



## HUNGRY FOR JUSTICE!

McDonalds workers campaigning  
for a new deal

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# Unions defending public services

**Nigel Costley warns essential public services across the West Country are being torn apart by outsourcing and austerity**



Public services are being crushed by cuts in front of our eyes. Health workers have to fight to defend the service and the patients they care for. Staff shortages look set to get worse and the solution is not more privatisation and fragmentation. This magazine highlights some of the issues but shows how workers and their unions will fight to defend every part of every public service.

The impact on the health service is being felt across the South West and skills shortages are worse since the Brexit vote. In the face of a 3,500 shortfall in midwives, the Royal College of Midwives has called for a fair pay rise to help retain and recruit the necessary staff. Care workers often go above and beyond their duties to

make sure clients are cared for. Society should not expect public workers to keep covering up for the lack of resources provided by government.

Teacher workload has reached unprecedented levels and recruitment for secondary schools missed its target by a long way. 80% of the required number of secondary trainees were recruited, the worst performance since comparable records began seven years ago. Education suffers as a consequence.

Local government workers fear that even the statutory services their councils must provide are at risk if the level of cutbacks continues and in some cases are already failing. Members of the PCS union recently



“The cold was due to a broken window still not fixed after weeks of complaints”

“Working...but still on the breadline”



NHS worker **Beth**

**My partner and I both work in the NHS. We've been on the same band – second from the bottom – since we began. And even though I recently specialised so that I could go up a pay scale, for the first time, we've been kept on the same rate.**

I've definitely seen the personal and professional effect of the pay cap.

Money wise, we're really struggling, for years now. We go through our budget every month and each time, we're squeezing more out of every penny. When my little boy got sick, I was told to pay for the operation privately – something that I know would never have happened in the past – and we definitely couldn't afford.

At work, waiting times are ridiculous. My patients used to wait 30 - 45mins, now its easily 2 - 3 hours. And recently, the hospital replaced key instruments and machines with much cheaper, and frankly, inadequate, models. I couldn't bear using one particular machine on my more vulnerable and elderly patients, so I bought a better version off ebay with my own money; my manager doesn't know.

“We go through our budget every month and each time, we're squeezing more out of every penny”



Prison officer **Mel**

My take-home wage in 2007 is almost the same today. The difference is that my pension contributions have gone up by more than £100 a month. We are now expected to work until 67 or 68, instead of 60. With the 1% pay cap, my wages definitely aren't going as far as they used to. Bills, council tax, food, all of that has increased a great deal in ten years, especially since the Brexit vote!

Newer staff are on a lot less pay and often do a huge amount of overtime. But as the cuts continue, and the funding isn't there, the overtime will dry up. I don't know what some of them, with young families, will do.

There's also a huge turnover with the new entrant staff. When I started, you had to shadow someone; they'd show you the ropes, get you some confidence. The new entrant prison officers are just thrown in at the deep end!

Diagnosed mental health issues for prisoners has increased hugely, without the added problem of drugs such as spice. New staff are expected to handle all this, often on their own. It's not uncommon for there to be several spice-induced health-care call-outs in a day and staff never know how the prisoners will react. On Christmas Day 2016, four staff on one wing spent most of the day sweeping away vomit and trying to help prisoners, incapable of walking as a result of smoking spice, back in their cells.

Serious violent incidents and the sheer number of assaults on other prisoners, have increased to worrying levels. Severe shortages of staff, caused by ministerial decisions several years ago, has reduced prison officer numbers by 25% and exacerbated the pressures. However, it achieved its aim of cutting prison officers' pay and pensions. It's no wonder so many staff, both experienced and new, are leaving the service.

Interviews by *Ines Lage*

voted overwhelmingly against the pay cap and even top civil servants are complaining at government failure to recognise the damage being done by pay restraint. The union for senior civil servants, the FDA, highlighted what it describes as the lack of regard the government has for its own staff.

