



Issue 20

FACTS AND FIGURES!

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June
2025



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In-depth bargaining analysis for negotiators

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JOBS • PAY • CONDITIONS



MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

A new mental health support package for Unite Reps

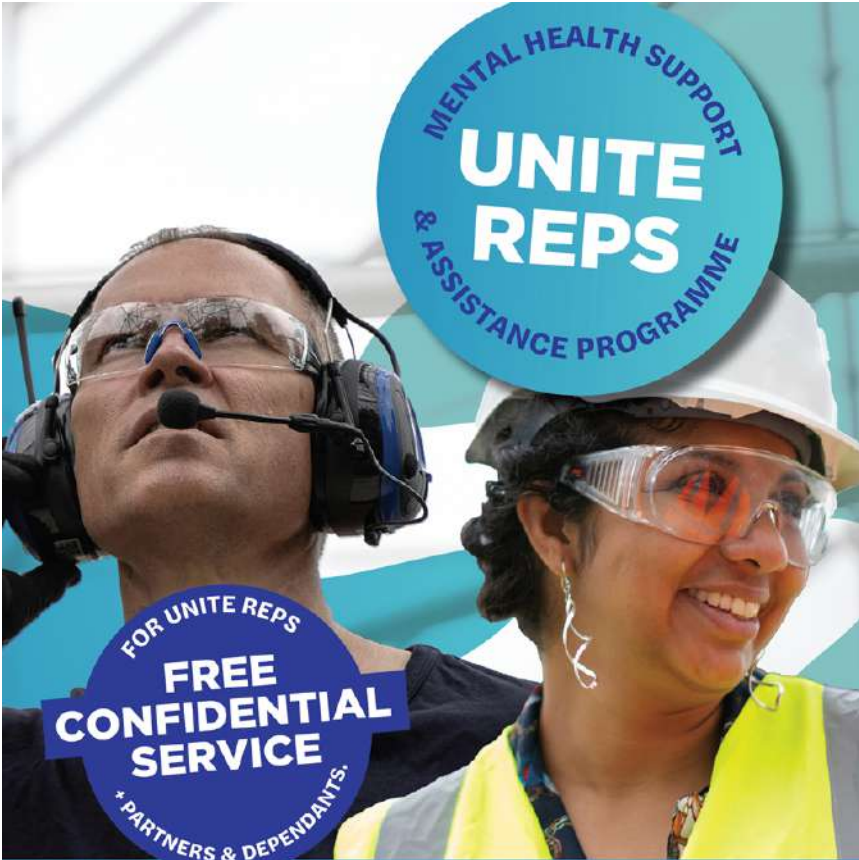
I want to start by saying thank you to all Unite Reps for everything you do to support Unite members.

Unite Reps are the backbone of our union and the work you do to improve and protect people's jobs, pay and conditions matters so much to our members, and I genuinely thank you for your work and support.

Ever since I was elected, I have been focused on making sure that your union is doing everything it can to support you, our Reps, and our workplaces.

I know that the life of a Rep can be really rewarding and fulfilling. But I also know that it can be tough for you and for your loved ones.

That's why we have now developed a free, dedicated mental health support programme for all Unite Reps and their immediate families.



**MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT
UNITE REPS
& ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME**

**FOR UNITE REPS
FREE CONFIDENTIAL SERVICE
+ PARTNERS & DEPENDANTS**

"I know that our union is nothing without our reps and I will always make sure that we have your back. That's why we set up the Reps' Mental Health Support and Assistance Programme - free, confidential counselling and wellbeing support service available to all Unite reps, your partners and dependants."

- Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

Experts, fully qualified mental health professionals, are now at the end of the phone 24/7 if you need them.

So, please scan the QR code below to access help if needed, or watch this short video (via this link: <https://tinyurl.com/3wcp2jwt>) and find out how this service can work for you.

Remember, support is just a call away.

In solidarity,

Sharon

HOW WE CAN HELP:

- 1. It starts with a call or whatsapp message**
You can reach our team of qualified counsellors and clinically trained psychotherapists on a range of platforms ➔➔
- 2. Internal Support**
We offer up to 6 sessions of counselling with professionals. Face-to-face, video or telephone. Whatever suits you.
- 3. Further steps**
We create further support with a registered 1-1 mental health nurse, who provides immediate help and future planning.
- 4. With you all the way**
We also offer a range of online support and courses, from sleep aids to nutrition, our digital platform is designed to support your well-being at every step.

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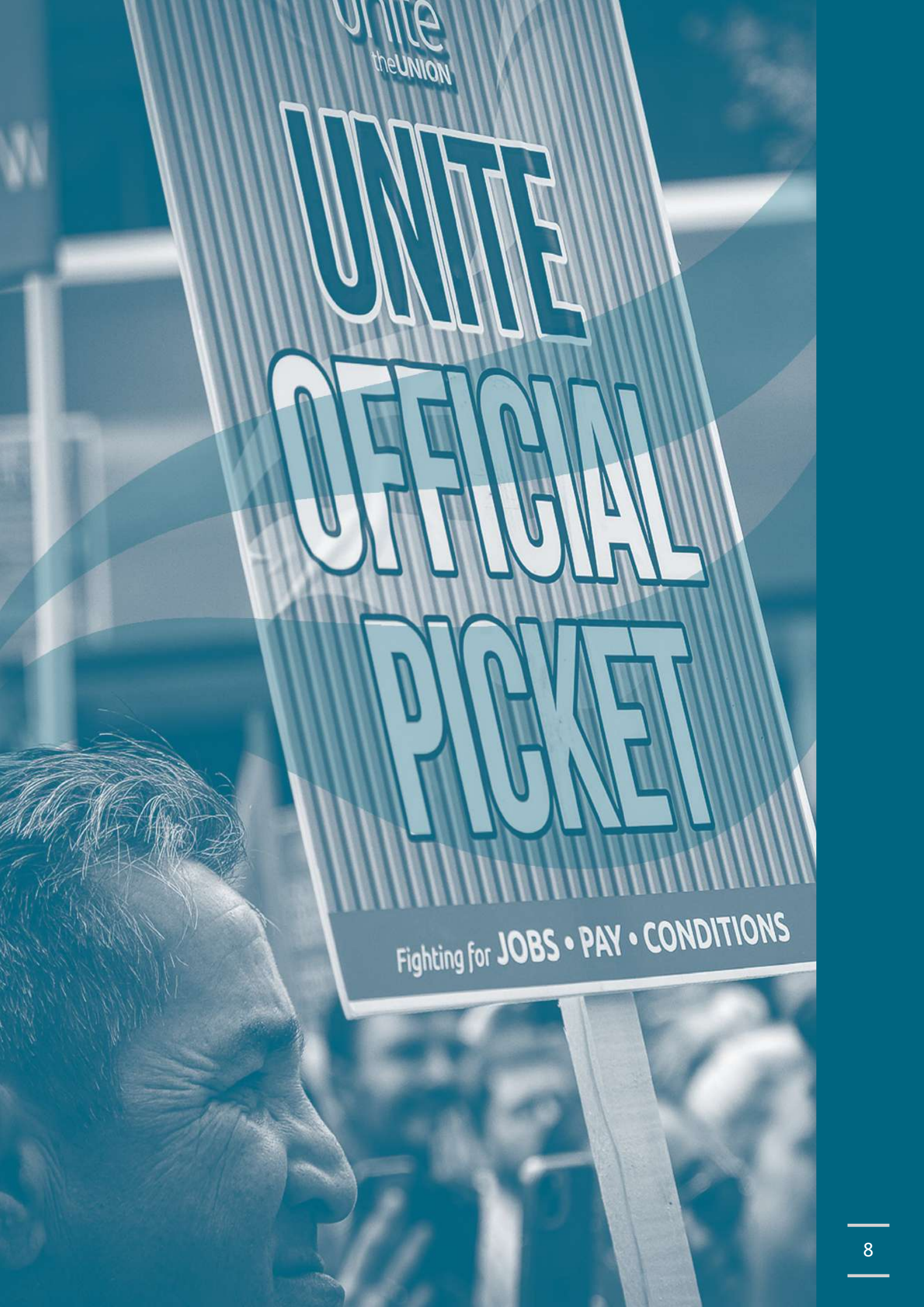
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UNITE OFFICIAL PICKET

Fighting for **JOBS • PAY • CONDITIONS**





SECTION ONE

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

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Facts and Figures

Collective bargaining is the tried and tested method of pushing up pay. We are the great equalizer; a force for good; getting money into the hands of the working class, the real wealth creators.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

1. What is the backdrop to collective bargaining this month?

1.1 RPI is 4.3%

Prices are up 4.3% compared to this time last year, using the Retail Price Index (RPI). After a series of spikes to energy bills, food and other essentials, prices are now 35.7% higher than they were in March 2021. Inflation has gone up 39% faster than wages.

This makes RPI+ pay deals essential. Employers may try to link pay to the CPI or CPIH indexes. But that won't cut it. Both CPI and CPIH short-change workers as they do not reflect the real cost of living.

■ Read the [Inflation and Wages section](#) for more.

1.2 Pay wins and Winter Fuel U-turn show power of collective action

Reps negotiating pay or in dispute this month can take inspiration from recent Unite wins across regions. At Glasgow Airport, workers in three different employers won better pay and conditions, including 11.6% win at ICTS in Merseyside, workers at Livv Housing won an RPI-busting deal that grew their power in the workplace.



Facts and Figures

At the national level, a concerted campaign led by the General Secretary and retired members forced the Government to reinstate the Winter Fuel Payment for pensioners. This is a major policy U-turn and shows what the union can do when it coordinates and deploys its resources.

■ Read the [Victories and Other Settlements](#) for more.

1.3 Aerospace employers' ability to pay increases after tariff exemption

Aerospace employers received some good news this month as the Government announced tariffs on imports to the US will be slashed to 0%. This gives engines and other aircraft parts produced in the UK a significant competitive advantage over overseas rivals, which face 10% tariffs. It also gives Reps a powerful narrative at the negotiating table over employers' ability to pay.

1.4 Eye-watering corporate profits and dividends show many employers can pay, despite "global uncertainty"

Most other sectors face tariffs of 10% on US exports. But negotiators should apply hard scrutiny to employer claims that "global uncertainty" means pay should be limited or jobs should be cut. New research in this month's Facts & Figures shows firms around the world declared a staggering £673 billion in profits last month, and paid out £508 billion of that to shareholders!

■ Read the [Ability to Pay](#) and [Tariffs section](#) for more.

1.5 Reps coming to Policy Conference can sign up for special sessions on Work, Voice, Pay and Forensics Accounts

Unite's 2025 Policy Conference will be held in Brighton from Monday 7 to Friday 11 July. Throughout it the Work Voice Pay team will be running breakfast and lunchtime sessions - with food and drink provided!

Forensic Accounts Breakfast sessions will introduce the Financial Insider tool and Forensic Accounts analysis.

Lunchtime Work, Voice, Pay sessions will showcase new and old Work, Voice, Pay tools, and how you can use them to win better Jobs, Pay and Conditions in your employer.

■ Reps coming to Conference can sign up at Stall 19, or email us in advance at workvoicepay@unitetheunion.org.







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Facts and Figures

It's a sign of growing confidence that, through union action, workers are winning the decent wage rises they deserve.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary



2. What have we delivered through collective bargaining?

2.1 Unite members' in LIVV Housing, Glasgow Airport, and Brake Brothers have won major pay awards through collective bargaining

Last month, Unite members again proved workplace power wins. From strikes to tough negotiations, these pay deals show that collective action delivers real improvements in wages and conditions.

2.2 At Glasgow Airport, Unite members won an inflation-busting 11.6% pay increase



Unite secured a pay rise worth 11.6% for ICTS baggage screeners at **Glasgow airport**, including a 9.8% wage increase and £500 bonus.¹ This double digit rise follows wage increases of over 60% in recent years.

Around 50 ICTS hold baggage screeners covered by the deal will see their basic pay increase by 9.8% backdated to October 2024. The hourly rate for screeners will increase by £1.28 to £14.33, with double time being secured on Christmas or New Year's Day.

A one-off bonus of £500 will also be paid to all ICTS workers, which increases the worth of the overall pay package to 11.6%. The security agents perform a number of tasks including the x-ray screening of hold baggage, document checks and the upkeep of the baggage system.

"Unite has delivered another good deal for ICTS baggage screeners at Glasgow airport. It builds on years of wage wins for our members and it's another demonstration that Unite is delivering better jobs, pay and conditions for our members." - Unite general secretary, Sharon Graham

Facts and Figures

In May 2022, Unite confirmed it had successfully lifted the wages of the ICTS workers over the course of a year from £8.95 to £11.50 per hour equivalent to an increase of 28.5%. The latest pay agreement means basic pay has increased by a further 24.6%.

Another victory at Glasgow airport saw a basic pay uplift by 5% for over 140 cleaners and workers who assist passengers with restricted mobility.²

Around 60 cleaners employed by ABM will receive a basic pay increase of 5% which will see the hourly rate rise to £12.70 effective from April.

Night shift pay will also rise by the same percentage to £13.50 an hour with double time being secured on Christmas or New Year's Day. In total Unite has delivered an increase in basic pay by 15.5% in two years for the ABM cleaners.

Meanwhile, around 80 workers employed by the OCS Group similarly accepted a 5% increase on basic pay. The wage win lifts the basic hourly rate to £12.81 and night shift workers to £14.29 which is also effective from April.

OCS Group workers aid passengers with reduced mobility. This includes assisting passengers with wheelchairs and ambilift vehicles for travellers at the airport.

"The wage wins for ABM and OCS workers at Glasgow Airport will deliver improvements across the board for our members. We have worked hard to deliver significant boosts to the pay packets of workers and these wins represent further progress for Unite." - Unite regional industrial officer, Pat McIlvogue

2.3 Unite members at LIVV Housing accepted an improved deal to pay and benefits after months of strike action

After months on strike, Unite members at LIVV Housing in Knowsley secured a pay rise of 7.7% plus a £175 lump sum. The total deal is worth 8-8.5% for 2024/25.³



Under the deal, matched pension contributions will increase from 6% to 10% and a pension salary sacrifice scheme will be implemented to help members benefit from tax savings.

Staff will also receive a further three days of annual leave a year.

As part of the agreement, there will be an immediate reduction in the working week from 40 hours to 39 hours. A working group from the employer and union side will be set up to look at a further reduction to 38 hours or lower within 12 months.

A joint working group from the employer and union side will also be set up to review all terms and conditions.

"This deal is a real step forward and could not have been achieved without the hard work and dedication of our reps and members. It is a prime example of why housing workers wanting better wages and working lives should join Unite and get their colleagues to join too."
- Unite regional officer, John Sheppard

Read our interview with LIVV Senior Rep **Kevin Byrne** on their fantastic victory in [Section 3](#).

2.4 At Brake Brothers, over 400 Unite members have secured a major pay rise of up to 9.8%

Over 400 Unite members at **Brake Brothers** in Newhouse, Motherwell secured a major pay rise.⁴

Facts and Figures



The offer, emphatically backed by the workforce, will see pay increases of between 5.1% and 9.8% on the basic hourly wage for warehouse workers, hygiene and distribution drivers. An 88 pence increase will be applied to hourly rates of pay for all workers.

The deal further includes a one-off payment ranging from between £458 and £515. The total pay package depending on hours worked alongside the bonus could mean workers taking home up to an extra £2,434.

The pay package will apply to wages from July but next year the pay anniversary date will be brought forward to April.

Brake Brothers provides wholesale food distribution services from the Newhouse facility to the hospitality and retail sectors. A significant proportion of the company's work comes from government based contracts to Scottish prisons, schools and social care homes.

Unite is working with Brake Brothers on its development plans which will see additional investment allocated towards an on site extension for 2026. The investment is designed to extend the Newhouse facility by 50,000 square feet to enable the company's growth in Scotland. Plans for the initial expansion phase will see the creation of 50 jobs with the potential for this to grow by a further 100 new jobs.

"The Brake Brothers wage deal is another good pay win successfully negotiated for our members. It builds on the successes already made at the company and it clearly shows that Unite continues to deliver better jobs, pay and conditions for our members." -
Unite general secretary, Sharon Graham



2.5 Workers in Canada stood firm and won an improved five year agreement with ArcelorMittal

In a significant win for unionized workers, five local unions representing 2,500 employees across **ArcelorMittal's** operations in Northern Quebec have ratified a new five-year collective agreement last month. The deal, which covers workers at the mine, concentrator, railway, port, pellet plant and office, marks one of the most substantial labour agreements in the region's recent history, securing major advancements in wages, pensions, working conditions and benefits.⁵

Under the new agreement, workers will see wage increases ranging from 26 to 30 per cent over five years, depending on their classification. The deal also delivers enhanced compensation for night work. Pensions are also significantly improved and better occupational health recognition will also be in place.



The agreement also acknowledges the high cost and isolation of living in Northern Quebec. The Northern allowance for workers residing in Fermont will increase from \$1,200 to \$1,300 per month. Coupled with several improvements to the group insurance plan, the addition of floating leave days and more statutory holidays, the agreement strengthens both income security and work-life balance.

IndustriALL base metals director, Patrick Correa said “This deal shows what workers can win with strength and solidarity. It’s about more than wages—it’s about respect, safety and a better future for all.”

Facts and Figures

The total cost of the agreement for ArcelorMittal is estimated at \$414 million over five years. Union leaders emphasized that these gains were made possible through strong worker solidarity and unified local leadership across all sites.

2.6 In the US, SAG-AFTRA have reached a tentative deal while being on strike for almost a year over AI issues

Members of the **Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists** (SAG-AFTRA) have been on strike since July 2024 after negotiations with game industry giants such as Activision-Blizzard, Disney Character Voices, Electronic Arts, and Epic Games broke down after failing to agree on AI provisions.⁶



SAG-AFTRA identified that unregulated use of AI posed a threat to performers in the video game industry as the capacity to cheaply and easily create digital replicas of a performers voice was widely available. Unchecked use of AI could displace them of future work.⁷

During the strikes, companies used various methods to undermine the strike such as Riot allegedly trying to cancel a game in response and Activision recast characters to non union represented actors.⁸

On 10 June 2025, SAG-AFTRA announced it came to a tentative agreement over the AI demands while members of the union will continue to strike until final terms are agreed upon. SAG-AFTRA president Fran Drescher stopped just short of declaring the case a victory.⁹

While not a complete victory yet, **positive progress has shown that patience and persistence can result in better conditions for workers across the world.** Through organised action, the workers have managed to secure guardrails against AI, keeping their jobs more secured in the future.







SECTION THREE WORKERS' VOICE

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Facts and Figures

Unite will do everything it can to support reps building power in the workplace, at the bargaining table and in dispute. Work, Voice, Pay tools, Facts & Figures, Forensic Accounts, strike pay, Strikes Plus and organising campaigns: they're all designed for a clear purpose: To help you win better jobs, better pay and better conditions.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

3. How did we win?

3.1 Livv Housing Rep Kevin Byrne on how Unite members won 7.7% pay deal last month

From dispute to victory - hear how Unite members at Livv Housing and Capita won pay rises through determined organising, collective strength, and had the support of their union.



Hear it straight from the front line! Listen to the full interviews on Facts and Figures podcast: Spotify:

<https://tinyurl.com/4uf9y5zc> & Apple Podcasts:

<https://tinyurl.com/3uv8ae8d>

Our first interview this month is with **Kevin Byrne**, an electrician and senior Unite rep at **Livv Housing**. Drawing on his experience as a rep at British Gas, Kevin and his colleagues have rebuilt their union at Livv from the ground up. Their determination led to a long but victorious pay campaign, setting a new benchmark in the social housing sector.



Tell us about the workplace.

Kevin Byrne (KB): In terms of membership, we've got about a 50% density in the company, between both unions, Unison and Unite. But crucially, I work on the maintenance, and we've got probably about 80-90% of the maintenance staff as Unite members. So everybody who's at work, and everybody who's on the tools, everybody who gets in a van, generally about 90% of those are in Unite.

Facts and Figures

Tell us how you got to this deal you achieved and what you actually achieved.

KB: We were up against a very anti-union company, a very aggressive company. The dispute was an eight month long dispute. So it was a long road to get into the point where we've got.

Livv Housing is a company that have presided over stripping away terms and conditions for a number of years, probably two decades, since it was Knowsley Housing Trust, and since the stock transfer happened and it moved over to Livv Housing. All those good terms and conditions and pensions that they had as council workers, were stripped and eroded over the years. And they've used some foul means as well to do that, including fire and rehire, over the years. So Livv Housing was a company that had never given an inch. It had never negotiated. It had just taken and not given back for a number of years.



We've had to sort of try to go at everything. So we've got a 7.7% rise. We've won some concessions on the hours of work. It's come down immediately from 40 to 39 on the maintenance side. So we're getting an early finish on a Friday, at half three. And that's immediate; that starts this Friday. And they've committed to coming down to 38 hours, but we've just got to look at ways around how we do that and look at productivity. Our pensions have been improved.

