

East of England Community Health Branch

UNISON NEWS

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2026

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FIGHTING FOR FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY



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UNISON
East of England
Community Health



STRONGER
TOGETHER



YOUR VOICE
MATTERS



POSITIVE
CHANGE

STANDING UP FOR YOU AT WORK

UNISON News

August 2026 Edition

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<https://eastofenglandcommunityhealth.unison.site/>

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR UNISON BRANCH SECRETARY

Dear Members,

Moving Forward Together as One Branch

I would like to extend a warm welcome to our colleagues from the legacy CCS branch as we move forward together as one newly formed UNISON branch, **East of England Community Health Branch**.

We are very pleased to have you with us and look forward to working collectively to support all our members.

I would also like to thank everyone who attended our Extraordinary General Meeting on 1st July.

Your engagement and commitment are vital to ensuring our branch remains strong, representative, and able to act swiftly when members need us.



Please Contact Us Early

As we transition into this new structure, I want to remind all members of the importance of **making contact with the branch as early as possible** if you are facing workplace concerns or entering any formal process.

We are increasingly seeing members approach us only at the appeal stage of procedures. When contact is made this late, our ability to support you is restricted because we have not been present during the initial stages—where a different or less severe sanction might have been achievable.

Early contact allows us to:

- Provide timely, preventative advice.
- Attend formal meetings with you from day one.
- Ensure you are fully supported throughout the entire process, not just at the end of it.

Keeping Your Details Up to Date

Finally, please ensure your personal details are kept up to date, particularly if you have recently changed roles, workplaces, or contact information. Accurate records help us reach you quickly when support is needed.

Thank you again for your continued engagement and support as we move forward together.

Kind regards

Lesley Luscher

UNISON East of England Community Health Branch Secretary

eec.unison@nhs.net



KEY UPDATES & CAMPAIGNS

Standing Up for Public Services

Public services are the backbone of our communities, but they continue to face immense pressure from structural reorganisations, departmental redundancies, and budget constraints. UNISON is actively working with employers to ensure that any service restructures are handled fairly, that staff are fully protected, and that redundancy consultation processes are legally and ethically sound.

Your Rights: If your department is facing a restructure or you are concerned about job security, do not go through it alone. Contact your local rep immediately for advice, guidance, and representation.

Moved house, changed your name or started a new job?

Remember to update your membership details

Update your details online: [Unison.org.uk/my-unison](https://unison.org.uk/my-unison)

COST OF LIVING SUPPORT: "THERE FOR YOU"

We understand that life can bring unexpected challenges—both at home and at work. That's why **UNISON's There for You** service is here: to offer **confidential advice and support** exclusively for members and their dependents.

Whether you need practical help or just someone to talk to, our professional staff and trained Branch Welfare Officers are ready to support you.



Who Can Access Support?

- Current UNISON members
- Partners and immediate dependents of members
- Partners of deceased members may also apply

If you're unsure about your eligibility, contact:

 **Carol Ring**, Branch Welfare Officer – lgbranch@sheffunison.org.uk

 **There for You** – 020 7121 5620

 thereforyou@unison.co.uk

What 'There for You' Support Is Available?

- **Financial assistance** tailored to a range of circumstances
- **Debt advice** – call 0800 389 3302 for immediate help
- **Wellbeing breaks** – for recovery after illness or hardship
- **Information and practical support** on a wide range of issues

All services are **completely confidential**.

2026
Year of Green
Activity

CAMPAIGNS

LEARNING

YEAR OF GREEN ACTIVITY

Find out
MORE



COMMUNITY
ACTION

unison.org.uk/2026-unison-year-of-green-activity



Help Us Grow – UNISON Needs You!

As a UNISON member you're already part of something powerful — a union that stands up for fairness, equality, and support in the workplace.

Recruit a Colleague Today!

Do you work alongside someone who isn't yet a member? Encourage them to join! Whether they're new to the team or have been around for years, Unison membership offers protection, advice, and a collective voice that makes a real difference.

WE NEED YOU!



Why Recruit?

- A stronger union means better representation
- More members = more influence in negotiations
- You'll be helping colleagues access support when they need it most

How to Get Involved:

- Share your experience as a member
- Point them to the Unison website or local rep
- Invite them to attend a Unison meeting or event
- All this, from only **£1.30 a month**

Together, we can build a safer, fairer, and more supportive workplace for everyone.

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Boost your skills this autumn! UNISON offers a fantastic range of **free** training courses and workshops for all members. These can help with your current role or support a transition into a new sector.

Upcoming Courses Include:

- **IT User Skills & Digital Confidence:** Master the digital tools needed for modern administrative workflows.
- **Understanding Mental Health in the Workplace:** Learn how to support colleagues and manage your own workplace wellbeing.
- **CV Writing & Interview Prep:** Get expert help highlighting your professional qualifications and transferable skills for your next career step.

Check the regional UNISON website to book your free place.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT & COMMUNITY WINS

Small Wins, Big Hearts

We love celebrating the incredible things our members do outside of work. A huge shout-out to all our members who dedicate their spare time to community volunteering—from supporting local healthcare and hospice charities to raising funds for emergency veterinary care for rescue animals. Our members prove time and again that compassion doesn't stop when the shift ends!

Noticeboard & Key Dates

- **Branch Meeting:** Join us online or in person for our next member catch-up on **24th September 2026 9am**. Have your say on local workplace issues.
- **Update Your Details:** Moved house? Changed your job title or workplace? Please log into **MyUNISON** online to update your details so we can ensure you receive relevant ballots and updates.

Get in Touch

Your workplace stewards and health & safety reps are always here to help.

- **Email:** eec.unison@nhs.net
- **Phone:** 07766 114767
- **Website/Socials:** eastofenglandcommunityhealth.unison.site

Not a member yet? Join the UK's largest public sector union today at join.unison.org.uk or speak to your local rep.

SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD: CHALLENGING THE RISE OF THE POPULIST RIGHT

By Claire Murray (Branch Membership Officer)

Racism remains one of the most challenging concerns throughout the NHS. To tackle this head-on, UNISON is proudly working in partnership with the charity **Show Racism the Red Card** through the *Challenging the Rise of the Populist Right Programme*. Together, our goal is to ensure all members understand the different

forms of racism and the profound impacts they have on our colleagues and our wider working environment.

True anti-racism is more than simply avoiding racist behavior; it requires us to actively challenge prejudice, discrimination, and inequality wherever they occur.

