



## THE GREAT JOBS AGENDA

# TUC

Changing the world  
of work for good



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# Welcome to West Country Workers



hope you enjoy our publication which includes its usual mix of news stories and opinion pieces from across the region.

The TUC's main campaign this autumn is the Great Jobs Agenda, where we bring together unions representing all different types of workers to highlight common demands in the workplace.

All workers – wherever they work, whoever their employer, however many hours they work – deserve respect at work, and that includes fair and decent pay.

South West workers need a pay rise. The poorest paid county is Cornwall where average wages are nearly £100 a week below the UK's. That's why unions are planning a protest rally in Truro on 21st October. It will be good to see Frances O'Grady, TUC General Secretary in Cornwall again.

Decent work will be the subject of a major conference on 1st November in Bristol when the South West TUC, Marvin Rees, the Bristol Mayor and the Bristol Chamber of Commerce join forces to set out ways to meet a vision for making the city the best place in which to work.

There are many challenges for unions to face and a big one is the impact of automation. The government recently gave the go-ahead for trials of 'platooning' of lorries on our major roads. This is a convoy of semi-automated lorries travelling very close to each other, 'driven' wirelessly by the lead vehicle.

The Department for Transport is to spend £8 million on platoon experiments and studying fuel savings from less wind resistance and reduced congestion.



**“If the government can invest more than £8 million in driverless technology it can invest in decent roadside facilities for Britain's truckers”**

As a lorry driver myself, I have been warning of the dangers of this idea for some time, and not just because I believe the real aim is to cut drivers' jobs and pay.

Unions are not against the use of technology to save fuel or making driving more efficient but it

shouldn't come at the cost of the jobs and wages of highly skilled lorry drivers.

The crowded and cramped roads of Britain are a far cry from the long straight highways of the US and mainland Europe where the 'platooning' concept emerged.

It remains to be seen whether wireless convoys of lorries are actually a realistic option in the UK but if the government can invest more than £8 million in driverless technology it can invest in decent roadside facilities for Britain's truckers.

In solidarity,  
**Kev Terry**, Chair, South West TUC



# THE GREAT JOBS AGENDA



The TUC has launched a national campaign to press for better pay and working conditions in workplaces across the UK

“While an employer can ignore the views of a single worker, when workers come together in a union, employers have to listen”

**The Great Jobs Agenda gives the trade union movement a common set of bargaining asks in workplaces, including a voice at work, fair and decent pay, regular hours, learning and progression, fair treatment and respect, and healthy workplaces.**

TUC general secretary Frances O’Grady said: “Everyone at work deserves a great job. A great job is one where the worker is paid and treated fairly. And it’s one where workers get opportunities to progress, to learn and to have a voice on what matters.”

First on the list is the desire for employers to recognise trade unions for collective bargaining on pay and conditions, agree consultation arrangements and establish the representation of elected workers on company boards.

The TUC also wants politicians to give unions the right to access workplaces, ensure more employers consult on important changes, let workers speak for themselves on company boards and get together with businesses and unions to discuss pay, training and conditions in low-paid industries.

Frances O’Grady said: “While an employer can ignore the views of a single worker, when workers come together in a union, employers have to listen. Collective bargaining raises pay and improves terms and conditions of work too.

“If we want an economy that works for everyone, workers need a voice in the boardroom to promote long-term thinking.”

The South West TUC is working with Bristol mayor Marvin Rees and Bristol Chamber of Commerce to promote better work in the city. A key idea is to agree an effective employment charter to raise standards of work.

South West TUC Regional Secretary Nigel Costley said: “By working together we want to make sure everyone in Bristol has access to a great job.

**Bristol Better Work Conference**  
**Wednesday**  
**1st November 1-5pm**  
**City Hall, Bristol**  
<https://betterjobsbristol.eventbrite.co.uk>

“We will be looking at how we can improve mental health and wellbeing at work, develop skills and progression, make Bristol a living wage city, and raise the voice of the working people of Bristol.

“We also want to target abusive employers, developing a city-wide initiative that tackles exploitation.”



Photo: Lorne Campbell / Guzelian

**Mayor of Bristol Marvin Rees said:**



“A good quality job is one of the most significant interventions you make in someone’s life. Decent jobs are

not just a good thing to have, they can reduce absenteeism, they can improve mental health and resilience. Providing decent jobs is also an investment in the context that they make profits for business much more possible.

“That’s why Bristol City Council supports the development of the TUC’s campaign. We want to be a jobs champion and share it across Bristol

with the Chamber of Commerce, but more importantly across the city.

“From my experience, I want a job that doesn’t feel like it’s the end of the road. It offers me hope, I want to know there is an investment in me, and my skills base and there is progression. I want a sense of security, not insecurity.

“I want a work environment in which there isn’t bullying, it’s not hierarchical, but there is an initiative that allows leadership and seniority.

“Also, it needs to pay a decent wage. People who work should not be in poverty and dependent because they’re doing all they can - they’re working.”

**1790s**  
Shoe makers around Bristol organise

**1792**  
Kingswood and Bristol colliers demand 2s rise

**1802**  
Wiltshire shearmen strike leading, in 1803, to the hanging of Trowbridge apprentice Thomas Helliker



**1824**  
Combination Acts that banned unions were repealed

# “We’re lucky to have a job”



South West TUC Policy and Campaigns Support Officer **Ines Lage** peers into the murky world of ‘bad’ jobs and asks: what are unions doing to help young workers?

