

# UNISON MANCHESTER ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

## PHYSICAL MEETING

12:30PM TUESDAY 28 JANUARY  
FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

## VIRTUAL MEETING

5:30PM TUESDAY 28 JANUARY  
MICROSOFT TEAMS

FINAL AGENDA & MOTIONS  
BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT





# MOTIONS FOR BRANCH AGM

## RULE CHANGE: AMENDMENT TO RULE 9

To add to Rule 9 Conduct Of Meetings in the Manchester Branch Rules the following line -

g) That all organised groups and committees within the branch, when a national deadline for their national Self Organised Group conference or national meeting is within two weeks and a physical meeting is impossible to arrange, may make decisions via a virtual meeting or via email.

## MOTION ONE: SSSNB

This Branch AGM welcomes the establishment of the SSSNB, included in the Employment Rights Bill currently going through parliament.

Currently our schools members are covered by the NJC, which is the national body that covers council workers. The establishment of the SSSNB will give our schools' members a louder voice so that we can focus on issues that directly affect our schools members.

We note that all school support staff in state funded schools, whether you're in an academy, a faith school or a maintained school, will be covered by the new negotiating body.

The new negotiating body will cover pay, terms and conditions, and access to training for school support staff. Once the SSSNB is established, we call on UNISON nationally to prioritise a strategy for better pay, action on term-time only contracts and improved access to training and development for those who want it.

In 2024, UNISON's Local Government Conference agreed clear policy in support of the creation of the SSSNB.

Conference made it clear that the final say will lie with UNISON members – so any final proposal will be put to our members before we agree it.

The SSSNB will give the greatest voice and have the most effective structure for fighting for better pay, terms and conditions for school staff members.

**Proposed by the Branch Officers**

# MOTIONS FOR BRANCH AGM

## MOTION TWO: PALESTINE - A TRADE UNION ISSUE

We are witnessing a genocide in Palestine. At a time, this was a statement some, including our Prime Minister & Foreign Secretary, strongly contested. However, reports from internationally recognised institutions have confirmed what most already knew. United Nations (UN) Special Committee, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have all produced comprehensively detailed reports that find Israel's actions were consistent with genocide due to fuel, water and food restriction in Gaza. Netanyahu stands accused of war crimes by the International Criminal Court and is becoming increasingly isolated on the world stage as a result.

This is one fraction of a rapidly expanding situation that appears to be on the precipice of an all-out regional conflict. At the time of writing the IDF have crossed push further into Syria's sovereign borders, an act described by some as an opportunistic land-grab. The expansion of their occupation of Syria's Golan Heights and air attacks on Damascus are increasing the likelihood of retaliation from Jordan, Yemen and Iran. A ceasefire deal was agreed with Hezbollah in Lebanon and subsequently ignored by Israeli forces, again with apparent impunity. UNISON's position is that a ceasefire in Palestine is key to ending the potential regional conflict.

UNISON has been steadfast since the beginning of this conflict. We have called for a ceasefire, the release of all hostages, an end to arms sales to Israel and for the UK government to recognise a Palestinian state. Without these acts there is no path to a two state solution. Our representatives in Parliament cannot call for a ceasefire in one breath and continue to facilitate the sale of arms, while failing to recognise Palestinian sovereignty in another. UNISON believes wholeheartedly that Palestinian rights are a trade union issue. We show solidarity with workers across the world who want the same basic rights that we take for granted: to access safe employment, to provide a life for their families and to enjoy leisure time.

The United Nations has consistently condemned the violence with resolutions passed overwhelmingly. However, the UK's seat on the UN security council has one of the decisive votes that could bring this conflict to a close. This is where we as trade unionists have power and must use our voice. We must continue to put pressure on this Labour government to be a vehicle for peace in the region.

At the time of writing 46,000 Palestinians have been killed. The scale of death, disease and displacement is not yet known. Media activity is highly restricted by the IDF and quantifying the true extent of the data is almost impossible in this war zone. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) 129 Palestinian journalists have been unlawfully killed since 7th October. Most of the footage we have seen has been from civilians utilising social media to share their stories. Many of us will have seen the harrowing images of devastated children fleeing the so called 'safe zones'. These areas are overcrowded, lacking in requisite aid and medical supplies.

