



**North  
Somerset  
UNISON  
Annual Report  
2021-22**

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## **Branch Report**

### **Branch Secretary's report**

#### **The Global Pandemic!**

As we all know, the Covid pandemic has continued apace throughout the year. It would be lovely to think that we will be able to look back on this time of crisis at our 2023 AGM but, with current Covid rates and new variants emerging, who knows what the situation will be like?

We cannot over state how difficult this time has been for so many of our members. The Office for National Statistics reports that over 170,000 people in the UK have died due to Covid, this was just under 224 deaths per 100,000 people and one of the worst Covid death rates in the world. Given that this country has the NHS and one of the most highly regarded Public Health infra-structures in the world, this data is staggering. And whilst government ministers partied on the Downing Street lawn, people across the country worked hard and left their vulnerable relatives isolated and loved ones to die alone because they thought that following the rules was important for the greater good.



Although many people are enjoying the new workplace flexibility forced upon employers by Covid, others have found working from home very difficult. Anyone without a suitable home-working space or with caring responsibilities or feeling isolated will have struggled. It is important that we continue to represent all members and that anyone who finds

it hard to work from home is not over-looked – make sure that you tell us if you are not happy with recent changes in your workplace or working patterns.

Concerns about working from home and worry about being exposed to Covid have highlighted the need to be in a union. However, some people still don't think about joining one until it is too late. Anyone can be subject to an unfair allegation, an unsuitable work restructure, bullying or a period of ill health. And we all deserve a pay rise! So please take every opportunity to remind your colleagues about the need for unions – whether that's at a team meeting or over a coffee with a friend! Be that person who badgers others about the power of unions – they will thank you for it one day!

UNISON is the country's biggest union and is for those employed providing public sector services. If you have friends who work in other sectors, point them towards the TUC tool to find the best union for them. [www.findyourunion.tuc.org.uk/](http://www.findyourunion.tuc.org.uk/)

## The benefits of joining UNISON

**“ASK YOURSELF, CAN YOU AFFORD NOT TO BELONG TO A TRADE UNION?”**

UNISON is here to make sure that you get a fair deal at work and to support you if you need us.

But it's also good to remember that union membership has other benefits too!

UNISON has negotiated deals with thousands of companies across the UK in order to offer discounts. Other members' benefits include a specialist travel agency, the beautiful Croyde Bay Holiday resort and much more. Take a look at <https://benefits.unison.org.uk/>

Also, please don't forget *There for You*, UNISON's welfare fund and support line.

Visit [www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/](http://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/) to find out more.

### **Sarah Wadsworth, Jean Long Rep of the Year, 2021**

Each year we honour the activist who others think has done the most for our branch and our members throughout the previous 12 months. We do this in memory of our dear friend and fellow union activist, Jean Long, who was one of our most dedicated and tireless reps.

In 2021 we were very pleased to congratulate Sarah Wadsworth for being a worthy winner! Sarah is a long-standing Health and Safety Rep and stepped up to be Branch Treasurer when we really needed someone. Treasurer is a key role and Sarah approaches it with commitment and good humour. Sarah is quiet and unassuming but has a steely determination and is also very funny – we couldn't manage without her!

Thank you, Sarah for all that you do!





Sarah Wadsworth, Rep of the Year 2021!

We celebrated Sarah's award, back in the summer, with a Covid-safe lunch and informal get together at The Stables. As ever, a magnificent cake was provided by our very own Pat Barrett.

Sarah said "As Pat said last year when she won, it's an award that we all deserve, but thank you to everyone who voted for me. I was very touched by the honour.

The M&S voucher was brilliant and it's a hard decision between a set of photo frames and some lovely vases"

### UNISON going green



Green issues are union issues! The branch has worked with neighbouring UNISON branches to influence the Avon and Somerset Local Government Pension Scheme to address the environmental impact of its investments. And branch activists joined the Cop 21 demonstration in Bristol in November.

If you are interested in helping us to do our bit for the environment, please get in touch, we'd love to hear from you!

## Keeping in touch

If you use social media, follow us on Facebook and Twitter: [@nsunison](#)

Our main way of contacting you is via email. In order for us to do this, you need to have ticked the box which allows us to contact you via email on My UNISON. You can do this and check all the details we hold on you at [www.unison.org.uk/my-unison](http://www.unison.org.uk/my-unison). It is important to check that your work place, job title and department (in personal details) are correct as this is how we will know whether to contact you if we are notified of workplace consultations.

If you haven't used My UNISON before, you will need to register. To do this, and to log in, you will need your membership number. If you don't have this, contact us and we will let you have it.

