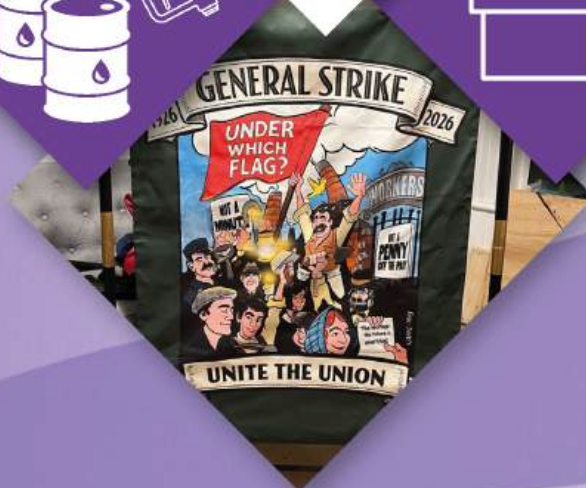


Issue 35

FACTS AND FIGURES!

September
2026



In-depth bargaining
analysis for negotiators

Unite – Fighting for
JOBS • PAY • CONDITIONS



MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The working class believe their best days are behind them. Labour's job now is to show them that it not the case.

The general secretary making the case for workers on Sky News



Among the debris of the old political centre ground there is one view that is shared widely in Britain. The idea that things are not working. It's a view I subscribe to.

If things don't change then we will be in for a period of real turbulence.

At the very centre of this moment is the working class. If they turn their back on politics, then our current malaise will feel like child's play.

Here is a stark fact. Since 1980 we have lost four million manufacturing jobs.

Back then 25 per cent of all jobs in Britain were permanent positions in the broad manufacturing sector. Today it's under 10 per cent.

Those jobs were the bedrock of working-class communities. They were union jobs, where pay, terms and conditions were negotiated.

But successive Governments have chosen to ignore the impact of radical offshoring.

For decades our political class have been unrivalled cheerleaders for so-called choice and competition. What they ignored was the cost.

And as the bitterness set in, our politicians doubled down. They were convinced by their own assumptions. Intoxicated by the free market.

The work that replaced manufacturing has often been poorly paid, non-Union and temporary.

At the same time the family silver was flogged off and we began to lose significant control over our own lives. Our power to act faded.

But instead of wresting back the wheel, our political class revelled in becoming a passenger.

Understanding that with a loss of agency also comes less responsibility.

And as they let their collective hand slip, the profiteers were happy to move in for the kill.

Energy and water are core infrastructure areas. But the privatisation bonanza crippled industry, and left our energy supply highly vulnerable to blackouts, network failures and security shocks.

Meanwhile, our research showed that big energy firms made nearly £30 billion in profits in 2024.

So, is it surprising that the working class began to turn their backs on Labour?



Our political moment is perilous. Time is short. The far right is on the march, and liberal democracy is under threat.

This calls for nothing less than transformation. The status quo cannot vanquish the siren voices whispering in the ears of working-class communities.

If we fail to act now, then rage will replace resentment. And all hope of stable progress will be lost.

Our political leaders will be tested again.

Are they able to deliver more than an abstract notion of growth? Can they deliver the jobs of tomorrow and a better life for the working class today?

In practice, that means massive public investment to turn back the tide of decline.

And the bond markets cannot be an excuse for inaction. Our fiscal rules have changed nine times since 1997.

They cannot be used to justify political cowardice as “sensible politics”. That is not hope.

We must now borrow to invest and bring that money back into the public purse as an asset on our books. Plus have the resources to invest in our public services and our manufacturing base.

You can't rebuild Britain on a three-year time horizon that changes every time the OBR spreadsheet reloads.

The relationship between markets and politicians will have to evolve. The markets will adapt.

Long term, reliable planning from the state in return for less knee jerk reactions from the traders.

But we also need change that people can touch and feel now. Signal policies to tackle the cost of living.

A serious cut to household energy prices financed by the energy firms would deliver a clear message.

And axing the threshold stealth taxes that threaten our nurses, teachers and tanker drivers with the higher rate of tax, would be a solid start.

The money is there.

We propose a wealth tax on the richest 1 per cent, equalising Capital Gains Tax with income tax rates; taxing Excess Profits of the banks and restoring Corporation Tax to 2010 levels.

Economic certainty can be provided and politics restored, but only on the ground of serious ambition.

The working class believe their best days are behind them.

Labour's job is to ensure that is not the case. It can be done. It must be done. Before it is too late.

In solidarity

Sharon

To listen to the general secretary's full interview on Sky News, head over to the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Teg3BtCncxc>

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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 3.4% as energy and fuel prices - and profits - surge

Inflation is rising yet again and it's being led by the prices we pay at the pumps for fuel. Petrol is up 26% compared to this time last year, diesel 35%. Ofgem's new price cap isn't helping either. Energy prices will be their highest level in three years over winter, and analysts say a further 12% hike is on the way come January.

On top of this, oil prices are surging and dragging costs at every step of the production chain up with it. Oil majors are now making £1 million in profit every two minutes as a result. Trade bodies warn food prices will spike by year-end and remain high well in to 2027. All signs point toward prices staying high, and workers' need pay deals that anticipate rising inflation forecasts.¹

■ [See Cost of Living & Pay section](#)

AI firms warn of danger but rush development to secure profits

Insiders at AI companies are raising the alarm that the race to develop AI models may have gotten out of hand. Even Anthropic's CEO has called for a slowdown in development. Not everyone is convinced - it may just be a tactic to strengthen the financial position of the companies.

Whatever the truth, AI is a clear and present danger to jobs. Unite Reps can use the model New Technology Agreement on Work Voice Pay for protection, with a new updated one for AI on the way.

■ [See Economy & Labour Market section](#)

Unite campaign wins air conditioning across London's bus fleet

Unite members have secured inflation-busting deals across multiple sectors this month. But Unite doesn't only fight for fair pay. After bus cabs reached up to 50°C in the heatwaves this year, Unite responded by launching a campaign that pushed Transport for London and all London bus operators to fit their cabs with air conditioning units. This victory shows that Unite members' willingness to organise and take action doesn't just deliver better pay - it protects the health & safety of members across all our sectors.

■ [See the Wins section](#)





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What have we won this month?

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



2. What have we delivered through collective bargaining?

2.1 Pay wins: Unite won inflation-busting deals in GXO sites, CNOOC oil rigs and a Tunnock's factory this month

Unite members have won further improvements to their pay this month through workplace organising and the credible threat of industrial action:

- Nearly 300 **GXO** warehouse workers on the **Sainsbury's** contract in **Bristol**, secured a bumper three-year pay deal after steps toward industrial action forced the employer back to the negotiating table. The agreement delivers a **6.25%** pay award in year one, followed by inflation plus **1%** in years two and three, while overtime rates rise from a flat rate to **1.1 and 1.2 multiples** over the course of the deal. Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham said the deal shows “the power of a union” and that workers “will now see inflation beating pay increases.”²
- More than 100 Unite members employed by **CNOOC** on the Buzzard, Scott and Golden Eagle platforms secured a new pay deal worth close to **£3,000** for some employees. The agreement delivers a **3.25%** increase in basic pay along with a **£600** uplift to the offshore allowance, covering electrical, instrument, mechanical and production technicians. The deal builds on the previous year's settlement, when around 130 CNOOC workers secured a **5.5%** basic pay rise worth up to **£8,000**.³
- Offshore medics, employed by **United Healthcare Global Medical** on Shell & Equinor's joint venture **Adura Energy**, also secured a pay win worth **£3,000** per worker. That continues Unite's run of settlements with major North Sea operators this year.⁴
- 300 factory workers at **Tunnock's** in **Uddingston**, Lanarkshire, secured a **9.6%** pay deal over 21 months after overwhelmingly backing strike action, forcing the company back to the table with an enhanced offer. The agreement lifts basic pay from **£13** an hour to **£13.61** from July 2026, rising to **£14.25** from April 2027. Sharon Graham called it “a significant victory” for workers who were “prepared to take strike action.”⁵

What have we won this month?

Facts and Figures

- More than 3,000 **Tesco** warehouse workers and HGV drivers at the **Belfast, Didcot, Doncaster and Thurrock** distribution centres secured a **4.5%** pay rise after threatening strike action, ending an “empty shelves” dispute without the need for industrial action. Sharon Graham said the workers “secured this pay rise because they are unionised.”⁶
- Nearly 120 workers at **Movianto** in **Bedford**, a specialist NHS medical warehousing company, called off planned strikes after securing an improved pay deal. The agreement includes better overtime rates and redundancy payments, an increased payment for staff working in very narrow aisles, and paid breaks from March 2027, with a further **2%** pay rise from April 2027. Sharon Graham called it “an excellent deal secured because Movianto's Bedford workforce was prepared to go on strike.”⁷
- Workers at the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission**, including gardeners, senior gardeners, office staff, deputy regional managers and stone masons, accepted a pay rise of between **3.5%** and **8.4%**, backdated to July, lifting the minimum basic rate to **£15** an hour. The deal also includes a **£450** non-consolidated payment for all staff, plus extra annual leave and improved travel allowances.⁸

These victories demonstrate that workplace organising and the willingness to prepare for industrial action continue to deliver meaningful pay improvements for members across all our sectors.





2.2 Beating the heat: Unite wins London-wide health and safety improvements after tackling stifling bus temperatures

This month, Unite member bus drivers won a capital-wide victory after bus cabs were unbearably hot during the recent heatwaves:

- Around 1,500 Unite members at eight **Arriva North London** garages, secured a groundbreaking agreement on hot weather working conditions after strike action, last month.
- Unite then secured a capital-wide commitment from **Transport for London** and all of London's bus operators to fit **air conditioning** to every London bus driver cab by **May 2027**.

Read more about the bus win in the [health & safety](#) section.

This victory shows that Unite members' willingness to organise and take action doesn't just deliver better pay - it protects the health & safety of members across all our sectors.

The fight doesn't stop there as the campaign proceeds at the national level. *"This concession from TfL is an important win in Unite's campaign to improve conditions for bus drivers in London and beyond. Unite will continue to fight for all bus workers to be kept safe and to be treated with dignity and respect."* General Secretary Sharon Graham

2.3 Jobs win: Alstom Derby's new train fleet contract has been secured

Unite's relentless campaign to protect Derby's train manufacturing jobs paid off this month, securing the city's rail-building future.

Alstom signed contracts worth more than **€1.2 billion** with TransPennine Express to build and maintain **29** battery-electric trains - Britain's first mainline battery-electric fleet - at its historic Litchurch Lane Works in **Derby**.

The deal will support more than **350** jobs at the site and over **5,500** roles across Alstom's UK supply chain, with manufacturing due to begin in 2028. It follows years of Unite campaigning after **1,300** jobs were put at risk in 2023 due to a gap in Alstom's order book.

Sharon Graham said this deal would be *"a huge relief to Alstom's Derby workers and those in the supply chain,"* adding that Unite's Alstom members *"have worked tirelessly in campaigning to ensure Derby's proud history of train making continues well into the future."*⁹

Facts and Figures

This win shows that sustained industrial campaigning doesn't just protect jobs today - it secures the long-term future of manufacturing communities and members across all our sectors.

2.4 Workers' Voice: Reps from bus company Go North West and defence firm Thales describe how they won

Every successful campaign has a story behind it. Hear directly from Unite Reps who have organised, negotiated and delivered real improvements for members in their workplaces.

This month, Unite Reps at bus company **Go North West** and defence firm **Thales** describe how they won pay victories in recent months.

They explain how they engaged members, built solidarity, negotiated with the employer and used the strength of Unite to deliver a better outcome.

Their experience provides practical advice and inspiration for Reps across every sector looking to organise, bargain and win.



Hear it straight from the front line! Listen to the full interviews on the Facts and Figures audio channel: **Spotify:** <https://tinyurl.com/4uf9y5zc> **Apple Podcasts:** <https://tinyurl.com/3uv8ae8d>

2.4.1 Go North West Rep: integrating Bee Network bus driver pay

Bus drivers working for **Go North West** on Greater Manchester's **Bee Network** celebrated a huge pay win in June. They won pay rises of between **23% and 56%** over three years after voting for strike action. The Bolton Depot is key, with 600 drivers based there.

We spoke to Branch Secretary Matt Moore to find out how they won.

You've recently concluded a great deal for the drivers. Tell us what you achieved and how you went about it?

MM: What we achieved with this garage was the first in the Bee Network franchising, and it's actually four garages put into one. So, we had people on Go North West contracts, me ex-Arriva, we had ex-First Manchester as well. We're all on different rates of pay, different conditions.

Facts and Figures



Our aim was we've got to get people on parity, on the same money. It caused friction: "I'm on such a pay, somebody's on such a pay, somebody's on such a pay."

The main aims were to get parity for all the drivers, so every driver on the same rate of pay; and to get the new starters a much better deal.

Drivers who were on Go North West contracts got, in year one, a **16.4%** pay rise to go up to **£18** an hour. Some others got a bit less. They were on something like £16.50; they went up to £18 an hour. Then there was us – 60 ex-Arriva drivers, me included. We got the smallest pay rise because we were on much more money. We only got 88p per hour and we've now got everybody on the same money.



It was important in this deal to bring pay rates together?

MM: The big win for me, was new starters on **£13.44**, the Real Living Wage, not minimum wage. That was just wrong. We look after everybody, not just ex-Arriva. We look after everybody. This year, within a **three-year deal**, year 1 everyone's on £18 an hour. Next April, everybody gets an **8.3%** pay rise, so we're all on £19.50 an hour. Then in year 3 we got **7.7%** and we went to £21 an hour, with nothing given up.

