Conference delegates

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DELEGATES (4 places)
- **Wendy Harris** (low paid woman reserved seat)
- **Kerie Anne** ● **Dionne Mottley**
- **Marshall Savage / Jon Mort** (Sharers) (Young Members)

NATIONAL DELEGATES CONFERENCE (3 places)
- **Wendy Harris** (low paid woman reserved seat)
- **Dionne Mottley / Kerie Anne** (sharers)
- **Marshall Savage / Jon Mort** (Young member)

■ The delegation composition must comply with UNISON's proportionality and fair representation rules (Women/Black Members/ Young Members).

Motions

Motion 1

UNISON's Year of the LGBT+ Worker – Securing the legacy

This Branch notes:
1. UNISON's Year of the LGBT+ Worker finished at the end of 2024. This followed a series of years with an equalities focus: Young Members, Disabled workers and Black workers – as part of UNISON's commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within the workplace and society.
2. 2024 was one of the Branch's most successful equality focused years in memory. A range of well attended events were organised or sponsored, trans ally training arranged and new LGBT+ activists emerged. This has created a strong foundation to build on.
3. In contrast with other recent equality focused years, a close working relationship was formed with the relevant staff network (Tower Pride) at the outset, and this may be viewed as an important factor in why the year was so successful, alongside having a designated and active Equalities Officer (LGBT+) on Branch Committee to lead on activities and planning.

This Branch resolves to:
1. Continue the great work already started and build on the year's success by continuing, amongst other things, the relationship formed with Tower Pride. Explore how UNISON can increase its profile within the other staff networks as an avenue for agenda setting, encouraging/identifying potential activists and for recruitment.
2. Offer/provide mentoring and learning opportunities to the new LGBT+ activists that emerged over 2024 and seek to nominate Branch delegate/s to the Greater London Region LGBT+ Committee in the next nomination cycle.
3. Encourage the Council to adopt UNISON'S model policy on *Supporting Workers Living with HIV* launched in December 2024.
4. Send a delegation to London Trans Pride+ 2025.

Motion 2

Standing up for Migrant Care Workers

This Branch notes:
1. Since the introduction of the Health and Care Worker Visa by the previous government there has been a dramatic increase in reports of modern slavery in the adult care sector.
2. Migrant care workers are too often the victims of exploitation including poor accommodation and bad employment practices like the illegal deduction of wages, high agency fees, not paying the minimum wage, trade union victimisation and inadequate health and safety. Unscrupulous employers have greater powers over migrant care workers because if they lose their job, they lose the right to live in the UK.
3. UNISON has developed the *Migrant Care Worker Charter* ('the Charter') to assist with tackling the serious exploitation in the sector. Councils and NHS Trusts are being urged to sign up to and implement the Charter. Signatories undertake to ensure that the third party providers they commission treat migrant workers fairly and equitably in relation to other employees.
4. Almost all residential and domiciliary adult social care in Tower Hamlets has been outsourced to private companies.
5. At the full Council meeting in November 2024, Tower Hamlets became the first Council in Greater London to commit to the Charter via unanimous cross party/group vote. Councillors from all parties/ groups can be applauded for putting their differences aside in order to recognise the scale of the problem and agree policy to address it locally.

This Branch resolves to:
1. Organise, promote and publicise a Charter signing event in 2025 with invitations extended to Councillors from across the Chamber and migrant workers.
2. Instruct Branch Officers to initiate negotiations with relevant senior managers about how compliance with the Charter can be genuinely monitored and embedded in future Council contracts awarded to provide adult social care. This could include a condition to grant paid facility time to support the election of/training and representation work of UNISON stewards from within the outsourced workforce.
3. Promote awareness of/sign ups to UNISON's Migrant Worker Network – an informal national network for members with a first generation immigrant background including overseas and migrant workers, EU settled status workers and those who have subsequently naturalised as British citizens or who have indefinite leave to remain – which any member with this background can join, not just those working in social care.
4. Encourage greater awareness of UNISON's free immigration telephone advice service provided by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, which is available to eligible members who have come to work in the UK.

Agenda item 8 – Change to Branch Rules – Honoraria

8. Change to Branch Rules – Honoraria

To discuss and vote on a change to the Branch Rules to permit the payment of an honoraria subject to UNISON's rules on the payment of honoraria.

Purpose of change
It will allow for a modest annual payment to be made to the Assistant Branch Secretary for Schools. This busy and demanding post has historically been filled (and currently is) by a low paid woman substantively employed in a school support staff role i.e. Teaching Assistant.

Branch Committee (10 December 2024) agreed to put forward a proposed rule change to the AGM to permit the payment of an honoraria, expressed the view that the amount paid should be approx. in line with the Council's travel allowance (£1280 pa) and that it is targeted at the ABS for Schools role.

