

Public Sector Trade Union Rich List 2020

Duncan Simpson
September 2020



Introduction

Membership of trade unions, for both public and private sector workers, has been declining for many years: 23.5 per cent were members in 2019.¹ In the public sector, it is at the second lowest level since records began in 1995, at 52.3 per cent. Most male public sector employees are no longer unionised.² Yet at least 29 bosses of trade unions with a high concentration of public sector workers were in receipt of total remuneration in excess of £100,000 in 2019.

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 2018-19, staff across the public sector received £81.2 million for trade union facility time duties.³ Facility time is paid time-off during working hours for trade union representatives to carry out their duties. Direct grants are also given by government departments, police forces, NHS trusts and councils to trade unions.

During the covid-19 pandemic, many teaching unions opposed the reopening of schools before the summer holiday and continued to resist the move before September.⁴ This is in spite of the children's commissioner for England pleading for children to get back in to the classroom "as quickly as possible."⁵

Key findings

- The **average remuneration of the 29 union bosses** on more than £100,000 was **£153,935** in 2019.
- The highest-paid public sector trade union boss was **Sally Hunt**, former general secretary of the **University and College Union**. She received **£534,805 in total remuneration** including £400,000 for "post employment payments". This is in spite of her criticising university leaders for pay packets of a similar size on previous occasions.⁶
- **Frances O'Grady**, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, received **£166,461** in total remuneration. Her gross salary puts her firmly in the top three per cent of earners across the UK.⁷
- In 2019, the public sector trade unions with the most senior staff on total remuneration more than £100,000 were the **Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF)** and the **POA**, with two each.
- Dr Chaand Nagpaul, **chair and general secretary of the British Medical Association**, received **£193,414** in total remuneration. His salary alone (£171,000) was **over 6 times what a foundation (FY1) doctor working in the NHS receives** in 2020 (£28,243).⁸
- **Six senior staff at the education unions** share **£1,296,869** between them.⁹

¹ Office for National Statistics, *Trade union membership statistics 2018: table 2.2*, 27 May 2020, www.gov.uk/government/statistics/trade-union-statistics-2019, (accessed 4 September 2020).

² Ibid.

³ Cabinet Office, *Public-sector trade union facility time data*, 11 October 2019, www.gov.uk/government/statistical-datasets/public-sector-trade-union-facility-time-data, (accessed 4 September 2020).

⁴ Wooding, D., Chaos charter: teachers' union 'sabotaging' school reopenings with list of 200 coronavirus safety demands, *The Sun*, 8 August 2020.

⁵ Children's Commissioner, *Government and teaching unions should stop squabbling and agree a plan to get kids back into school*, 16 May 2020, www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/2020/05/16/government-and-teaching-unions-should-stop-squabbling-and-agree-a-plan-to-get-kids-back-into-school/, (accessed 7 September 2020).

⁶ Ward, P., Scots university criticised for paying new boss more than £400k as staff prepare to strike over pensions, *The Daily Record*, 2 February 2018.

⁷ HMRC, *Percentile points from 1 to 99 for total income before and after tax*, 5 March 2020, www.gov.uk/government/statistics/percentile-points-from-1-to-99-for-total-income-before-and-after-tax, (accessed 4 September 2020).

⁸ NHS, *Pay for doctors*, 2020, www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/pay-doctors, (accessed 5 September 2020).

Table 1: public sector trade unions senior officials' total remuneration, 2019

Union	Position held	Name	Total remuneration (£)	Notes
University and College Union	General secretary	Sally Hunt	534,805	Accounts ended 31 August 2019. Sally Hunt stood down from her post on 31 March 2019
National Association of Head Teachers	General secretary	Paul Whiteman	211,286	
British Medical Association	Chair	Dr. Chaand Nagpaul	193,414	
Association of School and College Leaders	General secretary	Geoff Barton	174,206	
Royal College of Midwives	General secretary	Gill Walton	168,587	
Trades Union Congress	General secretary	Frances O'Grady	166,461	
Royal College of Nursing of the UK	General secretary	Dame Donna Kinnair	162,143	Accounts ended 31 December 2018. Dame Donna was chief executive & general secretary until 31 August 2018
GMB	General secretary	Tim Roache	160,000	
National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers (RMT)	General secretary	Mick Cash	159,944	Year ended 31 December 2018
Educational Institute of Scotland	General secretary	Larry Flanagan	149,472	Year ended 31 August 2019
FDA	General secretary	Dave Penman	148,636	
Prospect	General secretary	Mike Clancy	145,000	Year ended 31 December 2018
Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF)	General secretary	Mick Whelan	143,940	
Communication Workers Union	General secretary	Dave Ward	139,151	Year ended 31 December 2018
UNISON: The Public Service Union	General secretary	Dave Prentis	138,531	Year ended 31 December 2018

⁹ Unions included are the University and College Union, National Association of Head Teachers, Association of School and College Leaders, Educational Institute of Scotland, Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association and the National Education Union.

Union	Position held	Name	Total remuneration (£)	Notes
Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association	Acting chief executive	Joe Chattin	132,791	Year ended 30 September 2018
Fire Brigades Union	General secretary	Matthew Wrack	132,563	Year ended 31 December 2018
Fire Brigades Union	Assistant general secretary	Andy Dark	126,862	Year ended 31 December 2018
Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association	General secretary	Seamus Searson	125,294	
POA ¹⁰	General secretary	Stephen Gillan	123,424	
Transport Salaried Staffs Association	General secretary	Manuel Cortes	122,430	Year ended 31 December 2018
Public and Commercial Services Union	General secretary	Mark Serwotka	122,180	Year ended 31 December 2018
Fire Brigades Union	National officer	Unknown	120,780	Year ended 31 December 2018
Fire Brigades Union	National officer	Unknown	118,513	Year ended 31 December 2018
Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF)	Assistant general secretary	Simon Weller	113,614	
POA	Deputy general secretary	Joe Simpson	113,067	
National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers (RMT)	Assistant general secretary	Mick Lynch	113,038	Year ended 31 December 2018
Public and Commercial Services Union	Assistant general secretary	Chris Baugh	102,168	Year ended 31 December 2018
National Education Union	Joint general secretary	Dr. Mary Bousted	101,806	Accounts cover eight month period up to 31 August 2019

¹⁰ POA: The Professional Trades Union for Prison, Correctional & Secure Psychiatric Workers

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 2019), 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 or housing allowance and 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.