



Community & Voluntary Branch AGM Newsletter 2021

Annual General Meeting 2021

The AGM's will be held on Zoom this year due to COVID-19.

**Wednesday 10th March
1:00pm**

**Thursday 11th March
7:30pm**

Zoom is free to download on tablet or smartphone, or can be accessed at <https://zoom.us/>.

You can join the AGM on Zoom in a number of ways:

1. Click here: <https://bit.ly/2XxyaiV>
2. Join via the Zoom app (free to download)
3. Access the Zoom website - <https://zoom.us/>.

Join a Meeting

Meeting ID: 885 6549 3016
Passcode: AGM2021

Welcome to the UNISON Community Branch NI Newsletter 2021.

The current Branch executive sends you this newsletter with warm wishes, expressing unity and reaching out in a culture of solidarity. With over 2,000 members working across the community sector, the influence and power of your UNISON branch continues to grow. Providing community workers with an amplified voice, a voice which challenges all forms of inequality, discrimination, anything which stands in the way of workers rights and achieving social justice. A radical collective approach, across the many workplaces of our members and one which we view as fundamental to our very existence.

The sole purpose of this year's newsletter is to reach out to you, our colleagues in the UNISON Community Branch, asking you to join us in our collective fight against the many issues which affect our working and community based lives. We want to end substandard terms and conditions of employment, demanding improved sickness entitlement and enhanced hourly rates of pay. Unsafe staffing levels, being forced to use our annual leave or take unpaid leave, aggressive management styles and lack of support from company HR are some of the issues which are an unacceptable constant in the community sector. Coupled with cuts to services, the shadow of Brexit and successive governments which seem to favour the bosses over the workers means only one thing - we need to get organised and mobilise through the structures of our union, UNISON.

In previous years attendance at our annual AGM would have meant physically attending one of the agreed venues across our region. This year with Covid-19 this will not be possible with the restrictions on social gatherings. However, this provides an opportunity for you to attend your branch AGM from the comfort of your home, which we hope you will do.



UNISON Stewards and Activists completing training with Sean Brady from Participation and Practice Of Rights

NOT YET A UNISON MEMBER? JOIN TODAY!

Call Membership on 028 90270190 or Join Online <http://www.joinunison.org/>

Response to Covid-19

Our members have been working tirelessly throughout the Covid-19 pandemic as frontline workers. UNISON Community Branch has been fighting on behalf of our members to ensure that workers are kept as safe as possible, to ensure adequate PPE is being provided and meeting the Department for Communities Minister to request a review into current additional Covid-19 financial support provided to Supporting People Providers to ensure workers are financially supported. UNISON Community Branch Officers also compiled a letter to be sent to the Department of Health to make it very clear that C&V sector workers need to be seen as a priority for the Covid-19 vaccination. We will continue to fight for the safety and rights of our members.

How can I get involved in the union?

Workplace stewards and reps are the foundation of the union. In your workplace, get together, elect your steward or UNISON rep for the coming year and let us know the result. Please contact us for assistance.

What is involved in the branch posts? We have a wide range of branch posts and you can find short descriptions of them on our website at www.unison-ni.org.uk/branch-agms. If you believe in trade union values and have a particular interest in any of the posts listed in the attached form then get 2 other current UNISON members in your branch to counter-sign and return it by freepost **before 5pm on 7th February 2021**

What kind of activity would I be involved in? As an elected UNISON representative you will provide help and support to other members. This might be through formal representation in the workplace or encouraging members to take part in our excellent education programme, or you might want to specialise in equality and our self-organised groups. Your interest may lie in International Solidarity or with encouraging young people to become active trade unionists. You will also be involved in wider UNISON and Irish Congress of Trade Unions activities.

In all of these posts, and the Convenor posts, you will be expected to encourage new members to join UNISON and be part of the team which represents and negotiates.

When do we meet? All elected reps from the Branch Committee meet monthly. The Convenors will also agree a timetable for meetings for all stewards in their sector. UNISON steward teams in larger employers will agree their own timetable.



UNISON C&V Activists standing in solidarity with UNISON Health Branches and other Health Unions on the picket lines

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

Legal Advice: As a UNISON member, you receive free legal advice and assistance for:

- Employment law (accessed via your UNISON branch or regional office)
- Personal injury – at or away from work, on holiday or on the roads
- Serious injury at work – including brain injuries and spinal cord injuries
- Industrial disease or illness
- Basic will writing and reduced rates for more complex wills and conveyancing
- Defending work related criminal allegations
- Free initial legal advice on any non-employment issue from UNISON's lawyers.

UNISON members' families are also covered for personal injury and reduced rates for wills and conveyancing. For further information contact 0800 0857 857.

The **UNISON Welfare — 'There For You'** service is FREE to all UNISON members and is there for you at times of difficulty and crisis. For full details please see UNISON's website. www.unison.org.uk/get-help/

The UNISON College: Education courses are free to all UNISON members. Visit www.unison-ni.org.uk/education-and-training or contact 02890270190.

BRANCH CONTACTS

Niall McCarroll Branch Chair 07802439496
Saoirse Fanning Branch Secretary 07885575479
Joe McCusker Regional Organiser 07775856286



C&V Branch Officers and Committee members attending Community Conference in Wales (pre Covid-19)