This story extends beyond the confines of Gaza. The West Bank has seen its deadliest year for the second year in a row. Villages have been ripped apart with bombs and demolition vehicles. The targeting of those believed to be taking up armed resistance to the Israeli occupation often leads to the destruction of whole housing blocks, roads, shops and schools. The Nour Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm was destroyed in an extended raid. Most of the people living in refugee camps in the West Bank are under 18. There are those old enough to remember the

# MOTIONS FOR BRANCH AGM

## MOTION TWO: PALESTINE - A TRADE UNION ISSUE

displacement of the 1948 Nakba, who tell of their hopelessness as they watch their homes torn to the ground, yet again. In addition, we are seeing attacks from state backed extremist settlers and forced evictions in East Jerusalem. This is a crisis of humanity that we as a trade union must continue to fight against.

In the last three months we have seen some welcome steps from the new UK government to uphold international law, provide access to humanitarian assistance and limit the supply of arms; but these measures do not go far enough. We need the government to take further action to demand a ceasefire, including suspending the arms trade and the UK-Israel trade and partnership agreement until human rights and international law are respected.

We may be thousands of miles from the conflict but we have UNISON members in Manchester who have lost family and friends in the Palestine. Our members have also experienced an increase in antisemitic and Islamophobic abuse since 7th October. UNISON condemns any attacks our Jewish and Islamic communities and believes this conflict cannot be solved without working across cultures and religions. We must build on our achievements in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement and continue to strive for a full and unconditional ceasefire in Palestine.

We would also like to thank those who took part in the work place day of action on 28th November 2024.

This AGM calls for the following:

- To urge the British government and members of parliament to call for an immediate end to Israeli occupation of Gaza and Palestinian territory and for British recognition of an independent Palestinian state as part of a two-state solution.
- To work to support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaigns in line with UNISON's policy, as outlined in UNISON's guide 'Palestine: is your pension invested in the occupation' and the guide for UNISON activists 'Talking about Palestinian rights'.
- To work within our Branch Self Organised Groups to encourage steps to combat Islamophobia & Anti-Semitism and supporting anti hatecrime legislation and measures to prevent and prosecute hate crimes.
- To work within our Branch, Regional & National union to produce up to date materials and use publications to talk about Muslims and Islam designed to dispel negative myths and misconceptions.
- To work to encourage and publicise Islamophobia Awareness Month events in November each year
- To work to encourage support for the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and Stop the War Coalition and workplace days of action.

**Proposed by the Branch International Officer**



# MOTIONS FOR BRANCH AGM

## MOTION THREE: INCREASING FUNDING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This AGM recognises the vital role that local government plays in delivering essential services and supporting communities. This work can only be achieved if central government funding for local authorities is significantly increased. Local government is the backbone of our communities, providing critical services such as education, social care, housing, and public health. However, in recent years under successive Tory governments, they have faced unprecedented financial challenges, leading to cuts in services and rising inequality.

The current funding model for local authorities is insufficient to meet the growing demands of our population. With an aging society, increasing numbers of children needing support, and the ongoing impact of economic uncertainties, local authorities are stretched to their limits. This financial strain not only impacts service delivery but also the ability of local authorities to invest in long-term projects that can drive economic growth and improve quality of life for residents.

Increasing funding for local government will ensure that essential services are maintained and improved. It will enable councils to invest in vital infrastructure, support vulnerable populations, and foster economic development. Moreover, adequately funded local authorities can better respond to crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring the health and safety of residents.

Investing in local government is also an investment in our future. Strong, well-funded local authorities can create resilient, vibrant communities where businesses can thrive, and citizens can enjoy a high quality of life. This will, in turn, lead to broader economic benefits for the entire nation.

In order to empower local governments to deliver the high-quality services that our communities deserve and build a more equitable and prosperous future for all, this AGM asks for UNISON and our Labour Link to call for –

- Central government to conduct a comprehensive review of the current financial status of local governments and identify specific areas where funding is most urgently needed.
- Collaborate with other local authorities, the Local Government Association, non-profit organizations, and private sector partners to build a coalition supporting increased funding.
- Highlight successful projects and improvements resulting from increased funding to demonstrate the positive impact on local communities.
- Regularly review the funding model and make necessary adjustments based on feedback and changing needs to ensure sustained and effective support for local government.

**Proposed by the Branch Officers**

# MOTIONS FOR BRANCH AGM

## MOTION FOUR: STAND UP TO RACISM

### Manchester UNISON branch AGM notes:

The worrying rise of the far-right in Britain and internationally, including the election of Donald Trump, the successes of the AFD in Germany, the FPO in Austria and the right in Italy and France. The growth of Reform UK who are trying to build a mass right party, using anti-establishment rhetoric combined with scapegoating of refugees, immigrants and the muslim community.

