

# UNISON 2026 AGM NEWSLETTER

## NIAS BRANCH

### NIAS BRANCH AGM 2026

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

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

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

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

### AGM MEETING DATE 2026

**4th March 2026 @ 11am**

The AGM will be a hybrid meeting. If you wish to attend in person please come to UNISON HQ. Galway House York Street, Belfast. alternatively Zoom joining details are below or scan the QR code to join.



**Meeting ID: 850 5833 7877**

**Passcode: AGM2026**

## NO LOW PAY IN NHS PAY ONLY BETTER PAY WILL DO

### AFC Pay Campaign 2024/25

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

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



Photos of a lunch and learn session held in Craigavon station. If you would like more info about the education program please contact your branch or the education team - [educationni@unison.co.uk](mailto:educationni@unison.co.uk)

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

## BRANCH NEWS

Over the last year, UNISON Ambulance Branch Secretaries been at the forefront of negotiations and bargaining within the NIAS Trust and at Regional and National levels. This has meant engagement with the NIAS Senior Management Team, inclusion in all relevant Regional Structures, Ministerial engagement and representation nationally through the National Ambulance Occupational Group. We have successfully challenged the NIAS Trust over failures to engage in meaningful partnership working, poorly thought-out organisational change proposals and an attempt to impose a significant organisational restructure that would have a detrimental impact on members terms and conditions of employment and their health and wellbeing.

We have continued to maintain the end of shift protocol which ensures that UNISON members have protections for the last hour of every shift when they are only dispatched to appropriately triaged calls that meet the definition of 'life and limb' cover. In June, NIAS branch representatives met alongside other unions representing ambulance staff with the Health Minister, NIAS and Department of Health officials. UNISON highlighted the need to address the root causes of delayed patient handovers, which lead to unacceptably long waiting periods for patients and ambulance crews outside hospitals. UNISON is clear that action to address these problems must be taken not just by NIAS but across the entire HSC system.

Throughout the year we have persistently sought a more meaningful and compassionate approach to sickness management. We have highlighted the extremely difficult circumstances and conditions our members often have to deal with. We are pleased to report many successful representations by your UNISON workplace stewards has avoided punitive sanctions and the associated effects on staff's mental health and wellbeing. We have been consistently asking the Trust to adopt a more proactive approach to staff's mental health. We are pleased to say that a Regional HSC proposal is being developed with the Department to support and focus on implementing health and wellbeing interventions. This includes the development of a Workforce Wellbeing Training Toolkit for HSC Line Managers (supported by QUB and UU) as part of the implementation of the Regional HSC wellbeing framework 'Strengthening our Core' (SOC). Your UNISON Ambulance Branch Secretary has been nominated to take up the single TU position in phase one of this project. We can assure our members we will be very vocal about the unique roles we perform in the Ambulance service and the impacts of providing pre hospital care.

More recently your branch secretaries and branch officers have successfully challenged the Trust's attempt to impose an operational restructure that was unilaterally proposed without any meaningful consultation, negotiation or partnership working. If implemented this would have seen various job groups having to apply for what is essentially their own jobs.

It would also have seen an entire EMT job group left with no career progression within their own operational line management structure with the removal of the EMT Supervisor role. Your branch provided an 8-page response to this proposed restructure which highlighted 22 points of contention including significant red line issues that were non-negotiable.

We will continue to provide strong leadership going forward and as other challenges become apparent, your branch will insist on early inclusion, consultation, robust negotiation and meaningful partnership working in all aspects of Trust business that impacts our members working environment and terms and conditions of employment. The depth of experience and knowledge within our branch and region are essential to ensuring that nothing slips below the radar. Many of your representatives have a long history of representing members at the highest levels including at Ministerial and Departmental negotiations and briefings. Rest assured your UNISON representatives don't just talk a good game - we are in every room, around every table and provide robust, reliable and reassuring representation at all times.

UNISON NIAS branch has the largest network of stewards within the Ambulance service. We want that network and our membership to grow in the coming year and can promise that our members will have experienced and honest representation in all matters relating to their employment.

**We are, as always, Stronger together.**

## Membership Services

**Quilter**

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

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



**THOMPSONS**  
SOLICITORS

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

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

**abbeyautoline**

AbbeyAutoline offers discount for UNISON members.

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

## Branch Contacts

### Joint Branch Secretaries

**Ali Long - 07865044478**

**Roddy Lynch-07493778002**

**Regional Organiser- Danielle McCusker-**

**d.mccusker@unison.co.uk**

**Area Organiser- Claire Bolt- c.bolt@unison.co.uk**

**UNISON Direct Helpline 08000857857**



**For branch news follow our Facebook Page.  
Search: NIAS Unison Branch**