The current pension was 6% contribution of the employer and the employee. We've moved that up to 10. But we've also created a working group to improve the pension over the next 12 months to bring a better pension to our members, because we weren't quite happy about the matched elements of it.

We've also won extra three days holiday, which will be around the Christmas period. That'll be in the contract now.

"So yeah, we've attacked, we've gone for elements of everything, pay and conditions. The dispute was only about pay. But as the dispute rolled on, and as we knew we were going to win, we got creative on how we could resolve the dispute. We've also got working groups in place. We've got a meeting with Acas in the next week or two, which will put the principles of these working groups in place, which are designed then to improve all terms and conditions and pensions across the business."

You obviously engaged the membership really well. So tell us about how you did that.

KB: When I took over, in January 2024, there was no union rep. There were union members in place, but I think they were just union members because they used it as a sort of insurance policy, rather than what a union is intended to be. The recognition agreement that we had was basically a paper recognition. It wasn't an actual recognition, which is part of why we fought this dispute as well. And it's something we've won. We've now got recognition in practice.



To engage the membership, it was just good old-fashioned trade unionism. I just came in as a rep, with the experience I had. I didn't go out to try to organise straight away. What I did was just roll my sleeves up and give the best representation I could give. And then all of a sudden, people started talking in the canteens, on the phones, in the vans, "you know, we've got a union rep here now". I appointed a colleague alongside me who I felt had those leadership qualities, which turned out that he did, and that was shown during the strike.

So it was just good old-fashioned trade unionism. I sensed the strength in the membership. I really did. And I think all they needed was a banner, and we provided that. So that's how we built. That was the foundation of building it. Just give the best representation you can. Be as honest as you can. Maintain integrity, and your credibility will come with that. The credibility of the union will grow with that. And that's what we did.

Facts and Figures

Tell us a bit about the resources you used.

KB: Unite were a great source of support. We used the forensic accounting as well. Not only did we get the forensic accounts, but I got a little bit of training on how to read accounts as well, which was really useful for the staff there.



Alongside the Unite stuff, I think one of the most crucial things as well was the use of WhatsApp. You know, opening up really strong lines of communication with the membership and, again, being as honest as we could, because the company propaganda was ramping up. We could quickly quell the propaganda, and we could quickly show that the propaganda was misleading information. That sort of won hearts and minds, that. The membership went from looking at the company as the most important element in the relationship, to coming and looking at the union and themselves, and it gave them that confidence.

"With Unite as well, one of the important aspects was the Leverage Team. When the Strikes Plus team came in, after Sharon Graham had visited our picket line. And by the way, Sharon was fantastic when she came down. She left a real good impression on the members as well. Because she just went round speaking to the members. And the way she is. She's a bit of a force of nature. And that's what you have to be if you're getting to the top of Unite the Union."

The Strikes Plus team came in and just changed the gear of the dispute. At the time, it was sort of at an impasse. They came in and totally changed the gear, targeted the right people, including the board members. Because the housing sector has got issues which need to be worked through, probably at a governmental level. It appears that it's difficult to find the accountability there. And the board were very elusive. They didn't want to communicate with us. But the Leverage Team just went in and did their own thing. And I've done a few things with them as well. They invited me to a few of their things, and they were really good.

Any Rep listening to this or possibly engaging in their own dispute, I'd say use Unite's resources as much as possible. It's there for us, and it's incredibly good.

What three bullet points would you say helped you win this fantastic victory?

KB:

- I'd say be as honest as you can with your members.
- Give the best representation you can. Communication is king.
- And just have confidence to do it.

And like I said, I sensed the strength in our membership, and that gave me the confidence, but it's also about giving them confidence.

3.2 Capita Rep Lorraine Hanson on how Unite members won a better pay and grew stronger

Next up is **Lorraine Hanson** who shares how she and her fellow members at **Capita** took on the employer and won. Capita is an outsourcing company in the finance sector. Lorraine is a customer advisor, dealing with life and pensions policies. She has been a Unite Rep for around 10 years at Capita Manchester.



Facts and Figures

Tell us a bit about the workplace that you're in.

Lorraine Hanson (LH): In Capita Manchester, we cover Royal London contract. We have around 300 employees roughly, and it's all life and pension stuff. We don't have any new business, so it's a closed book. We don't have a lot of new staff, but we do have some on the call center areas because, sometimes even though it's closed, but we're not getting any new business. The work that you have to do around pensions because of the changes in rules does increase. And obviously there's a natural number of staff that do actually go. So we do get a few new members.



What about the union there? How good are you on membership?

(LH): Our membership density is around about 55 to 60%. We managed to increase that from about 40% during the industrial action. Most of it has been a fairly steady membership, same numbers for quite a long period of time, because originally all these people are from the old Co-op insurance, and when you join the Co-op, you basically were given a pack including 'join the union', and you were kind of encouraged to join the union by the Co-op. Obviously Capita doesn't particularly encourage people, but we don't have a particularly bad working relationship with the managers on site. They don't always like the union getting involved in stuff. But we tend to try and work together.

Moving on to the actual negotiation, tell us how you got to the deal you achieved.

(LH): Basically for 2024, Capita decided that they were going to freeze the pay negotiations. Negotiations normally start around January, or should start around January, with the pay usually going into pay around April time. But in April, Capita informed us that they were going to delay any pay negotiations until October, which we weren't particularly thrilled about, but we accepted that, obviously on the proviso that there would be something coming in October.

October came along and Capita informed us they had no money and there would be no pay increase for 2024. Obviously that's a real-terms pay cut for our members, because the cost of living is going up and up and up. It might be going up by less than in previous years, but it's still going up, and our members are struggling. So we decided to take an indicative ballot to see what the strength of feeling was.



On the Manchester site, it was pretty strong. I think 80-odd percent of people were prepared to take industrial action to force the company back to the table. With that result, we then took it to a postal ballot, and that was done over Christmas 2024, so it was about three weeks. And when we got the results of the postal ballot, it was very, very heavily in favour of industrial action.

We obviously informed the company of these numbers, and the company still weren't moving into negotiations. So we announced the first strike, which was going to be a five-day strike over the end of January. What they have is Service Level Agreements with Royal London.

Facts and Figures

These are obviously done throughout the month, but they do an extra push towards the end of the month to try and get these, to make sure they meet all these agreements. So we decided to do it for five days at the end of the month to try and hit the SLA's, because it would hit them the hardest. So we have five days of industrial action, out on the picket lines.

Up to that time we were constantly getting new members who obviously were encouraging as much as we could, and asking our members to encourage people as well. And I think that was the key point in getting the numbers up, because our members were talking to their mates, their colleagues and stuff like that. We had the first set of industrial action, and Capita decided they did want to try and talk to us a little bit. They wanted to get a resolution to this, but that resolution was basically offering a day's holiday for 2025 to members. We didn't even put that to the vote. People need money in the pockets, not a day's holiday. So we declined on that one.

During that first week of industrial action, Capita were doing everything they could to get people in, spending money on pizzas, Nando's, all that kind of thing for people in the office. So it does make you wonder where they've suddenly found this money.

But we got strong numbers out and we got a strong picket line, and I think it did start to put the fear into Capita. But again, still nothing concrete on the table. So we announced the next stage of industrial action, again hitting end of the month. So that would have been the end of February, beginning of March. And it was going to be 8 days this time, so that we could extend the action.

"Again, well attended. We managed to get more membership as well. Some of those people that went in the office, having to do all their work, just them, all the pressure that was put on them, and realized how bad it was and decided to join up the union and join us on the on the picket line."



Again though, Capita came back with another offer, and again, it wasn't a particularly good offer. We did then decide to put this out to members. It was, basically, for 2024 a £500 if you earned over 30k, a £1,000 if you earned under 30k, and nothing for those on what they class as the Capita Minimum, which is 12p an hour above minimum wage. They won't pay the real living wage. They stopped paying that a few years ago, when it increased by quite a bit, but they pay what they call the Capita Minimum. This was overwhelmingly rejected by our membership. So we announced the next period of action.

Now the next period of action was going to be a two-week strike. But at the start of the two weeks, we were going to give them notice of another two weeks. So it would actually be full four weeks of industrial action. During the industrial action, Capita were talking to us. Prior to that, the negotiations actually were with Acas. So Acas was an intermediary, but that was, like I said, the offer that they came to, and it was overwhelmingly rejected, which we knew it would be it. It just wasn't good enough, and we told them that. But we've got as far as we could with Acas. So we announced this two-week strike, and then another two weeks, and Capita were talking to us, and they were panicking. They couldn't afford for us to continue to be out.

On the first lot of action, the managers were basically saying "industrial actions had no impact." It clearly had, because by the time of the third action, they were definitely panicking. After a few days of negotiation, we did manage to get to where we are now, which would be a £1,200 one-off payment for everyone on above the Capita minimum. For those on the Capita minimum, they would get a £500 payment.

Facts and Figures



Capita's argument on this one was that they had already had a pay increase because national minimum wage had gone up in 2024, so they all had an increase to the new national minimum wage plus 12p an hour. So that was Capita's argument on that one. We pushed as much as we could on that, and we managed to get the £500.

We also managed to get the 2025 pay deal. Those on the Capita minimum were going to get their increase from April, but they actually agreed to push it back to January. The increase from January rather than April, and everyone else would get an increase of £1500, effective from January.

"We managed to agree that there was no performance relation on the pay increase, apart from people on the lowest rate wouldn't get an increase, which was two people. We just could not get them to move on that one. But everyone else would get £1,500, because our membership have told us a lot of times about the differences in pay structures. So you've got people that have got 20, 30-year service that are on the Capita minimum, and the person sitting next to them has been there a year or two and is on a couple of grand more than them. If everybody gets a percentage pay rise, that gap gets bigger. So we agreed between the reps that it would be better if we had a monetary rise, rather than a percentage rise. Everyone gets the same amount regardless of what you're on. The gap is not getting smaller, but it's not getting bigger."

What resources did you use? How did you support your claim?

(LH): Initially we do a pay survey. So in December 2023 - January 2024, we did a pay survey, and we did that, we've done surveys again on membership as well. We used **Work, Voice, Pay**, as well. We also had the financial accountants. They went through Capita's books for 2023 and 2024, with a fine tooth comb.

That meant that we could use that in the meetings with Capita to dispute their claims that they had no money and stuff like that. So those were the main resources that we used with regards to that.

Give us three bullet points for how you achieved what he achieved in this this deal.

(LH):

- Organisation,
- Strong membership,
- And have a bit of fun on the picket lines!



Are you familiar with the Unite's Work, Voice, Pay tools?

There are several tools in the **Work, Voice, Pay** armoury to understand more about your company's financial data and prepare a better collective bargaining negotiations- all of which can be accessed at <https://www.unitetheunion.org/work-voice-pay>

3.2.1 Bite-Sized Bargaining: more winning workers are telling us how they won better pay deals in their workplaces

When workers stand together, armed with the facts and supported by their union, real change is possible. Winning workers are telling us how they won better pay deals in their workplaces.

- Unite convenor **Tony McDermott** at **First Glasgow** and Unite Branch Secretary **Ralph William** at **Arriva Midlands** told us how Unite members led successful disputes that delivered wins in their workplaces. Read the interview at <https://tinyurl.com/2p9j4ees> or see Facts and Figures May 2025:p.23.

Facts and Figures

- Lead Shop Steward **Sharon Williams** at **Loganir** shared how strong organising, member-led action, and sector comparisons delivered a remarkable 27% pay deal over 18 months, and what others can learn from it. Read the interview at <https://tinyurl.com/53ambvb9> or see Facts and Figures April 2025 p.20
- Unite lead rep **Dishon Boxer-Gylenhall** shared how they secured a dramatic pay increase for cabin crew of **Qantas** in the UK. Read the interview at <https://tinyurl.com/zu4228bc> or see Facts and Figures March 2025 p.19







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What other settlements have been reached?

Facts and Figures

Unite will use brains as well as brawn to fight bad employers and reshape the industrial landscape.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

4. What other settlements have been reached?

4.1 Victory for pensioners: Unite's relentless pressure forces government U-turn on Winter Fuel Payment

After months of fierce campaigning, lobbying, grass roots actions and protests, and legal action, Unite has forced the UK Government to reverse the cruel decision to cut the **Winter Fuel Allowance**. This vital support, which helps millions of pensioners stay warm during the harsh winter months, is now restored in full for those earning under £35,000 a year.¹⁰

This is a landmark victory for pensioners, and it's thanks to the unstoppable pressure from Unite the union.



In July 2024, the **Labour Government** announced a brutal plan: to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment, restricting it only to those receiving Pension Credit.¹¹ That would have cut off over 10 million pensioners from vital winter support worth £200-£300 per year.

Unite knew what this meant: pensioners choosing between heating and eating. In a country where fuel poverty is already a crisis, especially in Scotland and Northern Ireland, this decision was nothing short of dangerous.

Facts and Figures

From day one, Unite, alongside the national pensioners' convention and other pensioner groups, sprang into action. The campaign wasn't just a response. It was a coordinated movement across every region and nation, with **Unite's Retired Members** at the forefront of the battle, mobilising communities up and down the country to demand justice.¹² **Unite For A Workers' Economy** campaign placed the issue at the heart of a broader fight against inequality and austerity.¹³ At the TUC, Labour Conference, and inside Parliament, Unite's voice was impossible to ignore.

On 25 September, Unite's general secretary **Sharon Graham** delivered a barnstorming speech on the **Labour Party Conference** floor: *"Friends, people simply do not understand, I do not understand, how our new Labour government can cut the winter fuel allowance for pensioners and leave the super-rich untouched. This is not what people voted for. It is the wrong decision and needs to be reversed."*¹⁴ (Watch the full speech here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-CQX_DNzKc)



Unite's daily campaign inside and outside of the Labour Party Conference put the issue at the forefront. A Unite-led motion opposing the cuts passed overwhelmingly, putting Labour's leadership on notice.¹⁵

The union movement didn't stop at the speeches.

- In Northern Ireland, Unite joined with the **National Pensioners' Convention** for mass rallies outside **Stormont** in October.¹⁶ Activists warned of the nation's dire fuel poverty rates and demanded action.

Facts and Figures



- In Scotland, following growing unrest, the **Scottish Parliament** voted 99-14 to condemn the cut and called on Westminster to reverse it.¹⁷
- **Westminster** saw major demonstrations by Unite retired members.



"Unite is spearheading the demand to reinstate the winter fuel payment. We are holding Labour to account over winter fuel. People need to see their lives improve. Taking money off pensioners on as little as £220 a week, while the 50 richest families in Britain own a combined £500 billion, doesn't do that. We aren't backing down." - **Monica Taylor**, Chair of the Unite Retired Members Committee and Unite Executive Council member

Across social media, picket lines, and community meetings, Unite activists and retired members kept the pressure on ministers at every turn.

Meanwhile, Unite's legal team supported pensioners in preparing for a judicial review, challenging the government's failure to assess the policy's impact on health and poverty.¹⁸

The campaign was coordinated, strategic, and furious.

By May 2025, the tide had turned. Labour backbenchers were in revolt. Legal challenges and pressure were mounting. Public opinion was unforgiving.

What other settlements have been reached?

Facts and Figures

On 9 June 2025, Chancellor **Rachel Reeves** announced a U-turn: the Winter Fuel Payment would be fully restored for pensioners earning under £35,000.

Over nine million people would once again receive the payment. And it was Unite's campaign that forced their hand.

The day after the UK Government announced its U-turn, Stormont confirmed pensioners across Northern Ireland would also receive the benefit again.

“Commonsense has finally prevailed as the winter fuel cut has been reversed for most pensioners. Leadership is about choices and the choice to pit workers against pensioners was simply wrong. Britain is the sixth richest economy in the world, the idea that we would be picking the pockets of our pensioners was unnecessary and unforgivable.” - Unite general secretary, Sharon Graham

Pensioners and workers standing together, not pitted against each other, won this tangible victory. The restoration of the Winter Fuel Payment is more than a policy change or money, it is about dignity, respect, defending vulnerable communities. It is a political statement. And it carries a message: when you stand with Unite, you don't stand alone.

Unite fights for justice at every stage of life, from shopfloor to retirement.

4.2 John Crane workers defend the right to collective bargaining through strike action

Unite members at **John Crane** in Slough forced management to back down through strike action and the threat of more walkouts.¹⁹ The workers in the engineering company took strike action not just for pay, but to defend their right to negotiate collectively.

Facts and Figures



After six days of disruption in April and May and planned further strikes in May and June, 40 workers secured a two-year deal. The workers were due to walk out again in a dispute about pay. However, they have now voted to accept an improved offer backdated to October 2024.

This is part of a two-year deal with the workers, who make seals, bearings and pumps for the oil and gas industry.

The workers had previously undertaken six days of strike action in April and May, causing supply chain disruption.

The company had planned to impose individual appraisals to determine future pay, aiming to divide workers and weaken the union. But workers stood firm and forced management to drop the plan, securing a two-year deal through collective bargaining.

This win shows that defending union rights is worth for the fight. It is about using union strength now to secure stronger pay deals in the future.

"This improved offer only came about because our members were determined to fight for a better deal through industrial action. They have shown there is power in being a member of Unite." - Unite general secretary, **Sharon Graham**

What other settlements have been reached?





SECTION FIVE INFLATION & WAGES

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The drop in the value of wages shows just how important it is for unions like Unite to defend workers' pay. We will continue to do whatever it takes to defend our members' Jobs, Pay and Conditions.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

5. How fast are prices rising? Are wages keeping up?

5.1 RPI is 4.3%

The Retail Price Index (RPI) is 4.3% in May, decreasing from 4.5% in the previous month. Despite the fall, this remains higher than any other month since February 2024.²⁰

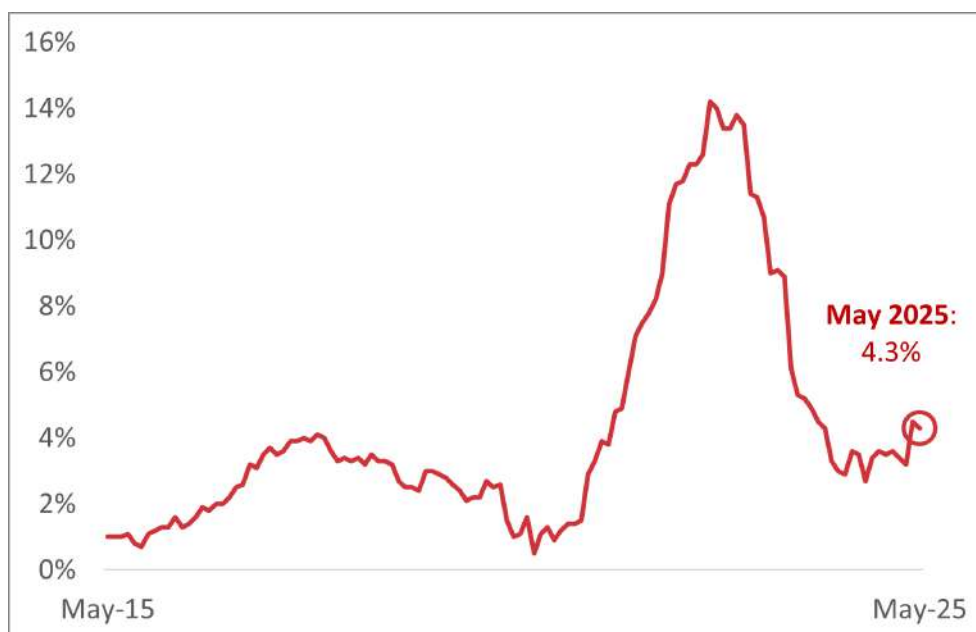


Figure 1 RPI inflation May 2015 to May 2025. Source: ONS

The inflation figure that gets repeated by bosses and the media is the Consumer Price Index (CPI) measure of inflation, which is usually lower than RPI.