I recently had the chance to visit Bristol Prison. I was both shocked and inspired by the staff and their deep sense of service despite the most extreme pressures. Dangerous levels of staffing and a decade of pay cuts have had their toll. On the morning of my visit prison officers were dealing with what was the daily routine of a violent incident after an inmate lost his temper at spending yet another long night in a freezing cell. The cold was due to a broken window still not fixed after weeks of complaints. The POA rep told me they used to call on the maintenance department and the job got done. But the work was outsourced to Carillion and the job now takes weeks and involves much argument over contracts, budgets and bureaucracy.

The union had successfully made the case for more staff but pay rates and poor conditions make recruitment and retention very hard. Prisons are not at the top of public concerns but they show how public workers doggedly retain their loyalty to a service even in the face of the most brutal effects of government's failed policies.

*Nigel Costley is the Regional Secretary of the South West TUC*



## A new deal for working people

TUC March and Rally

Saturday 12 May 2018 | Central London  
[tuc.org.uk/march](http://tuc.org.uk/march) #newdeal



## Women in Leadership

Come and join our exciting new Women in Leadership programme for women trade unionists wishing to develop their leadership skills within the trade union movement, their workplace and communities.

Comprised of 10 day online and classroom-based learning including visits to EU and UK Parliaments, the course will explore women's rights, activism, campaigning, motivation, media skills and much, much more.

For more information, register your interest by email to [southwest@tuc.org.uk](mailto:southwest@tuc.org.uk)

# McStrikers win pay rise

McDonald's workers have received their biggest pay rise in ten years, thanks to a union campaign. **By Tim Lezard**

When a small group of Bakers' Union members went on strike at two McDonald's restaurants it generated national media coverage. Never before in the UK had workers had the courage to challenge one of the world's largest employers. Fast-food workers across the country are talking about it and what it means to join a union.

After the strike action, McDonald's announced a pay rise including wages for those aged over-25 leaping from £8 to £10 an hour.

"When people say that strikes achieve nothing, they should look at the changes taking place within McDonald's – zero hours contracts being eroded, pay rates increasing and union density growing," said BFAWU General Secretary Ronnie Draper.

"That is the reality for these brave workers who have taken on the second largest employer in the world and are winning.

"I'm sure McDonald's will say the timing of the pay rise is just a coincidence, but we have two strikes,

with more action being threatened, and suddenly workers have the biggest pay rise for McDonald's workers in ten years? You can make your own mind up about whether or not it's a coincidence."

The strikes have their roots in the Fight for \$15 campaign, which has seen thousands of fast food workers in hundreds of cities across the US come together to press for a pay rise. The campaign claims to have won raises for 22 million people since 2012.

"Managers are trying to isolate workers from the public and their colleagues – they make them work in the backroom, out of sight – but our members carry on organising, campaigning and agitating around the country."

Draper believes the company's weak spot is its corporate image. Unlike the public sector, where

taxpayers don't have a choice about which service they use, consumers can pick and choose where they spend their money.

"A company that depends on profit is always worried about the brand," he says. "They're worried about their reputation which, I believe, is why we are in such a strong position."

The campaign has been backed by the wider trade union movement – specifically, Ronnie says, the TUC, Unite members campaigning for fair tips at Pizza Hut and BECTU members on strike at Ritzy cinemas.

Speaking at TUC Congress in Brighton last September, TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "Just this month we've cheered on the brilliant McDonald's workers in the Bakers' Union.

"Out on strike for the basic dignity of fair pay, guaranteed hours and recognition of their union. Brave young workers with the courage to win.

"Proof that, while we welcome Labour's pledge of repeal, the anti-democratic, anti-Trade Union Act won't stop us fighting for justice.

