



NORTHERN HEALTH BRANCH NEWSLETTER

Hello Members, welcome to our update newsletter. First and foremost a big thank you to all our members – not only have all of you given so much during the ongoing Covid Pandemic, worked tirelessly and sacrificed so much but you have done this willingly as Public Servants for the sake of your patients, clients and our families.

You have given more and more against a backdrop of ever-changing working conditions, ever changing PPE guidelines, social distancing regulations, working from home, additional and excessive hours, low pay and as services return – excessive workloads.

Many Unison Representatives continue to work in their substantive posts alongside you and the rest of us, although perhaps not just as visible on

sites and stalls have not gone anywhere. In fact, we are working harder than ever on your behalf. This Newsletter is just a very short overview of some of what is currently ongoing in your branch. We have much to do together over the next few months.

Our priorities from October to December are:

- Protect our NHS Services
- Secure a decent pay rise for all (leaving no-one behind)
- Ensure your safety, health, and well-being
- Give back to our branch members.

UNISON Branch Referral Line: 0782544218

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<https://www.facebook.com/unison.northernhealth>

Join UNISON Online at <https://www.unison-ni.org.uk/join-unison>

DEMANDING A PAY RISE FOR ALL

UNISON – Is the UK's biggest union and represents NHS staff and a pay claim has been lodged.

We have called for a **minimum** of £2000 pay rise for all members and we want this paid before the end of this year.

If the claim is accepted, minimum wages in the health service would go above £20,000 a year for the first time

We have referred to Boris Johnson's own battle with Covid-19 – and his recovery thanks to the care he received from the NHS.

It says: "Health staff have heard how much your recent personal experiences taught you about the value of what they do.

"They are now looking for you to reflect that in their pay. So, Prime Minister, why wait?"

It follows calls last month from all 14 NHS trade unions for an early and significant pay increase and the publication of survey data* showing strong backing from the public.

A survey of NHS staff who belong to UNISON found four fifths (84%) said the £2,000 pay lift would make a 'substantial difference' to them.

UNISON head of health Sara Gorton said: "Government ministers claim NHS staff are a 'top priority'. The Prime Minister must not miss the opportunity to show they really mean it.

"There's a tough winter ahead and a pandemic that shows little sign of disappearing. Giving health staff a morale boost now is much-needed ahead of any good news about a vaccine."



RESET PLANS

As the Trust moves to **Reset** services which were stood down during Covid, we have given written and verbal input into numerous Trust forums – keeping a careful overview that we protect your:

- Jobs
- Ensure your Health and Safety
- Reduce Redeployments
- Protect Terms and Conditions
- Changes go through the Trust Management of Change Process
- Stop Privatization of Services
- Ensure Safe Staffing levels and stable service provision.

NO GOING BACK TO NORMAL!

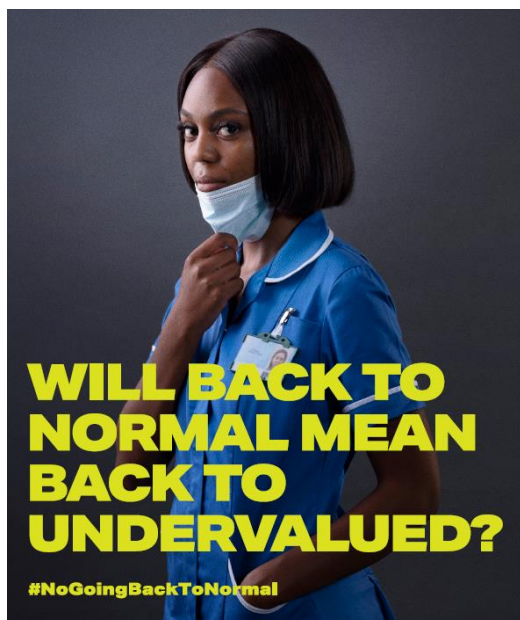
UNISON has launched a new campaign 'No Going Back to Normal' and UNISON Northern Health Branch are supporting this campaign in a very strong way. We want to send a clear message that we must not "return to undervaluing our public services and the people who provide them.

"There are stories of heroes – but, sadly, of tragedies too. Of those who didn't live long enough to see the rainbow flags in every window or hear the clapping at twilight when a nation applauded its real stars.

"Many workers missed the applause as they were too busy mopping hospital floors, feeding patients, holding the hands of those in their last hours or working through the night in the mortuary.

"But memories are short. Already there's talk of going back to normal, but we can never go back to normal. Normal meant a decade of pain and austerity, pay freezes and cuts. Key public services starved of resources and 700,000 jobs lost.