Over Summer 2024, significant mobilisations by Tommy Robinson's supporters brought thousands of right-wing activists onto the streets of London, and helped encourage anti-refugee attacks on individuals and hotels and protests in city-centres, including Manchester.

UNISON, along with the wider trade union movement has mobilised to counter these right-wing mobilisations and challenge far-right ideas, in the workplace and on the streets. In Manchester the right and Reform have tried to mobilise and gain support by attacking refugees who have been moved to a hotel in Altrincham.

Manchester UNISON's presence on Stand Up to Racism (SUTR) mobilisation against the far-right and in support of the Muslim community, immigrants and refugees is an important part of building solidarity against the right.

National UNISON's affiliation to SUTR and its support for SUTR events.

### This AGM agrees:

Manchester UNISON stands firmly against all forms of racism including antisemitism and islamophobia, as well as racism directed at the Gipsy, Roma & Traveller (GRT) community.

Manchester UNISON will continue to support anti-racist and anti-fascist mobilisations, including sending our banner to events.

Manchester UNISON will make a donation of £250 towards Manchester Stand Up to Racism. Send a delegate to the Manchester Stand Up to Racism steering group.

Manchester UNISON will support the following important mobilisations by sending a delegation to the events, circulating information to members and helping toward travel costs for those who wish to attend:

- Stand Up to Racism Trade Union conference on **Saturday 1 March** in London.
- Counter-protest to Tommy Robinson's next national demonstration in London on Saturday 1 February.
- The Stand Up to Racism protest on United Nations anti-racism day, in Manchester or London on Saturday 22 March

**Proposed by Martin Empson**  
**Seconded by Lesley Lancelott**

# BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## IN MY VIEW - CARL GREATBATCH - BRANCH SECRETARY



I'm sure many of you feel when you come to write yearly reviews, these Annual Reports just seem to get closer together, and it seems like only a couple of months since I was telling you all about our plans for 2024! Now we are busy pulling together our plans for 2025 and I am genuinely excited to bring them to you at our Annual General Meeting in January.

As I always say, the AGM is a vital part of our branch's organisational year: it's when we announce the results of the year's elections for the officers, stewards and activists who do the hard work of running the branch, and present our plans for the coming year, and we have purposely moved it this year to as early as possible in AGM Season to give us a full year to continue the improvements we have started.

As discussed at the last AGM, 2024 was a year of building the foundations to spread the organising model to as many members of the branch as possible. Our adoption of a Case Work system has allowed us to train up more activists to be involved in the vital work of supporting members with their workplace issues, and shadowing opportunities and regional training has resulted in more confident stewards, some of whom have been taking up some of the most difficult and complex cases that the branch receives.

We have also employed two new members of staff specifically as Organisers. They started in August, and they have already started projects in schools and social work, while offering support to reps across the breadth of the branch. I'll make my usual plea to members to get involved to support the people around you, whether as a contact, steward, learning rep or Health & Safety rep, there's never been a better time to become an activist.

The other big change of the year was obviously the country finally removing the Conservative party from power after 14 years of horrendous Tory and Con/Dem governments. While the Labour party have made some missteps in their program so far, the changes that have already begun with the New Deal For Workers and increased funding for local government give us much more hope for the future. It is important that the trade unions have a say in government and our partnership with them through the Labour Link is as vital as ever, please get in touch if you want to be involved in that too.

I hope to see as many members as possible at our AGM and look forward to the discussions we'll have there. If you can't make it and have questions about any of these plans please contact me through the branch at any time.

**In Solidarity, Carl Greatbatch - Branch Secretary**



# BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## JANE SLATER - CORPORATE CORE / GMCA



Another year of significant financial challenges to public services, but the summer brought us a new government who are looking to support councils as they have carried the brunt of austerity that was levelled at all public services and workers. Hopefully we will now see investment and growth in the things that people want and need

In the corporate core, staff have been working to their usual high standards for residents. We still haven't got back to 'normal' after Covid, and we're still seeing problems due to Long-Covid: it may be several years before we understand it fully. We know that staff are feeling tired but have still delivered first class services.

We now have the Adjustments Hub in the corporate core that supports staff in all our services to work through an adjustment passport. The passport stops staff having to tell their journey over and over again. It's clear for the manager and our member and should prevent disability discrimination, which best supports members to be well and in work. The team work with our Health and Safety and H&S continue to undertake risk assessments etc so there is no loss of support for members.