🧠 Understanding Unconscious Bias & Media Influence

An important focus of this program is exploring **unconscious bias**—the beliefs, assumptions, and preferences we may hold without even being aware of them. These are often shaped by our upbringing, personal experiences, and cultural influences.

Today, the language and imagery used across social media frequently reinforce harmful stereotypes, provoking strong emotional reactions rather than providing balanced information. Recognising that everyone holds some degree of unconscious bias is not about assigning blame. Instead, it is about becoming aware of our own thinking patterns to ensure they never lead to the unfair treatment of others.



🌍 Supporting Our Migrant Workforce & Improving Communication

Widespread misinformation has made it difficult for many to distinguish between legal migration and illegal entry, leading to unfair assumptions based entirely on a person's appearance, nationality, or ethnicity.

It is vital to recognize the facts:

- **Legal Processes:** Legal immigrants enter and remain in the UK through approved, lawful processes.
- **An Essential NHS workforce:** The NHS relies heavily on migrant workers to function, particularly due to ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining domestic staff.

Effective communication plays a critical role in promoting anti-racism. By engaging in open, respectful conversations, actively listening, and choosing our language carefully, we can learn from one another and dismantle deep-seated misunderstandings.

Aims of the Programme

The *Challenging the Rise of the Populist Right Programme* is designed to move beyond individual self-reflection. It actively combats the vulnerability of workers to racist attitudes enforced by outside groups—attitudes that ultimately weaken our collective power to create fair and equal workplaces.

The programme supports UNISON members to build a better understanding of:

- The root causes of racist and prejudiced ideas.
- The complex "push and pull" factors that influence global immigration.
- Attitudes that positively enhance critical thinking, empathy, and alternative perspectives.

An Ongoing Commitment

Creating an inclusive community requires a collective effort. Anti-racism is not a one-time action, but an ongoing commitment to fairness, equality, and mutual respect. Through education and communication, UNISON is committed to moving closer to a future where our diversity is truly valued and everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Get Involved: For more information, educational resources, and campaign tools, visit the official website at www.theredcard.org.

ANGELA RAYNER:

BORN IN STOCKPORT, RAISED IN UNISON

'Better quality jobs – with a stronger voice for people at work – is the solution,' said the former deputy prime minister.

On the first day of UNISON's national delegate conference in Brighton, Angela Rayner MP gave a speech to conference delegates.

"UNISON is, and always will be, my union family. Like all families, we have our ups and downs. But we are still family, one united in our commitment to a fairer future," she said.



Rayner told conference delegates that she had first joined UNISON as a care worker about 25 years ago, in the Stockport local government branch.

“I still remember my first national delegate conference, and I remember my first UNISON young members weekend, where I called for votes at 16. I wasn’t told to stay in my lane. I wasn’t told I was talking too much. I wasn’t told that my opinion didn’t count.

“For me, UNISON was the place where respect was given to me and to others. I owe each and every one of you a debt of thanks. I was born in Stockport, but I was raised in UNISON.

“Two decades later, as your deputy prime minister, I was proud to propose the law giving young people the vote.

“If UNISON made me a bit of a rebel, you made me a rebel with a cause. And today our values are every bit as relevant as at any time before.

“This movement taught me that it’s not about yourself, it’s about ‘us’. The cause of our movement has always been to secure for workers the fruits of their labour. That is not an idea of the past. Driving living standards for working class people should still be the mission of this Labour government.

“It is a government that has done many good things to bring about that change. But let’s be honest. I’m under no illusions that people are queuing up to thank us. People have turned to populists and nationalists because for all we have done, it has not been enough to fix the crises they face. They are impatient for change. So are you. And so am I.

“Living standards are barely higher than they were a decade and a half ago. Growth isn’t just low, it also fails to benefit most people, places and businesses. Yet when people have more to spend in their local high streets, businesses have higher revenues; in turn, they can hire more workers, and a community prospers.

“That is not just morally right, it’s economically right too,” she said.

“For too long, Britain has been on the wrong path. A path that has damaged communities and drained away power from ordinary people. Once again, working class people are paying the price for decisions they did not make and crises they did not cause. De-industrialisation in the 1980s. Deregulation and privatisation. The financial crash. Austerity. Brexit. Covid.

“We’ve seen the banks bailed out, energy companies posting record profits, the water companies that were flogged off paying huge bonuses to executives. For too long,

governments have allowed wealth and power to concentrate at the top without a plan to ensure the benefits of economic growth are shared fairly.

“The result is an economy that does not work for the majority, with wealth concentrated in too few hands. It has left us with an affordability crisis where people pay over the odds for the daily basics: energy, housing, water, transport.”

The Labour government

“The Labour party must now live up to our name. We must be the party for working people. This government needs, at pace, to put measures in place that make people's lives better.

“We need to fix the foundations of a system rigged against them. Because we know that things can be so much better than this.”

Rayner said she was motivated to go into government to give workers a fairer share, to fix the foundation of a good life for working people: home, work and community. But she has not lost her trade union roots.

“As a former care worker, I stood with today's care workers last week [at UNISON's migrant workers demo]. Because fairness means enforcing the rules, not ripping them up; people who follow those rules and contribute to our society should be able to trust the system in which they work.”

“Conference, I urge you, to fight with me, let's win together.”

Migrant workers

Rayner echoed UNISON's [calls to introduce a sector-wide visa](#), which, she said, will “empower those giving care, but support those receiving it as well.

“Behind every visa is a care worker. In front of every care worker is a vulnerable person, a cared-for elderly relative, and a community that depends on them.

“Yet migrant care workers are trapped in a system that does not protect them. And because it does not protect them, it does not protect us.

“It is the same problem we see across the economy. It is why we need an active, interventionist government to promote good jobs that pay decent wages.”

Employment Rights Act

“When I was introducing our Employment Rights Act (ERA), we gave millions of workers: higher pay; new rights and protections, and an end to exploitative zero hours contracts.”

Rayner said that the ERA had only happened ‘despite Reform’, who voted against it at every turn in its journey to become law.

“Farage is a Thatcherite and we must never forget it. Populists and nationalists are not on our side, and do not have the answers to the problems working people face.

“When I pledged an Employment Rights Bill within a hundred days, they said we couldn’t do it. We proved them wrong.”

Rayner proceeded to address the argument that better wages and conditions for young people are the reasons why there are not enough jobs.

“I agree that the tide of young people not in employment, education or training is a genuine problem. But as Alan Milburn found, it is long-term and structural, and has been consistently higher than other countries since long before Labour took office, let alone improved pay for young people.

