



**TimeForRealChange**  
**for a members' union**

Weekly Bulletin

18th April 2022

Number Eleven

Please share and distribute

## UNISON Health Conference 2022

Time for Real Change Fringe Meeting

# Stop the Tories: Build a Fighting UNISON

**5:15pm Tuesday 26th April**

**The Liverpool Pub**

**14 James Street**

**Liverpool**

**L2 7PQ**

**Just 15 Minutes walk from Conference**

**#TimeforRealChange**

**Calling all Delegates and Visitors to UNISON Health Conference 2022.**

Join us on Tuesday at the Liverpool Pub to hear Time for Real Change Supporters outline our strategy and ideas to stop Tory attacks on our members and also to build a Fighting Democratic UNISON.

With the cost of living crisis and the aftermath of Covid, paying lip service to the struggle against low pay is not enough.

**It's time for Real Change!**

Newsletter 11 leads with news of our Fringe Meeting at UNISON Health Conference. On Pg 2 we carry an advert for our SGE Campaign Launch, while on Pg3 there is an important statement on Ukraine, replying to Christina McAnea and the full text of the NEC Statement on Ukraine Pg 6 and 7 give important information on the question of UNISON's Legal Services Contract. Last but not least the SGE Elections are coming!



**TimeForRealChange**  
**for a members' union**

# Time For Real Change:

## Service Group Elections Campaign Launch



### Cost of Living Crisis?

### It's Time For Real Change in UNISON!

John McDonnell MP and candidates standing in UNISON's SGE elections discuss the cost of living crisis and how UNISON and government should respond



**Cost of Living Crisis? It's Time For Real Change in UNISON!**  
Online Meeting: Thursday 28 April 6:30 - 7:30PM  
Register for your free ticket now at <http://tffc-unison.eventbrite.com>

**This important public meeting takes place on the day that UNISON Members can start voting for our representatives on UNISON's Service Group Executives. These are important bodies that lead UNISON's work on pay and other strategic issues.**

These elections are taking place against a background of spiralling fuel and energy prices. Many people including far too many UNISON members are being forced to choose whether to Eat or Heat.

This meeting will give members an opportunity to hear what Time for Real Change supporters stand for. For many years UNISON has paid lip service to the curse of low pay. For too long we've put up with racism and gender inequality in the workplace.

The cost of living crisis throws all of this into sharp relief and illustrates more than ever that we need to fight for Real Change, not just at work, but in our union as well.

Come along to the meeting, hear what we have to say about these key issues.

We are delighted to be joined by John McDonnell

MP, a proud UNISON member and a great socialist Labour MP.

### Its Time for Real Change

#### Join with us:

#### *In fighting for a genuinely member led UNISON*

UNISON has the potential to be an enormously influential force everywhere we organise.

For too long our members have been on the receiving end of Tory austerity, low pay, racism and other forms of discrimination.

Members have seen big cuts in living standards and the pressure at work has grown as a result of cuts in staff and reorganisations.

We are fighting for real change in UNISON across every Service Group and in every country and region.

**If you agree with what we are fighting for, then get involved with Time for Real Change!**

**[Click here and get involved](#)**

# Ukraine statement Update:

## *A reply to Christina McAnea*

**The NEC passed a statement from its Presidential Team on Ukraine at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March. UNISON's General Secretary Christina McAnea shortly thereafter sent 5 questions to the Presidential Team which the General Secretary sent on to all Branch International Relations Officers, prior to receiving the answers from the Presidential Team. The answers Christina McAnea received to her five questions were comprehensive, straightforward and provided very quickly, but have not yet been reported back to Branch International Relations Officers (BIROs), despite Christina McAnea making a commitment to BIROs to do so.**

**This lack of follow up may leave the impression (unintended or otherwise) that the questions had not been swiftly answered in a completely satisfactory way. We therefore publish them here to give the assurances to BIROs that they were promised. We also publish in full NEC's statement on Ukraine below to finish.**

Q1. What is meant by describing the Ukrainian government as "the Zelensky regime"? Does this mean we are saying it is not the legitimate government and if so why?

