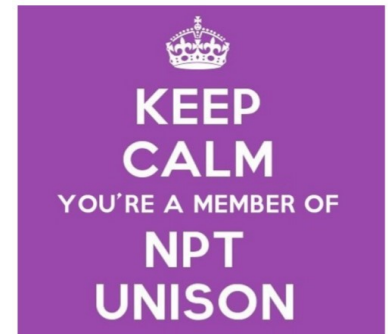


 unison@npt.gov.uk  01639 763820



With the hard times that we are all facing, we have focused this newsletter on the benefits of being in UNISON. Some of them might be new to you. Click on the links in the newsletter or call us at the office to find out more.

We remain one of the largest branches in Wales – much of the work completed is used as examples of best practice by other UNISON branches all



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR MESSAGE

Firstly can I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you and your families.

I would like to say a massive thanks to you all for your support and help in our [Fair Funding for NPT Campaign](#). I cannot emphasise the importance of everyone [clicking on the link](#) and signing and most importantly sharing far and wide. Together we can hold the elected Senedd Members in the Welsh Government to account over allocating fair funding for NPT Council. Without this fair funding we face uncertain times; we may potentially see services being lost, potential job losses, cuts to our terms and conditions and austerity measures. We are all affected by a reduction of funding to our council revenues and this has a knock on to every member of the authority, their families and our communities .

In recent years, we, together, have shown that we can achieve a positive outcome by working in partnership on behalf of UNISON and the Council. A better than average settlement will help keep our services in- house, and protect our terms and conditions as well as our jobs. Thank you again for your support .

We will face uncertain times in 2023, however, we are stronger working as a team. Our priorities are to campaign to keep our services public, bring services back in-house, protect our terms and conditions and support our valued members. We face the uncertainty of the cost of living crisis and a Tory Government however we are a Labour controlled Welsh Government which will help us in maintaining our jobs.

Our Branch Officers are working in partnership with elected members, officers and HR to resolve any concerns informally if possible. We recognise that our workforce has diminished over the last few years with experienced staff members leaving on ER/VR . This is now showing a strain on staff left who have to pick up the work. Our number one reason for staff sickness are Mental Health issues. We have agreed to seek to support staff currently suffering with Mental Health and have recently signed up for the 'Time to Change' that will support staff with their Mental Health and Wellbeing to remain healthy whilst in work .

We are pleased to be working in partnership regarding agile working and the fantastic Future of Work team over the cost of living crisis along with mileage costs. We also are going to be seeking your views and opinions on the NJC Pay claim 2023 now the 2022 offer has been accepted.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in your fantastic UNISON branch please contact our office.

Again can I personally thank you for your membership and I look forward to seeing you all in our AGMs in 2023.

In Solidarity ,

Your Acting Branch Secretary and Branch Chair,

Mark Fisher

There for You (UNISON Welfare Charity)



General advice

There for You provides a confidential service for members over the phone or in person if you are experiencing personal difficulties.



Energy Support Fund

Helping low income and vulnerable members with rising energy costs

Energy Support Fund

Please be advised that UNISON Welfare's Winter Fuel Grant will launch in January. And a third phase of the Energy Support Grant will launch in March. More details will be publicised soon.

UNISON Debtline can help you deal with all sorts of debt, from credit cards, to mortgage arrears, to county court judgment claims. We can help give you the best chance of keeping your home if you're at risk of repossession.

- immediate advice
- a free and confidential service with no hidden charges
- a personal case officer to advise you and negotiate with your creditors
- a manageable debt plan to suit your circumstances

Our debt advice covers all parts of the UK, so rest assured that the advice you're given will be based on the legislation and options available in the country that you live.

Help with debt

Peace of mind is closer than you might think. Turn to UNISON Debtline, a debt advice service for UNISON members offering free and confidential advice to help you clear your debts and manage your money for the future.

What we can help with

There for You is proud to support thousands of members and their families every year with things such as:

- general living costs
- household appliances
- urgent repairs
- disability equipment and adaptations
- utility bills
- funeral costs.

Financial assistance

If you are a member and you are experiencing financial difficulties, whatever the circumstances, There for You can offer you support.

The first vital step in taking control of your finances is to create your own personal budget plan. Our user friendly budget planner is free to use and should only take minutes to complete if you have all your financial information to hand.

