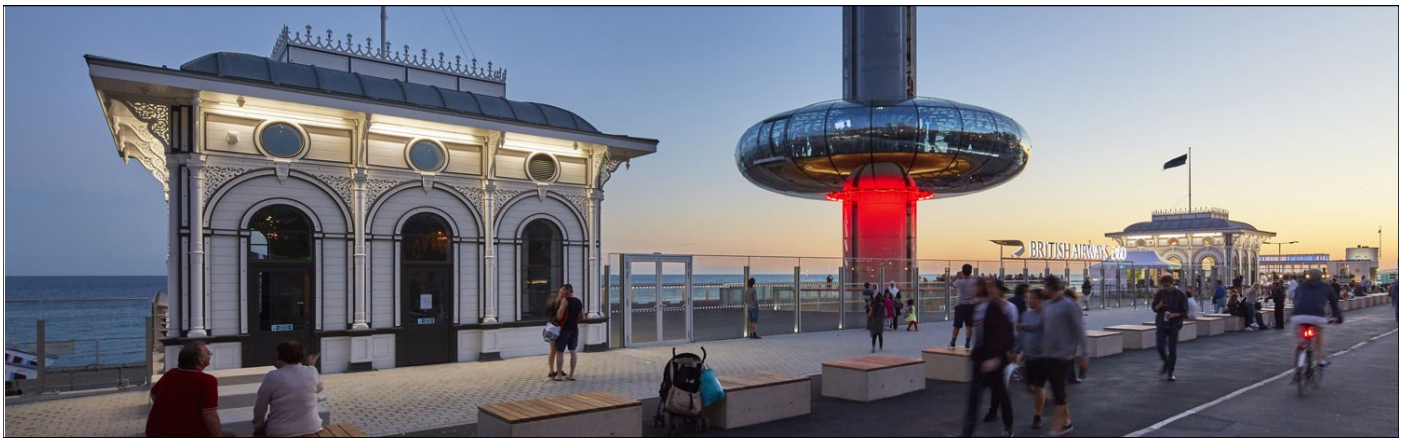
UNISON
North West Region
NEWS NOW!
Wednesday, 19 June Brighton

Welcome to Wednesday!



Having been relegated to the virtual league, your Newssheet Team are back and ready to keep you informed about what's happening on the second day of conference. Unfortunately, our attempts to get AI to write today's Newssheet failed after ChatGPT went down. Apparently robots need sick days too!

It seems likely that we might start the day with a standing orders report, which amongst other things might include the emergency motions submitted to this year's Conference. Will the general election feature? We'll find out soon enough.

After that, we move onto the motions, with **Composite B** starting the morning with a discussion about a National Care Service.

Christina McAnea, our General Secretary, is rostered to address conference at midday.

In the afternoon, there are timetabled discussions on **Motion 39** and it's amendments, about Domestic Abuse, and **Motion 56**, about Police Cuts.

A reminder that we got up to **Motion 9** – Supporting Black Members Experiencing Racism - yesterday, and this will be completed first thing, so the following motions are in scope for being reached today.

- **Composite C (made up of motions 77, 78 and amendment 77.1)** – The Legacy of the
- Year of Black Workers
- **Motion 14** – Speaking 'In a Personal Capacity'
- **Motion 83 (and amendments 83.1 and 83.2)** – The Constitution of the United
- Kingdom – Reimagined in the Interest of the Majority
- **Motion 45 (and amendment 45.1)** – Cuts and Finding
- **Motion 31 (and amendment 31.1)** – Time to Invest Now – Don't Make Public Service
- Workers Pay the Price of Austerity!
- **Motion 18** – Artificial Intelligence
- **Motion 8 (and amendment 8.1)** – Union