“It’s why we didn’t bring in our changes to the minimum wage overnight but let the Low Pay Commission do its job.”

Better quality jobs for all

She continued: “I’m passionate about getting young people, including those with disabilities or health challenges, into good jobs. But abandoning our ambitions and making those jobs worse surely cannot be the way to get young people into them.

“And this is the wider point. Better quality jobs - with a stronger voice for people at work - is the solution, not the problem. It is how we build the higher productivity, higher pay economy that we need.

“This should be common sense: businesses often tell me ‘our greatest asset is our people’. And we all know from our own experience that we work best when we have notice of work patterns, are safe and respected in the workplace, and are fairly rewarded.

“Where working people have money to spend, businesses grow. Where there is less temporary work, employers invest more in training. Better quality jobs mean

more people are able to and stay in work - and stay healthy. Good employers thrive as they are no longer undercut.”

Addressing the previous 14 years of Conservative austerity before Labour took office, Rayner said: “As our rights were attacked over the last decade, productivity stagnated. Growth ground to a halt. We have to break the cycle of squeezed living standards and weak economic growth.

“To those who say we can’t afford to make work pay, I say we say we can’t afford not to. And to you, I say let’s do it together.

“There is no way we would have had that new deal, nor our Employment Rights Act, nor the rest of our plan to make work pay, without UNISON and our trade union movement. And it will be delivered with you.

“It was this union and a Labour government that changed my life, that unlocked doors of opportunity that would have been closed for someone like me. And when I went into a Labour government myself, I saw first-hand that when we fight for change, better things are possible.

“We must finish the job on workers’ rights, not shy away from taking on union-busting bosses. Create jobs that pay a wage on which you can live and where you aren’t afraid of facing the sack at a moment’s notice.

“Harness the power of procurement to reshape the economy and unleash the biggest wave of in-sourcing in a generation. Reject any bailout of the private owners of Thames Water and put it back under public control.

“End rip off rents and the exploitative leasehold system for good. Take on the vested interests who rip off working people from bullying bailiffs to car park cowboys.

“Help households with their transport, energy and water costs. Restore our high streets and support smaller enterprises to thrive.

“Defend our democracy and society from any foreign dictator or fascist oligarch who seeks to divide our country and buy our politics.

“A country built for the one interest we should serve – the British people. That’s what is at stake. That’s what our shared future can be if we stand, and fight, for our values of equality, social justice and fairness. Labour values, but British values too.

“Conference, I urge you, to fight with me, let’s win together.”

NAVIGATING CERTIFICATE OF SPONSORSHIP (COS) & MIGRANT WORKER SUPPORT

By Claire Murray (Branch Membership Officer)

*Our branch has recently seen a significant increase in the number of members facing complex challenges regarding the renewal of their **Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS)**.*



If you are currently in a position where you need to find a new employer to take over your sponsorship, please know that you are not alone, and UNISON is here to support you.

🔍 Looking for a New Sponsor? Recommended Job Databases

If you need to identify a new employer who can provide a CoS, the following verified platforms can help you search for qualifying vacancies:

- **Autonomy Care Visa Sponsor Database:** A dedicated database proudly sponsored by UNISON! Visit autonomy.work/care-visa-sponsor-database-v2/
- **Sponsor Switch:** Specifically tailored for care workers looking to transition. Visit www.Sponsorswitch.com/carers
- **TERN:** Access a dedicated platform to find sponsored care worker jobs in the UK.
- **SESCA Guidance:** The South East Social Care Alliance offers wealth-of-knowledge guidance on international recruitment. Visit [International recruitment – SESCOA](#)

Free, Expert Immigration Advice

UNISON partners directly with the **Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI)** to provide **free immigration telephone advice** to members who have come to work in the UK from outside the country.

If you have been a UNISON member for **more than four weeks** and need expert immigration guidance:

1. Call **UNISON Direct on 0800 0 857 857**.
2. Have your full name, contact number, and **UNISON membership number** ready.
3. Your details will be passed securely to a JCWI adviser, who will call you directly on a **Tuesday between 10am and 4pm**.

Hardship Support & Lower Membership Rates

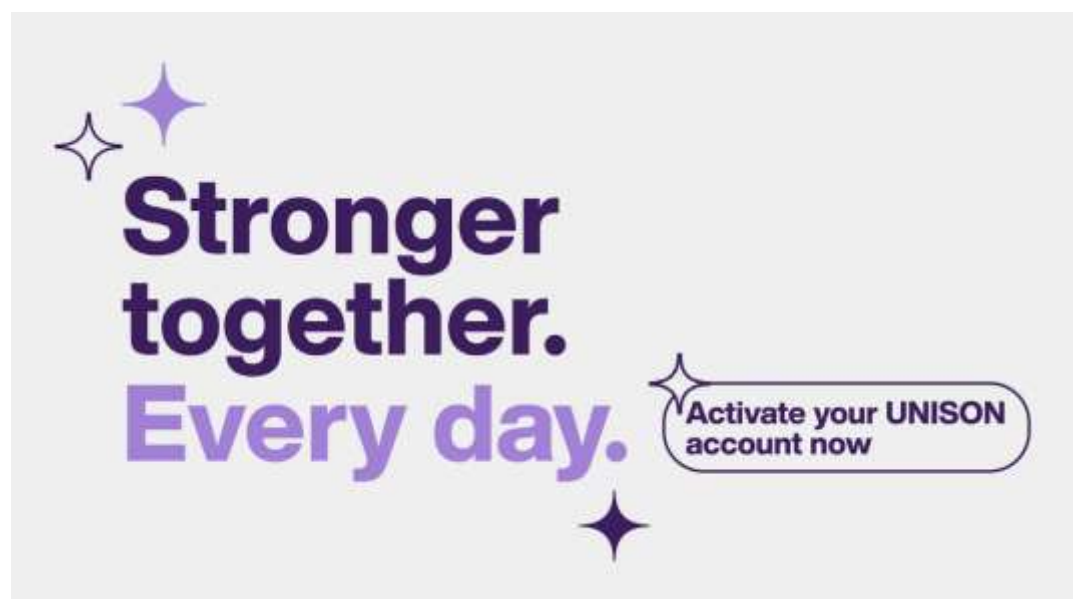
- **Reduced Subscription Costs:** If you are temporarily between sponsors and actively looking for a new role, you may be eligible to transition your UNISON account to an **unemployed membership**. This significantly reduces your monthly subscription cost while maintaining your protection.
- **Financial Assistance:** If the transition is causing you financial hardship, you may be eligible for emergency support through UNISON's welfare charity, **There for You**. Explore your options at [Financial assistance | There for You](#).