[> Try the planner](#)

Credit unions

There for You Credit Union Service offers UNISON members access to low interest loans and a range of savings products through our UK network of partner credit unions.

Budget planner

Our user friendly budget planner is free to use and can help you take control of your finances.

Wellbeing breaks

Wellbeing breaks can provide welcome relief from stress and respite from difficult circumstances. We can help you towards the costs of a break, depending on your financial situation.

If you are on a low income or in hardship and cannot afford the cost of a break, There for You may be able to help you towards the cost.

"Thank you for helping me to get away. It was wonderful to see my children having so much fun especially given what we've all been through over the last year. They've been telling everyone about it – their smiles say it all. I feel so much stronger and am now looking forward to returning to work very soon." – UNISON member

UNISON Living helps you get the most out of your money. We work with a wide range of trusted suppliers to help you manage your finances ...from giving honest advice to offering great savings opportunities.



LIGHTHOUSE FINANCIAL ADVICE

Lighthouse Financial Advice can help you resolve financial issues whatever your circumstances or stage in life.

We can help you resolve financial issues whatever your circumstances or stage in life, from buying your first home and protecting your family, to boosting your pension and paying for long-term care. The advice we provide is practical, affordable and specific to you and could improve your financial situation. Call 08000 85 85 90 or email : appointments@lighthousefa.co.uk to arrange a complimentary, no obligation appointment with one of our professional financial advisers.

We are one of the largest providers of expert financial advice in the UK with over 140 advisers across the country.



INSURANCE PLANS

Straightforward insurance for when life gets unexpectedly complicated.

Financial back-up for you and your family when you need it most.

No medical questions, if you're a UK resident within the age limits, you're guaranteed to be accepted for all our plans, provided by trusted partner UNISON Protect:

12 months of free £5,000 Accidental Death Cover, members aged 18-69

Accident protection plan, £150,000 accidental death cover plus hospitalisation cover for accidental injury.

Over 50s accident cover, £20,000 for accidental death and cash for burns, fractures and dislocations.



CAR INSURANCE PROVIDED BY LV = LIVERPOOL VICTORIA

UNISON members have saved money on car insurance with LV= using their membership discount.

Car insurance provided by LV = Liverpool Victoria.

UNISON members have been enjoying exclusive discounts on LV= car insurance vs general public prices on lv.com and through the call centre for many years.

Find out how they can help you save.



SHEPHERDS FRIENDLY SAVINGS PLANS

UNISON has partnered with savings provider, Shepherds Friendly to bring members a variety of tax-efficient plans, offering savings solutions for the whole family.

Shepherds Friendly is a mutual society, wholly owned and run by its members. It has been providing financial security to members since its foundation in 1826. In addition to their ISA and Junior ISA, their product range includes plans exclusive to friendly societies, that offer extra tax-efficient savings over and above the annual ISA and Junior ISA limits.

We care about your health, and we know that health is vital for a good work and personal life.

We have exclusive deals for areas of health the NHS doesn't cover – from opticians to dentists and more.



HEALTH PLANS

We've got you covered for everyday expenses such as trips to the dentists, opticians and physio – whatever your age!

We've got you covered for money back on everyday health expenses such as trips to the dentist and opticians plus a wide range of therapy treatments like physiotherapy, chiropody and many other cash-paying benefits.

Pre-existing conditions are covered on most benefits and there's no age limit to join or to stay on cover. Get peace of mind knowing health and dental bills for your **family** are taken care of with this low-cost plan, plus there's free cover for up to 5 children too.



DENTAL PLANS

Get £500 of NHS dental cover and your money back each time you visit your NHS dentist.

If you have a NHS dentist, get £500 of NHS dental cover with this NHS patient plan exclusively available to UNISON members and their families.

It gives you money back each time you visit your NHS dentist, meaning no more costly treatment bills! You're covered immediately as soon as you join this low-cost plan.



Let expert optometrists look after your eyes, whilst you save money on eye care.

As a UNISON member, you are entitled to a free eye test, including retinal photography, when spending £50 in [store](#), but even if you don't meet the minimum spend the eye test is still only £15. You can save £30 when buying a complete pair of glasses and get 10% off non-prescription sunglasses too.

If you are more suited to contact lenses or you want to give them a try, you can take advantage of a 3 month supply of soft disposable contact lenses, free of charge when joining our Direct Debit scheme.

