

# UNISON NEWS

October 2020

Southend-on-Sea  
Local Government Branch

# General Secretary Election

## Ballot papers arrive from 28<sup>th</sup> October

What's it all about?

The general secretary election is your chance to vote to elect the most senior person in the union. Being a member, or retired member, of UNISON entitles you to a vote if you were a member on 28 July 2020.

Who is the general secretary?

The general secretary represents you and the other 1.3 million members of UNISON in meetings with politicians across the UK, in discussions with employers and when working with other trade unions. They speak up for you and are the public face of your union.

Why should I vote?

This is your chance to have a say in who leads the union and who represents all our members. The election only comes around every five years so use your vote and make sure your voice is heard.

 **BE HEARD  
USE YOUR VOTE** 

## Southend Nominates Paul Holmes

- Southend branch has nominated Paul Holmes for General Secretary because we know he wants change.
- Unison nationally is not delivering for members. Branches currently only get 25% of our subs and no say over national and regional resources. Paul wants half of Unison resources directed to us and our members.
- The Government is coming at us with more attacks. Paul has the best track-record of leadership in fighting for members and winning – on pay, jobs, safety, racism and discrimination .



- Paul is the grassroots candidate and will take the job on his current wage of £32,000, not the £138,000 salary advertised.

## How can I make sure I get my vote?

Southend Branch has carried out an exercise to ensure your address details are correct on our system.

However, If you think your address may have changed recently or you just want to check , you can review and update your own details on *My Unison* on the national website

[www.unison.org.uk](http://www.unison.org.uk)

October is **BLACK  
HISTORY  
MONTH**

Check the national website: <http://bit.ly/nationalbhm>  
and look for emails from our branch

# 'Smash and Grab' on Council Redundancy Payments



Under cover of the Covid crisis, the government has brought in a cap on public sector exit payments.

In local government, if you are made redundant after the age of 55, you can get your pension based on length of service but without the usual reductions for going early. The council have to make payments straight to the pension fund to make up for the extra pension entitlement (known as the 'pension strain').

Under the new rules, the total of any redundancy payment, any pension lump sum and these 'pension strain' payments cannot exceed £95,000. If they do, you will have to give up either redundancy pay and/or pension to bring the total down.

You don't have to be highly paid to be hit by this daylight robbery. It will hit many people with long service even where their salary is only £20,000 or £30,00 a year!

They are doing this just when staff are facing redundancy due to the effects of cuts to council funding and the extra costs of the Covid crisis.

Southend UNISON is dealing with a tsunami of restructures, many of which could leave members redundant. We have written to the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to demand that the Council protect our staff.

- We have asked that where someone has already agreed their package they should be enabled to go early, to avoid the likely cut off date (which may be as early as 26<sup>th</sup> October).
- Where this can't be achieved, we are asking the employers to refer these cases to full Council, who can agree to protect their long-serving staff by 'waiving' the cap.

The time for talking is over. A national care service is the only way to prevent more deaths. We need a resilient system, like the NHS.

The UK's response to the coronavirus left vulnerable people and the heroes that care for them unprotected. Never again. It's time for a national care service.

## What you can do

We have the right plan for care. It's a realistic but urgent plan for change that has been created by care workers. A national care service is long overdue, but it is now the government's most pressing task. Without a national care service, the UK will not be fit to cope with future health crises. Join us and demand the government take action.

Get the nation behind our 5 demands

## Time for a national care service

### UNISON's 5 demands:

- 1 A real living wage for all care workers
- 2 A standard contract for care work
- 3 Significant, emergency government funding
- 4 Professional standards
- 5 A partnership working group, tasked to create a national care service

No more political promises. Demand government action to prevent more deaths.  
[unison.org.uk/5demandsforcare](https://unison.org.uk/5demandsforcare)

Share our demands with your friends – see if they agree. Let's get the whole nation calling for a national care service.

[Read more about UNISON's vision for a national care service](#)

**care workers**  
*for change*

## Contacting Southend UNISON during the Pandemic

The Covid 19 pandemic means that our UNISON office is closed to visitors. If you need to contact UNISON, or want more information about anything in this newsletter, please email us at [unison@southend.gov.uk](mailto:unison@southend.gov.uk) or leave us a message on 01702 215980. You can also follow us on social media:

There is also a national helpline on 0800 0857 857



Unison Southend



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