"Normal for public service workers was unsafe, and it meant stress and unfairness. Normal was being underappreciated, underpaid and undervalued. There can be no going back to that normal.



UNISON Northern Health Branch calls on our MLA's to listen to our message.

- *"Rebuild all our public services across the UK, through sustained long-term investment, safe staffing levels and training*
- *"Properly value everyone working in all our public services – tackling low pay and ensuring those who've kept services running are properly rewarded.*
- *"Create fairer and safer workplaces where there are full risk assessments and PPE for those that need it.*
- *"Build a more equal post COVID-19 society, in which the inequalities that have become so evident during the crisis are addressed as a matter of urgency"*
- *The Branch urges their members to join and work with them as they work to promote this campaign and ensure their members are listened to going forward.*

NIGHTINGALE

Whiteabbey Hospital

You may be aware the Whiteabbey site has been selected as a Nightingale Hospital. This is to provide 100 step-down beds in light of COVID-19, Estate work will begin on this site immediately. This will cause some disruption but at this point no staff or services are required to move off site.

This is a Regional Project which will be overseen by a Project Board, this is mainly made up of Directors, Assistant Directors and Department of Health Representatives from across Northern Ireland. The Regional Trade Union side leads have asked all decision making made by the board is shared with them. In addition, there will be 4 work streams. Regionally Trade Union side have placed Senior Representatives in each of these work streams.



POLICIES

Before a policy is ever seen by a member of staff it begins as a Trust draft policy and although many are still not as we would like them. Your UNISON and other Union Representatives enter into a complex process, many emails, reading, arguments, suggestions, amendments, subgroups, working groups and a policy committee debate through each policy to we reach a point we can come to some point of agreement or not.

Policies currently being worked on:

- Homeworking
- Flexible Working
- Special Leave
- Smoke Free Policy
- Equality Policies

STAFF SHORTAGES TERMS AND CONDITIONS GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARIES

We are working really hard on your behalf to ensure that safe staffing levels become a reality. We want to ensure proper workforce planning happens.

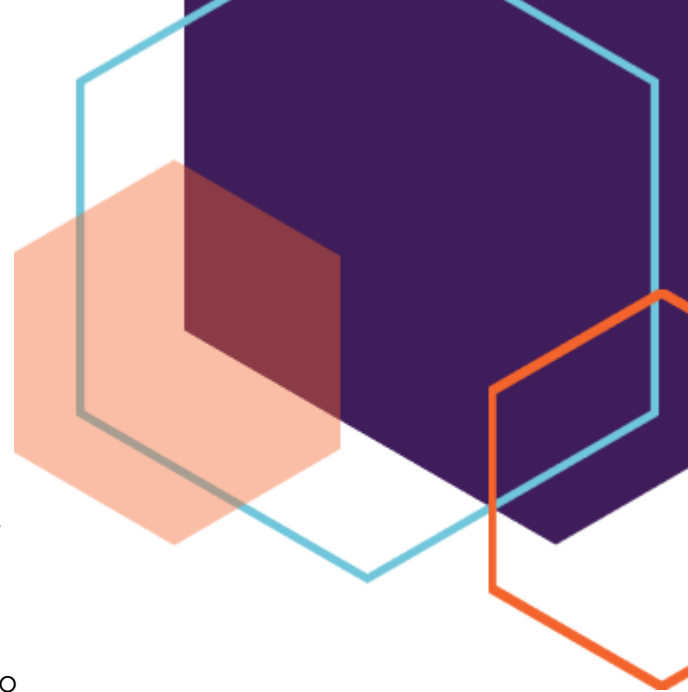
We have held numerous meetings with our members who informed us that on some occasion's overtime and the allocation of additional hours were not fairly applied across the trust. Many told us they were able to work more hours weekly and in fact had been doing so for many years.

We continue to work with HR business partners in securing permanent contracts. We want to see an end to as and when required contracts which offer you little or no job stability or security. We oppose the rates of pay offered for bank shifts as they sit outside the nationally agreed terms and conditions. We will see an increase in proper contracts as we work through this.

Grievance and Disciplinary processes have begun again, some conducted via zoom, most in a socially distancing setting. Our preparation and representation are so important our accredited and well-trained stewards and officers hold and conduct members meetings and will defend and support you through these Trust processes.

We sit on a raft of working groups, attend director divisional meetings, Trade Union side meetings, Branch Meetings, Health and Safety Forums, service groups, policy groups, and occupational special forums – all to encourage and ensure a robust knowledge of all that is happening in the Trust in order to protect you, your employment rights, your terms and conditions and your jobs.