Also, a big win next year is there's no new starter rate. As soon as they come out of training school, they're on the same money as drivers who've got a lot of service here. They're on £19.50 an hour.

To get this great deal you had to engage your members, you had to build support. How did you go about that?

MM: First, we had an aspiration meeting in February. Some of the aspirations were unrealistic, so you've got to rein it in a bit. But once that's done, it just follows a normal process. One of the hardest things is getting the MD, the finance director, a full-time officer and myself in the same room at the same time!

What have we won this month?

Facts and Figures

We keep members informed. We've got a trade union notice board. It's so easy these days. WhatsApp, you can send stuff out. You can put flyers out onto the tables when they're having their meal breaks. That's the key really, keeping people informed.

Wrapping up, a couple of pointers you would share?

MM: Firstly, communications. You must choose what you tell your members because you must build a relationship with the people you are negotiating with. That's part of the discipline of being a Rep.

Plan as if you are taking industrial action. Keep your lists up to date, keep the right addresses. Everything must be spot on. If you get a result like this, you need to get the members behind you.

Go to rest rooms, canteens, be visible, make yourself known.

Greater Manchester's novel integrated transport system now has an integrated pay structure thanks to that negotiation. Thanks for sharing it with your fellow Reps.

2.4.2 Thales Rep: going on the offensive to boost pay and pensions

Thales is a major defence contractor working on advanced military surveillance and advanced optics, with multiple sites. We talked to David Fulton, Convenor at the Glasgow and Reading sites, about their recent successful pay campaign.

Tell us a bit about yourself and your role in the union and day job?

DF: Hi, I'm David Fulton. I am the Convenor at Thales in Govan. I started off with Barr and Stroud in 1985, so I've been with the company for **41 years**. I've had twelve roles, most of them completely different. My current day job is shipping dangerous goods. I'm the Convenor for the Glasgow and Reading sites.

Tell us a bit about Thales the company.

DF: Our main customer is the Ministry of Defence. We do have some civilian contracts, but we make – I call it – sensors of mass surveillance as opposed to weapons of mass destruction. We make cameras, laser range finders and thermal imaging cameras which protect our forces. We also do AI products which work hand in hand with some of the sensors.

Explain the deal you achieved?



DF: We had a wage freeze in 2021, the year after COVID. Part of the UK business is civil aerospace, and Thales was rocked by the lack of travel. So, they thought it was a great idea to give us a wage freeze. We didn't agree with that. We were still working very hard.

We go in with a fair claim based on RPI from the previous October but also factor in some clawback of the loss we've had since 2021. We always go back to 2021 as that was the watershed moment where the company gave us nothing. Up until this year we were in the region of **10% behind RPI**.

After three meetings the company offered us **2.25%**. We didn't even take that back to the members. The gulf between what we had asked for and that offer was just ridiculous. We submitted a failure to agree.

The best and final offer they said they could give us was **3%** and a **£1,000** non-consolidated payment. In our eyes the £1,000 is just a distraction. You get a one-off payment, you're taxed and pay NI on it, and then it's gone. It doesn't matter for your pension.

How did you communicate with and engage the members on this?

DF: We went back to the members and **71%** voted to reject it. The ballot result was massive: **92%** voted to take strike action and **97%** for action up to but not including strike action. To put it into context, we've been on the current site for 35 years. We've never had industrial action on this site.

That mandate changed things. The company came back and we sealed a deal for a full **4.3%** consolidated increase. That extra 1.3% being consolidated is massive, because it goes onto salary and is pensionable.



So, the 4.3% wasn't the whole deal?

DF: No. There were two other points. I was lucky enough to be part of the old DB Pension scheme. The company closed it in 2023.

Facts and Figures

I think they've been saving in the region of £9 million a year. That's a ballpark figure. 1,000 people were in the scheme.

This year the company said it would increase the company's DC contribution from **7% to 8%**. The company committed because of the pressure they were under with this mandate that we had.

We also didn't meet the gainshare (profit share) target because of things out of our control, like supply chain and quality. But the company agreed to pay a **2.08%** one-off, non-consolidated gainshare payment to most of the technician population, newer staff members, and more professional roles.

So, when we talk about a win, we look at the bigger picture: not only the 4.3%, but the extra percent onto the DC pension and the gainshare.

What advice would you give other Reps seeking to "clawback" as you put it?

DF: I would say 100%: reach out to your members and get the momentum going with communication. There were years where we trundled along and were getting 1.2% and a wee bit of this and a sugar lump and all the rest of it. People were resigned to the fact that that's what we're going to get. But this year, when we got that industrial action ballot, the momentum we had was – do you know what – we're not going to back down on this thing.

Thanks, David, that was an inspiring win at Thales.

Use Work, Voice, Pay tools to win

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







SECTION THREE

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



3. What is happening to the cost of living?

3.1 Key figures: RPI is 3.4% and on the rise

The RPI inflation rate is 3.4% but will rise significantly this year. Unite Reps can use **forecast RPI** to set the floor for pay deals this month.

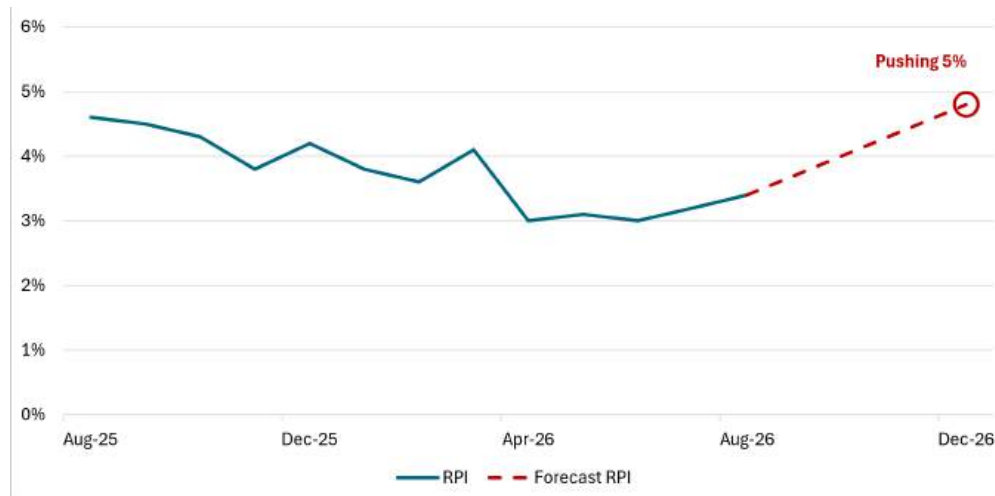
- **Prices rose 3.4% in the year to August**, as measured by the Retail Price Index (RPI).¹⁰
- **The cost of living is set to rise further.** Oil prices have surpassed the \$100/barrel mark and fuel prices are increasing. Petrol is up 26% since last year, diesel 35%. Food inflation is expected to rise through to next year and mortgage lenders are putting rates up.
- **Analysts say inflation could push 5% by year-end** Forecasts from city analysts collected by the Treasury all point toward higher inflation. By year-end, HSBC reckons RPI will hit 4.6%, while the National Institute of Economic Research says 4.8%. Workers should push for pay deals that reflect this.
- **Energy costs have hit the highest level since 2023.** Ofgem's latest energy price cap increase means that bills will be at three-year highs over winter. Yet analysts expect a further 12% hike to the price cap is on the way in January.¹¹
- **Tying pay to CPI or CPIH short-changes workers.** CPI is 3.1% this month, CPIH (which includes housing) is 3.3%.¹²

"After a decade that has seen prices rise by 40%, workers are sick of paying for crises they did not cause. Energy bills are set to be the highest they've been in three years, while the privatised profiteers rake in billions. Mortgage rates are spiking while the banks make money hand over fist.

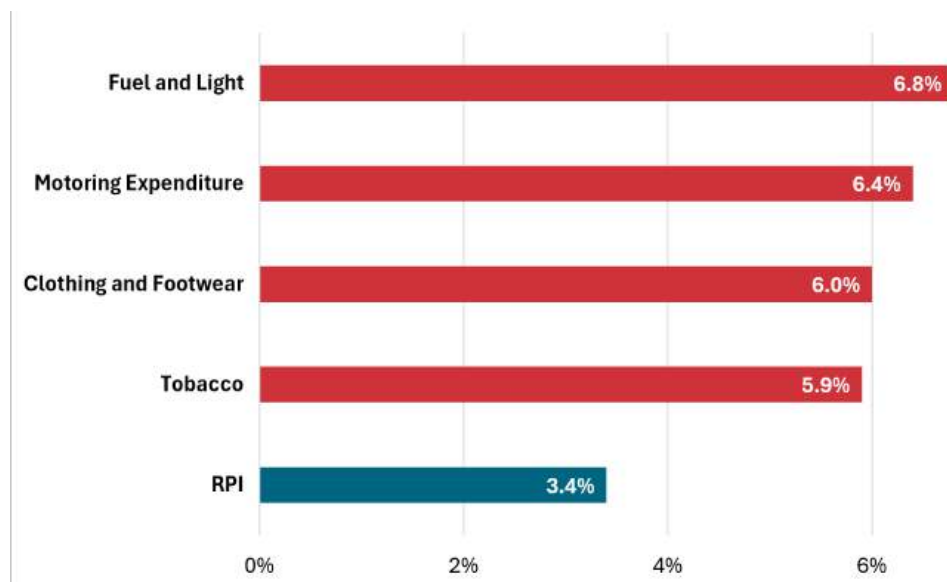
The Government needs to step in. It can start by unfreezing the tax thresholds to put more money in workers' pockets. At the same time, take back energy profits to subsidise household and industrial bills." Unite general secretary Sharon Graham

Facts and Figures

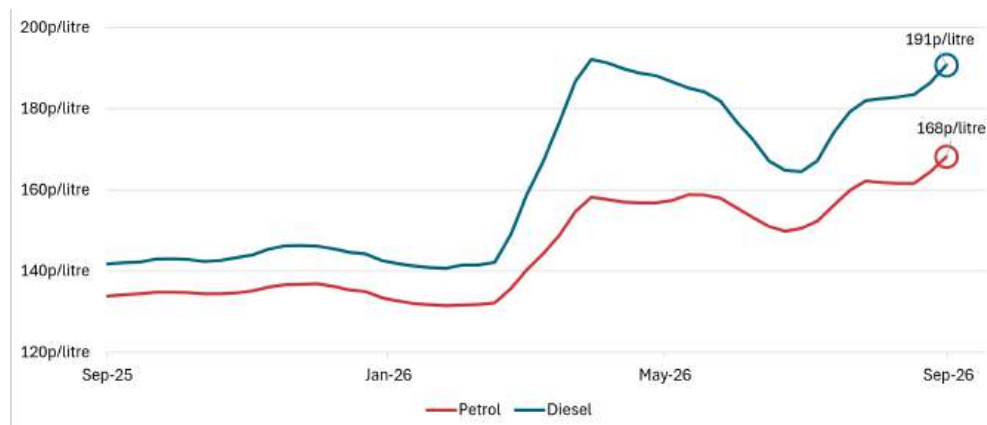
RPI is 3.4% but will go up by the end of the year



Fuel and light costs are rising faster than the headline rate

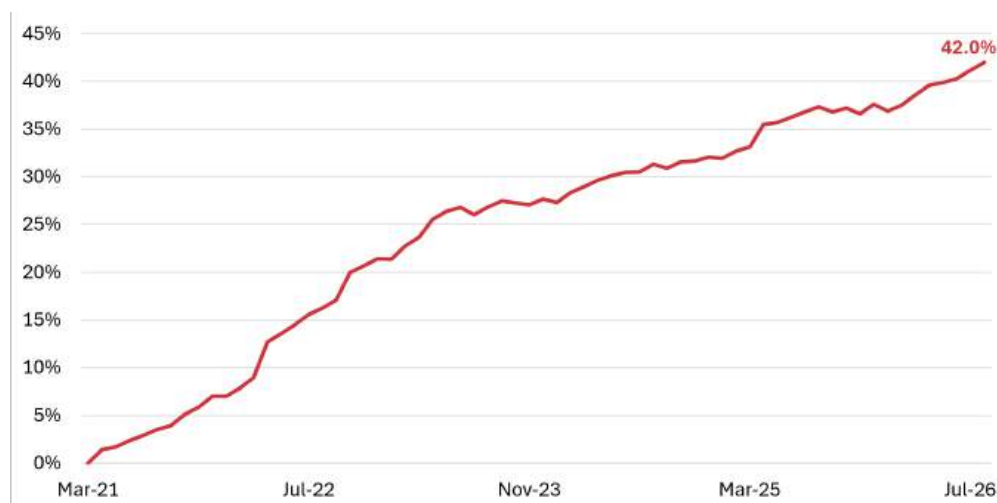


Fuel pump prices are back on the up

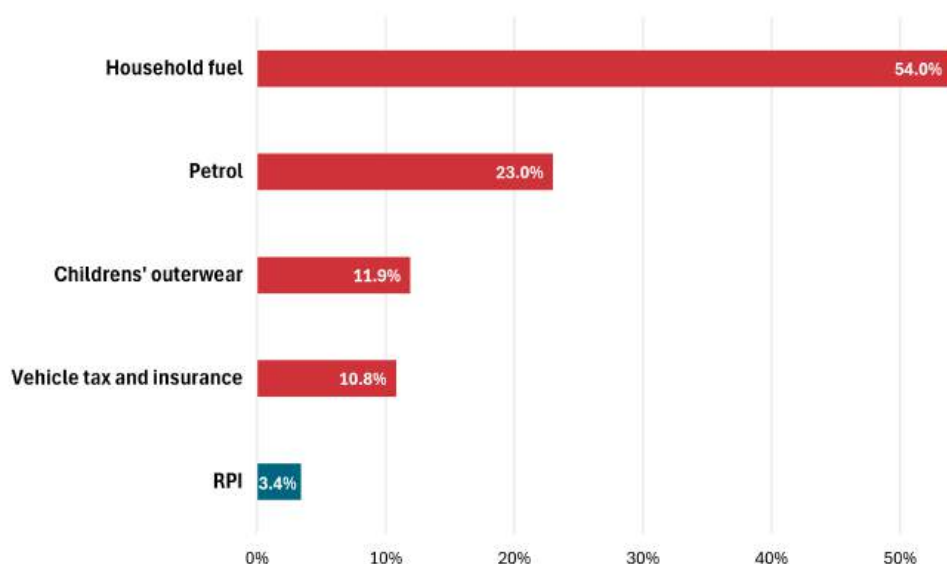




Prices have risen 42% since March 2021



Household fuel is 54% more expensive than this time last year



Food will be 48% more expensive compared to 2021



What is happening to the cost of living?

