



LINCOLNSHIRE UNISON
BRANCH NEWSLETTER

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January 2021

Get involved in UNISON. To find out more, contact the local branch office info@lincunison.org.uk

This is my comment back in March 2020 and is still so relevant today January 2021;

The Coronavirus outbreak is exceptionally difficult for everyone and is having a huge impact on all our lives. Our thoughts go out to all of you who are particularly affected.

We know that due to existing gender inequality, the situation will have **a significant impact on women**. Schools closing and family illness will exacerbate women's existing unpaid caring responsibilities. The surge in specific public services like the NHS and care work will put a huge strain on their staff - the majority of whom are women.

Respect to EVERYONE on the frontline – stay safe

The impact on our work

With the situation rapidly evolving and new decisions being made that affect our families, livelihoods, and physical and mental health, it is vital that people have their voices heard and their needs met. Our national office is asking for people to share their stories on how the crisis is affecting them, their families and those around them. Email into info@lincunison.org.uk and we'll send them through.

Don't forget to keep your contact details up to date!

Use [MyUnison](#) to update your contact details, this is how we keep in touch with you and identify emerging issues within groups, collate common issues within employers, send out papers when we need to, make quick contacts should the need arise and to protect your interests.

I'm regularly posting to our Facebook site with regular updates and useful weblinks. These also show on the web page.

Find our Facebook page at Lincolnshire County UNISON

Webpage link is <http://www.lincolnshireunison.org/>

NOT in UNISON? Join today

email info@lincunison.org.uk

Join online at <https://www.lincolnshireunison.org/join-us-today/ways-to-join>



Did you spot Jess McGuire our Young Members officer in the Autumn national UNISON magazine?

This year Jess is standing as the Young Members' National President, so keep your fingers crossed. It has been wonderful to watch her blossom into her role and encourage and support our YM in Lincolnshire and the East Midlands.



Dave Prentis has been our UNISON National Secretary for over 20 years and supported the union for over 40 years.

Dave retired from the role in December and Christina McAnea has been voted in as General Secretary following a member wide election. Congratulations!

See more at [\(1\) Lincolnshire County Unison | Facebook](#)

Christina will have a hard act to follow. How to deal with a declared 'no pay rise for the public sector' and the aftermath (hopefully) of a pandemic.

Pictured is our North Kesteven convenor Rhiannon, and Kim our steward in Legal services at LCC, capturing a selfie with Our Dave.

UNISON Learning Grants

During 2020 UNISON provided over £10,000 to members in the East Midlands to support their Learning Journey.

Each year we have successful applicants, if you are doing a work-related accredited course, apply now.

Applications for 2021 grants are now open:

<https://learning.unison.org.uk/financial-support/>



The Public Sector Exit Cap

The Government has introduced a cap on the amount of money a public sector employer can pay when an employee leaves their employment. It is called the public sector exit cap, or £95k cap. It applies to employees leaving public sector employments from 4 November 2020.

The exit cap is most likely to affect you if you are a public sector employee aged 55 or over and you are made redundant or leave your employment due to business efficiency. This is because the amount your employer pays to the pension fund so that you can receive your pension early is included in the exit cap calculation. This is a further attack on our Pensions and will likely impact those members with long service. The Local Government Pension Scheme's Advisory Board has produced [frequently asked questions](#) (FAQs) to help members understand the government's recently introduced Exit Cap Regulations 2020. These FAQs were produced following a request by UNISON and incorporate comments by us. UNISON lodged a Judicial Review seeking to challenge the legality of the regulations. If you are concerned that you may be impacted by this change then please contact the branch.

UNISON New General Secretary

Christina McAnea was announced as the new General Secretary for UNISON following the retirement of Dave Prentis, who had held the post for over 20 years.

Christina grew up in Drumchapel, a big council housing estate in Glasgow. Leaving school at 16 she worked in the civil service, the NHS and retail before going to university at the age of 22. Having achieved a degree in English and history, Christina first worked as a housing officer for Glasgow City Council, before moving to the GMB, where she advised workers taking cases against their employers to industrial tribunals.

In her time at UNISON, Christina has become the union's most senior negotiator, with a wide-ranging public services brief covering health, education, social care, local government and equalities.

