



## Branch Secretary's Message

Welcome to Bulletin. I know August is usually the silly season for news, but there's nothing trivial about

UNISON General Secretary's warning that there could be up to 500,000 more public sector job losses by 2020 thanks to the Tories austerity agenda.

This is why I'd urge you to alert members in your workplaces to the TUC's rally and march in Manchester on Sunday 4 October, the theme of which is: No to austerity; Yes to workers' rights.

Why this slogan? Because not only are the Tories damaging public services, they are also attacking the rights of working people and their unions by attempting to toughen up trade union laws.

As union members, we can't rest on our laurels. We need to get active.

Understandably, there will be lots of members who can't make it to October's rally, but there are plenty of other ways you can show your support; either by signing the petition, displaying a poster or, if you're into social media, you could share the event on Facebook and Twitter using hashtag #No2Austerity.

Finally, I'm sorry to say that this will be the last issue of Bulletin for a while. Instead we will be sending you regular emails to keep you updated on all the latest union news.

Yours in solidarity  
Steve Ryles

## Will you help protect the right to strike?



As mentioned in the July's Bulletin, unions' right to strike is under threat thanks to new government proposals which would see:

- employers able to use agency temps to replace striking workers
- restrictions on pickets and protests that threaten freedom of speech
- attacks on union reps in the public sector

Act now! Click [here](#) to join the TUC march on 4 October in Manchester against the Government's damaging programme of austerity and their attacks on unions and click [here](#) to add your support to the right to strike petition.

## Watch TUC's right to strike video



Have you seen the TUC's video about why the right to strike is under threat? Watch it at: <https://t.co/j3rEhWBO6x>

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## Watchdog says Government's trade union proposals not fit for purpose

Government proposals to toughen up trade union laws have been condemned as not fit for purpose by the Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC).

The RPC said the government had been too hasty in pushing through its proposals and called on it to undertake further consultations.

It also classified the three sets of proposals in the trade union bill, which MPs will debate when parliament reconvenes after the

summer recess, as “not fit for purpose”. The three proposals were:

1. to allow employers to break strikes by bringing in agency workers to replace strikers.

2. to force striking workers to tell their employers their plans two weeks before a strike

3. only to permit strikes in “important public services” if 50% of members vote and 40% do so in favour of strike action

[More...](#)

## Regional Women's Conference



This year's South West Regional Women's Conference is being held in Bristol and will include some inspiring speakers, including Joanne Kaye, Regional Secretary, Debi Potter, NEC Members and Finn MacKay from UWE. There will also be workshops covering public speaking and confidence building, young women and campaigning and also drumming and singing caribbean style. If you would like to attend, please speak to the Branch in the first instance by calling 01392 382530 or email: [branchoffice@devoncountyunison.org.uk](mailto:branchoffice@devoncountyunison.org.uk)

## UNISON needs your help to fight tax credit changes

UNISON is writing to the Public Bill Committee to give evidence against tax credit changes. Reducing entitlement of Work and Child tax credits to support low paid workers and low income households will mean that people will be driven into more poverty and household debt.

To make UNISON's evidence stronger the union is calling on its members to provide it with case studies of how they might be affected by the new changes.

If you'd like to help, please contact [a.roche@unison.co.uk](mailto:a.roche@unison.co.uk) (Alison Roche, Policy officer) and include your job title, type of household (couple, family, single etc), children and amount of WTC or child tax credit you think you will be losing out on.

Please tell Alison how tax credit changes will affect your household budget, lifestyle and your concerns. All information will be treated confidentially and will be written up as anonymous case studies.

Read more about the changes <https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/welfare-reform/>

## TUC Rally & March - 4 October, Manchester



## TUC concerned over new bullying research

One in five workers have witnessed others being bullied at work according to research published by lawyers Slater and Gordon.