Learning is Central to Skills and

- Development for UNISON Members and Activists
- **Motion 28** – A Health and Safety Response to a National Crisis of Stress and its
- Effects on Public Service Workers
- **Motion 40** – Zane's Law
- **Motion 15** – Treating our Members with Dignity and Respect
- **Motion 33 (and amendment 33.1)** – End Child Poverty!
- **Motion 67 (and amendments 67.1 and 67.2)** – Smash the Pension and Benefits Gap for Part Time Workers!
- **Motion 42 (and amendment 42.1)** – Justice for Workers Suffering from Long Covid
- **Motion 51** – Childcare, Women and Boosting Economic Growth
- **Motion 25** – Enough of Rack and Ruin – Safe and Healthy Workplaces Now!
- **Motion 57** – Insource School Kitchen Staff
- **Motion 68** – Work Till We Drop? – Resist Further Attacks on the State Pension Age (SPA)
- **Motion 96** – In Pursuit of a Just and Sustainable Peace in Northern Ireland
- **Motion 2 (and amendment 2.1)** – Building UNISON in the Private Sector

Away from the motions, there's a meeting for Women members on Wednesday lunchtime – details of which are in your About Conference 2024 guide, but should also pop up on the screens during breaks.

As for other Conference activity, there's a much broader range of fringe meetings to choose from today.

During lunch, you'll find sessions on Tackling HIV Stigma in our Workplaces, Police and Justice Pay and Conditions, 'Winning for the Future', which is about industrial action successes, The Power of Union Learning Reps, Columbia, and how to Stop Buying Products Riddled with Forced Labour and Union Busting.

After the close of the debating session in the afternoon, there are fringe events on showing Solidarity with Turkey, Ending the Cuban Blockade, Celebrating UNISON's Year of LGBT+ Workers, plus there's the Labour Link Rally, with 'special guests'.

Finally, and most importantly, don't forget that it's North West night, starting at 1830 hours with the Latin America Solidarity Fringe (and Social), followed by the North West Social starting at 8pm. They're both taking place at Patterns, which is on the main road just past the Pier. You'll get a free drink and even a slice or two of pizza. However, and despite previous promises, there is sadly no karaoke this year. There's also no chips (so clearly not as good as the Liverpool social last year).

Adam

Christina McAnea

Born in Glasgow, Christina worked in the Civil Service, the NHS and retail before studying English and History at the University of Strathclyde. Following college, she joined Glasgow Council as a housing officer. From there, it was roles with the GMB, NALGO and UNISON from 1993, becoming one of the five Assistant General Secretaries in 2018, and then General Secretary in 2021.

Composite B - National Care Service

Another opportunity for North West branches to highlight the longevity and importance of the organising and campaigning work we continue to undertake with our social care members across all relevant service groups.

We have been instrumental in developing and delivering the work that has been pivotal to formulating UNISON's policy on social care and the asks in this Composite.

The North West came early to the realisation of the importance of organising in social care and the far-reaching implications of building a powerful voice for change with our social care members and we knew it was going to be a long-haul.

The imprint of our Greater Manchester and Merseyside Care Workers Demand a Pay Rise campaigns, our Stand Up For Social Care Councillors Network along with our industrial campaigning, activist recruitment, development and organisation all appear across this Composite.

As we go into Conference, we know we could be on the cusp of a change of government, and we also know that the work our social care members are doing has influenced and driven the debate about what a national care service should look like going forward.

We also know what that debate can look like when social care members do take action. We can't forget that when our colleagues in Alternative Futures Group took action it resulted in a clear attack on them and their right to strike. Fiona Mercer's eventual Supreme Court victory secured a landmark ruling for all workers.

Much more needs to be done through existing and new alliances to organise and campaign with our social care members. Continuing the pressure is paramount to ensuring that we make social care pay for workers and that our communities receive a quality public service.

This Composite sets that out.

Where are you staying? Hotel Una, Regency Square
What's the view outside your window? I don't really have a view from my room as there is a screened Juliette balcony and two Velux windows with a view of the sky
How's the breakfast? Breakfast is lovely, lots of choice. Plus it's table service so no queue to make toast!!
Best feature? All the rooms are different and quirky.
Worst feature? I genuinely can't think of one but there is no air conditioning so that may put some people off
How many stars out of 5? 5

Joanne Moorcroft

ChatGPT

Beep Boop Beep. ChatGPT welcomes you to Conference (when it finally decided to work). Could it replace the Newssheet Team? You decide!