Next Steps: Keep Us Updated!

When you successfully secure your new role, please remember to update your employment details with us immediately.

You can do this quickly by calling **0800 0 857 857** or logging into the **MyUNISON Portal**.

Check out the next page for QR code and advice.



UNISON Migrant Workers



UNISON Migrant Workers Network

The UNISON Migrant Worker Network is a new, informal network of UNISON members with a first-generation immigrant background including overseas and migrant workers, EU settled status workers and workers who have subsequently naturalised as British citizens or who have indefinite leave to remain. Members can now identify and update their membership record as a migrant worker by scanning the QR code, which will enable UNISON to target advice, support and information more effectively.



Scan the QR Code to join the Network.

Free Immigration Advice

UNISON Migrant Worker Members can access expert migrant rights advice and support for themselves and their families via a UNISON funded partnership with the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI). Members can access the advice service via **UNISONdirect** who can then arrange an appointment for the member with a JCWI advisor.

Call **UNISONdirect** on **0800 0857 857**.

Not in UNISON?

Join today at joinunison.org or call **0800 171 2193** or ask a UNISON rep for an application form.



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WHAT IS A TRADE UNION?



A trade union is a group of working people who have joined together to achieve better pay and working conditions and a safer working environment.

Trade unions negotiate with employers on behalf of union members to agree wages, work rules, complaint procedures, rules governing hiring, firing and promotion of workers, benefits, workplace safety and other policies.

Who is in a trade union?

Ordinary working people like you – nearly seven million in the UK – are in a trade union, doing all sorts of jobs. They include nurses, school meals staff, hospital cleaners, actors, professional footballers, shop assistants, teaching assistants, bus drivers, engineers, social workers and apprentices.

UNISON represents people who work in our vital public services like health, education and local council services, keeping our children safe and caring for the vulnerable in society.

Why join a trade union?

Members benefit from the strength and security that comes from people working together to tackle problems.

In UNISON, as well as getting support when you need it at work you will have access to a wide range of help and benefits including:

- legal services for you at work and your family at home*
- financial assistance and debt advice in times of need
- our helpline open until midnight
- compensation for accidents and injuries at work
- member discounts on things like insurance and new cars – including up to 50% off holidays
- education, training and support.

Unions also campaign and lobby to persuade the public or government of their point of view.

*qualifying period and exclusions apply

WHAT IS A TRADE UNION?



Trade union successes

In recent years, unions have campaigned for and won:

- a national minimum wage
- improved parental leave provisions
- equality legislation
- laws on reasonable working hours
- minimum holiday and sickness entitlements
- health and safety in the workplace
- pension provision

...as well as many thousands of local agreements on issues affecting particular workplaces.

How do trade unions work?

Union members agree a common aim of what they want to achieve. This might be about pay or bullying at work or challenging unfairness, for example. Representatives from the union gather evidence about the issue and present it to their employer. They discuss the matter with the employer to reach an agreement.

If the employer refuses to reach an agreement, union members can broaden their campaign to win wider support in the workplace.

This may be with the public or at a national level with MPs and in government, or, as a last resort, taking strike action.

Trade unions also provide legal representation for workers, for example to win compensation in the event of an accident or injury at work. Many trade unions also provide other benefits and discounts on services for their members. You can think of trade unions as your insurance policy for work.

Find out more at unison.org.uk

In UNISON – the trade union for all public service workers even if they work in private companies – we believe in:

equality – we are all different, but we all deserve to be treated with respect and fairness. All of our voices should be heard

solidarity – we work to support each other at work and in society

democracy – our members have a right to make the decisions that shape their union

participation – we aim to share our skills, commitment and creativity to build a stronger union.

Three simple ways to join UNISON today and get essential cover wherever you work



Join online at
joinunison.org



Call us on
0800 171 2193



Ask your UNISON rep
for an application form

HOW UNISON IS RUN:

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

About Us

UNISON is a trade union – an organisation of people who come together to stand up for workers' rights. Your rights mean fair treatment and what you are entitled to at work. We work with employers and decision-makers to improve things for everyone in work, including:

- Higher pay
- Safer, better workplaces

We represent people working mainly in public services and related organisations – such as local councils, schools, colleges and health services. Anyone who joins UNISON is called a member.

Support for members

When you join UNISON, you can access:

- Personal advice and representation at work
- Free legal support for you and your family
- Financial help and support through our charity, *There for You*
- Free learning, training and skills development

You will also get access to member-only benefits such as discounts and special offers. You can see the full range at: benefits.unison.org.uk

Getting involved: being a UNISON rep

If you want to take an active role, you can become a Branch Representative – known as a rep for short. Reps:

- Speak up on behalf of UNISON members
- Give advice and support to fellow workers
- Accompany members to meetings and stand up for their rights
- Help run local UNISON meetings

There are different specialist rep roles to suit different interests:

- **Workplace Reps:** Listen to members' concerns and share information about UNISON
- **Health and Safety Reps:** Check that your workplace is safe and follows the law
- **Learning Reps:** Help members access training and build new skills

UNISON provides free training and events for all members and reps. You can browse what is available at: learning.unison.org.uk/events/

UNISON Stewards

A steward is another active role – sometimes also called a rep. Stewards:

- Represent groups of members
- Negotiate with employers to reach fair agreements
- Receive extra training and support
- Attend branch meetings, meet with union staff and take part in major UNISON events

Find out more at: www.unison.org.uk/get-involved/in-your-workplace/key-documents-tools-activists/

UNISON and your employer

Many employers have a formal *recognition agreement* with UNISON. This gives us the right to speak on your behalf and make sure you are treated fairly. These agreements also set out how we can support you – for example, paid time off for union representation or training.

Your local UNISON Branch

Members working in the same area, organisation or type of work come together to form a branch. **Our branch is the East of England**

Community Health Branch.

Branches are run by members, who vote for people to take on key roles to make sure everything runs well. These include:

- A committee to oversee the branch's work
- Equality officers
- Health and safety officers
- Young members' officers
- Disabled members' officers
- Learning and development officers

Full details of branch roles are at: www.unison.org.uk/about/our-organisation/activists/branch-roles/

Your UNISON Region

Every branch belongs to one of UNISON's 12 UK regions. **Our region is Eastern.** The regional office supports local branches to:

- Recruit new members
- Defend and improve members' rights
- Deliver high-quality support and training
- Campaign for better working conditions

Each region has a Regional Council made up of representatives from every local branch. The Council meets 3–4 times a year to plan work and

make decisions, and holds an annual general meeting to elect senior regional officers.