Facts and Figures

3.2 The Strait of Hormuz is still closed and petrol prices are surging - workers need above-inflation pay deals

The Strait of Hormuz, which is the passageway for around a quarter of the world's energy supply, is still closed and oil barrels have surpassed \$100/barrel - highs not seen since July. Higher oil and energy prices push up production costs at nearly every stage of the production line, feeding all the way down to the prices we see on the shelves.

Oil prices are surging, dragging up many other costs with it



The recent oil price spike comes after the US and Iran yet again escalated fighting, while Saudi Arabia's oil production fell to its lowest level this year after the Houthis seized a port in the Red Sea which was being used as an alternative oil export route.¹³

No one knows what will happen next with energy prices, but workers' wallets are already feeling the impact. Petrol costs 168p/litre at the moment - that's 26% more than this time last year.¹⁴

And analysts are saying inflation will increase even further. HSBC reckons RPI will hit 4.6% by year-end, while the National Institute of Economic Research says 4.8%. Workers should push for pay deals that reflect this.¹⁵

The chances of the Iran war being resolved any time soon are quickly dwindling too. Trump's team now say that the conflict could carry on through to the end of his presidency, meaning that prices will stay higher for longer.¹⁶

With all the signs pointing towards inflation being above target for the foreseeable, workers must benchmark pay deals to these forecasts.

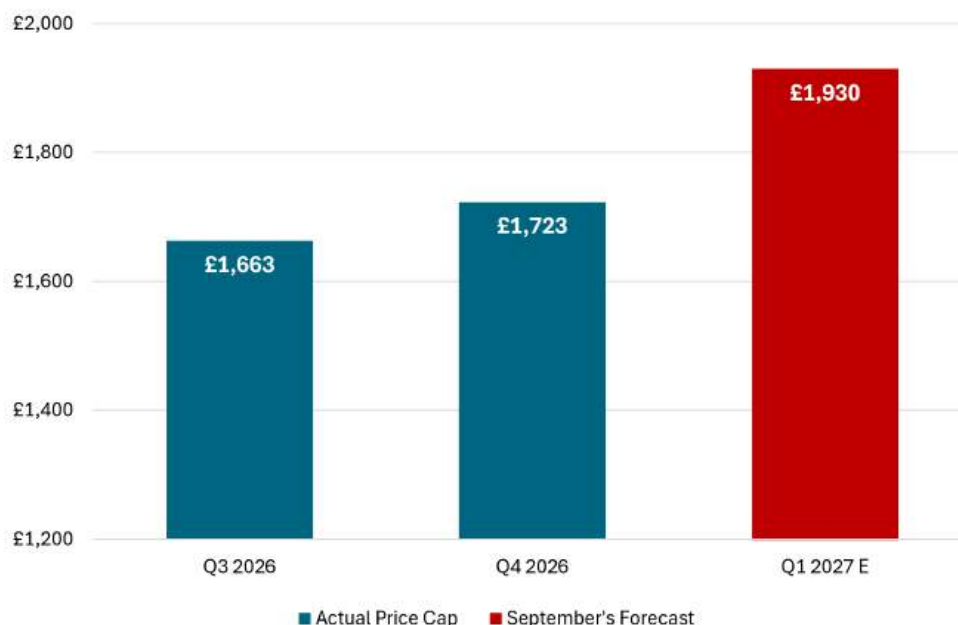
3.3 Ofgem's latest 4% increase to the price cap means that energy bills are at three-year highs

Ofgem has confirmed a further 4% rise will hit household energy bills in October, adding to the 13% hike back in July and pushing energy costs to the highest level in three years.¹⁷ With winter on the way, the need for above-inflation pay deals become ever more crucial.

For what Ofgem defines as a "typical household", this increase will see energy bills hitting £1,723 per year, a £60 rise compared to current rates.

And with UK gas prices continuing to rise in response to the war in Iran, analysts expect the cap to rise a further 12% come January.¹⁸

Energy bills are at their highest level in three years



Regular readers of Facts & Figures will spot that this headline rate is lower than what we've reported on in previous editions. And they'd be right - but unfortunately, it's not because energy prices have gone down.

A few months ago, Ofgem decided that the "typical household" uses less energy than it previously thought and so the headline energy price cap rate fell with it.¹⁹ Under Ofgem's old definition for a typical household, the winter cap would be hitting £1,935.²⁰

So with winter on the way and energy usage from heating homes on the rise, workers will yet again be left out of pocket. The only way to afford even the essentials is to secure above-inflation pay deals through collective bargaining.

Facts and Figures

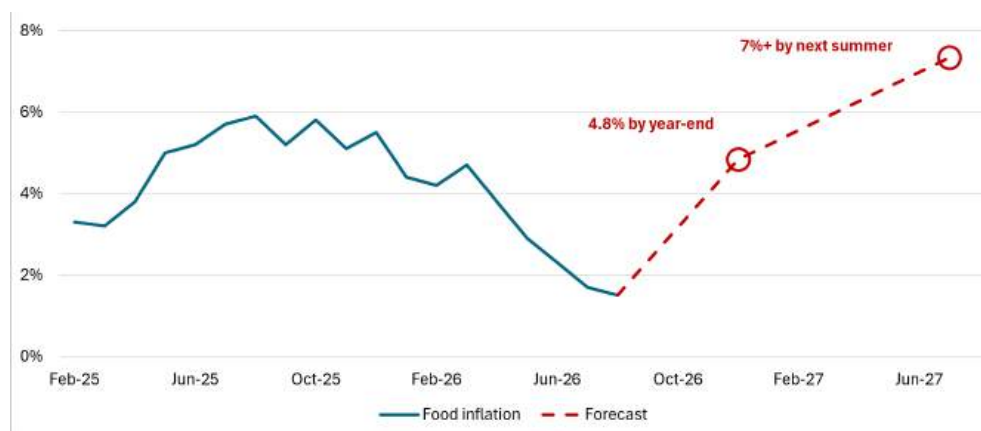
3.4 Food inflation is set to push 7% by next summer

Food prices have been burning a hole in everyone's pockets for some time now, but things are only going to get worse according to the Food & Drink Federation (FDF) and the Institute of Grovery Distribution (IGD). The industry bodies now predict food inflation to peak at over 6% next summer, driven by higher costs of production as a result of the war in Iran, droughts, and the current El Nino weather pattern.²¹

This all means that the cost of everyday items at the till are going up, but it doesn't mean that there's nothing we can do about it. Through collective bargaining, Unite members can push for above-inflation pay deals to anticipate these price increases and stay afloat.

Back in April, the FDF initially expected food inflation to hit 10% by year-end, so its new forecast of 4% for 2026 does sound like an improvement. The optimistic figure is just because higher input costs - like fuel and fertiliser - are taking longer to feed through to prices we see on the shelves. This doesn't mean higher prices aren't on the way.

Food prices are expected to climb in the coming months



By next summer, the FDF and IGD expect food inflation to push 7%, meaning that a sustained period of price rises are still to come. But with the UK experiencing its worst drought in decades and now El Nino threatening food production across the world, even these forecasts may be overly optimistic.²²

It's impossible to tell exactly by how much food prices will climb in the coming months, but with Christmas on the way there is no doubt that workers will be left out of pocket.

The only way to keep up is by securing pay deals that reflect soaring prices through collective bargaining.

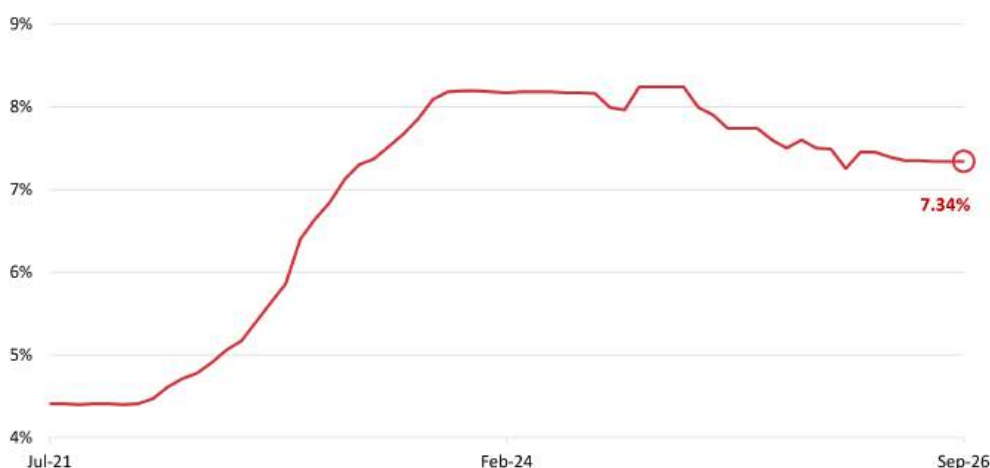


3.5 Average fixed mortgage rates have spiked since the Iran war, leaving workers even more out of pocket

Major lenders including NatWest, Santander, HSBC, Lloyds Bank, and TSB have all announced mortgage rate increases are on the way. Workers' wallets are yet again under attack, and the only way to fight back is by securing above-inflation pay deals.

Santander, for example, says it will increase two-year fixed mortgage rates by up to 0.45%, and five-year rates by 0.4%.²³ This might not seem like a lot, but even a seemingly small increase of 0.25% could add around £450 to a typical annual mortgage repayment.²⁴

Lenders are set to increase mortgage rates yet again



With the seemingly never-ending cost of living crisis, saving is impossible for many. It's no surprise that more buyers are taking out loans with smaller deposit requirements. The proportion of mortgages that have an above 90% loan to value ratio has hit an 18-year high, according to the Bank of England.²⁵

This puts workers even more at risk of hikes to mortgage rates. These increases come despite the Bank of England holding interest rates steady at 3.75% and analysts expecting this to continue well into 2027.²⁶ But as regular Facts & Figures readers will know, lenders will stop at nothing to make extra profit.

The UK's big 4 banks have already raked in profits of £29 billion globally in just six months, and this profit spree will likely only ramp up as mortgages and loans become more and more expensive.²⁷

The need to secure above-RPI pay increases has never been more important.

Facts and Figures

3.6 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 pay in the workplaces and sectors. See below for a compiled cost-of-living and real terms pay articles in our previous issues to strengthen your negotiations.

- **Use Financial Insider** to discover whether real-terms pay at your company has kept pace with inflation:
<https://www.unitetheunion.org/work-voice-pay/financial-insider>
- **CPI and CPIH** both short-change workers when used instead of RPI: <https://tinyurl.com/2wujk5s2> F&F June 2025, p.54
- **Pensions** regulator estimates 82% of UK **DB schemes** were in surplus, holding £163 billion more assets than needed:
<https://tinyurl.com/ycxprswd> F&F July 2026, p.44
- France can **cap prices**, why can't we?: <https://tinyurl.com/438e2cuh> F&F June 2026, p. 42
- The UK is the most expensive country for **childcare** in Europe, with costs for an under two-year-olds rising by 43% in the last decade:
tinyurl.com/2bcvj8hc F&F May 2024, p.49
- **Social care** has been mostly privatised, running for profit and costs its patients over £60,000 a year: tinyurl.com/2xu66av4 F&F August 2024, p.33
- **The lowest paid workers** are experiencing the highest rate of inflation: tinyurl.com/uccet97z F&F April 2024, p.51
- **The rising cost of living** has made personal leisure a privilege as workers have had to prioritise bills and food:
<https://tinyurl.com/4nu8vvbd> F&F December 2024 edition, p.32
- Since 1977, **the income gap between the top and bottom income groups** is continuing to widen: <https://tinyurl.com/3t9ep345> F&F October 2024, p.47

Heathrow bosses!

END POVERTY PAY

WORKERS CAN'T GET BY



#HALStrike

Unite, fighting for Jobs. Pay. Conditions.





SECTION FOUR

PAY AND PROFITS

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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

4. What is happening to pay and profits?

4.1 Contribution rate and how much of your pay is 'pensionable' could both impact the size of your pension pot massively

When comparing workplace pensions, the contribution rate is the first number that Reps should be concerned about. If one employer contributes 10% and another contributes 6%, the first scheme looks considerably better.

But there is another question that matters almost as much: 10% of what?

Pension contributions are calculated against a definition of pay. Depending on the scheme, this could mean virtually everything a worker earns, basic salary only, or something in between. That can make a significant difference to the amount actually paid into a pension.