**A**s workers continue to feel the squeeze in their pay alongside rising costs of living, increasing reliance on debt, growing concerns over skills shortages, a fall in job mobility, and an uncertain economic outlook – it’s no wonder that for many young people, working life feels bleak.

Low unemployment figures make headlines, yet it’s clear fewer good quality jobs exist. Two in every five working people are estimated to have a “bad” job (insecure and low pay). And recent ONS figures show the number of working people without

guaranteed hours in the South West has risen by 11% in the last year alone, meaning more than 100,000 people have no certainty of when they will be paid or how much their next pay packet will be.

For some time now, researchers, academics and even those not traditionally in favour of unions are in agreement – the continued fall in trade union density has been a key factor in the rise of poor quality jobs.

So why is it that young working people aren’t turning to unions for help and support to raise work

standards?

It comes down to what young workers consider as ‘normal’ in the world of work.

The rise in insecure work (such as zero hour contracts, temporary work or self-employment) has left many young workers grateful for some – any – form of security.

“Unless you’re in a traditional profession where your pay goes up every year or you have a set career path, it’s hard to know what is normal,” says Jenny, 28, a private sector worker in the tech industry.

“When I started, all I knew was that my job paid more than the minimum wage and was better than a lot of my friends who were working part-time. Honestly, I felt really lucky to have found that job.”

Andy graduated in 2010 and struggled to find work in the field he studied. “I ended up doing agency work for two years: general admin, data entry, anything I could get.

Eventually, one of the employers took me on for six months. And after two consecutive contracts, I was made permanent. I’d say most of my friends were in that position.”

Many of today’s young workers started work during or on the back of the financial crash, and continued through a stalling economic recovery. As a result, pay for all workers has stagnated, but none more so than for young people. The average millennial is set to earn less than their parents despite having to work longer.

“It’s frustrating for those of us that want to progress” says a retail worker, who did not wish to be named. “We already get paid close to the minimum wage, and it sometimes feels like that’s all I’ll ever earn.”

There is a distinct sense of futility amongst young workers – expectations that short-term ‘stop-gap’ employment is only temporary is often dashed as more young people compete for better paid, secure jobs. And any young person



“Two in every five working people are estimated to have a ‘bad’ job”

1830

Swing Rebellion swept across Southern Britain

1831

Bristol Riot over failure to reform voting laws

1834

Tolpiddle Martyrs are sentenced to seven years’ transportation for forming a union

1836

Tolpiddle Martyrs are brought home with free pardons



## “Management present a career path when you start, but it’s just false promises”

who manages to secure these ‘good’ jobs, are so keen to impress that they accept poor standards.

One young worker in a large accountancy firm said: “I know they’re a great employer. There are a lot of career opportunities. The downside is the working culture. I started as a graduate and basically did everything they told me to do. I even signed an opt-out clause to work more than 50 hours a week. I felt like I couldn’t say no because everyone else had signed. And this was on top of studying part-time for my accountancy exams.”

It’s still the case that more than a third of young graduates remain under-employed, largely in core sectors such as retail, hospitality, health and social work, where training opportunities are increasingly non-existent.

“I’ve been talking to management for months about training. They present a career path when you start but it’s just false promises.” says Peter, a hospitality worker.

Engaging with young workers

particularly in non-traditional non-unionised workplaces is difficult. They hold different jobs, in different (often newer) more fragmented sectors, and have different priorities and aspirations.

It is difficult for unions to engage a generation who began work on the back foot whilst being repeatedly told they are fortunate to have a job. The concept of decent work has almost been lost against the backdrop of lowering work and living standards. Young people, albeit frustrated with their position, don’t know to ask for more. The need for

unions to demand more should be a goal more than ever.



**1868**

TUC is formed in Manchester

**1875**

Emma Paterson founded the first women’s trade union: the Women’s Protective and Provident Association in 1875 in Bristol



**1878**

TUC Congress in Bristol

**1888**

Match Women’s strike

# Everyone deserves a great job

Kate Bell, the TUC's Head of Economic and Social Affairs, says the reality of working life is far from good



**O**ver the past year we've been highlighting the rise of insecurity at work, with more people working on zero hours contracts, in low paid self-employment, and in agency work.

Now we want to step up our campaign to get government and employers to do something about it.

That's why the TUC has launched the Great Jobs Agenda – setting out a common bargaining agenda for trade unions, and a set of demands for

government. The agenda focuses on six areas we think are vital to making work better; a voice at work, fair pay, regular hours, fair treatment and respect, healthy workplaces, and the chance to learn and progress.

It won't be surprising that for the trade union movement, one of the most important ways we can improve work is by making sure everyone can have their say. We know that letting workers speak up in a trade union or in the boardroom isn't only good for their pay and conditions, it's good for the company's long term success too.

In the middle of the longest living crisis since Napoleonic times, it's vital that workers get a pay rise. We shouldn't forget pensions either – there's still a huge challenge to ensure everyone can have a decent retirement.