## Thinking about becoming a rep?

UNISON representatives work to support colleagues. This is interesting and rewarding work which gives you an opportunity to learn new skills, gain confidence and to find out more about your employer's structure and decision-making processes.

You can carry out most of the work during work hours, depending upon your employer

UNISON offers reps comprehensive training and support and we promise not to overburden you with cases!

If you don't think you can become a rep, there are other things you can do to support your union – you could become a workplace contact, set up a Self-Organised Group for like-minded colleagues or become a Green Rep.

For a nomination form or for a chat about this or any UNISON roles, contact [unison@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:unison@n-somerset.gov.uk) tel 01934 634759

Louise Branch  
**UNISON North Somerset Branch Secretary**

## **North Somerset Council Report**

### **Supporting UNISON members**

Throughout another year of Covid our council UNISON representatives continued to provide support and advice to all our members. We provided individual support to 36 colleagues, advice to many more, and supported staff during 20 consultations relating to restructures.

The most common worries that people raised with us concerned capability and disciplinary proceedings, restructures and changes to contract and a feeling that their views were not being listened to.

### **Liaison with Council Management**

UNISON reps continued to speak up for our members in our regular meetings with management representatives and fellow unions in:

1. monthly **Trade Union Liaison meetings**, where we meet with HR and the other recognised unions (GMB and Unite)
2. quarterly **Joint Safety and Consultative Committee** meetings, where we meet with Councilors', HR and Health and Safety management.
3. **Individual liaison** with HR, management and the Health and Safety team.

The formal meetings are a great opportunity for your reps to present issues directly to those who can change things. So, if you work for the council and would like to find out about what the council is up to, or if you have any concerns about the council's employment practises or any bright ideas for how things might be better, do get in touch! You are the person who knows best what affects you at work and we can only raise any issues if you tell us about them!



If you work for the council and want to influence the way it operates, you should think about becoming a UNISON rep! Contact us for a chat over MS Teams or a coffee – there will be no pressure, but we might also buy you a cake if you sign up to be a rep or workplace contact!

### **Pay**

The unions on the National Joint Council (NJC) balloted their members who work in Local Government, on whether they were prepared to take strike action in response to the employers' offer of a 1.75% increase from 1 April 2021. Negotiations continue.

## **University Hospital Bristol and Weston**

The last 12 months has continued to be another challenging year for UHBW staff. The pandemic has been exhausting and has created constant staffing challenges throughout the Trust. The government pay proposal, response to the pandemic and uncertainty around mandatory vaccinations have not been supportive and will continue to drive staff away from the NHS.

At UHBW, the Trust is continuing with its integration programme as a result of the merger. As reps we are continuing to support Unison members through consultations. As a result of this we have worked with our HR services to create a post consultation survey as part of our policy. This was because there was no data that represented the impact change had on staff and we need to ensure our members' voices were heard. This is a really positive step as it means we have evidence, rather than just anecdotes and allows us to escalate concerns and improve our consultation process.

The BNSSG Integrate Care System programme continues to pick up momentum. We are working proactively with other staff side leads across BNSSG and have started to work out solutions that affect us all - such as standardised job descriptions and pooling resources to support job matching. Other areas which present opportunities are aligning policies. These are huge pieces of work that will need to be led by the organisations, but, as staff side, it is our role to identify areas which may result in inequalities.

The executive as BNSSG is changing with a new CEO and HR director. There was an employees' relations review undertaken that looked at the role of the unions within the Trust with the purpose of improving partnership working. The recommendations of this review will be released to staff side in the new year.

**Anthea Ward**

## **Alliance Homes Report**

- The quarterly joint meeting - where we discuss business wide issues, has continued. We try to meet heads of service when needed to discuss specific operations issues.
- Representation has also continued at the company's health and safety meetings which, not surprisingly, have continued to incorporate Covid 19 restrictions. Our main office is Covid compliant, and through discussion our main Weston office has been kept open with the help of interventions, questions, and suggestions from the reps. Company risk assessments have been accompanied by an available rep. The i-station on the Bournville

remains closed as non-Covid compliant. This is still being reviewed for viability – we regularly request updates.

