

National executive council report

Ongoing high profile pay campaigns, industrial action and the ongoing fight against racism and hatred highlighted at union's national executive council



Important wins and ongoing battles across the union

UNISON's national executive council (NEC) last week congratulated the union's staff and activists who had earned a very important recent legal victory in protecting the rights of members to strike.

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General secretary Christina McAnea said it was a "very significant victory against the strike-breaking tactics of employers", with bosses no longer being able to mistreat staff who take part in union-organised workplace disputes.

The case involved a UNISON workplace rep who was suspended from work and disciplined in the middle of industrial action about sleep-ins

in early 2019.

It was a timely victory as the general secretary highlighted a number of ongoing disputes the union is currently engaged in, including high-profile action across HE, Tower Hamlets in London and in local government in Scotland.

"Successful industrial action ballots take a lot of work from the whole union," Ms McAnea told the NEC. "Central office, regions

and branches, we all need to work together – lots more coordinated work is needed across the whole union.”

High profile, long-running campaigns currently taking place across the union in local government and health in terms of pay and cuts were highlighted by the meeting.

The general secretary said: “Our local government funding campaign is continuing as the union continues to raise the profile of local government workers and the lack of funding and the impact that has on our members and on the services they provide for our communities.

“We are keeping up the pressure and this is a big ongoing campaign for the union.

“Lots of great work has also been done across the union recently on NHS pay,” the general secretary added. “We used the recent 73rd birthday of the NHS to highlight the issue of NHS pay back to the Westminster government.”

The NEC also reiterated the union’s joint statement with Show Racism the Red Card over the “disgusting and abhorrent” abuse suffered by Black England players on Sunday after the European Championships final at Wembley.

“UNISON continues to be at the forefront of the fight against racism, abuse and hatred,” the general secretary told the meeting. “And we will continue to call on the government to make sure social media companies are held to account. There needs to be consequences for these hateful actions.

The NEC also heard that the union had strongly objected to the Westminster government’s confusing recent announcements over the relaxing of COVID restrictions and that the union would continue to keep members protected, whilst continuing to fight calls for mandatory vaccinations for care members.

“We are keeping up the pressure on masks and social distancing and protecting workers,” Christina told the NEC. “And yet again it’s our members who will be under pressure to police these measures. It’ll be low-paid reception and

security staff, our members, who are being left to take the tough decisions.

The NEC also:

- agreed to mobilise ahead of the climate change conference in the autumn in Glasgow;
- agreed meeting dates for the rest of 2021 and 2022;
- accepted the report from special delegate conference;
- sent a message of support to HE members at the University of Dundee on their pension battle.