

Executive Committee

26 February 2025

Unions and Trades Councils Reports

Trade Unions

PCS

There are currently several disputes and industrial action ongoing within the union, including members in facilities management working on ISS, OCS and G4S contracts in various government departments.

There are concerns over safety for staff and public at Jobcentres. A survey of G4S security staff in jobcentres reveals severe levels of violence, generally faulty safety equipment, routine under-staffing and exploitative pay and conditions. In the last 12 months 81% of PCS members said they had experienced dangerous incidents in their work, with 50% saying this had happened 4 or more times. Of all those, 19% had needed time off sick and 10% required medical attention. 64% who had been involved in dangerous incident said they could have been prevented with safety equipment. G4S provides staff with personal mobile radios and body-worn cameras that fail on a daily basis. Despite high levels of sickness absence because of under-staffing and failing equipment, G4S offers minimal sick pay. Over 640 PCS members working for G4S in jobcentres are currently balloting to strike, with results expected on Friday 28 February.

Members at **HM Land Registry** are currently in dispute over mandatory office attendance. Land Registry PCS has served two weeks' notice of strike action to Land Registry today 12th February. PCS believes that this action is necessary because of unwelcome developments in dispute resolution talks in relation to the use of personal data in performance management.

The strike action will begin on 26th February and finish on 11th March. It will be targeted at two areas where the union believes the most disruption to HMLR can be caused. These will be in the Customer Service Centres in Durham and Swansea and across all staff in the Targeted Casework Team across all sites including Weymouth, Plymouth and Gloucester.

Members at **HMRC Benton Park View** are continuing their strike action over the sacking of reps there. In December, members voted for action – with 96% in favour on a 68% turnout. Discontinuous action began on 23 December, running until 14 February. [Support sacked reps by signing the Megaphone petition.](#)

Aviation regulator workers represented by PCS and Prospect at the **Civil Aviation Authority** escalated their dispute over pay with joint strike action.

The union is providing financial support to members in many of these disputes from our fighting fund.

Donations are always welcome to support the strikers through the following account:
Account Name: PCS Fighting Fund Levy
Account Number: 20331490
Sort code: 60-83-01

RMT

First Bus South West

Please be aware of a campaign to check and raise concerns around toilets and welfare conditions. Our members have been subjected to Dickensian type conditions for too long and it is important we continue to raise issues and press for facilities as good as the Management staff enjoy and deserve. There should not be a two tier arrangement and you deserve the same and to be treated with respect and dignity.

Employers have to provide adequate toilet and washing facilities for employees.

'Adequate' means they have to provide:

- enough toilets and washbasins for those expected to use them _ people
- where possible, separate facilities for men and women _ failing that, rooms with lockable doors;
- clean facilities _ to help achieve this walls and floors should preferably be tiled (or covered in suitable waterproof material) to make them easier to clean;
- a supply of toilet paper and, for female employees, a means of disposing of sanitary dressings;
- facilities that are well lit and ventilated;
- facilities with hot and cold running water;
- enough soap or other washing agents;
- a basin large enough to wash hands and forearms if necessary;
- a means for drying hands, eg paper towels or a hot air dryer;

- showers where necessary, eg for particularly dirty work. You must always consider the needs of those with disabilities.

A question for employers to consider.

Do I need to provide rest facilities for pregnant women and nursing mothers? Yes, if it is 'reasonably practicable' for you to do so. You may need to provide a room for pregnant women/nursing mothers to rest or lie down.

Health and Safety Executive Welfare at work - Guidance for employers on welfare provisions 3 of 4 pages

Employers must also ensure that the facilities are kept clean and in good condition, and that there is always an adequate supply of toilet paper, soap etc. This means that you need to put in place an effective system to maintain them to a high standard, including regular cleaning.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg293.PDF>

UNISON South West – February 2025

Industrial action and campaigns

Serco dispute at Great Western Hospital

Low-paid workers at Great Western Hospital in Swindon are continuing their campaign for fair pay. Staff employed by Serco, including cleaners, porters, and catering staff, took further strike action on 14 and 17 February.

Serco is refusing to pay two one-off bonuses awarded to other NHS staff in 2022/23, and worth at least £1,655.

We have had positive and active engagement from both Labour MPs in Swindon on this and continue to hold talks with the Trust and the employer.

Somerset Council to cut 555 jobs

UNISON staff and residents lobbied Somerset Council recently over plans to cut 555 jobs as part of a £32.5 million savings drive.