Other information
Honoraria payments are made direct to the individuals concerned by UNISON head office, with deductions made for national insurance and tax. It is deducted from the Branch's funding. Any payment must be discussed and agreed annually at a quorate Branch Committee and submitted to the AGM for scrutiny and final approval by members.

UNISON's rules on the payment of honoraria:
● Full details of the proposal, including the recipients and the exact amounts for each, must be proposed to be put forward to the AGM and agreed by a quorate Branch Committee.
● The total proposal agreed for honoraria must be less than 10% of branch income.
● Honoraria is paid retrospectively.
● If a Branch amends its rules to include honoraria provision at this year's AGM, this will not come into effect until the 2026 AGM; where honoraria can be agreed for 2025 (not before).
● A proposal and agreement on the recipient and exact amount must be proposed and agreed by a quorate Branch Committee meeting to be put forward to the AGM. This should then form part of the finance report and budget proposals to the AGM to ensure members are fully informed.
● The details of the recipient and the exact amount must then be agreed by a quorate AGM.

Proposal: To change the Branch Rules in the relevant section (16) on Honoraria to insert the additional following paragraph (in red).

16. Honoraria
Any honorarium paid to a branch officer will only be made in accordance with the Scheme for Honoraria Payments in Branches contained in the Branch Finances Handbook

Branch Committee may make a discretionary one-off payment on an annual basis to officers to provide some financial recognition to those undertaking extensive duties on behalf of the Branch. Any recommendations for payment of honoraria must comply with UNISON's national procedures and rules.

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Tower Hamlets UNISON

Annual General Meeting (Hybrid)

Tuesday 25th February 2025

12.30–1.45pm

Council Chamber
in the Town Hall,
160 Whitechapel Road, E1 1BJ
Lunch provided from 12.15 – *Vege Palestinian themed lunch boxes for the first 50 in-person attenders*

and on Microsoft Teams
Meeting ID: 342 438 905 140
Passcode: a5xE8c

Guest speakers:



Steve North, UNISON President

Claire Miller, Social Worker & Greater Manchester Mental Health Service UNISON Striker



● **One hour paid facility time agreed by council senior management for staff to attend**

Members are encouraged to make this one of their 'in the office days' and attend in person. This is the main AGM meeting and is part of a 'rolling' AGM to fit around different groups of staff and work patterns. All members are entitled to attend any of the AGM meetings but can only vote on Branch wide matters in one meeting. Unemployed & Retired Members may vote on issues not relating to the pay and conditions of members in employment.

Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Guest Speakers
- Steve North, UNISON President
- Claire Miller, UNISON Striker, Greater Manchester Mental Health Early Intervention Service

3. Minutes
To approve the minutes of the 2024 AGM
4. Annual Report
To approve the 2024-2025 Report
5. Rita Ash Solidarity Award
6. Annual Estimates
To approve the financial estimates
7. Branch Elections
Full list of nominations on page 3
8. Change to Branch Rules
Honoraria (page 4)
9. Motions
- Year of the LGBT+ Worker – Securing the Legacy
- Standing up for Migrant Workers

10. Other Urgent Business
(must be notified to Branch Office in advance)

Schools AGM (Hybrid)

and for those with differing work patterns

5pm **Thursday 27 February**

Room THC1, Ground floor, Town Hall

and on Zoom

https://bit.ly/4agejcG
Meeting ID: 826 6083 0615
Passcode: SchoolsAGM

Light Buffet provided from 4.30pm

As well as core AGM business, the meeting will include a short briefing on the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) - the new structure the government is planning that will cover pay, terms and conditions and access to training.

A *new deal* for school support staff ✓

Whilst this meeting is aimed at school based members, those who could not attend the main AGM are welcome.

Budget for 2025

Funding	£104,198.00
Locally Collected Subs	£6,823.00
Retired Members	£45.00
Unemployed Members	£24.00
Other	£2,770.00
	£113,860.00

Salaries, Pension, Tax, NI	£93,800.00
Admin & Postage	£5,500.00
Conf & Meets	£14,000.00
Other Meets	£1,500.00
Publicity	£8,000.00
Local Activities	£100.00
Education	£600.00

Donations	£2,000.00
Affiliations	£250.00
Activist Expenses	£700.00
Other	£350.00
Audit	£300.00
IT	£300.00
	£127,400.00
	-£13,540.00

Balances at 31 December 2024:
General Fund:
£97,881.67
Anti-Racist Fund:
£212.79
Industrial Action Fund:
£1,768,154.74

Tower Hamlets UNISON
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■ Email **bernadette.hall@towerhamlets.gov.uk** or ring **020 7364 6515**
■ **Facebook:** Tower Hamlets Unison ■ **Twitter:** @UNISON_TH ■ **Instagram:** thunison
■ **Branch website:** https://towerhamlets.unison.site/

Tower Hamlets UNISON Annual Report AGM 2024-25

As we gather for the AGM at long last we find ourselves free of the Tory government that for 14 years battered public services with an endless dose of austerity. Over those difficult years our Branch relentlessly mobilised against their anti-union/cuts agenda. While the July 2024 change in Government is welcome, it is no silver bullet that will solve all our problems – as we can already see. But no Trade Unionist will shed a tear for Sunak, Boris and their mates, nor will we ever forget their mismanagement of the Pandemic. There will be challenges ahead no matter who is in power and the need to be a member of a fighting campaigning trade union branch remains as relevant as ever.