Pensionable pay is simply the earnings on which pension contributions are calculated

The precise definition will normally be set out in the pension scheme rules or other arrangements made by the employer.

There is no single definition applying to every workplace pension. Pensionable pay may exclude particular elements of earnings, such as overtime or bonuses. That means Reps need to look beyond the headline contribution rate.

Facts and Figures

Depending on the workplace, questions might include whether pension contributions are paid on:

- basic salary;
- shift premiums and shift allowances;
- regular overtime;
- bonuses;
- commission;
- any other allowances or supplements.

This can be particularly important in workplaces where a significant part of workers' overall earnings comes from shift payments, overtime or other additions to basic salary.



The same 10% employer pension contribution could be worth £10,000 less depending upon what pay your employer considers pensionable

Consider a worker who receives £30,000 basic pay plus a £5,000 annual shift allowance, giving total earnings of £35,000.

If the employer pension contribution is 10% of total pay, the employer pays £3,500 a year. If the scheme only counts basic pay this figure is £3,000 a year.

The headline contribution rate is exactly the same. But the worker receiving contributions on total pay gets £500 more into their pension every year.



Over 20 years that is £10,000 of additional employer contributions before allowing for pay increases or any investment returns.

That is why simply looking at headline contribution rates across employers in a sector does not always produce a meaningful comparison.

Your employer may try to use 'qualifying earnings' rather than total earnings to reduce your pension contributions

As we've discussed [previously in Facts & Figures](#), some employers calculate contributions using the statutory qualifying earnings basis used for automatic enrolment.

For 2026/27, qualifying earnings are earnings between £6,240 and £50,270. Relevant earnings can include salary, wages, commission, bonuses and overtime, but contributions do not have to be paid on the first £6,240 or on earnings above £50,270 where the statutory qualifying-earnings basis is being used.

Using our £35,000-a-year worker again, 10% of qualifying earnings would be calculated on £28,760 rather than £35,000.

That would produce an annual contribution of £2,876.

So three schemes could all describe an employer contribution as 10%, while producing very different results:

Basis	Pay counted	10% employer contribution
Total earnings	£35,000	£3,500
Basic pay	£30,000	£3,000
Qualifying earnings	£28,760	£2,876

Table 1: Comparing a 10% employer contribution across different pensionable pay bases.

The difference between the best and worst of these examples is £624 a year for the same worker using the same headline contribution rate.

The statutory minimum for an automatic-enrolment defined contribution scheme is currently at least 8% of qualifying earnings in total, including at least 3% from the employer. But employers can, and many do, provide significantly more generous arrangements.

The government has legislated to give itself powers to remove the lower qualifying-earnings limit in future, so that contributions could eventually be calculated from the first pound earned. But those powers have not yet been implemented: the £6,240 lower limit remains in place for 2026/27.

Facts and Figures

When negotiating a pay settlement, Reps should consider not only the headline values but also whether different elements are pensionable

This matters beyond pensions negotiations themselves.

For example, an increase in consolidated basic pay that is pensionable may be worth more over the long term than an apparently equivalent increase delivered through a non-pensionable allowance or bonus.

The same issue can arise when negotiating changes to shift payments, overtime arrangements and other regular additions to earnings.

A good workplace pension agreement should therefore be clear about both sides of the calculation. What percentage is being contributed, and what percentage of pay is it being applied to?

When looking at your workplace pension scheme, find out:

- What definition of pensionable pay does the scheme use?
- Are shift premiums, allowances, overtime, bonuses or commission included?
- Does the scheme use qualifying earnings, basic pay or total pay?
- What does the employer actually contribute in pounds for a typical member?

And when comparing pension provision with another employer, make sure you are comparing like with like.

A 10% pension contribution is only meaningful once you know what the 10% is calculated on.



4.2 US firms are taking a larger share of the pie from workers, and the story is the same here in the UK

In previous editions of Facts & Figures we've put on show the bumper profits that firms over in the US are making.

Facts and Figures



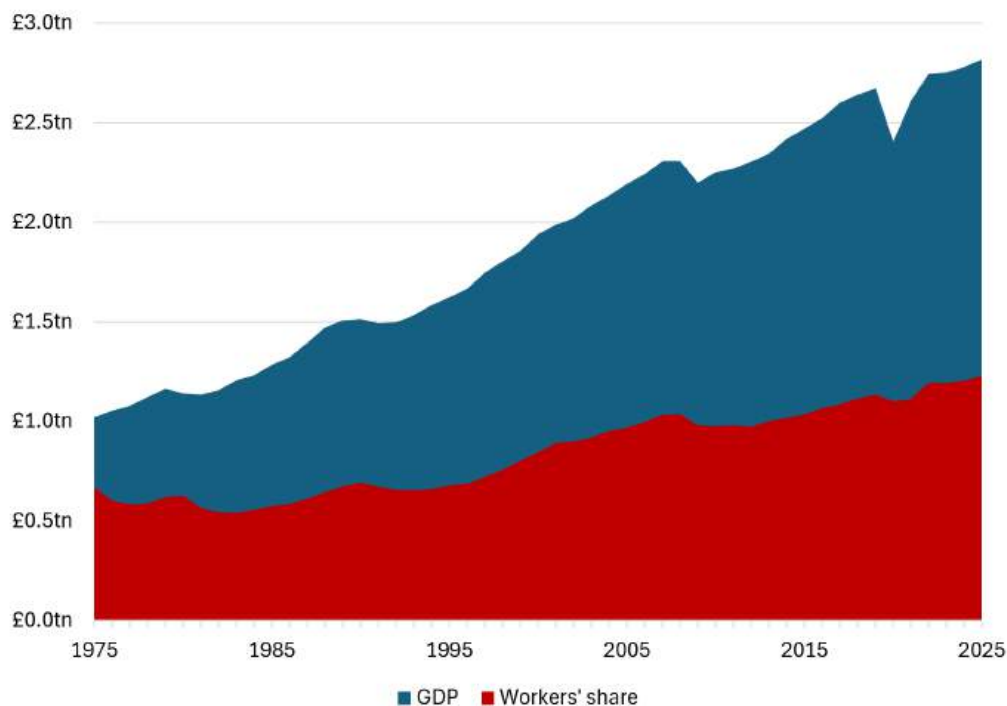
New figures reveal that US firms are taking a higher share of national income, and it's at the expense of the workforce. Given that most Unite members are ultimately employed by firms overseas, it's time we demand our fair share.

Firm's latest results reveal annualised profits of \$4.8 trillion, or 18% of the US' national income - the highest share since the aftermath of World War 2. In contrast, workers' share of national income has fallen to the lowest level since the 1950s.²⁸

This stark contrast makes it clear - workers are paying the price while firms are raking it in.

And this isn't just a problem for the US either. The UK's economy is currently worth a whopping £2.8 trillion and growing faster than any of the other G7 countries.²⁹ But workers' share of the pie is falling here too.

Workers' share of GDP in the UK has fallen



Back in 1975, workers' share of GDP totalled around 65%. Since then though, it has consistently fallen to around 44% today. So while GDP has grown massively over the period, workers aren't the ones seeing the rewards. This raises the question - who is? The chances are, the UK has a similar story to the US. Firms are raking in more profit while workers pay the price. It's time workers got their fair share, and the only way to get it is through collective bargaining.

What is happening to pay and profits?

Facts and Figures

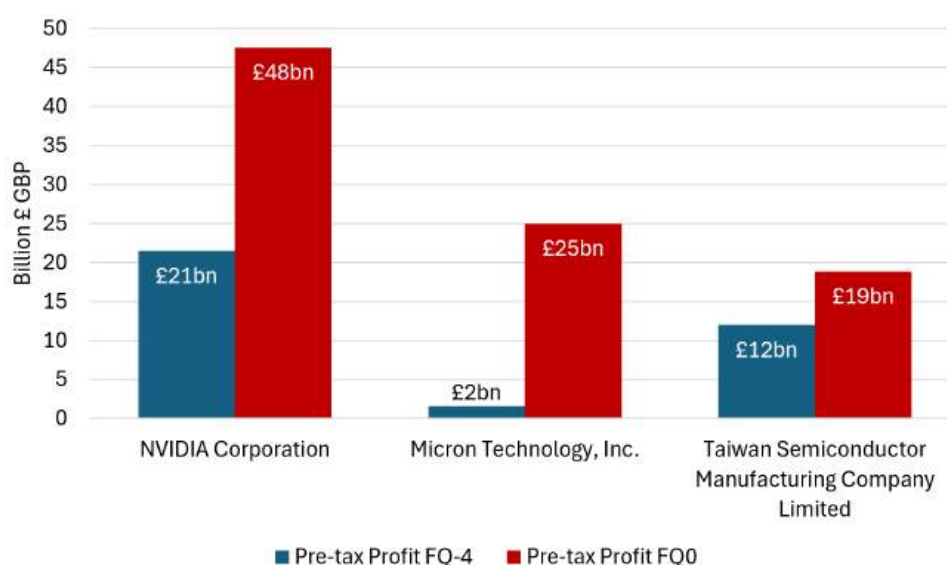
4.3 AI & Tech companies have seen a surge in profits and margins, yet investors are favouring UK stock markets

Almost everything in the news is at least somewhat linked to AI. Across the world, firms are piling into AI-linked investments and many are surging in profitability as a result. But movements on the stock markets reveal a different story. Investors are worried about the AI boom and are instead favouring UK stock markets which are less exposed to the sector - and when stocks are on the rise, so is ability to pay.

For this month's Facts & Figures, we've tracked the profits made by over 30 of the world's largest AI & Tech companies and compared their results to the prior five years. On average, pre-tax profit margins have climbed 5%.

This may not seem like a huge deal, but considering these firms make billions in revenue, that 5% works out to a massive jump in profitability. NVIDIA's profits, for example, have more than doubled to £48 billion compared to the same period last year.³⁰

AI & Tech firms are raking in huge profits



The 35 companies we analysed raked in a whopping £363 billion in profit in just three months at a 50% margin - far above the 29% margin made in the same period last year.

Despite these bonanza profits, not all investors appear to be convinced that AI is the be all and end all. Even insiders at AI companies are beginning to raise the alarm that the AI spending spree may have gotten out of hand.

Facts and Figures

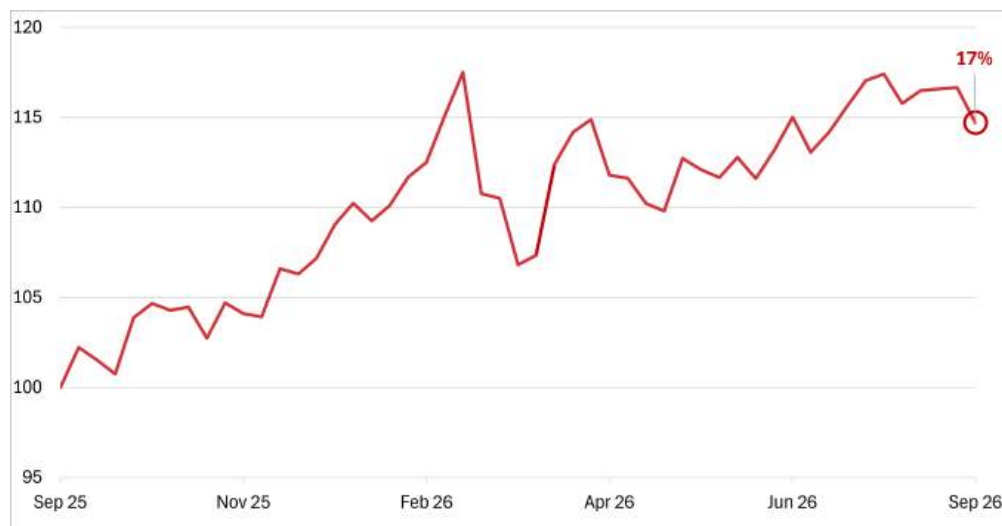


Anthropic's CEO, who oversees the Claude AI, has called for companies involved in production to slowdown production following days of warnings over its safety. Stock markets responded to this warning by selling off shares in these companies, with the likes of NVIDIA, Micron, and Intel all falling 5% in value.³¹

As a result, US indices such as the S&P 500 and NASDAQ have all fallen.³² Investors are instead piling into UK stocks, with the FTSE 100 up almost 1% on the day.³³

The FTSE 100, as the name suggests, contains 100 of the UK's largest companies and huge Unite employers, such as Aviva and BAE Systems. In the last year alone, its value has grown 17%.

The FTSE 100 is up 17% in the last year



Unite employers are some of the fastest growing companies on the FTSE 100, showing that the ability to pay is there.

Unite employer	Day % Change
GSK	4.3%
Unilever	3.2%
Diageo	2.7%
BAE Systems	2.2%
Compass Group	1.7%

Table 2: FTSE 100 constituent daily change %³⁴

This makes it clear that your employer doesn't need to be a huge tech firm, writing blank cheques to AI companies, for it to grow. And when share prices are growing, shareholders are the ones raking it in - but workers deserve their fair share too.

What is happening to pay and profits?

Facts and Figures

4.4 Average FTSE 100 boss pay has hit a record high in an attempt to compete with rising CEO pay in the US

Average Chief Executive pay at FTSE 100 companies has surged above £5 million for the first time, as UK firms continue to approve higher pay packets to prevent their execs from being poached by US companies.³⁵ If companies can find the cash to pay their bosses more, then they can do the same when it comes to worker pay.

Average CEO pay ranged between £3-£4 million during 2010, before falling during COVID. Since then though, pay has sharply risen and last year it increased from £4.6 million to £5.1 million.