We are currently in the process of setting up a support services forum. It is particularly important that the views of our members are heard in these rooms. We will want you to take part in this forum.



WASPI (WOMEN AGAINST STATE PENSION INEQUALITIES)

"UNISON Northern Health Branch is leading the fight with WASPI within your trust area. Representing our women members approximately 900 women who were born in the 1950's who have been adversely impacted by inadequate notification of increases in their pension age.

UNISON Northern Health Branch has assisted our members to make a personal written complaint to the department of work and pensions for maladministration.

The case was heard in the High Court in London and was not upheld. An appeal was lodged and was heard on the 15th September and This was also not upheld

Mr. Michael Mansfield and his legal team are carefully going over the outcome and considering the next steps. UNISON'S message to the Government is you could still do the right thing and compensate these women you our members. UNISON stand's with you our members and the fight goes on together!"

EDUCATION AND LEGAL ADVICE

We offer **FREE** Education courses and 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.

Learning online UNISON's learning site. Any UNISON member can use their My. UNISON account to log in to our online learning site and... Skills Academy. We're very pleased to be able to offer our members over 550 **free** online certified **courses**.

NEW STEWARDS

"Do you believe in standing up for what is right? Do you think equality and fairness is something to value? Do you feel you could support someone who is being bullied or unfairly treated?"

If so, have you considered joining your branch committee? We represent all health care workers in a wide variety of issues. We do this through liaising with management at all levels, communicating in a respectable and knowledgeable manner to obtain a fair outcome.

Come join us! Help make a real difference."



FLU JAB

The TUS Position in relation to the flu jab is that it should not be mandatory or contractual. However, particularly in the current climate we encourage all our members to protect themselves, their patients, the vulnerable in our communities and avail of the trust flu jab program.



UNISON WELFARE

Uniquely UNISON have a "There for you" charity. We can provide Financial Aid advice sign posting debt advice and support. Help financially when you need it. Benefit guidance and support.

"Members experiencing financial and emotional difficulties can contact our welfare charity, There for You, which provides a confidential advice and support service for members and dependents. (Link Below)

www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/ their dependents

**UNISON NORTHERN HEALTH BRANCH THANKS ALL OUR MEMBERS FOR THEIR
DEDICATION AND SERVICE.**

SOCIAL MEDIA DRAWS

We're Giving Back and the Prizes get Bigger and Better!

Watch our Facebook Page in the coming weeks and let the fun begin. For our exclusive Northern Health Branch member's prize draws. Including:

October - Recruit a Friend – Opportunity to Win Tablets. Become a New Steward and we will enter you into a draw for £100 Gift Voucher.

November – We have six beautiful pamper hampers for our members

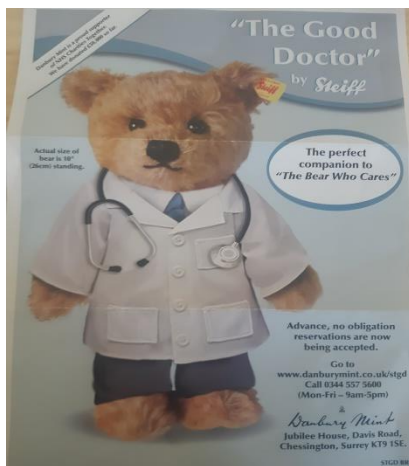
Girls and Boys Bicycles, a selection of children's games, Children's motorized Jeeps and Amazon Echoes all to be won. Big Prize Draws for Shopping Vouchers for all acute sites and community locations across the Branch.

December – We will fill your Oil, we have turkeys, and we have fantastic butcher hampers all to be won.

And watch out, we will be delivering beautiful Thank you food baskets into Wards and Departments across the branch.

AIR AMBULANCE

The Branch is running a GoFundMe event in December, all donations going directly to Air Ambulance. Anyone making donations will also be entered into a draw for a **Steiff NHS Teddy Bear** similar to this one.



NORTHERN HEALTH BRANCH REFERRAL LINE

07825411218

IF YOUR CALL IS MISSED LEAVE A VOICEMAIL INCLUDING NAME, CONTACT NUMBER AND THE ISSUE. ADMIN SUPPORT WILL CALL BACK ASAP.

THIS IS FOR UNISON NORTHERN HEALTH BRANCH MEMBERS, IF YOU'RE A NON-MEMBER AND WOULD LIKE TO JOIN, VISIT BELOW.

[HTTPS://START.UNISON.ORG.UK/ABOUT-YOU](https://start.unison.org.uk/about-you)

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