Service Groups

Alongside branches and regions, members are grouped by the type of work they do, into 7 service groups:

- Community services
- Health services
- Energy
- Police and justice
- Education (colleges and universities)
- Local government
- Water, environment and transport

There is also a separate group for members working in private companies.

National Executive Council (NEC)

The NEC is UNISON's national governing body. It is made up of elected members from across the UK, who meet regularly to oversee the union's overall work and direction. All members can vote in NEC elections.

Andrea Egan is UNISON's General Secretary, elected by members to lead the union.

Equality and inclusion

UNISON is committed to being inclusive and representative of all our members. We have dedicated structures to support and amplify the voices of:

- Black members
- Disabled members
- LGBT+ members
- Women members
- Young members

Find out more at: www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/fairness-equality/

Contact us

If you have questions or need more information, get in touch:

- **Phone:** Branch Secretary 07766 114767, or UNISON Direct 0800 0 857 857
- **Post:** Union Office, Norwich Community Hospital, Bowthorpe Road, Norwich, NR2 3TU
- **Online:** www.eastofenglandcommunityhealth.unison.site/contact-us/



In Your Own Words: Why Being in UNISON Matters

When workplace challenges arise, it can feel incredibly isolating. Whether you work in the NHS or the private sector, navigating formal processes, management challenges, or restructures is daunting.

But you are never alone. Over the last few months, our local reps—including Lesley, Mel, Dave, Lisa, and Pauline—have been on the ground, standing side-by-side with members to defend their rights, secure reasonable adjustments, and protect livelihoods.

We asked members who have recently been represented by the branch to share their experiences. **Here is what they had to say:**



Saving Livelihoods & Protecting Rights

"Without the union I would have been sacked..."

"I work in the private sector and was supported by Dave and Lesley. Both were compassionate and helped me be strong to take on the challenges I was facing. It was an awesome experience—being a foreigner I never knew my rights, but the union helped me know that. Without the union I would have been sacked, or the abuse would still be severe. Now my employer knows I am in a union, and I will always have support. I won my case."

"Saved from redundancy..."

"I was involved with a TUPE transfer and through the advice and advocacy of my rep, Lesley, I was saved from redundancy. I have a disability, and Lesley was very understanding of my reasonable adjustments. Even my CEO was thankful for her presence. Although I was stressed, Lesley helped me keep close to the ground."



Support on the Frontlines of the NHS

"I couldn't have had a better experience..."

"I work for NCHC as a Community Nurse and Mel supported me. I felt very supported from the very first contact. When Mel phoned me, she put me at ease right away and gave me great advice for my meeting. Even though the meeting was on Teams, she

kept checking to make sure I was okay. I was able to speak much more confidently knowing she was there for me. The support is without doubt the best I have had."

"She went above and beyond for me..."

"My rep was Lesley. She was very compassionate and went above and beyond for me. My experience with her and UNISON was fantastic, and I've told many colleagues they should make sure they join UNISON."

"I couldn't have done it without her..."

"I work in the NHS and my representative was Lisa. Lisa was compassionate, very knowledgeable, and I felt supported throughout. I couldn't have done it without her."

Standing Up to Unfair Treatment

"They made me feel like I was doing the right thing..."

"Challenging my manager was a very daunting experience and the appeal process was anxiety-inducing, but Mel and Pauline had my back. Mel was prepared to ask the difficult questions and support me when I struggled to speak. She even suggested fantastic ideas that my manager hadn't thought of to support me in my role! If I didn't have their support, I would have felt like an ant. Seeking support from the union was really easy to do, and I'm so glad I did."

The Takeaway: Don't Wait Until It's Too Late

These stories highlight exactly why our branch exists. From helping international staff understand their UK workplace rights to guiding members through stressful redundancies and NHS appeals, our reps are here to hold management to account.

As these members noted, **seeking support is easy to do, and the reassurance starts from the very first phone call.**

If you are facing an issue at work, entering a formal process, or simply need advice, please don't wait until the final appeal stage. Contact the branch as early as possible so we can stand by you from day one.

Not a member yet?

Don't wait for a crisis to hit. Join UNISON today and ensure you have the best protection, advice, and legal support behind you.

Your union at your fingertips...

We've launched a new website that brings everything about your union into one place — from how to get active and take part in our campaigns to legal advice, training and even deals to help save money.

All you need to do is activate your membership account to find personalised content that's only available to you. You'll need your membership number to get started, which can easily be found on any UNISON email. After that, you'll only need your email address to log in.



Activate your account
today and get your union
at your fingertips...

unison.org.uk

Activate your
account now and
enter our competition
for a chance to win
a £500 shopping
voucher



Manage your membership online

View and update your details without making a call or waiting for an email.



Find the right support

Use your personalised dashboard to easily access help, advice, and more.



Access training in one place

Browse, book, and manage learning and training tailored to you.

Year of green activity

Events Calendar for the 2026 UNISON Year of Green Activity

Aug	Extreme Heat / Max Temp Health and Safety campaign highlight	Join us in demanding the government set legally binding maximum workplace temperatures and come and join our webinar to find out more about why this is so important
Sep	Green UNISON Week 	Film festival – 1. The Man Who Mends Things (short) – an award winning and very powerful short animation about climate change and fixing things – available all month to run in branches locally. 2. 2040 - Exploring an optimistic view of what 2040 could be like if the right choices are made. 2 ticketed virtual screenings (dates to be confirmed) The Line We Crossed (documentary) – exploring the recent draconian attacks on protest rights and the targeting of climate defenders. 2 ticketed virtual screenings (dates to be confirmed)
	Environment Agencies / Water Highlight	Find out more about how our members working in the Environment Agencies and Water Industry are being directly affected by the climate crisis – a webinar.
Oct	Black History Month	Join our webinar to find out more about how climate change disproportionately affects Black people both globally and here in the UK
	Build up to COP31 (held in November)	3. The annual global conference where 198 nations discuss collective action on climate change. UNISON is privileged to have held one of only 2 UK observer delegate places as part of the International TUC delegation – watch out for information on UNISON engagement, member mobilisation opportunities and what will be at stake.
Nov	COP 31 (likely Australia)	Reports back from COP and opportunities to support Global mobilisations in the UK to mark at COP31
	Global Supply Chains and Human Rights and the Environment	Find out more about what our International team do to campaign for ethical sourcing of vital climate related materials – Join us in asking our MPs to sign up to the Business, Human Rights and Environment Act
Dec	Disabled Members Highlight	Join our webinar to find out more about how climate change impacts disabled people and what needs to change to make sure disabled members are not left behind in the move to Net Zero
All Year	Background work and organising	• Public services as social infrastructure • Sign-posting Citizen scientist opportunities. • Campaign to fill the EnvO role in branches. • Support bargaining for local facility time. • Research pieces and policy work. Promote Newsletter sign up!