The recent surge in boss pay reflects a willingness from shareholders to approve more generous pay packets.

A big chunk of executive pay is in the form of variable bonuses that are based on how well the company performs. Usually, the more profit the company makes, the more the CEO is paid. But CEO's don't just get a salary and a bonus each year. They also get shares in the company and generous car allowances. On average, execs were provided with car benefits worth up to £20k per year - over half the average worker's annual pay in the UK.³⁶

And while 15 million people in the UK are currently saving too little for retirement - often due to inadequate employer contributions - the average FTSE 100 CEO gets up to 13% paid in by their employer.³⁷

This makes it clear. The funds for fair pay increases are there and workers deserve their fair share.



4.5 Bite-sized Bargaining: Employers have much ability to pay

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

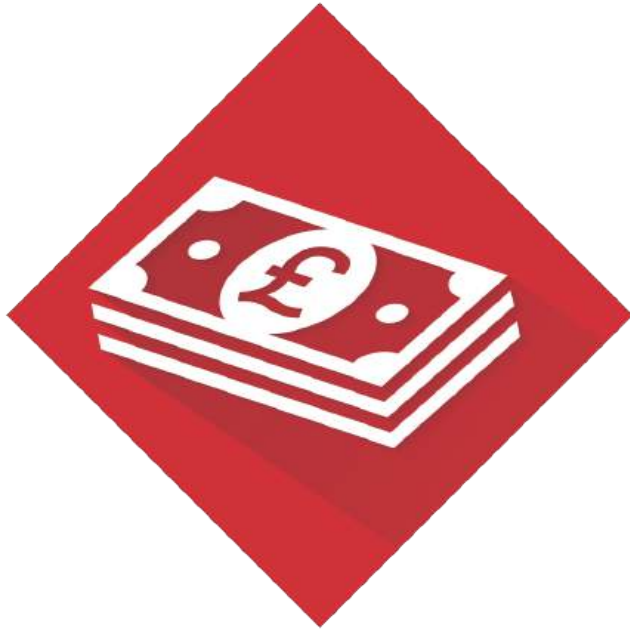
- Quarterly results update: firms have raked in **profits of £730 billion** in just three months despite the Iran war: <https://tinyurl.com/4nzvvs69> F&F June 2026, p.54
- Accountant's corner: Why it's legitimate to **point to group results in pay talks**: <https://tinyurl.com/yerry5yu> F&F July 2026, p.54
- **Thames Water** executives get pay rises while customers get higher bills: <https://tinyurl.com/5n8h39wh> F&F August 2026, p.42
- Analysis of **earnings calls with shareholders** often reveal a much rosier picture than the story bosses tell workers: <https://tinyurl.com/ms9xvyfj> F&F May 2026, p.50
- Unite has identified five main forms of **profiteering**, including windfall profits: <https://tinyurl.com/2dvcbwa6> F&F March 2024, p.76
- Companies paying **dividends and share buybacks** to shareholders indicates there is money for workers: <http://tinyurl.com/3e3f3wv6> F&F March 2024, p. 235
- Companies will use various **different measures of profit** but the main measures are explained here: <https://tinyurl.com/4z6jfbwc> F&F February 2024, p.73
- Explainer: Why you can use **group profits** to back up pay demands <https://tinyurl.com/yerzmsh8> F&F June 2025, p.83
- Unite Reps have been using **stock market analyst research** to reinforce the ability to pay argument: <https://tinyurl.com/4tnnvdtf> F&F March 2025, p.73

Use Work Voice Pay's Financial Insider tool to generate a report about your employer's finances. Find out more here:

<https://tinyurl.com/yhk7y344>.

Contact Unite's forensic accounts team for a bespoke analysis of your employer's finances.

forensic.accounts@unitetheunion.org





SECTION FIVE

ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET

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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



5. What is happening to the economy and labour market?

5.1 Unite will consider 'all options' against NHS Scotland cuts

This month, the **Scottish government** confirmed plans to slash the number of health boards in Scotland from fourteen to just two bodies running local **NHS** services.³⁸

Unite represents over 15,000 health and social care workers in Scotland, and we warn the Scottish Government that we are considering 'all options' in resistance to these severe public sector cuts.



The restructuring of health boards has been portrayed as improving efficiency by cutting layers of management but this will result in direct cuts to frontline services, and thousands of job cuts.

It has been projected that up to 20,000 public sector jobs could be lost as a result of the Scottish Government's proposals.

"The Scottish Government has set out a slash and burn programme for the NHS. The proposals will inevitably result in cuts and thousands of job losses across the public sector. Our members will not be the collateral damage for the Scottish Government's failings." Unite general secretary Sharon Graham

The Scottish Government is setting out its 'slash and burn' agenda to fund an estimated £4.7 billion public sector funding gap by 2030 instead of investing in services and workers, through alternative measures including a wealth tax on Scotland's wealthiest individuals and families.

A modest 2% tax on Scotland's 10 richest people alone could raise almost £500 million a year.

Facts and Figures

Unite represents thousands of NHS and social care workers, porters, the ambulance service, medical equipment management, scientists and theatre roles.

Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission reported in January that one in nine hospital beds were occupied because of delayed discharges in the 12 months to April 2025.

A significant proportion of the £440 million spent because of delayed discharges by NHS Scotland could have been avoided and redirected towards more effective patient support packages, if social care services in Scotland were properly and adequately funded.

Unite regional coordinator James O'Connell, said: *"Culling health boards does not resolve the need to invest in health and care services. We have seen a repeated failure to invest in health and social care workers who provide essential services."*

"Reducing health boards does not reduce workload or staffing pressures. Unite will not standby and allow workers and services to be attacked. We will consult our members on the damaging implications of this announcement, and all options will be on the table to prevent this unacceptable programme of cuts."

5.2 Billionaire's Greek exit shows that it's time for a wealth tax

Chris Rokos, a hedge fund billionaire, has decided to depart the UK for Greece. Probably to spend more time with his money.

We are told that he is the third highest taxpayer in the country.³⁹ But the behaviour of this hedge fund boss lays bare how utterly selfish and indecent many of these people and their apologists are.

His contribution to the tax system is part of a convenient myth constantly parroted by the Tory press and others. The figure for Rokos' tax bill comes from a dodgy annual "tax heroes" analysis run by the Sunday Times.⁴⁰ This is based on the "proportionate" contribution of all taxes paid by the company the individuals own. It is not based on their return to HMRC, which jealously protects the privacy of Rokos and other billionaires. According to tax fairness think tank Tax Watch:

"Since individuals' tax bills are secret, the Tax List simply adds up all the corporation tax, dividend tax, capital gains tax, employers' national insurance tax and other taxes (such as gambling and alcohol duties) paid by the companies these individuals own. It attributes these company-

paid taxes in their entirety to the individuals that own the companies, in proportion to their shareholding.

“In other words, most of these taxes aren’t paid by the individuals themselves, and aren’t taxes on their individual incomes or gains.”⁴¹



Tax Watch says the Sunday Times was so eager to find their tax heroes that they included Bernie Ecclestone’s fines for fiddling his taxes in his “contribution” for 2024!⁴²

As French economist Gabriel Zucman has shown, many of the super-rich pay a lower “effective tax” than most ordinary workers yet still they bleat about being squeezed by the Government.⁴³⁴⁴

Labelled as a “leading philanthropist” by politicians and journalists, Rokos’ philanthropy stretches to sponsoring elite public school Eton, bunting Cambridge University to have a department named after him, and donating to the Tory party.⁴⁵ Perhaps that is why the Tory shadow Chancellor Andrew Griffith praised his “contribution”. Even his Cambridge donation will fund a vanity project, a political institute which will no doubt recommend lower taxes for billionaires.⁴⁶

In the meantime, Rokos has assured us, before flying off to Athens, that he will keep restoring Tottenham House. Before you think he is investing in affordable housing in North London think again. Tottenham House is his 100-room, £175m mansion in Wiltshire.⁴⁷ Will it be opened to the homeless? Will it be donated to the National Trust? We doubt it.

It’s just one of his UK homes. Unlike many families, Rokos and his family won’t be feeling over-crowded. They will also have a tennis pavilion, cinema room and a solar farm, probably to power his own tech.

Facts and Figures

No doubt he'll also have a billionaire Batcave to play with his Bloomberg screens to see how well he is doing. A [Forbes rich list article](#) we published last month shows that Rokos is very rich.⁴⁸ However, compared to Jim Ratcliffe (£13.7 billion and already in Monaco), and Anthony Bamford (£9.45 billion, staying home for now), he has room to get richer. Rokos is worth about £3 billion, depending on which way the decimal points on global currencies are placed.⁴⁹

Still, that £3 billion at a middling 5% interest return would pay over £400,000 per day, £12 million per month or £150 million per year. He can present the biggest cheque to his favourite charities and barely notice it. Like many of these people he can leverage debts in a way that would bankrupt most ordinary people.

It's time people like Rokos were taxed on a global basis. Wherever he "resides", he will still be basing his business in London, because as a casino capitalist, that's where the money is. Why should the workers of Greece, where he is making a paltry contribution, pick up the tab?

Unite is calling on the Labour Government to set up a wealth tax on the super wealthy. Just 1% on their assets to pay for public services.⁵⁰⁵¹ In his case that would be £30 million and standard interest would recoup it in around two and a half months.⁵²

5.3 AI firms warn that AI could destroy humanity but they rush to release it anyway to secure massive profits for their shareholders

Lately, people working at AI companies have been debating whether artificial intelligence could eventually threaten humanity and how such risks can be controlled.⁵³ Even Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei has urged leading AI companies to slow the development of increasingly powerful models and put more effort into safety.⁵⁴

However, this looks like a move to dominate the AI market rather than a genuine safety concern.

While Amodei proposed independent third-party evaluators and international cooperation around common safety standards and limits, he also warned that the United States and its allies could lose their technological lead, especially to China.

He even called on Washington to **restrict the sale of powerful AI chips and semiconductor-manufacturing equipment to China.** He wants stronger action against companies trying to get around these restrictions.



Other technology executives, including OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, have also supported parts of Amodeli's proposals. Elon Musk, who once described Anthropic as "evil," has since taken a less hostile position. This came after **Anthropic agreed to pay SpaceX about \$15 billion a year for computing capacity.**

There is a clear tension here. **While AI leaders publicly warn against building overly powerful systems, their companies are simultaneously racing to scale, secure massive funding, prepare for IPOs, and promise investors higher returns.**

Anthropic has told investors that its adjusted operating income would be positive for a second consecutive quarter. It also reported gross margins above 80% before revenue sharing with distribution partners and the cost of training its models.⁵⁵

Anthropic was also expected to begin marketing its initial public offering in mid-October at the earliest. The listing could take place shortly before the U.S. midterm elections in November.

So when it comes to protecting profits, the message is no longer simply, "AI could harm us, so let's develop it more slowly."

Chamath Paliapitiya, an investor and co-host of the technology podcast All-In, strongly criticised Amodeli's position. He argued that it could restrict open-source AI while concentrating huge amounts of technological and economic power in the hands of Anthropic.⁵⁶

Calls for slower AI development could also strengthen the position of the big companies already leading the industry. New rules can be expensive to meet. Smaller companies and open-source projects may struggle to keep up. The biggest companies may therefore gain even more control over the technology.

Workers have already created much of the knowledge and infrastructure on which the technology depends. Researchers, engineers, programmers and countless people doing data and content work have

Facts and Figures

built the foundations of the AI industry. Open-source communities have also made major contributions.

Yet the profits are being concentrated in private companies.

The workers who build these systems do not control them. The communities that contribute to open-source software do not own the companies that profit from it. And ordinary people have little say over how AI will change their jobs and their lives.

For shareholders, the priority is clear: growth, market share and profit.

For workers, the questions are different. Will AI destroy jobs? Will it make remaining jobs less secure? Who will benefit from any increase in productivity? Who will lose their livelihood? And who will own the technology?

This is why AI safety cannot be left to the CEOs of private AI companies.

If AI poses a danger to humanity, its development cannot be governed solely by the corporations profiting from it. The tech workers and the public, whose lives and jobs will change, must have a voice in its future.

Major tech companies cannot simultaneously claim that AI is too dangerous to develop without restrictions while promising investors massive profits. Safety cannot simply become a tool for market control.

5.4 AI use is highest in information & communication (58%) but low in construction (13%)

AI use has grown rapidly, but isn't spread evenly across the economy.

The latest ONS figures show that 58% of businesses in information and communication were using AI, compared with 13% in construction.⁵⁷ Larger businesses are also much more likely to use it than smaller ones.

AI is currently best suited to digital work, generating text, analysing data, writing code and helping with administration and marketing. This means workers in IT, finance, professional services and administration are likely to see changes to their jobs sooner than many manual workers.

But AI is not only an issue for office or technology workers. It can affect every Unite sector, from manufacturing, engineering and construction, to transport, logistics, energy, hospitality, retail and public services.

AI will not immediately replace many physical jobs, but it could change how work is structured. It can be used by management for production planning, scheduling, procurement, maintenance, monitoring, customer services and workplace surveillance.



The key question for workers is therefore how employers use AI, who controls it and who gets the benefits. For Unite Reps, this means **AI must be a collective-bargaining issue.**

Unite Reps need to bargain over how AI is introduced

Across Unite sectors, the technology will affect sectors differently:

- **Manufacturing and engineering:** production, maintenance and quality control, and to increase production targets or reduce jobs.
- **Construction:** design, planning, procurement and site management.
- **Transport and logistics:** optimising routes and schedules but also increasing monitoring and work intensity.
- **Energy and utilities:** creating opportunities for skilled jobs while increasing demand for electricity and infrastructure.
- **Hospitality and retail:** automation can reduce routine work but may also lead to fewer staff and increased workloads.
- **Public services and administration:** could reduce bureaucracy, but must not be used to cut jobs or replace professional judgement.

