children post the last Israeli attack.

UNISON members, staff and activists are extensively involved in Trade Union Friends of Palestine (TUFP). To mark its 10th anniversary, UNISON NI hosted a 2-day conference in Galway House and part-funded the international speakers:

- Ivan Karakashian - Defence of Children International, Palestine;
- Omar Barghouti - BDS National Committee - by Skype;
- Riya Hassan -BDS Europe;
- Merav Amir -Who Profits from the Occupation, Human Rights Activist;
- Max Blumenthal - Author, Journalist and Film-maker;
- Dan Cohen - Journalist and Film-maker;
- Workmates International -Trade Union Section of Palestine Committee, Norway.

Unfortunately Jamal Juma - Stop the Wall, Federation of New Unions, Land Defence Coalition was forced to pull out at the last minute.

The conference, opened by Peter Bunting on behalf of Patricia King, General Secretary ICTU was extremely well attended. A further work programme has been developed as a result.

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Jewish ‘Voice for Peace’ activists challenging the attacks on Israelis and Palestinians supporting BDS

Arising from the joint UNISON regions seminar last year Eamonn McMahon, as Secretary of TUFP, met with Palestinian support groups in Brussels with proposals for joint trade union working to challenge the EU over its failure to act on the human rights requirements in the EU preferential trading agreement with Israel.

This initiative has now resulted in a trade union seminar ‘Solidarity with Palestine - Ending European complicity with Israeli violations of international law’ to be held in Brussels on 18 and 19th November. The seminar has been endorsed by UNISON international committee who have also provided some sponsorship. We anticipate that there will be a significant delegation from UNISON NI and have

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encouraged other regions to participate. ICTU is also endorsing the seminar as are unions from Norway, Belgium, France and other EU countries.

UNISON’s bargaining agenda includes our demand for implementation of the NIHRC recommendations on human right and procurement. This includes challenging on the supply chain and the award of contracts to companies profiting from illegal occupation. We are now part of a significant global campaign challenging Hewlett Packard. This work is being undertaken by the lead negotiators in public services covering the main public service unions.

Aside from the repressive legislation introduced in Israel against Israelis involved in supporting BDS, other Governments including the UK are attempting to impede our right to Boycott. The Irish Government has recently challenged the Israeli Government for imposing travel restrictions on Omar Barghouti and has defended the right to participate in BDS. The UK Government’s attempts to curtail BDS activity have been challenged in court.

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### Colombia

We continue to support Justice for Colombia and the trade union campaign challenging inequality, denial of human rights, and in particular the assault on trade unionists, human rights activists and peace activists.

In addition, we remain totally involved in the trade union / NI cross-party initiative established by Justice for Colombia (JFC) in support of the Colombian peace process.

UNISON’s delegation, made up of NEC and regional representatives and organised with Justice for Colombia, went to Colombia at the end of 2015. We were represented by NEC member Alastair Long. The delegation heard first hand from trade unions, human rights defenders and community groups about both their hopes and their fears for the peace negotiations. Attacks on trade unionists and human rights defenders continue and the Colombian legal system has failed to prosecute their attackers.

The delegation came back determined to strengthen UNISON’s support for JfC and our solidarity projects with the Colombian trade union movement through the UNISON International Development Fund. A report and film were produced and we viewed it at the joint regional seminar in Glasgow. We commend it to all branches.

Alastair Long has embarked on a series of meetings with branch committees to give information about the situation in Colombia. This is resulting in more branches affiliating to JfC. UNISON NI currently has the highest affiliation rate in the union.

We have continued to play a core role in the special NI initiative in support of the peace process. This initiative has been extensively supported by UNISON at the centre over the past 4 years. During that time our politicians on a cross-party basis have worked with trade union leaders here, including the Regional Secretary, through JfC to support both sides in the peace negotiations.

In August 2016, it was announced that a peace agreement had been reached between the Government and the Revolutionary Forces of Columbia (FARC). Despite this, in the period between the announcement and the formal signing of the peace agreement in Cartagena in September, more than 20 peace activists, human rights activists and trade unionists were assassinated.