"The biggest rise is for workers aged over 25, whose wages will leap from £8 an hour to £10 an hour"



BFAWU General Secretary Ronnie Draper (left) and TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady (in green) meet McDonald's strikers at TUC Congress in Brighton.  
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# ♥ UNIONS



"To coin a phrase: 'McStrike, We're Lovin' It'. Let's hear it for the bakers, and all workers standing up for their rights. Every time we expose another bad boss and organise, that's more workers that know that unions are on their side, more decent employers who won't be undercut by the bad and more pressure on the government to change the law."

At the same event, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn also praised the strikers, saying: "McDonald's boss is paid 1,300 times more than the lowest-paid of his staff, symbolic of the deep inequality and injustice that scars our society."

As long as workers are underpaid, Ronnie says the campaign will continue. "There will be McDonald's strikes during 2018 unless the company talks to us," he says. "We will meet with them to discuss recognition to represent their workforce, but I doubt they'll agree, so it's inevitable more strikes will take place, over a wider geographical area."

Other food chains, such as Burger King and Wetherspoons, are in the union's sights too.

"The strikers are incredible. They're standing up to the second biggest employer in the world," concludes Ronnie. "They could have said 'No',

"McDonald's boss is paid 1,300 times more than the lowest-paid of his staff, symbolic of the deep inequality and injustice that scars our society."

but they said 'Yes' and they're backed not just by other unions in the UK but by unions globally."

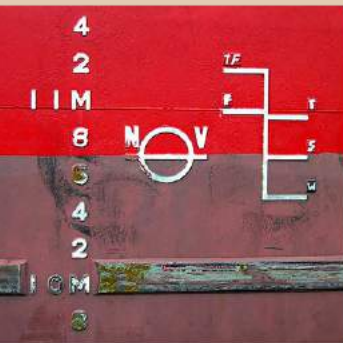


# WEST COUNTRY UNION CHAMPIONS

## PART ONE 1836-1898

Nigel Costley  
looks back at  
some inspirational  
characters from the  
South West

Right: Samuel Plimsoll  
Below: The Plimsoll line



On July 27 1836, the Loyal Sons of the Globe held its first meeting in the Old Globe, Christmas Street, Bristol. This was the start of the Bristol branch of the boilermakers' union. **John Allen** became secretary and later general secretary.

Born in Cheltenham in 1830, print worker **Harry Slatter** was in 1869 elected one of the earliest general secretaries of the Provincial Typographical Association. He was



Harry Slatter

also president of the Cooperative Printing Society and sat on the TUC Parliamentary Committee – now the General Council – from 1877 to 1890.

The son of a Cornish miner, **George Odger** became a shoemaker and was one of the 'junta' that led unions before the TUC was formed. He represented London Trades Council at the first TUC Congress in 1869 and became

one of its first secretaries. He stood in Bristol in the 1870 by-election for the Labour Representation League, set up the year before to promote working class MPs. He wore the silk hat made for him by the Hatters' Trade Union during the campaign in Bristol, coming a close second, winning 4,382 votes to the Tory's 4,686. The hat is now in the People's History Museum in Manchester.

Devon-born **Robert Knight** became an angle ironsmith during the construction of Brunel's Royal Albert Railway Bridge across the Tamar. He got a job in the dockyard at Devonport in 1857 where he became involved with the Boiler Makers and Iron and Steel Builders' Society, and was elected general secretary in 1870, representing the union on the Labour Representation League and the TUC. The Boiler Makers eventually joined the General and Municipal Workers in 1982 to form what is now the GMB.



George Odger



Emma Paterson

Plymouth carpenter **John Prior** led the local Joiners' Society, whose demands for better conditions led to a lock-out. His handling of the dispute enhanced his reputation and he was elected to the General Council of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners. He became general secretary in 1871.

**Emma Paterson** founded the first women's trade union: the Women's Protective and Provident Association in 1875 in Bristol. The union represented a wide range of workers including dressmakers, upholsterers, bookbinders, artificial-flower makers, feather dressers, tobacco, jam and pickle workers, shop assistants and typists. She went on to become the first woman member of the TUC General Council.