The Branch recently rolled out training for stewards on the new case management system where we can store member queries and cases in line with GDPR. We also have rolled out our GDPR training so members can feel confident that anyone handling their information is fully trained.

We still have lots of individual member representation to do, including supporting staff through stress risk assessments, adjustment hub meetings, management of attendance interviews, capability procedures and hearings, disciplinarys and complaints. We are planning how we make member support more accessible by arranging inhouse training for stewards. We want to move back to the model where members will then have representation in their workplaces, from stewards who understand their work, which will ease some of the pressures on the branch office.

Staff and services are still benefiting from hybrid working, which gives members more autonomy on where they work and how they work, while supporting the council's carbon reduction commitment and environmental strategy.

We continue to work closely with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, which sits

# BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## JANE SLATER - CORPORATE CORE / GMCA

within the Manchester Branch, and the stewards there have been getting more involved in day-to-day UNISON business, which helps future-proof the Branch for years to come.

We are all still supporting our members to deliver excellent services to residents by making sure our members have the best terms and conditions possible. We are one of the only councils who have managed to retain the excellent terms and conditions since 2014 and we in UNISON Manchester Branch will continue to defend these terms and conditions for our members, whose commitment to our residents is and always has been second to none.

UNISON is starting its negotiations for the pay award for 2025. If we want to change what we are awarded by the employer, then we need to all come together and say no and stand up for what is right.

As a Branch, we need to encourage stewards and members to recruit their colleagues to UNISON: we need strength in numbers to get real change. We encourage our members to speak to new colleagues, or colleagues who aren't in a union, to encourage them to join UNISON and explain the value of collective action. If you are interested in being a workplace steward so that your area has a strong voice, contact us for advice. If every workplace has a steward this gives a real voice to members.

We need to continue to encourage members to sign up to the Labour Link fund so that we continue to have substantial influence on the Labour Party especially now Labour is in government. We need UNISON members' priorities to be at the heart of this decision-making in parliament. When we all stand together, we are stronger together.

**Jane Slater (Assistant Branch Secretary)**  
**Corporate Services / GMCA**

## UNISON MANCHESTER BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

### Physical Meeting

**12:30PM Tuesday 28 January 2025**

**Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Central Manchester**

### Virtual Meeting

**5:30PM Tuesday 28 January 2025**

**Join via Microsoft Teams**



# BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## PETE BANKS - NEIGHBOURHOODS, GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



Another year flies by and once again UNISON members should be recognised for the hard work they have put in for the last 12 months to ensure the smooth running of the City of Manchester and the services it provides to its residents. In the directorates of Neighbourhoods and Growth & Development it's been another busy and challenging year.

### Housing Services

It's 3 years since Northwards staff moved back into Manchester City Council, and we completed the harmonisation process for all concerned in January 2024. This gave ex Northwards members the terms

and conditions UNISON has fought for for many years such as pay protection, m people/ redeployment and other benefits which MCC members continue to enjoy. Following the harmonisation process we embarked upon a redesign of the whole service section by section.

A lot of joint working by UNISON, local stewards, other union colleagues and all levels of management ensured the process was as seamless as possible. These redesigns successfully dealt with some long-standing grading issues. The service can now move forward to provide improved services.

### Homelessness

The last 2 years has seen the addressing of many of the concerns our members in Homelessness have raised with us but the process continues. This area of the council goes through many ups and downs in regard to the demands on it but never is the service busier than during the winter months. Last year we negotiated a new rota for this service which helps staff to focus on the busiest periods and also agreed a new SWEP (Severe Weather Protocol) which we hoped would focus resources where most needed and support staff in the course of their work. It seemed to work well. This rota is currently being considered again for this winter.

# **BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

## **PETE BANKS - NEIGHBOURHOODS, GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT**

### **Libraries/Galleries**

Local Stewards and Health & Safety Reps in the Libraries/Galleries continue to negotiate with managers and represent members when needed with only the occasional input from me. The work they do locally is a great help to the branch.

### **Growth and Development**

This area has some significant changes this year and we continue to negotiate all matters regarding service provision/development etc. We meet regularly with senior management to deal with any issues as they arise.

### **General Issues**

I say it every year, but redesigns in the authority have been significant again this year and it does seem to be a never-ending circle which I suppose it is. Thanks to all stewards and members who have helped with these. While we at the branch office have a generally good overview of most areas, you the workers know best with regards to what needs fixing and how to fix it in your own areas of the authority.

### **Stewards and Contacts**

A quick thanks again this year to all UNISON stewards and contacts for all the work they have done to represent and support UNISON members through the last 12 months.