Commenting on the research, TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady, said: "Office bullies must be banished from the workplace. The stress and anxiety felt by victims can make them physically ill, lose all self-confidence and mean that they dread coming into work. No-one should be put in this position.

"Employers who fail to tackle bullying will pay a price too. Staff who are bullied are more likely to take more time off because of the stress caused by their harassment and will be less productive at work.

"Every organisation needs to have an anti-bullying policy, and every manager should ensure that there is zero-tolerance of bullying either by line managers or work mates."

## MPs pay austerity ends

MPs are to receive a 10 per cent pay rise bringing their annual earnings to £74,000.

As a result of the pay increase, MPs final salary retirement funds will also get a boost, meaning that MPs with only 14 years service will receive a lump sum worth tens of thousands of pounds.

UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis said: "Pay austerity might be over for MPs, but it goes on and on for everyone else in the public sector.

"If pay restraint is at an end for politicians – who are public servants too – it should also be over for nurses, teaching assistants, hospital cleaners, council staff and other public sector workers."

## Cutting public spending on the old is not the answer to youth crisis, says TUC



A new TUC report reveals that young people's falling long-term economic prospects are not down to older people in society hoarding all the wealth, and will not be improved by cutting pensioner benefits to fund more public spending on young people.

The new Touchstone pamphlet *Young against old? What's really causing wealth inequality?* finds that young people's deteriorating prospects are due to a toxic combination of increased university tuition fees, unemployment, poorer job opportunities, lower pay and rapid house price inflation. Read the full report [here](#).

## 1.7 million people missing out on paid holidays



Nearly 1.7 million people are missing out on their minimum legal entitlement to paid holidays according to new figures published by the TUC.

The TUC's analysis of unpublished figures from the 2014 Labour Force Survey (LFS) shows that on average 6.4 per cent of employees across the UK are losing out on their holiday rights.

The TUC warns that it has become easier for bad employers to get away with denying workers their full holiday pay since employment tribunal fees were introduced.

TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady said: "Some employers deliberately stop staff from taking the leave and holiday pay they're entitled to, whereas other workers lose out from poor management and failure to keep up with the law.

"Workers who are worried about not getting their holiday entitlements should join a union, so that their voice is heard and their interests are properly represented." [More...](#)

## 'Coasting' maintained schools academy makeover



The government is rushing legislation through parliament that would greatly increase the power of the Secretary of State for Education (England) to force maintained schools, which it defines as 'coasting', to become academies. The bill would also remove requirements to consult with parents, local communities, staff and others when maintained schools are being forced to become academies.

UNISON submitted evidence raising its concerns on these proposals to the committee which was debating the bill.

UNISON also recently sponsored a meeting in parliament with sister unions NUT, ATL and NAHT, to highlight our concerns to MPs. A jointly agreed detailed briefing document was produced to support the meeting, which can be found by clicking [here](#).

## Cuts could mean more kids in need let down

Council cuts could mean more children and young people in need being let down UNISON has warned.

Billions of pounds of cuts mean that few councils can cope with demands from young people.

The Tories first got into government in May 2010. Since then councils – who have a statutory duty to look after children – have lost £12.5bn in funds in England alone.

At the end of March last year, 68,840 children were being looked after by councils. In March 2010, that figure was 64,470. The year before, it had been 60,900.

Council budgets say they'll be spending £3.364bn on children who need vital public services. [More...](#)

## Stewards follow us!

Want to know more about what is going on in the Branch or keep up-to-date with the latest union news so you can inform members in your workplace? Then like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).



## Membership benefits

Don't forget to remind colleagues in your workplace about UNISON Devon County Branch. Let them know that both in and outside the workplace, UNISON has a lot to offer its members. Membership starts from just £1.30 a month, depending on how much you earn, and gives you access to a whole range of benefits, from free legal and welfare advice to discounts on insurance and grants for workplace training visit: [www.unison.org.uk/benefits](http://www.unison.org.uk/benefits)