Born in Bristol in 1824, **Samuel Plimsoll** is remembered by unions for his services to those who work on the sea. As an MP his first speech helped legalise trade unions and he raised awareness of the hazards of methane gas in mines.

He led a long campaign against ship owners who over-loaded ships risking the lives of all on board. His simple solution of a load line was won and the Plimsoll line is now on every ship in the world.



Ben Tillett

## “At last I’m a socialist” – Beatrice Webb confides in her diary about her true political leanings

In 1886 **Robert Gray Tovey** of the Clothiers Cutters’ Association and Secretary of Bristol Trades Council was selected by Bristol and District Labour League to stand against city mayor Charles Wathen. The League advocated municipalisation of water, lighting and tramway undertakings and the abolition of unnecessary sub-lettings of corporation contracts. Despite a dirty campaign during which Robert Tovey was called an atheist and a drunkard, he lost by just eighteen

votes. The following year he had better luck becoming Bristol’s first Labour councillor.

**Ben Tillett** was born into poverty at 8 John Street, Bristol in the shadow of the Easton Coal Pit. He moved to London and after marrying Jane Tompkins, settled down in Bethnal Green and had nine children. He joined the Tea Operatives and General Labourers’ Association and in 1887 was elected as general

secretary. In 1889 Tillett’s union was involved in the London Dock Strike, where dockers demanded four hours continuous work at a time and a minimum rate of sixpence an hour. During the strike Tillett lost his speech impediment and became one of the labour movement’s greatest orators. After five weeks the employers granted all the dockers’ main demands. After the successful strike, the dockers formed the General Labourers’ Union. Tillett was elected general secretary and Tom Mann became the union’s first president. In London some 20,000 men joined this new union. Tillett and Mann wrote a pamphlet together called *New Unionism*.

Bournemouth was one of the first towns to have a Fabian Society and the most famous early member – **Beatrice Webb** – was born in Standish House near Gloucester, the grand-daughter of radical MP

Richard Potter. After she moved to Bournemouth her letter on unemployment was printed in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and seen by Joseph Chamberlain, a leading Liberal. She had an infatuation with the ageing widower and it stirred her political writings. During work on co-operative history, Beatrice met **Sidney Webb**. In 1890 she noted in her diary: “At last I am a socialist.” Sidney came to Bournemouth to recover from scarlet fever and in 1891 they were married. The couple wrote a book on the history of trade unions that is still used as a key publication for scholars. Sidney Webb wrote Clause IV of the new Labour Party constitution calling for collective ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. In 1910 Beatrice spoke in Bournemouth on her Minority Report on the Poor Law Commission. Organised by the Poole and Bournemouth branch of the National Committee for the Prevention of Destitution, the meeting heard the Fabian case for public spending to relieve poverty. Beatrice appealed to those living comfortable lives in the town to help.

Former millworker **Margaret Bondfield** was the first female cabinet minister in Britain. Born in Chard, Somerset, she began an apprenticeship at the age of fourteen in a draper’s shop in Brighton and soon got involved in the union. In 1896 the Women’s



Margaret Bondfield

Industrial Council commissioned her to investigate the pay and conditions of shop workers. In 1898 she was elected assistant secretary of the Shop Assistants’ Union and in 1908 became secretary of the Women’s Labour League. She was president of the TUC General Council in 1923. The same year she was elected Labour MP for Northampton but lost her seat a year later. She won again in 1926, in a by-election in Wallsend. She was appointed Minister of Labour by Ramsay MacDonald in 1929, the first woman to be a cabinet minister. She supported cuts in unemployment benefit to eight shillings a week, earning her the nickname ‘eight-bob Maggie’. After she lost her seat in the 1931 general election she became chair of the Women’s Group on Public Welfare. She also wrote a number of books including: *Socialism for Shop Assistants* (1909), *Why Labour Fights* (1941) and *A Life’s Work* (1949).