In September 2016 the Regional Secretary was invited to attend the formal signing of the peace agreement.
Peter Bunting, ICTU and Jimmy Kelly, Unite also attended alongside Mariella Kohon, Director of JfC. While there, meetings were held with the Irish Ambassador and the EU special envoy and with the FARC negotiators who had extended the invitations.

Although the thousands of people attending the official ceremony appeared optimistic, we were concerned that the referendum was being held in a much shorter timeframe than our own peace referendum and on a peace agreement which is considerably more detailed than the Good Friday Agreement. We also knew from the outset of the peace negotiations 4 years ago that some of the most powerful and richest influences in Colombia had openly declared that they would not accept either the peace process or any agreement.

On the 2nd October those Colombians taking part in the referendum rejected the peace agreement by a narrow margin. The referendum was categorised by the following:
- there was massive abstentionism with 60% of the population not voting;
- in the areas which had borne the greatest impact of the civil war and contained some of the highest concentration of victims, the people overwhelmingly voted in favour of the peace agreement.

Following the result, the Regional Secretary gave interviews to BBC World TV and radio; to international radio stations; and to BBC NI.

We were only too well aware of the dangers that lay ahead once the agreement was reached. It is now even more imperative that we continue with our solidarity work given that the last failed peace process in Colombia resulted in the annihilation of over 5,000 trade unionists, peace activists, human rights activists and ordinary people.

We are, however, still optimistic in the light of the joint communiqué issued by the negotiators from Havana on 7th October. JfC is present and supporting. There is an international obligation, particularly on the world leaders present at the peace signing ceremony, to support both sides equally.

### Refugees

We are in the middle of the worst refugee crisis since the Second World War. 65 million people have been forced to flee their homes because of conflict and war. Many more are on the move because of natural disasters and entrenched poverty. Most of those fleeing conflict – over 38 million – are displaced within their own countries. Others have found shelter in neighbouring countries. And tens of thousands have been forced to risk their lives on treacherous and often deadly journeys to seek refuge far from home. We continue to work with allies to seek justice for them.

UNISON participated in further welcome rallies throughout 2016 in support of refugees. We continue to demand that our doors be opened to all those caught up in a crisis much of which has been created by the wars waged by western Governments.

Regional Committee continues to open our advice clinics and English classes to refugees and asylum seekers. We also congratulate our black and migrant workers group, branches, staff and members on the extraordinary response to the call for humanitarian support.
2016 has been another year of sustained effort in support of refugees and asylum seekers. On the eve of last year’s Council meeting branches and members were involved in collecting and sorting donations of clothing, tents, sleeping bags, shoes and toiletries.

In November 2015 a comedy and cabaret night was organised to raise funds for Lesvos and Kos where thousands of men, women and children had been coming ashore in boats or having been rescued from the sea. The comedy night included stand up acts from Nuala McKeever, Gemma Hutton, Debstar, Frank Rafferty and our very own Fidelma Carolan.

Individual branches also made donations towards transport and buying fresh food for those newly arrived. The items gathered were shipped via St Vincent de Paul who worked with local charities to distribute the donations. More clothing and children’s toys were given by UNISON members and were sent to a project in Sicily supporting children and young people via the Belfast based charity Tuesday’s Child. Many of these children were arriving unaccompanied by their parents and are at particular risk of exploitation.

In June 2016, UNISON - working with East Belfast Mission; Stormont Presbyterian Church; Fortwilliam and Macrory Presbyterian Church; All Souls Church, Belfast; and the Society of St Vincent de Paul Ireland (NI) collected and fixed over 40 adult and children’s bicycles with accessories for members of the local refugee and asylum seeker community. We were very grateful to Chain Reaction who stepped in during the last week help us repair the bicycles. The bicycles were distributed by the Regional Secretary at an event in All Souls Church Hall. Sustran provided hi-vis vests.

It can take more than 5 years for someone who has fled their country and seeks asylum here to have their case adjudicated. In the meantime, they live on around £35 per week and are not allowed to work or to drive. So bicycles allow individuals and families the opportunity to be more mobile, to promote health and wellbeing, to link into volunteering opportunities and help kids integrate with other local children.

