Welcome

Jenny Underhill

Hello all, and welcome to the winter newsletter from UoY UNISON. We’ve been busy as ever, working to support the membership and campaign on your behalf.

You may remember us campaigning around Brexit, and the rights of EU workers, this time last year. This has been incredibly successful, and the University have recently announced they will be assisting EU staff with the costs of applying to stay after Brexit. Thank you to all who spoke with us, gave their opinions, and signed the petitions.

Below you will find information on what we’ve been doing and what’s coming up, alongside information on the Christmas social, which I hope to see as many of you at as possible.

Regional and National News

A message from Nick Allen, HESGE Chair & Leonie Sharp, Regional Organiser

This region led the way nationally in getting the vote out and we can be proud of the fact that we broke through the government’s regressive and punitive threshold: it is testament to the unwillingness of our members to be bullied by a Conservative party that is proving once again to be the employers’ friend. It is also testament to the hard work of regional staff, branch reps and volunteers, and it demonstrated what can be achieved by collective action that is deployed with a strategy and purpose.

However, despite our best efforts in Yorkshire and despite the fact that the turnout was one of the highest in years, the national result fell short of the 50% threshold: the total figure was 31% of those eligible to vote, did so and of these 62% voted to reject the pay offer. As this was a nationally aggregated ballot, as decided by the Service Group Executive, then we do not have a mandate for industrial action.

Needless to say this is a disappointing result, particularly after all the work put into this region. What it does show, is that branches and regions nationally are going to have to learn lessons from the methods used in this region to push us towards the threshold.

What this region and almost all of our individual Universities have proved through this ballot is that we can and will reach this threshold (however unfair it may be) should our employers come to us on local matters. This will ensure that they realise that they need to negotiate properly with their local UNISON branch whenever such issues come to the fore.

In the meantime, thank you to all of you who voted and/or volunteered your time, and of course we need to keep talking to colleagues and recruiting new members, to ensure that the union continues to grow in strength.
25 Years of UNISON

1st July marked the start of UNISON’s 25th anniversary year. To celebrate those first 25 years, and the values that will remain key to UNISON for the next quarter century and beyond, a specially commissioned film has been produced.

UNISON Becomes the UK’s Biggest Union

UNISON is celebrating becoming the UK’s biggest union by launching Grovember, a campaign to remind existing members about all the help and support on offer, and to show potential new members all the benefits of being in UNISON.

You can take part by encouraging a colleague to join UNISON – and enter a prize draw to win one prize of £1,000 and 4 runners up prizes of £500, thanks to UNISON Living partners LV and Lighthouse financial services. To enter the competition, visit:

https://www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/lets-grow-together/

Your branch is also currently running a separate offer for recruiting new members – see page 3 for details.

Christmas Social 2018

Friday 14 December 2018, H/G21 Heslington Hall, 12:30 – 1:45 pm

Join us for our annual Christmas social with buffet lunch. Please RSVP through the google form or by emailing unison@york.ac.uk by Tuesday 11 December.

Changes to the Executive Committee

Farewell to Jacqui Chainey

Jacqui Chainey, our membership officer and a committed steward, has now left the University. She continues to be involved as a retired member, but we hope you’ll join us in wishing her all the best - she made a huge contribution to the branch, the members, and the University, and will be sorely missed.

Update Your Details

Have your contact details changed? It is easy to manage and update your personal details online with UNISON. To do so, visit: https://www.unison.org.uk/my-unison/

Forthcoming Drop In Sessions

The UNISON branch office is in Wentworth, W/022. The branch regularly runs drop in clinics for all your work related questions and requests. The next clinic will take place:

- Friday 11 January 2019

Bookable appointments are available from 12 noon to 1 pm, and drop-in times are 1pm to 2 pm. Book an appointment by emailing unison@york.ac.uk.
Encourage a Friend to Join UNISON

Know someone you think will benefit from joining UNISON? Encourage them to join for three months and the branch will reimburse you £20.

How to sign up
Contact unison@york.ac.uk for a membership form. Ask your colleague to return the completed form (along with a note of your name) before the end of December 2018. After the qualifying period, the branch will contact you to reimburse you £20.

Charity Fundraising Update

Thank you to all who attended our Strawberry Social in June, and enjoyed strawberries, scones and Pimms on a sunny day! We were fortunate to have a number of prizes donated, and we thank Shared Earth, Bettys, Stay City and Hampton Hilton for their generosity. Members raised £70 towards the two charities we nominated this year—York Mind and Yorkshire Cancer Research. If you have any ideas for further funding-raising events, we’d like to hear from you, please get in touch!

Get Involved in Your Branch

Branch Positions

There are a number of positions currently available in the branch, and we would very much welcome any member considering attending a more active role to get in touch. Whether you are looking or something low-commitment such as a workplace rep, or interested in a larger role, we have something to offer – contact: unison@york.ac.uk

Positions include:

- **Welfare Officer**: an important and rewarding role, ensures members seeking welfare assistance receive a prompt, supportive and effective response by liaising with regional colleagues and UNISON’s welfare charity, There for You.
- **Young Members’ Officer**: an ideal role for someone 27 or under and looking to become more active in the union. Responsible for making sure issues of concern to young workers are raised through the branch.
- **Retired Members’ Officer**: a role for a retired member, responsibilities include encouraging the participation of retired members in the branch and making sure members approaching retirement have the opportunity to become retired members.
- **Stewards**: act as a point of contact for members in the branch, talk to members about their issues, offer advice and represent cases (including disciplinary and grievance hearings), raise members’ issues through the branch.
- **Workplace reps**: point of contact for members, add information to noticeboards, brings feedback from members to the branch committee.

