

MayDayGreetingsMayDayGreetingsMayDayGreetingsMayDayGreetingsMayDayGreetings

A message from Dave Pike, Regional Secretary TUC North East, Yorkshire & Humber

Report from the TUC North East, Yorkshire & Humber (NEY&H) Regional Conference

Greetings colleagues,

Welcome to our first post-conference Newsletter. On March 21 and 22 our region held its second ever regional conference, a weekend that brought together our movement, with delegates representing tens of thousands of union members across the North East, Yorkshire & Humber.

The focus throughout the conference was clear, unity. Unity against those who seek to divide us, unity as we face up to the political and economic challenges that our region faces, and, most powerfully of all, unity of purpose in demanding better for our members and our communities.

I was incredibly proud to recognise the contribution of activists from across our movement in our annual rep awards. Activists like Kiah Middleton, a trail blazing woman leading her members in the FBU; Dr Jessica Fox, building consensus around greener workplaces for Unite; Marian Jervis, with an incredible contribution to our movement over a lifetime of commitment as a Unison Activist; and, of course, our Rep of the Year Fern Skeldon, who leads her PCS members to demand better at work and delivered a barn-storming inspirational speech at conference on what it means to be a workplace rep.

We also had the honour of being joined by the incredible striking mine guides from the National Coal Mining Museum - especially fitting given we meet at Redhills, the home of the Durham Miners Association for more than 100 years. These Unison members have been standing strong for equal & fair pay for more than six months. As our guests of honour, we were proud to recognise their incredible contribution and stand shoulder to shoulder with them. This was a point that Kate Bell, TUC Assistant General Secretary, our key note speaker, led on in her contribution and which was echoed in our panels and fringes and by other guest speakers, such as Airedale Hospital GMB Rep Gemma Williamson, North East Mayor Kim McGuinness, and Durham MP Mary Foy, to name just a few.

The main business of conference was about setting the policy for our region for the next two years. Our affiliates brought a wide range of issues from tackling the rise of

division in our society to bereavement leave and dignity at work, from the rise and dangers of AI to fair taxation and protection of our critical national industries. Delegates led important discussions on how to organise young workers and migrants, and how we rightly demand a better world of work for all. Many of these motions were moved by delegates who had never attended our conferences before and were speaking for the first time. Nonetheless, delegates were left in no doubt of the passion, skill and knowledge of those shaping our movement. As a region we have also now taken a big decision about the future of our structures: We have now determined to move to a two-year policy & strategy conference cycle, and to reshape our industrial representation to maximise the voices of our affiliates.

I am incredibly grateful to all who attended, and our staff team that made it possible. A special thank you to our region's chairs and vice chairs who expertly steered the debate to ensure delegates could engage fully with our foundational democracy.

As we look to the weeks, months and years ahead I am confident of the ground this conference has provided us to build on. We face serious challenges, politically and economically. From the growing political forces that seek to divide us, to AI and threats to critical industry, to the super heating of our planet. What our conference has left me confident of, however, is that we have the strength to do something about it. The awesome history of a setting like Redhills made the depth of our movement's roots palpable, and helped us all feel in our souls our class's track record of overcoming adversity and uniting for a better future.

For those who missed this conference, I hope to see you at a future one. For those who made it there, I look forward to seeing you again.

Dave Pike. <https://www.tuc.org.uk/neyh>

BMA Staff – the action goes on

Staff working for the British Medical Association (BMA) **GMB** members. will strike for two further dates on 30 April and 2 May, as their pay dispute continues. Despite five days of strike action involving more than 450 staff, BMA management have not returned to the negotiating table or improved on their 2.75% offer. The strike dates will coincide with the Local Negotiating Committees Conference and the rescheduled day 2 of the Medical Students Conference, which was previously cancelled due to staff strike action. The previous strike date, 18 April coincided with the Resident Doctors Conference, which was cancelled as a result.

More at: <https://www.gmb.org.uk/news/bma-staff-announce-fresh-strike-date>

Thousands of construction engineers receive pay rises worth around £2,000

Thousands of engineering construction workers will receive a pay rise of 4.5% from May, **Unite** has announced. The deal, which includes a range of other benefits, was

narrowly accepted in a vote by 3,000 workers, who operate under the National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry (NAECI).