These cuts would have devastating effects on local services and the workforce.

UNISON is calling on Somerset Council to rethink these proposals and engage in meaningful discussions to protect jobs and services.

Gloucestershire Phlebotomists vote for strike action

Phlebotomists at Cheltenham and Gloucester hospitals have voted for strike action, with strike dates set to be announced for March.

These healthcare professionals are currently paid on Band 2 of the NHS Agenda for Change pay scale. However, the skills and responsibilities required in their roles mean they should be on Band 3. UNISON fully supports their claim for fair pay that reflects the true value of their work.

Migrant workers

Next steps in our Tier 2 visa campaign

Migrant workers from across Dorset gathered at the RNLI in Poole on 31 January for a productive meeting with local MP Neil Duncan-Jordan. The event gave migrant worker members the opportunity to discuss key issues affecting their working lives and explore how to engage effectively with their MPs.

Nationally UNISON has launched the tier 2 visa campaign which encourages migrant workers to lobby their MP about visa reform which would lead to a 'de-coupling' from their employer and provide better support for health and social care workers who, for whatever reason, need to seek alternative employment.

Alongside this work continues on our South West Migrant Worker Charter for commissioning bodies, with a launch and first signing due to take place in the next few months.

Strengthening our union

Branch Secretaries seminar in Taunton

UNISON branch secretaries from across the region gathered in Taunton to discuss the challenges facing branches, share best practices, and celebrate their successes.

The seminar closed with discussions on supporting one another, building effective networks, and strengthening the union's role in workplaces across the region.

LGBT+ History Month and SOG training and planning event

Our LGBT+ self-organised group (SOG) hosted a successful LGBT+ History Month quiz earlier this week and provided social media content to celebrate and acknowledge the month.

The group also held its training and planning weekend in Bristol, with a packed agenda focused on strengthening LGBT+ activism within UNISON and included training on the new worker protection act and tackling sexual harassment.

Activist development

New activist education programme launched

UNISON South West's Education and Engagement team has launched the 2025 activist education programme. The programme includes the five-day Organising Steward course, follow-on courses as part of the Stewards Pathway, and more. These opportunities are vital for developing activists' skills, building confidence, and growing union power in workplaces across the region.

Get Active 2025

Booking for our annual new activist weekender is well underway now. The event takes place from 9 – 11 May and will include our general secretary as a guest speaker.

Unite

Recent Wins:

Local Government – 49 reablement carers impacted by a shortfall in shifts have now settled their dispute. The wording of the COT3 is now signed and agreed; on average members received £3,400, to be paid by the end of the month. 61 staff members were impacted, with each member's settlement figure based on length of service.

Live Unite South West Disputes:

Stagecoach West – proposed strike action is now off as a recommended offer has now been put to members. At the Gloucester depot, this will see Mon-Fri rates increase from £13.50ph to £14.50ph, whilst Sat-Sun rates similarly jump from £13.65ph to £14.66ph. Next January, the rates will rise again to £15.00/£15.66. The deal also includes commensurate rises in sick pay, plus back pay for those working prior to October 2024 in the form of a non-consolidated £400 lump sum. Stroud gets a further rate rise September 2026 to take them up to Cheltenham's rates. The new deal puts drivers back in line with other Gloucestershire bus operators.

NHS Trust – management are reviewing the position of the JUC secretary and have asked the unions not to invite anyone into the position. The JUC have ignored this directive and elected a secretary, who is currently not being paid by management. However Swindon management are proposing they advertise the role of JUC Chair, which is usually democratically elected. This represents a concern to our lay member-led unionised industrial partnership. This may have implications elsewhere in the country as the South West region is the first to be confronted with these proposals.

Trades Councils

Our Regional Annual meeting in Bridgwater this Saturday looks set to be the best attended ever, with over 50 delegates set to attend.

Hannah David will chair, Ines and I will lead sessions and Sharon Battishill, Unite, Dave Roberts, FBU and Rachel Beaney, PCW, are guest speakers.

Most of our 19 TCs have had their AGMs and are busy sending out and appealing for more delegates and affiliations.

The "Together we can win!" TCS pamphlet is proving a useful organiser and I hope that regional secretaries and other senior union officers can send out the pdf to all their branches, regional executives and other activists.

I am always available to speak to union regional committees to encourage trades council delegate take-up from your union.

Dave C.