The government’s Trade Union Bill is a ferocious attack on almost every aspect of trade unionism in England, Scotland and Wales.

It shifts the balance of power in workplaces further to the advantage of employers and away from workers, whether they are in a union or not. It is fundamentally an attack on core trade union activity:

- facility time
- check off
- the ability of unions to underpin collective bargaining with a credible right to strike.

It subjects unions to unprecedented levels of civil and criminal penalties, red tape, and monitoring by the Certification Office.

It proposes to curtail unions’ abilities to fund political activities and campaigns, within the Labour Party and wider civil alliances and groups.

Ministers are relying on the Bill’s punitive financial implications and massive organisational challenge to the trade union movement to inflict a fatal wound on our ability to fight back. It is therefore vital that our response is coherent, unified, flexible and engages every element of the union from the wider membership, branches, activists, UNISON regions, service groups, self-organised groups and UNISON Centre resources and staff.

The Bill is the most important challenge currently faced by our union, so the campaign is being led from the top by the general secretary and the presidential team.

A huge amount of activity has already taken place, both in Parliament and outside.
UNISON Leeds and York Community Health members joined thousands of marchers outside the Tory party conference in Manchester to say “No to Austerity and Yes to Workers Rights.” in October.

UNISON has slammed the government over a Treasury letter to the chair of the public sector Pay Review Bodies (PRB) – including the NHS PRB – which stated that not all staff will get a pay rise as promised in the Summer budget.

UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis said: “It is clear from this letter that the government’s promise of a one per cent pay rise for public sector workers was all smoke and mirrors.

“There was no substance to Osborne’s claim and NHS staff will be bitterly disappointed to hear many of them may not even get an extra penny for five more years.”

The letter states that ‘the government expects pay awards to be applied in a targeted manner’ and that some workers could receive less than one per cent.

Dave Prentis added: “It is difficult to see how much targeting you can get from a miserly 1 per cent without resulting in hundreds of thousands not getting a pay rise at all.

“Ministers’ acknowledgment of saving at least £8bn with the pay caps and freezes imposed on public sector pay proves it is nurses, healthcare assistants, porters and paramedics who are still paying for a deficit they have nothing to do with.”

The AGM will be held on WEDNESDAY 3rd FEBRUARY 2016

VENUE: Moorside Tara, St Catherine’s Drive, Bramley, LS13 2JX
16.30 for refreshments 17.00 meeting starts.
Please contact the Branch office for catering purposes as places are limited.
As a member of UNISON you will soon be receiving a ballot form for the election/re-election of UNISON’s general secretary. The UNISON General Secretary is the person who is the senior paid officer of the Union and is responsible for managing the Union and its staff on a day to day basis.

It’s a high powered role and as well as being the most senior manager of the Union, the GS is required to regularly be involved in national negotiations and media broadcasts, sharing platforms with politicians, broadcasters and academics, and being responsible for the affairs of Britain’s largest (and best) trade union. The General Secretary is also a member of the Trade Union Congress general council and its executive committee and represents the Union on the Executive of Public Services International – the umbrella body for public service unions across the world.

Any member of the Union or its staff is entitled to stand for election to this post, provided they meet the qualifying criteria. People who stand as candidates have to be nominated by the National Executive Council, or by at least two national Service Group executives, or by at least two Regional Councils, or by at least 25 branches. This matter was discussed at length at the last branch Committee meeting held on the 2nd September 2015. Our branch committee have agreed to nominate Dave Prentis for another term as general secretary.

The people who have indicated that they wish to stand for the position are currently going through the nomination process to determine whether they receive enough support from nominating bodies to get on the ballot paper.

WHY WE ARE MAKING A NOMINATION

The branch committee have supported Dave Prentis, as we believe he is the best person for the job. Dave is our present general secretary and was born and brought up in Leeds and has an affinity with our branch. Under his leadership the union has continued to recruit at higher levels than ever before. The respect Dave is held in can be summed up in a quote from the Guardian who wrote: “Dave Prentis in many ways defines the modern Centre-left trade union leader. Dave has led Britain’s biggest union formidable. “His sense of fair play, compassion and work ethic were honed on the streets of Leeds, the city where he was born and brought up.

Dave Prentis visiting our Branch’s 2011 Annual General Meeting

What clinched it for the branch committee was Dave’s track record in keeping the union together through a very difficult period, his proven ability to communicate with all kinds of people, including those who don’t necessarily support a union, and the feeling that now is not the time to change to an inexperienced leader.

The branch committee felt that we are facing unprecedented attacks on basic trade union rights and activities, and the union needs a leader who is going to oppose those attacks without putting the activities of the union and the interests of members in jeopardy. In our view Dave has steered the union through many difficult times – from fighting sell-offs and privatisation under New Labour to opposing austerity and defending members under the Tory-led coalition government. We felt that whichever party is in power, Dave’s natural instinct was always to speak up for public services and defend the people who provide them, that’s why we nominated Dave Prentis.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE ELECTION

The election is to be run over October/November, and papers will be sent out to all paid up UNISON members, to the addresses UNISON nationally has on file for them. You can check that we have the correct details by calling UNISON direct on 0800 0857 857. You will get all the information about the candidates who are standing when you get your voting pack – and it is entirely your choice who you vote for.