Welcome, esteemed delegates from the North West of England, to the National Conference of UNISON, the public service trade union, here in the vibrant city of Brighton. It is with great enthusiasm that we gather to celebrate our collective achievements, discuss vital issues, and forge pathways for a stronger future for public services.

Brighton, known for its dynamic community, beautiful coastline, and rich history, provides the perfect backdrop for our conference. As you immerse yourselves in the engaging sessions and thought-provoking discussions, take a moment to enjoy the unique charm of this seaside city.

Your presence here signifies the unity and dedication that UNISON members from the North West bring to our movement. Each of you plays a crucial role in advocating for fair working conditions, defending public services, and ensuring that the voices of workers are heard at every level. This conference is a testament to our shared commitment and a chance to bolster our collective efforts.

Over the next few days, we will delve into critical topics, share experiences, and develop strategies that will shape the future of public service delivery. Your insights and contributions are invaluable, and we look forward to the robust debates and collaborative spirit that you bring.

As we embark on this journey together, let us reaffirm our commitment to solidarity, equity, and justice. Welcome to Brighton, and thank you for your unwavering dedication to UNISON and the vital work we do. Let us make this conference a milestone in our ongoing mission to improve the lives of public service workers and the communities we serve.

IER Institute of Employment Rights

UNISON North West Region

Protecting Women in Public Services and Rebuilding Rights at Work

The Institute of Employment Rights (IER) and UNISON North West region, come together to discuss how we protect women at work, how we get rid of anti-union legislation, and how we rebuild workers' rights in the UK to ensure dignity at work for all.

When:	**Thursday 20 June – 12.45pm -1.45pm**	
Where:	**The Brighton Centre - Syndicate 1**	
Speakers:	**Lynne Morris -**	**UNISON NW Regional Secretary**
	Rachel Halliday -	**Thompsons Solicitors**
	James Harrison -	**Acting Director, IER**
Chair:	**Joanne Moorcroft -**	**UNISON NW Regional Convenor**

Refreshments will be provided

Local delicacies

When travelling to a new place it's always tempting to try out the local delicacies and specialities. Sometimes these can be things quite comforting and familiar like thin and crispy pizza Margherita in Naples or a rich buttery croissant in Paris.

Other times these local dishes can be something that one might struggle to acquire in Manchester, Liverpool, Preston or across the North West. They might even provoke revulsion in those not familiar to their taste and their charms. One such unusual dish caught my eye on Brighton Beach this week when it was being advertised on a seafood stall and that was the, now elusive, jellied eel.

Since the 18th century, Londoners have been dining on jellied eels as a cheap and nutritious meal. Eels were once a common fish in the Thames and became a working class favourite in the East End alongside oysters and, more familiar to us northerners, pie and mash.

Their popularity only expanded during World War II when people were searching for alternatives to meat due to rationing. However, by the late 1950's their popularity started to wane due to an increasingly polluted River Thames which, in 1957, was declared biologically dead by the Natural History Museum. Since then, while the state of the Thames has improved, the European Eel is not an endangered species and jellied eel purveyors take their eels from wherever they can find them.

Where the eels I tried came from, I could not say, but I was eager to dive headlong into my first ever pot. The young lad who handed it over informed me that “the vinegar is just to your left” so, assuming it was the done thing, I doused mine in a copious amount. The “jelly” itself is a fish stock that the eel is cooked in which is then allowed to cool and set. The eel is naturally gelatinous and over time releases collagen into the stock which forms it into a jelly.

When it comes to the taste, I have to say that it was not as strong as I was expecting. Eel itself has a “fishy” flavour but a meaty texture that is not unpleasant. The jelly too also tastes like fish and the vinegar cuts through everything quite nicely. It's certainly something I would recommend trying if you see it on a menu but not something I could eat every day. It's something I can now scratch off my list and I'm not ruling out a pot of whelks between sessions some time this week.

Chris

President's address

UNISON President Libby Nolan addressed conference as her year-long term finishes at the end of this week.

The President opened by reminding us that: "If you don't know where you come from, you don't know where you're going." Libby has been involved in the trade union movement for 40 years and, like many who become reps and officers, she learned her trade unionism and desire for justice from her parents, her father being a Dublin docker and union activist.