- Alliance Care has now left the group and staff were tupe'd over to Access your Care. All relevant staff were consulted and kept fully informed, and reps were copied into all relevant emails about the transfer.
- Stress has been a fairly big issue in parts of the company, with high staff turnover and high sickness levels in some areas. Home repairs service has suffered greatly and is currently under review.
- Home working, where possible is still being embraced by a high percentage of staff, and various consultations have taken place regarding staff/company expectations around attending the offices.
- Welfare – a menopause group was started by HR, with get-togethers and information sharing via teams. This was very successful, but due to the HR member of staff leaving, it is now seen as a peer-to-peer support group, with no one from management heading the group. We are looking at ways to keep this running effectively. We are also continuing to press HR to continue to look into becoming a menopause-friendly employer, with a relevant policy.

## **Agilisys Report**

2021 was a mostly quiet year in terms of union activity for Agilisys in North Somerset.

Agilisys was very proactive in giving supportive messaging throughout the pandemic. Workers have been returning to Agilisys and other Council offices around the country but in North Somerset, they have observed the Council's cautious approach to office access. Agilisys is committed to a longer term "Agile Life" policy with staff largely working from home and only attending the office when necessary and they will aim to accommodate staff preferences where possible.

In January 2021, the annual leave year changed from January to April with no impact on leave allowance. Our 15 month leave year to facilitate the switch, will end on 31 March 2022

Given the travel restrictions that have been in place, the longer leave year and in an effort to encourage staff to take their designated leave for their own wellbeing, for this year only, staff have been advised that requests to carry over up to five days annual leave, will be refused. This is a temporary change to a discretionary practice. There have also been numerous reminders to staff centrally and from managers to book their leave in advance, not least because we can't have everyone off for the last two weeks of March. It is possible that some people will still be caught out and lose leave as a result.

Agilisys has implemented a policy for Agilisys staff to purchase up to five days additional annual leave. Its primary purpose was to enable Agilisys staff to bring their annual leave in line with NSC staff. The council has subsequently established a policy for council staff to purchase up to 10 days additional annual leave. TUPE'd staff are not eligible to apply under the Agilisys scheme as their leave is already at NSC levels. They are not eligible to apply under the council scheme as their pay and leave is managed by Agilisys. If a TUPE'd member of staff requires additional leave, their option is to submit an unpaid leave request for consideration.

A consultation on job description changes which started in October has been put on hold whilst options for ways forward are considered. Once it is back on track, UNISON will be providing further support to affected members.

## **Helen Jones**

### **Liberata Report**

Case wise it has been quiet over the last year.

The majority of Liberata staff have continued to work from home under Covid measures and customer facing staff have been redeployed to temporary roles supporting other teams.

Liberata contract holders voted and accepted a 2% salary increase back dated to 1<sup>st</sup> June 21, Liberata will honour the NJC pay award once agreed for TUPE contract holders who were balloted for strike action.

## **Nick Caines**

### **Sirona**

No report received

### **Weston College Report**

No report received

### **Case Worker Report**

Another year of Covid has passed and more pressure on our Members. Our Members have dealt with many difficulties within their employment and at home.

The majority of our Members work in Local Government, Care Homes, Hospitals, Schools, and in the Community. (I may have missed areas out and if so I apologise).

A lot of members in the private sector, particularly in Care Homes, have come under a lot of pressure with many staff returning back to their homeland because of Brexit

plus the added stress of vulnerable people getting Covid. When some of our Members are having to isolate they are not being paid sick pay (it is rare that Care Homes have a sick pay policy). They are told to use their annual leave!! What would happen if they went to work knowing they were supposed to be isolating? The mind boggles. This is something that has to be addressed.

Thank you all for keeping this Country running in such difficult times and showing people how dedicated you all are in your individual areas.

Take Care.

**Pat Barrett,  
Case Worker**

### **Retired Members Report**

There have been no Retired Members activities or events this year due to the Covid pandemic, however, we will be looking to have a get together in the early spring, if Covid rules allow, to see if we can get the show back on the road.

**Martin Tolemen  
Retired Members Secretary**

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Branch started the year with balances of:

General Fund £43,699.63

Branch Reserves £16,532.30

We ended the year with balances of:

General Fund £29,870.11

Branch Reserves £ 32,564.31

Our reserves have gone up by £16,000 as we decided that it would be good to have enough money to pay redundancy if need be and to cover in case the Health Members were moved from our branch into the Bristol branch. The decision was made in December that they wouldn't be so we will be able to potentially reduce our reserves in 2022 as it does affect our funding and does better if spent.

Last year our funding was 20% and has increased this year to 23.3% as the way branches are funded was discussed at Conference and has changed for this year.

This year we were able to send people to conference and people attended the Retired Members Conference, the Health and Safety Forum and the Regional

Committee. We also had a branch development day at the Stable in Weston. This all cost just under £1,100.