Most businesses using AI report no change in their overall workforce. But this does not mean there are no jobs lost.

Facts and Figures

Amazon announced 16,000 corporate job cuts in January 2026, following earlier redundancies.⁵⁸ It has also said that greater use of AI will mean fewer people are needed for some tasks.⁵⁹ Google workers have also demanded stronger protection against AI-related layoffs.⁶⁰

AI is only one reason for these cuts. Cost-cutting and wider restructuring are also involved. But AI gives employers another excuse to reduce labour costs and increase output from the workers who remain.

Where AI is introduced, Unite Reps should seek agreements covering:

- job protection and redundancy safeguards;
- paid training and retraining;
- limits on workloads and work intensity;
- protection against excessive surveillance;
- health and safety;
- transparency around AI systems;
- human oversight of decisions affecting workers;
- union consultation before new technology is introduced; and
- a fair share of any gains achieved.

If AI allows workers to produce more in less time, the answer should not automatically be fewer workers doing more work.

Productivity gains should lead to higher pay, shorter hours, more secure jobs, better services and safer workplaces.

5.5 The AI investment boom could push up prices first but lead to overcapacity later

The impact of AI can extend well beyond technology companies.

Building datacentres and other AI infrastructure requires large amounts of electricity, microchips, construction, equipment and skilled labour. Much of this investment is privately owned and aimed at making a profit.

If demand for these resources grows faster than supply, prices rise. Some of these costs will be passed on to customers, adding to inflation.

But if AI fails to deliver the expected productivity gains, businesses may cut their AI spending. Datacentres and other infrastructure could become underused, reducing profits and restricting new investment.

So an AI investment boom could create inflationary pressure first and overcapacity later.



Unite Reps need to bargain over how AI is introduced.

For unions, the key questions are: who pays for the investment, who gets the profits and who reaps the rewards from productivity gains?

AI is therefore not automatically good or bad for workers. The outcome depends on who controls the technology and who receives the benefits.

This makes AI a collective-bargaining issue across the economy. **Unions need to protect jobs and conditions where AI is introduced, while fighting for wages and living standards if the wider investment boom pushes up costs.**

Unfounded optimism about the speed of productivity and profitability gains from AI could easily see inflation rise above forecast. Large-scale investment in datacentres, microchips, electricity and other infrastructure could increase demand for scarce resources and push up prices.

Companies may pass some of these costs on to customers. If the expected productivity gains do not materialise quickly, the costs of this investment will be harder to offset, increasing the risk that workers and consumers end up paying for a failed AI boom.

5.6 **AI won't take everyone's job, but some tasks are more vulnerable than others, and a new technology agreement is still a sensible rainy-day precaution**

In 2012, Intel predicted that everything would use microchips that consumed almost zero energy by 2020.⁶¹ Overall we're using more

Facts and Figures

energy than ever, with chips in everything from cars to washing machines, from small electricals to toys.

Advances in technology mean that they can deliver the same for less but as tech advances it is used to do more and more. Our mobiles are no longer just for calling or texting, they're closer to personal computers.

In the mid-2010s Uber predicted that we'd all be using flying taxis by 2020.⁶² It's not that they aren't technologically possible, they already exist.⁶³ The economics just mean that they still aren't practical at scale.⁶⁴ Tech CEOs often inflate benefits or downplays costs, partly to attract investors, partly to build hype among consumers.

After getting investors they need early adopters and later the mainstream market that they hope will follow. A lot of money will be burned through in the hope of vast gains down the line. In AI more than \$1 trillion (£743 billion) has already been spent to increase usage.⁶⁵

They get people to see the benefits, get them hooked, and only then let them know its true cost. Then they cross their fingers and hope that users can't live without it, and are forced to pay much higher prices.

The main reasons that AI isn't coming for everyone's job: A number of AI's most passionate evangelists are already rebelling, even before companies have made any profit. Companies with no moral qualms about replacing jobs, such as Amazon and Microsoft, tech companies themselves! Many are already reducing the volume of AI usage but also the range of tasks they use it for.⁶⁶

- costs are too high - it's use is already being rationed by its earliest and biggest users due to the move to token-based pricing (i.e. cost based on processing power used) and away from the subsidised, below-cost model that was used to build a customer base.
- potential profits are exaggerated - based on using the most advanced AI models even though people or cheaper, less profitable models could do these jobs more cost effectively.^{67,68}
- results are unreliable - AI is known to 'hallucinate', giving answers that don't exist in its sources. It also oversimplifies so that even where some of the content is in the source it doesn't necessarily mean what it thinks it does. That means that everything needs checking by a human regardless.⁶⁹
- it's too energy intensive, which alone would explain the massive rollback on climate policies by the US Government - presumably to help the (predominantly US) tech companies to eat through more energy until they have convinced everyone of it's benefits.⁷⁰



We should remember that a lot of the danger is exaggerated.

If your employer doesn't want to increase your pay then pretending that you are expendable is a common tactic. The reality is often very different.

As hundreds of thousands of members have found to their benefit during disputes, there is power in a union and we win when we take action together.

DRAFT NEW TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT



It is still wise to introduce a **new technology agreement** to safeguard jobs against automation, AI or whatever new tech emerges. You can use Unite's draft one here, in Word: <https://www.unitetheunion.org/media/4960/new-tech-agreement.docx> or PDF: <https://www.unitetheunion.org/media/4964/new-tech-agreement-pdf-version.pdf>

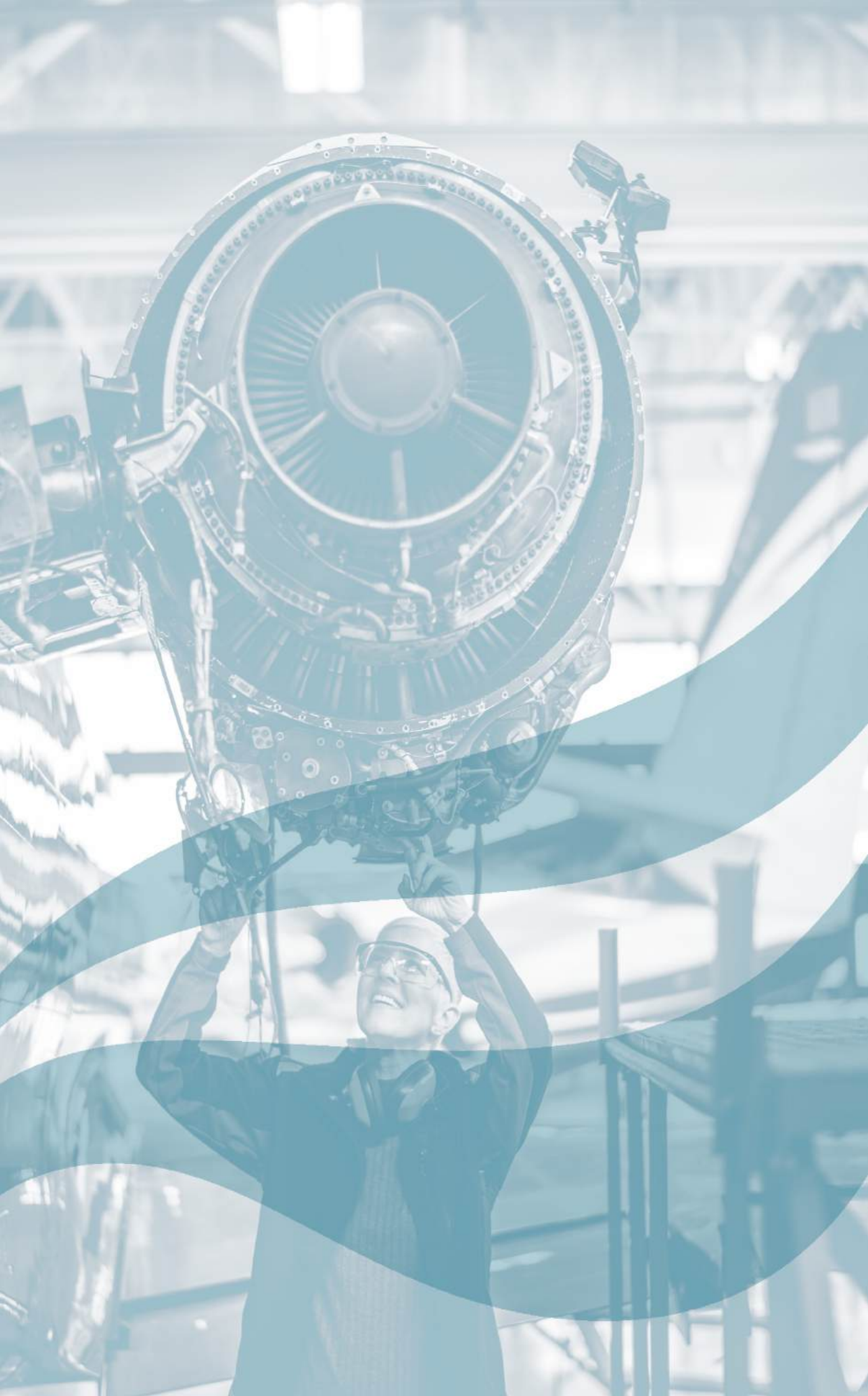
Keep an eye out: We are updating our **New Technology Agreement** template, and we will share it with you over the next couple of months.

5.7 Bite-sized Bargaining: Collective bargaining reduces inequality

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

Facts and Figures

- The Treasury expects the **UK economy** to be the strongest among the G7 throughout this year, with 1.5% annual growth predicted until the end of the decade: <https://tinyurl.com/3j5w25ab> F&F August 2026, p.51
- Jet fuel imports keep Britain flying but lack of refinery capacity means **Government must invest**: <https://tinyurl.com/5xkva6w7> F&F July 2026, p.62
- Studies show that greater **union membership leads to money being distributed more evenly across society**: <https://tinyurl.com/382n83mf> F&F March 2024, p.210
- CMA studies show that **without collective bargaining, concentrated labour markets reduce wages**: <https://tinyurl.com/bddn5x88> F&F 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: tinyurl.com/3akae4w7 F&F March 2024, p.208
- Government's failure on **the economy** is no excuse for employers offering poor pay deals: tinyurl.com/4pxcmt4p F&F April 2024, p.110
- **Investment is a collective bargaining issue** where worker focused investment can benefit employers and employees: <https://tinyurl.com/2wx2mtvj> F&F December 2023 p.182
- UK companies lag behind peers in comparable countries with far lower **investment** levels: <https://tinyurl.com/4fpa8ytx> F&F November 2023 p.144







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Equality, safety, and decent conditions aren't extras. They're the basics. When workers stand together, we win better pay, safer jobs, and real equality. That's what Unite is built for.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

6. What's happening in our workplaces?

6.1 Beating the heat: Unite campaign wins air conditioning for Arriva North London buses after cab temperatures hit 50°C

Bus drivers don't only fight for fair pay. This month Unite members won a groundbreaking, capital-wide victory on working conditions, proving that organising and industrial action can win safer as well as better-paid workplaces.



Around 1,500 Unite members at **Arriva North London**, working across eight garages in Barking, Edmonton, Enfield, Grays, Palmers Green, Stamford Hill, Tottenham and Wood Green, secured a groundbreaking agreement on hot weather working conditions after taking several days of strike action last month.

Driver cabs on the fleet's air-cooled - rather than air-conditioned - buses had reached temperatures above **40°C** during this year's fifth heatwave, with drivers reporting heat exhaustion, heatstroke and dehydration.

Following the walkouts, **Arriva** and **Transport for London** confirmed they will fit **air conditioning** across the Arriva London North fleet by **May 2027**.

Drivers will also no longer be expected to “carry on and sweat it out” when air conditioning is faulty: a new **35-minute** rule now applies to both hot and cold weather working, down from the previous hour.

Unite national lead officer Onay Kasab called it “an excellent win for our members, who stood together on picket lines.”⁷¹

Facts and Figures

6.1.1 TfL and operators agreed to install air conditioning in all London bus cabs by May 2027 after further campaigning

Building on this momentum, Unite secured a capital-wide commitment from **Transport for London** and all of London's bus operators to fit **air conditioning** to every London bus driver cab by **May 2027**.

Most London buses currently rely on cheaper, largely ineffective air-cooling systems, which can only lower cab temperatures by two or three degrees during heatwaves.

This summer London saw a record-breaking **40 days** above 30°C, with some driver cabs reaching highs of **50°C**.

Cabs will now also be fitted with UV protective film to reduce the risk of skin cancer. Sharon Graham called it “an important win in Unite's campaign to improve conditions for bus drivers in London and beyond.”⁷²

This victory shows that Unite members' willingness to organise and take action doesn't just deliver better pay - it protects the health & safety of members across all our sectors.



6.2 New law: employers liable for third-party harassment

From **30 October 2026**, employers in England, Scotland, and Wales carry a new legal duty to protect staff from harassment by customers, clients, patients, contractors, and members of the public.

This closes a gap that let bosses ignore when abuse of workers came from outside their own workforce.



Reps can use this briefing to start a conversation with your employer now - raise it at your next joint consultative or health & safety meeting, use it to demand a review of your existing dignity at work policy, and cite the 30 October 2026 deadline to force a timeline for negotiations.

The change comes via the **Employment Rights Act 2025**, amending the Equality Act 2010.

