



NEWSLETTER

April 2025 | Volume 03

Stronger Together: Your voice, Our Action



WELCOME TO THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER – WHAT A BUSY FEW WEEKS IT'S BEEN!

Earlier this month, we participated in the UNISON Health Care Service Group Conference in Liverpool. It was a valuable opportunity to contribute to national discussions and help shape the priorities for UNISON Health from now on. A key outcome was a renewed call to action on NHS pay, and we're encouraging all members to engage with the consultative ballot. You'll find more details later in this edition – please take the time to read and participate. Closer to home, our branch has been continuing its work supporting members and negotiating with the Trust on several key issues. One of the most significant developments has been progress in our "Put Our Banding Right" campaign for NEPTS Patient Care Assistants. Following months of evidence gathering and negotiation, we've now reached a proposed back pay deal. A consultation is now live, and your feedback is vital – full information is also included in this newsletter and on our website.

With more activity on the horizon, we are proud to keep supporting our members and pushing for the changes that matter most to you! As always, we are here to represent and support you, and we would love to hear from you. If you have an idea, a story, or something to share, get in touch. **This newsletter is for you, our members. Your voice matters!**

UNISON NATIONAL HEALTHCARE SERVICE GROUP CONFERENCE 2025

Our branch delegation was proud to attend the UNISON National Healthcare Service Group Conference 2025, held in Liverpool.

This important event brought together healthcare representatives within UNISON from across the UK to debate and influence national policy on key issues facing our members in the health sector.



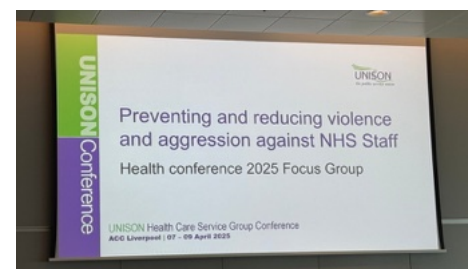
Delegates spoke on behalf of their branches and committees, contributing to motions on a range of critical topics – including Agenda for Change pay, terms and conditions, equality and inclusion, health and safety, professional and occupational matters, campaigning against NHS privatisation, and the prevention and reduction of violence against staff.

Alongside formal conference business, we engaged in workshops and focus groups, such as the Ambulance Occupational Group and sessions on tackling workplace violence.

These offered valuable chances to share experiences and collaborate with other branches, particularly those from ambulance trusts facing similar challenges.

A significant development this year was the advancement of the Time for Talks campaign 2025/2026. While the campaign began last year, the conference progressed the agenda further, with a renewed call to action cascaded to all branches.

This reinforces the push for meaningful engagement around pay and conditions in the NHS. More details can be found in the following article.



TIME FOR TALKS - 2025/2026 NHS CAMPAIGN IN ENGLAND

By now, all members should have received their electronic consultative ballot regarding the lack of a pay offer in England. We urge you to respond to this crucial ballot if you haven't already. If you haven't received it or are having issues, please contact UNISON immediately to ensure your vote is counted.

As dedicated members of the ambulance service, you perform a wide range of critical roles that are essential to its success. Whether directly involved in patient care or providing vital support to ensure high-quality services, every role is crucial. Without your unwavering dedication, the ambulance service would simply not function. However, dedication alone cannot sustain a workforce facing real-term pay cuts, increasing workloads, and the ever-rising cost of living. The recent announcement of a pay rise for NHS staff in Scotland highlights the power of collective bargaining and the recognition that fair compensation is essential. In contrast, the current pay offer for NHS staff in England falls significantly short, failing to address the pressing issues that affect us all.

Why This Matters to Ambulance Service Staff:

- **Retention and Recruitment:** Competitive pay is essential for retaining experienced staff and attracting new talent to the NHS.
- **Staff Morale:** Fair compensation directly impacts morale, helping reduce burnout and ensuring high-quality patient care.
- **Service Sustainability:** Adequate pay and working conditions are vital for the long-term sustainability of our services, ensuring we can meet the ever-growing demands of public health.

UNISON's Core Objectives for NHS Pay:

UNISON's roadmap to the negotiating table is clear: the NHS pay issue is overdue and requires immediate attention. We are calling for:

- **A Proper Pay Rise:** We need a significant real-terms improvement in pay, above inflation, to restore the value of wages and eliminate poverty pay from the NHS. Fair pay reforms must ensure that staff see a real difference in their pay as they progress or get promoted.
- **The Right Banding:** Annual role and pay band reviews should be mandatory for all staff, ensuring they are paid at the right rate for their job. This requires national investment to ensure fair, timely, and effective job evaluation processes across all NHS trusts.

- **A Shorter Working Week:** UNISON's ambition is to negotiate a reduced working week within the NHS with no loss of pay. This initiative is aimed at improving work-life balance, reducing burnout, and keeping staff in their roles.



What You Can Do:

- **The ballots are in your inboxes!** If you haven't completed yours yet, please do so. Your participation is crucial to making our collective voice heard.
- **Ensure Your Details Are Up-to-Date:** If you haven't received your ballot, please verify your contact information with UNISON as soon as possible.
- **Vote YES:** Show your support for fair pay by voting in the consultative ballot.
- **Engage with Colleagues:** Discuss the importance of this ballot with your colleagues and encourage them to participate. A strong turnout will make a real difference.