Please sign up to our [Green UNISON Newsletter](#) to get regular updates and notifications for registering to attend these events.

Keep Your Details up to Date with My UNISON

Want to stay in the loop with news, updates, and support tailored to your role? Make sure your membership details are current!

The easiest way to do this is by registering with **My UNISON**. You'll need your membership number, which you can find:

- On your membership card
- Or at the bottom of any email from UNISON

☒ **Update your details so we can keep you updated.**

Visit my.unison.org.uk to register or log in today!

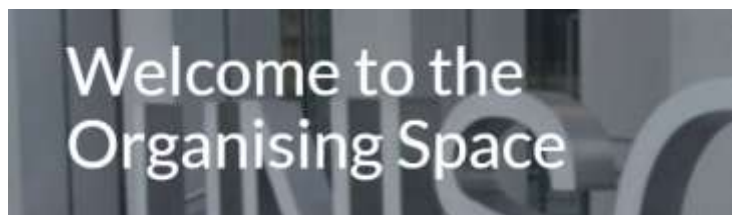
Organising Space

Organising Space is a secure, supportive online platform created to empower UNISON's activist and organising communities.

We understand that organising can sometimes feel challenging or disheartening. That's why UNISON developed Organising Space—to help build stronger connections, share knowledge, and learn from each other's experiences.

This dynamic space enables members to:

- **Share innovative and creative content**
- **Engage in meaningful discussions**
- **Ask questions and get advice from experts**
- **Find encouragement and support from fellow activists**



Whether you're looking for inspiration, collaboration, or practical tools, Organising Space is designed to be flexible, interactive, and responsive to your needs.

🔗 **Join the community:** www.organisingspace.unison.org.uk

We're powered by 1.4 million members – and we want to help you get even more from your UNISON membership.

Be sure to activate your UNISON online account and be in with a chance of winning one of five £500 shopping vouchers!

<https://unsn.uk/Activate>

What is UNISON College?

***UNISON College** is your gateway to learning, development, and empowerment—offering training and education opportunities for all members across the union.*

Whether you're looking to boost your confidence, learn new skills, or grow as an activist, UNISON College has something for you. With over **1,000 courses, workshops, webinars, and events**, you can explore topics like:

- Excel and spreadsheets
- Interview preparation
- Financial wellbeing
- Mindfulness and stress management
- And much more!



Learning That Fits Your Life

Courses are delivered in a variety of formats—in-person, online, blended, and self-study—and take place in regional offices, workplaces, learning centres, or online. They're run by UNISON staff or trusted external providers.

Open to All Members

Your regional learning team organises local opportunities, and you can also access national courses open to members and activists across the UK.

Ready to learn something new?

Visit [Member learning | UNISON College](#) to explore what's on offer.

UNISON Knowledge Base: Your Go-To for Trusted Information

*Need reliable advice on your rights at work or support with everyday issues? The **UNISON Knowledge Base** is packed with up-to-date, legally checked information on employment rights and key topics affecting you at work and at home.*

 Whether you're looking for guidance on contracts, pay, leave, or workplace safety, it's all just a click away.

 Visit: unison.org.uk/get-help/knowledge
Or speak to your local branch rep for more support.



The August Coffee Break Quiz



Take five minutes out of your busy day, grab a cuppa, and test your knowledge! (Answers at the end of the quiz).



Summer & August Trivia

1. August was named after Augustus Caesar, the first emperor of the Roman Empire. What was the month called before he renamed it?

- a) Sextilis
- b) Quintilis
- c) Julius

2. Which famous structures in the UK are known for being repainted constantly, a task so endless it became a famous British idiom for a never-ending job?

- a) The Clifton Suspension Bridge
- b) The Forth Bridge
- c) Tower Bridge

3. August is a massive month for festivals. Which Scottish city hosts the world's largest arts festival every August?

- a) Glasgow
- b) Aberdeen
- c) Edinburgh



Public Services & History

4. August marks the anniversary of the opening of the UK's very first section of motorway in 1958. Which motorway was it?

- a) The M1
- b) The M6 (Preston By-pass)
- c) The M25

5. Florence Nightingale, the pioneer of modern nursing, passed away in August 1910. What was the nickname given to her by the soldiers during the Crimean War?

- a) The Angel of Crimea
- b) The Lady with the Lamp
- c) The Healing Hand

Just for Fun

6. If you are working hard and "burning the candle at both ends," what are you doing?

- a) Saving money on electricity
- b) Going to bed early and waking up late
- c) Working late into the night and waking up early to start again

7. Collective nouns can be strange! What is a group of worker bees called?

- a) A swarm or a colony
- b) A buzz
- c) A team

No Peeking! Answers Below...

Answers:

1. **a) Sextilis** (It was originally the sixth month of the Roman calendar before January and February were added!).
2. **b) The Forth Bridge** (Though modern specialist coatings mean they finally finished a "permanent" paint job in 2011!).
3. **c) Edinburgh** (The world-famous Edinburgh Festival Fringe).
4. **b) The M6 Preston By-pass** (It was only 8.2 miles long when it first opened).
5. **b) The Lady with the Lamp.**
6. **c) Working late into the night and waking up early to start again** (A feeling many dedicated public service workers know all too well—remember to take your proper breaks!).
7. **a) A swarm or a colony** (Though we think "a hard-working branch" fits nicely too!).

How did you do?

- **5–7 Correct:** Branch Champion! You're fully charged and ready for autumn.
- **3–4 Correct:** Solid Effort. Definitely earned that biscuit with your tea.
- **0–2 Correct:** Brain Melt! The summer heat is getting to you. Step away from the desk and take a proper lunch break!

Ending sexual harassment in the NHS



Have you experienced or witnessed sexual harassment at work? Your union is here to help

All NHS employers have a duty to protect their staff from sexual harassment in the workplace. From October 2026, this includes taking all reasonable steps to prevent incident and where it has taken place, your employer should take action to prevent reoccurrence.

UNISON has trained local representatives who are on hand to ensure that you and your fellow members are represented if you are affected by sexual harassment at work.