**In part two** more women emerge as trade union leaders, PLUS the Devon-born TUC general secretary, the miners’ leader from Somerset and the Bristol-based hockey international who refused to give the Nazi salute when playing in Berlin.

Left: Robert Gray Tovey, Centre: Robert Knight  
Right: Beatrice Webb



# The secret plans to privatise NHS workers



**Tim Lezard** looks at how unions are working together to protect hospital staff from being outsourced

**NHS trusts in the South West have begun transferring non-clinical jobs into subsidiary companies in a move unions fear will lead to worse terms and conditions, as well as affecting patient care by adding yet another management structure.**

Despite major opposition from their own workers, Yeovil is the first trust to go, with 350 estates and facilities staff transferred into a subsidiary company (or 'subco') at the start of February. Other trusts in Gloucestershire, Bath and Bristol are set to follow suit.

More than a million NHS staff have their terms and conditions protected by Agenda For Change, a system agreed by employers and unions in 2004, which harmonises their pay scales across the entire NHS.

But once employees leave the security of the NHS, unions fear they may no longer be covered by Agenda For Change, leaving the door open for the new employer to change their terms and conditions for the worse.

"The initial group transferred over won't be employed by the NHS and so might lose their Agenda

For Change terms and conditions protections," fears Helen Eccles from UNISON.

"Once staff are outside of nationally-agreed NHS contracts, things like sick pay, holiday allowance, pensions and more will come under attack. Also, new starters can be put on less favourable contracts than directly employed NHS staff.

"Some trusts have been quite open about their desire to change terms and conditions once staff are outside the NHS."

In Gloucestershire, where 900 staff risk being transferred, health chiefs have admitted the move would save around £35m over ten years by cutting back on VAT costs. The trust is taking advantage of a tax loophole known as the "contracted out services direction" which allows public organisations to claim back VAT that would be incurred

when they contract services to external organisations.

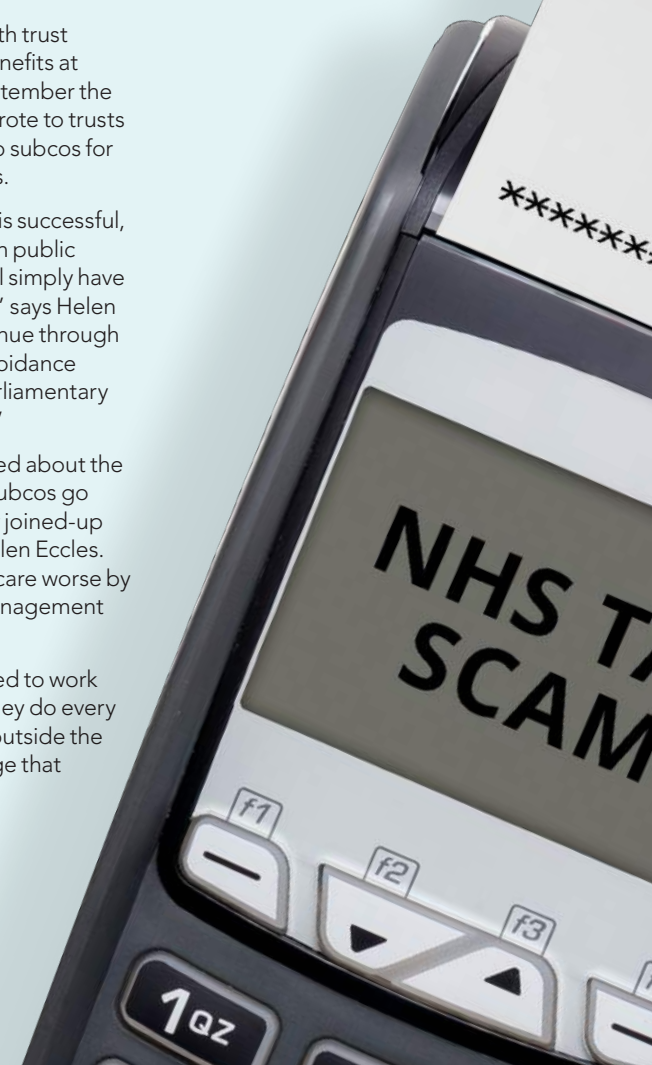
Unions dispute this – in Northumberland, a health trust says there are no VAT benefits at all – and point out in September the Department of Health wrote to trusts telling them not to set up subcos for VAT avoidance purposes.