This year we have made donations of £1,915.75:

- Birmingham hospital porters fund £1,000
- The People's Assembly £325
- Welfare There for you £40.75
- Clarks strike fund £250
- Weston Super Mare Credit Union £300

We have also made the Affiliations over the year of £779.03

- Palestine Solidarity Campaign £25
- Campaign against Climate change £25
- LRD Publications £384.13
- Regional Fund £70
- Weston and North Somerset Trades Union Council £202.90
- Living Wage Foundation £72.

The accountant from head office will be carrying out our end of year audit and this will cost the Branch £200

**Sarah Wadsworth**

<b>General Fund Income and Expenditure Account for North Somerset</b>				
<b>For the period ended 31 December 2021</b>				
<b>All Items</b>	<b>2021 (£)</b>	<b>2021 (£)</b>	<b>2020 (£)</b>	<b>2020 (£)</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Branch Funding	45,699.62		45,090.52	
Branch Levy	0.00		0.00	
Investment Income Received	32.01		32.92	
Tax deducted or paid on Investment Income	191.70		0.00	
Retired Members Subscriptions	105.00		75.00	
Other Income	5.00		119.36	
Regional Pool Income	0.00		0.00	
Transfer from Industrial Action Fund	0.00		0.00	
Transfer from Dedicated Action Fund	0.00		0.00	
Locally collected subscriptions	0.00		0.00	
<b>Income total</b>		<u>46,033.33</u>		45,317.80
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Fighting Fund	0.00		0.00	
Staff Salaries	24,232.97		24,569.75	
Rent	5,500.00		6,000.00	
Rates	0.00		0.00	
Utilities	0.00		0.00	
Other administration	2,601.33		6,086.09	
Honoraria	0.00		0.00	
Conferences and group meetings	964.08		25.00	
Branch Committee	0.00		0.00	
Other Meetings	6,274.19		2,542.45	
Publicity	71.94		774.49	
Education	879.45		350.00	
Donations	1,915.75		75.00	
Affiliations	779.03		611.76	
Local Activities	170.45		0.00	
Transfer to Industrial Action Fund	15,000.00		0.00	
Transfer to Dedicated Fund(s)	0.00		0.00	
Other Expenditure	91.75		97.40	
Other Branch Funding Deductions	0.00		0.00	
Tax	0.00		0.00	
<b>Expenditure total</b>		<u>58,480.94</u>		41,131.94
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<u>-12,447.61</u>		<u>4,185.86</u>

**Consolidated Balance Sheet  
for North Somerset**

For the period ended 31 December 2021

All Items	2021 (£)	2021 (£)	2020 (£)	2020 (£)
<b>Fixed Assets</b>				
Freehold Properties	0.00		0.00	
Leasehold Properties	0.00		0.00	
Equipment, Fixtures & Fittings	1.00		1.00	
Investments (Quoted & Unquoted)	0.00		0.00	
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>		<u>1.00</u>		1.00
<b>Current Assets</b>				
Branch Funding	0.00		0.05	
Third Party Debtors	0.00		0.00	
Loans	0.00		0.00	
Building Society	0.00		0.00	
Bank Deposit	32,564.31		16,532.30	
Current Account	29,870.11		43,699.63	
Prepaid Card	0.00		0.00	
Cash	24.10		24.10	
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<u>62,458.52</u>		60,256.08
<b>Current Liabilities</b>				
Branch Funding	0.05		0.00	
Third Party Creditors	0.00		350.00	
HO Loans	0.00		0.00	
Locally Collected Subscriptions	0.00		0.00	
Credit Card	0.00		0.00	
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<u>0.05</u>		350.00
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<u>62,458.47</u>		59,906.08
<b>Total Assets</b>		<u>62,459.47</u>		59,907.08
<b>Accumulated Funds</b>				
Accumulated General Fund at year beginning	43,375.84		39,189.98	
Brought Forward Balance Adjustment	0.00		0.00	
Surplus/Deficit	-12,447.61		4,185.86	
<b>Accumulated General Fund at year end</b>		<u>30,928.23</u>		43,375.84
Accumulated Industrial Action Fund	16,531.24		16,531.24	
Surplus/Deficit	15,000.00		0.00	
<b>Accumulated Industrial Action Fund at year end</b>		<u>31,531.24</u>		16,531.24
Accumulated Dedicated Fund	0.00		0.00	
Surplus/Deficit	0.00		0.00	
<b>Accumulated Dedicated Fund at year end</b>		<u>0.00</u>		0.00
<b>Total Funds at End of the Year</b>		<u>62,459.47</u>		59,907.08