Leisure Service

May saw the long awaited for insourcing of all Leisure Centres with GLL staff being TUPE transferred into the Council. From the outset UNISON lobbied against the creation of a two-tier workforce. In November the first success came with the harmonisation of all Duty Managers following the threat of a trade dispute. We have challenged the grotty state of staff areas, represented members to win unfinished Grievance and Disciplinary cases that transferred in from GLL, and published a special edition of Tower Power to welcome Leisure staff into the Council. Stewards toured all Centres to canvas concerns, which



Stewards tour Leisure Centres – July

we continue to press management about. UNISON is now firmly the union of choice for Leisure staff. Attention now turns to campaigning for the harmonisation of all roles and to develop a stewards network.

NJC Pay for Council and School Workers

In May the Employers served up another poor pay offer, triggering a national ballot. Disappointingly, once again there was not enough big employers who met the tough 50% turnout threshold to take strike action. Regardless, we can hold our heads high as our Branch delivered more votes than any other in the Greater London Region – which is no small feat and a sign of how hard our activists organised. A lunchtime hybrid Pay meeting attracted over 200 attendees and a Zoom Pay meeting for school members was also well attended. Pay must remain a key concern as does the need for UNISON's Labour Link to hold Labour's feet to the fire about changing the laws that have hindered our ability to fight for fair pay.



Inaugural Trans Pride delegation – July

Equalities – Year of the LGBT+ Worker

2024 was UNISON's 'Year of the LGBT+ Worker' which meant it had a special focus, and in Tower Hamlets it was one of our best equality focused years in memory. A productive relationship was formed with the Staff Pride Network to sponsor/arrange events, we sent our first ever delegation to Trans+ Pride, met with HR to review policies to ensure they were LGBT+ friendly, sent a larger than usual delegation to LGBT+ Conference and recruited/encouraged LGBT+ members to take their first steps into UNISON activism. A special shout out goes to Thomas French and Jamie Donohue-Strawbridge for their contributions.

Schools

Assistant Branch Secretary, Justine Kohl, continues to ably lead our work in schools. Stewards can find it hard to get training release, so a 1day event at the Town Hall was organised to 'turbo-charge' sickness absence representation skills. Stewards have asked for more compressed local training days which will now be planned. A Recruitment/Retention project was launched with the assistance of GLR Area organisers and awareness raising about the *School Support Staff Negotiation Body* has begun. April saw an important victory when school meals staff at Thomas Buxton School were insourced after UNISON raised



School Stewards Training Day – November



You are better off in UNISON

Annual Report by Kerie Anne (Branch Secretary)

Over the past year Tower Hamlets UNISON has:

- Supported GLL members transferring into the Council, campaigned against a two-tier workforce and built our membership within Leisure Centres
- Represented scores of members in sickness absence, grievance, discrimination, flexible working and disciplinary cases, grading disputes, TUPE transfers and reorganisations
- Continued to develop and train our Branch Committee/stewards & activists network
- Launched a school recruitment/retention and school-based stewards upskilling project
- Successfully organised/sponsored a range of activities to promote the objectives of UNISON's Year of the LGBT+ Worker
- Led a community campaign to demand the Council divests our Local Government Pension Fund from companies that profit from death and destruction
- Taken solidarity to a range of disputes/organisations and causes
- Restructured our Industrial Action Fund to safeguard its real value
- Been active within the international solidarity and peace movement

concerns following the shocking discovery that some kitchen workers were not being paid the London Living Wage.


Pensions Committee Lobby – September

Divest for Palestine and the Planet

As the bombardment of Gaza continued so did our calls for a ceasefire. Workplace Days of Action were observed, with one taking place outside Central Foundation Girls School so school members could take part. Solidarity was taken to the QMUL student encampment while September saw the launch of a major campaign (via a noisy lobby skilfully compered by Branch Chair, Amina Patel) of the Pensions Committee to demand it divests the staff pension fund from companies that profit from climate change, death and destruction. Our delegation addressed the Committee and we are pushing to allow a UNISON rep to sit on it. A Campaign Fund grant was secured to produce a concise leaflet to help members understand the issues. All this was shown to be well worth it when in January 2025 the Council passed a motion to start a process of auditing/divesting pension assets away from arms companies. We can consider ourselves to be national leaders in our union in respect of LGPS ethical investment campaigning and are offering advice/resources to other Branches that are further behind in this fight.

