

**Barnet UNISON hopes those who chose to recognize Valentine's Day in some way had a pleasant time. One thing's for sure – there is no love from our main employers to the workforce!**

## **Breaking News: Covid Heroes face the sack by Barnet Council**



The Barnet Group is an arm's length company **100%** owned by Barnet Council. On **Friday 9 February 2024**, Enablement Home Care workers were told that they were **no longer needed**.

**“We are the best at what we do, that is why we look after people discharged from hospital for 8 weeks till other carers takeover.”**

**Care worker**

**“They should be expanding our service, not shutting it, what we do is vital, and we do it well”**

**Care worker**

Staff and Barnet UNISON left the meeting with the following questions:

1. Enablement is a well-run and valued service – why isn't TBG expanding rather than closing the service?
2. What engagement has taken place with stakeholders – our tenants and clients?
3. When will we know if this is a TUPE or a Closure?

4. What are they consulting staff and UNISON on? UNISON is clear that TBG need to provide more details before commencing with 121's?
5. When will 'consultation' begin and how long will it last?

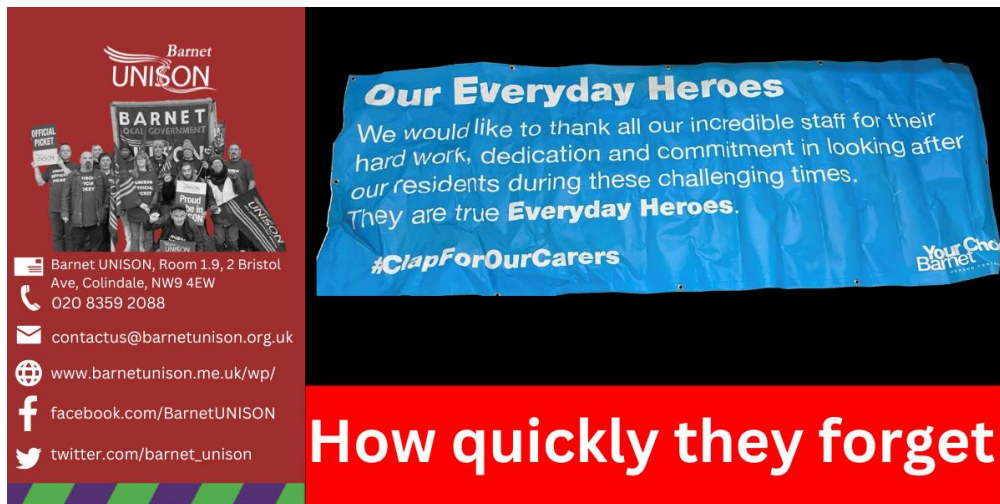
### Background:

This service was handed to TBG after senior officers working for Barnet Council spectacularly failed over the procurement of **Aquaflo a private contractor** who had been given the contract by Barnet Council to deliver home care for Barnet residents.

**“Disaster’ – Aquaflo Care company’s takeover from Housing 21 goes badly wrong.” 15th September 2016.**

<https://www.borehamwoodtimes.co.uk/news/14745911.disaster-aquaflo-care-companys-takeover-from-housing-21-goes-badly-wrong/>

**Covid: How quickly senior officers and councillors forget.**



It is only a few years ago that these workers were called heroes as they went into Barnet residents' homes to provide care and support whilst many of the senior managers and councillors issued instructions from the safety of their homes. Barnet UNISON will be providing support to all of our members.

Barnet UNISON will be providing support to all of our members and in the meantime, we are calling on Barnet Council to **reverse this decision** and bring it back in-house to the Adult Social Care directorate where it belongs. The decision by senior officers is at odds with the Labour Party position on creating a National Care Service which is something UNISON supports. "Unison's general secretary, Christina McAnea, told the Observer: **“Care is in crisis and the need for a national service has never been greater.”**

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**Barnet UNISON consultative ballot for care  
workers**



**Don't just  
complain  
about pay**

**Vote  
Yes!**

**The Barnet Group  
UNISON Reps**



We want you to participate in this consultative ballot to make it clear to senior managers just how strongly you feel about your pay.

We will be letting senior managers **know the results of the ballot, so this is your chance to make a difference.** If enough people vote yes, then it will not

be your last chance and we may progress to balloting our members officially about your willingness to take strike action.

During the COVID pandemic you put your lives and the lives of your families/ loved ones on the line to keep members of the public safe. It took a long time for you to then receive an uplift in your pay, terms and conditions....and it was not enough.