"Even if the VAT reclaim is successful, there is no net increase in public funding; the Treasury will simply have less revenue to allocate," says Helen Eccles. "The loss of revenue through what is essentially tax avoidance has been the topic of Parliamentary debate in recent weeks."

Unions are also concerned about the break-up of the NHS. "Subcos go directly against plans for joined-up health services," said Helen Eccles. "They will make patient care worse by inserting yet another management structure.

"All parts of the NHS need to work together and in reality they do every day. Putting some staff outside the NHS defeats the message that

"Health bosses are very keen to talk about One Place. I prefer to talk about One Team"







“Putting some staff outside the NHS defeats the message that every health employee is an essential part of the team”

every health employee is an essential part of the team.”

The Leader of Stroud District Council, Doina Cornell, raised the issue at the county council’s Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, saying: “Apart from the irony of the NHS trying to avoid paying the tax that funds itself, I’m very concerned that it is workers who will pay for this move with their salaries and their pensions.

“Health bosses are very keen to talk about ‘One Place’. I prefer to talk about ‘One Team’ – the people who work hard every day to keep our NHS running in the face of unprecedented Tory cuts.

“Every NHS worker, whatever they do, wherever they work, should be valued equally, so this plan to separate non-medical staff from clinical staff, is as shameful as it is divisive.

“If non-medical staff are cut adrift from their NHS contracts, how long before the new company seeks to squeeze their terms and conditions

to save money? And how long before medical staff are forced off their NHS contracts too?”

“We are witnessing the gradual dismantling of our NHS, which is being picked apart piece by piece by a Tory government. The NHS should be caring for patients and looking after its own staff – not embarking on tax scams.”

Unite is calling for the government to compel HMRC to close this tax loophole, the health secretary to implement a moratorium on further subcos and a review of procurement and commissioning by NHS trusts in England to establish a fair, transparent and ethical framework.

Nick Bailey, who holds the health brief for Unite in Gloucestershire, said: “The Tory agenda of outsourcing has led to the fragmentation of NHS services, serious breakdowns for services to patients and the quality of care, to the cost of patients, staff, NHS services and, ultimately, the taxpayer.



“The increasing tendency of NHS trusts to create wholly-owned subsidiaries in the form of private limited companies could lead to a

flood of dozens of Carillion-type situations across England, if serious action is not taken by the government immediately.”

# Fat cat pay has no place in education

The scandal of fat cat pay has recently hit universities and led to the early retirement of the highest paid vice-chancellor, Dame Glynis Breakwell from the University of Bath.

She earned a whopping £451,000 a year and stepped down after a campaign by UCU and students.

**Bath protest at vice-chancellor pay**  
Photo: Saskia Kovandzich.



Then Bath's smaller university, Bath Spa, paid its vice-chancellor, Christina Slade, £808,000 in her final year in the job, including a £429,000 pay-off on her departure.

According to a UCU report, Hugh Brady, Vice-Chancellor of Bristol University got £323,000 and Steve West who has the title of President, Chief Executive and Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West of England has a package worth £315,269. The University of Plymouth paid some £310,149 to its vice-chancellors: Judith Petts who is taking over from David Costlett. John Vinney from the University of Bournemouth got £305,000 – a rise of more than 20% from the previous year.

