

Exit Payment Cap Pushed Through Parliament

The Tory Government have pushed through legislation to limit the exit payment for anyone leaving the public sector (except Police, Armed Services and Fire). The Exit cap is set at £95K but includes any pension top-up in addition to any redundancy entitlement.

Under the local government pension scheme anyone made redundant aged 55+ has the right to receive their pension at an unreduced amount. As reported in the bosses Municipal Journal, "A note by the Government's Actuary Department said it expected 86% of local government pension scheme (LGPS) members made redundant to be affected by the proposed reforms on exit payments, with each employee losing about £13,000 on average."

The LGPS is yet to be changed to reflect the new law, creating a level of chaos and uncertainty that is unclear at present. Further detail and news reports about this can be found at www.sandwellunison.co.uk

UNISON Members ask for Libraries to Re-open Safely

Most Local Authorities have already re-opened their libraries in a COVID-secure manner. In Sandwell this is only just beginning to take place. Whilst the safety-first approach is welcomed by UNISON, staff working in the library service now want all libraries to re-open.

In a survey of UNISON members working in Sandwell's Library service, 97% want all libraries to re-open in a COVID secure manner.

Every Library in Sandwell survived 10 years of austerity. The Labour Council, together with staff working with fewer colleagues, are to be congratulated for achieving this. After protecting Sandwell's library service for 10 years, it would be a tragedy if every library did not survive the pandemic.

UNISON Launches Petition for COVID funding

After clapping key workers – now is the time to ensure the very same public sector workers are not hit with further cuts and job losses due to inadequate funding.

While our Councils have stepped up to the challenge to help our communities during the pandemic, they have also been hit with increased costs and lost income. The government must fund local councils properly to keep communities safe and rebuild the country after the pandemic.

The £10bn put aside for Track and Trace has largely gone to the private sector – instead this funding should go to our Councils. Check out the following link for you and your family to sign it. <http://www.sandwellunison.co.uk/sign-up-to-fund-key-workers-and-our-councils/>

New Policies at the Council

UNISON has been part of discussions that will see new policies introduced for Foster Carers Leave and Transgender equality rights.

Under the Foster Carers policy staff will be entitled each 12 month period up to:-

- 4 days for training and assessment
- 1 day for attendance at Panel
- 5 days for Review meetings

The Transgender guidance sets out how staff should be treated to ensure they are not discriminated against.

Black History Month

A whole range of events are taking place online up until 30th October. Check out the following link to those events taking place in the West Midlands.

<https://westmidlands.unison.org.uk/home/black-history-month/>

NJC Pay Award 2021

The NJC pay award for 2020 was agreed and members should have seen that paid into September's pay, including the back-pay element since 1 April 2020.

The process for the NJC pay claim for 2021 will begin shortly. We will shortly be asking members to share their views via SurveyGizmo. We can only send access to this survey for members who we have an email address for.

If your colleagues have not seen this newsletter, it is because we either haven't got their email address – or they haven't yet joined UNISON. Please ask your colleagues if they have seen this flyer.

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