A. There is nothing meant in that description, and nothing in the statement or discussion at the meeting to even imply that the government is not legitimate.

Q2. What is meant by working with groups that are "acting independently of the Zelensky regime and building their own organisations"? Which groups are envisaged by this and how should the union assess these groups?

A. The sentence immediately following this gives an example.

Q3. UNISON's international policy to date has been to work with the recognised unions in countries in crisis and take our lead from them. Does this mean we will no longer be supporting the recognised trade unions in Ukraine?

A. No, and there is nothing in the statement to suggest that.

4. This motion is also critical of economic sanctions saying this may strengthen support for Putin and in the debate it was clear there was opposition to economic sanctions. This has very serious implications for us as we have very clear policy supporting sanctions over the years against a number of oppressive governments including our

existing policy on Israel. I have asked for clarity on what was meant by this.

A. The Chair of the International Committee did not say that she believes sanctions don't work. She very clearly said that they are a tactic and that there are different types of sanctions, before going on to quote the French Finance Minister and that there is a danger of this kind of approach allowing Putin to gain support and undermine the anti-war protests in Russia.

5. How can both these motions be enacted alongside the [other motion passed, with a smaller majority]?

A. The Chair of the International Committee started by talking about the common ground. A lot of the other statement is in the one from the Presidential Team. The Presidential Team statement had a much bigger majority and should be publicised.

The [Presidential Team statement, passed by the NEC] is unequivocally clear in opposition to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, and calls for the troops to be withdrawn immediately. It is also clear in sending solidarity to the people of Ukraine, and specifically mentions our equivalents in public sector trade unions. The Chair of the International Committee also highlighted the people in Kherson who have bravely been occupying the square against Russian tanks.

You say that the NEU withdrew a similar statement due to the level of criticism it received. In fact at their next NEC meeting, they agreed a very similar statement.

It is legitimate to also discuss the different actions that could lead to escalation, and potential ways that war can be ended. These issues are already being discussed in our workplaces and communities.

In relation to the International Committee, its Chair has said that her response to the email sent to the whole committee was to reply that there were two other statements and that all three should be discussed at the NEC the next day, not that she didn't support the one statement. No-one replied to say that wasn't how it should be done, that there had to be a vote as that was the process or similar. It may be that this highlights the need to have a clear process about how items are accepted on to the NEC agenda, how they are circulated etc.

This discussion also highlights that when there has been a decision made by the NEC, that decision should be publicised and acted on. We cannot have a situation where only the decisions you agree with are taken forward.

***The Ukraine statement, passed with 30 for, 12 against, 1 abstention:***

## **UNISON National Executive Council statement on Ukraine**

**We oppose and condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We call for an immediate ceasefire and for all Russian armed forces to immediately withdraw from Ukraine.**

**The war in Ukraine is an extremely dangerous development. Implicit in the situation is the risk that it may spread and escalate, drawing other countries into a growing international conflict.**

The working class has nothing to gain from war and will pay the biggest price, both in Russia and Ukraine.

We particularly note the danger of escalation into nuclear conflict and the threat to human existence this would entail. We reiterate our opposition to use and maintenance of all nuclear weapons.

Despite the terrible situation, we support the building of unity among workers across national boundaries. The workers of Ukraine and Russia have common interests.

We stand in solidarity with those in Russia who have protested against the invasion, despite police repression. We support the building of a mass anti-war movement, including among Russian troops.

We support workers in Ukraine acting independently of the Zelensky regime and building their own organisations and taking independent action. This should include attempts to build dialogue and links with rank-and-file troops in the invading Russian forces.

