



Southampton District Branch

Issue 20—August 2017

Support EU citizens' right to remain day of action 13 September 2017, 1:00pm–4:30pm

Palace of Westminster, London SW1A 0AA

UNISON believes that EU citizens currently living in the UK make a major contribution to society and should be allowed to stay here after the UK leaves the EU.

Workers from across Europe play a vital role in our public services, especially the NHS and local government. They have built their lives here. They have settled and integrated into British society. Negotiations so far have failed to secure EU citizens' existing rights – leading to massive uncertainty for UNISON members and their families. They deserve better.

On 13 September UNISON members will join a lobby of parliament to speak up for the rights of EU nationals. This is an important issue and we need your support. If you can come along please contact your MP in advance and request a meeting so you can share your story and concerns with them on the day.

UNISON has reserved rooms in parliament from 2–6pm so your MP can come and meet you. And there will be plenty of UNISON stewards there to help you on the day.

If you are planning to come to the lobby please register at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mass-lobby-for-rights-of-eu-citizens-in-the-uk-british-citizens-in-the-eu-tickets-35863169706>

For more information please contact cathy.robin@southampton.gov.uk.



Born between 1970 and 1978? You just lost £10,000

Extract from an article in The Guardian, 24 July 2017

More than 7 million people will lose just under £10,000 each because of new government plans to increase the state pension age earlier than planned.

Last week the government announced it would raise the state pension age to 68 for those now in their late 30s and early 40s. The change will affect Britons born between 1970 and 1978, who will now have to wait another year to receive their state pensions, a move which the government found would save £74bn.

The work and pensions secretary, David Gauke, said implementing the proposals would create "fairness across the generations, and the certainty which people need to plan for old age". He said failing to act "would be irresponsible and place an extremely unfair burden on younger generations".

New analysis from the House of Commons library found that each person affected by the change stood to lose around £9,800, which Labour called "disgraceful and unjustified". The analysis said the sum was roughly what might be expected, given that one year's state pension is around £8,300.

Debbie Abrahams, the shadow work and pensions secretary, said the government was asking "millions of people to work longer to pay for their failing austerity plans", and said recent research that showed increases in life expectancy were slowing proved there was no evidence-based reason for the change.

The government's plans would see the state pension age for men and women equalised at 65 at the end of 2018, before rising to 66 in 2020 and 67 in 2028.



ESOL Course

Our Education Co-ordinator (Martin Merritt) has been able to obtain some funding for an English for speakers of other languages course to run within our branch.



The course will run over a 10 week period for 2 hours a week.

We need a minimum of 10 members to attend the course. Once we have numbers we will be able to arrange a venue and start date and time and then let members know when the course/workshop will start.

If you are interested in attending this course please contact Martin on martin.merritt@southampton.gov.uk or 023 8083 2740.

Female EU citizens face disadvantage in claiming permanent residency in the UK

(Extract from an article from The Financial, July 2017)

Female EU nationals who are engaged in insecure types of work and who have young children face disadvantage in claiming permanent UK residency. The finding was made as part of an LSE research project examining female EU citizens' experiences of trying to claim access to residence rights and social benefits.

EU nationals have residence rights in the UK if they are workers, the family members of EU nationals, or self-sufficient persons. After five years of residing in the UK on this basis, they can claim permanent residence.

The research found that female EU nationals are at risk of exclusion from residence and social rights because their work is not recognised as 'genuine and effective work' or because having children negatively impacts on their employment.

Women working on zero-hours contracts faced difficulties in being recognised as workers. One provider is quoted in the paper as saying: "I had notice from the DWP last week that just said 'zero-hours contract is not genuine and effective work'. There was no consideration of how many hours she was working – it was a blanket assertion that zero hours is not 'genuine and effective work'.

The difficulties of providing evidence of 'genuine and effective work' were compounded where this evidence was required over a five-year period in order to claim the status of permanent resident.

Dr Shutes commented: "The free movement of EU citizens is central to ongoing Brexit negotiations. But it is, already, much less free for some than for others. The research findings indicate how gendered experiences of work, care and family affect access to rights for EU migrant women in the UK.



UNISON legal victory sees employment tribunal fees scrapped

Supreme Court verdict follows four-year fight by union and is a victory for everyone in work.

Employment tribunal fees will be scrapped after UNISON won a landmark court victory against the government on 26 July.

