

## Yo Ho Ho: Join Barnet UNISON Festive Mental Health social worker picket line

 **SAVE THE DATES - 5 DAYS OF ACTION** 

**Mental Health Social Workers**

**STRIKE DECEMBER**

| MONDAY   | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY   |
|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>6</b>  | <b>7</b> | <b>8</b> |

 **BarnetUNISON**  **@barnet\_unison**  [www.barnetunison.me.uk/wp/](http://www.barnetunison.me.uk/wp/) **#BarnetStrikers**

**Location of Barnet UNISON Picket Line: Outside Barnet Council main office,  
2 Bristol Ave, London NW9 4EW  
Time 8am – 12 noon.**



Barnet UNISON Mental Health social workers begin a week of strike action on **Monday 4 December**.

Please see above details of the location and times of our picket line.

### **What can supporters do?**

- 1. Visit our picket lines** all week commencing 4 December to 8 December between **8- 12.30 pm** (see above graphic).
- 2. Please sign #BarnetUNISON email campaign** to Barnet Council Chief Executive  
Please click on the link and follow the instructions. <https://action.unison.org.uk/page/135744/action/1> Let us know when he replies.  
Please send a solidarity message to our strikers by emailing our office at [contactus@barnetunison.org.uk](mailto:contactus@barnetunison.org.uk)
- 3. If you are on social media**, you can help by liking/sharing or commenting on our many posts. Here are our social media sites.  
Twitter: [https://twitter.com/barnet\\_unison](https://twitter.com/barnet_unison)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BarnetUNISON>  
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/barnetunison/>

**4. Please write by email or by letter to:**  
**John Hooton, Chief Executive of Barnet Council** [John.Hooton@Barnet.gov.uk](mailto:John.Hooton@Barnet.gov.uk)  
Address: London Borough of Barnet; 2 Bristol Avenue; London NW9 4EW

Cllr Barry Rawlings, Leader of Barnet Council [Cllr.B.Rawlings@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.B.Rawlings@barnet.gov.uk)  
Address: London Borough of Barnet; 2 Bristol Avenue; London NW9 4EW.

## Invitation to House of Commons debate on why social workers are voting to strike

**Barnet UNISON invites you to**



**Debate: Why are Social Workers taking strike action?**

**House of Commons**

**Tuesday 5 December 2023, 6.30 pm, Committee Room 17**

### **Why are Barnet Council Mental Health social workers taking strike action?**

Mental Health Social Workers in Barnet have taken **12 days of strike action** and another **14 days are planned** in the coming months. But Barnet isn't the only local authority in which social workers are saying enough is enough. Earlier this year **South Gloucestershire** social workers became the first branch to successfully ballot for strike action with **Barnet, Brighton, Swindon and Leeds** social workers all having declared strike action in the following months. Similar issues are being raised by strikers across the country including **high caseloads, under-staffing, unsafe services, and unfair pay** policies.

13 years of austerity have resulted in huge cuts to local authority statutory services while the impact of covid has contributed to increases in referrals to social care that are forecast to continue for years to come. In such an environment and with no clear political priority being placed on fixing social care, this panel discussion considers topics like the role of social workers in championing better public services and fair pay for workers.

The session will be held on **5th December 2023 at 6.30pm in Committee Room 17, House of Commons.**

The **event is free**, and **all are welcome** but **please book your place** by emailing [contactus@barnetunison.org.uk](mailto:contactus@barnetunison.org.uk)

**Co- Chairs: John McDonnell MP and Kerie Anne**  
**Panellists:**

1. Kristiana Heapy
2. Dan Smart
3. Corinna Edwards-Colledge
4. Nana Yabbey-Hagan.

**Kerie Anne**, Chair of UNISON National Social Care Forum, Branch Secretary, Tower Hamlets UNISON and Families social worker.

**Corinna Edwards-Colledge** is joint branch secretary of Brighton and Hove UNISON and has worked in local government for over 20 years. She is also a campaigner and a writer, and is currently leading adult social workers in Brighton on their very first strike action over pay parity.

**Kristiana Heapy** Kristiana is the Unison team rep in Barnet's Mental Health Social Work South Team which is currently undertaking strike action. Kristiana qualified as a social worker in 2022, prior to that she worked in the voluntary sector in a number of public policy, campaigning and service delivery roles. In her spare time Kristiana has held voluntary positions for charities focused on access to green space, equality and supporting people experiencing mental ill-health..

**Dan Smart** is Branch secretary, UNISON South Gloucestershire and an Adult social worker.

**Nana Yabbey-Hagan** is a Qualified Social Worker for Children and Families of 10 years. Nana is currently a Team Manager for a Looked After Childrens Team, previously a Team Manager for a frontline Children Protection Team. In addition, Nana is a Practice Educator for Bachelor's, Masters, Step Up Students/ASYE assessor for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW), University Lecturer and Co-Host of the Social Worker and The Mentor Podcast.