In any case the small gains you made in pay were smashed away by the cost-of-living crisis.

What can The Barnet Group afford? Perhaps we should ask the question differently – You have been identified as essential workers; can any employer afford the cost of you not doing your job?

### **What you must do now?**

**If your workplace setting has a UNISON rep,** you should ask them for your ballot paper. Your rep should be checking with you that the address on the envelope matches your current home address. If we did go on to carry out an official ballot, the letter would go to your home address. We need to know we have your correct details. Complete the ballot paper and hand it back to your UNISON rep.

**If your workplace has no UNISON rep,** the ballot paper will be posted to you directly. Please complete the ballot paper and put it back in the pre-paid envelope and post it back to us.

Your ballot paper needs to reach us by **5pm 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024**

Yours Sincerely

John Burgess  
Barnet UNISON  
Branch Secretary

Patrick Hunter  
Barnet UNISON  
TBG Assistant Branch Secretary

Helen Davies  
Barnet UNISON  
Branch Chair

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## **27 days of strike action as strikers re-ballot for more strikes!**



Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February was our last day of strike action. Barnet UNISON Mental Health social workers have taken **27 days** of strike action which equates to at least 405 LOST working days to Mental Health services. Our members estimate that these days lost mean that at least **4,050 contacts** for Mental Health services users have been lost.

It has been **162 days** (six months) since UNISON notified Barnet Council of the intention to strike, yet senior management refuse to negotiate despite the obvious serious implications for service users.

Senior management are **defending the indefensible** they have lost control of the service, and they are doubling down on a strategy that is dragging the Councils reputation into disrepute.

### **Key points about our campaign.**

- Mental Health social workers support adults who experience mental ill-health to live safely and with dignity.
- The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman says 4 – 6 weeks is a reasonable wait time for a needs assessment under the Care Act 2014. In Barnet mental health services, the wait time has reached 17 months.
- 20 staff have left the adult social work teams in the last 18 months, and another has handed in their notice. Despite this, the council refuses to apply the same recruitment and retention payment to adult social workers that it applies to children's social workers who are in teams with better staff retention rates.



- Mental health social workers in Barnet are calling for the council to provide a safe service, no waiting lists and fair pay.
- Mental Health Social Workers have taken **27 days** of strike action (we estimate this works out to **405 LOST** working days or **4,050 service user contacts** LOST for Mental Health service users) since September 2023 but the Chief Executive of Barnet Council still refuses to negotiate.

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## Kingsley – a Good UNISON Rep to Know

Over the past few years Barnet UNISON has been working to increase the number of UNISON reps and Health & Safety reps. One of the services we have targeted has been Street Scene services. Kingsley is a good example of how our branch has begun to grow the UNISON reps not just for the present but the future. Kingsley works in Ground Maintenance, and they use heavy machinery and equipment to carry out their work across the borough. Kingsley is eager to learn more about his Health & Safety role to keep his work colleagues safe. That is why our reps are sending solidarity to Kingsley.



Click above image to watch video

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## Barnet UNISON reps on Bringing Services Home campaign



Click above image to watch video

## Barnet UNISON Annual General Meeting

### BARNET UNISON ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



THIS IS A HYBRID MEETING SO  
YOU CAN CHOOSE TO JOIN  
ONLINE VIA ZOOM OR ATTEND  
IN PERSON (CONFERENCE  
ROOMS IN COLINDALE OFFICE  
NW9 4EW.

**WEDNESDAY 28TH FEBRUARY AT 4PM**

## **Wednesday 28th February 4pm is the date of our Annual General Meeting 2024.**

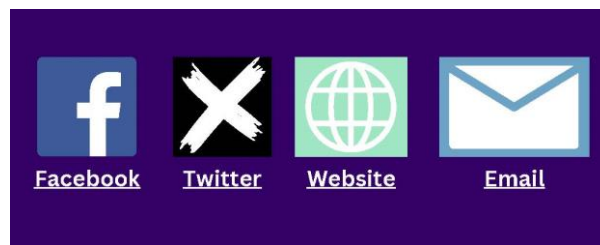
This meeting is critical. If we do not have enough members at the meeting, we cannot pass the business we need to in order for our branch to continue under UNISON's rules. Please put this date in your diary and commit to attending it now. You do not want to be in a position where you need support from the union but for the lack of 1.5hrs of your time, we could not be there for you!

*Guest speakers are to be confirmed.*

[Click Here To Register](#)

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

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