CPI is 3.4%, well above the Government's target of 2%, but **Unite Reps shouldn't accept CPI being used in pay negotiations**, as it does not reflect the price increases that our members actually experience.²¹

RPI far more closely tracks the price rises faced by Unite members. As such, **it is more urgent than ever that Unite members fight for RPI+ pay rises, and resist bosses' attempts to make workers pay the price.**

It is important to note that this drop in inflation does not translate to falling prices. Inflation builds on the previous months inflation figures, such that cumulatively, across the last five years, we can see that **prices are 35.7% higher than they were before the cost of living crisis began.**

Facts and Figures

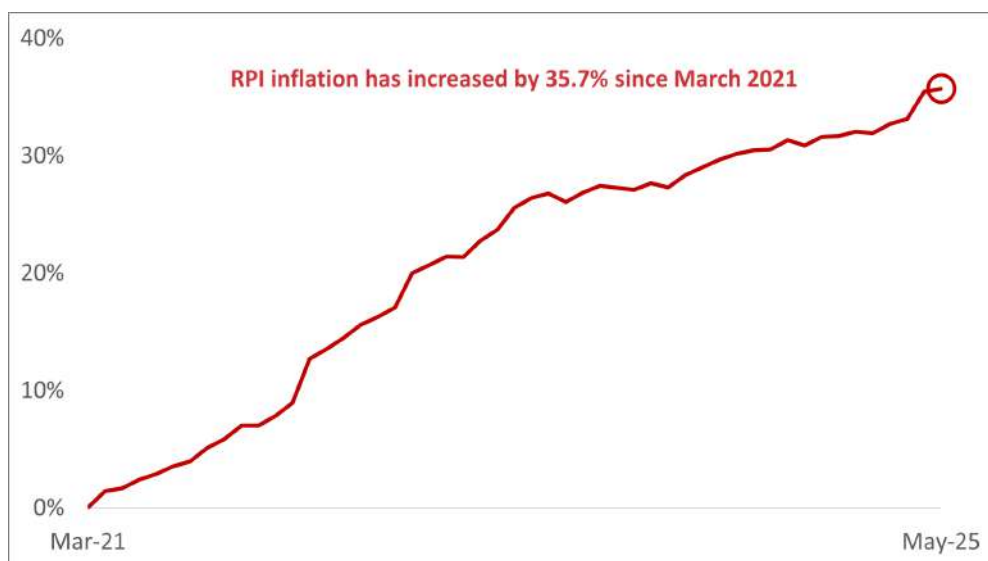


Figure 2 The inflation increase this month builds on previous high levels. Cumulative RPI Mar 21 to May 25. Source: RPI, ONS

5.1.1 The rise is driven by an increase in energy costs, as the UK's domestic energy bills are the highest in Europe

Prices across numerous categories have surged dramatically since March 2021. Many household essentials have risen much faster than the average price increase - including fuel (77.6%) and clothing (60.3%).

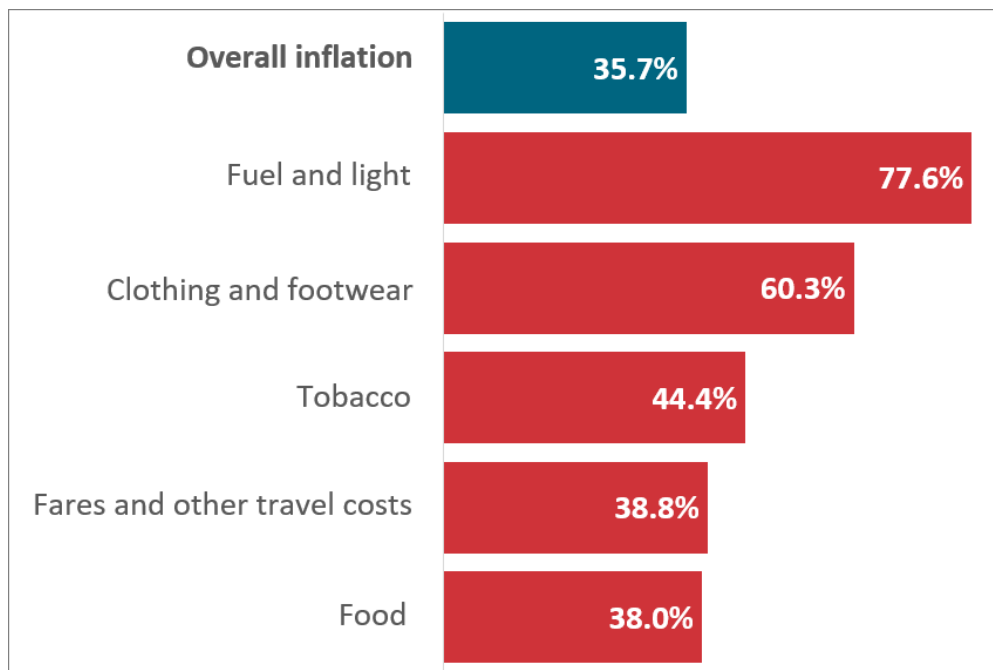


Figure 3 We have seen huge price increases across all key categories. RPI percentage change, Mar 21 to May 25. Source: RPI, ONS

[Unite Investigates](#) has shown that many of these price increases are driven by profiteering. Unite will continue to shine a light on the role of profiteering in fuelling the cost of living crisis.²²

How does the cost of living crisis impact different groups?

Previous editions of Facts & Figures have discussed how the lowest paid workers experience the highest rate of inflation. Find out more here: tinyurl.com/uccet97z

The UK's domestic energy bills are the highest in Europe.²³ Electricity and gas prices started rising in the UK, when the economy opened up after the pandemic related-lockdowns. They skyrocketed due to the conflict in Ukraine and its effect on the supply of energy.

Currently, electricity prices are 57% higher than they were five years ago and gas prices are 79% higher since June 2020. This is despite the governments' introduction of the energy price cap, which pre-dated the price rises and was intended to stop suppliers overcharging by reflecting the true cost of supplying energy.

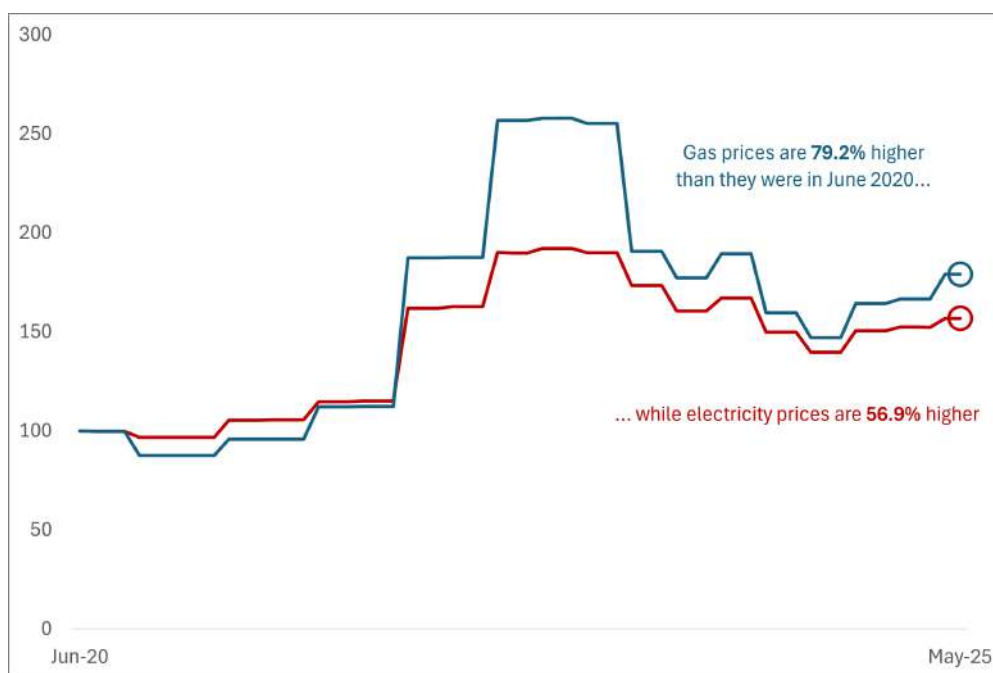


Figure 4 Index of UK electricity (red line) and gas (blue line) prices June 2020 to May 2025 (Index month: June 2020), source: ONS

Prices began to fall from mid-2023 and there have been some reductions in the price cap. However, the quarterly cap from January 2025 will still be around £520 above their summer 2021 levels.²⁴

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5.2 Real wages are up 1.4%, but pay still lags behind prices

Real wages - the amount you receive after adjusting for the effects of inflation - has grown recently. In real terms, average pay increased by 1.4% in April 2025, when compared to the same period a year earlier. This month, however, the real wages growth is the lowest over the last 18 months²⁵

The collective action of workers has helped drive this rise in real wages, putting more money in the pockets of workers, with Unite members leading the way with inflation-busting pay deals.



Above-inflation pay deals have helped push up overall pay growth and inspired other workers to build their own workplace power. **Only by workers coming together in their workplaces through collective bargaining can we begin to reverse the damage done on those at the bottom by the attack those at the top.**

5.2.1 Prices have increased 39% faster than wages since Spring 2021, equivalent to an annual pay cut of over £2,780 for the average worker

Real wages have been on the rise for over a year. Yet, they still lag behind prices. Since the beginning of the cost-of-living crisis, prices have grown 39% quicker than wages.²⁶

If wages had matched inflation over this period, the average worker would be earning £2,780 more per year.

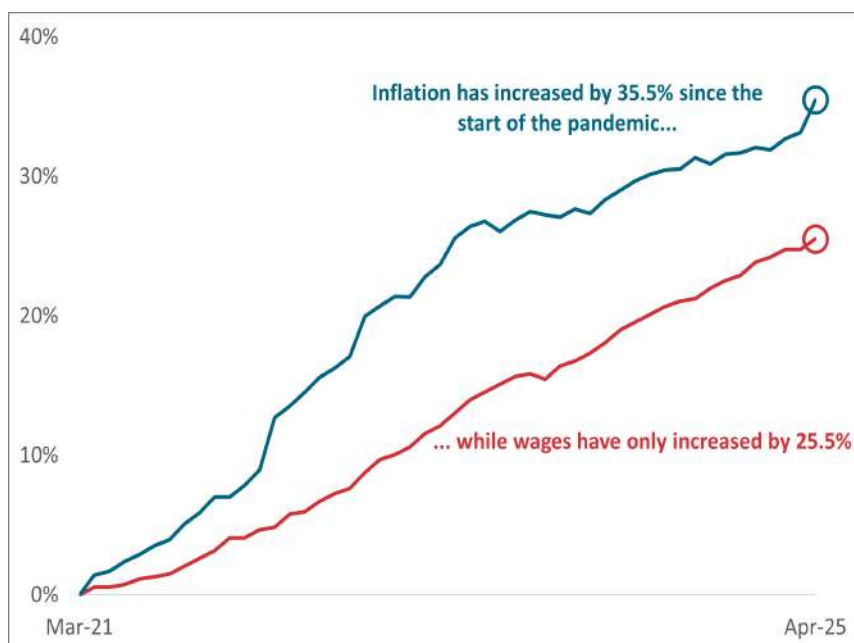


Figure 5 Inflation (in blue) and wages (in red) since Spring 2021. Monthly average weekly wage versus monthly RPI, indexed to Mar 21. Source: RPI and AWE, ONS

This exposes the claims made by bosses and politicians about a 'wage-price' spiral as nonsense. In reality, workers need to fight to win back the earnings lost to inflation and profiteering by employers.

Unite's [Financial Insider](#) tool depicts the true financial state of companies and analyses their ability to pay employees a fair wage. This is just one weapon, of many, that reps can use to win in the workplace and claim back what our members have lost to inflation.

5.3 Tying wages to CPI rather than RPI short-changes workers

You may have seen news articles that use CPI, rather than RPI, to report inflation and the increases in the cost of living. Or you may have had employers at the bargaining table use CPI when negotiating over wage increases during a pay round.

RPI more closely reflects the actual price rises experienced by Unite members, and is therefore a better standard to use for bargaining than the lower CPI figure. As such, [Work Voice Pay's suite of bargaining tools](#) are all linked to the current rate of RPI inflation.

RPI has been going since 1947 and is still used to set prices such as mobile phone bills, rail fares, student loans, plus 'sin' taxes (on, for example, alcohol).²⁷²⁸

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But with the availability of different measures, some employers go 'inflation measure shopping' and choose to use different measures which tend to produce lower figures than RPI.²⁹

Even the government links its expenses to the lower CPI rate, while linking income-generating items (such as car tax) to RPI.³⁰

Items that are linked to CPI when the government pays	Items that are linked to RPI when we are paying to the government
State pension	Tobacco duty
Public sector pensions	Alcohol duty
Personal independence payments (which are replacing the disability living allowance)	Air passenger duty
Attendance allowance	Vehicle excise duty (sometimes known as 'road tax' or 'car tax')
Jobseeker's allowance	Council Tax
Universal credit	Train tickets
Housing benefit	Mobile phone airtime tariffs
Income support	Income from index-linked annuities
Statutory maternity and paternity pay	Income from (some) index-linked bonds
Statutory sick pay	Interest on Student Loans
	Final salary pension payments

Table 1: Comparison between what CPI and RPI measures, Source: Alan Boswell Group & The Times

CPI was introduced by the Government in 2004 at the behest of the European Union to compare macro-economic inflation across the continent. It was not designed to understand changes in the cost of living.

RPI includes some price rises that our members experience, aren't covered by CPI such as paying for mortgages, or foreign holidays.³¹

CPI includes the spending of groups not usually relevant to our negotiations, such as:

- the top 4% of households by income

- Pensioner-only households
- Stockbrokers fees
- Spending by foreign tourists

So, if your boss tries to tie your pay negotiations to CPI, remind them that only RPI+ makes our members' pay stand up!



5.4 CPIH doesn't cut it either - it doesn't include the real cost of housing

Employers may also try to link pay to CPIH - which is CPI plus some housing costs. But this still short changes workers compared to RPI.

Inflation isn't just numbers - it's about bills, rent, and food. It is real life. CPI and CPIH hide the true cost of living, whereas RPI shows it. CPI and CPIH are unfair measures used to suppress pay. They lead to real-terms pay cuts. Unite demand RPI-busting pay rises to protect and increase living standards.

Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) is CPI plus some of the costs associated with owning, maintaining and living in one's own home (known as owner occupiers' housing costs, or OOH), along with Council Tax.³²

Although the Office of National Statistics (ONS) argues that CPIH is the 'most comprehensive measure of inflation', in reality RPI reflects the real cost of living fully.

Unlike RPI, CPIH does not include mortgage interest payments, which are directly impacted by interest rates. When interest rates rise, RPI

Facts and Figures

increases more sharply.³³ Workers feel the squeeze from housing, council tax, and energy bills - and RPI captures this better than CPIH.

Significant housing costs calculated in RPI, but not in CPIH
Average mortgage interest payments (estimated/modelled)
Depreciation costs proxy (smoothed house price index)
Dwelling insurance premiums
Ground rent proxy (smoothed house price index)

Table 2: Significant housing costs that affect cost of living but only calculated in RPI

Source: ONS

CPIH only includes housing costs through something called 'rental equivalence'. This method estimates how much rent a homeowner would have to pay to live in their own home.³⁴ It is a model, not a real cost paid by most workers.

If RPI is good enough to adjust key costs in our lives like utility bills, social housing rent increases, taxes, train fares, student loans, then why are workers asked to ignore it when negotiating fair pay? Unite believes negotiating RPI-busting pay deals are essential to truly beat inflation. Keeping up with inflation is not enough. Workers need to get ahead of it.

5.5 Use Unite's Pay Claim Generator for a better pay deal

Unite reps and shop stewards can use the Unite's **Pay Claim Generator** to include better pay deals in their pay claim.

The Pay Claim Generator is one of the **Work, Voice, Pay** tools for shop stewards negotiating with a UK registered company. You can construct your own bespoke pay claim online in less than 10 minutes.

The Pay Claim Generator helps reps create data-driven, employer-specific claims that include:

- Company profits data
- Inflation and cost of living data
- Unite's own pay bargaining data - collected from thousands of reps across the UK and Ireland

How to use Pay Claim Generator

[Pay Claim Generator \(GB & NI\)](#) or [Pay Claim Generator \(Republic of Ireland\)](#) can be found by navigating to the Work, Voice, Pay section at the

Facts and Figures



top of Unite's homepage, scrolling down, and selecting one of these Pay Claim Generators.



You will need to then log-in using your Work, Voice, Pay login credentials, and then you will arrive at the Pay Claim Generator dashboard. Press the big red "Pay" button to enter.

Pay Claim Generator (GB & NI)

[Share](#)

If you are a Shop Steward or Rep negotiating with a UK registered company you can now construct your own bespoke pay claim online in less than 10 minutes using the [Pay Claim Generator](#).

Your claim will be complete with the latest pay, inflation and company profits data; sourced from filed accounts, the Office for National Statistics and our own pay bargaining data - collected from thousands of reps across the UK and Ireland.


Within 10 minutes it will be fully laid out and ready-to-print.

Click [here](#) or on the icon below to get started.





Here's what you would see if you were to search for 'Firstgroup PLC' as your employer:

Your Pay Claim

Employer
Enter the name of your employer
 

- This company FIRSTGROUP PLC
- This company turnover £4.7bn
- Month/Year of latest Accounts 03/2024

Year of claim
Choose one of the following
☒ One Year Deal
☐ Two Year Deal
 

Unite Sector
 

Facts and Figures

Even selecting a company's name will give you a brief overview of how the company is performing financially - it is worth double checking this to ensure you've selected the correct company! When you are sure that this is your company, you then select the deal coverage, the sector, and the region.

Section 1 is about Pay and Pensions. You can include specific items in your pay claim by toggling the grey bar next to each option - it will turn green when activated.

For example, you can add a new pension related item into your pay claim:

- Introduction of a Defined Benefit Scheme
- Introduction of a new pension scheme
- Introduction of trade union bargaining rights and enhancement to an existing employer pension scheme
- Introduction of trade union bargaining rights and enhancements to an existing National Pensions Savings Scheme (NEST)
- Enhancing a National Pensions Savings Scheme (NEST) with existing union bargaining rights

Apart from Pay and Pensions, there are six more sections with specific issues and five sections for custom claims. You can choose all the issues related to your workplace conditions, and click on Preview Pay Claim button at the bottom.

Preview Pay Claim

Facts and Figures



You will be able to see your company's brief overview of turnover and its ability to pay, a comparative list of pay deals which were done in other companies in your sector, and a quick summary of the RPI.

You will also see the details of selected items of the claim. Here, for example, you will see the information on "Introduction of a Defined Benefit Scheme" in Firstgroup PLC pay claim.

ITEMS OF THE CLAIM

Introduction of a Defined Benefit Scheme

Studies have shown that pensions are the company benefit valued most by employees. Employee benefits specialist Thomsons found that employees rate a decent company pension above private medical insurance, extra holiday or childcare vouchers.

It is the view of Unite members that FIRSTGROUP PLC should in consultation with Shop Stewards/Reps introduce a defined benefits pension scheme without delay.

Negotiations should include but not be limited to:

- The right of Shop Stewards/Reps to negotiate with FIRSTGROUP PLC on the pension contribution rate of the employer
- Agreed retirement age for all members of the proposed scheme
- That pensions are covered by a meaningful disclosure of information agreement with the Union
- Pension benefits should be fully recognised as terms and conditions in all existing and future contracts of employment
- Early implementation of the requirement for 50% member trustees with all trustees selected by members of the scheme or their elected representatives
- Joint management committees to be established to oversee the operation of all non-trust based arrangements

¹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sponsored/finance/pension-auto-enrolment/10744934/pensions-motivate-staff.html>

If you have added all the claims your workplace needs, then you can save your pay claim as either PDF or WORD by clicking one of the two options at the bottom.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or corrections, please get in touch at workvoicepay@unitetheunion.org.

If you have yet to try out the **Pay Claim Generator** tool, it can be accessed at <https://www.unitetheunion.org/work-voice-pay/pay-claim-generator-gb-ni> or <https://www.unitetheunion.org/work-voice-pay/pay-claim-generator-republic-of-ireland>

Are you familiar with the rest of Unite's Work, Voice, Pay tools? Unite's Pay Claim Generator is one of several tools in the Work, Voice, Pay armoury - all of which can be accessed at <https://www.unitetheunion.org/work-voice-pay> For mobile users, try flipping your phone to landscape to see Work, Voice, Pay on Unite's homepage.

How fast are prices rising? Are wages keeping up?

Facts and Figures

5.6 Bite-sized Bargaining: Real terms pay is historically low, while inequality is continuing to widen

Previous editions of Facts and Figures have described how real pay today compares to the past:

- Since 1977, the income gap between the top and bottom income groups is continuing to widen. Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/3t9ep345> or look in October 2024 p. 45-47
- Workers are earning less in real terms today than in 1997. Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/5c7kbzb8> or look in March 2024 p. 87-88
- Real terms wage increases were the norm for over 100 years. Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/5c7kbzb8> or look in March 2024 p. 88-89

Use Financial Insider to show how little your employer is spending on wages and if your pay is keeping pace with inflation:

- Whether real-terms pay at your company has kept pace with inflation. Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/2585t624> or look in September 2024 p. 134-135







SECTION SIX

COST OF LIVING

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Facts and Figures

We are under no illusion: this is not the end - the cost of living crisis is not over. Furthermore, those who have profited from the crisis should pay for it.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

6. What else is pushing up the the cost of living?

6.1 Levels of consumer debt have increased to an average of over £8,300 per household over the last year

The Bank of England interest rate is 4.25%, after being cut by 0.25% in May. The cut last month was welcome, however, it is still not nearly enough to relieve the burden of workers' mortgage payments and credit card debts.

As of May 2025, total unsecured consumer debt stood at £235.9 billion, or £8,305 per household, growing 5.4% in the last year³⁵ **Workers are increasingly struggling to keep up with ever-growing debt costs.**

Widespread pay rises are needed to ensure that workers can keep up with rising living costs, and are not reliant on increasingly unaffordable debt to pay the bills.