This decision is not made lightly, but after years of being undervalued and underpaid, it is time to act. A strong turnout will send a clear message to policymakers about the necessity of addressing our concerns.



**YOUR PAY RISE IS
OVERDUE**

NEPTS - PCA Ballot: Your Opportunity to Vote on the Proposed Back Pay Deal!

UNISON's "Put Our Banding Right" campaign has been hard at work for over a year to ensure that NEPTS Patient Care Assistants (PCAs) receive fair recognition for their important roles. After months of negotiations, we are now at a pivotal point and are asking you to vote on the proposed back pay deal.

Eighteen months ago, UNISON launched the "Put Our Banding Right" campaign with the goal of securing two key achievements:

- Re-banding of NEPTS PCAs from Band 2 to Band 3.
- Fair back pay for work already carried out at Band 2 rates.

In December 2023, UNISON formally submitted a re-banding and back pay claim to EMAS. Throughout this process, the UNISON EMAS branch has gathered compelling evidence showing that PCAs have consistently performed Band 3 duties while being paid at Band 2 rates.

We are pleased to share that we have already achieved the following as part of this campaign:

- ✓ Re-banding of NEPTS PCAs, effective from 1 April 2025.
- ✓ New, detailed job descriptions outlining clear distinctions between Band 2 and Band 3 duties.
- ✓ A clear distinction between Band 2 and Band 3 duties, ensuring transparency going forward.



After months of hard work, evidence-gathering, and negotiation, UNISON EMAS has reached an agreement with EMAS management regarding back pay for PCAs. This is now your opportunity to have your voice heard and vote on whether to accept the proposed deal.

The proposed back pay deal includes:

- 2.5 years of back pay for the period from October 2022 to 31 March 2025.
- Re-banding effective from 1 April 2025.
- Unsocial hours and overtime recalculated and paid retrospectively for the back pay period.
- Bank workers (casual staff) are included in the back pay offer.

Consultation Period

 **Opening: Tuesday, 29 April 2025**

 **Closing: Midday, Friday, 11 May 2025**

How to Vote:

Please use the link you have received to register your vote.

UNISON Recommendation

After extensive negotiation, UNISON EMAS believes that this is the best deal we could achieve through negotiation. We strongly recommend you participate in the vote and express your opinion on this matter.

We want to thank you for your continued support and patience throughout this campaign. Your participation in this consultation is critical, and we encourage all members to take the time to cast your vote.

For more information, please visit our website for Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to address any queries you may have. You can find the full list of FAQs and further details on the voting process on our website at

<https://www.unisonemas.org.uk/nepts-pcas-important-campaign-update/>

REP SPOTLIGHT... LEAH SWALLOW



Q: What's the best part of being Branch Chair?

A: "It has improved my confidence and gives me the ability to control the flow of branch meetings."

Q: How did you get involved with Unison?

A: "Stuart Hallows and Jo Mills were looking for a young members officer, and as a young activist, I thought it would be a good experience."

Q: What's a fun fact about you?

A: "I can read a book in a day!"

Q: If you had a superpower, what would it be?

A: "Invisibility - I could go wherever I wanted to."

Q: What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

A: "I enjoy hiking, reading and dancing."

Each month, we're putting the spotlight on one of our dedicated reps! This month, let's meet **Leah Swallow**, our **Branch Chair**.

About Leah:

Leah joined EMAS in 2022 as an Emergency Medical Dispatcher and has shown remarkable dedication and growth ever since. She successfully progressed through the Student Technician Programme, becoming a qualified Technician in 2024.

In addition to her clinical role, Leah is a committed trade unionist. She currently serves as Chair of UNISON EMAS, where she leads branch committee meetings with focus and fairness—ensuring the agenda is followed and every member has the opportunity to contribute. Leah is also a qualified ERA Steward and one of the branch's Equality Representatives, actively promoting inclusion and standing up for equal rights across the workforce.

Leah's leadership reaches beyond the branch. She was Co-Chair of the East Midlands Young Members Forum in 2024, playing a key role in donating a bundle of medical and educational supplies to the Cuba May Day Brigade in April 2025—a proud moment of international solidarity.

Leah's energy, compassion, and commitment to others make her a standout rep and a driving force within UNISON EMAS.

COMPETITION UPDATE: NO WINNER THIS TIME!

Unfortunately, no answers were received to our comms email address for this month's competition, so the prizes have not been won on this occasion. The correct phrase was "Workers for Justice", so well done if you figured it out!

But don't worry – we'll be back next month with a new competition, and we hope to see more entries from you! Remember, you can't win anything if you don't submit your answers – it's that easy! Just email your correct answers to comms@unisonemas.org.uk and you could be in with a chance of winning one of many prizes we have lined up.

Look out for next month's edition of our newsletter for another exciting competition! As always, we will select the winner at random from all correct submissions, as outlined in the competition terms and conditions on our website.