If you don’t want to miss out on the chance to vote in this vital election, PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU’RE FULLY PAID UP AND YOUR ADDRESS DETAILS ARE UP TO DATE. This is particularly important if you pay your subs by Direct Debit, as it’s easy to miss a payment not going through. It’s equally important that you check that your address is up to date on UNISON’s records. If you know you’ve moved, or you’re not sure what details are held on you, ring UNISON Direct on 0800 0 857 857. It won’t cost you anything, and the people at the other end will update your details there and then. It will help them and us to communicate effectively with you.
Calling on MPs support for One Team

UNISON is calling on MPs to sign up to support the union’s One Team campaign.

Every day NHS support staff work around the clock to dispense medicines, maintain vital equipment, order medical supplies, book appointments, pay bills, manage computer systems, clean, cook, do the laundry and oversee the day-to-day running of our NHS services. It is fair to say that without them, our NHS simply couldn’t function.

The ‘one team’ campaign seeks to highlight the vital work carried out every day in our NHS by staff working in support services.

Former UNISON President and Labour MP Dave Anderson has tabled a new Early Day Motion (number 501) entitled “One team for our NHS”. The motion calls for recognition of the essential work carried out by support staff in helping our NHS achieve high standards of care and patient experience. It also calls for such staff to be properly valued and refutes the artificial divide between “frontline” clinical services and so-called “back office” support services.

The motion points out that health managers are under constant attack and highlights the importance of staff who dispense medicines, maintain equipment, order medical supplies, book appointments, pay bills, manage computer systems, clean, cook and do the laundry.

So please contact your MP and ask them to show their support for the campaign by signing EDM 501. You can find out more about UNISON’s One Team campaign here: www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/one-team-for-patient-care/
Becoming a UNISON Steward

by Nicky Miller

When I joined the Trust I signed up to be a member of UNISON at the induction. I didn’t know that much about unions. I knew about the miners’ strike as my great-aunt had been very involved in Women Against Pit Closures but I didn’t know anything about modern unions. However, I did know I wanted to be a member of a union as they offer protection in the workplace – it’s better to be in one and not need any support, than to suddenly face problems and it’s too late to join.

I had never thought of being a Steward. I just paid my monthly subs and was happy to know that I had my ‘work insurance’. However, a couple of years later I was sat thinking about an issue that had been aggravating me and playing on my mind, when I just thought to myself, “Either stop moaning or try to do something about it.”

After speaking with the branch secretary I decided that becoming a steward was something I was really interested in doing. To make a change you need to get involved, so you are able to have an influence on how things are done and better understand the organisation. I then had to wait to be ‘ratified’ by the branch before being signed up for Stewards training. This was a week long course held at Northern College in Barnsley. I really enjoyed the course which taught me more about the role of a steward, UNISON and trade unions in general. It also covered grievance and disciplinary procedures, how to raise issues and how to represent members.

To represent members all Stewards have to complete their training and become ‘accredited’. They need to do a refresher course every three years to ensure their skills are up-to-date. Once I was accredited I started to attend meetings in the Trust, such as Staffside (where all the unions come together to discuss issues that staff are facing) and JNCF (where Staffside meet with the senior management team to bring the issues to their attention). I also shadowed meetings with members, sickness reviews, etc. to get an idea of how they worked before I started representing members on my own.

Since becoming a Steward I have carried out further training on employment law and workplace matters. I also went on secondment for a year to be Staffside Rep for the service reviews which LCH was carrying out.

Stewards attend the branch meeting once a month outside of working hours. We come together to discuss issues our members face, discuss national issues that might affect our members, consider campaigns and vote on matters affecting the branch.

Being a Steward can be quite hectic. For example, the other week I had two sickness reviews in the morning, followed by Staffside in the afternoon and then branch meeting straight after from 5-7pm. It was a long day out of the house and a lot of travelling but it can be so rewarding.

Becoming a Steward has opened my eyes to how the organisation works, allowed me to express my opinion and offer ideas on issues that affect staff, meet senior managers, and develop relationships with other teams and colleagues.

I’m proud to be in UNISON

Nicky Miller
Healthy Lifestyle Advisor
After a decision made by the Tory government, staff working in the public sector may no longer be able to pay their UNISON subscription direct from their salary. This is a direct attack on unions in the public sector, in the hope that people won’t transfer, or will fall into arrears, thus reducing union membership.

So, if that’s how you currently pay for your UNISON membership – to keep your UNISON cover – you may wish to switch to direct debit to pay your subs. Don’t lose the advantages of UNISON membership due to possible payment changes. Your job security, your pay and other terms and conditions are all worth defending.