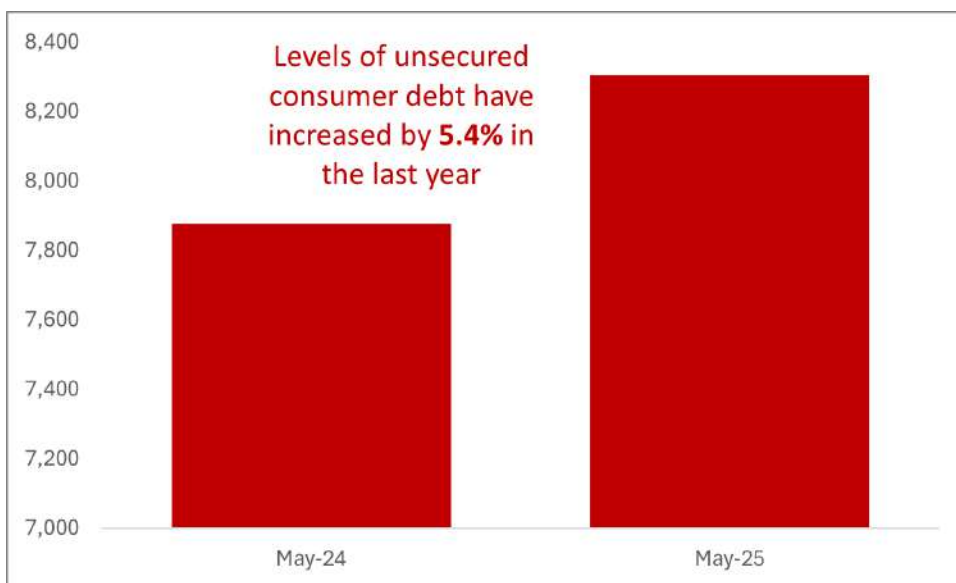


Figure 6 Average unsecured consumer debt per household as of May 25, and increase compared to a year earlier. Source: The Money Charity May 24 and May 25

6.2 Rents are up by nearly 7% in the last year, and take up nearly a third of the average worker's income

The current state of the housing market is working for no one, except the wealthy. As the Resolution Foundation has reported, **the share of income families dedicate to housing has doubled since 1980.**³⁶

Facts and Figures

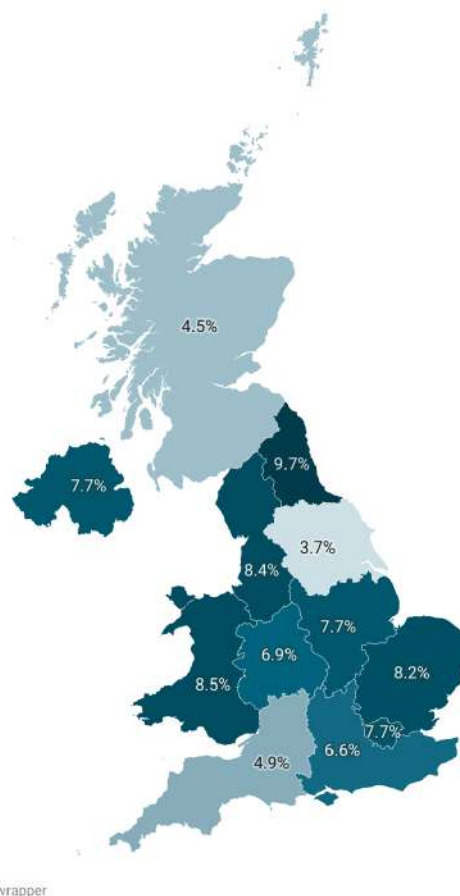


Figure 7 Rents continue to rise across the country. Annual percentage change comparison May 24 v May 25 (Note: for Northern Ireland the data is from March 25).

Source: Price Index of Private Rents, ONS

Successive governments have failed to address this mounting crisis by providing decent, affordable housing - and so workers only option is better pay through collective bargaining. The soaring price of housing is an important cost-of-living element to raise in pay negotiations.

Again, this month's rental data suggests things are only getting worse. **Overall, rents have increased by an average of 7% across the UK in the last year**, driven by increases the North East.³⁷

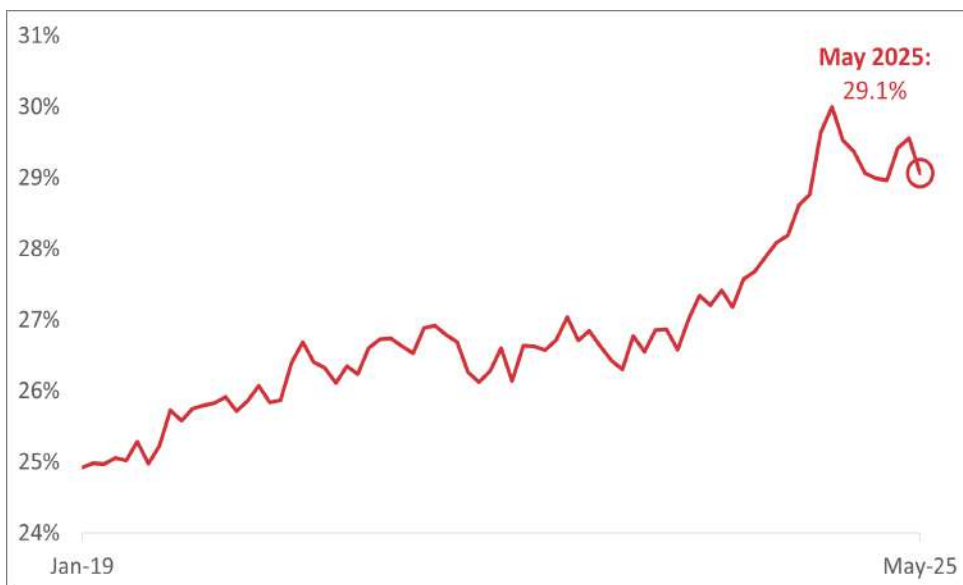


Figure 8 The share of tenants' income spent on rent has shot up in recent years. Monthly data showing the proportion of gross income spent on rent for new tenancies across the UK. Jan 19 to May 25. Source: ONS

For renters across the UK, housing costs now take up 29.1% of gross income on average. This is slightly down from a peak of 30.0% in September 2024, but it is still a major driver of the cost of living crisis.

While rents have been soaring, wages should not lag behind. For many workers, a growing share of income is swallowed before the month even begins. In collective bargaining, our members should demand pay rises that reflect rising housing costs.

6.3 Average house prices are up more than 3.5% across the UK

In the 12 months to April 2025, house prices have increased by 3.5% on average across the UK. Breaking down by country, Northern Ireland saw the biggest increase at 9.5%. England saw the smallest increase, up 3% while Wales and Scotland house prices grew 5.3% and 5.8% respectively.³⁸

Interest rate rises have made borrowing for a mortgage prohibitive to many - making it even harder for renters to get on the housing ladder.

Work, Voice, Pay



6.3.1 Average mortgage rates are almost 8%, well above recent historical levels

As a result, households with mortgages up for renewal in the UK face significantly higher monthly costs.

Mortgage brokers are reporting that more people seeking to take out a mortgage are saddled with credit card debt they are struggling to pay down. This makes it harder for them to get a mortgage.⁴¹

The bottom line is that housing is hugely expensive in the UK, and to address this our members - whether renters or owners - need good pay deals to keep up.

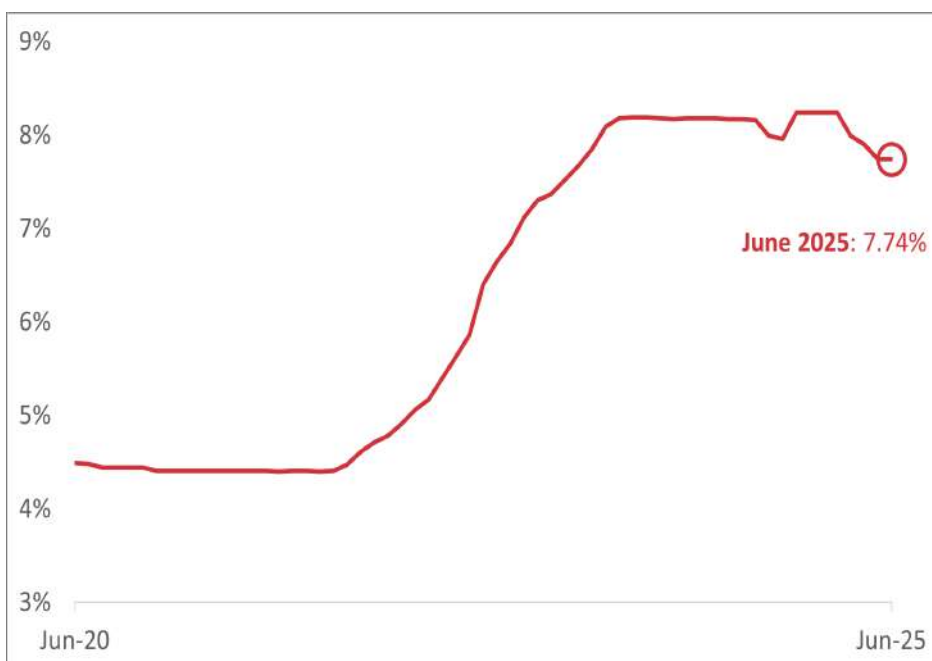


Figure 10 Standard Variable Mortgage Rates in the UK. June 20 to June 25. Source: MoneyFacts and USwitch

The need to ensure that we pursue above RPI pay increases and resist attempts to use measures which do not cover the costs of housing has never been more important.

What impact are increased mortgage costs having?

Previous editions of Facts & Figures have covered how home owners are falling into arrears because of soaring mortgage costs. Find out more here: tinyurl.com/bd58zw8e

6.4 Bite-sized Bargaining: Increased social care, child care, and leisure costs add to workers burden

Unite backs its members who fight collectively for inflation-busting **pays in the workplaces and sectors**. See below for a compiled cost-of-living articles in our previous issues. You can (re)read them and use these insights to strengthen your negotiations by addressing the rising cost of living and securing fair wages.

Facts and Figures



- The UK is the most expensive country for childcare in Europe, with costs for an under 2 years old rising by 43% in the last decade. Find out more here: tinyurl.com/2bcvj8hc or look in May 2024 p.49-51.
- Social care has been majority privatised, running for profit and costs its patients over £60,000 a year. Find out more here: tinyurl.com/2xu66av4 or look in August 2024 p.33-35.
- The lowest paid workers are experiencing the highest rate of inflation Find out more here: tinyurl.com/uccet97z or look in April 2024 p.51-52.
- Employers will downplay the cost-of-living crisis by using inaccurate inflation forecasts. Find out more here: tinyurl.com/yeywny9n or look in March 2024 p.274-275
- The rising cost of living has made personal leisure a privilege as workers have had to prioritise bills and food. Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/4nu8vvbd> or look in December 2024 p.32

Use the Pay Claim Generator to create pay claims that keep up with inflation

Work Voice Pay has developed tools to help Unite reps and shop stewards win better terms and conditions. The [Pay Claim Generator](#) allows you to construct your own bespoke pay claim online in less than 10 minutes.

Your claim will be complete with the latest pay, inflation and company profits data; sourced from filed accounts, the Office for National Statistics and our own pay bargaining data - collected from thousands of reps across the UK and Ireland.

the UNION

UNITE OFFICIAL PICKET

Fighting for **JOBS • PAY • CONDITIONS**





SECTION SEVEN

ABILITY TO PAY

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Facts and Figures

Put simply: huge profits and dividends show that firms have the ability to pay.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary



7. How much money are employers making?

7.1 Companies reporting results in May have raked in £673 billion in profit over the last six months

Many bosses may point to global uncertainty as an excuse to limit pay increases - pleading poverty and a need to cut costs. **However, in many cases, this simply isn't true. Across the world, companies are posting massive profits, making it clear that the ability to pay is still there.**

We analysed nearly 1,700 companies listed on the world's largest stock exchanges that reported results in May. Over the last six months, these companies have declared eye-watering profits of £673 billion.

Company	Profits in the latest six months (£m)
Shell plc	4,045
3i Group plc	2,990
NatWest Group plc	2,574
National Grid plc	2,255
Lloyds Banking Group plc	2,007
Nationwide Building Society	1,883
International Consolidated Airlines Group S.A.	1,532
Standard Chartered plc	1,296
Imperial Brands plc	808
Compass Group plc	723

Table 3: The top ten largest net profits of London Stock Exchange companies reporting results in May, sourced from Capital IQ Pro. Data excludes Trusts and companies with revenue less than £1 billion.

Many Unite employers are amongst the highest earnings companies posting results in May, leaving bosses no excuse to plead poverty.

Facts and Figures

Company	Stock Exchange	Profits in the latest six months (£m)
Meta Platforms, Inc.	NASDAQ	28,306
Amazon.com, Inc	NASDAQ	27,380
JPMorgan Chase & Co	NYSE	20,848
Toyota Motor Corporation	TSE	14,759
Exxon Mobil Corporation	NYSE	12,570
UnitedHealth Group Incorporated	NYSE	8,988
Uber Technologies, Inc.	NYSE	7,358
The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.	NYSE	5,503
Morgan Stanley	NYSE	5,349
TotalEnergies SE	ENXTPA	4,843

Table 4: Unite employers are amongst the most profitable companies reporting results in May. Sourced from S&P Capital IQ Pro. Data excludes Trusts and companies with revenue less than £1 billion.

Meta Platforms (i.e. Facebook) was amongst the largest companies globally to report results in May, boasting profits of almost £28.3 billion in the latest six months. For context, that means Meta generated more profit in the last six months than the entire GDP of 72 countries.⁴²

7.1.1 Shell's £4 billion in profits over the last six months exposes that oil company profits are still at record-highs

In May, Shell was the biggest profiteer amongst companies on the London Stock Exchange reporting results in May. Over the last six months, the oil company has raked in over £4 billion in profits.





Oil companies experienced a boom in 2022, with many reporting a surge in profits. Shell was no different, raking in over £34.3 billion that year.⁴³ Meanwhile, in Shell's last full financial year of 2024, it raked in profits of £12.6 billion - almost four times more than what it made in 2016. So, while it is true that profits have fallen since 2022, Shell is far from poor and is still raking in the cash.

The trend is the same across the oil and gas sector - if your boss tries to use the drop in profits compared to 2022 as an excuse to limit pay increases, remind them that profits are still at record highs.

7.2 Shareholders of these companies pocketed £508 billion in cash payouts

We've seen that companies across the world are boasting enormous profits, but where do these funds actually go? Most profits are syphoned out of the company and pocketed by shareholders rather than being used for investment or to give workers a decent pay rise.

In the last six months, **shareholders of the companies who released results in May received over £508 billion in cash payouts.** This consisted of £215 billion in dividends and £294 billion in share buybacks.



Figure 11 Shareholder payments and profits of companies on the largest stock exchanges reporting results in May 2025. Source: S&P Capital IQ Pro

There are two main forms of shareholder payouts. **Dividends** are payments made directly to shareholders out of a company's profits. **Share buybacks** are when a company buys back some of its own shares, increasing rewards for the remaining shareholders.

When companies are shelling out so much cash to shareholders, the workers who actually generate that cash have the right to demand their fair share.

Facts and Figures

7.3 FTSE 350 shares are up 38% over the last five years

With all the tariff drama and news about stock markets in turmoil, it is important to think in the long-term. In fact, even after what has been coined as the "worst stock market days in history", all three major stock market indexes have shown enormous growth over the last five years.

Negotiators should come prepared to fight back against claims from bosses that "economic uncertainty" means they can't afford a pay rise. See the [section 11](#) to find out more.

The Financial Times Stock Exchange 350 Index (FTSE 350), which contains the 350 biggest companies traded on the London Stock Exchange, is up by 38% compared to five years ago.⁴⁴

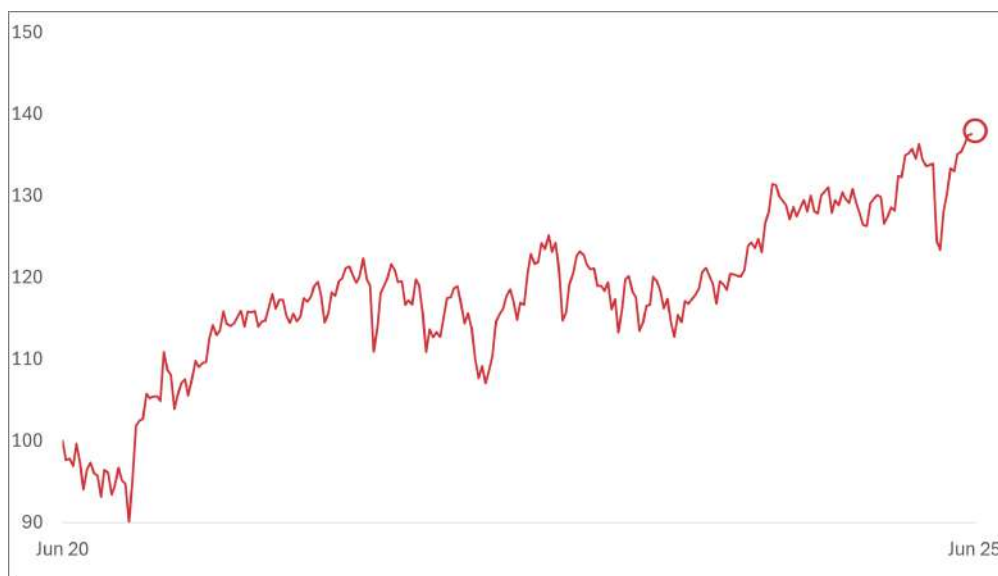


Figure 12 The FTSE 350 is up. 14 June 2020 to 15 June 25. Source: S&P Capital IQ Pro

Meanwhile, the global equivalent stock market index - the US's S&P 500 - has almost doubled in value. It is up 95% over the last five years, while the MSCI World index, covering 23 developed markets, is up by 78%.

Explainer: Why stock markets matter for collective bargaining- as better share prices indicate future profitability and an ability to pay its workers. Find out more here: <http://tinyurl.com/4jty253r> or look in March 2024, p. 163-164



7.4 Banks, Construction & Building Materials, and Insurance are at the forefront of the FTSE 350's growth

As of 17 June, the FTSE 350's growth was led by Banks, with the supersector up 38% compared to last year.

Looking at sectoral growth is important, as the highest risers are the driving force behind the FTSE 350's overall growth. **If your company's sector is growing and outperforming the overall index, it also means that ability to pay is growing too.**

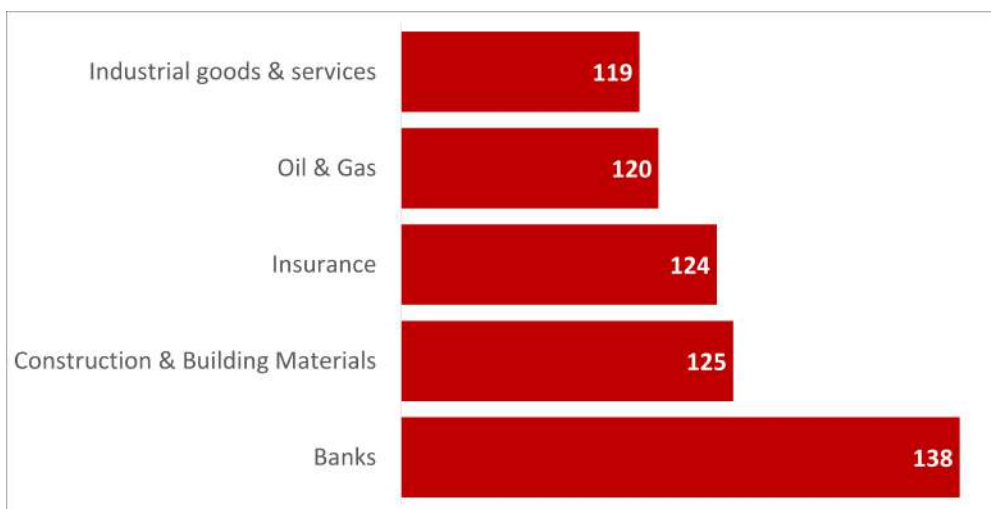


Figure 13 FTSE 350 Supersector growth index, 23 June 2024 to 15 June 2025.

Source: [Investing.com](https://www.investing.com)

Construction & Building Materials came in at second, growing 25% over the last year, led by Marshalls Construction Group.⁴⁵

7.5 Analysts forecast two additional cuts to interest rates this year - good news for firms that borrow

Although interest rates are largely expected to remain unchanged at 4.25% on the Bank of England's next release on 19 June, analysts are expecting in two additional cuts by the end of the year.⁴⁶

As it stands, the BoE is expected to cut rates in August, and then again in November.⁴⁷ Market rates are currently pricing in an 82% chance of the interest being cut in August, and Barclays is even expecting a third cut in February next year.⁴⁸

Debt is often portrayed as a bad thing by bosses, with many pointing to high interest payments as a reason to limit pay increases. **However, this excuse is undermined by falling interest rates.**



When interest rates fall, it makes debt relatively cheaper. This is because most firms borrow the cash they invest, through bank loans, overdrafts, or bonds. If your employer has 'variable rate debt' - which fluctuates throughout the year according to interest rates - it will see an immediate benefit from lower rates. If it has 'fixed rate debt' - which is pinned to a particular rate of interest - it will benefit the next time it agrees a loan or issues a bond.