### **Call for Stewards**

If there isn't a UNISON steward in your area/office please consider becoming one. Full training is provided, and you would only take on any representation etc when you are completely happy to do so. Just having a contact, if nothing else, in every area is a huge boost for the branch. Please contact me on [pete.banks@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:pete.banks@manchester.gov.uk) if you would like more information.

Finally, as a member, don't forget to always check if your work colleagues are in a union and if they are not, please encourage them to join UNISON.

**Pete Banks (Assistant Branch Secretary)  
Neighbourhoods, Growth and Development**



# BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## SONIA STEWART - CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SERVICES



Over the last year I have continued to represent members on various workplace issues. In addition, discussions and negotiations have been ongoing with management, including on service redesigns, one being around Family Time. The aim of the service has been to extend the operational hours, based on engagement with social workers, schools, children and young people, parents/guardians and foster carers. We are now at the stage where flexible working arrangements have been discussed with staff and new statement of particulars issued. The Branch continues to ensure staff are not disadvantaged by any proposed changes.

### Recruitment and Retention

We have raised the issue of exit interviews and asked what actions the Services have taken to address any shortcomings identified.

### Sickness Absences

In addition to levels of absences, we've been working on identifying and monitoring root causes, eg absences which are specifically work-related and the triggers for these. Mental health is still one of the top reasons for absence. There are also reasonable adjustments, personal safety and caring responsibilities to take into consideration. The Branch has also continued to insist on more clarity around Optima recommendations, as vagueness regarding the way forward often causes unnecessary delays to a member of staff returning to work with the required level of support needed, if indeed they are to return to work.

The continued challenges of staff to meet the high demands of the Services still creates additional pressure, however, staff are trying their best to deliver, whilst also adjusting to Directorate changes and meeting targets. While we recognise the Directorate is working towards putting support mechanisms in place, including for staff wellbeing, management training and better ways of working, UNISON is committed to ensuring implementation of improved working conditions for our members in the workplace, followed by regular monitoring, evaluation of impact and regular feedback.

I continue to represent members, including at Disciplinary Hearings, AMRs, Grievances, Employee Dispute Resolutions and consultations on reviews and structural changes.



# BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## SONIA STEWART - BRANCH EQUALITIES REPORT

### Stewards

Stewards' meetings are in place, and I would like to thank our existing stewards for the support they provide to members. However, we need more stewards in the Services. If you would like to become a Manchester Branch UNISON steward in Children's and Education Services please get in touch with me. Training will be provided, as well as opportunities for shadowing.

### Branch Self Organised Groups (SOGs)

The Branch Women's Self Organised Group and Inspire Black Members Forum continue to operate, providing a safe space for members to come together to discuss concerns, provide support, celebrate achievements, work closely with the Branch towards common and specific objectives and to make progress in helping to eliminate inequalities. Following our last Call Out! A member has come forward to lead the Branch LGBT+ SOG and we hope to launch the group in early 2025. Look out for updates on that.

See below if you are interested in becoming involved in any of the SOGs:

#### Inspire Black Members Forum

Sonia Stewart: [sonia.stewart1@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:sonia.stewart1@manchester.gov.uk)

Damian Daley: [damian.daley@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:damian.daley@manchester.gov.uk)

#### Women Members

Lesley Lancelot: [lesley.lancelot@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:lesley.lancelot@manchester.gov.uk)

Dawn Warriner: [dawn.warriner@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:dawn.warriner@manchester.gov.uk)

### Call Out! – Want to make a difference?

We're looking for committed members to form **Disabled Members, Young Members** and **Retired Members SOGs**. Let's make it happen in 2025. These are very important platforms for members' voices to be heard in safe spaces and the Branch acting on their behalf to bring about resolutions. If you are interested in becoming a part of these SOGs, please email [sonia.stewart1@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:sonia.stewart1@manchester.gov.uk) as soon as possible.

### Equality Events

Equality events/campaigns supported by the Branch included another successful White Ribbon Campaign; a well-attended and thought-provoking Black History event held in the community entitled 'Black History – Unravelling the Truth', with speakers, performances and lots of engagement; Mandela Day – 18 July is Mandela Day, which is about acts of kindness. The 2024 theme was "Do what you can with what you have, where you are" and some members of the Inspire Black Members Forum volunteered at the African Caribbean Care Group for a couple of hours engaging with and assisting the elderly residents. If you would like to get involved in Branch

# BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## SONIA STEWART - BRANCH EQUALITIES REPORT

equalities events in 2025, please let us know.

