



JOIN US AT THE
MARCH AND RALLY
SATURDAY
18 OCTOBER

Midlands TUC Update

17 July 2014

Articles

- July 10 Industrial Action
- TUC Campaign Plan Countdown: 300 days
- PCS Land Registry victory
- TUC Young Workers Open Forum
- Saving Our Safety Net Campaign
- Midlands Needs A Pay Rise – September 28
- Organising Academy: ‘Supporting Organising’ October 15-17
- Midlands TUC Reps Awards Night
- Midlands TUC Pensioner Network

July 10 Industrial Action

Unions in mass action in campaign for fair pay



Birmingham

The anger about unfair pay across the public sector was on display for everyone to see on July 10 when local government workers across the country held a one-day strike, with unions involved in other long running industrial campaigns also taking action.

A large, colourful demonstration was held in Birmingham with thousands attending a rally in Victoria Square to listen to rousing speeches from a variety of speakers that included



Birmingham

UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis, NUT's General Secretary Christine Blower, PCS AGS Chris Baugh, UNITE Regional Secretary Gerard Coyne, FBU's David Pitt, and Sally Maybury, a striking GMB local government worker from Birmingham City Council.

TUC AGS, Paul Nowak, also spoke at the rally and joined striking GMB and UNISON workers on the picket line in the morning.



Paul Nowak, TUC AGS, with Birmingham City Council Social Care workers

Midlands TUC Update



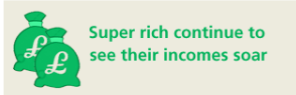
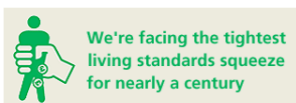
CWU workers showing their support for striking workers in Birmingham

With local rallies being held in many cities and towns right across the region, a clear message to Government: “Midlands Needs A Pay Rise”



hundreds attended the Derby rally

Whilst the economy might be growing again, across the UK real wages are still falling, with public servants everywhere facing a huge squeeze on their incomes. Pay restraint was a bitter pill to swallow during the dark days of recession, but now the economy looks to be back on its feet, public sector workers are understandably angry that their pay continues to be held down.



TUC Campaign Plan

Countdown: 300 days



In May 2013 the TUC set out its Campaign Plan that brought together five clear streams of work that were embraced and endorsed by the whole movement.

This latest document outlines progress that has been made against the plan and sets out what we will do in the year ahead as we approach the most important general election in a generation

October 18: Britain Needs A Pay Rise demonstration

Let's increase Britain's pay packet, and see it share more fairly



March logistics and promotional materials are available to download from the October 18th special website: britainneedsaparrise.org

PCS Land Registry Victory

Andrew Lloyd, PCS Regional Secretary and Midlands TUC vice-Chair, on significant victory for staff, professionals and the public



On 14th July 2014 the government announced plans to shelve the privatisation of the Land Registry (LR). The overwhelming number of responses to the BIS consultation on the Future of Land Registry opposed any change in status.

This is a victory for the campaign spearheaded by PCS, that saw an unprecedented coalition of trades unions, property industry professionals (including solicitors, property search companies and lenders), a former Chief Land Registrar, members of the public and politicians.

Over 100,000 people signed a 38 Degrees petition calling for Land Registry to remain public, and the vast majority of PCS members supported a highly successful two day national strike to 'Keep Land Registry Public' on May 14-15. This included the Land Registry Offices in Coventry, Leicester, Nottingham and Telford in the Midlands Region.

These actions prove that, if unions campaign and fight, we can beat privatisation. These proposals were totally ideological – Land Registry is a well-respected organisation that underpins the state guarantee of title that protects the rights of property owners in England and Wales, valued at £1.3 trillion.

Land Registry returns money to HM Treasury on an annual basis (£98 million in 2013-4) and continually lowers its charges.

Tony Conway PCS Land Registry Official has said "This is a great victory for our members and the public. By any measure, Land Registry is a success story that rests upon the dedicated, independent and impartial Civil Servants that provide great service to the public. This can only be guaranteed while it remains a public service."



PCS strike action Coventry (Credit: Coventry Telegraph)

Tony Conway went on to say, "I have been asked is this a total victory, I believe we have only won a battle, not the war. We need a commitment from Labour that they will not privatise LR if they win the next election. We also need to campaign to stop proposals that will fundamentally change the way that LR delivers its services, and move responsibility for decisions affecting property rights away from independent Civil Servants, to paid representative who may have a vested interest. These fundamental changes represent a threat to the integrity of LR and to the service we provide the public."

This campaign has seen more Land Registry staff join PCS and gain significant support from MPs, conveyancers, solicitors and members of the public. It has made maximum use of social media and youtube in getting the message across. The two day strike was supported by over 90% of PCS members over 60% of LR staff.