Anne Carlise, vice-chancellor of Falmouth University receives more than £300,000 making her the highest paid public sector worker in Cornwall. Stephen Marston, vice-chancellor of the University of Gloucestershire, receives a salary of £165,000 and

pension contributions of £25,000. This £190,000 total falls well below the country's average vice-chancellor pay package of £281,000.

Dame Breakwell's leaving was the culmination of a ten-year campaign by local UCU reps, including Michael Carley, who told *West Country Workers*: "We started campaigning on pay, and especially pay transparency, almost a decade ago, using a combination of lobbying the governing bodies and the remuneration committee, and where we had people elected onto those bodies, direct questioning at meetings.

"The basic question every time was 'How can you justify paying this salary?' and for years we were simply brushed off. Even members of the governing body were told they could not see the reasons for the VC's pay.

"We were able to keep up the pressure because all three trade unions at Bath were united and we didn't allow management to divide us from each other or from student groups or our supporters outside such as the local Labour councillor who did much of the campaigning work."

Bath University sits at the top of the list of English universities using

zero hours contracts, while Bath, Exeter and Bristol universities have all come out in support of massive cuts in pension benefits over which the UCU is taking action. Vice-chancellors at Bath, Bristol and Exeter are also among those that enjoy accommodation provided by the university.

Soaring top pay is in stark contrast with pay caps imposed on staff and has angered students forced into big debts to pay fees and living costs. UCU general secretary Sally Hunt said rocketing vice-chancellor pay had become a real embarrassment for the higher education sector.

Sir Steve Smith, the vice-chancellor for Exeter University received a package worth £426,000 a year. He also clocked up a £14,772 hotel bill during 2015-16. Like many, he sits on

his own university's Remuneration Committee. A University of Exeter spokesman told Devonlive: "The Vice Chancellor is a member of the remuneration committee but has no power to make decisions about executive pay. He is not in attendance when these decisions are made."

Sally Hunt accused vice-chancellors of hiding behind shadowy remuneration committees, saying: "More than two thirds of vice-chancellors sit on their own remuneration committees and three-quarters of universities refuse to publish full minutes of the meetings where leadership pay is decided. We need proper transparency of pay and perks in universities and the time has come for staff and student representatives on remuneration committees."

**"We need proper transparency of pay and perks in universities and the time has come for staff and student representatives on remuneration committees"**



# Dying to Work in Dorset

**Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (DWFRS) has added its name to a charter aimed at helping employees who become terminally ill at work.**

DWFRS is the latest fire and rescue service to sign up to the Dying to Work Voluntary Charter, which is also supported by employers such as Rolls Royce, Royal Mail and the Co-op and is part of the TUC's wider Dying to Work campaign seeking greater security for terminally ill workers where they cannot be dismissed as a result of their condition.

Dying to Work was taken forward by the TUC following the case of Jacqui Woodcock, an area sales manager from Derbyshire who was forced out of her job three years ago after being diagnosed with terminal breast cancer.

The TUC is asking employers to sign up to its voluntary charter to stop cases like Jacqui's happening in the future.

South West TUC Regional Secretary Nigel Costley said: "Your job should be the least of your worries when you get a terminal diagnosis. I'm delighted that Dorset &

Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service has shown real leadership in this area, working with unions to guarantee fair treatment for terminally-ill workers.

"More than 570,000 workers are now covered by the Dying to Work Charter across the country, and we expect more employers to commit in the coming months."

Chief Fire Officer Ben Ansell said: "I'm very proud to have signed the Dying to Work Charter on behalf of Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service. Already working within the spirit of the TUC charter, we continue to demonstrate to our staff that we remain committed to their continued health and wellbeing.

"The charter represents a cornerstone in our progressive organisational culture, ensuring staff and their families will have peace of mind should they encounter a terminal diagnosis."