We condemn any far right or fascist group, on either side of this conflict, seeking to take advantage of the war to build their own organisation and activity by further provoking national and ethnic tensions

We send our solidarity to Ukrainian public service workers, delivering humanitarian service in the most appalling conditions. We will seek to build support and send practical solidarity where possible, including through the relevant trade union where appropriate.

This war is also a proxy conflict between Russia and NATO prompted by NATO expansion into central and Eastern Europe. We oppose this expansion and any intervention in this conflict by NATO forces.

We note that economic sanctions will disproportionately

hit working people, and will be seen as an aggressive measure by the west and may well strengthen support for Putin.

We have no trust or confidence in the Johnson government on this or any other matter. They have demonstrated for more than two years their utter disregard for human life through the deliberate mishandling of the pandemic, leading to the loss of more than 150,000 lives in the UK.

We note the hypocrisy of those in the UK government criticising the state repression of protest in Russia, whilst the police, crime and sentencing bill will serve to create authoritarian restrictions on protest and democracy in the UK.

We oppose the UK government's disgraceful racist restriction on the right of refugees fleeing the war to enter the UK. We call for refugees from this and other conflicts to be welcomed. We are also horrified by the scenes at some of the borders where Black people have been prevented from leaving Ukraine. Racism will only divide us and weaken our opposition to war.

This shows how important it is to oppose the Nationality and Borders Bill.

In wartime, as in peace time, we defend the democratic right to speak out, discuss, debate and protest. We condemn any attempts to shut down discussion within the Labour movement and to bully and threaten those with different views. We continue to support Stop the War Coalition and CND, and urge our members to join anti-war protests called by them.

Workers in Ukraine and Russia - and across the world - have common interests. Even in this appalling situation, we stand for workers' unity and internationalism.

In Britain, we demand that workers do not pay the price for this and other crises such as Covid. Workers should receive pay rises above RPI inflation. We oppose the massive rises in energy prices and call for the re-nationalisation of the gas and electricity companies. We support refuge be given to those fleeing from Ukraine and other war-torn areas. The wealth of the oligarchs and super-rich should be expropriated to help provide the resources needed for working-class communities.



**TimeForRealChange  
for a members' union**

# UNISON SGE Elections: *Vote Time for Real Change!*

**The game is afoot! You should receive your ballot paper from 28th April. We now know who is standing in the SGE Elections and we know that #TFRC supporters have already made some strides forward, especially in Community.**

More than half of the 59 Time for Real Change SGE candidates have been elected unopposed. Importantly in some Service Groups this means a big increase in participation at a national level, but it also means that the demand for Real Change in UNISON is reaching a wider audience and members are coming forward to get involved.

In some areas, such as the Northern Region for the first time in years seats are going to be contested. Some five candidates supported by time for Real Change are standing across four service groups. This is very significant and reflects the growing support for the ideas that we defend.

Getting so many supporters elected unopposed is great but there is still a lot to do. We need to make sure that as many of our supporters are elected as possible and we need your support. So, come along to our Campaign launch rally. Get in touch and find out how you can help the campaign in your local area.

Speak to your friends, your colleagues, your neighbours and your family members. Keep an eye out for our social media posts and print, share and copy this newsletter and the other information we share on our website.

Get on board and help us to fight for Real Change, at work, in society and inside our union!

**Vote Time for Real Change!**

#SGEElections2022 #TimeForRealChange

## Important links to Information from our Website:

**Time for Real Change: Health Conference Bulletin**

*Info for all delegates and visitors*

[Click Here](#)

**TFRC Dedicated Conference Page**

[Click Here](#)

**On the Record: Kirklees Trade Union  
Victimisation exposed**

*Link to legal papers that demolish Kirklees case*

[Click Here](#)

**Community Conference Report**

[Click Here](#)

**NEC Report 15th March**

[Click Here](#)

**TFRC Statement on Ukraine**

[Click Here](#)

**SGE Elections with full list of Time for Real  
Change supported candidates:**

*Who is standing for Real Change in your area?*

[Click Here](#)