So, if your boss is claiming that debt costs are crippling the company, point to forecast falling interest rates to refute this excuse.

If your company is trying to use debt as a scapegoat to avoid fair pay increases, reach out to Unite's Forensic Accounts team for an in-depth analysis at workvoicepay@unitetheunion.org

7.6 UK businesses are more confident about their future prospects compared to last year

There's a danger bosses may use recent market events, like tariffs or GDP changes, to claim that they can't afford a fair pay increase.

However, reps can hit back against this narrative with statistics from market analysts.

Business confidence is a great statistic to point to, as it reveals how optimistic businesses are about the economy. **In short, improving business confidence means ability to pay should be rising.**



Figure 14 Extract from Lloyds Bank Business Barometer May 2025

Whilst some surveys show a negative picture, others show that **consumer and business confidence is not as low as employers might like to suggest**, and that the economy is likely to perform positively over the next year.

Lloyds' Bank says that business confidence is strong and above historical long-term averages. According to the latest **Lloyds Business Barometer**;

- Business confidence is at 50% in May 2025, a massive 11% increase compared to the previous month.
- This is also well above the benchmark long-term average level of 29%
- Business confidence is at its highest point since August 2024, reversing much of the previous five month decline business confidence⁴⁹
- Lloyds says that **"the rebound in business confidence suggests that firms might be in a stronger position for the next quarter"** ⁵⁰
- The proportion of firms expecting to increase their staffing levels has increased to 57%.⁵¹ Increasing demand for labour means that workers have greater power through collective bargaining.

Reps can use these figures in negotiations to call out employers using a 'doom and gloom' economic narrative when attempting to justify low pay deals.

Facts and Figures

7.7 Explainer: use group profits to back up pay demands

In pay negotiations, it's common for management to claim that the financial results of the international company are irrelevant, and that only the performance of the UK subsidiary company should be considered in pay bargaining. However, this can be designed to mislead reps by providing a narrow view. In many cases, group accounts can provide a far more accurate picture of the company's overall financial strength and its ability to afford the fair pay rises you deserve.



Let's explain why it is legitimate—and often essential—to use group figures in your bargaining strategies:

Subsidiary profits may be artificially depressed

Management may claim that the UK operation generates no profit, and so new pay demands cannot be met without putting the company at risk. However multinational companies often use internal financial arrangements that reduce the on-paper profitability of their UK subsidiaries, even when they are doing well. It becomes difficult to tell how the UK subsidiary is performing in isolation. So it is necessary to look at the overall group to see how these different transactions generate profit, and thus the company's ability to pay.

Financial arrangements can also be used to deliberately reduce profit in the UK, often to lower tax paid. These include:

- **Intra-group charges:** The UK subsidiary may be required to pay significant fees to the parent company for use of branding, intellectual property, or central services. These charges may not reflect market rates and can dramatically reduce UK profits.

- **Transfer pricing:** Profits may be shifted across jurisdictions through pricing arrangements that favour low-tax or strategically chosen locations.
- **Group debt loading:** The parent company may allocate high levels of group debt to the UK subsidiary. The resulting interest payments reduce reported profits, even when the business itself is operating healthily.

These tactics are legal and often used for tax efficiency or internal structuring. However, they do not reflect the underlying performance of the business or its contribution to the group as a whole. As a result, an analysis of group profitability is essential.



The Group Ultimately Controls the Purse Strings

Even when the UK subsidiary appears less profitable, it is important to understand that it is part of a larger, integrated group:

- Executive pay and shareholder returns are typically set by the group. If the group can afford generous dividends or high executive bonuses, why can't they also fund decent wages for UK workers?
- Investment and wage decisions are frequently made at the group level or influenced by the parent company's financial strategy.
- Cash pooling and intercompany lending mean that financial resources can move fluidly within the group. A wealthy parent can, and often does, support subsidiaries when needed.
- Ability to Pay Should Reflect Group Strength

Reps are entitled to argue that, with lots of money flowing around an organisation, it is legitimate to view an employer's "ability to pay" through the company's full group financial accounts. When the group is making substantial profits, investing heavily, or returning significant value to shareholders, it is reasonable to expect that some of those resources should support decent pay for workers in the UK.

Facts and Figures

Management may argue that it is not the responsibility of the other group companies to subsidise pay rises at an unproductive UK business. But there are always subjective decisions about where to allocate overheads and other costs which depress profits in some group companies and not others. UK companies contribute to the overall strength of the group, and so the group has some responsibility to recognise UK worker efforts.

Transparency and Accountability

Often, subsidiaries don't issue full accounts, making it difficult to work out the 'true' financial position of the UK employing company. Refusing to consider group results is therefore often a way that employers avoid scrutiny and accountability.

Trade unions have a legitimate interest in the full economic reality of the companies their members work for. Referring to group accounts ensures that pay bargaining is informed, transparent, and fair.

In today's globalised business environment, company accounts do not always reflect local reality. UK subsidiaries can be made to look poor on paper while contributing to a thriving multinational. Union reps are absolutely justified in raising the group's financial position during pay bargaining—it speaks directly to fairness, ability to pay, and corporate accountability.

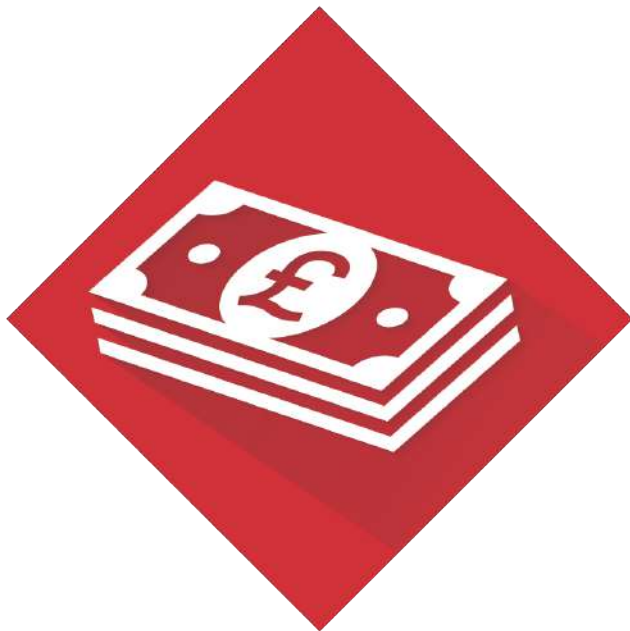
7.8 Bite-sized Bargaining: How much money are employers making?

Previous editions of Facts & Figures have identified how companies maximise profits and the methods they use.

- **Unite has identified five main forms of profiteering, including windfall profits.** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/2dvcbwa6> or look in March 2024 p. 76-80
- **Companies paying dividends and share buybacks to shareholders indicates there is money for workers.** Find out more here: <http://tinyurl.com/3e3f3wv6> or look in March 2024 p. 235-236
- **Companies will use various different measures of profit but the main measures can be explained here:** <https://tinyurl.com/4z6jfbwc> or look in February 2024 p. 73-74

Use Work Voice Pay tools to generate a report about your employer's finances. Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/yhk7y344> or look in December 2024 p. 114-117







SECTION EIGHT

UK ECONOMY

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Facts and Figures

Workers earn less today in real terms than they did in 1997 and the divide between the rich and the rest of us is growing ever wider. We need to fix our broken economy right now and not allow growth targets to be used as an excuse for a smokescreen for fresh rounds of austerity.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary



8. What is happening to the economy as a whole?

8.1 The UK economy has contracted by 0.3% in April

The Government's favourite statistic to describe the state of the economy is gross domestic product (GDP) growth. Monthly GDP is estimated to have fallen by 0.3% in April 2025. **But this is no reason for poor pay and conditions.** GDP is still massive and April's dip comes after previously grew by 0.7%.⁵² In the past three years, GDP has increased by 2.3% and is higher than it was pre-pandemic.

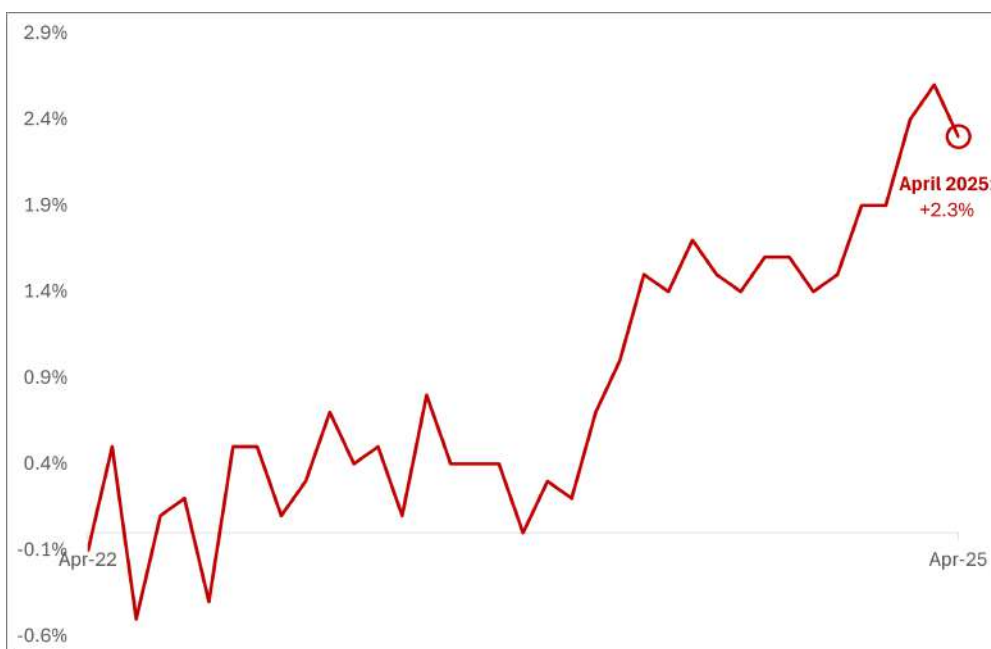


Figure 15 UK GDP growth since April 2022. Despite the fall in GDP in April 2025, GDP has grown by over 2.3%

8.2 UK GDP is worth a massive £2.56 trillion, there is enough money for decent pay and conditions

The UK GDP is currently worth £2.56 trillion making it the sixth largest economy in the world.⁵³ As such, while media may focus on GDP contractions, it's important to remember that the UK's GDP is still incredibly high and there is more than enough money for good jobs, pay and conditions for workers.⁵⁴

Facts and Figures

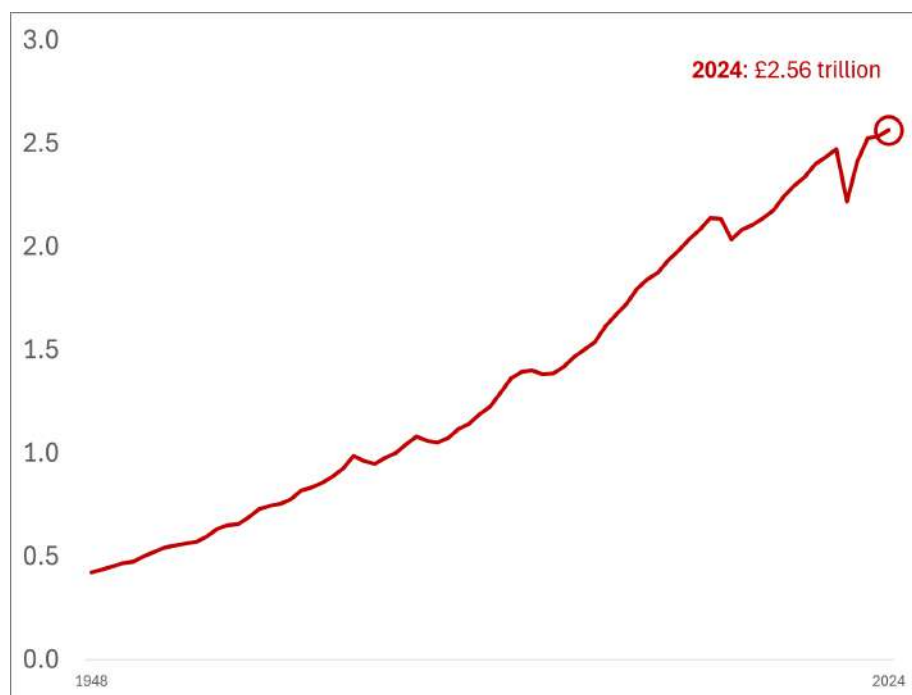


Figure 16 UK GDP since 1948. The economy has rebounded since Covid and its latest figure is worth £2.56 trillion. Source: ONS

Politicians push the importance of GDP growth as being universally beneficial, **workers should be concerned about the share of GDP that is going to labour.**

8.3 British worker's share of the GDP is much smaller than it used to be

There's clearly enough wealth in the UK to ensure workers are adequately paid. However, despite GDP growth, UK's workers are seeing proportionately less and less of the GDP pie than before, while corporations are seeing more and more.

This isn't a recent issue, it's a long-term phenomenon. As the below chart shows, **worker's share of GDP used to be more than half. However, as GDP has continued to grow over the past 50 years, the labour share of GDP has failed to keep up, falling by more than 11% since 1975.**

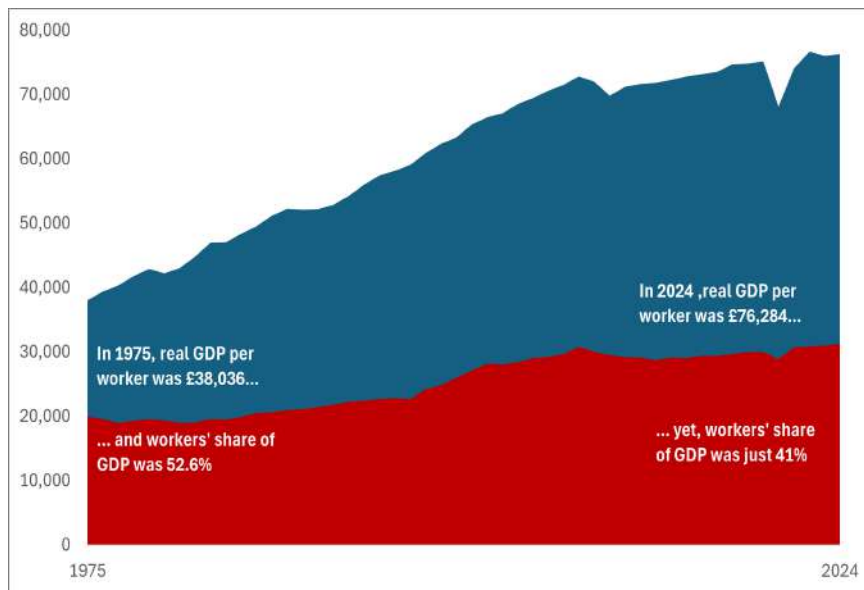


Figure 17 The worker's share of GDP has failed to keep up with GDP growth and has dropped 11% since its peak in 1975. Source: ONS

So while GDP growth can be an important means to an end, excessive focus on it ignores many measures of the economy such as inequality.

- **GDP growth ignores income inequality.** Despite boasting the sixth largest GDP in the world, the UK ranks ninth in income inequality among OECD countries.⁵⁵ GDP growth does not measure where the wealth is going. Are workers seeing the fruits of their labour, or are only the wealthiest seeing the benefits of the GDP growth arising from the workforce's labour?
- **GDP growth ignores activity that may have societal function but little economic value.** GDP only measures products that have market value. As a result, public services may be undervalued and other services, such as public spaces, voluntary work, clean air, and non-waged care, and domestic work are completely ignored by any measure of GDP.
- **GDP growth ignores regional divide.** In 2023, GDP per head in London was £69,077 while in the North East, it was only £28,583.⁵⁶ A strategy focused on GDP growth may overly focus on higher value regions leaving other regions economically neglected.
- **GDP growth ignores non-economic activity like leisure or reduced work hours.** GDP requires productivity to grow. Therefore, workers working fewer hours, retiring earlier, or prioritising leisure, is seen as a failure in growing GDP.⁵⁷ However, what makes the average person happier, a better "work/life balance" or seeing headlines that GDP grows X%?

Facts and Figures

- **GDP growth is not a measure for standard of living.** While GDP can measure a country's health and prosperity, it is still very limited in measuring standards of living. While GDP is still growing, real wages have fallen, household income has fallen, public services are declining, and investment towards sustainability has fallen.

8.4 Academic studies show collective bargaining will increase workers' share and increase overall GDP

For sustained growth, the UK needs to focus on getting more money into the pockets of workers.

Unions have a critical role in promoting economic growth. Research for Unite by the University of Greenwich has found that **if collective bargaining rights for workers had remained at 1996 levels, then the UK's GDP would be 2.8% larger than it currently is.**⁵⁸

Increasing collective bargaining coverage by 1% means 285,000 more workers will benefit from the outcome of collective bargaining agreements between the trade union and the employer. This would lead to a £9.2 billion increase in the UK GDP.⁵⁹

"If we are ever going to get sustained growth, the government will need to focus more on creating and protecting good quality jobs and on getting more money into the pockets of workers... It also means more investment in everything from good quality green jobs to the public services and local authorities currently being pushed into austerity by cuts. A real recovery must mean that everyday people feel it in their pockets." - Unite general secretary, Sharon Graham

8.5 Unite is calling for an ambitious industrial strategy to drive growth

The government announced its spending review on the 11 June which sets government spending for the next three years.

In response, Unite general secretary Sharon Graham published the following analysis urging the government to be bolder:

"Whilst outside and inside the spending review, several of the demands Unite has been calling for have been met - for example Sizewell C, Rolls Royce SMRs winter fuel, increased defence funding, investment in the steel industry and Heathrow expansion - this spending review lacks the vision to deliver the fundamental change needed for everyday people.

Facts and Figures



“The UK is the sixth richest economy in the world, and we need to end this cautious cycle of robbing Peter to pay Paul. You can’t have an NHS without workers. Staff are crying out for fair pay increases to offset a decade of real terms pay cuts. Pitting workers against communities is not the answer



“As was done in 1945, this Labour government needs to bite the bullet and admit that change needs vision and money. The self-imposed fiscal rules need to change, and we must look at the implementation of a wealth tax.

“Instead of the presentation of false trade-offs - defence but not international aid, cuts to disability benefits but no tax on the super-rich. Labour needs to set out a clear vision that people can see and feel and then they need to finance it.

“Workers and communities need to see action now, promises of jobs can’t always be promised for tomorrow and never actually be delivered. This must include a comprehensive and tangible jobs agenda that deals with the wave of job losses on the horizon, for example in the oil and gas industry. We need a joined up industrial strategy that sees investment in Grangemouth and much needed procurement decisions on buying British in defence. Growth and profits need to convert to jobs and wages.

“Today was a missed opportunity to lay out the funding to tackle key issues, including the energy costs crippling British industry and the local authority debt which is straight-jacketing services in our communities.

“Spending cuts will be seen as austerity, those are the facts. Labour needs to pick up the pace on change otherwise it will be stuck in the political slow lane while other voices get louder.”

What is happening to the economy as a whole?

Facts and Figures

8.6 Bite-sized Bargaining: Growing GDP does not mean that living standards will rise, collective bargaining is needed

Previous editions of Facts and Figures have described other issues in the UK Economy:

- **Despite politicians pushing for growth, growth is not a guarantee of higher living standards.** Find out more here: tinyurl.com/mr3w7j94 or look in March 2024 p. 151-152
- **Government failure on the economy is no excuse for employers offering poor pay deals.** Find out more here: tinyurl.com/4pxcmt4p or look in April 2024 p. 110-111







SECTION NINE

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Facts and Figures

We need to cut through the noise on tariffs. We must not let employers use them as another excuse to push down pay.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

9. What is happening with tariffs?

9.1 Trump's tariffs remain in effect despite court rulings

On 29 May, two US Federal Courts struck down some of the tariff's introduced by President Donald Trump.⁶⁰ The courts ruled that he had overreached his authority when introducing the 'reciprocal' tariffs of 10% on foreign exports.⁶¹ The court also blocked tariffs imposed on Mexican, Canadian, and Chinese imports

However, the White House appealed the decision and **the tariffs still remain in effect**. The tariffs will remain in effect at least until the appeal on 31 July.⁶²

Other tariffs such as those on steel and aluminium and car parts are unaffected by the court case and will remain in effect.⁶³

The table below shows the current tariff levels imposed by the US on countries not including the UK:⁶⁴

Target	Applicable Rate	Date came into effect
Steel and aluminium (all imports)	50%	4 June 2025
Automotive (all imports)	25%	2 April 2025
Mexico and Canada ('Border and Fentanyl' tariffs) (Note: the rates won't apply to goods agreed upon in the US-Mexico-Canada agreement)	10% on energy and potash 25% on all other goods	4 March 2025
China ('Fentanyl'+ 'Reciprocal' tariffs)	30%	12 May 2025
'Reciprocal' tariffs on all other goods from all other countries	10%	9 April 2025

Table 5: US tariffs as of 17 June 2025, excluding the UK

Facts and Figures

There are certain exemptions US President Donald Trump's administration has exempted certain Chinese goods from the tariffs.⁶⁵

These include: smartphones, computers, other electronic devices, copper, pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, lumbar, bullion, and energy and other minerals not available in the US.⁶⁶

Note: The tariffs in the above table may 'stack' on top of existing tariffs. For example, many Chinese goods already face a 25% tariff on US exports. So the overall tariff rate on them is now 55%.