[www.tuc.org.uk/dying-work-campaign](http://www.tuc.org.uk/dying-work-campaign)

**"More than 570,000 workers are now covered by the Dying to Work Charter across the country"**

L-R: Chief Fire Officer Ben Ansell (DWFRS), South West TUC Regional Secretary Nigel Costley, Cllr Spencer Flowers, Positive Action Project Officer Karen Adams FBU, Andy Fowler UNISON.



## TUC raises union concerns with police commissioner

Promoting better jobs has to include tackling bad bosses who exploit workers and TUC South West is calling for a wider partnership between unions, advice groups and the enforcement bodies to tackle them. At its worst, exploitation takes the form of 'modern slavery' and human trafficking but it also includes non-payment of minimum wages, holidays, unsafe work and abuse. The TUC South West raised these issues with Sue Mountstevens, the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner who is keen to see the police prevent such crimes.

The meeting also considered Usdaw's campaign to protect shop workers from abuse and assault. Adrian Grabarski, Usdaw officer presented shocking results from a survey of members in Co-op Stores who have faced a rise in attacks. More than half of workers who responded to the survey had been threatened by a customer in the last year. Sixty had been a victim of physical violence.

**Photo: Usdaw organiser Adrian Grabarski, South West TUC Regional Secretary Nigel Costley, Avon Police & Crime Commissioner Sue Mountstevens, PCC HR manager Kate Watson and South West TUC campaigns officer Ines Lage.**



**T THOMPSONS**  
SOLICITORS  
**STANDING UP FOR YOU**

# Tolpuddle Festival

Captain Ska and Billy Bragg are the first big names to be revealed as performers at this year's Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival.

The annual trade union event, takes place in Dorset between July 20 and 22, with tickets going on sale on April 1.

Captain Ska will headline the Saturday night of the festival. The band made its name with 'Liar Liar' – a musical assault on government's health policies and before Christmas their

single about Theresa May reached number four in the UK singles chart.

Billy Bragg will make a welcome return to Tolpuddle on the Sunday.

More details of the line-up as it is announced, and details of how to get tickets are available at [www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk](http://www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk)

# Captain SKYA



# Celebrating women's suffrage



2018 is a year full of anniversaries, writes **Joanne Kaye**, Regional Secretary UNISON South West. It's not only 150 years of the TUC, 100 years since the end of the First World War and 25 years since the formation of UNISON, but it also marks 100 years since the first women were legally allowed to vote. Bristol Women's Commission has an exciting programme of activities which unions should be supporting and promoting.

Around 5,000 women are expected to attend International Women's Day events in City Hall, while South Bristol's street art festival Upfest will be showcasing women street artists and images of women's achievements,

and events promoting girls and women in science and engineering will take place to find our future female Brunels. Democracy week in the city will see suffragettes on buses across the city engaging the public in conversations about the importance of democratic participation.

It is easy to forget how recent our hard won rights are and this year is a chance to celebrate those achievements but also to renew our commitment to fight for equality and a greater voice for ordinary working people in all aspects of life.

[www.internationalwomensday.com](http://www.internationalwomensday.com)  
[www.upfest.co.uk](http://www.upfest.co.uk)

The Rebellious Sounds Archive is collecting women's contemporary stories of activism in the South West. A mobile listening booth built like a voting booth will tour museums and locations to gather and share contemporary stories of women's activism, whilst also looking back 100 years to discover local stories and connections to the women's suffrage campaign. Supported by Heritage Lottery Fund.

[www.dreadnoughtsouthwest.org.uk/rebellious-sounds/](http://www.dreadnoughtsouthwest.org.uk/rebellious-sounds/)

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# Award for Tesco rep Marie

**A 25-year old supermarket worker from Callington in Cornwall has been named Usdaw's Most Promising New Activist.**

Marie McCallion became a rep in 2016 and has helped to organise 87% membership in her Tesco store, helping young members in particular. She also spent a fortnight helping refugees in Calais.

Marie (second left) receives her award from Usdaw general secretary John Hannett (centre) and Paddy Lillis general secretary elect (left)



Changing the world of work for good