What is considered to be sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment can come in many forms such as the use of sexualised language, 'jokes', 'banter', obscene gestures and unwanted physical contact. It's important to remember that none of these behaviours are acceptable, regardless of the intention.

Whilst sexual harassment can be experienced by staff of all genders and ethnic backgrounds, you are more likely to be the victim of sexual harassment if you are a woman, young, black, disabled or are LGBT+.

If you are made to feel uncomfortable by remarks or actions made towards you at work, consider reporting the incident.

Raising concerns

In England and Wales, all NHS Trusts have signed up to the NHS Sexual Safety Charter which is a commitment to take a zero-tolerance approach to sexual misconduct, harassment and abuse in the workplace and focus on supporting those who experience it.

We know it's not always easy to come forward. Whether you've experienced sexual harassment first hand or have witnessed these behaviours from other members of staff, patients or members of the public, reporting the incident is the first step to a resolution.

UNISON wants to reassure you that ALL sexual safety concerns will be taken seriously and those who do come forward to report incidents or patterns of behaviour will be treated with respect and dignity and will have the right to remain anonymous.

Remember, there are several ways for you to report sexual safety concerns at work. We recognise that you might not feel comfortable or in some cases, it might not be appropriate to raise these directly with your line manager. If so, you can also raise concerns:

- ▶ With your local UNISON branch
- ▶ Directly with your employer – if not your line manager, then another senior manager or members of People Services Teams/HR department
- ▶ Through your Freedom to Speak up Guardian
- ▶ Through your Trust's safeguarding lead

Further support

Those who have been victims of sexual harassment can experience long lasting affects and may find it difficult to come forward to talk about or come to terms with what they've experienced. If that's the case, consider reaching out to external organisations who are trained and on hand to help:

- ▶ Rape crisis support: [rapecrisis.org.uk](https://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)
- ▶ The independent ACAS helpline is open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm for anyone who needs employment law or workplace advice in relation to sexual harassment: 0333 300 6389
- ▶ An online chat is also available or rape and sexual abuse support, as well as legal advice. Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year: acas.org.uk/sexual-harassment/get-help-and-support

What is UNISON doing to tackle this issue?

UNISON continues to work with employers on issues relating to the sexual safety of NHS staff. This includes helping to develop clear policies and reporting systems, highlighting the need for training and education for the NHS workforce, and challenging misconceptions about access to support, particularly in cases where the alleged perpetrator holds a position of authority or influence.



The Cinema Corner Pick: *Spider-Man: Brand New Day*

Release Date: In Cinemas Wednesday, 29 July 2026

Starring: Tom Holland, Zendaya

If you are looking for the ultimate air-conditioned escape from the summer heat this month, look no further than the big screen's favourite web-slinger. After what feels like an absolute age, Tom Holland is back in the suit for *Spider-Man: Brand New Day*, bookending a massive month for cinema-goers.

What's it about?

Without giving away too many spoilers, *Brand New Day* catches up with Peter Parker attempting to navigate a completely reset life. This time around, the rumour mill suggests he is facing a deeply personal, grounded battle against classic comic foes—including the sting-happy, psychotic Scorpion—while simultaneously wrestling with his own rogue DNA. Expect the brilliant chemistry between Tom Holland and Zendaya, massive IMAX-worthy set pieces, and a welcome return to the old-school, neighbourhood-focused Marvel storytelling we fell in love with.



Why it's worth your time:

Let's be honest—mergers, restructures, and daily workloads can take it out of us! Sometimes you just need two hours of pure, unadulterated popcorn entertainment where the good guy saves the day. Early buzz promises that this film is a spectacular, fast-paced return to form for the franchise.

Whether you're taking the grandkids for a summer holiday treat or sneaking out for a solo evening viewing with a giant tub of popcorn, this is guaranteed to be the biggest crowd-pleaser of the season.

🚩 🎟️ **Branch Verdict: 5/5 Stars.** A must-see on the biggest screen possible. Book your tickets early, as opening week is bound to be packed!

Alternative: For the Nostalgia Lovers

If capes and superheroes aren't your thing, the cinema is also playing host to some incredible British animation re-releases this month. Keep an eye out for special anniversary screenings of *Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* hitting selected screens on **31 July**, perfect for a nostalgic trip down memory lane.

💡 **UNISON Money Saver:** > Don't forget that as a UNISON member, you can get **discounts on cinema tickets** (including ODEON, Vue, and Cineworld) through **UNISON Living or Health Service Discounts**. Check the website before you book to save up to 40%!



GET LEARNING WITH UNISON

Does that promotion look a million miles away because you're stuck in a rut at work?

Do you want to give your confidence a boost?

Are you interested in learning new stuff?

Well, what are you waiting for?

Now is the time to get learning with UNISON.

We have a range of opportunities for members, ranging from short workshops and one day courses, to 12 weeks on our award-winning Return to Learn and Women's Lives courses.

All our free courses aim to build your confidence and give you a range of skills and knowledge to help you, not only at work, but outside too.

So, whether it's stress management, assertiveness, improving your reading and writing skills, or continuing professional development to get you that promotion at work, UNISON has it covered.

Or maybe you are interested in studying for that qualification you never got when you were younger through a non-UNISON course?

As a UNISON member, you can often get discounts on courses from many different organisations and our learning grants can also help towards the cost of these courses as well as the cost of text books and exam fees.

Get learning with UNISON

Interested?

A good place to start is by speaking to the union learning rep in your UNISON branch who can point you towards learning opportunities. They can also organise informal learning in your workplace and speak to your employer about providing high quality training for staff.

You can also go to **learning.unison.org.uk** where you will find loads of information about what's on offer and how to access it – including study with the Open University or the Workers' Educational Association. It doesn't matter if you are studying full time or part time, on line or face to face – you'll find useful information on our website.

Not in UNISON? Join today at **join.unison.org.uk** or call us free on **0800 0 857 857**.





August & September 2026

Keep this page handy or pop these dates into your calendar! Here is a breakdown of what is coming up across our branch footprint over the next two months.

August 2026

- **Thursday, 27 August | UNISON Monthly Branch Meeting**
 - *Time:* 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
 - *Location:* Online via Microsoft Teams
 - *Note:* Grab a cuppa and log on to hear the latest updates on the N&S ICB transition and regional workplace support.
- **Monday, 31 August | Bank Holiday (Summer Bank Holiday)**
 - *Note:* Branch offices will be closed. For urgent regional support during the bank holiday weekend, please contact UNISON Direct on 0800 0 857 857.