9.2 The UK-US trade deal will exempt all UK aerospace exports from tariffs when it goes into effect

As part of the new trade deal with the US, the UK government announced on 17 June that the entire aerospace sector can export to the US tariff free. This was an expansion from the initial announcement where only Rolls-Royce was granted exemption from the 10% tariffs.⁶⁷

Auto exports will also see a tariff reduction from 25% to 10%. However, this only applies to the first 100,000 car exports. Subsequent exports will be subject to the 25% tariff rate.⁶⁸

The UK government has stated the deal will come into effect at the end of the month.⁶⁹ But there is no confirmed date. Until then, UK exports face the tariff rates in the previous section, except steel and aluminium exporters which are described below

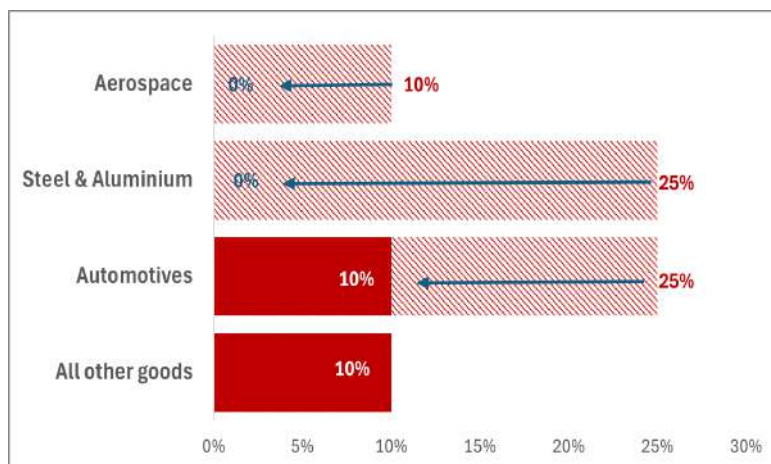


Figure 18 The changes of UK tariffs via the UK-US deal. Aerospace, automotives, and steel and aluminium will all see reductions in tariffs.

The 'reciprocal' tariff rate of 10% on all other exports will remain in effect for the UK and is unaffected by the UK-US trade deal.



For more details on the UK-US trade deal, see [Facts & Figures May 2025 p. 102](#)

9.3 Tariffs on UK steel and aluminium exports are being negotiated but are expected to fall to 0%

Last month, the UK-US deal agreed to lower steel and aluminium tariffs from 25% to 0% for UK exports. However, negotiations are still ongoing with the US imposing requirements.⁷⁰



Issues include the Chinese ownership of British Steel as well as concerns of steel from other countries being processed in the UK and exported to the US.⁷¹

Currently, UK steel and aluminium tariffs will remain at 25%, despite those on the rest of the world rising to 50%.⁷²

However, the White House has since stated the higher 50% tariff could come into effect on or after 9 July if the UK administration "has not complied with relevant aspects" of the deal.⁷³

9.4 Negotiators can request forensic accounts to assess the tariff threat to their employers

Tariffs may cause business disruption, but check your company's financial position before entering into talks. While the tariffs are unpredictable, employers may overstate the negative effects to attack employee pay and cut jobs.

Very often, employers use the first hint of economic headwinds to push through changes to business practices at the expense of workers. Now is the time to check your employer's actual financial position.

For support on this and more, contact the **Work, Voice, Pay team** at workvoicepay@unitetheunion.org





SECTION TEN

MARKET POWER

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Facts and Figures

Demand for our labour remains at historic highs. This gives us a clear opportunity to build power in the workplace: let's use it.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary



10. What market power do workers have?

10.1 Employers cut 55,000 payrolled jobs in April

The number of workers on company payrolls in the UK fell by 55,000 in April, according to figures released this month by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Preliminary estimates by the ONS show that in May, payrolled employees fell further by 109,000 employees. If confirmed, this would mean that since July 2024, payrolled employees has decreased by more than 282,000 people.

We should put this into perspective. Even with the recent dip, there are 3.4 million more payrolled workers than July 2014. As employers may continue to cut payrolled jobs, **it is only through workplace power that we can fight back against it.**

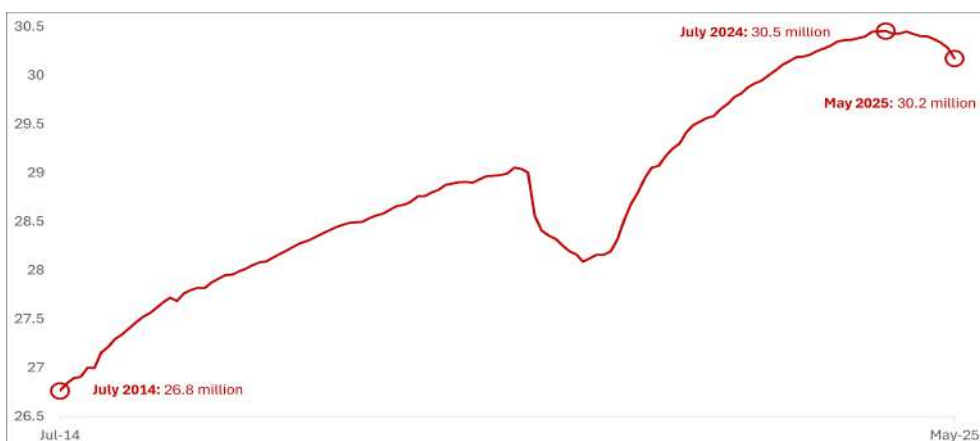


Figure 19 Payrolled employees, seasonally adjusted, UK, July 2014 to May 2025

We saw last month that a survey by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) suggests employers will look to cut more jobs this year. Bosses are blaming rising employer's National Insurance Contributions, and the increased National Living Wage as key reasons for redundancies and the weakening labour market. Growing global uncertainties relating to trade sparked by Donald Trump's tariffs are also being cited behind the increased threat of job losses.⁷⁴

Facts and Figures

10.2 The UK's employment rate remains high by historical standards

The employment rate has remained fairly consistent during the beginning of 2025, currently sitting at 75.1% over the past three-month period. This has gone down from 76.5% in December-February 2020.

But, the critical point here is that this is generally high compared to other periods this century: this is 2.5% higher than June 2001, and is more than 4.1% higher than in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis.

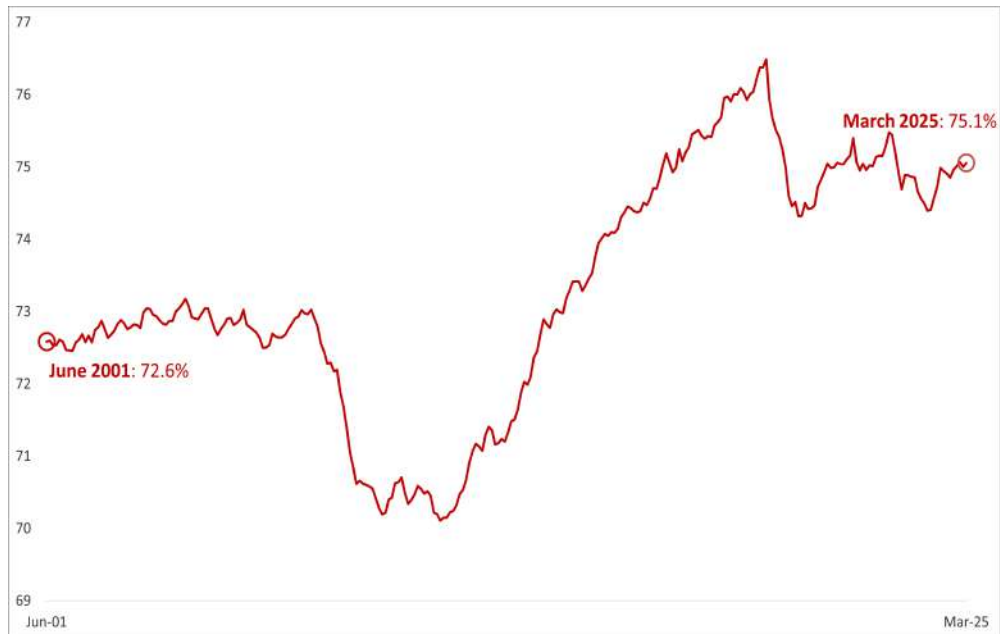


Figure 20 UK employment rate from June 2001 to March 2025, where currently 75.1% of the workforce are employed. Source: ONS

A high employment rate is good news for workers because it creates employer competition for talent, and increasing job security for workers.

This increased employer competition can lead to higher wages, better benefits, and more favourable working conditions as employers strive to attract and retain employees - **strengthening the workforce's bargaining power. Unite will continue to fight for jobs, pay, and conditions for its members.**

10.3 Job cuts have been driven by the retail and hospitality sectors

When comparing the early estimates for May 2025 with the same period of the previous year, we see that two sectors are primarily responsible for driving this trend of declining payrolled employees.⁷⁵

The Accommodation and Food service industry saw the largest change in absolute terms, with around 124,500 fewer payrolled employees. The second largest drop was the retail industry, seeing a reduction of around 82,500 payrolled employees.



Figure 21 The top six sectors that saw the largest decreases in payrolled employees. Source: ONS

Other sectors with a decline in the number of payrolled employees when compared to April 2024, include:

- Admin services (around 44,500)
- Information and communication (around 44,000)
- Professional, scientific, and technical services (around 38,000)
- Construction (around 32,000)
- Manufacturing (around 30,500)

10.4 Job numbers have been increasing in the health, education, finance, and insurance sectors

It is important to note that while payrolled employees have declined by 282,000 people since July 2024, it did not decline across all sectors in the UK. ⁷⁶

When comparing the early estimates for May 2025 with the same period of the previous year, we can see the health and social work sector increased in size by almost 62,000 employees, and the education sector increased by more than 21,500 staff.

Facts and Figures

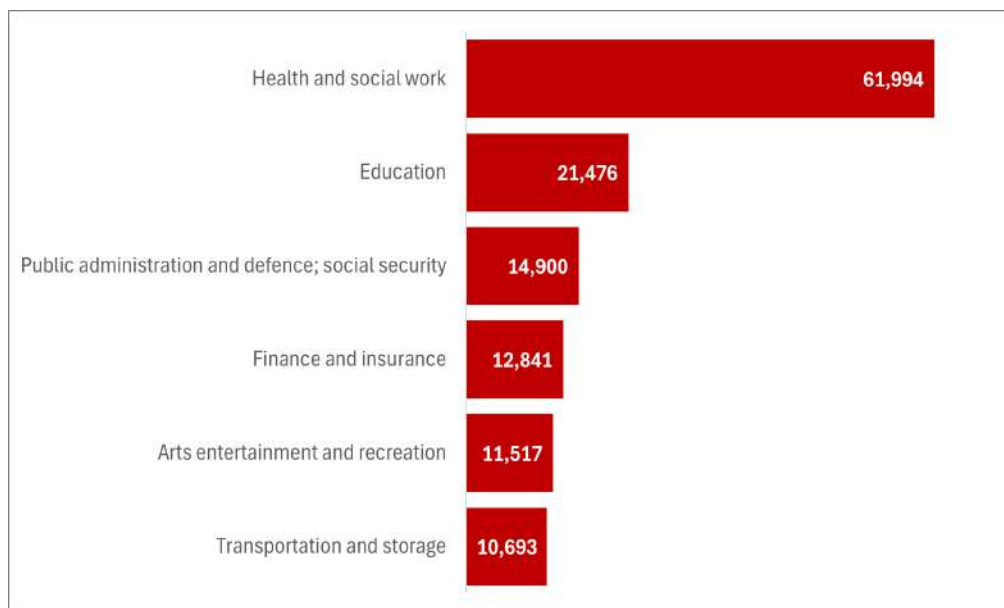


Figure 22 The top six sectors that saw the largest increases in payrolled employees.
Source: ONS

This means reps in these sectors can use this knowledge to push for fairer pay demands or better conditions in negotiations.

Other sectors also saw growth in the number of payrolled employees when compared to May 2024, including:

- Public administration (15,000)
- Finance and insurance (13,000)
- Arts, entertainment, and recreation (11,500)
- Transportation (10,700).

10.5 Use Financial Insider to scrutinise management's claims that National Insurance Contributions rises mean job cuts are unavoidable

Bosses blame rising employer's National Insurance Contributions, and the increased National Living Wage as key reasons for redundancies and the weakening labour market. Growing global uncertainties relating to trade sparked by Donald Trump's tariffs are also being cited behind the increased threat of job losses.⁷⁷



Employers should be pushed to go beyond statutory minimums to support the financial wellbeing of affected staff. Offering enhanced redundancy packages where affordable not only provides a vital buffer for individuals, **but also signals to remaining staff that the organisation is acting responsibly.**

We can push back and challenge the bosses' narratives that redundancies are a necessity due to rising NIC costs. Reps can use Unite's [Financial Insider tool](#), part of the **Work, Voice, Pay** toolkit, to learn about the real finances of their companies and their ability to pay a fair wage. **Fact-based financial information can help to defeat any excuses of bosses, and build workplace power for better jobs, pay, and conditions.**

For a full run through on how to use Unite's Financial Insider tool, view our [Financial Insider guide](#).

In some cases, the data displayed can contain errors, or show companies that are consistently loss-making. If this is the case, or you don't think the accounts tell the true story, reach out to our forensics accounts team at forensic.accounts@unitetheunion.org

Are you familiar with the rest of Unite's Work, Voice, Pay tools? Unite's Financial Insider is one of several tools in the Work, Voice, Pay armoury - all of which can be accessed via this [link](#).

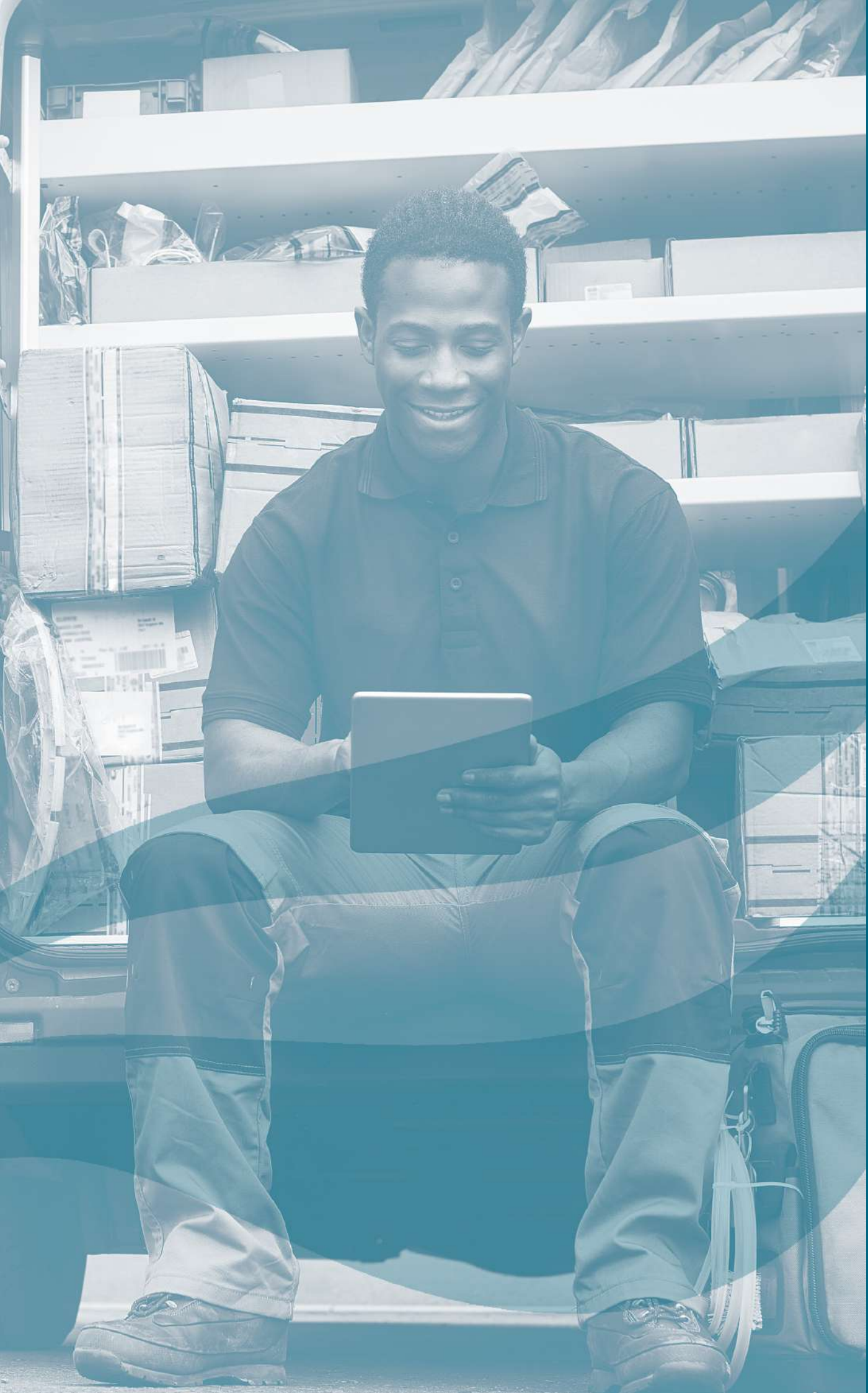
Facts and Figures

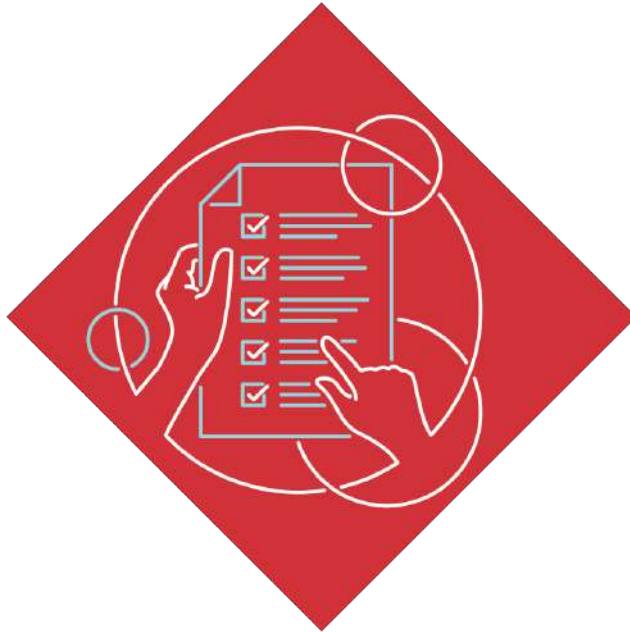
10.6 Bite-sized Bargaining: Studies show that collective bargaining reduces inequality across society

Employers rely on our labour, yet our members, through their union and collective bargaining, can shift the balance of power in the economy.

When we act together, we have the power to demand more than crumbs. **Whether it's winning above-inflation pay rises, improving conditions, or securing a fair share of public investment, this is about building real market power from the ground up.** Use the insights from previous Facts & Figures here to boost your bargaining strength, and don't forget to look at the examples of how our members have done it before and won.

- **Studies show that greater union membership leads to money being distributed more evenly across society** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/382n83mf> or look in March 2024 p. 210.
- **CMA studies shows that without collective bargaining, concentrated labour markets reduce wages.** Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/bddn5x88> or look in March 2024 p. 211.
- **Union power extends beyond its membership, with collective agreements covering 40% of the workforce, and we can increase this by organising more.** Find out more here: tinyurl.com/3akae4w7 or look in March 2024 p. 208-209.







SECTION ELEVEN

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Facts and Figures

Defined benefit pensions are by far the best way to ensure that workers enjoy a financially secure retirement. So, the big question is how to get employers to stop closing these schemes and start opening new ones.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

11. What is happening to pensions?

11.1 Government's pension reforms put workers' retirement savings at risk

On 5 June, the UK government presented the **Pension Schemes Bill** to Parliament.⁷⁸ It includes reform plans for a fundamental structural shift in the UK pensions system over the next five years and beyond.⁷⁹

Pension schemes are deeply tied to our workplaces. They're the product of hard-fought collective bargaining and union organising over decades. Workers need a greater say in pension fund governance to make sure that savings are invested properly.