We'll allow a friend or family member to benefit from every one of these discounts as well, so let those closest to you receive the expert eye care they deserve.

Did you know UNISON has a Members Shopping REWARDS SCHEME?

Welcome to UnisonRewards.com – your online shopping discounts website.

Sign up to UnisonRewards.com today and you'll have access to hundreds of discounts and online cashback offers.

Quick Facts

- £10 FREE welcome Bonus*.
- FREE, Safe and Secure website.
- We serve more than 1 million rewards members.



All Categories ▾ Electricals Fashion Food Gifts Mobiles Utilities Hot Offers **Retail Vouchers** 🛍️

Online Cashback | Vouchers & Reloadable Cards | Get Started

Earn cashback on the things you buy anyway!

It's easy as 1 - 2 - 3...

- 1 Browse**
- 2 Shop online**
- 3 Earn cashback**

Join UNISON Rewards for FREE and browse our hundreds of retailers and offers

Click through from UNISON Rewards to the retailer and buy online as normal

Cashback will be added to your UNISON Rewards account and paid to you free of charge

Get paid in cash when you shop from more than hundreds of online retailers. Our members have saved hundreds of pounds so far using our service.



Same prices. Same shops. Just extra cashback!

[Full UNISON Rewards Discounts List](#)

Did you know as a UNISON member you can earn unlimited cash back on your everyday shopping at a wide range of major retailers?

Shopping online or in-store, you'll get great benefits with the UNISON Prepaid Plus Cashback card. Earn up to 6% cash back at big-name retailers, including Sainsbury's, ASDA and Boots. The cash back is unlimited so there's no minimum spend or cap – you'll earn cash back on every penny you spend.

Plus it's great for budgeting, unlike a credit or debit card you load with money before you use it rather than paying for it afterwards so there's less chance of getting carried away.

Don't just take it from us...

"I have been a UNISON member for 21 years and fully support incentives that UNISON recommends to the membership. The prepaid plus card is fantastic and I have found it a very useful way of keeping control of my finances...I am recommending UNISON Prepaid Plus to my members." – Prepaid Cardholder, UNISON Prepaid Survey

Don't miss out on unlimited cashback on your everyday shopping!

Sign up for your card – visit UNISONprepaid.com

[£150,000 cash benefit for accidental death, helping your loved ones to cope.](#)

[£75 for every 24 hours you stay in hospital due to an accident, helping to tide you over a difficult period.](#)

[Guaranteed acceptance for UK residents aged 18-69.](#)

[Covers you in and out of work, anywhere in the world.](#)

[This policy is underwritten by Stonebridge International Insurance Ltd.](#)

Life Cover

Up to £50,000 cash lump sum.

No medical questions - guaranteed acceptance.

Covers death from any cause after the first 2 years, if you die before age 69.

Accidental death is covered immediately, subject to policy exclusions.

No price increases - premiums stay the same throughout your cover.

For UK residents aged 18-64.

This policy is underwritten by Scottish Friendly Assurance Society Limited who is an award-winning insurer and has designed a high-quality insurance product to meet the needs of working people like you.

Winter Self Care – Make it a gift from you to you!

Let's be honest, most of us are completely tired and fed up of the present situation. We have all done our best to battle on and managing through the new changing work situations we all find ourselves in. Christmas is coming soon and boy do we need a break—but take care—Christmas sometimes brings additional strains and stresses. Here are a top ten of mindfulness pointers that may help!

1 Good music is a great way to improve your mood. Whether you've got the radio on or are streaming your favourite album, forget the neighbours and sing along. **LOUD AND PROUD!**

2 The weather may mean we are spending a lot of time inside, but that doesn't stop us from refreshing our surroundings. There is plenty of scope for decorating our favourite spaces. Put them up in the room you spend most of your time in!

3 During lockdowns, many of us were separated from friends and family. Why not reach out again and catch up- there is never a better time to do so than now. Have a look through the photos on your phone—send a few to those you are missing most.

4 Many of us spend long periods in front of screens both in and outside of work. Mixing up your usual screen routine can be a welcome change of pace, as well as a nice break for your eyes! Why not play a board game or do a puzzle....