Regular hours are important to help people plan their lives – and with more than 900,000 people now on zero hours contracts too many people face having their shifts cancelled at



Photo: © Ideal Insight | www.idealinsight.co.uk

the drop of a hat. It's time for government to ban the regular use of zero hours contracts – and we're asking employers to agree a minimum notice period for allocating shifts.

When we launched the agenda in June, we put abolishing employment tribunal fees top of the list for ensuring that everyone gets fair treatment at work. It's great that the Supreme Court has now ruled that these fees – which were stopping many people from taking discrimination cases to court –

have been ruled illegal (see opposite page). But there's more to do to ensure everyone is treated fairly at work – and make sure all employers have a zero tolerance approach to discrimination.

Health and safety has always been a vital trade union concern. And with 23 million working days lost each year due to injury or illness in the workplace, it's a national issue. We're asking government to place a duty on company directors to ensure good health and safety – so that it's on the agenda in every workplace.

And finally, we want everyone to have the chance to learn and progress at work. One way to do that would be to give everyone the right to a mid-life career review, and high quality face-to-face guidance.

**“We're asking government to place a duty on company directors to ensure good health and safety”**



1889

Dock strike led by Bristol-born Ben Tillett



1889

Bristol gas workers and women cotton workers strike

1890

May Day marked around the world for eight-hour-day

1892

Women of Sanders Sweet Factory in Bristol strike, leading to Black Friday when mounted troops attacked a union march



# Why the Magna Carta still matters



This summer UNISON won an important legal case to scrap Employment Tribunal fees. The union's South West Regional Secretary **Joanne Kaye** looks at the implications of the ruling

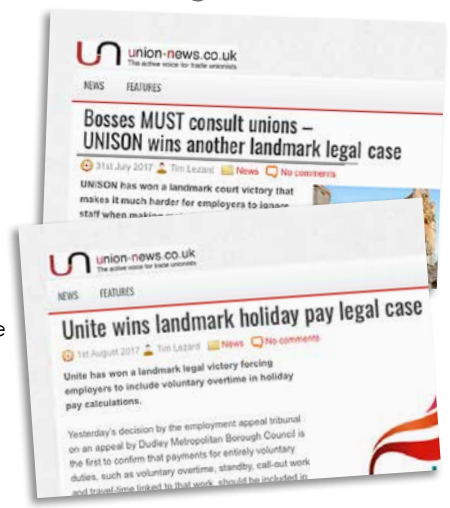
**When I started out as a trade union official, of all the laws I thought would be useful, I never expected the Magna Carta to feature.**

But in July this year, the ancient founding principles of our legal system and constitution – promising swift access to justice – were used in a judgment which had a huge impact on the right of workers across the UK to enforce rights to justice and fairness.

*“To no-one will we sell, to no-one deny or delay right or justice.”*  
The line from 1215's Magna Carta quoted in the ET judgement

UNISON's four year battle to challenge the government's introduction of Employment Tribunal fees ended with the highest UK court agreeing with our arguments that these fees were unlawful, prevented access to justice and were discriminatory. Despite earlier defeats in lower courts we felt the facts were overwhelmingly on our side. Following the decision to charge workers to lodge claims, these claims fell dramatically, a fall described by the court as “so sharp, so substantial and so sustained” that it could only have had a deterrent effect on workers, many of whom were on low to middle incomes and would have had valid claims.

Overall discrimination claims fell by 50% and pregnancy and maternity cases by 45%. The court found



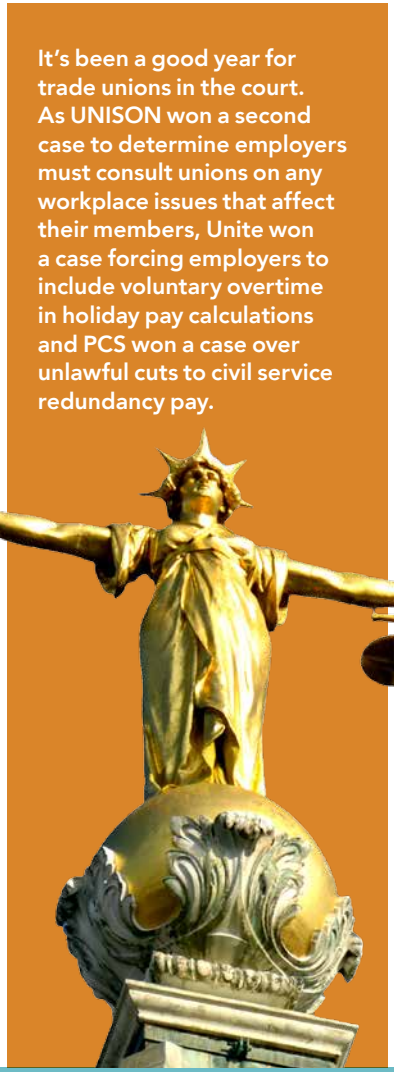
that the proportion of successful to unsuccessful claims did not substantially change, invalidating the government argument that the fees regime would reduce weak claims. The judges showed a rare and welcome understanding of the reality of life for working people, examining the hypothetical situations of sample workers and the financial impact of having to find up to £1,200 to enforce rights – where often the value of those claims would mean there was limited value in doing so.

