

# Durham Local Government **UNISON** Bulletin

January 2026



Happy New Year and welcome to the latest edition of our quarterly newsletter.

Please get in touch if you have any ideas or suggestions for future editions

## New General Secretary

Five-year term begins in January 2026



Andrea Egan was elected as the new general secretary of UNISON in December 2025. She replaces Chrisina McAnea who has served as general secretary since 2021.

**Branch Secretary:**  
Ian Pritchard

**Assistant Branch Secretary:**  
Jacqueline Woods

**Telephone :**  
03000 263300

**Email:**  
unison@durham.gov.uk /  
Kirsty.mason@durham.gov.uk

**Website**  
[www.durhamunison.info](http://www.durhamunison.info)

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Thinking of joining, contact us in the branch or you can join online at **[www.joinunison.org](http://www.joinunison.org)**



This years UNISON AGM (Durham Branch) will be taking place at 12 noon, on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February via Teams.

If you are planning on attending, could you please let us know at [unison@durham.gov.uk](mailto:unison@durham.gov.uk), so we can add you to the list to receive an invite and all relevant paperwork for the meeting.

It would be wonderful to see as many members as possible so please make every effort to attend, thank you.

## NEWSFLASH

### Unison Conferences 2026

Conference	Date	Venue
Black Members	16 Jan —18 Jan	Brighton Centre
Higher Education	29 January	Hilton Metropole, Brighton
Women Members	12 Feb—14 Feb	TBC
Community	27 Feb—28 Feb	oco St. John's, Solihull
Health	13 Apr—15 Apr	EICC, Edinburgh
Local Government	14 Jun—15 Jun	Brighton Centre
Water/Env/Transport	14 June	Brighton Centre
Energy	15 June	Brighton Centre
National Delegate	16 Jun—19 Jun	Brighton Centre
Retired Members	06 Oct—07 Oct	TBC
Police & Justice	08 Oct—09 Oct	TBC
Disabled Members	24 Oct—26 Oct	TBC
LGBT+ Members	13 Nov—15 Nov	TBC
Young Members	27 Nov—29 Nov	voco St. John's, Solihull

# NEWSFLASH



We'd like to introduce you to Abby Macintosh and Nicola Halford, who will be working with the branch, alongside Conor McArdle from UNISON Northern.

Abby and Nicola will be out and about in workplaces throughout 2026, talking to staff across our sites about the issues that matter to you. Please come and say hello if you see them at your workplace.

# NEWSFLASH

## Employment Rights Bill

The Employment Rights Bill received its 'Royal Assent' on 18 December 2025. Employment law changes included in the Act will take place over a period of 2 years. Most changes will happen in 2026 and 2027.

### February 2026 changes

#### Increased dismissal protection for industrial action

- Dismissal for taking part in industrial action will become 'automatically unfair'. This will remove the current 12-week limit for claiming unfair dismissal. This will change in February 2026.

#### Trade union activity

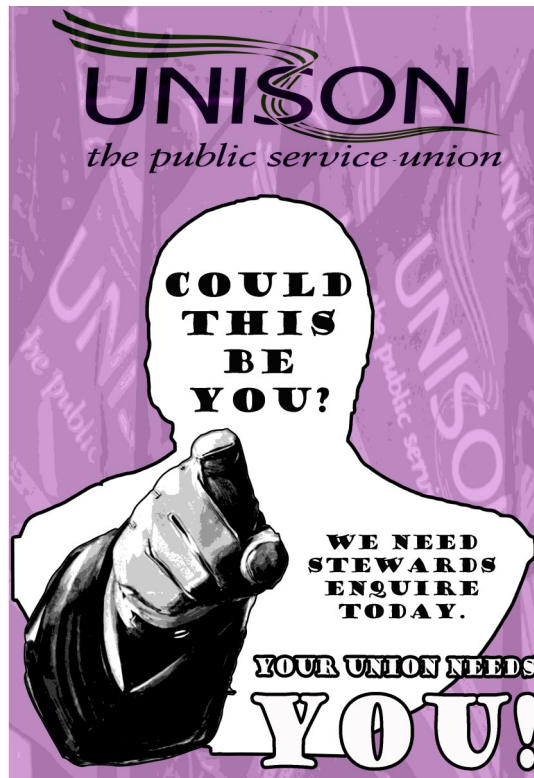
- the time needed to give notice of industrial action will reduce to 10 days
- unions will need a simple majority to vote for industrial action
- picket supervisors will no longer be required
- industrial action mandates will last for 12 months, instead of 6 months
- industrial action and ballot notices will be simplified
- Political fund rules will change

## Does this sound like you?

Do you have a strong belief in fairness and want to help support your colleagues and workmates? If so you might be interested in becoming a UNISON Rep.

Reps are the backbone of UNISON and engage in different levels of activity depending on their experience, skills and availability to commit.

To find out more please contact [unison@durham.gov.uk](mailto:unison@durham.gov.uk) about becoming a UNISON Rep today



Remember, every single person in the UK has benefited from rights which have been secured by unions and the right to strike which include:

- Paid holidays
- Health and safety at work
- Sick Pay
- Minimum Wage
- Equal pay for women
- Maternity pay
- Two day weekends
- Equal opportunities

**TOGETHER we  
RISE in UNISON**