It isn't limited to sexual harassment: the duty covers any unlawful harassment tied to a protected characteristic, including age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Where an employer knows, or should have anticipated, the risk of harassment and fails to take reasonable steps to prevent it, they can now be held liable - and **a single incident can be enough** to establish that liability.

Third parties covered by the duty include customers, clients, patients, service users, contractors, suppliers, visitors, and the wider public - anyone who isn't the employer or a fellow employee.

Unite Reps can act now and push employers to:

- Review and update anti-harassment and dignity at work policies
- Build specific third-party harassment provisions into those policies
- Carry out workplace risk assessments
- Train managers and staff to recognise and respond to harassment
- Set up clear reporting and investigation procedures
- Display zero-tolerance notices for customers, clients and visitors
- Write behavioural expectations into contracts with clients, contractors and suppliers
- Back workers who report harassment and take action against offending third parties

Reps should open negotiations with employers on a third-party harassment policy as soon as possible - this is a protection that every worker facing the public is entitled to, whatever sector they work in.

Facts and Figures

6.3 Bite-sized Bargaining: Research shows that women, the young, LGBT+ and disabled people face disproportionate discrimination in the workplace

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

- The Government is finally ending exploitative **zero-hours contracts** and of course employers are complaining: <https://tinyurl.com/23mcxuex> F&F August 2026, p.70
- Unite calls for a **full ban of engineered stone** to protect workers from deadly silica dust exposure: <https://tinyurl.com/55c78nz6> F&F July 2026, p.73
- **AI watch: Hyundai workers strike against AI job destruction:** <https://tinyurl.com/8f5s55et> F&F July 2026, p.71
- **The United Minds** campaign helps Reps in negotiating better management processes around mental health and workplace stress: <https://tinyurl.com/yx6wzhku> F&F April 2026, p.65
- Brits are working more and **paying for it with their health:** <https://tinyurl.com/2u4jvc95> F&F May 2026, p.76
- Under the **Worker Protection Act 2023**, employers have to take reasonable steps to stop their workers from being sexually harassed at work: <https://tinyurl.com/mj2apcj3> F&F January 2025, p.50
- Know your rights as a **young worker or apprentice** in the UK: <https://tinyurl.com/3apsvm2y> F&F August 2025, p.121
- The TUC reports **over half of LGBT+ people experienced workplace bullying/harassment in the last five years:** <https://tinyurl.com/3fmvfakr> F&F February 2025, p.48
- Support for workers with **caring responsibilities:** session for reps: <https://tinyurl.com/2c7kj527> F&F May 2026, p.78.

Blood Bank Issue Fridge



Blood Bank Issue Fridge







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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



7. Where are we building our industrial power this month?

7.1 Strikes escalate across Aerospace, Transport, NHS, and Energy

Unite members are on the move, taking action and ready to win. Since 20 August, members across multiple sectors are balloting for strike action.

- **400 Alexander Dennis** workers in **Scarborough** are continuing strike action into a fourth month over pay, with fresh dates through September now threatening delivery of a **£57 million** contract for 200 new Liverpool buses.⁷³
- Nearly **300** of the lowest-paid staff at **Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Trust** are striking this week over poverty pay of just **£15.89** an hour, with more dates planned through the autumn.⁷⁴
- Workers at **Pilgrims Europe's Enniskillen** site, some paid as little as **£12.82** an hour, have entered a fifth week of strike action over pay, with a member survey showing **81%** have cut back on food to cope with the rising cost of living.⁷⁵
- Biomedical scientists at **Blackburn** and **Burnley** hospitals are escalating strike action after **Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust** refused arbitration over holiday pay it was already found to owe at tribunal, with strikes running every week into October.⁷⁶
- Nearly **200 GXO** drivers delivering supplies to hospitals nationwide are balloting for strike action after rejecting a **4%** pay offer by a near-unanimous margin, with a ballot closing 17 September that could disrupt NHS supply chains.⁷⁷
- Around **160** offshore workers employed by North Sea operator **Apache** are balloting for strike action over real-terms pay cuts and threats to withhold back pay, with the ballot closing 1 October and action possible by mid-October.⁷⁸
- More than **350 Stagecoach North West** drivers in **Cumbria** are balloting for strike action after being paid as little as **£15.20** an hour, nearly **£2** less than colleagues in Preston and Chorley for the same job, with the ballot running 15-29 September.⁷⁹

Facts and Figures

7.2 Unite members are also taking action in Health and Local Authorities

The table below shows the workers across many sectors who are fighting for better pay, improved working conditions, and union recognition.

Employer	Region	Unite Sector	Dates
Birmingham City Council	WM	LA	Continuous
Job and Talent Holding Limited	WM	LA	Continuous
Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board	WA	Health	18/09, 21/9 - 25/09, 28/09 - 02/10, 05/10 - 09/10, 12/10 - 16/10, 19/10 - 23/10, 26/10- 30/10
Lockwood Haulage Limited	NEYH	RTC	Continuous
National Education Union	LE	CYWNFP	28/09 - 29/09
Wood Group Limited	SC	CPPT	06/10-07/10, 20/10-21/10, 03/11-04/11
Legalease Limited	LE	F&L	14/09 - 26/09
Hovis Limited	SW	FDA	24/09 - Continuous
Mitie Ltd	NW	A&S	21/09-25/09, 28/09-02/10, 05/10-09/10, 12/09-16/10
Clydeport Operations Limited	SC	DFRW	08/09 - 10/09, 13/09, 20/09, 24/09, 29/09, 02/11, 03/11, 07/11
Forged Solutions Group Limited	EM	EMS	23/09, 30/09, 07/10, 14/10
Wilson James	SE	CAT	17/09 - 20/09, 23/09 - 25/09
Diageo Scotland Limited	SC	FDA	28/09 - 14/10
The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)	SE	CYWNFP	21/09, 22/09, 23/09, 24/09
The Institute of Cancer Research	LE	CYWNFP	Continuous
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals	NW	Health	18/09, 21/09 -



Employer	Region	Unite Sector	Dates
NHS Foundation Trust			25/09, 28/09 - 02/10
Pilgrim's Food Masters UK Limited	NI	FDA	Continuous
Alexander Dennis Limited	NEYH	Automotive	21/09/- 25/09, 28/09-30/09
ABM Aviation UK Ltd	SC	CAT	20/09/26 - Continuous

Table 3: Unite workplace industrial action (as of 14 September 26)

7.3 Get involved: Unite's Industrial Combines are already raising standards in Finance, Civil Air Transport, and Health

Our Industrial Combines join Reps to coordinate action sectorally.

They are also the most effective way to raise awareness and understanding among workers within a specific industry.

Unite's Finance Combine meets to coordinate pay claims

It meets to coordinate negotiations in the Banking and Insurance sector.

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

- AI and Contact Centre online meeting: 23 September 12:00-14:00

Unite's Ground Services Combine meets about pay and conditions, including health issues

It is open to those working in ground handling. Reps can join future meetings to discuss pay and working conditions.

To get involved email: christine.vera@unitetheunion.org

The Ground Services Combine is also conducting an **online survey about health within the aviation industry**. To take part, click below.

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

Facts and Figures

The Health Combine (England) helps NHS reps win

Reps meet ever second Wednesday of the month(and any Rep in the sector can join) to discuss, agree and develop campaigns across the NHS in England. It supports health workers to win on their key issues.

To get involved email: onay.kasab@unitetheunion.org

7.3.1 The Health Combine takes on reorganisations – don't let employers use consultation as a rubber stamp

The Health Combine has agreed its campaign priorities. Briefings will follow for reps on each one.

First up: **reorganisations**.

Reorganisations happen all the time in health. They come under different names, but the effect on members is always the same – instability and worry.

Too many employers think that once they've "consulted," they can just impose their plan. We're pushing back on that.

This means using every tool we've got – including industrial action and legal challenge, and sometimes both together.





When does the law require consultation?

If an employer wants to make 20 or more redundancies at one site, the law says they must consult reps. This comes from [s188 of the 1992 Act](#). The employer has to put the details in writing.

Consultation only counts if the employer goes in with an open mind – genuinely willing to change their plan, not just going through the motions.

Tip for Reps: compare the employer's original proposal with the final outcome.

If nothing changed, that's strong evidence the "consultation" was a sham – and that can win a protective award.

Where redundancies are on the table, the employer must discuss:

- Avoiding the dismissals – could this be done with no job losses?
- Reducing the numbers – are there real alternatives?
- Softening the impact – redeployment, financial protection, or voluntary redundancy terms.
- Watch out for: employers claiming a "trial" proves their plan is the right one. If they do this, we're entitled to see that evidence – and to challenge it.

Fire and rehire in disguise

Sometimes an employer says they're scrapping one role and creating a new one. Don't assume that's fine just because they've "consulted." This can amount to fire and rehire – and can be challenged, including as unfair dismissal. Health reps have already run strike campaigns on exactly this issue.

Key rule: employers shouldn't offer members a new role until grading and banding is fully sorted. Members can't make an informed choice on a role if the pay grade is still up in the air.

"Consultation can be challenged. Not through argument alone – through action. Reps keep winning the arguments against HR, only for them to be ignored. The question is how we make ourselves more effective – don't let employers get away with it, and be ready to organise." Onay Kasab, National Health Officer

Any questions contact onay.kasab@unitetheunion.org

Facts and Figures

7.4 Dockers have united in Tilbury for solidarity and the 3rd Annual International Dockers' Football Tournament

FIFA's scandal-stricken CEO Gianni Infantino likes to talk about "grassroots football" when, [as we showed in August's Facts & Figures](#), he just wants to parcel the World Cup into "rights" for his rich friends. He and others like him use "grassroots" to hide that they only ever want football to be big business. He and other sports bureaucrats even have the cheek to talk about "solidarity", while they try to steal the game away from its global, mainly poor and working-class fan base.

It's therefore heart-warming to see football played for passion and purpose at the real grassroots. Not by entitled millionaire footballers who roll about like they've been tasered by a light tackle, but by a group of workers playing across borders to build solidarity and support for dockworkers.

The **3rd Annual International Dockers' Football Tournament** took place in Thurrock, Essex, bringing together dockworkers from Belgium, Chile, the United States, Spain, Australia and Canada, as well as dockworkers from Scotland, Liverpool, Bristol, London Gateway, Southampton and Tilbury.



Born from an idea raised at a Shop Stewards' meeting in a small office at Tilbury Docks, the tournament continues to grow.

This year, 23 teams from across the globe took part.

Never walk alone again

Funds raised during the tournament were donated to **The CASA**, the Liverpool dockers' club, which is facing financial challenges.

The CASA was set up by Liverpool dockworkers following the bitter **1995-98 Liverpool Dockers' dispute**.

When over 80 dockers were dismissed, their remaining colleagues refused to cross the picket lines.

This sparked a historic international solidarity campaign.

Dock unions on different continents refused to handle ships carrying cargo originating from the disputed Liverpool docks, while workers from overseas unions sent financial support to the striking families.



Through the Liverpool dockers' dispute in 1995-98, rank-and-file workers recognised the vital importance of international solidarity.

In 2000, the **International Dockworkers Council (IDC)** was founded as a legacy of this dispute, carrying forward the principle: **"Never walk alone again"**.

Facts and Figures

7.5 There are upcoming RISCs and NISCs in September and October

Upcoming **National Industrial Sector Committee** meetings:⁸⁰

NISCs	Date	Location
Graphical, Paper, Media & Information Technology	01-Oct	London
Community, Youth Workers & Not-for-Profit	01-Oct	Glasgow
Education	01-Oct	Bristol
Finance & Legal	01-Oct	Birmingham
Health	01-Oct	London
Food, Drink & Agricultural	1-2 Oct	Liverpool
Passenger	1-2 Oct	Wales
Energy & Utilities	1-2 Oct	Newcastle
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	1-2 Oct	TBD
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	02-Oct	London
Docks, Rail, Ferries & Waterways	02-Oct	Birmingham
Retired Members	08-Oct	Birmingham
LGBT+	12-Oct	Birmingham
Disabled	13-Oct	Birmingham
Women	14-Oct	Birmingham
Young Members	16-Oct	Birmingham
BAEM	23-Oct	Birmingham
Automotive	26-Oct	Sheffield
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	29-Oct	Sheffield
Civil Air Transport	29-Oct	London
Construction	29-Oct	TBD
Government, Defence, Prisons & Contractors	29-Oct	Cardiff
Local Authorities	29-30 Oct	Cardiff
Service Industries	TBD	TBD
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	TBD	TBD



Regional Industrial Sector Committee (RISC) meetings for all sectors will take place across September and October. Please contact your region for more information.