5 Learn something new. Learning new things can have many positive effects and open new doors. Search U tube—it's amazing what FREE tutorials are out there to see! From DIY to making Xmas decorations to making bread—have a go!

6 Being outside in green spaces is a proven boost to mental wellbeing, so make time for the outdoors. Go for a walk on the beach, in the woods or a park. Why not take a picture of something you have not noticed before and send it over to someone you have not been able to meet up with.

7 With so many nice things to eat over the Christmas period, it can be easy to over-indulge and stop paying attention to what we're putting in our mouths. By eating mindfully, we can really slow down and appreciate what we're eating. After all, there's no need to rush at this time of year. When you eat without thinking, you miss out on so many wonderful flavours, textures, and aromas. A single bar of chocolate, for example, has over 300 different flavours. How many of them do you normally taste?

8 Be kind to your body. Have a nice hot bath; have a nap for 30 minutes (or perhaps a little less); treat yourself to your favourite food without feeling guilty; have your favourite hot drink.

9 Come to a 'positive appreciation' for the small things in your life, you can try the gratitude exercise. It simply means that once a day you should bring to mind 10 things that you are grateful for, counting them on your fingers. It is important to get to 10 things, even when it becomes increasingly harder after three or four! This intentionally brings into awareness the tiny, previously unnoticed elements of the day.

10 Whatever this Christmas means to you, there is always something to be grateful for. William James, the Father of American Psychology once wrote: '*The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another*'. So this Christmas, if you can, choose the grateful thought over the anxious thought. Notice that whatever your situation you can meet it with kindness: compassion to yourself and kindness to others. And remember, it is a strength to reach out in connection both to offer and to ask, for help.

IT'S TIME TO TAKE CARE OF YOU.

So, take some time to look after yourself.



Christmas PAY Arrangements 2022

December payday is Wednesday 21st December 2022 for all employees (including teachers).

The final date for submission of data via iTrent, absence returns, overtime claim forms etc. should be submitted to and received in Payroll by Wednesday 7th December 2022.

For employees who submit weekly timesheets:- Employees will receive additional hours worked up to the week ending Sunday 27th November 2022. Please inform employees to submit all timesheets, immediately after Sunday 27th November. The final deadline to ensure payment on Wednesday 21st December 2022 is Wednesday 7th December 2022.

Mileage Claims:- All mileage claims (hardcopy and electronic) should be received in the Payments office by Monday 5th December 2022 to ensure payment in December salary.

If you have any employees whose contracts are terminating any time during December, particularly on the last day of term (schools), you must ensure the termination is entered into iTrent by Wednesday 7th December 2022 at the very latest. Should you become aware, after that date, of any other terminations, please contact the Payroll Section immediately to avoid a possible overpayment.

If you have any queries, please contact payroll@npt.gov.uk



Exclusive for UNISON NPT members!

Join us for our Christmas events

Last few places left for our trip to Bath Christmas Market on 10th December.
Book your place now!



Getting help as a member of UNISON

Can't find the answer you're looking for here? Get help by:

- **Contacting your branch**
- **Using our online enquiry form**
- **Calling the UNISONdirect call centre on 0800 0 857 857**

UNISONdirect's hours are:

Monday to Friday 6am to Midnight
and Saturday 9am to 4pm.



UNISON NPT AGM 2023 Meeting Dates

Monday 6th February

NPTCBC 12.30pm via Teams & Committee Rooms 1 and 2, Port Talbot Civic Centre

NPTCBC 4.30pm via Teams & Room C, Neath Civic Centre

Tuesday 7th February

NPTCBC 6.00am Room 20, SRC

Celtic Leisure 12.30pm via GoTo Meeting & Lecture Room, Neath Sports Centre

Tai Tarian 4.30pm via GoTo Meeting

Wednesday 8th February

NPTCBC 12.30pm via Teams & Conference Room 3, The Quays

Private Employers ~ 4.30pm via GoTo Meeting

Thursday 9th February

NPTC Group 12.00pm via GoTo Meeting & Neath

Check out all the details on the Branch Website
www.nptunison.org.uk

Merry Christmas

From all the
Branch Officers,
Stewards and
Work Place Con-
tacts

Christmas Coffee Break Fun!



Guess
the
Christmas
Film!
Which is
your all
time
favourite?

Getting help as a member of UNISON

Can't find the answer you're looking for here? Get help by:

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