**TFRC Website**

[Click Here](#)



**TimeForRealChange  
for a members' union**

## Reforming UNISON's legal services contract: *The motion that's so explosive Standing Orders Committee refused to even print it!*

**Ask the average UNISON branch secretary or convenor what needs to change about their trade union and though chances are you'll still be talking to them an hour later, they will likely say quite quickly in the conversation 'UNISON's legal service contract'.**

Every branch secretary, convenor, equalities officer and steward knows that UNISON's core legal services contract does not work for branches or members, and the contract needs wholesale review and reform. Surely reviewing your main contract for legal services in a trade union would not be controversial, but merely common sense and good practice? In UNISON, according to our Standing Orders Committee, such a discussion should not be had with lay members under any circumstances!

Time For Real Change has the majority of elected representatives to UNISON's NEC. We want to see wholesale change to our union. We want UNISON to be a fighting union, winning for members.

Cooperating with our sister unions and not viewing them with suspicion as competitors. A union where activists can debate their differences without the instinctive recourse being to take disciplinary action against those you disagree with. A union which is, as our Rulebook demands, member-led and not led by a bureaucracy which is out of touch with branches and members and the real world of public service trade unionism we have to work within.

Part of Time For Real Change's manifesto for change is changing UNISON's legal services contract. It is the view of UNISON's new NEC that the legal services contract is long overdue for reform. As branch activists we find:

- ◆ It's getting harder and harder to take cases for members because our legal services contract has thresholds for the probability of winning the case which have to be cleared. But sometimes it is really important to take a case, irrespective of this: to test an employer, or to test the law. We think that discrimination cases for black members are particularly harmed by these thresholds.
- ◆ The Regional Office is increasingly acting as a gatekeeper to legal advice, preventing branches from getting access to solicitors directly. This deskills our branch activists and is a barrier to both learning and timely, effective negotiation and case management.
- ◆ Trying to get in touch with the legal services provider directly often takes too much time, and involves multiple calls and passwords; in addition, the 28-day turn round for written legal advice often means advice is not there when your member needs it or when activists leading employer negotiations need it.

The NEC believes few UNISON branch activists would disagree with this, and even if they did find the current service by and large met member needs, fewer would disagree that a review should be undertaken given how fast the landscape our branches work within has changed.

However, UNISON's Standing Orders Committee has denied Conference the chance to debate this key issue facing our branches and union. They have ruled the NEC's motion on legal services out of order: but more than this, they have gone even further and NOT PRINTED it on the laughable grounds of legal jeopardy! So the motion cannot even be 'referenced back' at the start of conference.

It underlines just how desperate our union is for real change, that so many within our union are seeking to resist that change by any means available to them. They will use the most draconian methods available to prevent honest debate and discussion, even of the most necessary and urgent change in the interest of members and the effectiveness of our union.

Both Time For Real Change and the NEC still want there to be a debate with branches at Conference, so the NEC has appealed the Standing Orders

Committee's edict. We don't come from a starting point that we know everything or we know best – we want to understand more about the lived experience of branches to inform any review. So If Standing Orders Committee do not see sense, we will find other ways at Conference to find out what you think.

### **Support Time For Real Change if you want to change UNISON**

We need your help to change our trade union, to overcome the resistance from the parts of our union that think it works just fine for them, and never want it to change. Sign up for our conference updates at: <https://timeforrealchange.uk/get-involved>

And if you want to drop us a line about the legal services contract now, you can contact us at [conferences@timeforrealchange.uk](mailto:conferences@timeforrealchange.uk) Meanwhile, you can read for yourself the motion that was so explosive, the Standing Orders Committee felt they had to ban it! You won't read this on the preliminary conference agenda, but we print the motion in full below. What's wrong with it? You decide. UNISON is a member-led union and members must be allowed to lead and change their union!