\*\*\***Please note** Barnet UNISON Mental Health Social Workers are taking a whole week of strike action starting **Monday 4 December to Friday 8 December**.

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### Open letter to Executive Director of Adult Social Care – Mental Health social work dispute.



Dear Dawn

As a registered social worker, you will be aware of the professional standards set out by our regulatory body, Social Work England, and the expectation that social workers should raise concerns about **unsafe practice** and should challenge practices, systems, and processes where necessary. We implore you to act on your responsibilities within the social work profession and also those set out within the framework of the law.

The Care Act 2014 is underpinned by the responsibility for local authorities to promote wellbeing and to prevent, delay, and reduce a person's needs for care and support. We have been reporting that we, on the front line, do not feel that we are meeting this statutory responsibility and are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of the residents of Barnet, the impact on ourselves as regulated professionals, and the impact on Barnet Council. Whilst you will be aware, through our consistent reporting, of our areas of concerns, this **open letter** stresses a number of the key areas:

The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman consider it reasonable for a person to wait **4-6 weeks** for an assessment. In **August 2022** we were raising concerns about staffing levels and that our waiting list for an assessment under the Care Act was up to **six months**. Since then, the situation has continued to become **far more critical**, with **14 staff members leaving** within a year and the waitlist more than doubling. The staff who left were often the staff members with the most experience, many working their entire 20-30 years careers as social workers within Barnet mental health. This means that our teams have been left without an experienced workforce. In one team, figures demonstrate that when looking at the years of mental health experience of permanent staff, the team has **lost 75% of the experience** in the past year alone. The impact is that our waiting lists have now **drastically increased**, reaching up to **15 months**, and alarmingly continue to grow.

Based on rates of increase, without adequate intervention, we predict that the waiting list will reach **two years in 2024**.

[Click Here To Read Further](#)

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### **BreakingNEWS: National Pay 2023 update**

Dear Barnet UNISON member

We can confirm that the National Pay Award has now been formally agreed. This means that Barnet Council workers should receive their new rate of pay and back dating to **1 April 2023** in their November payslip.

If you have worked any overtime since the **1 April 2023**, the backdating for this will be paid in **December payroll**.

If you have any questions, please email [contactus@barnetunison.org.uk](mailto:contactus@barnetunison.org.uk)  
**Old and NEW rates of are in YELLOW Pay.**



| GRADE   | Min | Max | Min 2022 | Max 2022 | Min 2023 | Max 2023 |
|---------|-----|-----|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Grade A | 2   | 5   | £23,457  | £24,804  | £25,854  | £27,030  |
| Grade B | 4   | 7   | £24,408  | £25,629  | £26,634  | £27,855  |
| Grade C | 6   | 9   | £25,212  | £26,472  | £27,438  | £28,698  |
| Grade D | 8   | 11  | £26,046  | £27,357  | £28,272  | £29,583  |
| Grade E | 10  | 14  | £26,913  | £28,737  | £29,139  | £30,963  |
| Grade F | 14  | 20  | £28,737  | £31,731  | £30,963  | £33,957  |
| Grade G | 20  | 26  | £31,731  | £35,217  | £33,957  | £37,443  |
| Grade H | 25  | 29  | £34,341  | £37,725  | £36,567  | £39,951  |
| Grade I | 29  | 33  | £37,725  | £41,793  | £39,951  | £44,019  |
| Grade J | 34  | 39  | £42,795  | £47,805  | £45,021  | £50,031  |
| Grade K | 42  | 47  | £50,910  | £56,022  | £53,136  | £58,248  |
| Grade L | 48  | 54  | £57,102  | £63,684  | £59,328  | £66,156  |
| Grade M |     |     | £65,262  | £72,266  | £67,794  | £75,070  |

\*\*\*\*\***Please NOTE:** For those **Barnet UNISON members whose employer does not** use Barnet Council Grading system please read guidance below which provides the new spinal column points for outer London pay rates.  
<https://www.barnetunison.me.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2023.11.02-National-Pay-Agreement-with-the-London-pay-spine.pdf>

### **Autumn statement is a cynical ploy that won't fool the public**

Yet again public services didn't get a look in, aside from being told to deliver more for less.

Commenting on the autumn statement today (Wednesday), **UNISON general secretary Christina McAnea** said:

"This is a desperate attempt to press the reset button and present the government as the party of change. But it's too little too late and can't undo the damage done.

"It's a cynical ploy ahead of an early election. The government is on the ropes and wants to shift attention from its dire poll ratings.

"The chancellor is simply giving back what he and his inept predecessors have already snatched from working people. No one will be fooled. They will still be worse off.

"Yet again public services didn't get a look in, aside from being told to deliver more for less. But in-crisis essential services can't give the public what they need.

"Disabled people don't want and shouldn't have to rely on benefits. They need more rights at work, so they're not forced out of their jobs by unsympathetic employers."

