

UNISON 'There for you'

NEWSLETTER

We are UNISON's registered charity offering FREE and confidential services, benefits and support including:-

- **Financial Assistance** - if you are in financial hardship due to unforeseen circumstances
- **Links to Credit Unions** - for loans/savings
- **Small Grants** - School Uniform May-July & Winter Fuel Dec-Feb
- **Debt advice** - freephone 0800 389 3302
- **Wellbeing breaks** - during illness/respite for carers
- **Support & information**

To access contact your local branch welfare officer. If you do not know who this is please contact UNISON Direct on 0800 0857 857 or contact UNISON There for You 0207 121 5620 thereforyou@unison.co.uk

WINTER FUEL GRANTS

We received nearly 600 applications for the winter fuel grant – the majority of applications have now been processed and those successful applicants should have received their cheques. One member said *"I recently received a cheque for the winter fuel grant and just wanted to pass on my sincere thanks to There for You. I am currently really struggling financially and it has meant I have been able to put £15 credit on both my gas and electric key meters and buy £10's worth of logs for my log burner"*

Look out for **SCHOOL UNIFORM GRANTS** - launching mid May



Join the Lottery! Octopus monthly prize draw, for just £1 per month - you could win **£1,000 !!** Recent Winners of £1,000:
Karen Worsley - North West Gas branch
Ann Donnelly - Derry Education branch, N.I.

To join please contact thereforyou@unison.co.uk or 0207 121 5620

BRANCH WELFARE OFFICER TRAINING

Were you elected as a branch welfare officer at your branch AGM? if so you will want to apply for training – here are details of Induction training courses. Any queries please contact Andrea Barker a.barker@unison.co.uk 0207 1212 5620

BWO INDUCTION COURSES	
SCOTLAND Venue – Glasgow - 22/24 April	please apply Amanda Brown activisteducationscotland@unison.co.uk 01463 715891
NORTHERN IRELAND Venue – Belfast – 21/22 April	please apply Liz Robinson L.Robinson@unison.co.uk
National course – Leeds - 4/5 May	Course full
National course – London - 10/11 May	Course full
Regional course - Eastern Venue Essex - 20-22 May	Please apply Kerri Fuller k.fuller@unison.co.uk 01245 608905
National course – Bristol Venue – tba - 19/20 July	Please apply Andrea Barker a.barker@unison.co.uk 0207 121 5620
Regional course – West Midlands Venue - Birmingham – 15/16 Nov	Please apply Aimee Rawlins A.Rawlins@unison.co.uk 0121 685 3143
Further courses	
Supporting members with Debt & Budgeting Venue – Birmingham - 8th June	Please apply Andrea Barker a.barker@unison.co.uk 0207 121 5620
Making the Case Venue - Leeds - 15 th Sept	Please apply Andrea Barker a.barker@unison.co.uk 0207 121 5620
Supporting members with Debt & Budgeting Venue – Glasgow - 21st Sept	Please apply Andrea Barker a.barker@unison.co.uk 0207 121 5620

CHARITY CHALLENGE 2017

Regrettably we have had to change the dates of the challenge event which was due to take place in September 2016. We now intend to hold the Charity Challenge in Spring 2017 – watch this space for more details – but anyone interested at this stage please contact thereforyou@unison.co.uk



New date: 15 May 2017

Spanish Pyrenees - Catalan Coast & Mountain walking

“.. these boots are made for walking”

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

When – Tues 21st June
Where – Brighton
(during National Delegates Conference)

Please look out for registration details – to be sent out shortly

There for You SEMINAR

When – 1-3 September 2016
Where – Croyde Bay

Look for further announcements and more details over the next few months

TRUSTEE ELECTIONS

- The trustee election process is now underway, with the advert having gone out.
- If you are either a branch welfare officer or member of a regional welfare committee and missed the opportunity to apply – please contact thereforyou@unison.co.uk for an application pack.
- Closing date for applications 3rd May 2016

Did you know?

HMRC tax credits debts being transferred to DWP

From April 2016, HMRC customers who move from tax credits to Universal Credit (UC) will have any tax credits debt transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to consider recovery.

A new HMRC letter, called 'Your tax credits overpayments' (TC1131) will be sent to customers telling them that their tax credits debts are being transferred to DWP. Most customers do not need to do anything. Any existing time to pay agreements with HMRC will cease and HMRC will stop any direct debit arrangements. However, anyone repaying the debt by standing order will need to cancel this arrangement with their bank themselves. Claimants who moved to UC prior to April 2016, will also receive a letter if any tax credits debts are transferred to DWP. These letters are planned to be issued from May 2016.

For more information go to GOV.UK

Save over £200 through the Marriage Allowance tax break

"3.6 million of the 4.1 million eligible couples are still missing out on a tax benefit of £220 each year"

Marriage Allowance allows a spouse or civil partner who doesn't pay tax to transfer part of their tax-free personal allowance to their partner, if their partner pays income tax at the basic rate of 20%. The saving is worth up to **£220** for the 2016/17 tax year, and it takes just a few minutes to claim at GOV.UK



Completing DWP GOV.UK forms Support for Mortgage Interest



In January 2009, temporary measures were introduced which reduced the waiting period before Support Mortgage Interest can be paid, to 13 weeks. These measures also increased the Capital limit to £200,000 for working age claimants. With effect from 1 April 2016, all new working age claims made on or after this date will have a waiting period of 39 weeks.

NEWS FROM Social Welfare Training

info@socialwelfaretraining.co.uk
www.socialwelfaretraining.co.uk 0117 9514 337
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Free School Meals under Universal credit

...consultation underway on eligibility for free school meals under Universal Credit later in 2016, with a view to having the necessary regulations in place for the end of the year, when the roll out of the full Universal Credit Service to a broader claimant base will be well under way.

While this work is on-going, any child whose parent or guardian is receiving Universal Credit will continue to be entitled to free school meals.'

Help with Sanctions

In a letter to the Work and Pensions Committee, the government has responded to concerns over sanctions:

'...automated sanction notifications for JSA and ESA were successfully reintroduced from Monday 23rd November 2015...'

'...at the point of deciding to impose a sanction the Decision Maker will inform the Work Coach. The Work Coach will then attempt to contact the claimant...to arrange an appointment. This will help to ensure that sanctions do not disproportionately affect more disadvantaged customers.'

'Vulnerable claimants- It is a requirement that every claimant commitment is tailored..'

The letter also includes vulnerability guidance.

Social Welfare Training

says - You should always apply for hardship payments if you are sanctioned and consider challenging the decision if you have a good reason. Ask for the commitment to be changed if it's not suitable.

Did you know?

JSA hardship payments don't have to be paid back whereas under Universal Credit hardship payments do.

Living Wage

National Minimum Wage rates 2015/16

Age	Minimum rate
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Over 25 (New Living Wage)	£7.20 an hour
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21-25	£6.70
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18-20	£5.30
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16-17	£3.87
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Apprentices	£3.30
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Source: DWP



For further information please contact
020 7121 5620 thereforyou@unison.co.uk

To join UNISON please contact 0800 171 2193

For work issues please contact UNISON Direct
0800 0857 857

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