### Equality Matters

We all have something to offer in this drive for improvement and fairness: that's why working together is so important if we want real and visible change to happen. We must continue to challenge discrimination and break down barriers to equality of opportunities – there is still work to be done, including on bullying and harassment. The Equality Matters Branch newsletter will continue to keep members up to date on current issues relating to equalities including news, legislative updates, events and community engagement. We welcome your articles and if you want to become involved in working with me to produce the newsletter drop me an email.

**Sonia Stewart (Assistant Branch Secretary / Branch Equalities Officer)**  
Children and Education Services

## JANE WILCOX - ADULT SOCIAL CARE / MUSEUMS



This year I've supported groups of our members at service redesigns, job evaluation and health and safety processes, and individuals at attendance management meetings and disciplinary and grievance hearings.

Our network of stewards in Adults' is growing and a big "thank you" to all our reps. But we need more – so, if there isn't a UNISON steward in your workplace, please consider stepping up. Our hard working and skilled members deserve representation, decent conditions and fair pay but these don't get handed to us, we have to fight for them.

I've also supported our stewards and members at the People's History Museum to resist, through collective action, attempts to remove them from the Greater Manchester Pension fund. When we stick together and fight together, we win.

**Jane Wilcox (Assistant Branch Secretary)**  
Adult Social Care

# BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## RENA WOOD - PRIMARY SCHOOLS (SOUTH) / LEISURE CENTRES



I want to say thank you to all stewards and contacts who share UNISON information and promote the work that we do.

I also want to extend a warm welcome to activists who have volunteered to be new school stewards and I look forward to working alongside them.

Once again this has been another hectic year with the continued consequence of the austerity measures impacting on our member's jobs, but, hopefully with a newly elected Labour Government we will start to see some positive changes going forward, from increases in funding for local government, to establishing the

School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB), commonly known as the triple SNB.

I have sought to reestablish JCC's with Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) I have raised members concerns with regard to sexist behaviour and a negative culture at some of the GLL work sites with senior management. GLL have raised concerns regarding the increase in National Insurance contributions, which may result in a restructure, due to the costs in the near future.

I am pleased to report that GLL are going to arrange a joint trade unions & management meeting in the new year to emphasise our role and the need for a good joint working relationship.

I have represented and advised a number of members on disciplinaries, grievances and capability hearings working in various south Manchester primary schools. There has been an increase in schools robustly applying the schools' Attendance Management Policy resulting in regulation 7 dismissals on health grounds. Schools have also conducted various restructures following Ofsted Inspections and we have negotiated settlement agreements for a number of members. I have supported members on school restructures, that are complex, requiring careful negotiations to ensure fairness, transparency and equality.

I have also supported members working for Ofsted with their probation reviews, disciplinaries and grievance meetings.

# **BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

## **RENA WOOD - PRIMARY SCHOOLS (SOUTH) / LEISURE CENTRES**

I have supported a number of our migrant worker members in the social care sector, very few of their employers have transparent & fair policies. Some employers exploit our members to such a degree that they potentially could have their work visas withdrawn & be threatened with deportation.

I have represented members who have not been paid their proper salaries resulting in unlawful deduction of wages which UNISON has challenged legally. I have also supported members employed in the private and Community & Voluntary sector to ensure they are paid the National Minimum Wage.

I have represented members during TUPE consultations involving mostly schools' members employed in catering & cleaning who have been outsourced, which is an issue UNISON is campaigning against, as we believe public services should be insourced where our members are on more favourable terms & conditions, which, through collective action, through negotiating and bargaining are a fundamental principal role of our trade union.

I have been involved in negotiating and challenging employers where there have been TUPE breaches.

Once again, a number of members have sought my support on their pensions discussions, resulting in their ill health dismissal following attendance management hearings with my schools members. There is quite some delay in members receiving their local government pension, once they have been dismissed on health grounds.

I have worked on recruitment initiatives in a number of schools by holding recruitment stalls with UNISON publicity material with the aim of increasing UNISON membership.

As a member of the Labour Party, I have campaigned to highlight the value of the services that our members provide, by taking UNISON policies into the Labour Party, particularly on the issue of local government funding, at every opportunity.

I distributed NJC pay campaign material to a number of schools to encourage members to participate in the NJC pay ballot 2024/25.

I spoke on behalf of Manchester Branch at a SUTR unity rally in Piccadilly Gardens as fighting racism is a trade union issue.