The workers, who carry out essential repair and maintenance at oil refineries, power stations and pharmaceutical and petro-chemical plants, will see their wages increase by around £2,000 on average.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: “Due to the deal passing by a slim majority, the union is now seeking to open negotiations for 2027 pay with the employers’ side as soon as possible. **Unite** never rests in the fight to keep improving our members’ jobs, terms and conditions.”

The workers initially rejected an offer of 3.6% that was imposed in February. The offer was increased to 4.5% after **Unite** began the process of initiating industrial action proceedings for NAECI workers at sites across the UK, including EDF Torness, Sizewell B, Grangemouth, **Drax (Selby)** Stanlow ESSAR and GSK Montrose.

NHS talks must be backed with real money on the table say UNISON

Commenting on the recent announcement that NHS pay structure reform talks will start later this month, **UNISON** head of health and chair of the joint health unions Helga Pile said: “Unions have been calling for talks to fix pay for months. Getting these in place is a step forward, albeit a year and a half after they were promised. NHS workers have been deeply disappointed by this year’s 3.3% pay award, which has already been overtaken by inflation. But there’s now the prospect it could be improved through addressing longstanding problems with the pay structure. There’s a lot riding on these talks. Real money on the table from government will be key. Ministers must show they value the staff who’ll be critical to getting the NHS back on track.”

School finances – urgent action needed says NASUWT

Data released in April on academy school finances and spending underlines the urgent need for stronger regulation and transparency to ensure public money is focused at the frontline and is being spent responsibly, **NASUWT** – The Teachers’ Union, says.

The publication of the Academies Consolidated Annual Report and Accounts 2023 to 2024 shows a 39% increase in one year in the number of multi academy trusts (MATs) paying salaries of over £150,000 a year to senior staff and a 13% annual increase in the amount spent on consultancy.

At the same time, the accounts show a 17% increase in compulsory redundancies on the previous year and an increase in the number of trusts in revenue deficit. £18.5m was provided by the government in additional financial support to 53 MATs – 32 of whom received money to support deficit recovery.

NASUWT is calling for salary caps on academy leaders in relation to pupil numbers, a cap on consultancy spending, an end to the use of profiteering supply and employment agencies and for education procurement to come back under public management. The Union also wants to see academy trusts obligated to publish itemised spending every year. More at: <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/article-listing/new-data-underlines-scale-academy-spending-scandal.html>

NEU members ballot results

The results of two indicative ballots of National Education Union (**NEU**) members are now out. Teacher and support staff members working in state schools in England were consulted online in separate ballots between 28 February and 17 April 2026. Teacher and leader members of the **NEU** have voted to reject the government's proposed unfunded pay offer of 6.5 % over three years.

Teachers, leaders and support staff in England all indicated their willingness to take strike action not only over pay, but also funding and workload.

The teacher ballot asked:

Do you reject the proposal of an unfunded 6.5 % increase over three years for teacher pay?

Are you prepared to take industrial action to win sufficient funding to secure an above inflation pay increase, reduce workload and defend existing directed time provisions, including the 1,265 hours limit?

96% of members who responded voted to **REJECT** the offer.

And 90.5% said they would be **PREPARED** to take industrial action to secure better funding.

The overall turnout in the teacher ballot was 48.6% of those eligible to vote.

The support staff ballot asked:

Do you agree that the defence of support staff jobs is essential to save education?

Are you prepared to take industrial action to win sufficient funding to secure an above inflation pay increase, reduce workload and prevent redundancies?

99.5% of members who responded **AGREED** with question one and 86.1 % said they would be **PREPARED** to take industrial action to secure better funding.

The overall turnout in the support staff ballot was 55.5% of those eligible to vote. The national executive will meet next month to determine the next steps. More at: <https://neu.org.uk/latest/press-releases/results-neu-indicative-ballots-pay-funding-and-workload>

Action pays as UNISON porter/drivers win great victory



UNISON PORTER DRIVERS WIN!

UNISON Porter Drivers at Greater Manchester Mental Health have won and agreed a significant offer that resolves the ongoing dispute. the news comes during their recent 3 week walk out and after 27 days of industrial action. The Porter Drivers will now move up to Band 3 with back pay to July 2024.

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