

# UNISON *news*

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## EVER THOUGHT ABOUT GETTING MORE INVOLVED IN THE UNION?



Your UNISON branch needs you. As was mentioned at this year's AGM, we're always on the lookout for anyone who wants to get more involved in the Union. We'd also like to encourage any of our women members, who are thinking about it, to get involved too as we want to make sure we encourage proportionality in our representation.

Being a member of UNISON is more than just carrying a membership card: it's about what we build together to become a more powerful

union. UNISON relies on its members and their time to run the Union. UNISON workplace representatives (reps), stewards and other activists are the most important link between the Union and its members.

You don't have to commit a lot of time, or be an expert to get more involved: a little time and a lot of enthusiasm are all that's needed. Give it a try and you'll be amazed how much you get out of it. Just contact one of your local stewards for more information.

## HIGHER EDUCATION PAY CAMPAIGN 2019

For many years university pay has not kept up. Not kept up with the cost of your bills, the cost of your rent or mortgage – nor the pay rises awarded to principals and vice chancellors. You deserve a pay rise.

UNISON is campaigning for a real pay rise, that both keeps up with inflation and catches up with the shortfall from years of low pay.

UNISON is the biggest union representing university support staff. Along with other unions, we will negotiate with

your employer and campaign for all in HE to be paid properly.

But we can't do it without you. You have a vital role to play. Make sure you update your contact details: Just go to myUNISON at [my.unison.org.uk](http://my.unison.org.uk) to check your membership record is correct or call UNISON Direct on 0800 0 857 857.



Valuing public services and the people who provide them

## LAURA BENVIE, ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER

I've always tried to recycle at home, donate to charity shops when spring cleaning and buy second-hand when I could. But it wasn't until Boxing Day, 2016 that I decided I wanted to be more proactive about lowering my impact on the world. We'd had ten people visiting at Christmas and from just that one day we'd produced two black bin bags and three recycling bags of waste. Since then, I've been researching, trying out and slowly replacing things with environmentally friendly options both at work and at home.

I'm excited to be the first Aberdeen Universities Branch Environmental Officer and am

looking forward to helping promote, implement and support climate action at organisational, branch and personal levels.



**If you've any ideas you want to share just let me know!**



## HEALTH & SAFETY



Your UNISON branch has designated trained health and safety officers at both RGU and UofA. If you are concerned about any workplace health and safety issues, want things brought up with the employer, or want any advice or guidance, please get in touch with them.

**RGU—Iain McLenan**

01224 263444

**UofA—Liz Robertson**

01224 274507

## GRAMPIAN PRIDE 2019—GET INVOLVED!



Unison North East Branches (Universities, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Health) are proud to be part of Grampian Pride on Saturday 25th May 2019 to celebrate the diverse LGBT+ community here in the north east of Scotland.

UNISON has a strong record of fighting discrimination and prejudice in the

workplace on behalf of its lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) members and we are looking for UNISON members from across the North East of Scotland to get involved. There are lots of great opportunities for any member - this could be marching with a UNISON Flag down Union Street, talking to individuals at Grampian Pride about UNISON, helping to plan the UNISON presence or helping to decorate the UNISON float. Last year we had a great turnout including a number of

LGBT allies who supported the planning from day one.

Hamish Walker, Aberdeen Universities Branch LGBT Officer said "I am looking forward to marching with Unison on the Parade on Saturday 25th May 2019. For me attending a Pride represents an opportunity to renew our commitment to each other to live in a city that is Proud, Respectful, Inclusive, Diverse and Equal (PRIDE)."

If you would like to discuss the many volunteering options

that are available please email

Karen Davidson

k.davidson@unison.co.uk



Join online at [joinunison.org](http://joinunison.org) or call free on 0800 171 2193

## MY UNISON JOURNEY — KENNETH SADLER

I started working for the University of Aberdeen in the year 2000. I decided early on that it was appropriate and right to join UNISON because I thought they would be there to support me if difficulties arose in the workplace. However, for a long time I was a very passive member: I paid my monthly dues, would look at the material I was sent and would occasionally vote in various ballots, but getting actively involved was not a priority for me.

Things changed when, after a period of absence from work for health reasons, I started to become aware that, even though I had been treated well during my convalescence, employees should not take their hard-won rights for granted. Also, as austerity continued, the minimal pay increases that University support workers received, combined with increased

workloads due to ongoing restructuring, began to feel like a social justice issue.

Meeting with committed UNISON members at the University was significant: I learned that these people truly cared about the conditions, pay and general welfare of the employees they represented; and they were also passionate about their work, wanting to provide an excellent service to students and others. Seeing this constructive and positive attitude among active UNISON members made me open to putting myself forward to play more of a role in the branch. Eventually I volunteered to become a workplace steward and, happily, was accepted.