The Supreme Court – the UK's highest court – has unanimously ruled that the government was acting unlawfully and unconstitutionally when it introduced the fees four years ago. From today, anyone who has been treated illegally or unfairly at work will no longer have to pay to take their employers to court – as a direct result of UNISON's legal challenge. The government will also have to refund more than £27m to the thousands of people charged for taking claims to tribunals since July 2013, when fees were introduced by then Lord Chancellor Chris Grayling. Anyone in England, Scotland and Wales wanting to pursue a case against their employer has had to find as much as £1,200. This has been a huge expense for many low-paid employees, says UNISON.

Reacting to this morning's decision, **UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis said**, "The government is not above the law. But when ministers introduced fees they were disregarding laws many centuries old, and showing little concern for employees seeking justice following illegal treatment at work. The government has been acting unlawfully, and has been proved wrong – not just on simple economics, but on constitutional law and basic fairness too. It's a major victory for employees everywhere. UNISON took the case on behalf of anyone who's ever been wronged at work, or who might be in future.

Unscrupulous employers no longer have the upper hand. These unfair fees have let law-breaking bosses off the hook these past four years, and left badly treated staff with no choice but to put up or shut up. We'll never know how many people missed out because they couldn't afford the expense of fees. But at last this tax on justice has been lifted."



Star Steward

UNISON Southampton District Branch are proud to recognise **Mel Robertson**, steward at **Redbridge Community School** as our **STAR Steward** for May 2017. Branch Secretary, Hayley Garner, had this to say, "Mel has helped members in the school with questions about terms and conditions, giving great advice and support. She always responds to members quickly and is around to help when needed. She always looks out for school staff and isn't afraid to speak up when she sees something happening that shouldn't be."

On receiving the award, Mel said, "I became a steward to support TAs with queries, as I was being asked the questions anyway! Most people are under the illusion that all unions do is strike - I would argue they support you and offer great insight into how your workplace should be run. They can also help with many topics that aren't work related. If workers aren't in a union, there is no one to fight their corner."

Is there a woman in your workplace who is the model UNISON activist? Is your steward a star? Does your health and safety rep keep you safe? Is your workplace contact keeping you in the loop? Contact ben.martin@southampton.gov.uk to nominate.



Mel Robertson accepting her award with Hayley Garner, Branch Secretary, and Ben Martin, Fighting Fund Local Organiser



30 hours 'free' childcare: what parents need to know

In September 2017, the government is planning to introduce its flagship promise of 30-hours free childcare for working parents of three- and four-year-olds. It has thrown up quite a few questions and how it differs from the current 15 hours childcare offer. Below we address some of those questions including how to sign up for the 30 hours offer.

ELIGIBILITY

You will be eligible for the 30-hour funded childcare offer if:

You earn more than the equivalent of 16 hours at the national living wage or minimum wage per week: for example, £120 per week if you are 25 or older.

There is no requirement to work a certain amount of hours per week – it is all about how much you earn.

This means if you only work 10 hours a week but earn £12 per hour, you will meet the minimum earning threshold.

Apprentices are also eligible as long as they earn the equivalent to 16 hours at the apprentice minimum wage.

AND

You earn less than £100,000 per year.

This applies if you are self-employed or on a zero-hours contract and expect to meet the earning criteria on average over the three months after you have applied for the 30-hours. HMRC will look at data such as your previous earnings to consider whether you are likely to meet the criteria and may contact you for further information if they are unsure.

If you are a single parent and meet the above criteria, you will be eligible for the 30 hours. If you live with a partner, you both must meet the above criteria. This still applies if one of you is not the child's parent – for example, if you have remarried or



have started living with a new partner. If you are separated/divorced from your child's parent, the eligibility rules will only apply to the parent that the child normally lives with (and their new partner if they are part of the same household).

SIGNING UP FOR THE 30-HOURS

You will be able to apply for both the 30-hour offer and tax-free childcare using a single application available online via the Childcare Service, <https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE 30-HOURS OFFER

Q: My child is going to turn three next year. How soon can I access the 30-hours?

A: Your child will be eligible for the 30 hours offer from the term after they turn three, or the term after you receive your eligibility code – whichever is later.

For example, if your child turns three on 25 March, and you apply for the 30-hours on 27 March, your child will be eligible for a place from 1 April (i.e. the start of the spring term). However, if your child turns three on 25 March but you don't apply for the 30 hours until 5 April, your child won't be eligible for a place until 1 September (i.e. the start of the autumn term).

Q: If I'm not eligible for the 30-hour offer, can I still get my 15 hours?