UPDATE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS AND STAY INFORMED!

We want to make sure you receive the most up-to-date information and campaign news from us. To help us do this, please take a moment to update your contact details. It's quick and easy!

How to Update Your Details:

- **Option 1:** Update your information directly through the **MYUNISON** portal.
- **Option 2:** Email your updated details to enquiries@unisonemas.org.uk.

Please ensure your contact details are current, so you never miss important updates!

TO LEARN MORE VISIT
OUR WEBSITE

www.unisonemas.org.uk



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LEARNING FOR MEMBERS

Learning at Work Week 12 - 18 May 2025

Explore the power of learning during this year's national Learning at Work Week - 12th-18th May. Learning at Work Week is an annual event that highlights the importance and benefits of learning and development in the workplace. It's a great chance to try out short versions of some of UNISON's courses and workshops, and find out more information about where to go next with your learning journey. All the sessions are available free of charge and are open to all UNISON members.

UNISON College

Learning at Work Week 2025

MON 12 MAY	Connect with yourself: Introduction to Mindfulness 12noon - 1pm
TUE 13 MAY	Connect with your creativity: The Right to Write 1pm - 2pm
WED 14 MAY	Connect with your resilience: Staying Strong 12.30pm - 1.30pm
THU 15 MAY	Connect with the world: Connecting Positively Online 12noon - 1pm
FRI 16 MAY	Connect with colleagues: Speaking with confidence in everyday conversations 12noon - 1pm Active Listening 2pm - 3pm

learning.unison.org.uk/learning-at-work-week-2025/

East Midlands Member Learning Programme June – December 2025

UNISON East Midlands Regional Programme

June - December 2025

<p>MISINFORMATION 30 JUNE (10AM - 11.30AM)</p> <p>This module explores what dis/misinformation is, its dangers and why humans are so drawn towards conspiracy theories</p>	<p>DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS 30 JUNE (1PM - 2.30PM)</p> <p>This session looks at ways to call people out on inappropriate comments without creating arguments</p>
<p>Dementia Awareness 1 SEPTEMBER 2025 1PM - 4PM (MS TEAMS)</p> <p>For members who work in a role where they may come into contact with individuals living with Dementia</p>	<p>EXCEL BEGINNERS 2 & 3 SEPTEMBER 10AM - 1PM (MS TEAMS)</p> <p>This course is aimed at members new to Excel You will need basic computer knowledge including using a mouse and how to save files</p>
<p>ASSERTIVENESS 19 & 26 September 10am - 1pm via zoom</p> <p>This two-session course is delivered by a tutor with years of experience delivering mental health and confidence courses</p>	<p>EXCEL ADVANCED 29 & 30 SEPTEMBER 10AM - 1PM (MS TEAMS)</p> <p>Aimed at members with good knowledge of Excel</p>
<p>NEURODIVERSITY UNDERSTOOD 1 October 1pm - 4.30pm Via MS Teams</p>	<p>Loss and Bereavement by Suicide 9 October 10.15am - 12.45pm via zoom</p> <p>Understand why bereavement by suicide may differ from other types of bereavement, considers the impact of suicide on those bereaved, and how we can support those affected</p>

Please visit our website for details of each course:
eastmidlands.unison.org.uk/members



<p>Deaf Awareness & Intro to British Sign Language 13 October 9.30am - 12.30pm Via Zoom</p> <p>Delivered by Notts Deaf Society this workshop introduces basic Sign Language and will look at ways we can support people</p>	<p>Write Your Life Story 15 & 22 Oct 9.30 - 1.30 via Zoom</p> <p>Delivered by acclaimed author, Carol Adam, this two-session workshop will introduce the skills needed to record your life story and, with it, improve confidence in your writing skills</p>
<p>EXCEL IMPROVERS 4 & 5 NOVEMBER 10AM - 1PM (MS TEAMS)</p> <p>This course is aimed at members with some experience of Excel</p>	<p>Pre-Retirement Planning 7 November 9.30am - 4.00pm</p> <p>Delivered in-person in Derby</p>
<p>THE POWER OF PERCEPTION 18 November 1.30pm - 3.30pm via Teams</p> <p>We will look at the ways in which we can affect how we're perceived and come away with an awareness of how we're using our voice and body language</p>	<p>Introduction to Makaton 27 November 10.00 - 12.00 via Zoom</p> <p>Delivered by a licensed Makaton Tutor</p>
<p>Introduction to Makaton 27 November 13.00 - 15.00 via Zoom</p> <p>Delivered by a licensed Makaton Tutor</p>	<p>Dyslexia Awareness 1 December 1pm - 4.30pm via MS Teams</p>
<p>Therapeutic Activities in Dementia 5 DECEMBER 9.30 - 12.30 VIA TEAMS</p> <p>For members who support individuals with dementia, this session will consider the importance of therapeutic activities</p>	<p>EXCEL BEGINNERS 16 & 17 DECEMBER 10AM - 1PM (MS TEAMS)</p> <p>This course is aimed at members new to Excel You will need basic computer knowledge including using a mouse and how to save files</p>

Please visit our website for details of each course:
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