She has held senior positions across the union, negotiating on behalf of members working in police forces, schools, universities and colleges, and the NHS.

While head of health at the union, Christina played a key negotiating role in the national dispute over pensions, when up to two million public sector workers took part in a day of action in late 2011. Three years later, she was the lead negotiator in the first national health strike in England in 25 years. Christina is a member of the ACAS Council, sits on the government's COVID-19 social care stakeholder group and was the driving force behind the creation last year of the future social care coalition, a cross-party alliance of more than 80 organisations and individuals.

Christina is married, has two adult children and lives in South London.

I think many of our members will feel familiarity with her work story and background.

COVID19 – next steps?

If I had a crystal ball, I might be able to anticipate the future – we are short on facts, vaccines and strong leadership, so by our AGM in March, it might all be better.... or not.

Indications are that the hospitality industry will be closed until May at the earliest and working in an office environment 5 days a week will be a thing of the past, with permanent working from home arrangements the norm.

Remember, if you have worked one day from home during the lockdown, claim tax relief as a wfh allowance [Claim tax relief for your job expenses: Working from home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/claim-tax-relief-for-your-job-expenses-working-from-home)

Our national charity for members, There for You, has reopened its COVID-19 response fund, offering grants of up to £500 to help those whose household incomes have been affected by coronavirus. You can check if you're eligible and [apply online](#) here.

If you are on a low income you may be entitled to Universal Credit. The government announced on 20 March 2020 that Universal Credit will be increased by £20 per week (£1,000 a year).

Working Tax Credit will also be increased by £20 per week (£1,000 a year).

Local Housing Allowance will be increased to cover more people's rents.

REALLY useful weblinks!

On the last newsletter I published a list of really useful websites, here's an updated list for reference

[Coronavirus: your rights at work | UNISON National](#) Your national

COVID-19: guidance for school-based staff

https://www.unison.org.uk/at-work/education-services/key-issues/covid-19-closures/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Covid-19+branch+circular&utm_source=Education&utm_content=Read+the+UNISON+advice&fbclid=IwAR1cJ5XumlnLBeAm4VAIklyYwaU5DYOF8o4DdNDH2ajJsIb7op6sgOQAfSU

COVID-19: guidance for residential care, supported living and home care

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance?fbclid=IwAR3k7IqjgE6SZ7kVVzlcXax44xIlgAcabkK1C4GoAQkfgZMK8tr4MaKOAU>

UNISON help at work - has useful link to other advice sites

https://www.unison.org.uk/coronavirus-rights-work/?fbclid=IwAR1S_00I9MkkaAXmWUjW_HfOpDCOA2sGqXuTw2Ne4-fMN8DI7HNACaqojbs

Coronavirus UNISON helping members financially There for You

<https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2020/03/coronavirus-unison-helping-members-financially/?fbclid=IwAR1U7JD4NGbDAVg1pQfVTvEiFajbwOIECgy7Q2UEn3dWPM-CQpkEKdiyeZ0>

There are a number of very useful groups set up on various platforms on the web, including;

Sign up for TUC Education mailing list now and receive regular updates on resources, webinars, and training <http://bit.ly/tuc-education-sign-up>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/198548431595271/> TUC Covid19 support and advice

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/blogs/coronavirus-school-closures-what-are-my-rights-time>

Maternity action have got a really good FAQs page as well as TUC guidance

<https://maternityaction.org.uk/covidmaternityfaqs>

Your existing maternity rights are not affected, here's a link to them on ACAS's website

<https://www.acas.org.uk/your-maternity-leave-pay-and-other-rights>

Our petition calling on the govt to support workers affected by school closures here, we have over 15,000 signatures and we need more!

<https://www.megaphone.org.uk/petitions/coronavirus-nobody-should-lose-their-job-because-their-kids-school-is-closed>

Information is changing hourly, but the message is that a lockdown is the only way to halt this virus. We know we have emergency services that need to operate and be fully supported. Many of our UNISON members are on the front line and caring for your loved ones. Please be kind and careful. Share your wealth, health and goodwill and we will get through this. To those home schooling there are lots of brilliant resources on the web (and Joe Wicks is back!)