In the 1970s and '80s solidarity between workers and trade union power was very real and was on full show during strikes in the '70s, the Miners' Strike of 1984/5 and the Wapping printers' dispute. Libby and UNISON's predecessor unions were involved in collections to support strikers and standing side-by-side with them on picket lines. She was eager to remind us that, then as now, "Knowing what you are on is crucial, especially if you're working class".

We were then taken through a potted history of resistance over the past four decades and our union's role in it, starting with the opposition to the Poll Tax; which was stopped through mass protest and ultimately brought down Margaret Thatcher. The movement to support Nelson Mandela and to end the racist Apartheid regime in South Africa, a glittering example of international solidarity. The movement to fight for justice for the family of Stephen Lawrence, with his parents Doreen and Neville recognising trade union support and being made honorary members of UNISON at last year's NDC.

UNISON was there for justice then and we need to be there for justice now.

Unions have been flexing their muscles over the past few years. Our own union is growing and is seeing more action than ever! Each win, big or small, makes a difference and shows our collective strength.

As we do this, we will carry on the fights for justice that make our union what it is. We must stand by LGBTQ+ workers. To be allies to Trans people, to not be silent and not to associate with those who would deny Trans people their human rights.

We must stand with the people of Palestine by calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and for Israel to allow access to aid. At the same time, we also condemn anti-Semitism and Islamophobia while recognising that being pro-Palestine does not mean you are anti-Semitic.

We must fight against the Tory Party's racist Rwanda policy. Refugees and migrants are welcome here, many keep our public services running and build our union.

As Libby reminded us: "We must always be on the right side of history and the right side of the picket line."

A standing ovation greeted the end of the speech. We wish to thank Libby for all of her service to the union and for her term as president over the past year.

Chris

A quick pint

I'd had half a mind to watch Austria v France but after the disappointment of Belgium's defeat at the hands of Slovakia and an agreeable Turkish meal in the Etci Kitchen on Preston Street, I went for a stroll having already missed the kick-off.

I chanced upon a small hostelry on Dean Street called The Rook Taproom & Beer Shop. There weren't so many people inside or out but charmed by its quaintness I chanced my arm. And lo and behold they were only selling Manchester Bitter from the Marble Brewery, which was once brewed in the cellar of the Marble Arch pub before the operation was moved to bigger premises.

On Monday someone on the Newssheet team floated the idea of finding the cheapest pint in Brighton but this was swiftly dismissed with the realisation that Wetherspoons would almost certainly be the winner!

However, a pint of 4.2% Manchester Bitter came in at just £3.00! In Brighton! It was a happy night or some such. And for the financially prudent, they even sell measures of thirds and two-thirds along with the obligatory halves and pints!

Anyway, The Rook is well worth seeking out, having reopened 18 months ago after it had been closed for some time.

There is a lengthy list advertising the 20 beers and lagers available on draught and if they don't float your boat there is a shelving unit heaving with take-out wines that come in red, white and orange, whatever orange wine may be. And if that still doesn't quench your thirst there is a fridge laden with esoteric bottled and canned beers, ranging from a Belgian Lambic beer (Kriek Boon) to a blackcurrant stout, again from the Marble Brewery.

There really is something for everyone and you can sit and sup your tipple indoors, surrounded by enough timber to build a small ark out of.

Noel

Euro 2024 - Wednesday's games

5pm Turkey v Georgia

8pm Portugal v Czech Republic

The North West Night

Latin American Solidarity Fringe & Social

Wednesday 19 June at 6:30pm – 1am

At Patterns

10 Marine Parade, Kemptown, Brighton BN2 1TL

6:30pm – 8pm - Latin American Solidarity Fringe

Hosted by UNISON North West International Committee, this fringe meeting will feature speakers from across Latin America. This is sure to be a fascinating discussion about the labour movement in Latin America and resistance to the hostile interference from the USA.

8pm – Late - The North West Social

The North West social will immediately follow the Latin American Fringe. There'll be a disco and a free drink for North Westerners as well as food throughout the evening.

Patterns is 15-minute walk down the sea front, just past the Palace Pier. It should be easy to find and could be a lovely summer stroll (weather permitting). For those who can't use Google Maps, here's a map…