**Rena Wood (Assistant Branch Secretary)  
Primary Schools (South)**



# BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## DAWN WARRINER - PRIMARY SCHOOLS (NORTH)



Support Staff in North Manchester Primary Schools and Nurseries are continuing to take the brunt of school underfunding and a fracturing in the sector that makes them easy targets for managers and headteachers needing to find more for less. The ongoing academisation across the area causes issues and uncertainties around terms and conditions. Hopefully, the proposed School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) will help to provide more clarity, bargaining power and progression opportunities within the sector.

Aside from this, in a lot of the meetings I go to, the lack of respect and esteem for school support staff, their skills and their professionalism is a main underlying issue. It further demoralises staff who often have to work in crumbling buildings, some of which

are at or approaching 100 years old, especially in the older areas of North Manchester.

This year, the branch has been lucky to recruit two excellent Organisers, Stephen Cassidy and Matthew Kirk, who have been supporting the branch to grow activists and stewards in the workplace. They have been focusing most recently on Schools, and have visited school member meetings in North Manchester with me to identify issues and contacts within these specific workplaces.

Workplace stewards are an excellent resource for members, and we have been able to recruit some additional school stewards this year. We are looking for more members wishing to become stewards – training and support is provided. If you don't see yourself doing that, being a contact or an activist within the school that we can rely on to pass on posters and updates is very useful too.

The strength of the branch and the union comes not from officers or elected officials, it comes from you, our members. The motto of our union is '*Unity is Strength*'. These are not empty words, it is crucial. As part of this year's pay claim, I have done phone banking – calling members up – with other activists and officers. Unfortunately, we didn't get the numbers we needed. We are preparing the pay claim for 2025/26, and when it goes live, I urge you to use your vote and encourage others to do so too. We are only as strong as our members. We are all members with one vote – use yours!

Solidarity and respect – I feel proud to represent you.

**Dawn Warriner (Assistant Branch Secretary)  
Primary Schools (North)**



# BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## CATH BAGGALEY - SECONDARY SCHOOLS / ACADEMIES



We have had yet another very busy year in our schools.

### SSSNB

The Employment Rights Bill has now gone to Parliament and as expected it contains legislation to reinstate the SSSNB (School Support Staff Negotiating Body).

The Bill sets out the high-level parameters for the SSSNB. It will cover all state-funded schools – so academies, MATs, free schools and PRUs are all included. This is a major win for our members as it means school support staff will be on the same pay framework and will receive the same cost of living increase whether or not they are in an academy.

The SSSNB will also have a broader remit than the previous body (when it nearly came into being before being abandoned by the Tory government) – it will cover pay, terms and conditions, and training and career development. The SSSNB will be England-only, though we hope there will be provision for devolved nations/regions to have observer status.

The Bill will now make its way through parliament, and should become law next spring, with the SSSNB to be implemented after that. The Department for Education estimate that the first pay round that will be conducted through the SSSNB will be 2027/28.

There will of course need to be serious consideration of the transitional and protection arrangements for staff moving across, and of the implications for the NJC. Ultimately, in line with the motion passed at Local Government Conference in support of the SSSNB, members will need to be given a final say on the overall proposals.

The Department for Education (DfE) have also made clear there is no intention for NEU to be included. They have stated: “DfE has engaged with the prospective members of the SSSNB. This includes the officially recognised support staff trade unions: Unite, UNISON and GMB, as well employer representatives: the Local Government Association (LGA), the Catholic Education Service in England and Wales (CESEW) and Church of England Education Service and the Confederations of School Trusts (CST).”

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Communications have gone out to all school members and also a survey which had a huge response.

Many school members have signed up to be School Support Staff Champions and will receive regular updates. Four webinars have been taken place for school members, which were very well attended, with more planned.

### Academisation

By the end of 2023/24, 47.9% of Manchester schools had converted to academies

### Academy Conversions

The Sensory Support Service is to transfer to Big Life Group on 1st January 2025.

The Endeavour Federation which consists of the following special need schools – Southern Cross, Meade Hill & Castlefield Campus are due to join the Ambition Community Trust, which is a Tameside Trust on 1st January 2025.

We have been supporting our members through the TUPE process.

More academy conversions are planned during this academic year:

Camberwell Park will be joining Prospere Learning Trust

A number of Catholic primary schools are scheduled to join Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust; however, it is unlikely that these will go through before the summer term.

Academy Conversion Grant

The DfE will end its £25,000.00 grant scheme for schools choosing to become an academy at the end of this year. This will no doubt slow down the academisation process.

