

HeartUnions 2018

A TUC guide for trade union activists

12th – 18th February 2018

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What is HeartUnions Week?

HeartUnions week will be taking place from 12 to 18 February 2018. It's a week of activity throughout England and Wales that highlights the good work that unions do every day to offer everyone a voice at work.

Why are we doing HeartUnions week?

HeartUnions week is all about building a stronger movement. We want as many of you to get involved as possible.

This week is an opportunity to celebrate the good work unions do in workplaces across the country.

Our themes this year

We want HeartUnions week to be a time when all union members can tell their stories about why they're proud to be in a union. This year we're concentrating on two campaigns that need the support of the whole trade union movement – supporting young workers at McDonald's, and stepping up the campaign to make sure public sector workers get a fair pay rise.

Supporting young workers at McDonald's

We're supporting young workers in McDonald's to organise, as well as helping the campaign get more members to sign up to the union helping them fight for better pay and conditions at work.

▣ LAST YEAR AT MCDONALD'S, WORKERS TOOK STRIKE ACTION FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY

People working at McDonald's endure low pay, zero-hours contracts and problems with bullying and harassment by poorly trained and low-paid managers.

McDonald's chief executive picks up nearly £12m a year, while those on the shop floor earn just above the legal minimum. Workers often don't even know how many hours they'll be working from week-to-week.

These problems persist because the company won't allow McDonald's workers a trade union voice at work.

Last year, workers at McDonald's took strike action for the first time in history. The company has already put pay up. Now we're campaigning for them to recognize a union – so their workers have a real voice at work.

Campaigning for a properly funded pay rise for all public sector workers

For seven years, the government have frozen public servants' pay or given them a settlement below inflation. As prices, rents and bills go up that means real hardship for many.

We're campaigning for a properly funded, above inflation, fair pay rise for all public sector workers.

Showcasing the great work unions do in all workplaces

HeartUnions week is a great time to celebrate the work that unions do in different workplaces. Throughout the week, we'll be featuring stories from across the union movement, as well as the specific actions to support McDonald's and public sector workers.

HeartUnions is also a great opportunity to talk about the Great Jobs Agenda which sets out why everyone at work should:

- get paid fairly
- work in a safe and healthy environment
- get treated decently
- have guaranteed hours
- be represented by unions and have a strong independent voice on what matters at work
- get the chance to progress at work and get on in life.

▣ WHY PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS DESERVE A PAY RISE

For seven years, the government have frozen public servants' pay or given them a settlement below inflation. As prices, rents and bills go up, that means real hardship for many.

The public sector union, Unison found that shocking numbers of healthcare staff were turning to food banks, payday lenders and pawnshops just to get by. They found that more than two thirds (67%) said they had either sought financial help or made major changes to their standards of living in the past 12 months.

A firefighter today earns £2000 less in real terms than in 2010. A midwife has seen their pay cut in real terms by £3000. And this is when rents, food costs and bills continue to rise, squeezing pay more and more.

A modest pay rise is not unaffordable. If public sector workers saw their earnings rise by inflation over the next five years, it would add just 1% to annual departmental spending.

That's why we need the government to fund a pay rise for all public sector workers now.

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What you can do to support HeartUnions Week in your area

Take action in your local area

Trades Councils are organising stalls and leaflet drops outside McDonald's stores and town centres across England and Wales to tell people about the campaign and help the union gain recognition.

On Valentine's Day, every TUC region will also be holding a mass card signing event asking the Chancellor, Philip Hammond, to show some love to our public sector workers and and give them a properly funded pay rise.

Get in touch with your regional TUC office to find out more and ask how you can get involved.

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North West JMcKenna@tuc.org.uk

Yorkshire & Humber GLewis@tuc.org.uk

Midlands RJohnston@tuc.org.uk

London, South East & East
LHeselden@tuc.org.uk

South West ILage@tuc.org.uk

Wales MMansfield@tuc.org.uk

▣ TIPS FOR RUNNING A STALL OUTSIDE MCDONALD'S

We're keen for people to sign the petition and to leave our McDonald's leaflets in the stores. We're therefore asking activists to arrange stalls outside McDonald's stores to raise awareness of the campaign, talk to people about the benefits of unions, and encourage people to sign the petition.
tuc.org.uk/mcdonalds

We strongly urge organisers and activists not to protest in stores or to put local store managers, workers or customers under any direct pressure..

Our problem is with the corporate management of McDonald's, not the staff working there nor the people choosing to eat there.

Take action online

You can sign the petition in support of young workers organising at McDonald's and putting pressure on the company to recognise the union that's backing them, at

<http://tuc.org.uk/mcdonalds>

Support the campaign for a funded, above inflation pay rise for all public service workers at

<http://bit.ly/heartunionsselfie>

Once you've signed, make sure you share the petitions on social media with the hashtag #HeartUnions so we can show as much support as possible for these campaigns.

The TUC will be featuring stories of how unions make a difference throughout HeartUnions week. So if you've got a great photo of an action you've taken part in, a story to tell about how your union helped you, or just want to tell us why everyone should HeartUnions, make sure you tweet us @The_TUC with the hashtag #HeartUnions

Take action in your workplace

HeartUnions week is a great time to ramp up action in your workplace or branch. Talk to friends and colleagues in your branch, workplace or trades council about what you want to do for the HeartUnions community day of action – and start making your plans!

If you want to make sure that local people or other workers in your workplace know about the great work done by unions and reps where you work and live, why not put up some posters or organise an event, leafletting session or street stall in your branch or local area. Or you could run a rally or lunchtime talk – you'll know best what

works in your local area or workplace. Maybe your members would like to tell their stories on social media? Make sure to use the hashtag #HeartUnions and the TUC will share as many stories as we can.

▣ 'TALKING UNION' – A BRIEF GUIDE

We talk to colleagues about a range of issues at work. Joining a union can naturally form part of that conversation. Avoid a sales or a pushy approach; it is usually best to speak to colleagues more generally. Some conversation starters could include:

- *How are you finding your role?*
- *What are you enjoying about work?*
- *Are there any concerns that you might have at work?*

Establishing a rapport with colleagues avoids coming across as 'prying' into their work. It could be that your colleague has never heard of a union. You might want to introduce what unions do, the benefits of joining a union, and why you personally joined.

If your colleague does not know much about unions, they may have some concerns. If they respond with any objections, avoid getting into an argument. Respond constructively and stay positive.

The most important skill is to listen so that you can understand their view. In the end, your colleague might decide not to join a union right away, but you have started a conversation with them and you can always follow up with them later.

Find out more

For more information about the campaign, go to:

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/heartunions-week>

Follow the campaign on:

Twitter @The_TUC and use the hashtag #HeartUnions

For more information about the campaign get in touch with:

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