In addition to collecting the bicycles, we have also invited members to donate to further shipments going to Greece funded by St Vincent de Paul. Once again members responded with amazing generosity to the plight of those stranded. Lorraine Clyde from NEELB branch organised a collection across her school, St Comgall’s in Antrim, just a month before she was tragically killed in a car accident.

Regional Officer Fidelma Carolan travelled to volunteer with Refugee Support Europe in a Greek refugee camp where 900 Syrians (including 400 children) were living in tents. Many UNISON branches made donations which were spent on buying fresh food, toiletries and refurbishing a derelict room so it could be used as a classroom.
As part of Refugee Week, UNISON members also attended various solidarity and campaigning events organised by refugee support organisations, including Housing4All - a group campaigning against the forced destitution of asylum seekers.

In September 2016, we part-sponsored an ICTU delegation to the horrendous Calais camp known as ‘the Jungle’. The preliminary report can be found in the international section of the ICTU website. This also contains details of the 2016 summer school including a comprehensive report on the session on refugees.

Working in the wider trade union movement

ICTU

Our main work with other unions continues to be through the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and its Committees and in the NI-wide public sector negotiating bodies.

Executive Council of Congress and Standing Orders Committee: Patricia McKeown and Anne Speed were both elected to the NI Committee at the 2016 Northern Biennial Conference. Denis Keatings is now elected to both the standing orders committee and the conference arrangement committee. Table 15 sets out the full extent of UNISON involvement in the Congress.

NIC ICTU conference 2016: The 2016 NIC ICTU Biennial Conference was held in Derry in April. UNISON’s motions on protecting the peace process and health and social services were extensively debated and carried unanimously. The UNISON delegation made significant contributions throughout the agenda.

Trades Councils: Regional Committee continues to encourage UNISON activists to become involved in local Trades Councils and the ICTU campaign to re-establish Trades Councils is proving successful. Trades Councils are playing an important role in encouraging workers and communities to participate in the campaign to protect the welfare state and to oppose cuts in public services.

May Day: The 2016 week-long trade union Festival culminated in the annual May Day march. This year’s theme was again ‘A Better, Fairer Way’. Once again UNISON branches and self-organised groups fully participated in the week long events including the film showing at UNISON and turned out in excellent numbers force to represent UNISON on the May Day march.

Events and seminars: Throughout the year, members and activists participated in ICTU events and seminars on a wide range of trade union priorities including equality and human rights, the implications of the lobbying act, health and safety, defending jobs and services and international solidarity.

1916-2016 Centenary: Throughout the year members and activists have taken part in a range of activity marking the Centenary of the 1916 Rising. These have included
lectures, seminars and theatrical events on the role of women and a wide range of trade union activity as well as formal state events.

In April, the Regional Secretary, along with Brian Campfield (President ICTU), and a representative from the US trade union movement unveiled a statue to James Connolly in Belfast.

In May 2016 UNISON representatives attended the unveiling of a tombstone in memory of George McBride - Ulster Volunteer; survivor of the massacre at the Somme; union activist; socialist; and also husband of Winifred Carney, a Cumann na mBáin volunteer and adjutant to James Connolly in the GPO during the Easter Rising and lifelong socialist activist. 100 years on, still lessons to be learned and shared.

Regional Committee has also joined with other unions to sponsor a range of theatrical events. In November, Greenshoot Theatre Company will present ‘Gallagher Street’ to commemorate the 1932 outdoor relief strike.