Solidarity & Protest

We never forget those who stand by us during difficult times and our tradition of taking solidarity to others via a range of methods has continued. Messages of support, speakers, strike fund and other donations or sponsorship have been taken to a range of disputes, causes and organisations: UNISON GMMH strike fund; Greenwich UNISON school strike; Stand up to Racism's Unity Fund; the Big Ride for Palestine Rally; Junior Doctors strike and Barnet's mental health strike are just a few. When Lewisham's job share Branch Secretaries were shockingly both threatened with the sack, we sent speakers, made sure our banner was at their lobbies and Branch Committee passed motions of support. We have promoted and/or arranged delegations to local/national events and protests, such as Trans Pride, Stop the Far Right & Stop the War Coalition.

Best Value Inspection and challenges

Michael Gove's decision to impose a BVI subjected our borough to a torrent of comment. The Council definitely has its problems and leadership defects – which as an independent union branch we need to be clear-eyed about and willing to challenge, whoever is in power. But it is not in danger of going bust like so many other councils and is bucking the trend and insourcing some services as opposed to shutting them. For these reasons we rejected insinuations that Tower Hamlets is a 'rotten borough', as such a label may deride the achievements of our members who provide services under often difficult conditions. Areas of note which have faced particular challenges over 2024 include Housing Options and the Leisure Service (see above). As we go to press the first trade dispute of 2025 is being formulated due to threatened job cuts at St Lukes Primary School.

Committed Team

The office remains extremely busy with the stream of casework, reorganisations, TUPEs and consultations which is the core work of the Branch. There has been a push to try and funnel members needing help through a 'front door' so our excellent Administrators, Bernie Hall and Jamie Donohue Strawbridge, can triage the issue.

Mario Kyriacou (new Treasurer) deserves a special mention. He has whipped the accounts into shape and met with our Bank's relationship managers to make changes to ensure that interest on the Industrial Action Fund is maximised. New faces on Branch



Branch Training & Away Day – November

Committee have brought fresh ideas/energy which the more longstanding activists have valued. Since the last AGM Nicola Klinger has been coopted into the vacant Environmental Officer role, and Thomas French and Jon Lilly into vacant Directorate Convenor positions. This will be Steve Evans last AGM as Assistant Branch Secretary, with retirement calling. We wish him well.

Many activists have been supported into training courses/events/conferences to aid their development and a well-attended Branch Away Day was also organised. A Retired Members meeting took place in June (the first RM gathering of any kind in many years). Delegates were also sent to UNISON's Retired Members Conference and Young Members Conference – once again, for the first time in many years.

I want to thank all of our Stewards, Convenors, Workplace contacts, Branch Committee members, activists, Officers and Branch Administrators, for their hard work over 2024 – 2025, and all our members for their ongoing support.

Affiliations: Stand up to Racism, Campaign Against Climate Change, CND, Homes for All, TH Trades Council, PSC

Nominations for Branch Officer posts 2025

The following are elected unopposed:

- **SECRETARY: Kerie Anne**
- **ASSISTANT BRANCH SECRETARIES: Steve Evans (Feb – June), Thomas French (June –) Justine Kohl (Schools)**
- **BRANCH CHAIR: Amina Patel**
- **TREASURER: Mario Kyriacou**
- **EQUALITIES OFFICERS: BLACK MEMBERS: Marshall Savage LGBT+ MEMBERS: Thomas French**
- **INTERNATIONAL OFFICER: Oliver Kianchehr**
- **ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER: Nicola Klinger**
- **WELFARE OFFICER: James Wakefield / Shamine Kanabar (job share)**
- **YOUNG MEMBERS OFFICER: Isaac Hoeschen**
- **EDUCATION OFFICER: Bridget Galloway**
- **COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER: Jonathan Mort**
- **LABOUR LINK OFFICER: Jed Scoles**
- **DIRECTORATE CONVENORS: HASC: Amina Patel Childrens: Carly Holmes Housing & Regeneration: Jonathan Lilly Chief Executive: Thomas French Ex THH: Jason Croft**
- **RETIRED MEMBERS SECRETARY: *to be elected at the RM's AGM, 13th February***

Nominations will be taken at the meeting for the following posts as no nominations were received. All roles can be done as a job share. To discuss any phone the Branch Office on 0207 364 5302 or go to: *https://www.unison.org.uk/about/our-organisation/activists/branch-roles/*

- **Equalities Officer: Disabled Members**
- **Womens Officer**
- **Social Officer**
- **Health & Safety Officer**
- **Auditors X 2**
- **Directorate Convenors X2**