



FAQs- Red Book Industrial Action Ballots

Why am I being balloted?

You are being balloted over the national employers' refusal to negotiate with Unite on your 2026 pay offer. The employers have made an offer of 3.2% which was overwhelmingly rejected by Unite members.

It is an offer that fails to address the falling value of rates in your agreement, impacted by the Cost of Living. The rates and terms and conditions of the agreement need to remain relevant and ensure they attract and retain labour for repair and maintenance of critical housing and HRB's. Unite is also fighting to protect our members who are apprentices and prevent the imposition of job evaluation without agreement.

What am I being asked?

You are being asked one question: are you prepared to take strike action? UNITE is recommending you vote YES

How do I vote?

This is a postal ballot. Ballot papers will be posted to your home address. Please make sure to put an X in the YES box and return your ballot paper in the enclosed self-addressed envelope before the ballot closes.

What happens if I vote YES for strike action?

Strike action is a complete withdrawal of labour. First, a majority of UNITE members in your workplace must vote in favour of strike action and 50% of those eligible to vote must have returned their ballot.

Next, your workplace reps will meet with UNITE reps from other balloting councils to agree the strategy for strike action. Dates will then be announced following this.

What are the ballot thresholds?

Under the law, all industrial action ballots must reach a 50% turnout with a majority voting in favour of strike action.

I don't think I can afford to strike for better pay & conditions?

Can you afford not to? We understand the financial pressures you face. Strike action is a last resort. UNITE always tries to negotiate and bargain for our members before moving to industrial action. But in this case, the national employers have refused to negotiate with UNITE and made a full and final offer without any meaningful talks. Strike action will help bring them to the negotiating table.

What is the strike fund?

UNITE is on your side- we will not let our members be starved back to work. We have a healthy strike fund and a pro rata dispute benefit of up to £70 a day to help you during any strike action. Some conditions apply and more details will be provided closer to the time and members should contact your rep or officer if you have any special additional needs.

How long will the ballot run for?

UNITE's ballot will open around 19th February (depending on your workplace) and will close on 26th March 2026.

Please contact your workplace reps and/or Unite officer for more information about your ballot period.

A ballot paper will be posted to your home address. Check your post. Vote and post back your ballot paper straight away.

Who is being balloted?

Members under the Red Book Craft Agreement working for certain local authorities will be balloted. We are targeting specific workplaces this year where we believe we can best achieve strike mandates and impact the national campaign.

Can new joiners vote?

Yes, your colleagues can join at any time up to and including the day or (days) of action and lawfully take part in the industrial action. This is a good time to encourage your workmates to join Unite. Get them to join online at www.unitetheunion.org/join or ask your rep for a supply of membership forms.

Are new joiners entitled to strike pay?

This is a regional decision so please speak to your UNITE reps and regional officer first for confirmation.

Why is it important that I vote?

Every vote matters. Your vote is your voice. This is our chance to stand together and show that you are united against low pay in our public services, after a 14 years of real terms cuts. Also because of the strict threshold rules a failure to vote will be counted as a 'no' vote.

Is my vote anonymous?

Yes. No-one knows how you voted but you. The ballot is run for UNITE by an independent body called Civica Election Services (CES), formerly the Electoral Reform Society.

Will we get in trouble if we support industrial action?

You cannot be disciplined if you are taking legal industrial action, which Unite will organise once we have hit the legal ballot thresholds. You need to make sure that you stay in touch with your Reps/Unite throughout this process and discuss any concerns with them.

Postal ballot not arrived?

If you have not received a ballot paper five days after the ballot has opened, please request a replacement through your relevant regional officer.