**Table 15 - UNISON representation on ICTU structures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICTU Structure and purpose</th>
<th>UNISON representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Executive</td>
<td>Patricia McKeown; Anne Speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI Committee, ICTU</td>
<td>Patricia McKeown; Anne Speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Equality &amp; Human Rights Group</td>
<td>Patricia McKeown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Standing Orders Committee</td>
<td>Denis Keatings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Women’s Committee</td>
<td>Anne Speed and Margaret McKee (Danielle McCusker sub)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Health Services Committee</td>
<td>Anne Speed (Chair); Patricia McKeown; Joe McCusker; Brian Ferguson; Denis Keatings; Maura McKenna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Education TU Group</td>
<td>Anne Speed (Chair); Brian Ferguson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Public Services Group</td>
<td>RMT, senior lay reps and regional organisers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU private sector group</td>
<td>Brian Ferguson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Disability Committee</td>
<td>Marjorie Trimble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU LGBT Committee</td>
<td>Fidelma Carolan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Retired Members</td>
<td>Archie Thomson, Angela Boorman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Youth Forum</td>
<td>Sinead Liddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Education Officers Group</td>
<td>Fidelma Carolan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Health &amp; Safety Committee</td>
<td>Ray Rafferty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Solidarity Committee</td>
<td>Mary Ferris; Dominic Murray; Eamonn McMahon (TUF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTU Education alliance</td>
<td>Anne Speed and nominated reps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Main policy making body – all island
2. Main policy making body for NI
3. NICICTU sub-committee on full range of equality and human rights policies and practices
4. Advisory Committee to NIC and jointly with Women’s Committee RI to Executive Council on women’s rights and participation
5. Main health policy committee for NI. Reports to NIC
6. Main education policy committee for NI. Report to NIC.
7. Advisory Committee to NIC
8. Advisory Committee to NIC
9. Advisory Committee to NIC
10. Liaison group for all NI TU education officers
11. Advisory group to NIC
12. Campaign group on education policy in NI comprising TU and affiliates.
“Developing an efficient and effective union”
Finance & Managing Resources

**Summary Accounts – Lay Activity Fund**

The Regional accounts for the year ending 31 December 2015 have been fully audited and distributed to all branches and delegates. The UNISON NI lay activity budget for 2015 was £105,477.68, representing a 0.8% increase on the previous year. The allocation for 2016 is £104,700.72. At the start of each year the budget for all categories of lay activity is set by Regional Committee and reviewed on a quarterly basis.

The Regional Committee affiliates to a range of organisations and also makes donations on individual and group requests in line with UNISON policy. These are normally confined to £100-£300 and, where appropriate, branches are invited to support the relevant project or cause.

A total of £3,400 was donated to projects through the following organisations:
- FASA
- Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- UNISON Welfare
- Gambia Schools Project
- Cork Mother Jones Committee
- ICTU – Margaret Skinnider event
- Anti Racism world cup
- Macha Production – Refugee week
- Bronagh McElholm – Oestrogen Rising Cabaret
- Refugee Support
- Marie Curie
- NI Hospice

More significant sponsorship has recently been agreed for the Greenshoots Theatre production of ‘Gallagher Street’ marking the 1932 outdoor relief strike.

**Branch finance**

All branches submitted their annual return on time and within rule. For the second year in a row, NI was the only region to achieve this and the only region where all branches submitted their returns using OLBA. A number of branches were audited in 2016. Common issues raised included general issues of good practice on recording expenditure decisions and filing receipts.

Regional Committee has drawn all issues to the attention of the relevant branches. Regional Committee continues to offer support to all branches to enable them to meet the new requirement to record all budgets on the OLBA system. As reported elsewhere, preparations are being made for training and support on the production of activity based branch budgeting.

**Income and RMS**

Total income returned to Head Office was £3,827,034.87. This represents an increase of £154,497.55 (4.1% year on year).

Total income returned to branches for 2015 increased to £930,129.62. This represents an increase of £67,782.62 (7.7% year on year).
**Premises**

**Galway House:** UNISON purchased Galway House in April 2016. The contract with the managing agent has been extended to the end of the year. In discussion with HQ we have agreed to work jointly on the production of a business case for the development and use of the remainder of the premises.

We continue to host a wide range of events for UNISON lay structures including meetings, seminars, film nights and cultural events. We have also hosted a range of activity organised by external organisations including:

- NI Anti Poverty Network
- TUFP conference
- C.O.T
- N.I.U.S.E / Equality commission
- Human Rights Consortium
- Participation in the Practice of Rights
- Four Seasons

**North West Support Centre:** The North West Support Centre in Derry continues to be the prime venue for UNISON branches in the North West. It is also the location for Derry Trades Council and our most regular external organisation is the Derry Well Woman Centre.

Other organisations booking the centre include:

- The Law Centre
- NIACRO
- Polish Abroad

The NI Council for Ethnic Minorities continue to base their North West operation in the UNISON centre as part of their partnership arrangements. Income generation from our North West Centre continues to outstrip the Regional Centre in Belfast.