7.6 Balloting Brief: Unite Reps across 16 workplaces are balloting their members in the coming months

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

Employer	Region	Closing
DO & CO Event & Airline Catering Ltd	LE	17/09/2026
Tower Hamlets GP Care Group CIC	LE	17/09/2026
GXO Logistics UK Ltd	National	17/09/2026
Greencore Food to Go Limited	EM	17/09/2026
Oxalis Logistics UK Limited	SC	21/09/2026
PrimeFlight Aviation Inverness Limited	SC	21/09/2026
UNISON Berkshire Healthcare & Community Branch	LE	28/09/2026
Glasgow Caledonian University	SC	29/09/2026
Stagecoach (North West) Limited	NW	29/09/2026
DHP Family Limited	EM	29/09/2026
Airbus Belfast Limited	NI	30/09/2026
AWE Plc, Devonport Royal Dockyard Limited, Lockheed Martin UK Strategic Systems Limited	SC	30/09/2026
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	National	30/09/2026
Apache North Sea Production Ltd	SC	01/10/2026
Redbridge Civic Services Limited	LE	08/10/2026
FCC Waste Management Limited	LE	08/10/2026

Table 4: Unite workplaces balloting for industrial action. Source: Unite Balloting Department (as of 14 September 2026)

Facts and Figures

Appendix 1: Significant Unite wins on pay and conditions

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

September 2026 wins

Sector	Company	Results
Government, Defence, Prisons, & Contractors	Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)	Pay rises of between 3.5% and 8.4% The lowest paid workers will receive £15 per hour. The deal also includes a £450 non-consolidated payment for all workers, plus an extra half a day of annual leave and travel allowance improvements.
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	Neo Next at Flotta oil terminal	5% for the vast majority of workers. The lowest paid will receive a proportionately higher increase with all workers getting an above inflation rise.
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	Tesco in Belfast, Didcot, Doncaster and Thurrock	4.5% wage increase
Food Drink & Agricultural	Tunnock in Uddingston	9.6% over 21 months
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	Movianto in Bedford	4% pay rise backdated to April and further 1% from October.

August 2026 wins (RPI was 3.4%)

Sector	Company	Results
Government, Defence, Prisons, & Contractors	Thales in Govan and Reading	4.3%
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	Marshall Aerospace in Cambridge	5.75% increase on base pay and allowances was secured
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	GXO in Bellshill	The one year pay deal consists of a 5% pay rise alongside all breaks being paid which is worth a further 5.5%.

Facts and Figures



Sector	Company	Results
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	Brake Brothers in Motherwell	Pay increases of up to 4.85% on the basic hourly wage.
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	CNOOC Petroleum Europe Limited	3.25% basic pay rise with an additional £600 enhancement to the offshore allowance.
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	United Healthcare Global Medical	A pay increase of 3.75% alongside an 11% average increase to the travel allowance which will jointly lift pay by over £3,000.
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	GXO warehouse workers for Sainsburys in Emersons Green in Bristol	6.25% for the first year and then inflation + 1% in years two and three. Their overtime rate will also increase from a flat rate to 1.1 and 1.2 multiples over the course of the deal.

July 2026 wins (RPI was 3.2%)

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	ICTS at Aberdeen airport	6.5% pay increase alongside an improved overtime rate.
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	Oxalis Logistics UK Limited Avonmouth's Tanker Driver members	For "12 shift" colleagues: 9% on the base rate backdated to 1 February 2026. For "14 shift" colleagues: 11.8% on the base rate backdated to 1 February 2026. For all colleagues: The higher of RPI or 3.5% on the base rate from 1 February 2027. The higher of RPI or 3% on the base rate from 1 February 2028. The higher of RPI or 2% on the base rate from 1 February 2029. The higher of RPI or 2% on the base rate from 1 February 2030.

June 2026 wins (RPI was 3%)

Sector	Company	Results
Road Transport Commercial,	Geberit Service all members	4.25% backdated to 1 January 2026.

Facts and Figures

Sector	Company	Results
Warehousing & Logistics		
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	Qioptiq Limited at Saint Asaph	3.5% Base pay (all elements of pay) increase from April 2026. 4.5% Base pay (all elements of pay) increase from April 2027.
Passenger Transport	Go North West in Bolton, Denton, Heywood and Wigan	Pay rises of between 23 and 56% over three years. The deal sees baseline pay for most drivers increase from £15.51 an hour to £18 backed dated to April 2026. From April 2027 pay will increase to 19.50 an hour, before rising to £21 an hour from 2028.
Civil Air Transport	Edinburgh Airport Limited	Two-year pay deal: - £1800 or 5.5% increase, whichever is greater, in 2026. - 4% or the RPI+0.5% effective of January 2027. There are improvements to shift, sickness and paternity pay.
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	Amtcor in Northumberland	12.3% increase over three years (4.8% in the first year, 4% in the second, and 3.5% in the third)
Civil Air Transport	Prestwick Airport	from 5.1% up to 8% alongside an extra day annual leave for this year, and improvements to shift payments and pension contributions.
Civil Air Transport	ICTS and Menzies Aviation at Glasgow airport	5% increase in basic pay and shift allowances will be backdated to 1 January with a one-off bank holiday included in 2026. In 2027, the workers will receive the RPI+1% in basic and shift pay alongside a boost to terms and conditions from 1st January.



Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	Aberdeen International Airport	4.2% pay deal in a one-year deal
Civil Air Transport	ICTS at Aberdeen International Airport	5% increase in basic pay and shift allowances will be backdated to 1 January with a one-off bank holiday included in 2026. In 2027, the workers will receive the RPI+1% in basic and shift pay alongside a boost to terms and conditions from 1st January.

May 2026 wins (RPI was 3.1%)

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	ABMat Stansted Airport	3.8% pay increase backdated to November 2025 plus 1% from May, and 3.5% next year
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	Resideo	8% pay increase this year with a further 5% in 2027
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	Oxalis at Grangemouth	4-year pay deal: - 4% rise in 2025 alongside an increase in the annual bonus to £1500, and improvements to shift rates. - 5.4% for 2026, - pay increases matching the inflation rate or 3%, whichever is the higher, for 2027 and 2028. In the last year of the deal, the employer pension contributions will also go up from six to eight per cent in addition to enhancements to sick pay and rest day allowances.
Finance & Legal	Barclays	An overall 4.6% increase and a 5.35% pay rise for around 20,000 lower-paid Barclays employees

Facts and Figures

April 2026 wins (RPI was 3.0%)

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	GH Luton Ground Handling Services	7.5% effective from 1 April
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry	4.5% pay increase
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	North Air	4.2% pay rise + 5% increase to shift allowances and over-time rates
Construction	Bear Scotland	5.5% pay increase
Civil Air Transport	Bidvest Noonan at Aberdeen Airport	Up to 10.2% pay rise and union recognition agreement

March 2026 wins (RPI was 4.1%)

Sector	Company	Results
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	Oregon timber	4.8% pay deal, plus significant enhancements to conditions including the introduction of a company sick pay scheme and paid time off for hospital appointments alongside the restoration of a service-related bonus scheme.
Aerospace & Ship-building	BAE Systems at Warton and Samlesbury	6% pay deal, plus additional annual leave and a one-off payment
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	Oxalis	RPI+2% - which works out as 6.2 per cent as it was based on December 2025 RPI.
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	Lochcarron Mill	6.7% pay increase
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	Bilfinger UK Limited	5% increase in company's pension contribution
Civil Air Transport	ICTS at Glasgow	7% pay rise backdated to October + over-time rates being increased to time and half



Sector	Company	Results
	airport	

February 2026 wins (RPI was 3.6%)

Sector	Company	Results
Docks, Rail, Ferries, & Waterways	Orkney Ferries	Two-year pay deal. In year one, a 5% pay increase and a non-consolidated £600 payment. In year two, a 3.5% pay increase or January 2026 RPI rate - whichever is higher.
Service Industries	Sodexo Remote Sites Scotland Limited	Two-year pay deal. In year one, a cost of living payment of up to £1,225, a 4% pay increase backdated to 1 April, and retention of the attendance bonus of up to £1,000. In year-two, a 4% pay increase and retention of the attendance bonus of up to £1,000.
Civil Air Transport	ICTS at Glasgow airport	9.8% increase for the baggage screeners last year backdated to October 2024
Food Drink & Agricultural	Diageo	15.5% in a three-year deal

January 2026 wins (RPI was 3.8%)

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	Heathrow cabin crew at SAS airline	8% pay increase, overtime pay go to a maximum of £240, two additional days of annual leave, and an additional pay grade
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	Glen Dimplex	Between 6% to 8% pay increase
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	Bosch Rexroth Limited	4% pay increase backdated to 01/01/26.
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	Menzies Distribution Solution Limited	4.25% pay increase for 2025, and 3.75% for 2026
Aerospace &	Safran	4.5% pay increase backdated to February

Facts and Figures

Sector	Company	Results
Shipbuilding	Nacelles Limited	2025 in year one, and 3.3% in year two. New employee incentive scheme worth up to £750 introduced.
Civil Air Transport	DHL Services Limited	18-month pay deal including a 5.5% pay increase backdated to October 2025, a 25% increase to night shift premiums, and a £250 payment.
Passenger Transport	First Glasgow	5% pay increase

December 2025 wins (RPI was 4.2%)

Sector	Company	Results
Health	GFM at Newham Centre for Mental Health	Up to 15% pay rise, five days additional annual leave, improved full & half day sick pay. Plus a recognition agreement
Passenger Transport	Arriva Leicester-shire	6.5%, one off non-consolidated payment of £1,000 and an improvement to their bank holiday working rate
Passenger Transport	First Aberdeen	5.3% for one year
Passenger Transport	First Cymru	5%

November 2025 wins (RPI was 3.8%)

Sector	Company	Results
Docks, Rail, Ferries & Waterways	Immingham DB Cargo	£11,723 in back pay for each worker
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	GXO Logistics	4%, boost to overtime payments
Government, Defence, Prisons, & Contractors	Amulet Security at Bank of England	4%+4% over two years, additional day of annual leave
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	Leonardo	8% over two years (across five sites)



October 2025 wins (RPI was 4.3%)

Sector	Company	Results
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	Altradon EnQuest's Magnus and Thistle Alpha platforms	4.5%
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	Lufthansa Technik	5%
Passenger Transport	Ribble Motor Services	Birkenhead - 10% Chorley and Preston - 6.2%
Passenger Transport	First West of England	8.6% over two years
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	Collins Aerospace	A fully consolidated 10.3% over a 28-month period
Civil Air Transport	Bournemouth International Airport	4.5% in year one, plus an additional £1/hour for workers classed as front of house backdated to 1 April. In year two, an additional pay rise of inflation plus 0.5%, or 3.1% (whichever is greater)

Facts and Figures

Appendix 2: Unite recognition agreements

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

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

Date	Employer	Note
Aug-26	North Air	Tanker drivers employed by North Air who supply fuel to airlines operating at Prestwick airport will be represented by Unite in negotiations over enhancing jobs, pay and conditions through collective bargaining.
Jul-26	Milk & More	Statutory recognition at three depots, restoring collective bargaining for workers less than a year after the company terminated its national voluntary recognition agreement.
Jul-26	North Tyneside Citizens Advice Bureau	Unite now has formal recognition with the workforce electing two workplace representatives and two health and safety reps.
Jun-26	OCS at British Airways HQ	The recognition agreement provides sole bargaining for Unite over pay, terms and conditions, including working hours and annual leave.
May-26	Seagate Technologies	Third workforce recognition agreement with Seagate, covering administration staff in Northern Ireland.
May-26	St John Ambulance & Rescue Service	Union recognition agreement for 56 workers in Guernsey.
May-26	EnQuest	Union recognition agreement in the North Sea.
May-26	Harrods	Union recognition agreement for engineering, maintenance staff, and members of fire, health and safety.
Apr-26	Apache	Union recognition agreement in the offshore sector in the North Sea.
Mar-26	Bidvest Noonan	Union recognition agreement and double

Facts and Figures



Date	Employer	Note
	workers at Aberdeen Airport	digit pay deal covering cleaners.
Feb-26	Glasgow Community Food Network	Union recognition for Glasgow food workers.
Jan-26	Trescal	Recognition agreement for Trescal employees based in Derby Riverside Court.
Dec-25	Grosvenor Facilities Management (GFM)	Union recognition and wage win (up to 15% and improvements to annual leave and sick pay).
Nov-25	Amulet Security at the Bank of England	Union recognition and enhanced pay.
Oct-25	Bear Scotland	Union recognition and wage win (up to 7.25% and improvements to standby payments).
Oct 25	Norwich Eaton Park Café	Voluntary recognition agreement marking the first ever hospitality venue in the city to sign an agreement recognising its workers' chosen union.
Sep 25	Gipson Supported Independent Living	Recognition agreement for everyone from housing support workers and counsellors to advice and employment workers.

Facts and Figures

Appendix 3: Other unions' major pay increases

The following table details private sector pay deals of 5%+ won by other unions over the last year, taken from the **Labour Research Department**. They may include multi-year deals.

Name	Date	Result (%)
Stena Line (Seafarers)	Jan-26	24
Merseyrail	Jan-26	7.25
G4S Secure Solutions (DXC)	Apr-26	7.1
Mitie DWP	Dec-25	6.75
GXO Logistics (Marks & Spencer's) Bradford	Apr-26	6.75
Marks & Spencer	Apr-26	6.4
G4S (Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service)	Nov-25	6.2
G4S (PSNI)	Nov-25	6
Crane Ltd	Jan-26	6
GXO (Iceland) Livingston - Drivers	Apr-26	6
Sofina Foods (Cookstown)	Jan-26	5.5
Lidl	Mar-26	5.49
Wightlink	Jan-26	5.2
Bernard Matthews (Derby)	Apr-26	5.16
Tesco (retail)	Mar-26	5.1
Serco Northlink Ferries	Oct-25	5
East Midlands Railway Drivers	Jan-26	5
Grand Central Rail	Jan-26	5
Koura	Jan-26	5
Amber Valley Norse	Apr-26	5
Runtech Ltd (Shotton Steel Works)	Apr-26	5
Tesco Customer Engagement Centre (Dundee)	Apr-26	5
Unipart Rail Doncaster	Apr-26	5

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- ⁷⁹[Unite the Union, “Cumbria bus turmoil as Stagecoach drivers ballot for strikes,” 9 September 2026](#)
- ⁸⁰Unite National Industrial Sector Committees (NISCs). Source: Unite Constitutional Admin (as of 14 September 2026)