Of the many positive statements of the judgment, however, was the finding that justice delivered to one

worker or groups of workers was not an individual benefit to them, but a public benefit which gave rights to so many others. How many times will the victories of Pamela Enderby against Frenchay Health Authority, Sharon Coleman against Attridge Law or Lisa Grant against South West Trains, to name just a few, be used to make lives better for other workers in other workplaces? Look the cases up, if you want to know more!

As any trade unionist knows, all workplace rights only have meaning if workers can enforce them and the removal of fees will make that so much more possible. The Supreme Court judgment said what we have always known – that enforcement procedures can only work fairly and properly if they are backed up by an accessible system of adjudication. Otherwise, the party in the stronger bargaining position will always prevail.

In this case, UNISON spoke up for those in the weaker position in any employment relationship – and after four years, we won. It is a huge victory and one which will have a resounding impact on our movement's future capacity to stand up for workers everywhere.



It's been a good year for trade unions in the court. As UNISON won a second case to determine employers must consult unions on any workplace issues that affect their members, Unite won a case forcing employers to include voluntary overtime in holiday pay calculations and PCS won a case over unlawful cuts to civil service redundancy pay.

**“As any trade unionist knows, all workplace rights only have meaning if workers can enforce them and the removal of fees will make that so much more possible”**

**1896**  
Bridgwater brick workers' strike

**1897**  
Plymouth builders' strike

**1898**  
TUC Congress in Bristol despite fire in Colston Hall



**1900**  
Labour Party formed

**1901**  
Taff Vale Railway wins damages against union after strike

# Tolpuddle

NUS President  
Shakira Martin

The Skimmity Hitchers



**T**housands of people attended this year's Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival to hear Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn pay tribute to the Dorset farmworkers credited with the birth of trade unionism.

"Those six labourers probably didn't know the impact of what they were doing at that time," he said. "They lit a spark, a flame that spread across the whole country and trade unionism grew as a result of the oppression. They have given us a legacy we all have to live up to and here, in Tolpuddle, we're living up to that legacy."

All pics by Jess Hurd [www.jesshurd.com](http://www.jesshurd.com)

People came to the festival from all over the UK to enjoy music, comedy and politics by a wide variety of acts and speakers.



Jeremy Corbyn

Clive Lewis MP



Unite Mixed Fleet Cabin Crew strikers



## 1906

Trade Disputes Act establishes system of 'voluntarism'

## 1908

Carter Ernie Bevin leads against Bristol unemployment. He went on to become founder of the TGWU and Minister of Labour.



## 1912-13

Great Unrest with strikes, including Cornwall china clay strike



## 1914

First World War



Laying wreaths at the grave of James Hammett, the only Martyr buried in the village



Maddy Carty grabs a pic with Jeremy Corbyn



TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady



Francesca Martinez

Black Water County



**Tolpuddle 2018**  
will be on  
July 20 - 22



Robb Johnson



Kay Wilcox, Catherine Rayner, Joanne Kaye and Jo Stevens MP lead a discussion on Women and Brexit



**1917**

Russian Revolution

**1918**

TUC is 50 with 5 million members

**1921**

Miners are locked out

**1926**

General Strike

# Educating reps

Tim Lezard discovers what unions are doing to train their members

**N**ineteenth century playwright **George Bernard Shaw** is credited with coining the phrase “**educate, agitate, organise**”.

A hundred years on, trade union reps across the South West are reaping the rewards as unions go into workplaces and train them up.

“Now we link education much more explicitly to organising,” explains Mark Everden, UNISON’s South West Regional Organiser (Education).

“Education is how we get members involved, get them campaigning, making their workplaces better.

“Education doesn’t sit away from organising. It’s an essential tool for organising. We make sure our activists have the skills, knowledge and confidence to go out and organise. We want them to have the confidence to challenge their employer.”

UNISON, which last year trained some 1,000 reps and members in the region, also runs courses in CV writing and interview techniques – they are proving to be popular as the cuts force workers to reapply for their own jobs.

The most popular course run by Unite – which trained more than 1,300 reps last year – was the five-day basic workplace reps course, teaching new reps about organising, negotiating and



recruiting, giving them an overview on employment law and discrimination.

Supplemented with additional courses for health and safety reps, equality reps and learning reps, Unite also runs a variety of other courses around public speaking, campaigning, communicating political courses as well as how to organise and chair meetings.

“All our union’s courses are founded on the three pillars of Unite’s vision: organising, global solidarity and politics,” says Karen Cole, Unite’s Regional Education and Equalities Organiser.

“Unite reps are active in all these areas which is necessary to improve our members’ lives both at work and in wider society.

“Once they’re elected to a position in the union, we expect them to book themselves onto a course so

“Workplace union reps are the lifeblood of trade unionism”

we can equip them with the skills and knowledge to do the role effectively, whether that’s chairing meetings, public speaking, communicating or negotiating for members at work.”

The work of unions educating their members is welcomed and supported by the TUC.

“Workplace union reps are the lifeblood of trade unionism,” says Marie Hughes, TUC Education Officer for the South West and Southern & Eastern regions. “They are the volunteer champions for members. It is their role that makes work safer and more productive.

“It is far from an easy job and its rewards are the satisfaction of supporting others. To do it well reps need to be trained. Unions all have their own training provision suited to their own needs.