Self Organised Groups

UNISON has a number of member groups for members who experience particular types of prejudice and discrimination. There are four self organised groups, for black members, disabled members, LGBT members and women members. There are also equality groups for young members and retired members. These groups meet locally and nationally to discuss, campaign and organise around the specific issues that affect them. To find out more about getting involved in a Regional Group or setting up a group, contact the branch by emailing: unison@york.ac.uk
Branch Education Bursaries

The branch is continuing to offer education bursaries for the year ahead, so if there is a course you are interested in, why not think about signing up? The bursaries can cover courses in education, training or well-being, and you can study with York Learning, Languages for All, York College, or with other training providers in and around York.

Available bursaries:

- 15 Level 1 / introductory level and recreational courses up to £125
- 3 Level 2 / intermediate level courses up to £250
- 2 Level 3 / advanced level courses up to £350

All courses will be paid for on a first come, first served basis.

How to Book a Place on a Course

Level 1 / introductory level courses with York Learning: Look through the York Learning brochure: https://www.yortime.org.uk/yortime_home/default.aspx, Choose your course, and book by telephoning an advisor on 01904 552806. Quote your membership number and complete the form with the advisor.

Level 1 / introductory level courses with other providers: contact unison@york.ac.uk first to express your interest, we will advise on how to proceed with making a booking.

Bursaries for Level 2 / intermediate level and Level 3 / advanced level courses: apply for these by contacting unison@york.ac.uk first. The branch will send you a form to complete, which we will then send on to the education provider to make the booking. Please DO NOT pay for any course before checking funding is available at the branch and your application has been approved.

Please note: you cannot apply for more than one course per term. All courses are offered subject to funding, on a first come, first served basis. Funding is reviewed termly. You have to be a member for a minimum of 4 weeks to qualify.

UNISON Training Courses

There are many members’ training courses offered by UNISON – a short selection is listed below. The courses listed below take place at the UNISON Regional Centre, in Commerce House, Leeds. To find out more about the many courses available, visit: http://www.unison-yorks.org.uk/education.html#

Pre-Retirement Workshop
Description: This workshop run by True Bearing Chartered will make you aware of your choices and aid you in your decision making. The course is intended for those retiring imminently or considering retiring within the next 18 months and want to be informed of the issues affecting retirement and planning for the next phase of life.
Wednesday 20 March 2019  closing date to apply: Monday 18 February 2019

Assertiveness Habit
A one day workshop that aims to help to understand the meaning of assertive, passive and aggressive behaviour, consider the impact of behaviour on ourselves and others, and speak with more confidence.
Thursday 25 April 2019  closing date to apply: Monday 25 March 2019
Return to Learn

Return to Learn is a course specifically designed for adults who have been away from learning for a long time but would now like to take up new learning opportunities. The course will help you develop your skills and give you confidence in four areas: writing, investigating/research, analyzing and problem solving and working with numbers. It is suitable for adults of all ages.

Attendees will join a regular study group that meets once every one to two weeks in the evening. You will have a tutor to help and advise you throughout the course. There is one weekend residential school.

Open University Courses

One day sessions delivered by an Open University lecturer.

All sessions take place at the UNISON Regional Centre, Commerce House, Leeds. For more information and instructions on how to book, visit:

http://www.unison-yorks.org.uk/education.html#

**Autism Awareness**

A general introduction – covering the historical background to autism and characteristics of autism.

Tuesday 5 February 2019  
**closing date to apply: Monday 7 January 2019**

**Mental Health Awareness Workshop**

This session aims to understand the main mental health problems that people face, to be able to take a revised awareness to the workplace.

Friday 8 February 2019  
**closing date to apply: Monday 7 January 2019**

**Dementia Workshop**

A short workshop that aims to explain how dementia affects the way a person behaves and functions, and considers ways to make it possible to live well with dementia.

Thursday 14 February 2019  
**closing date to apply: Monday 14 January 2019**

Online Courses

The Social Partnerships Network (SPN), a group of organisations including the Open University, unionlearn and UNISON, offer two free online courses. The courses are interactive and fun to do. They each take approximately 15 hours to complete, and are designed to be studied in shorter chunks of time.

Courses offered:

- Supporting Children’s Development
- Introducing Practical Healthcare

For more information, visit:

www.open.edu/openlearn/spn-courses

Research Participants Wanted

Researcher Manasa Gade is looking to speak to people over the age of 60 about their relationships with food, specifically daily routines around shopping, cooking and eating. More details can be found at the project webpage:

https://www.york.ac.uk/sociology/research/current-research/role-of-food/

If you’re interested in being involved please contact the branch.