Our priority is to ensure that you can still access the help and support your UNISON membership gives you. It’s quick and easy to make the switch.

More than ever, in these uncertain times, you cannot afford to lose the protection that membership brings.

You can make a switch to direct debit really quickly and easily by visiting UNISON’s website, or calling your union free on 0800 0857 857.
**LGBT NEWS**

To discuss any confidential or general LGBTI issues please ring the UNISON LGBT officer on 0113 3055168 or go to [www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/fairness-equality/lgbt/about/](http://www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/fairness-equality/lgbt/about/)

---

**Our safety matters...**

*A view from Leeds Equipment Services*

As a member of staff working in the warehouse for Leeds Equipment Services and also a UNISON steward it has been a challenging 12 months. After all the staff going through a major restructure, moving into a new building and changing to a new IT system at the same time. As a UNISON steward at Leeds Equipment services, I have supported our members who work in the building through this period dealing with most of the inhouse issues.

One difficult issue has been the WAV machine in the warehouse. This piece of equipment is designed to pick equipment from within the warehouse on the upper racking but as time has gone on it has become not fit for purpose and a health and safety matter. This is because it is not capable of getting the larger pieces of equipment on it to lift them up on to the racking. This has resulted in a risk assessment and a workplace assessment being carried out to assess if this is safe to use. We are hoping to resolve this issue in the near future but in the meantime staff have been made aware of the heightened risks of using this machinery. This is just one of the many issues that I am dealing with in our building.

Neil Keighley  
Leeds Equipment Services

---

**LGBTI DIARY (Oct-Dec 2015)**

- **October 2015**
  - 28-31 ILGA Europe Conference, Athens*
  - 24-26 UNISON national disabled members conference, Manchester

- **November 2015**
  - 12 UNISON national LGBT committee, Brighton
  - 13-15 UNISON LGBT conference Brighton
  - 20 Transgender Day of Remembrance

- **December 2015**
  - 1 World AIDS Day
  - 10 Human Rights Day

---

*What is ILGA-Europe*

ILGA-Europe is a driving force for political, legal and social change at European level. Our vision is of a world where dignity, freedoms and full enjoyment of human rights are protected and ensured to everyone regardless of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and intersex status.

*28th -31st October 2015 ILGA Conference Athens*  

The UK is well represented at this conference.
The history of the suffragettes

In 1897 Millicent Fawcett founded the National Union of Women’s Suffrage – suffrage meaning the right to vote. Millicent believed in peaceful protest and therefore progress was slow. Men in Parliament just didn’t believe that women would understand how Parliament works and didn’t want them to be able to vote.

In 1903 Emmeline Pankhurst founded the WSPU (Women’s Social and Political Union), whose motto was “Deeds not words”. Their campaigning colours were purple for dignity, white for purity and green for hope.

The WSPU was tightly controlled by Emmeline and her daughters, and it was a highly organised group. They did not want to keep waiting patiently and took more drastic measures to get their voices heard – such as chaining themselves to railings, breaking windows of prominent buildings, pouring chemicals into post-boxes and even night time arson of unoccupied churches and houses.

The WSPU became better known as the suffragettes, women who were prepared to use violence to get what they wanted.

The suffragettes were quite happy to go to prison – where they would go on hunger strike. The women would get weaker with the lack of food, until eventually the prison would release them for fear that they might die in custody. Following release they would be too weak to take part in protests and once they had regained their strength they would be re-arrested on trivial reasons. This was known as the ‘Cat and Mouse Act’.

The government used this as an effective weapon against the suffragettes but this in turn made them become more extreme. The most well-known act was in June 1913 when Emily Wilding Davison stepped in front of the King’s horse as part of her fight for votes for women. Sadly she was fatally wounded and died four days later. The suffragettes also blew up part of a famous politician’s house in 1913.

Whether or not the violence would have increased will never be known, as World War One broke out in August 1914 and the suffragettes stopped their campaign and supported the government and war effort.

In 1918 the Representation of the People Act was passed, allowing women who owned property, aged 30 and over, the right to vote. While this was only a partial success, at least it was progress. It was probable that this Act was passed due to the work of the suffragettes, as during the war Britain had experienced a potentially disastrous munitions shortage and this was only solved by the work done by women in munitions factories. There was also fear that the suffragettes might start campaigning again. The right to vote for all women was achieved in 1928.

Over two-thirds of UNISON members are women and the purple and green colours of our logo pay tribute to the suffragettes.

Nicky Miller

---

Film tells of hard fight for equality...
The fight goes on

Suffragette, the new British historical period drama was released on 12 October 2015. It has some big names stars – Meryl Streep, Helen Bonham Carter and Carey Mulligan. The film tracks the story of some of the women in the early feminist movement; women who were prepared to fight for equality. It is the first film in history to be shot in the Houses of Parliament, done with the permission of MPs. The suffragettes wanted the right for women to vote. I haven’t had the chance to see the film yet but an NME review gave it 4 out of 5.