Work and Pensions Secretary **Liz Kendall** said that "The Bill is about securing better value for savers' pensions and driving long-term investment in British businesses to boost economic growth in our country." It is being talked up as a long-awaited landmark moment for pensions. The Bill includes several reforms. Here, we focus on measures to unlock £100 billion from Defined Benefit (DB) pension schemes' funds.

The government wants to change the law to classify more money in DB schemes as "surplus".⁸⁰ Under this new method, called "low dependency funding", the total available surplus across DB schemes would be £160 billion, compared to just £68 billion using the current rules.

Currently, DB schemes are worth £1.2 trillion. Schemes have recently benefited from higher interest rates. **But the value of pension schemes could decrease again, especially if interest rates take a downturn.** There is a risk here.

Facts and Figures

The **Department for Work & Pensions' (DWP)** own Impact Analysis says that the government's plan to allow surplus extraction from defined benefit (DB) pension funds puts schemes at risk of underfunding and increases the chances of members not getting their full pensions.⁸¹ The Impact Assessment warned that surplus cash in pension funds helps protect members from economic shocks, and removing it puts their pensions at risk if schemes don't have enough money to pay their pensions.

11.2 Workers can push for more power over how their pensions are managed

The key point here is that workers need to be involved in the governance of their pensions, both to make sure their retirement savings aren't put at unnecessary risk, and so they can decide what they are invested in.



Our pensions are not just about what we get when we retire—they are also about how our money is used now. With around £2 trillion in retirement savings across the UK, this is a massive pool of workers' capital, and one of the biggest untapped sources of power working people have.⁸²

But as employers have shifted from defined benefit (DB) to defined contribution (DC) schemes, they've also shifted power of governance away from workers. Decisions about how our money is managed—how it's invested, who profits from it, and whether it supports or undermines working people—are mostly made without workers at the table. That has to change.

Unite believes pension funds should be governed by workers' representatives and they should be tools for building worker power. Unite is campaigning to ensure:

- **Workers have a strong voice in pension fund governance.**

Facts and Figures



- Union rights and decent work are a core part of pension investment policy.
- Our money is used to build good jobs, strong communities, and fair workplaces.



Pension governance is how pension schemes are run and overseen. It includes the rules about how decisions are made, who makes them, and whether workers have a say. In traditional workplace (defined benefit, or DB) pension schemes, members often have the right to elect representatives, **Member-Nominated Trustees (MNTs)**, to the boards that oversee the fund. This allows some degree of worker influence over how pensions are managed.

But governance has weakened over time. As employers shift from DB to defined contribution (DC) schemes, especially “**master trusts**” and “contract-based” plans, member representation has declined. In many cases, these new schemes have no requirement for member-elected trustees at all. Decisions are often taken by so-called “independent” trustees, typically from the financial sector, with no connection to the workforce.

In the public sector, in the **Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)**, union members often sit on pension boards—but these have limited powers, and the real decisions are taken by local councillors. In most cases, even when we’re “in the room,” we don’t have a vote. This is a clear power imbalance. And it reflects a wider trend: employers and finance providers want control over workers’ capital without being accountable to workers themselves.

What is happening to pensions?

Facts and Figures

Who controls your pension depends on the type of scheme:

- Private sector DB and some DC schemes have trustee boards. Some of these include union members as trustees, though representation varies widely, from equal numbers of employer and employee reps to none at all.
- Master trust DC schemes are run by finance providers like insurers. Their trustee boards may be called “independent” but are not connected to the workplaces whose money they manage. These schemes typically lack member representation altogether.
- Contract-based schemes (often run by insurance firms) have no trustees. They are required to have Independent Governance Committees, which include independent members and a chair, but again, there’s no direct link to members or unions.
- Public sector schemes like the LGPS are managed by local authorities. While unions often have a voice on pension boards, real power lies with councillors on committees. Union reps may attend these but rarely have voting rights.

This means that workers’ money is mostly controlled by people with no connection to our jobs, our workplaces, or our interests.

11.3 Workers must be involved in the their pension fund governance, to make sure decisions are made in their interests

Pension funds invest in things like shares, bonds, property, and private equity. Most large funds do not make these decisions in-house. Instead, they hire external asset managers to manage the investments. These managers decide which companies and projects the money goes into.



When pension schemes invest, they become shareholders in companies—meaning they can influence corporate behaviour.



But if unions aren't involved in the governance of the pension fund, the power of workers' collective savings is therefore in the hands of financial intermediaries, and those decisions are made without reference to workers' interests. This makes it harder for us to influence how our money is used, even though it belongs to us.



Here's how you can get involved:

- Use collective bargaining to win stronger governance rights

Pension governance is a bargainable issue. Through collective bargaining, Unite reps can negotiate for worker representation in governance, investment policy language that supports union rights, and greater transparency.

- Stand for election as a member-nominated trustee

In many DB and trust-based DC schemes, members still have the right to elect trustees. Unite can support and train members who want to take on this vital role. It's a chance to bring our voice into the boardroom and influence how our money is used.

- Organise for worker representation on pension boards and committees

In public sector schemes like LGPS, we need to fight for voting rights and meaningful influence—not just observer status. This is part of the wider struggle to defend public services and democratic accountability.

- Push for pro-worker investment policies

Just like we bargain for pay and conditions, we should also demand that our pensions don't undermine the work we do. That means pushing pension funds to adopt investment principles that support trade union rights, good jobs, and public services.

Facts and Figures

11.3.1 Bite-sized Bargaining: Unite Reps make pensions a bargaining issue

DB pensions promise workers a guaranteed income when they retire, based on their pay and years of service. Nowadays, DC pensions are the most common in the private sector. Workers and the employer pay into a pot that gets invested. When they retire, their income depends on how well the investments perform. There's no guarantee.

DB pensions are the gold standard we should fight to keep and expand, and they still exist where unions are strong enough to defend them. Unite continues to campaign to protect existing DB pensions and push for better pensions for all.

- Find out more about DB and other pension schemes in last month's Facts and Figures: <https://tinyurl.com/3erfnwcr> p.54-62







SECTION TWELVE EQUALITIES

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Facts and Figures

I was elected in 2021 to do what it says on the trade union tin - to fight for Jobs, Pay and Conditions and to take equalities into the heart of our members' workplaces.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

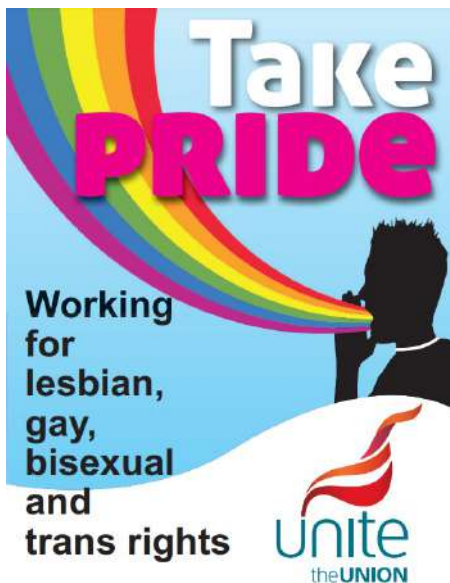


12. What equalities issues are we seeing in the workplace?

12.1 Love Unites: Unite calls for strongest ever turnout

Unite is urging members to show their solidarity and make Pride 2025 the most powerful yet, declaring that celebrating and defending LGBT+ rights is core trade union business, especially following a concerning Supreme Court judgement.

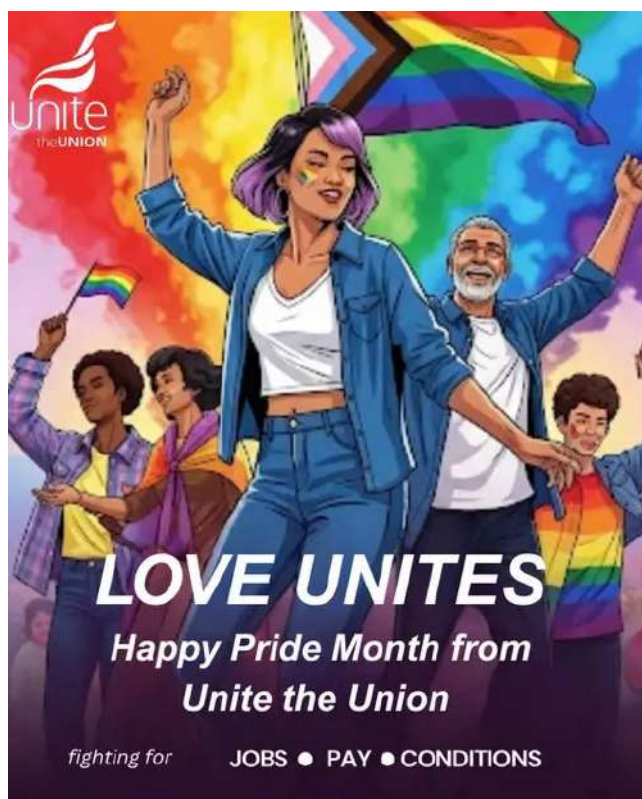
As Pride Month dawns, Unite banners will fly high, not just in celebration, but in a clear statement of intent. For our union, Pride is an unshakeable commitment - a vibrant demonstration of our fight for equality, dignity, and justice for all LGBT+ working people. This year, that commitment takes on an even greater urgency.



"Pride began as a protest, born from the fight for liberation, and it is crucial that it remains a powerful political statement, even as we celebrate our hard-won diversity. Trade unionists have been at the heart of the LGBT+ rights movement for decades, fighting discrimination in the workplace and beyond. This year, with hard-won rights under increasing scrutiny, our solidarity must be louder and more visible than ever." Chair of Unite's National LGBT+ Committee Phil Jones

Facts and Figures

The link between trade unionism and LGBT+ liberation is historic and profound. From the groundbreaking solidarity shown by Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM) to Unite's ongoing campaigns for fully inclusive workplaces, our movement understands that an attack on one group of workers is an attack on all.



Unite fights for equal pay, fair pensions, robust anti-harassment policies, and truly inclusive environments for our LGBT+ members. Pride is where we visibly celebrate these values and renew our pledge to defend them.

How are LGBT+ workers paid compared to their peers?

Previous editions of Facts & Figures have covered how LGBT+ workers are paid in comparison to their peers. Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc2y7wa4>

The backdrop to Pride 2025 includes the recent UK Supreme Court judgment in the For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers case.

While the Court noted that transgender individuals retain protection from discrimination under the separate characteristic of "gender reassignment," the judgement has sparked significant alarm within the LGBT+ community and among allies.



"This ruling has understandably caused deep concern, there are legitimate fears that it could be used to undermine the rights and inclusion of trans and non-binary people, particularly trans women, despite existing legal protections. It's a stark reminder that progress on equality is never guaranteed and must be constantly defended." Chair of Unite's National LGBT+ Committee Phil Jones

This legal development makes Pride 2025 a critical moment to stand firm. It's a time to powerfully assert the message of full inclusion and to counter any narrative that seeks to divide or marginalise sections of our community. As trade unionists, we must be at the forefront of challenging any regression on hard-won rights.

Unite takes pride in supporting LGBT+ workers and produces various documents to help our members in their workplaces. A selection can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/4fhn5bnv>

12.2 Unite calls on employers to recognise carers in the workplace by adopting a "Carer's Passport"

Unite, Britain's leading trade union, is calling on employers to adopt improved workplace practices and recognise the needs of workers who have caring responsibilities.

At the start of UK Carer's Week, Unite is calling for organisations to adopt "Carers' Passports" that document the flexibility and support needed by employees with caring responsibilities. It can then be carried into an employee's future roles or if their line management changes.



Facts and Figures

A carer is an employee who, outside of the workplace, provides unpaid care for a person who has a disability, illness or who needs support in their life. Around one in five of all employees (or approx. five million people) juggles work with care.

"Although most of us care for someone at some point in our lives, it is also something that we are not prepared for and can come as a shock. It can be difficult to talk about some of these issues which may not have been raised in the workplace before. Unite is calling for employers to adopt the Carers' Passport and support their staff in being able to be a carer as well as a valued and productive employee." - Unite general secretary, **Sharon Graham**

The purpose of the Carer Passport is to enable a carer and their manager to hold a supportive conversation and document flexibilities needed to support the carer in balancing care and work. It is designed to be a living document, to be reviewed regularly and will identify and record any changes in the nature or impact of an employee's caring responsibilities.

"We know that employees that have these responsibilities often feel overwhelmed by needing to balance working with caring. Employers need to show flexibility and understanding when dealing with this and the Carers' Passport is a good way to do this. The aim is to minimise the need to re-negotiate these flexibilities every time an employee moves post, moves between roles or departments, or is assigned a new manager." - Unite national officer for women, **Alison Spencer-Scragg**

12.3 National Women's Week will be held in August and aims to promote women's equality and involvement in Unite

National Women's week is held every year as part of the union's commitment to promote women's equality and their involvement in Unite. This year it will begin on Sunday 17 August in Birmingham.



Whether you are new to your union, or an experienced representative, there is a course applicable for you. We guarantee an extremely supportive environment for our women members and throughout the week you will be working both in small groups but also joining together with other courses participants to hear about the experiences of women across our movement.

We hold plenary sessions with guest speakers and social events in the evening to build confidence and solidarity amongst all attendings. If you have been to National Women's Week before, please pass this flyer to a colleague and give them some encouragement to get involved.

How to apply: Firstly, you don't need any formal educational qualifications, just an enthusiasm to learn. Please either [apply directly](#) (click the link) or contact Lynette Lowe to request or return an application form at Eductaion.education@unitetheunion.org

12.4 Bite-sized Bargaining: Research shows LGBT+, women, and disabled people face disproportionate workplace discrimination

See below for a compilation of Equalities articles in our previous Facts and Figures issues. **Unite represents all its members equally and will fight and defend against all forms of discrimination**

- The TUC reports over half of LGBT+ people experienced workplace bullying/harassment in the last five years. Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc8hz43j> or look in February 2025 p.48-50
- Under the Worker Protection Act 2023, employers have to take reasonable steps to stop their workers from being sexually harassed at work. Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/mj2apcj3> or look in January 2025 p.50-52

Facts and Figures

- The TUC reports disabled workers suffer from finding employment and being underpaid. Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/2td2cztn> or look in January 2025 p.52-54
- The ONS reports only 22% of autistic adults are in employment. Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc5df346> or look in July 2024 p.66-67

12.5 Unite has a wide range of resources to fight for equalities

Unite has a wide range of resources to help equalities issues members may face at <https://www.unitetheunion.org/what-we-do/equalities/equalities-resources>

Resources include Union Reps Equality handbooks, calendars for dates for events, and posters and leaflets to print and display at workplaces.







SECTION THIRTEEN

NEGOTIATIONS

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Which negotiations take place this month?

Facts and Figures

We will look to join up local fights and maximise our power through coordination. Without coordination, how can you build solidarity? Without solidarity, how can you build an effective Union or deliver results at the workplace?

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary



13. Which negotiations take place this month?

13.1 Workplaces including Go Ahead London, Royal Mail, and Airbus UK will have pay anniversaries in June and July

Unite's [Pay and Anniversary Date database](#), part of the Work Voice Pay suite of tools, can help us co-ordinate action across employers and sectors. **By coordinating anniversary dates, we can benchmark pay rises and build power across our industries.**

While April, the start of the new financial year, is the most common time for pay agreements, thousands of members are negotiating every month. In June and July, members in recognised workplaces such as **Go Ahead London, Royal Mail, and Airbus UK** will have their anniversary dates.

High quality information is vital for coordinating action across industries. Unite is currently delivering new services to gather data to help our members win, as well as making use of the data we already have.

See below for a list of major employers with anniversary dates in June and July. If your workplace details are wrong or missing, get in touch at workvoicepay@unitetheunion.org

Anniversary date	Employer	Region	Sector Name
30-Jun	Collins Aerospace	WM	Aerospace & Shipbuilding
30-Jun	Princes Limited	LE	Food Drink & Agriculture
01-Jul	Abingdon Flooring Ltd	WA	Chemicals Pharmaceuticals Process & Textiles
01-Jul	Airbus UK	SW	Aerospace & Shipbuilding
01-Jul	Arriva Midlands Ltd	WM & EM	Passenger Services
01-Jul	Astra Zeneca	NW	Chemicals Pharmaceuticals Process & Textiles
01-Jul	AWE Plc	SE	Government

Facts and Figures

Anniversary date	Employer	Region	Sector Name
			Defence Prisons & Contractors
01-Jul	Beatson Clark Ltd	NE	Chemicals Pharmaceuticals Process & Textiles
01-Jul	Bidfood	WM, SW, NE & WA	Road Transport Commercial Logistics & Retail Distribution
01-Jul	Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company	SE	Passenger Services
01-Jul	Cummins Engine Co Ltd - Darlington	NE	Automotive Industries
01-Jul	Peabody Trust	LE	Community Youth Workers & Not For Profit
01-Jul	DHL Services Ltd	SW	Road Transport Commercial Logistics & Retail Distribution
01-Jul	Diageo Scotland Limited	SC	Food Drink & Agriculture
01-Jul	GKN Aerospace Services Limited	SE	Aerospace & Shipbuilding
01-Jul	Go North East	NE	Passenger Services
01-Jul	Go-Ahead London	LE	Passenger Services
01-Jul	Huhtamaki Food-service Delta Ltd	IR	Graphical Paper & Media And It
01-Jul	Huhtamaki Ltd	SE	Graphical Paper & Media And It
01-Jul	James Walker & Co Ltd	NW	Engineering Manufacturing & Steel
01-Jul	Kuehne & Nagel Ltd	SE & SC	Road Transport

Facts and Figures



Anniversary date	Employer	Region	Sector Name
			Commercial Logistics & Retail Distribution & Food Drink & Agriculture
01-Jul	MB Aerospace	SW	Aerospace & Shipbuilding
01-Jul	National GridPlc	WM, SW & SE	Energy & Utilities
01-Jul	Peel Ports Group Ltd	SC	Docks Rail Ferries & Waterways
01-Jul	Portals De La Rue	SE	Graphical Paper & Media And It
01-Jul	Princess Yachts International	SW	Aerospace & Shipbuilding
01-Jul	Riverside Housing Group ECHG	LE, NW, SW, EM, NE & SE	Community Youth Workers & Not For Profit
01-Jul	Royal Mail Group	LE, SC, IR, SW, NW & NE	Service Industries
01-Jul	Scottish Water	SC	Energy & Utilities
01-Jul	Severn Trent Water	WM, EM & SW	Energy & Utilities
01-Jul	Sony Manufacturing Co UK	WA	Engineering Manufacturing & Steel
01-Jul	Stagecoach Manchester	NW	Passenger Services
01-Jul	Tesco Stores Ltd	IR, SE, LE, SC & NE	Food Drink & Agriculture, Service Industries & Road Transport Commercial Logistics & Retail Distribution
01-Jul	Transport for London	LE	Passenger Services

Facts and Figures

Anniversary date	Employer	Region	Sector Name
01-Jul	Wincanton PLC	EM	Road Transport Commercial Logistics & Retail Distribution
01-Jul	ZF TRW Automotive Holdings Group	WM	Automotive Industries
05-Jul	Stagecoach Bus	WA	Passenger Services

Table 6: List of employers with pay anniversary dates in June and July,
Source: WVP

If you see anything wrong in the table above or find that your workplace is missing, please get in touch with the WVP team at workvoicepay@unitetheunion.org





**OFFICIAL
DISPUTE**



SECTION FOURTEEN STRIKES

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Facts and Figures

We will be attacked by those with much to lose. It won't stop us. Whatever hurdles they put in our way, we will jump them. If they tax our strike pay, we will add the tax on. If they try and force people to break our strikes, we will use strikes plus. If they fiddle with thresholds and notice periods, we will change our tactics.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary



14. Where are workers on strike?

14.1 Unite members at employers including Western Buses and Wilson James are taking industrial action in June

In 2024, over 52,000 Unite members were involved in successful workplace disputes. Thousands more Unite members are taking industrial action in the first months of 2025.

Employer	Region	Unite Sector	Dates
Veolia ES (UK) Limited - All drivers and load-ers, Veolia Shef-field	NEYH	Local Authorities	Continuous
Birmingham City Council - Waste management refuse collection	WM	Local Authorities	Continuous
Western Buses (Stagecoach West Scotland) - All bus driver and bank-spersion members	SC	Public Transport	09 June- 20 July
Wilson James - Heathrow pas-senger assistance staff	LE	Civil Air Trans-port	16-20 June
Encirc Ltd.	SW	Food, Drink, and Agriculture	19 June
University of Liver-pool - Professional services staff	NW	Education	20 June
Strathclyde Part-nership for Trans-port - Glasgow Metro	SC	Public Transport	21, 25, 27, 28 June
Liverpool University Hos-	NW	Health	23- 25 June

Where are workers on strike?