September 2026

- **Tuesday, 1 September | Workplace Representative Training Check-in**
 - *Note:* Deadline to submit final attendance confirmations for upcoming autumn steward and health & safety rep training modules.
- **Thursday, 24 September | UNISON Monthly Branch Meeting**
 - *Time:* 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
 - *Location:* Online via Microsoft Teams
- **Monday, 23 September | Submission Deadline for October Newsletter**
 - *Note:* Got an update from your local workplace, a success story, or a retirement notice? Please submit all copy and photographs to the branch communications officer by 5:00 pm today.

Looking Ahead: Save the Date!

- **Thursday, 22 October | October Monthly Branch Meeting** (Teams, 9:00 am)
- **Thursday, 26 November | November Monthly Branch Meeting** (Teams, 9:00 am)
- 🌲 *Reminder: There is no formal branch meeting scheduled for December.*

 **Need to add an event?** If your local workplace department is hosting a UNISON workforce drop-in or a charity event you would like publicised in the next diary section, email the details straight to the branch office!

STAY CONNECTED WITH US

 **Facebook**

facebook.com/EastofEnglandCommunityHealth

 **Twitter (X)**

[@UNISONnchc](https://twitter.com/UNISONnchc)

 **Branch Info Page**

[UNISON Branch Finder – East of England Community Health](#)

CONTACT: ‘East of England Community Health Branch’

Secretary Mrs Lesley Luscher

**Union Office, Norwich Community Hospital,
Bowthorpe Road, Norwich, NR2 3TU**

Telephone 07766 114767

UNISON CAMPAIGNS & UPDATES

1. Protecting Our Workforce: Navigating the ICB Restructure

Following the massive transition on **1 April 2026** that established the newly merged **NHS Norfolk and Suffolk Integrated Care Board (N&S ICB)**, our primary focus remains on supporting our members through the fallout. With the national mandate to slash administrative costs, we are closely monitoring the impact on remaining staff.

- **Workload Monitoring:** Fewer staff means a massive risk of workload creeping into unmanageable territory. If you are being asked to absorb the duties of redundant roles, document it and contact us.
- **Terms and Conditions:** We are actively consulting on any post-merger departmental restructures to protect your grading, pay bands, and working arrangements.
- **The Message is Clear: Don't wait until the appeal stage.** Contact the branch the moment a workplace consultation or formal process begins so we can protect you from day one.

2. Worth It! The Campaign for Fair NHS Pay

As inflation and living costs continue to put immense pressure on public sector households, UNISON's national pay campaign is ramping up for the financial year ahead.

- **Our Demand:** A fair, above-inflation pay rise for all Agenda for Change (AfC) staff that recognizes the intense pressures under which healthcare teams are operating.

- **Why It Matters:** Recruitment and retention are at crisis points across the NHS. Fair pay is the only way to safely staff our services and protect patient care.
- **Take Action:** Ensure your ballot and voting details are entirely up to date in the *MyUNISON* portal so your voice counts when national consultations land in your inbox.

3. Hidden Heroes: Celebrating Our Private Sector & Care Members

UNISON isn't just an NHS union. We represent thousands of dedicated professionals working in the private care sector, outsourced services, and community trusts.

- **TUPE & Redundancy Protection:** From protecting members during complex TUPE transfers to fighting unfair dismissals, our reps are proving every day that union membership saves livelihoods.
- **Equal Rights for All:** We are incredibly proud of our recent wins supporting international colleagues and staff with disabilities, ensuring employers honor reasonable adjustments and treat every worker with dignity.
- **Organizing Your Workplace:** If your private sector workplace doesn't currently have a designated UNISON rep, get in touch. We will provide full training to help you stand up for your colleagues.

4. Become a Voice for Your Team: Step Up as a Steward

Our branch is only as strong as its network of local representatives. If you have ever wanted to make a tangible difference in your workplace, now is the perfect time to get involved.

- **What Does a Rep Do?** You act as the eyes and ears of the union on the ground—listening to colleagues, sharing information, and standing with members in times of need.
- **Full Training Provided:** You don't need to be an expert in employment law to start. UNISON provides comprehensive, fully funded training modules (covering first-time steward training, health and safety, and casework support) to ensure you feel confident and capable.
- **Paid Time Off:** Legislation allows for paid facility time off from your regular job to complete your union training and carry out representative duties.

👋 **Get Involved Today:** Whether you want to share a campaign flyer in your staff room, update your contact details, or learn more about becoming a workplace steward, drop an email to the branch office. **Together, we are unstoppable.**

SEE YOU IN OCTOBER!

That's all for this edition—thank you for reading and staying connected with your UNISON East of England Community Health Branch.

We'll be back with our **next issue in October 2026**, bringing you more updates, support, and stories from across our healthcare community. The deadline for anything to be included in the next issue is **23rd September 2026**.



How UNISON can help

UNISON has a wide range of benefits to help members during times of difficulty. In the first instance, make contact with your branch's welfare officer, who will be able to advise you. Support services include:

UNISON Direct – the UNISON helpline can process straightforward queries and put you in touch with your local rep, branch or region if you have a problem at work. The helpline can also provide factsheets on issues such as: health and safety; employment rights; and professional issues.

There for You (UNISON welfare) – 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 their dependants. It can also arrange emergency support or grants for members in a crisis, who are facing issues such as debt, eviction or domestic abuse.

Legal services – UNISON provides the broadest range of legal help to union members in the UK. Members receive quality legal advice for non-work and employment issues at no extra cost to members and their family. This service includes: a free 30-minute telephone interview advice service on any non-employment issue.

UNISON Debtline – This confidential helpline is to help you manage money and deal with debt. We offer free confidential advice to help you clear your debt. The service is provided by Payplan – specialist debt management experts.



ESSENTIAL COVER WHEREVER YOU WORK

Worried about your job?
In these uncertain times there's never been a better time to **join UNISON**.

For as little as £1.30 a month our members get:

- advice, support and help at work
- a helpline that is open until midnight
- legal help for you at work and your family at home
- plus a wide range of exclusive member discounts.

From £1.30 a month

Annual salary	Monthly cost
Up to £2,000	£1.30
£2,001 - £5,000	£3.50
£5,001 - £8,000	£5.30
£8,001 - £11,000	£6.90
£11,001 - £14,000	£7.65
£14,001 - £17,000	£9.70
£17,001 - £20,000	£11.50
£20,001 - £25,000	£14.00
£25,001 - £30,000	£17.25
£30,001 - £35,000	£20.30
over £35,000	£22.50

Join online at joinunison.org or call free on 0800 171 2193

UNISON essential cover for you

UNISON
the public service union