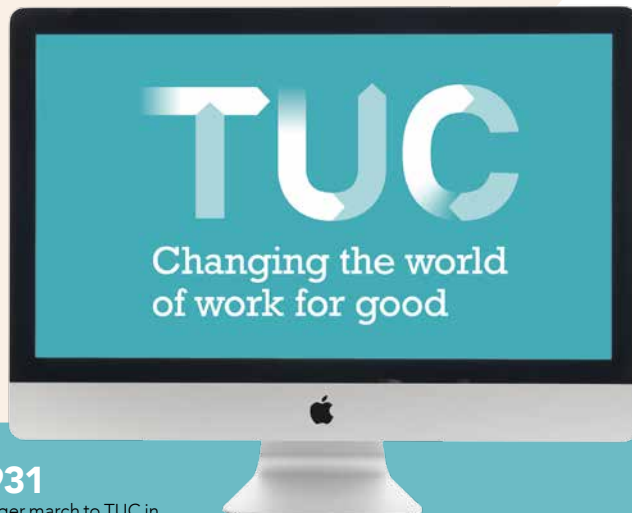
Above: Mark Everden. Right: Karen Cole



“The TUC co-ordinates this work and its education service has a proud record. It is now rolling-out a range of new courses using on-line learning. This will especially suit reps in the South West who have not been able to attend a local course. Already the new courses are attracting a younger group of reps and more women.”



You may have noticed our new-look logo to mark our 150th anniversary. Check out our new website [www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk)



**1931**

Hunger march to TUC in Bristol leads to rioting

**1939**

South Croft mine in Cornwall on strike

**1939**

Second World War shows importance of unions

**1945**

End of Second World War and Labour election landslide

## Help online

**T**he TUC has launched an online advice service to help trade union reps in the workplace.

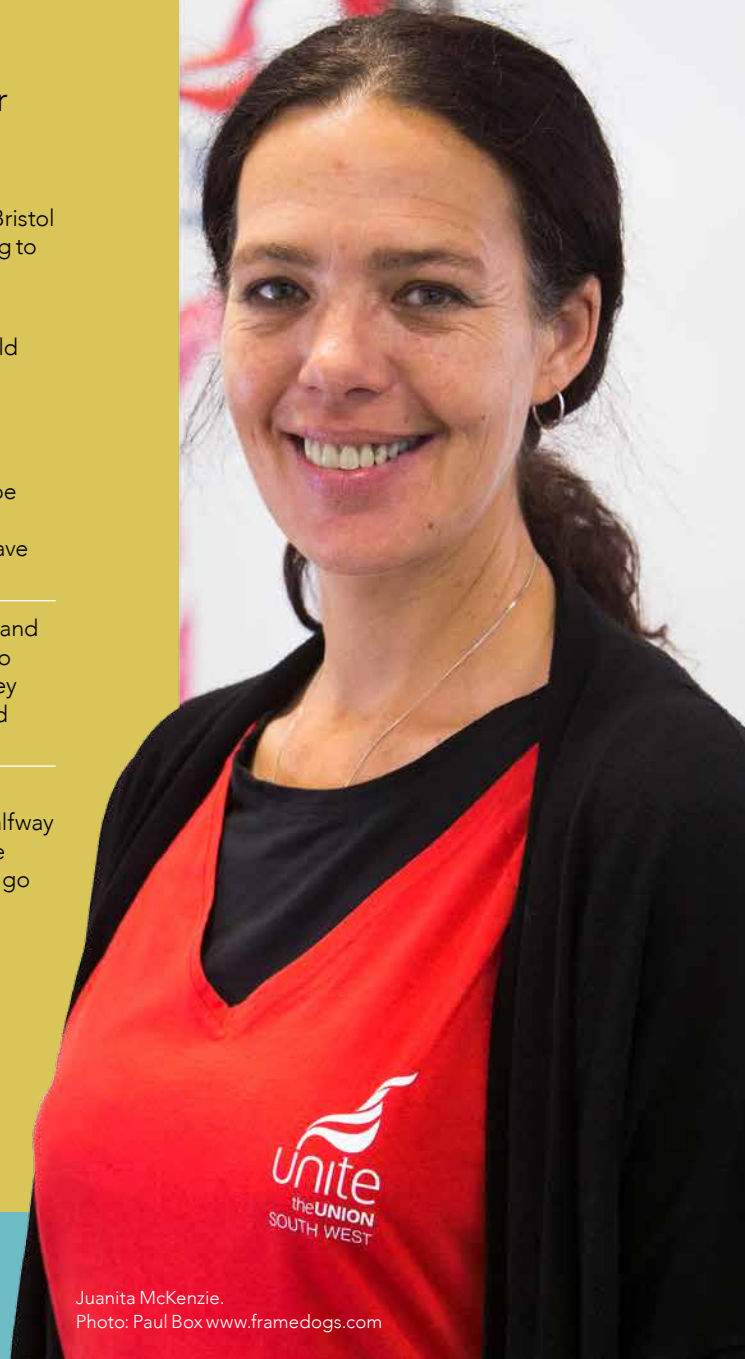
TU Education's new website [www.tueducation.org.uk](http://www.tueducation.org.uk) provides reps with answers to commonly-experienced problems at work, allowing them instant access to information without having to first join a classroom course.