### **Legal support for our members and activists: getting it right**

This Conference accepts that the legal services available to our activists through UNISON's main contract with a legal services supplier are of crucial importance. The quality, accuracy and timeliness of our legal support to members makes our reputation as a union, supports individual and collective gains for UNISON members, and helps to build power in our workplaces.

However, Conference recognises that UNISON's delivery of legal advice and support to our activists and members through this external contract is due for review.

Conference recognises a general concern amongst activists that in regards to this main legal services contract:

- ◆ It is getting harder to take cases for members and that merit thresholds can sometimes be a barrier
- ◆ Legal advice requests are more often than not steered through the Regional Office as gatekeepers
- ◆ When activists do try to access the legal advice helpline directly this can be a time-consuming process and not always be successful
- ◆ The 28-day turnaround to provide written legal advice can make negotiations and bargaining for members difficult at times
- ◆ Branch secretaries and other key activists have over time become deskilled, no longer having the requirement to engage directly with UNISON's legal services or support members at Tribunals
- ◆ There is an ongoing need for timely and responsive legal advice to branch secretaries at key points of collective and individual negotiations
- ◆ Members increasingly expect to receive legal advice within their cases due to UNISON marketing this service as part of its 'offer' to new members.

This Conference also notes there is increasingly a need to 'have activists' backs'. Our activists put themselves and their careers on the line for our members. When they are victimised or harassed by their employer for carrying out their trade union duties, activists need to know that their union will support them. The decision to provide legal support should be based on principle not probable success. Conference believes that there is a case to explore and review the criteria applied when deciding whether to provide legal support for activists who assert they are being victimised or harassed by their employer for carrying out trade union duties.

Therefore, this Conference calls on the NEC to institute a review of UNISON's legal services contract to see if more responsive and dynamic legal services can be developed, taking account of the above issues. This review should conclude by the end of 2022 and its findings and any actions taken be reported back to NDC 2023.

# ***Time for Real Change:*** Dedicated Conference Page

<https://timeforrealchange.uk/conferences>

Conference Season is here, starting with Health Conference in Liverpool next week, closely followed by Service Group Conferences and NDC at Brighton in June. These are the most important set of conferences for many years. You can keep up to date by following the dedicated Conference section on our website, designed to help keep Comrades up to date with important information.

## **Fringe Meetings**

We will publish details of Fringe Meetings that we are organising ourselves and also events that we are supporting. We will also be using the Conference Page to post TFRC Resources that Comrades can use in the run up to Conference and at the Conference itself.

## **Motions and Amendments**

We will be publishing information on Key Motions and amendments to look out for and to argue for in your branch.

## **Dedicated Conference Email**

We have set up a dedicated Conference Email address. We are especially encouraging Comrades who are attending any of these conferences as Delegates or Visitors, or who may be available to support our activities around Conference to get in touch and let us know you are coming.

The dedicated email is:

[conferences@timeforrealchange.uk](mailto:conferences@timeforrealchange.uk)

We will be updating the Conference Page as we go along, so it will always be a live document. To help with this however, we will also be highlighting any important information in these Weekly Newsletters.

## **What can you do now?**

The first thing to do will be to let us know if you will be joining us at any of the forthcoming conferences as a Delegate or a Visitor.

**So please get in touch!**

## **UNISON Conference Calendar 2022**

### **Health**

Mon 25th April—Wed 27th April : Liverpool

### **Virtual Black Members Conference**

Fri 27th May – 28th May 2022

### **Local Government**

Sun 12th June—Mon 13th June: Brighton

**WET** Sun 12th June: Brighton

**Energy** Mon 13th June: Brighton

### **National Delegate Conference**

Tues 14th June—Fri 17th June: Brighton

## **Time for Real Change at Health Conference**

***Sunday 24th April:  
Informal Meet up at 8:30pm***

**Are you coming to Health Conference as a delegate or as a visitor?**

***#TFRC Supporters will be meeting for an informal get together at:***

**The Baltic Fleet**

**33A Wapping**

**Liverpool**

**L1 8DQ**

***Are you a delegate? Can you help us at conference?***

***Then drop us a line via***

<https://timeforrealchange.uk/conferences>



# SGE Elections Update:

## Can you make a donation?

There is just over a week to go! We know that half of our 59 SGE candidates have been elected unopposed, which alongside our successes in the 2021 NEC elections is a great first step.