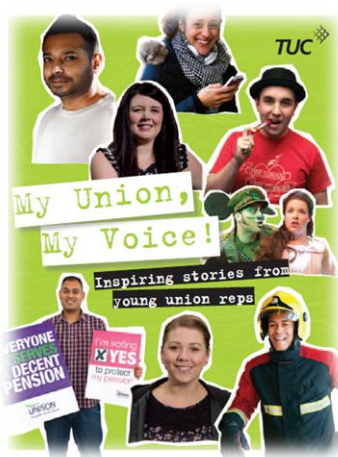
For further information contact tonyc@pcs.org.uk

TUC Young Workers Open Forum

Young Workers Forum comes to Birmingham to campaign and debate jobs and opportunity



The next meeting of the TUC Young Workers Forum will take place in Birmingham on 2nd August 2014. The meeting will be followed by an Open Forum discussion on Jobs and Employment. The forum is open to all young people in the region and will be an opportunity to discuss the challenges they face getting into work and gaining decent employment.



The TUC have also produced a new booklet promoting the value of young union reps. Copies can be downloaded from the TUC website, whilst hard copies can be ordered from Carl Roper, TUC National Organiser, croper@tuc.org.uk

Saving Our Safety Net campaign

Say no to the five-week wait for help after losing your job



The TUC has launched our Saving Our Safety Net campaign calling on the government to withdraw plans to make people receiving the new Universal Credit wait for more than five weeks before they get their first cash.

Thousands of unemployed workers face hardship. Hardly anyone has heard of this change, and when they learn about it they are overwhelmingly opposed. *(Just 13 per cent say they have heard of the proposal, but when they do learn about it, they are opposed: 70 per cent to 18 per cent).*

If you lose your job and need to claim UC, this is what will happen from April 2015:

- For a calendar month the amount of benefit you're entitled to will be assessed.
- For a further week you wait while they arrange payment.
- Finally, after a wait of more than five weeks, you get your Universal Credit, paid in arrears.

The government is also introducing a period of seven 'waiting days' – a week when you won't have any entitlement to Universal Credit at all. They haven't yet decided whether these waiting days will be part of the assessment period or in addition to it. If they're in addition, the wait will be over *six* weeks, not five.

Midlands TUC Update

A campaign tabloid newspaper has also been produced which can be distributed to union members.



Hard copies have already been distributed to unions, but for further copies can be ordered from Rob Sanders rsanders@tuc.org.uk

The first action in the campaign is a [petition](#) calling on Iain Duncan Smith to end the five week wait.

For more information about the campaign visit the campaign website at savingoursafetynet.org



Organising Academy

Award in Supporting Organising to be run in the Midlands 15-17 October



The TUC Organising Academy's Award in Supporting Organising will be run in the Midlands. The course is being run as a pilot in delivering courses regionally.

This course is for union staff members in administrative and other support roles who would benefit from a deeper understanding of core organising practices and their implications for the way that unions operate. T

The course provides participants with the skills and knowledge needed to support organising..

Programme:

- understanding organising
- working with members
- effective communication

To sign up, please email organisingacademy@tuc.org.uk giving us your name, union you work for and position and please ensure you have time off to attend.



Midlands TUC Update

Midlands Needs A Pay Rise

Flyer available for September 28th march and rally in Birmingham



The Midlands TUC is organising a march and rally at the Conservative Party Conference in support of the 'Britain Needs A Pay Rise' campaign.

Hard copies of the flyer have been distributed to unions and trade councils but further copies can be [downloaded from the Midlands TUC website](#)

Mids TUC Pensioners Network

Pensioners Network supporting Action For Rail Campaign in Derby



Pensioners network outside Derby station

The Midlands TUC Pensioners Network in a move to support the TUC's Campaign Plan, decided to get out and campaign.

Along with RMT representatives from Derby the group handed out over 200 Action For Rail

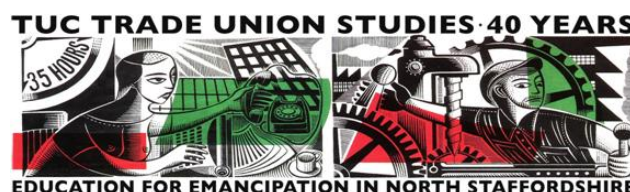
Postcards and talked to the public about the folly of rail privatisation.

The group are determined to support campaigning across the region and are keen to hear from unions and trade councils about where they can support campaign activity.

To contact the group or find out more information please contact mkesterton@tuc.org.uk

Stoke TUEd 40th anniversary

May 2nd 2014: a date for the history books. Stoke on Trent Trade Union Education Centre 40th anniversary bash.



After a mere 40 years of giving it large for trade unionism in the Potteries it was time to celebrate TUC Education.

Tommy Cheadle's at Port Vale FC was the venue and how appropriate it was that a pub named after an all action tough centre-half should welcome the stalwarts of Staffordshire trade unionism.