**Administrative systems and front-line communication**

**In-house systems and protocols:** UNISON’s virtual filing system – SharePoint was upgraded in 2016. A subsequent review of all our filing systems has been undertaken. Changes to make the systems more effective are ongoing and will be complete by end of year. A health and safety audit was completed in the region in May and the final report is awaited.

**IT system:** A new web-based telephone system was introduced across the union in 2016. This has presented a few problems all of which have been fed back to UNISON HQ. All other IT equipment is due be upgraded and we will be included in the initial roll out.

**Websites and social media:** Our Communications Assistant, Sharrona Loughins, continues to co-ordinate with branches giving advice and support on their websites and social media facilities. Through planned visits to each of the branches, the two-way exchange of information on everything from local campaigns to bargaining initiatives and successes has considerably improved. Moving forward, we will be aim to strengthen the role and participation of communication officers in branches and incorporate more communication objectives in branch plans.

We are currently working on a new UNISON NI website. This will have a clear layout that will allow members to access all the relevant information from the region and their branch. The website also features areas of support for branches including poster and newsletter templates as well as having a branch page to upload any of their newsletters or upcoming event details.

An ‘update your detail’ feature will allow members to contact us quickly and easily with all new information keeping our records up to date and relevant. The Education Programme and AGM newsletters will be displayed in digital
format for members to download at their convenience and there will be an option to apply online for training courses. The new website will also showcase our unique partnership programmes and our work on equality and human rights. We will be seeking feedback from branch communication officers on the website to ensure all information remains current and relevant to our members.

E-communication with branches and members: We are pleased to note that this now a union-wide project. We continue to collect, collate and cleanse our email and telephone data bases of member details.

We currently hold over 18,300 email addresses – up 14% on last year. The accuracy of our mobile phone number data base cannot be measured until we complete another outreach to members. This is underway. Our texting facility continues to be used by branches to assist with local campaigns.

Distribution and print: The Regional Centre continues to provide a service for branches and during 2016 circulated branch newsletters to all members during the AGM season. The postage costs were met by the Branches. In addition an election was conducted on behalf of three branches.

□ Staffing

Thanks: Regional Committee records its thanks to all our staff for all their work throughout 2015/2016 and in particular the very significant contribution made by the NI staff team to UNISON retaining Silver award status in Investors for People.

New staff: This year we welcomed John Patrick Clayton as our new Policy Officer. We will shortly be joined by 9 Fighting Fund Organisers for a 12 month period.

Our current staff team is:

Administration
- Michele Bradford – Regional Administrator
- Tracy Bryson - Secretary (PT)
- Caroline Butler – Building maintenance and Catering
- Anne Campbell – Team Support
- Gemma Curran – Telephonist Receptionist (PT)
- Alison Downey – Telephonist Receptionist (PT)
- Deirdre Graham – RMS Supervisor
- Shelly King - Secretary (Part Time)
- Roslyn McCartney - Secretary (Part Time)
- Brenda Peel – RMS Clerk
- Liz Robinson – Senior Secretary

Specialist
- John Patrick Clayton – Policy Officer
- Sharrona Loughins – Communications Assistant

Regional Management Team
- Patricia McKeown – Regional Secretary
- Thomas Mahaffy – Head of Organising & Development
- Anne Speed – Head of Bargaining & Representation

Organising
- Marianne Buick - Area Organiser
- Fidelma Carolan - Regional Education Officer
- Nuala Conlon – Area Organiser
- Nathalie Donnelly – Local Organiser
- Brian Ferguson – Regional Organiser
- Danielle McCusker – Area Organiser
- Joe McCusker - Regional Organiser
- Susan Neill – Area Organiser
- Caitlin NiChathail – Area Organiser (PT)
- Una NiMhearain – Area Organiser (PT)
Many delegates will recall that at last year’s Regional Council our comrade, Jonathan Swallow, showed signs of illness while making a presentation to us on strategies to challenge austerity. After spending a week in the Mater Hospital Jonathan returned to his home in Yorkshire. He made one final working visit to Belfast in December 2015 to speak on equality and human rights.