"Reps really benefit from our classroom courses, but they're not always easy to get to," explains Marie Hughes, Education Officer for the South West and Southern & Eastern regions.

"The advantage of e-learning is you can do it at your own pace, in your own time. We wanted to help new reps by giving them basic information if they needed it right away. They can, of course, build on that basic knowledge when they attend one of our classroom courses."

The new site also contains e-notes – briefings on topics as diverse as universal credit, stress and mental health – as well as allowing reps to join an online forum to share experiences and advice with trade union tutors, and reps from other unions and workplaces.

Weekly webinars hosted by a TUC expert will take place in September to cover a range of topics including public sector pay, occupational cancer, union membership and how you can support mid-life and older workers. The webinars give learners a chance to ask questions, chat to other reps and learn something new.



Juanita McKenzie.  
Photo: Paul Box [www.framedogs.com](http://www.framedogs.com)

# "I went on a course ... and got a new job"

Juanita McKenzie believes she has her union to thank for her new job

The Unite member was always shy about public speaking but, having attended a learning reps course, she gained new confidence and applied for a promotion at Bristol City Council to become a Performance and Customer Engagement Officer, talking to marginalised groups.

"I would never have applied for the job before I went on the course," she says. "I completely avoided speaking to groups of people or giving presentations. If I could get out of it, I would.

"But that all changed when I went on the course. I was with a supportive group of people and learned everyone was as scared as me!

"My advice is everything you can possibly learn, go ahead and do it. You mustn't be afraid of learning. Some people have a barrier because it's a long time since they were at school. It's challenging to do things but you might find, as I did, that you have undiscovered talents."

Two UNISON health and safety reps from a private care home attended a course and told fellow learners about an issue they were experiencing with a hoist they used to lift people in and out of bed. As a result of gaining confidence from the course, they returned to their workplace and challenged their employer, who backed down and provided new equipment.

A UNISON member in Dorset vowed to finish writing a novel after attending a lunchtime session about identifying your skills. She told the course tutor: "I was halfway through writing a novel but stopped because I thought people like me didn't write novels. I learned today that I do have a skill, and I'm going to use it, so I'm going to go home and finish it."

**"It's challenging to do things but you might find, as I did, that you have undiscovered talents"**

**1960s**

Series of strikes amongst Devon's engineering factories



**1964**

Industrial Tribunals established

**1968**

Fine Tubes strike in Plymouth starts and lasts 2 years



On the frontline  
of the war against  
modern slavery

# Policing work



**T**im Lezard talks to Cornwall's Migrant Support Officer PC Steve Edser about how he wins the trust of Cornwall's migrant community

"The first look we get is rabbit in the headlights because trust in the police is quite low due to how some are treated by their home police force," explains PC Steve Edser.

"But the more they get to know us, the more they realise they can trust us. You can see their attitude change and before long they're laughing with us and thinking the British police are quite nice."

Steve, who is based in Bodmin, started work as a Migrant Support Officer on an initial twelve-month attachment in 2010. He works alongside his colleague Bev Faull.

"My son-in law is Lithuanian," Steve says. "He told me about the problems he had when he came to the UK, people taking advantage of him because he didn't speak English. I went for the job, got accepted and we have been lucky enough that the role was made permanent after senior management recognised the need and value.

"It's very rewarding. Every day is different. We are promoting integration, looking out for crime concerns, crime trends and victimisation of migrant workers. One of the biggest parts of the job is highlighting to people how to spot the signs of modern slavery."

Cornwall, with its high turnover of seasonal workers and holiday-makers, is a target for modern-day slavers, with pop-up brothels appearing in seaside resorts and agricultural

**"We are promoting integration, looking out for crime concerns, crime trends and victimisation of migrant workers"**



Below: Migrant Support Officers  
Bev Faull and Steve Edser



1968

TUC Centenary



1969

In Place of Strife White Paper, which restricted union actions, defeated

1970

Equal Pay act introduced

1971

Kill the Bill protests against Tory union reforms

1972

Miners' Strike, mass picket forces Satley Gate to be closed

“I go into schools and communities trying to educate people about the realities of migration”



workers sometimes found living and working in horrendous conditions.

“We have dealt with some terrible cases,” says Steve. “People who have had their passports withdrawn, money taken off them. They are totally controlled.

“On one occasion an individual working in a factory was told by someone from his own country:

‘I got you the job, you give me money’. They were taken to one side, moved into different accommodation, their identification and cash card taken off them, and money taken out of their account after they were threatened with violence.”

Having come across a case, the next step is trying to gain the trust of the exploited workers.

“A lot of people won’t trust the police in their own

country because they are exploited by them, so they are understandably slow to trust us,” Steve says.

“The most rewarding part of my job is gaining that trust and speaking to people who would never normally contact the police. Now they contact us via telephone or email or Facebook or whatever. They know we’re here to help them and will deal with them sympathetically.”

Steve tells of employers failing to provide pay slips, holiday pay, the National Minimum Wage, and of workers forced to live together in unpleasant, overcrowded conditions.

“One group was placed into caravans so unsafe we had to move them out immediately,” Steve says. “They were also being transported to work in dangerous vehicles.