Facts and Figures

Employer	Region	Unite Sector	Dates
pital NHS Found- ation Trust - Micro- biology			
Hedin Automotive	LE	Automotive	23, 25, 27, 30 June 02, 04, 07, 09, 11 July
ALPLA UK Ltd	NW	Chemicals Phar- maceuticals Pro- cess & Textiles	27 June 11 July
Zacchaeus 2000 Trust	LE	Community Youth Workers and Not for Profit	07-18 July
Lancashire UNISON branch - branch case- workers	NW	Community, Youth Workers, & Not-For-Profit	TBC
Scottish Water	SC	Energy	TBC
Greener Ealing - Ealing Council parking enforce- ment	LE	Local Authorities	TBC

Table 7: Unite workplaces due to take industrial action from June. Source Unite

14.2 Balloting Brief: Unite reps across 19 workplaces are balloting their members in June

Unite members are fighting for better jobs, pay, and conditions with fair and decent pay rises being essential during this cost of living crisis.

Across our regions and sectors, Unite members are showing that they are prepared to face down bad bosses.

Employer	Region	Ballot Clos- ing
Lockwood Haulage Limited	NEYH	18/06/2025
Veolia ES (UK) Limited - All drivers and loaders	NEYH	19/06/2025
Sense Scotland	SC	24/06/2025



Employer	Region	Ballot Closing
Simon Community Scotland	SC	24/06/2025
Aberdeen City Council	SC	30/06/2025
National Education Union	LE	30/06/2025
International Transport Workers' Federation - All Unite members below pay grade B4 at working at ITF House	LE	02/07/2025
Greenwich Leisure Ltd -Belfast	NI	03/07/2025
Falck Fire Services UK Ltd	SC	03/07/2025
Glasgow Airport Ltd	SC	03/07/2025
Pilkington UK Limited - All FNCC members within Float Manufacturing	NW	10/07/2025
H.J. Heinz Manufacturing UK Limited	NW	14/07/2025
Repsol Resources UK Limited	SC	15/07/2025
South East London & Kent Bus Company - All Unite bus drivers at Plumstead, Kangley, Catford, and Bromley bus garages	LE	15/07/2025
AGGREGATE Sellafield - All Unite construction workers working at Sellafield	NW	24/07/2025

Table 8: Unite workplaces currently balloting for industrial action. Source: Unite Balloting Department

14.3 1,500 Unite members at Sellafield will ballot to strike over lack of pay

Unite, the country's leading trade union for nuclear site workers, is to ballot around 1,500 construction workers from 36 contractors at Sellafield.⁸³

The affected workers range from electricians, joiners, pipefitters, riggers, groundworkers, welders and painters and other vital construction roles.

The long running dispute is around the employers at Sellafield refusing to resolve requests for additional 'Sellafield Specific Allowances'. The requested allowances relate to Unite construction members engaging and constructing on advanced technologies projects.

Facts and Figures



A further demand was for the introduction of a nuclear professional allowance for Unite members who are working in a unique working environmental at Sellafield. All such requests have been refused by the employers.

Feelings are running high given that other construction workers within the UK are rewarded a premium for working at Hinkley Point C, AWE, Sizewell C, BAE Barrow.

Sellafield plays a crucial national role, in managing the UK's nuclear legacy, including the largest stockpile of plutonium. The site's decommissioning, fuel reprocessing, and waste management efforts are vital for long-term safety and security.

“Strike action would inevitably result in work at Sellafield grinding to a halt but the employers have brought this dispute on themselves by refusing to negotiate. There is still time to avoid strike action but the employers must return to the table with a viable offer.” -Unite regional officer, **Ryan Armstrong**

Only last week the Public Accounts Select Committee found that clean-up work at Sellafield was problematically behind schedule. Any industrial action at the site would lead to further substantial delays. The MPs said they had found “indications of a suboptimal culture” at Sellafield, and noted that the NDA paid £377,200 in 2023-24 to settle employment-related claims.

The Unite ballot will commence on the Thursday 12 June and will conclude on Thursday 24 July.







SECTION FIFTEEN INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEES

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Facts and Figures

Employers operate in coordinated groups and across workplaces. We need to do the same. Combines can bring all our reps together by industry or sector to create collective bargaining at the level of whole industries or sectors.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary



15. Are there any upcoming industrial committee meetings?

15.1 The National Policy Conference and National Industrial Sectoral Committees will take place in July

The 8th National Policy Conference will take place on 7 - 11 July in Brighton.

See below for the list of National Industrial Sectoral Committees (NISCs) which will meet across Britain throughout June and July 2025.

Sector	Date	Location
Automotive	Mon 30 June 2025	Sheffield
DRFW	Tue 1 July 2025	London
Finance & Legal	Tue 1 July 2025	Birmingham
GDPC	Tue 1 July 2025	London
Energy & Utilities	Tue 1/Wed 2 July 2025	Birmingham
CAT	Wed 2 July 2025	London
Construction	Wed 2 July 2025	TBC
Health	Wed 2 July 2025	London
Service Industries	Wed 2 July 2025	London
Aerospace & Ship-building	Wed 2 July 2025	Isle of Wight
RTC/WL	Wed 2 - Thurs 3 July 2025	London
Education	Thurs 3 July 2025	London
EMS	Thurs 3 July 2025	Sheffield
GPM&IT	Thurs 3 July 2025	London
Local Authorities	Thurs 3 July 2025	Birmingham
Passenger Transport	Thurs 3 July 2025	TBC
CPPT	Fri 4 July 2025	London
CYWNfP	Fri 4 July 2025	London
FDA	Fri 18 - Sat 19 July 2025	Tolpuddle

Facts and Figures

15.2 Unite's Industrial Combines are leading the way in setting and raising standards across our sectors

Unite's Industrial Combines are leading the way in setting and raising standards across our sectors.

Whether it's in Finance, Passenger Transport, or Hospitality, our Combines have helped bring Reps together to coordinate action. The Industrial Combines are also the most effective way to raise awareness and understanding among workers within a specific industry.

15.3 Unite's Finance Combine will meet in July to coordinate pay claims and negotiations in Banking and Insurance

Unite's Finance Sector Combine continue to meet in July to coordinate pay claims and negotiations in Banking and Insurance sector.



Combine meeting:

- Tuesday 22 July 2025 - 10 am - 12 pm - Zoom

Contact Centre:

- Tuesday 22 July 2025 - 13 pm - 15 pm - Zoom

To get involved please email Michelle.Smith@unitetheunion.org

15.4 Unite's Health Combine is campaigning against staff shortages, and it meets online every Tuesday

Since it was created in 2022, **Unite's Health Combine** for Reps in England meets regularly to discuss, agree and develop campaigns across the NHS in England. Together it takes on issues that health workers face and supports them to win.

The Health Combine has been campaigning on "safe staffing numbers" - members have made clear staff shortage is a key issue for all staff, in addition to nurses and doctors.

Facts and Figures



The current campaign where microbiology members in laboratories in Royal Liverpool University Hospital are taking strike action is the latest strike campaign demanding safe staffing numbers.⁸⁴

The message from the Combine is that staffing numbers impact safety right across services - including cleaning and testing. The Combine is also using responses from employers own staff surveys, linking sickness absence with inadequate staffing levels. But key here is the work of the Combine to build, encourage, assist and co-ordinate industrial action in order to build on the wins already secured.

Get involved by joining **The England Health Combine meeting meets online every Tuesday morning at 10am.** or email National Officer Onay Kasab: onay.kasab@unitetheunion.org

15.4.1 Unite's Ground Services Combine will meet for general meetings in September and December

Unite's Ground Services Combine will meet on 23-24 September in Eastbourne and on 4-5 December in Birmingham. This combine includes anyone works in ground handling.



Reps whose jobs fall under Ground Services Combine can book these days in their calendars to join the meetings to discuss the pay and working conditions.

To get involved please email christine.vera@unitetheunion.org or National Officer Balvinder Bir: balvinder.bir@unitetheunion.org

The Ground Services Combine has been also carrying out an online survey about health related issues within the aviation industry. To join the survey click on the link

<https://surveys.unitetheunion.org/250274033423042>

Are there any upcoming industrial committee meetings?

16. Appendix 1: Significant Unite wins on pay and conditions

Major trade disputes won by Unite members over the last 12 months:

June 2025 wins

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	Gatwick Airport, Redline Oil	4.75% pay rise backdated to October 2025+ additional 1.75% from October 2025+ one fewer working hour a week
Civil Air Transport	Gatwick Airport Red Handling	Return of pension contributions+covering loss of interest on contributions that were not paid
Community Youth Workers and Not for Profit	Livv Housing	7.7%+ £175 non-consolidated payment+ matched pension contributions between 6-10%+ three more days annual leave+one fewer working hour a week

May 2025 wins (RPI was 4.3%)

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	Glasgow Airport ICTS	9.8% backdated to October 2024+one off bonus of £500
Food, Drink & Agriculture	Brakes Brothers	5.1-9.8% for warehouse workers, hygiene, and distribution drivers. An 88p hourly increase for all workers+ one-off payment between £458-£515.
Civil Air Transport	Glasgow Airport, ABM, and OCS	5% for cleaners, OCS workers, and night shift+-

Facts and Figures



Sector	Company	Results
		double time for Christmas and New Years Day
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	John Crane	3.75% backdated to October 2024
Civil Air Transport	North Air	4% increase, double time for week-end+Improvements to paternity leave rising to full basic pay after 26 weeks service
Docks, Rails, Ferries, and Waterways	Scotrail	3.6% + Enhancements to paternity leave and pay, an increase in paid leave from 2-week statutory pay to 3 weeks full pay. Apprentice pay will also increase by 5%
Civil Air Transport	Prestwick Airport	Backdated 6.8% to 1 April and improved shift allowances
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process and Textiles	Ethigen	Unite secured a £1,600 pay increase for around 20 distribution drivers. The deal backdated to April, also includes improvements to terms and conditions
Passenger Transport	First Bus Glasgow	13.3% for engineers
Passenger Transport	Arriva Midlands	Pay increase sees workers earning £13.36 per hour will receive £14.00 per hour(backdated to July 2024) and a further increase to £14.45 per hour from July 2025. The offer also sees improvements to overtime rates and the introduction of a

Appendix 1: Major Unite pay increases

Facts and Figures

Sector	Company	Results
		critical illness payment policy.
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	Merson Signs	The deal includes a two-hour reduction in the working week with no loss of pay, effectively delivering a 5% average pay rise. Workers will now move to a four-day working week and receive up £250 in back pay from 1 January.

April 2025 wins (RPI was 4.5%)

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	Valero at East Midlands Airport	The workers will receive a 6.5% pay increase in year one and 3.5% in year two, with backpay to June 2024. The agreement also includes improved overtime rates, more holiday entitlement, paid training, and a one-off lump sum.
Civil Air Transport	Edinburgh Airport	The pay deal delivers a 5.8% increase in basic pay along with a similar increase being applied to shift allowances. It is backdated from 1 January 2025. It also delivers increases to the bonus scheme by



Sector	Company	Results
		up to £450 alongside a number of improvements to working conditions including paternity, income protection and training policies. The overall pay uplift is worth up to 8% for the airport workers.

March 2025 wins (RPI was 3.2%)

Sector	Company	Results
Automotive Industry	BMW Hams Hall	3.5%
Civil Air Transport	American Airlines (Heathrow engineers)	Roughly 10% over two years, taking the average wage to £108,000
Passenger Transport	First Bus Hampshire	6.5% over two years

February 2025 wins (RPI was 3.4%)

Sector	Company	Results
Passenger Transport	First West Yorkshire Limited (Huddersfield) - All Bus Drivers, Huddersfield	15.76% by April 2025
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	AFE Group Limited - All members	5.7%
Construction	Worley Services UK Ltd - Sullom Voe Terminal, Shetland	Members received a cost-of-living payment of £1500 plus pay increase of 4% 2023 and 4% 2024

Facts and Figures

January 2025 wins (RPI was 3.6%)

Sector	Company	Results
Passenger Transport	Stagecoach West	11.1%
Construction	Altrad (Sellafield)	Joined the National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry (NAECI), resulting in pay rises of up to £6000 for some workers.
Civil Air Transport	North Air tanker drivers across Scottish airports	4.5% plus significant improvement to conditions, expansion of recognition to cover island airports.

December 2024 wins (RPI was 3.5%)

Sector	Company	Results
Local Authorities	Transport for Greater Manchester	8.9% for lowest paid, improvement to base rate for all grades, allowances doubled, improved maternity pay
Civil Air Transport	North Air tanker drivers, Edinburgh Airport	4.5% plus significant improvement to conditions
Construction	Electrical apprentices covered by national sectoral bargaining agreements	£1000
Energy & Utilities	Northern Ireland Water	5% + £1500 lump sum
Construction	Citizen Housing Group	4.5% backdated to April 2024 + £500

Facts and Figures



Sector	Company	Results
		lump sum
Civil Air Transport	Qantas Cabin Crew (Heathrow)	11% - 15% back-dated to July 2024
Health	Southampton Hospital porters	Improvements to their working conditions, including breaks and over-time.

November 2024 wins (RPI was 3.6%)

Sector	Company	Results
Automotive	Ammanford Pullmaflex	10.5% over two years
Passenger Transport	First Bus Aberdeen	7.2% over two years
Graphical, Paper, Media & Information Technology	Jiffy	Backdated 4% to March 1
Docks, Rail, Ferries & Waterways	Clydeport dock workers	3% + 2 days extra AL, £1,000 maximum bonus.
Civil Air Transport	Loganair cabin crew	26.7% over 18 months
Passenger Transport	Stagecoach Highlands	7.50%
Health	Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) Patient Liason	Pay band increase from Band 2 to Band 3 (£456 and up to £1,603 at the top of pay band

October 2024 wins (RPI was 3.4%)

Sector	Company	Results
Docks, Rail, Ferries and Waterways	Train Operating Companies	4.75% for 2023, 4.5% for 2024
Docks, Rail, Ferries and Waterways	Network Rail	4.5%

Facts and Figures

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	Cathay Pacific	8% in 2025, 3% in 2026; plus flight pay rise of 10% for 2025 and a further 3% for 2026

September 2024 wins (RPI was 2.7%)

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	ABM Aviation - Stansted Airport	12.4%
Food, Drink & Agriculture	Allied Bakeries	8.5% over two years
Food, Drink & Agriculture	Diageo	10.3%
Food, Drink & Agriculture	Hargreaves Industrial Services	21.2%
Local Authorities	COSLA	Minimum increase of £1,292
Local Authorities	Wirrall Biffa	5.1%
Passenger Transport	Scotrail	4.5%
Passenger Transport	Stagecoach Strathtay and Perth	7.1% over 16 months
Health	NHS Scotland	5.5%
Health	NHS England	5.5%
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	Wincanton (Bellshill)	10% over two years

August 2024 wins (RPI was 3.5%)

Sector	Company	Results
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	SPS Technologies	8% over two years
Civil Air Transport	Gatwick Airport	8.3%
Civil Air Transport	Mitie Cleaning & Env. Services Manchester Airport	5.7%
Civil Air Transport	Skytanking Inverness Airport	7.75%
Community Youth Workers & Not	Pilkington Retirement Ser-	5%

Facts and Figures



Sector	Company	Results
for Profit	vices	
Community Youth Workers & Not for Profit	Scottish Borders Housing Association	5.5%
Docks, Rail, Ferries & Waterways	Orkney Ferries	4.5%
Education	Northern Ireland Education Authority (NIEA)	£130 million
Energy & Utilities	Siemens Gamesa Hull	8.4% over two years
Construction	PX Limited	6-7.5%

July 2024 wins (RPI was 3.6%)

Sector	Company	Results
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	Babcock Marine (Clyde)	11.5% over two years
Automotive Industry	Case New Holland	5%
Civil Air Transport	Falck Glasgow Airport	4.5%
Civil Air Transport	OCS Edinburgh Airport	11.9%
Passenger Transport	London Trams	20%
Passenger Transport	Metrolink Manchester	9-14% over three years
Passenger Transport	Stagecoach Cambus	15.9%
Passenger Transport	Stagecoach Merseyside	6.4%
Passenger Transport	Stagecoach Swindon	17% over two years

June 2024 wins (RPI was 2.9%)

Sector	Company	Results
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	Harland & Wolf	10.5-13%
Automotive Industry	Aston Martin	8%
Automotive Industry	Vantec (BMW Rolls Royce)	6.1% & pay protection
Civil Air Transport	Menzies Edinburgh Airport	7.4%
Civil Air Transport	Menzies Glasgow Airport	6.8%

Facts and Figures

Sector	Company	Results
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	British Engines	5.5%
Graphical, Paper, Media & IT	Amcor Packaging	8-9%
Passenger Transport	First Cymru	11.6%
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	Oxalis (Hoyer)	£2.02 ph backdated to May 23 £1.99 ph for 2024
Engineering, Manufacturing, and Steel	Envases	Fire & Rehire threat defeated
Health	Barts NHS Trust	Outsourced workers won COVID lump sum victory



17. Appendix 2: Unite recognition agreements

Over the last 12 months, Unite has secured multiple major recognition agreements across the UK, with thousands more members now being covered by Unite in the workplace.

See below for a list of major recognition deals in the last year:

Employer	Note	Date
Key	Extension of recognition agreement for 2500 social care workers across Scotland	May 25
Sodexo at Sullom Voe terminal	Secured recognition agreement for over 30 Sodexo workers at Sullom Voe terminal	May 25
Baxter Storey	Secured formal recognition for Drax Canteen workers as well as a five per cent pay rise for 2025	Feb 25
Siemens Mobility	Recognition agreement for factory workers who strip down, repair, and reassemble train bogies	Feb 25
Advocacy Service Aberdeen (ASA)	Recognition agreement for over 20 key workers and volunteers who provide vital services for vulnerable residents in Aberdeen.	Jan 25
Wilson James Security workers at Sullom Voe oil terminal	New recognition agreement, alongside other Unite organised employers at the terminal.	Jan 25
North Air tanker drivers (Scottish airports)	4.5% on basic plus bigger uplifts for shift allowance, overtime, and bonus rates, extension of recognition agreements	Jan 25
East Midlands Airport	Enhanced recognition deal covering 850 workers improving negotiations and consultation mechanisms for pay and other employment issues.	Dec 24
Camden Town Brewery	Secured formal recognition for its members at Camden Town Brewery's Enfield facility.	Dec 24
Repsol Resources Flotta Terminal	The recognition agreement covers around 40 terminal workers including marine and production technicians, control room operators, and supervisory	Dec 24

Facts and Figures

Employer	Note	Date
	roles.	
MCL Medics	Recognition agreement with MCL Medics covering around 20 workers for its Harbour Energy offshore contract.	Oct 24
Seagate	Union recognition deal with Seagate at its Springtown, Northern Ireland site, covering 270 engineering specialists.	Sep 24
HS2 Skanska, Costain, Strabag (SCS)	Access agreement: secures the right of Unite officers to meet with workers during break times, to discuss employment matters, and attend induction meetings to talk to workers.	Aug 24
OCS Group Edinburgh Airport	Covers about 130 OCS workers at Edinburgh Airport, who aid passengers with mobility issues.	Jun 24



18. Appendix 3: Other unions' major pay increases

The following table details pay deals for other unions of above 5% over the last 12 months, taken from the **Labour Research Department**.⁸⁵

Company	Date	Result (%)
BBC TV performers	Apr 25	13
DHL Inside Track	Apr 25	10.13
Bidvest Noonan (Transpennine Express)	Nov 24	10
Rail Gourmet (TransPennine Express)	Nov 24	10
Capita TVL (Bristol and Darwen)	Apr 25	9.52
Aldi (retail)	Jun 24	8.6
Poundland Distribution Warehouse (Harlow)	Jun 24	8.55
Asda Petrol Stations (ex Co-op) hourly paid staff	Jul 24	8.4
ASDA (Northern Ireland)	Jul 24	8.2
ASDA (retail)	Jul 24	8.2
Damory Coaches	May 25	7.7
Carlisle Support Services (Northern Trains)	Apr 25	6.73
Hovertravel	Apr 25	6.73
Anderson Maguire	Apr 25	6.7
NICHOLAS & HARRIS Ltd	Jan 25	6.7
Organ Building JIC (IBO)	Jan 25	6.7
Savencia Fromage & Dairy	Jan 25	6.7
The You Trust	Apr 25	6.7
Mitie (Merseyrail Soft Services)	Apr 25	6.67
Midcounties Co-operative Society (Food)	Apr 25	6.5
Glatfelter (Caerphilly)	Apr 25	6.47
G4S (PSNI)	Mar 25	6.3
Wilts & Dorset Engineering (morebus and Salisbury Reds)	Jul 24	6.06
Phoenix Healthcare Distribution	Apr 25	5.93
A & P Falmouth	Apr 25	5.9

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Company	Date	Result (%)
Pladis (United Biscuits- Manchester)	Apr 25	5.8
Pladis (United Biscuits- McVities) Harlesden	Apr 25	5.8
Sixth Form Colleges Support Staff	Apr 25	5.5
Teaching (Schools) England	Sep 24	5.5
Teaching (Schools) Wales	Sep 24	5.5
Teaching (Sixth Form Colleges)	Apr 25	5.5
Darline	Apr 25	5.45
NSL (Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea)	Apr 25	5.26

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