On his return home, Jonathan was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease. The prognosis was 18 months to 2 years but this was not to be. In early 2016 Jonathan, who had no living family in England, expressed the wish to spend his remaining time in NI with his UNISON family. We thank Thomas Mahaffy for his tireless efforts in making this wish come true. Jonathan died in the Mater Hospital, Belfast on 31 May 2016 and we thank Eoin Stewart, Mater Branch Secretary for his help well beyond the call of duty.

For over 30 years Jonathan worked alongside NUPE, UNISON, other unions and a host of public sector employers in NI. Through his efforts, local government and education services were kept privatisation free. In our health and social services, where the campaign against privatisation lasted for 15 years, all services were returned in-house resulting in Jonathan’s ‘hero’ status amongst low paid women workers and the dispossessed.

He was deeply engaged in work with UNISON NI on equality and human rights issues and to support the Peace Process. Always the champion of the underdog, the value of his input has been immeasurable and his contribution will inform our work for many years to come. Jonathan was a member of NALGO Birmingham City Council branch and the Greater Belfast Community and Voluntary Sector branch.

Jonathan’s funeral was marked by the extraordinary range of trade unionists, senior public servants and equality and human rights activists attending. In September 2016, we were honoured to fulfil Jonathan’s last wishes in the memorial celebration recorded in this year’s report.
A Memorial Event to Celebrate the Life and Work of JONATHAN SWALLOW

Held at UNISON, Galway House on 23 September 2016

Welcome to this celebration of our friend and comrade Jonathan Swallow. The slide show running at the start of our memorial event contains archive material on Jonathan’s family. He was an only child. His father, a teacher and orchestral musician, died when he was 8 years old. His mother Sybil was also a teacher. It was inevitable that Jonathan would be a scholar. By the time we met him he was a revolutionary in a quiet, English sort of way. Jonathan had no close relatives but wanted to share some of his family history with us. He also wanted to share some of his best loved music, poetry and memories of union struggle. We are delighted to be joined today by the actor Maggie Cronin who will help us present a picture of Jonathan Swallow, the man.

12.30 Slideshow: Jonathan’s early life – “From the Yorkshire Dales to Oxford”

- Music: JS Bach, ‘Kommt Ihr Angefochtnen Sunder’

  Jonathan chose the Lorraine Lieberson version of this aria for the beauty of her singing which he felt ‘put the world in order’. It would have been sung in Leipzig where he had “treasured memories of a visit to Thomaskirche, the church were JS Bach was cantor.”

1pm Jonathan and what he meant to us

Chaired by Patricia McKeown, UNISON Regional Secretary

“From Ilkley to University Challenge”

- A short speech from Jonathan to students at Oxford in 2014 describing how a working class lad from Yorkshire arrived at Hertford College, Oxford.

- Music: Thomas Tallis ‘Spem in Alium’ with Bertold Brecht poem ‘Vom Sprengen Des Gartens’

  Of the music, Jonathan said “early weeks at Oxford, live in Merton Chapel - music I knew would accompany me for life. Also, given 16th century English politics, quite subversive!” He was also a big fan of left wing German poet, playwright, and theatrical reformer Bertold Brecht.

“From Scholar to Public Servant”
• Slide show of union struggle from the 1980s onwards

Jonathan chose ‘Bread and Roses’ sung by Bronwyn Lewis. For 30 years this has been the closing anthem of the ICTU women’s conference. He also recalled that in the early 80’s he has been taken to see Christy Moore by the Birmingham City Council Women’s Unit – hence ‘Unfinished Revolution’. He spoke of the “good 80’s struggle memories”.

“From Public Servant to Workers’ Champion”

• Memories of Jonathan – Anna McGonigle, Schools Meals Worker and former NUPE and UNISON President

• Poem: ‘From the Republic of Conscience’, by Seamus Heaney

Jonathan recalled this as “a great memory” - a shared discussion of Heaney’s poem with the late Inez McCormack.


“Jonathan’s Legacy”

• Patricia McKeown

• Poem: ‘Remember’, by Christina Rossetti

Jonathan wanted us to “forget and smile while still remembering”

“The Last Word?”

• Extract from presentation on public procurement and human rights – Jonathan Swallow

• ‘The Internationale’ – All sing

Jonathan and the UNISON team, Durham Miners’ Gala 2015