It was a traditional night; beer, sandwiches, speeches and not a little Northern Soul. Thanks goodness I left before the dancing started. Trade union banners festooned the room, the most prominent being that of the Trade Union Education Centre itself. It was the newest too, bought and paid for through the work of the North Staffs Trade Union Studies and Labour Movement Consultation Group (NSTUSLMCG). The only thing those guys lack is an amusing acronym.

Working closely with partner colleges to organise education of union reps was something the TUC Education Service began in earnest following the forward looking Employment

Midlands TUC Update

Protection Act 1975. Stoke on Trent College was in from the start and still is.

Rights to paid time off from work to carry out the role of the union rep and get training support helped to build a UK-wide trade union tutor group based in the Further Education Sector. TUC Education became an established and professional part of the system of UK industrial relations and therefore the UK economy. They moan about cost but this is cheap at twice the price.



Nowadays the talk is of how to encourage 'employee involvement'. Well here's a message for the 'Human Resource' industry. It can't be done without trade unions. Everything else is ersatz. If you don't know what that means look it up.

'Yes', I hear you saying, 'all well and good, but who were the glitterati on the night? What a star-studded list! Pete Try (Midlands TUC); Roger Seifert (Wolverhampton University) and Peter Coyte who began teaching at Stoke in the 1970's and was a witness to it all. All ably compered by the red-trousered Ron Foulkes of Stoke TUEd – and everyone clapped politely as is normal in Burslem on a Friday night. Wonderful!

Notwithstanding the effects of the 20 per cent cut imposed on adult education provision, Vince Cable's commitment to union rep training for another year was announced so all that remains is to look forward to the 50th anniversary. That will only happen if enough union reps apply for TUC courses at Stoke on Trent Trade Union Education Centre. It's based at Stoke on Trent

College Cauldon Campus. So if you are a union rep get to it! The courses are free, they're for you and your support is needed. You'll feel better if you do.

You can email Stoke Trade Union Studies at rfoulkes@stokecoll.ac.uk or call on: 01782 603660. Alternatively, you can ask for a course brochure from the Midlands TUC by contacting Louise Power at lpower@tuc.org.uk. Finally, you can check the TUC programme at www.tuclearning.net

Pete Try, Midlands TUC Regional Education and Training Officer

And finally...A goodbye from Pete
Pete Try is retiring in August.....



Pete Try with Surjit Kaur Chohan

Having reached the ripe old age of 65 I'll be retiring on 29 August after having had the privilege of working 11 years with the TUC as the REO.

I wanted to say thanks to everyone I've worked with over that time for what I will look back on with a great deal of satisfaction.

Working for the TUC is a unique experience because of the need for a single movement approach. I sometimes think the importance of that isn't always fully understood, perhaps

Midlands TUC Update

because every union wants an education programme that meets its own perceived needs.

Nevertheless, we've been able to facilitate a programme that has retained public funding, largely met individual union wants and, at the same time maintained a core programme that has set educational standards for the trade union movement. I'm proud to have been part of the national team behind that. Long may it continue.

The next period will be an interesting one for my successor because there is to be a staged withdrawal of government support for the fee element of funding. During the next 12 months strategies will need to be developed or strengthened to get beyond the worst case scenario of zero funding from August 2016. I'm actually sorry I'll miss all of that.

It will be a time for the movement to realise the importance of coming together and work with the TUC to take a genuine single movement approach around core training. I'll always argue the case that in the representation of working people there isn't more important work than that of the workplace union rep and there isn't a more important task than the education and training of the union rep.

I would say that wouldn't I?

Before becoming the TUC REO I worked 18 years as a TUC tutor in the Black Country so I must mention all of the wonderful people who I met and worked with over that time. Work colleagues, union officers, TUC staff but most of all the union reps I met on courses. Marvellous, thanks for the education you all gave me. I hope you got something from it too. I still meet people from those days and the feedback is always encouraging. I met one TU student on a retirement course the other day. Six people in the room, and one was an ex-NAGO union rep from Sandwell MBC who I'd worked with more than 15 years ago on TUC Union Reps Stage 1, priceless!

So, thanks to the principals and managers of FE colleges from whom I 'mostly' got co-operation.

Actually there was tons of it. Didn't always get exactly what we wanted but we usually got what was needed to meet the staffing, teaching and quality assurance requirements that are so important to TUC Education.

Thanks to the TUC tutors who I've worked with too. I couldn't praise them more. Argumentative and combative, but in the end having the nous to get the job done. After all isn't that what trade union representation is all about? Finally I'll thank and praise the regional TUC staff with whom I've worked so closely. It is you who I'll probably miss the most. I'll only mention one person by name because he left earlier in the summer; Alan Weaver. Thanks for Women's Chainmakers Festival Alan, an incredible achievement.

Keeping in touch

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