

Public Sector Trade Union Rich List 2019

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Introduction

Membership of trade unions, for both public and private sector workers, has been declining for many years: 23.4 per cent were members in 2018.¹ In the public sector, it is at the lowest level since records began in 1995, down by more than 5 per cent to 11.6 per cent. In the private sector, it has almost disappeared, at a measly 2.6 per cent in 2018. Yet at least 30 bosses of trade unions with a high concentration of public sector workers were in receipt of remuneration in excess of £100,000 in 2018.

Closed-shop workplaces are now illegal, and self-organising in a trade union is an individual's decision. Nevertheless, the amount of taxpayer subsidy that they receive is vast. In 2017-18, staff across the public sector received at least £85.9 million for trade union facility time duties.² Facility time is paid time off during working hours for trade union representatives to carry out trade union duties. Direct grants are also given by government departments, police forces, NHS trusts and councils to trade unions.

Many of the most active unions, such as the RMT that strikes frequently, receive substantially more each year in direct taxpayer subsidy: net government support to the rail industry was £6.4 billion in 2017-18.³

Key findings

- The **average remuneration of the 30 union bosses** on more than £100,000 was **£144,168**. This is an increase of £12,970 from the previous year.
- **Frances O'Grady**, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, received **£167,604** in total remuneration. Her gross salary puts her firmly in the top 3 per cent of earners.⁴
- The trade union with the most senior officers earning more than £100,000 in 2018 was once again the **Fire Brigades Union, with 4 staff members still earning above the threshold**. This is in spite of membership of the Fire Brigades Union falling by almost 21 per cent between 2011 and 2016 (the most recent figures available).^{5,6}
- The highest-paid public sector trade union bosses were the joint general secretaries of the National Education Union, **Kevin Courtney and Dr. Mary Bousted**, who received **£217,501 and £187,557**. This higher figure included a salary of £170,269, employers' national insurance contribution of £21,968, and a pension contribution of £25,264.
- Dr Chaand Nagpaul, **chair and general secretary of the British Medical Association**, received £193,445 in total remuneration, over **7 times what a foundation (FY1) doctor working in the NHS receives: £27,146**.⁷

¹ Office for National Statistics, *Trade union membership statistics 2018: table 2.2*, 30 May 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/trade-union-statistics-2018>, (accessed 29 August 2019).

² Cabinet Office, *Public-sector trade union facility time data*, 30 October 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/public-sector-trade-union-facility-time-data>, (accessed 29 August 2019).

³ Office of Rail and Road, *Rail Finance 2017-18 Annual Statistical Release*, 11 October 2018, <https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/media/1037/rail-finance-statistical-release-2017-18.pdf>, accessed 29 August 2019.

⁴ HMRC, *Percentile points from 1 to 99 for total income before and after tax*, 6 March 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/percentile-points-from-1-to-99-for-total-income-before-and-after-tax>, (accessed 3 September 2019).

⁵ The Fire Brigades Union, *Executive council's report 2013*, 1 May 2013, <https://www.fbu.org.uk/download/file/fid/2935>, accessed 29 August 2019.

⁶ The Fire Brigades Union, *Executive council's report 2017*, 28 November 2017, <https://www.fbu.org.uk/download/file/fid/4023>, accessed 29 August 2019.

⁷ NHS, *Pay for doctors*, <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/pay-doctors> (accessed 5 September 2019),

- **4 senior staff at the railway unions** (ASLEF, RMT and TSSA) share **£514,900** between them.
- **8 senior staff at the education unions** share **£1,349,492** between them.⁸

⁸ Unions included are the National Education Union, National Association of Head Teachers, Association of School and College Leaders, National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, University and College Union, Education Institute of Scotland
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Table 1: public sector trade unions, senior officials' total remuneration, 2018

Union	Name	Position held	Total remuneration (£)	Notes
National Education Union	Unknown	Joint general secretary	217,501	Kevin Courtney & Dr. Mary Bousted are joint general secretaries, but it is not possible to disaggregate each individual's remuneration from the annual return
British Medical Association	Dr. Chaand Nagpaul	Chair and general secretary	193,445	
National Education Union	Unknown	Joint general secretary	187,557	Kevin Courtney & Dr. Mary Bousted are joint general secretaries, but it is not possible to disaggregate each individual's remuneration from the annual return
National Association of Head Teachers	Paul Whiteman	General secretary	182,855	
Association of School and College Leaders	Geoff Barton	General secretary	170,451	
Trades Union Congress	Frances O'Grady	General secretary	167,604	
Royal College of Midwives	Gill Walton	General secretary	163,674	
Royal College of Nursing	Janet Davies	Chief executive and general secretary	162,143	Janet Davies left her post in August 2018, but the remuneration figure covers the period 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018
National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers	Chris Keates	General secretary	160,983	
Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference	Ian Power	Membership secretary	156,491	Year ended 31 March 2019
RMT (National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers)	Mick Cash	General secretary	153,614	Year ended 31 December 2017
GMB	Tim Roache	General secretary	153,000	
University and College Union	Sally Hunt	General secretary	145,025	
ASLEF (Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen)	Mick Whelan	General secretary	139,787	

Communication Workers Union	Dave Ward	General secretary	139,151	
UNISON: The Public Service Union	Dave Prentis	General secretary	138,531	
Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association	Joe Chattin	Chief executive	132,791	Year ended 30 September 2018
Fire Brigades Union	Matthew Wrack	General secretary	132,563	
Prospect	Mike Clancy	General secretary	131,000	
Educational Institute of Scotland	Larry Flanagan	General secretary	128,629	Year ended 31 August 2018
Fire Brigades Union	Andy Dark	Assistant general secretary	126,862	
Public and Commercial Services Union	Mark Serwotka	General secretary	122,180	
Prison Officers Association	Steve Gillan	General secretary	121,102	
FBU (Fire Brigades Union)	Unknown	National Officer	120,780	
SSTA (Scottish Secondary Teachers Association)	Seamus Searson	General secretary	118,888	
FBU (Fire Brigades Union)	Unknown	National Officer	118,513	
British Medical Association	Dr. Andrew Dearden	Treasurer	116,724	In post until November 2018
TSSA (Transport Salaried Staffs' Association)	Manuel Cortes	General secretary	112,759	Year ended 31 December 2017
RMT (National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers)	Mick Lynch	Assistant general secretary	108,740	Year ended 31 December 2017
PCSU (Public and Commercial Services Union)	Chris Baugh	Assistant general secretary	102,168	

Sources and methodology

- All figures were taken from the annual returns of trade unions, which are published by the Certification Officer. Where the annual return has not yet been submitted for the latest year (ending on 31 December 2018), the most recent one has been included in the table and explained in the notes. Only those whose total remuneration was above £100,000 were included in the list.
- Total remuneration includes salary, employers' national insurance contribution, pension contributions and other benefits, such as a car and housing allowance or health insurance.
- Trade unions were selected because they have a high concentration of workers whose remuneration is from taxpayers, such as teachers, medical professionals, railway workers or civil servants.