A: Yes. The 15-hour offer is still universal so if you're not eligible for a 30-hour place, you will still be eligible for the 15-hour offer.

Q: Is there any difference in how the first 15 hours and the second 15 hours under the 30-hour offer will be delivered?

A: No, there is no difference. Childcare providers will provide early years care and education that follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework across the whole 30 hours.

Further information is available at <https://www.pre-school.org.uk/30-hours-free-childcare-what-parents-need-know?>



Baby Equipment Bank

The new Baby Equipment Bank at Oasis of Life Church is preparing for launch in the coming months. Baby equipment and bedding can be donated at Oasis of Life Church, Unit 7 (next to 'On the Tiles' showroom), Millbrook Industrial Estate, First Avenue, Southampton, SO15 0LJ
Open on: Mondays 10:30 to 13:00 and Thursdays 11:00 to 13:00



Examples of what they would love to receive are:

Baby linen and toiletries, cots, beds, Moses baskets, basinets, changing bags and mats, pushchairs, prams, buggies and strollers, safety gates, car seats, changing units, baby baths, highchairs, sterilisers, bottles, baby monitors, Bumbo seats, etc.

If you work with service users who could benefit from this project, you can refer them directly to the Baby Equipment Bank by emailing a request for equipment to babyequipment@rccgsouthampton.org or telephoning: 07879 236456 (Checked and answered Mondays 10:30 to 15:30)





Saturday 26 August 2017

Put the date in your diary and come along on the day and join in the street party and parade. The parade will set off from the Stage Door at 3pm and move along West Marlands Road, around Guildhall Square, down Above Bar Street to the Bargate monument and then back up Above Bar Street to Guildhall Square and back along West Marlands Road. The branch will be having a stall in the Guildhall area so if you can donate us an hour or two of your time we would welcome seeing you.

Last year's event raised just over £3000 for local charities and this year's target is to raise £5000.

There for You

If you are a member and you are experiencing financial difficulties, whatever the circumstances, There for You can offer you support.

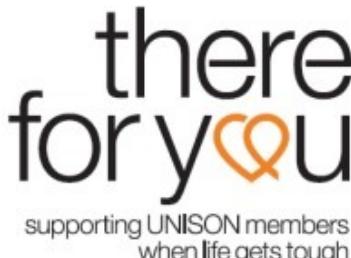
You may have financial problems for reasons including:

- relationship breakdown;
- loss of income;
- suffering from a long illness;
- needing to buy equipment because of a disability;
- Caring for someone with special needs or an illness.

Grants and funding

There is no guarantee that we can offer you financial help, but thousands of members and their families do benefit from our support every year. For example, in 2012, There for You gave more than 4,000 grants to members totalling nearly £750,000.

For more information contact us on 020 7121 5620 or email theresforyou@unison.co.uk or contact your branch welfare officer.



Recruit a new member and get a £25 reward

For every new member recruited, you will get a £25 reward. Application forms and further information are available from the UNISON office.

New members need to have paid their first subscription before any advice can be given but, in any case, cannot be advised on pre-existing issues.



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Southampton District Unison**

TOWER BRIDGE · SOUTHWARK BRIDGE
MILLENNIUM BRIDGE · WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

Walk4

Because 1 in 4 women will experience domestic violence.

Saturday 9 September

"When I arrived at the refuge, I was terrified that my husband would find me. My case worker was so welcoming and assured me that I was safe." — Jane

Jane is just one of the 5,000 women escaping domestic violence Refuge supports on any given day. With your help, we can continue to support thousands more like Jane who are fleeing abuse.

On **Saturday 9 September** you and hundreds of others can walk across four of London's most iconic bridges, knowing **every step you take** means we can support the thousands of women and children who need us.

1 in 4 women experience domestic violence during their lives. We all know someone who is experiencing domestic violence, someone who needs Refuge's support. By **taking part** in Walk4 you will raise vital money that will save and change lives, now and for future generations.

Registration fee: £10
(free for children under 16)

Minimum sponsorship: £150 *per person*

Distance: 10k

Sign up now at <https://www.everydayhero.co.uk/event/walk42017%20>

If you are unable to take part on the day you can donate at <http://www.refuge.org.uk/get-involved/walk4/> or by phoning 020 7395 7771.

Volunteer Charter

Claire Ransom has been working on a Volunteer Charter, which hopefully will be adopted within Southampton City Council. This document will give clear guidance about the use of volunteers within the council and when and how they can be engaged.

Check out the UNISON Southampton District website at www.unisonsouthamptondistrict.org.uk

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