

## Breaking News: 100% vote by Mental Health Social Workers for strike action



On **Friday 1 September 2023**, Barnet UNISON notified Barnet Council Chief Executive that Mental Health Social Workers **voted 100% for strike action with a 78.95% turnout.**

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

Barnet Council has had a long and proud history of Mental Health Social Work pioneering the crisis intervention model in the 1970's long before Care in the Community legislation.

Barnet Mental Health Social work teams were sought after workplaces full of experienced social workers, but sadly there has been a long-drawn-out neglect towards mental health social work which has led to this current crisis. The demise of Mental Health Social Work Teams can be traced back to Barnet Council's obsession with the "One Barnet mass outsourcing approach" to service delivery. The focus was on **commissioning** rather than **delivering**.

The **final nail in the coffin** for Mental Health Social Work Teams was in 2016 when Barnet Tories agreed the senior management proposal to **delete social work posts and replace them with non-social work qualified roles.** Barnet UNISON in our report: "Unsafe & Unsustainable" UNISON response to Mental Health Restructure 2016 <https://www.barnetunison.me.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/2016-10-12-UNISON-response.pdf> warned the Council of the consequences of pursuing this ideological change. However, as often when we submit reports, we were ignored.

"This result confirms the strength of feeling amongst our members that the offer submitted to staff is unacceptable. Family social workers are, as a minimum receiving **15%** with other social workers receiving **20% or 25%**. Staff feel undervalued, insulted, and angry. They are working at the coal face of Mental Health services. A service that has been grossly underfunded by the **Tories for 13 years.** The levels of stress in the workplace are off the scale. Social workers are voting with their feet. During the period of the strike ballot, we lost another social worker who chose to leave for a less stressful job in a university and more money. If the Council

doesn't act now to this crisis, then more staff are likely to leave and that will deepen the crisis within the workplace and impact on the services to service users." **John Burgess Branch Secretary, Barnet UNISON.**

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### Adult Social Services Survey



**This survey closes at the end of this week. If you have not received the survey and are a registered social worker or OT you should contact Barnet UNISON immediately to request assistance (email [contactus@barnetunison.org.uk](mailto:contactus@barnetunison.org.uk)).**

It is important all of our members express their view so that we can accurately represent you when we speak to senior managers.

Mental Health social workers have been officially balloted for industrial action and so would not have received this survey as their views are being expressed separately. Indeed it is the Mental Health social workers who have pushed the issue of recruitment and retention into the open.

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**Can You Join Camden UNISON NSL Strikers on Their 50th Strike Day?**



NSL strikers are asking for people to join them on their solidarity picket line next Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September 8-9am.

Address: Guilford St WC1N 1DW

Or can you send a video message or write a message of solidarity to share with the strikers? Please send it to [unison@camden.gov.uk](mailto:unison@camden.gov.uk).

It will be the start of their 8<sup>th</sup> week on strike and their 50<sup>th</sup> day.

Camden Council has already lost over £1.4million in revenue. It is shocking they prefer to lose income rather than see these workers get the pay they deserve!

Please write to Camden Council here:

[https://action.unison.org.uk/page/134031/action/1?utm\\_campaign=Activist%20August%202023&utm\\_content=Show%20your%20support%20and%20write%20to%20the%20Council%20here%20using%20our%20email%20template&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Greater%20London](https://action.unison.org.uk/page/134031/action/1?utm_campaign=Activist%20August%202023&utm_content=Show%20your%20support%20and%20write%20to%20the%20Council%20here%20using%20our%20email%20template&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Greater%20London)

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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 pay is priority for you or not, we need to hear from you.

Look out for the **online survey** if you work for Barnet Homes.

All YCB colleagues will receive a ballot paper at their home address.

The colleagues who are working at:

1. **Dell Field Court**
2. **Meadowside**
3. **Flower Lane**
4. **Repairs**

will receive a **hard copy ballot paper** from their rep

**Not received a ballot?**

Please check your junk folder.

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

**The Survey will close 15<sup>th</sup> September**

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### **Immigration/ Migration**

Many of our members will know first-hand what it means to move from one country to live and work in another. However, colleagues will have had very different high and low experiences of this. Wherever we came from we serve a community where people have recent or past experience of migrating to live in London.

There are relentless attempts to turn the majority population against newcomers with ever more outrageous and brutal suggestions.

London Regional Black Members Committee is holding an event 14<sup>th</sup> September in Central London to give members the opportunity to discuss this important topic and hear presentations from speakers on how immigration impacts members lives and workplaces.

If you're interested in attending register here: [RBMCI Immigration Symposium Registration Form \(office.com\)](#)

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### **RAAC in a Building Near You?**

At the local Council Health and Safety meeting Barnet UNISON was assured that all workplaces are being told to complete surveys advising whether and where they have RAAC. So far we have not been advised of any specific problems. If you are reading this and disagree please report your concerns here: [contactus@barnetunison.org.uk](mailto:contactus@barnetunison.org.uk) or phone 020 8359 2088.

Use this article to answer further questions you may have: [School Buildings - Safety Concerns | Key issues | UNISON National](#)

Read further here: [UNISON urges government to make schools safe now | Article | News | UNISON National](#)

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### **Clinical support workers set to strike for the first time in NHS history**

'We all love our jobs and are dedicated to our patients. But you have to stand up for what you believe in'

Over 400 health staff at Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (WUTH) will take strike action tomorrow.

The strike will take place from 7am on Thursday 31 August through to 6:59am on Saturday 2 September after an overwhelming majority (99%) of clinical support workers voted to strike in a recent UNISON ballot.

[Read Further](#)

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### **Workers Summit 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 in 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 so that 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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**Our mailing address is:**

Barnet UNISON, Room 1.9, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale  
London NW9 4EW

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