

**Breaking News: UNISON issues notice of strike action across Barnet Council Mental Health social work teams.**



Earlier this week UNISON formally notified Barnet Council of the dates of strike action for our Barnet UNISON Mental Health Social Workers who **voted 100% for strike action.**

**The strike timetable is as follows:**

**Week One: Tuesday 26 September**

**Week Two: Tuesday 3 October, Wednesday 4 October**

**Week Three: Tuesday 10 October, Wednesday 11 October, Thursday 12 October**

The strike ballot is in relation to the chronic staffing issues across frontline mental health social work teams in Barnet Council.

*“Adult mental health social workers have the same qualifications, same skills and the same retention problems as children’s workers. The only difference is the value that Barnet is choosing to place on its workers and the value it places on providing mental health services that are staffed to meet the needs of Barnet’s residents.”* **Barnet UNISON Mental Health social worker.**

*“Our members are showing the same commitment to the profession they love as Junior Doctors to theirs in taking strike action. Drastic action is needed to keep Mental Health services safe and viable for them and service users. The service needs staff with experience. Currently no one is sticking around because the levels of stress and pay are simply not worth it. Our members are absolutely doing the right thing.”* **Helen Davies, Branch Chair, Barnet UNISON.**

“I want to **pay tribute** to our brave Barnet UNISON members who have decided ‘Enough is Enough!’ We are in the worst Cost of Living Crisis in 76 years, the current pay for social workers doesn’t reflect the level of training and knowledge needed to be able to put up with the escalating levels of stress in a workplace which has been starved of resources due to **13 years of Tory Austerity** (the first 5 years under a

Coalition Government). When staff are asked ***'Have you considered leaving your current role within London Borough of Barnet in the last few months'*** and **100%** of staff reply **YES**, then Barnet Council needs to listen and submit a proposal that shows our members the respect they deserve." **John Burgess, Branch Secretary Barnet UNISON.**

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### **78% of Adult Services Social Worker and OT UNISON members Say No!**



Adult Social Services senior management team proposed to pay each social worker and OT in Adult Social Services a £1,000 payment this year and next in a bid to help with the recruitment and retention problems. Our members are not impressed and have voted overwhelmingly to reject the offer as being insufficient. Mental Health Workers were balloted officially and separately and had voted 100% to reject the offer and take strike action.

This is not surprising given that social workers in Family Services receive a minimum of 10% rising to 25% and HGV drivers receive 10%. In contrast the proposal for Adults Services equates to just 2.6%. Colleagues clearly think this will not help recruit or retain staff.

Barnet UNISON will commence a campaign amongst these members to see what we can do to improve the offer and save the services.

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### **Pay Matters: The Barnet Group UNISON Survey**

# The Barnet Group

Every UNISON member in The Barnet Group is being asked:

1. Are you satisfied with your level of pay?

2. Do you think something should be done to increase your level of pay?

We are keen to hear from all our members about what they think. Whether or not pay is a priority for you, we need to hear from you.

**Not received a survey?**

Please contact: [contactus@barnetunison.org.uk](mailto:contactus@barnetunison.org.uk), or ring 020 8359 2088.

**The Survey will close this Friday (15<sup>th</sup> September)**

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**Workers Summit 23rd September Central London**



The rail strikes that kicked off in June 2022 were the beginning of the biggest year of workers' struggles we have seen since the late 1980s. Big national strikes in the NHS, in schools, in Royal Mail and the civil service have been accompanied by the first strikes in Amazon and other, more localised, strikes like those by refuse workers in a number of local authorities.

The cost of living crisis is a massive attack on working class living standards and workers are right to fight back.

As the strike movement has developed different questions have arisen. **It's clear now that we need a more coordinated campaign across the unions where we strike and march together.** We need to reflect on the "deals" that have come our way and discuss ways to roundly reject bad deals that fall short of our demands.

**Join grassroots trade unionists from across the movement to discuss the key questions facing us in our struggles. Help devise plans for joint working and help grow the grassroots networks.**

This event was initiated by Lambeth and Hackney districts of National Education Union, Strike Map and NHS Workers Say No. Barnet UNISON and Barnet Trades Council have agreed to support this event.

Interested in attending? Email [contactus@barnetunison.org.uk](mailto:contactus@barnetunison.org.uk) or phone: 020 8359 2088

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## **Camden UNISON NSL Strikers Complete 50 Days!**

**Message from Greater London Regional Local Government Committee:**

### **SOLIDARITY WITH CAMDEN UNISON NSL STRIKERS : MONDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2023**

This Monday, 11 Sept, is **Strike Day 50** of the Camden UNISON traffic wardens. They started indefinite strike action on Monday 24 July, and there are now more members out on strike. They have daily picket lines at their workplaces and have held regular protests and marches. This is a mainly Black workforce fighting for decent pay to recognise the work that they do. Employed by private company NSL on a Council contract, we understand that NSL gave a 60% pay rise to their top director whilst saying they had no more money for our members - members who deserve a decent pay rise.

We are asking if you could visit the picket line on Day 50, Mon 11 Sept, between 8-9am to show your solidarity. If you can bring your branch banner that would be great. If you can't make it, please send a solidarity message to [unison@camden.gov.uk](mailto:unison@camden.gov.uk)

Picket line details:  
8-9am, Mon 11 Sept  
13-15 Guilford Street WC1N 1DW

You can also show your support by writing to Camden Council using our email template here.

**A similar event will take place the following Monday and details will be circulated in the branch secretaries bulletin next week.**

With kind regards

**Helen Reynolds** (she/her)

Regional Manager and

**Sean Fox**

Chair

Regional Head of Local Government  
Government Committee

Regional Local

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### **Take the UNISON equalities survey**

**Tell us about your experiences during the cost-of-living crisis – and help to shape our campaigning and bargaining**

Every year, UNISON surveys its members to get a better understanding of their experiences over the last 12 months – both in and out of work – and how that is bound up with equalities.

The results help us understand more clearly what our members are experiencing and to shape our work in campaigning for fairer, safer workplaces and better working lives.

This year, we want to find out more about how the cost-of-living scandal is affecting you. Specific topics include flexible working, childcare and domestic abuse.

The survey, which runs until the end of September, takes about eight minutes to complete. It is confidential and anonymous.

Your answers matter to us.

**Take the survey now**

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### **Top 5 ways to help planet Earth this week**

**From webinars to WhatsApp messages, how to prepare and get involved in Green UNISON Week, which starts this Friday**



This year, Green UNISON Week runs from 15-22 September to coincide with two major global mobilisations Fridays for the Future – a youth led protest about the threat posed by climate change (15 September) – and Fight Fossil Fuels which demands ‘a rapid, just and equitable’ end to fossil fuels (15-17 September).

[Here are five ways you can still get involved.....](#)

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### **Support with your energy bills**



There for You, UNISON's very own charity, is opening the latest round of its Energy Support Fund on 27 September, with grants of £200 available to support low-income members with their energy bills this winter.

Debi Potter, vice chair of the There for You board, says: "Employers are not giving pay rises our members deserve and need. So, they're fighting constantly to keep their head above water and are turning to us as a charity."

"We've seen the levels of hardship being faced by members and have reacted with one of the most extensive support schemes the charity has ever run."

[Find out more, including when to apply](#)



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