“We told one gang-master in advance that we were going to inspect his vehicles ... and still four out of six of them failed.

“They simply weren’t safe, had bald tyres, oil leaks. They wouldn’t have passed an MOT test so we took them off the road. It shows how the gangmaster felt about the people he was transporting because he knew his

vehicles were going to be stopped, yet didn’t even bother to check whether they were roadworthy.”

The scheme, which was initially paid for by The Migration Impact Fund, has undoubtedly been a success, with six gangmasters having their licences revoked and countless individuals helped.

But there is still plenty of work to do as, post-Brexit, Steve says he has witnessed a rise in hate crimes in Cornwall.

“I go into schools and communities trying to educate people about the realities of migration,” he says.

“I try to put them in the position of migrant workers asking ‘Would you be prepared to spend money on transportation, leave your family for a country whose language you don’t speak, have little knowledge of the laws and how to obtain services, work with people you don’t know, to do a minimum wage job just so you could put food on your table back home?’

“I tell them: ‘Don’t have a go at them because they’re brave enough to do it. They’re throwing themselves into work to better themselves. What’s wrong with that?’”

## How to spot a victim of modern day slavery

- » **Health and wellbeing deteriorating, unexplained injuries, malnourished**
- » **Other parties holding travel or I.D. documents**
- » **Not knowing where in the country they are**
- » **Indicating they have been threatened with violence**
- » **Persons (in charge) speaking for others, “victims” being subservient**
- » **No money, known to be working but looking for handouts/stealing food or indicating working but not being paid.**
- » **Same address being used for numerous people, Houses of multiple occupancy e.g. too many people living there for size of property (bedding in unusual places)**
- » **Next of kin details given as someone other than a relative**
- » **Evidence of alcohol or drug abuse (controlling factor)**

**1973**

Second Miners’ Strike amidst Middle East fuel crisis – three-day week

**1974**

Ted Heath election – Who governs Britain? – Labour minority government

**1976**

Race Relations Act

**1978**

Winter of Discontent leads to national strikes over low pay



Changing the world of work for good



# 150 years

## of standing up for workers

The TUC was founded in 1867. South West TUC Regional Secretary **Nigel Costley** looks through the South West archives at some key moments



**W**orkers have joined together to speak with one voice for as long as people went to work to earn a wage.

But trade unions as we know them can be traced back to the late 1700s. They were mainly craft societies with astonishing levels of solidarity, such as the weavers and shearmen of Wiltshire, the felt hatters of South Gloucestershire and brush makers in Bristol.

The Combination Acts failed to stop workers forming unions and when they were repealed in 1924 unions could lawfully exist. A strike wave followed and employers demanded ways to stop the new unions. When farm workers formed a union in Tolpuddle the local squire used an obscure law against secret oaths to arrest the leaders and have them transported into slavery until a massive protest forced their release.

By the mid 1800s the hundreds of different unions needed a national voice and effective co-ordination. In 1868 the Trades Union Congress was born at a meeting in Manchester.

The same year the first attempt to form a Bristol Trades Council was made, called the Council of Amalgamated

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Striking miners at Pillowell in the Forest of Dean, 1921

Trades. It didn't survive but on 26th January 1873 a small group of trade unionists met in the Cork and Bottle on Castle Green and established Bristol Trades Council. Others soon followed around the region.

Around that time was the start of what was called 'new unionism' when

workers in less skilled jobs came together to protect their interests. Bristol witnessed a big growth of unionism amongst dock, gas and factory workers. Inspired by the London match workers, women now joined unions such as those in the cotton mills and chocolate factories.

1979

Conservative victory led by Margaret Thatcher

1983

People's March for Jobs sets off from Land's End



1983

NGA Messenger Newspaper dispute

1984

GCHQ unions banned from Cheltenham base



1984-5

Miners' Strike



Unions still faced repressive laws to limit their actions but by the early 1900s a system of 'voluntarism' developed in Britain where unions and employers were free to bargain with little interference from the courts.

Just before the First World War a period called the 'great unrest' saw big union growth and a strike wave. In 1913 the Cornish Clay Workers struck for a pay rise and union recognition. After a long strike it seemed they were beaten back into work but they refused to give up the fight and within weeks they won.

Military conflict forced the government to turn industry towards the war effort and with thousands of men heading off to fight, workers

including many women learnt they had real power if they stuck together.

People saw that industries such as coal mining were more efficient if nationally planned for the public good. But after the war coal prices plummeted and mine owners demanded pay cuts. In defence of the miners the TUC called the 1926 General Strike.

The miners' union insisted not a penny off the pay, not a minute on the day and with no prospect of a compromise, the strike was called off. The defeat was devastating for unions and working people. The depression of the 1930s led to mass unemployment and poverty. Unions didn't recover until the Second World War.

In 1945 workers turned to Labour for a more radical way of running the country. Industries were nationalised



and the NHS was born. Unions grew rapidly and a powerful shop stewards movement developed emphasising grass-roots organisation.

Devon saw a strike wave in the 1960s especially in the engineering factories. The dispute at Finetubes in Plymouth was to be the longest, lasting two years. High inflation forced workers to take action to ensure wages kept pace and unions were at the centre of economic and political life. White collar workers joined unions in their thousands.