### **Free the Hong Kong 47 – Trade Unionists Protest**

Join the protest this Sunday (26<sup>th</sup> November) at 3pm outside the Chinese Embassy, 49 Portland Place, W1B 1JL

On 27 November, the final stage of the Hong Kong 47 will begin. The HK47 face prison on subversion charges, for participating in primaries of the pro-democracy camp in 2020 in preparation for elections to HK's formerly semi-democratic Legislative Council. They include leading trade unionists Carol Ng and Winnie Yu, and veteran socialist Leung "Long Hair" Kwok-hung.

Most of HK's independent unions and pro-democracy political organisations have been forced to dissolve under intense state pressure and intimidation.

Other HK trade unionists and pro-democracy activists also face state repression and intimidation, including Lee Cheuk-yan (a former leader of the independent union confederation HKCTU imprisoned for organising an unauthorised protest) and Elizabeth Tang (another former HKCTU leader and the General Secretary of the International Domestic Workers Federation, arrested under Beijing's totalitarian, corporate-backed National Security Law) and the leftwing League of Social Democrats (one of the few oppositional parties to continue public protests, suffering state intimidation and de-banking).

The Workers Against the CCP campaign and several leading trade unionists have called a demonstration "Trade Unionists say 'Free the Hong Kong 47!'" for the day before the trial resumes: 3pm Sunday 26 November at the Embassy of China (49 Portland Place, London).

[Trade unionists say 'Free the Hong Kong 47!'](https://tradeunionistsprotestfreethhk47.carrd.co)  
([tradeunionistsprotestfreethhk47.carrd.co](https://tradeunionistsprotestfreethhk47.carrd.co))

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### **UNISON president welcomes the union's Year of LGBT+ Workers**



**Libby Nolan says she looks forward to helping make it 'the best year possible'**

UNISON president Libby Nolan addressed the union's LGBT+ conference in Liverpool last weekend for the launch of the Year of LGBT+ Workers in 2024 and pledged: "I look forward to working with you to make this the best year possible."

"This is a Tory administration that has come to the end of the road," she told delegates. "It's just a crying shame that we may have to put up with another year of it."

“Because make no mistake, this is a dying government ... yet determined to continue running our country into the ground.

“We have seen the Tories’ relentless attacks on trans, non-binary and gender diverse people and their rights. I’m not going to peddle the same myths that members of the Tory party are happy to spout – it’s unfair to draw attention to it.

“But let me be clear, the presidential team and UNISON will not tolerate or excuse any form of trans hate or anti-trans rhetoric.

“Trans rights are human rights and, as trade unionists, we are committed to fighting alongside our trans siblings against this.

“So, a general election cannot come soon enough. The public need a chance to boot Sunak and his cronies out of office.

And Ms Nolan also wanted to celebrate LGBT+ victories over the past 12 months.

“Our trans equality campaign, which has been driven by our wonderful trans, non-binary and gender diverse network, has been a huge success. Over 2,000 members have been trained to be trans allies.

“Over 450 trans, non-binary and gender diverse members have joined the network nationally, and over 50 workplaces now have our trans equality model policy adopted in their workplaces.”

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### Living with neurodiversity

Ahead of UNISON’s national disabled members conference, one delegate talks about her neurodiversity – and how being diagnosed has changed her life and work for the better



UNISON’s disabled members conference takes place in Edinburgh this week (28-30 October). The first motion to be debated, prioritised by the delegates themselves, is about the experience of workers who are neurodiverse, something employers and society are only now starting to understand. The motion deals specifically with the huge lack of understanding about

neurodiversity as it relates to women, with neurodiverse women still failing to get the support they need in the workplace because of outdated and sexist stereotypes.

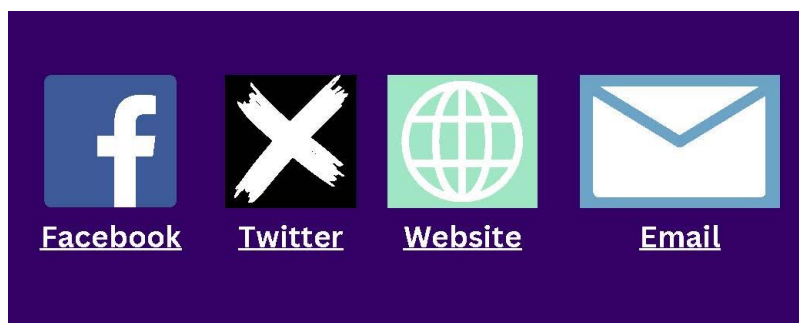
Lisa Dempster (**pictured above**) is one delegate in Edinburgh who knows all about neurodiversity – as someone who is both autistic and ADHD, has a neurodiverse child, and has spent several years working with disabled children.

And, she says, “I am so passionate about disability awareness. I’m open about my own disability because I want people to ask me questions and understand my condition.”

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