While I have attended informative and useful training courses at the Grampian Resource Centre and in Edinburgh, I know that my real training comes from shadowing

Owen, my mentor, listening to other activists and members and, vitally, gaining practical experience. The work I have done as a UNISON steward has been varied and satisfying, and I have always been able to ask if I needed help or advice.

I hope to keep on learning about UNISON, the different aspects of our Union and its work. I also want to contribute constructively as a UNISON representative to any University group I become part of. Most importantly, I want to work with other members as their UNISON steward.

My UNISON journey has entered a new and exciting stage. I look forward to the challenge.

*Kenneth Sadler*

Aberdeen Universities Branch

## RGU STUDENT ASSOCIATION—TIME IS RUNNING OUT

Earlier this year staff from the RGU Student Association approached us with some serious problems... they'd no guarantee of getting the living wage, they weren't getting occupational sick pay when they were off ill, they couldn't get occupational maternity or paternity leave, and their pensions were the very inferior government minimum NEST scheme.

Far from being some type of unusual administrative oversight however, this was and is entirely

intentional! Even though the RGU Student Association staff work alongside University staff, even though they work for the benefit of the same RGU students, and even though the University provides a block grant, funding the Student Association **and** employs the manager in the Student Association (on standard RGU terms & conditions we might add), the Student Association is technically a separate legal entity,

and so neither recognises UNISON, nor provides any equivalent terms and conditions to the rest of the University.

We agree with the staff, that this is entirely unfair and inappropriate and we've asked the Student Association to rectify it. We're waiting for a response and will keep you updated on what happens next...



### Three simple ways to join UNISON today:



Join online at  
[joinunison.org](http://joinunison.org)



Call us on  
0800 171 2193



Ask your UNISON rep  
for an application form

## GET INVOLVED

### Christmas Competition Winners

Our competition this year was a maze to help Rudolph find his presents. The correct answer to the maze was

**B—Teddy Bear.**

First prize was an amazing MSI GL62M Gaming Laptop. Our two second prizes were our ever popular Dinner and a Show for Two vouchers, and our third prizes were our fantastic Christmas hampers.



### Congratulations to our winners:

1st: Raymond Reid

2nd: Lyn Mair,  
Craig Wilson

3rd: Spencer Bartholomew,  
Enohi Ibekwe

Find us online:  
[www.aub-unison.org.uk](http://www.aub-unison.org.uk)

**Concerned about job insecurity, inequality, pay and conditions, privatisation, pensions, harassment or safety issues?**



**Full training and support is available and you don't have to commit to long hours—get in touch for a chat about how you can help!**

**mentalhealth**  
MATTERS

All staff at RGU recently received an email from Angela Lizicai, a student undertaking a placement with the RGU HR team.

The project she is working on is about understanding stress and mental health issues. It would be really helpful if as many RGU staff as possible completed this survey to help inform any outcomes of the project:

Go online:



[surveyMonkey.co.uk/r/2XXHFV3](https://surveyMonkey.co.uk/r/2XXHFV3)

## YOUR BRANCH STEWARDS

### ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY

Name	Location	Telephone
Julie Yackiminie (Chair)	Nursing & Midwifery, Garthdee	01224 262950
Colin Jones (Treasurer)	IT Services, ICRGU, Garthdee	01224 262178
Iain McLenan (H&S)	Janitorial Group, Garthdee	01224 263444
Anne Campbell	Gray's School of Art	01224 263675
Jim Florence	IT Services, ICRGU, Garthdee	01224 262763
Stephen Williamson	School of Pharmacy & Life Science	01224 262506
Hamish Walker (LGBT Rep)	Sr. Business Operations	01224 263754

### UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

Name	Location	Telephone
Owen Cox (Br. Secretary)	Security Officer, Estates	07387 729537
Elizabeth Robertson (H&S)	School of Education	01224 274507
Kenneth Sadler	Helpdesk Co-ordinator, Infohub	01224 273040
Laura Benvie (Environment)	Special Collections Centre	01224 274268



**Saturday  
27th  
April 2019**

**BOOK NOW  
FREE TRIP!**

## Livingston Designer Outlet Coach Trip

UNISON Aberdeen Universities branch has organised a FREE coach trip on Saturday 27th April to Livingston Designer Outlet for branch members. Members may also bring along a guest as well! To **book your place** go online to the branch website and follow the booking link: [www.aub-unison.org.uk](http://www.aub-unison.org.uk)

Join online at [joinunison.org](http://joinunison.org) or call free on 0800 171 2193

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the public service union