The DfE is currently working on guidance for school collaborations.

### Ofsted

During the last academic year 62 inspections took place:

- 26 ungraded inspections, 35 graded inspections and 1 one monitoring visit of an inadequate school.
- 8 schools increased their grade
- 15 schools decreased their grade (8 have previously been outstanding).
- 38 schools maintained their grade.

### New Schools

Two new primary schools have opened in Manchester:

Crown Street run by Laurus Trust and The Olive School run by Star Academies.

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### SEND

A full consultation was carried out with all maintained schools and academies in September to seek agreement to transfer 0.5% (equivalent to £2.7m) from the 2025/26 Schools Block to the High Needs Block to fund investment in:

- SEND units and special school places
- Additional resource provision at mainstream schools
- Additional support for Early Years provision
- Additional support for the re-integration of pupils from MS PRU back into mainstream secondary schools
- The LA Schools Forum voted to accept the proposals.
- Two SEN primary units opened in September at Rushbrook and Old Moat primary schools creating 60 new places across those two schools.

### Member Representation

We have continued to support our members throughout the last year in many areas, TUPE transfers, disciplinary hearings, grievances and attendance meetings to name just a few.

### School Support Staff Seminar

The seminar that took place on **24th April 2024** at the Hilton Hotel Cardiff, was a great success, all our stewards who attended enjoyed the event. Next years event will take place on **Wednesday 30th April 2025**, the venue is to be confirmed.

### Stars in Our Schools

Many of our schools hosted events again this year, which is fantastic. It was lovely to hear of the celebrations and events that took place.

### And finally...

I always end my annual report with a big thank you to all our school stewards and contacts for their continued support in distributing information, providing support to our members, and keeping us informed of any issues arising in their schools. If your school does not have a workplace contact or steward and you would like more information about becoming involved as a workplace contact or steward, please contact the Branch Office on **0161 254 7500** or via email to [UNISON@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:UNISON@manchester.gov.uk).

**Cath Baggaley (Assistant Branch Secretary)  
Secondary Schools / Academies**

# BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## STEPHEN CASSIDY / MATTHEW KIRK - BRANCH ORGANISERS

As many of you know the role of branch organiser is a new one. Trade unions have been under sustained attack since the 1980s and this has led to a massive decline in worker power. Furthermore, 14 years of Tory austerity and further anti-union legislation have left many feeling hopeless. We face not only the challenge of low density in most workplaces, but crucially we also face the misplaced idea that a trade union is some 'other' that acts on behalf of the workers rather than an organisation run by and for workers themselves. The goal of organising is not just to recruit new members and build our density, but rather, change workers' relationship with their union. What organising seeks to do is get workers to understand that a trade union is not a service or insurance policy but a collective experience through which we can unite to fight for and win the changes we want to see in our workplace. So, it is our job to support members and activists to bring their colleagues into action and win on issues that matter most.

We have been hard at work since we started in August, our main focus, as directed by the branch, has been in schools, particularly in north Manchester. So far, through talking members we have identified schools with issues that are deeply and widely felt for us to organise around, as well as identifying workplace leaders in schools, people who can bring their colleagues into the union and into action. We have met with and supported leaders and activists in schools to engage their colleagues in union activity, build density, and engage workers in collective action. We hope to have led workers to changes in their workplace through collective action in three schools by early next year.

Prior to our focus in schools, we helped organized workers in fire prevention education, who went onto win concessions surrounding reimbursement for travel during their visits

As the role we are doing is new, there has been a huge learning curve in how best to engage with members and get people active. From what we have learned so far in the new year we want to extend visits to many more schools across Manchester so we can replicate the work we have already done.

On top of the work, we have done in schools we have also recruited members elsewhere through workplaces visits and stalls. This recruiting has identified issues and activists in other workplaces that we are supporting to organise their colleagues and bring them into action against their employers.

We expect 2025 to be a busy year for us. We aim to build our membership across employers, get reps elected and engage workers in collective struggle to demonstrate the power of trade unionism. But the work cannot be done by us alone, it is the responsibility of all members and activists to organise their individual workplaces and we are here at your disposal if you need support in doing so.

**Stephen Cassidy / Matthew Kirk**  
**Branch Organisers**

To be completed by the existing UNISON member.  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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Title \_\_\_\_\_ First name \_\_\_\_\_

Last name \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

**2 Tell us about your job**

Employer's name \_\_\_\_\_

Your job title or occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Workplace name and address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Payroll number \_\_\_\_\_

NI number \_\_\_\_\_

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