However, that makes the contested elections where we are standing even more important. Many of these will be hard fought campaigns and we have to make sure that we get the word out, explaining what we stand for and how we intend to make Real Change in UNISON.

### Donate

Candidates are preparing leaflets, social media posts and videos to support their campaigns. We have no rich backers and our supporters have to take on not just the right wing in UNISON, but also the establishment press and media. We rely completely on small donations from our grassroots supporters.

Could you help us by sending a fiver or a tenner or a larger amount to help us produce the leaflets and posters, stickers and badges we need in the Election campaign?

Can you make a donation which will help Time For Real Change candidates in UNISON's Service Group Executive election campaigns, and allow us to speak to more members and grow our movement for real change.

Every penny counts and every penny makes a difference!

### Its Time for Real Change!

<https://timeforrealchange.uk/donate>



**TimeForRealChange**  
for a members' union

## Vote Time For Real Change candidates in UNISON's 2022 Service Group Elections

### Community

**Eastern:** Paul Turnbull (General)  
**East Midlands:** Michael Hancock (General), Anjona Roy (Female)  
**Northern:** Terry McPartlan (General), Cath Davis (Female)  
**Northern Ireland:** Niall McCarroll (General), Pauline Lagan (Female)  
**North West:** Hanna English (Female)  
**South East:** Michelle Lincoln (General)  
**Yorkshire & Humberside:** Hywel Robinson (General)

### Health

**Greater London:** Jordan Rivera (General), Janet Maiden (Female)  
**Northern:** Amanda Martin (Female)  
**North West:** John Flannery (General), Karen Reissmann (Female), Denise Williams (Reserved)  
**South East:** Miranda Crawford (Reserved)  
**South West:** Gareth Drinkwater (General), Aileen McLoughlin (Female)  
**Wales:** Joe Hale (General), Libby Nolan (Female), Lorna Hood (Reserved)  
**Yorkshire & Humberside:** Denise Carr (Female), Anne Marie Pedley (Reserved)

### Higher Education

**Eastern:** Martin Thurlow (General)  
**East Midlands:** Vicki Morris (Female)  
**Greater London:** Laura Dickens (Female)  
**Northern:** Helen Smith (Female)  
**North West:** Andy Beech (General), Linda Holden (Female)  
**South East:** Ivan Bonsell (General), Sarah Pickett (Female)  
**South West:** Joe Sucksmith (General)  
**West Midlands:** Mike Moore (General)  
**Yorkshire & Humberside:** Mark Adcock (General), Mobina Begum (Female)

### Local Government

**Eastern:** Kris Holt (General), Liz Brennan (Female), Polly Smith (Reserved)  
**East Midlands:** Ged Talty (General), Cath Lewis (Female), Sara Evans (Reserved)  
**Greater London:** John McLoughlin (General), Anju Paul (Reserved)  
**Northern:** Ed Whitby (General)  
**North West:** Glen Williams (General), Lois Founds (Female), Rena Wood (Reserved)  
**South East:** Jon Woods (General), Serena Powis (Female), Marilyn Cox (Reserved)  
**South West:** Kevin Trewweeks (General), Amanda Brown (Female)  
**West Midlands:** David Hughes (General), Carol Garfield (Female), Shazziah Rock (Reserved)  
**Yorkshire & Humberside:** Adrian Kennett (General), Julie Forgan (Female), Rita Ball (Reserved)



**Vote Time For Real Change**  
**Voting opens on 28 April 2022**

For more information visit our website: [timeforrealchange.uk/elections](https://timeforrealchange.uk/elections)