But with economic crisis came pressure to tackle union power. When Margaret Thatcher was elected

in 1979 she set out to destroy the powerful unions, especially the printers and the miners.

In the South West print workers at Arrowsmiths in Bristol were involved in a long dispute. Globalisation, new technology, changes in society and government policies led to a turbulent period that saw union membership decline.

In 1984 the Tory government banned workers at the Cheltenham communications headquarters – GCHQ – from being in a union. Many refused to leave the union and a long campaign led by the civil service unions followed. In 1997 the new Labour government overturned the ban and the sacked union members walked triumphantly back into work.

Unions stemmed the membership losses and concentrated their efforts on new ways to organise workers. Today's fragmented labour market poses fresh challenges for unions especially how to win over young workers.

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## TUC addresses mental health at work

Successful national campaigns already exist to remove the stigma of mental health in the public eye, yet evidence shows many workers still struggle with mental health at work, and often face discrimination from bosses and colleagues. On top of this, a recent TUC survey found workplace stress is rising and is now the biggest concern for health and safety reps in the South West.

To support reps, officers and members on this issue, TUC South West and TUC Education are holding two events in the autumn that will introduce the issue of mental health at work. Both events will cover mental health awareness, mental health first aid, dealing with stress at work, as well as provide resources for attendees to adapt and use in their workplaces. Lunch will be provided. To book your place, visit: [www.tuc.org/uk/south-west](http://www.tuc.org/uk/south-west)

• **Cornwall**  
Monday 23 October – 10am – 1pm

• **Bristol**  
Friday 1 December – 10am – 1pm

More dates will be announced in 2018.

1993

UNISON is formed after NUPE, NALGO and COHSE merge



1993

Arrowsmith dispute in Bristol



1993

John Monks turns TUC into a campaign body and launches the Organising Academy

1997

New Labour lifts ban on GCHQ unions

# Solidarity with Grenfell

# Rally for better pay

**F**irefighters in the South West, along with the TUC, have raised more than £1,000 at this summer's Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival in July for the Grenfell Firefighters' Support Fund.

firefighters present were very moved by this show of appreciation.

A cheque was presented by FBU South West official Tam McFarlane to a group of heroic firefighters from Battersea fire station who responded to the Grenfell fire. McFarlane was joined by Nigel Costley, South West TUC regional secretary, and Joanne Kaye, South West TUC vice-chair.

"The men and women who attended Grenfell did an incredible job in the most challenging circumstances imaginable, and the horrors they experienced will stay with them for the rest of their lives. The presentation of this cheque shows that they not only have the respect and appreciation of everyone in the fire services across the UK, but of trade unionists and members of the public countrywide."

Tam McFarlane said: "The support and solidarity shown by everyone at the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival towards our colleagues who responded to Grenfell was very heart-warming. People were queuing up at the FBU stall to donate to the firefighters' hardship fund. All of the

Nigel Costley said: "Tolpuddle celebrates the solidarity of farm workers when they formed an early union and of workers across the country who won their freedom. The solidarity being shown here today is to the firefighters who fought this unprecedented blaze at Grenfell that took so many lives".

Photo: Mark Thomas, www.markthomasphotos.com



**T**UC general secretary Frances O'Grady is to speak at a rally for better pay in Cornwall.

Figures from the Office of National Statistics show wages in the county are nearly £100 less a week than the national average.

South West TUC Regional Secretary Nigel Costley said: "Cornwall's workers have lost some £1,117 a year in real terms since 2008, and with inflation running ahead of pay rises, the wage squeeze is getting worse.

"In addition, public sector workers in vital services, such as health, education and local government, have faced a pay freeze followed by a 1% pay cap, leading to the scandal of nurses using food banks to cope.

"Cornwall needs an economy that offers young people a decent career without having to leave the county to get a wage to live on."

Falmouth teaching assistant Jayne Kirkham, a UNISON member, wrote a post on Facebook after spotting an advertisement for a TA that paid the equivalent of £7.44 per hour. Her post was seen by more than 52,500 people – highlighting the depth of concern about the issue.

She said: "We have historically had a problem with low wages in Cornwall, and the minimum wage £7.50 rate currently only applies to over 25s: if you are between 18 and 20 you can be paid £5.40 per hour, £4.05 if you are 16-18.

"Labour rightly intends to raise the minimum wage for everyone over 18 to £10 per hour, and remove the public sector 1% pay cap. But even £10 per hour would not be enough.

"The gap between wages and living costs in Cornwall has become so vast that we need to start thinking radically what we are going to do about it – before homelessness and poverty become endemic."



Trade unions want:

- » An end to the 1% pay cap for public workers
- » A real Living Wage of £8.45 an hour
- » A properly enforced minimum wage
- » A Living Wage for young workers doing the same job
- » An end to exploitative zero hours contracts
- » Good union agreements to win better pay

The rally, organised by Cornwall Trades Council and the South West TUC, takes place at 12.30pm at Lemon Quay in Truro, Cornwall on Saturday, October 21.

**"Cornwall needs an economy that offers young people a decent career without having to leave the county to get a wage to live on"**

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**TUC**  
Changing the world  
of work for good

2007  
Unite is formed



2013  
Frances O'Grady elected first woman general secretary of TUC



2018  
TUC's 150th anniversary

