

# National Executive Council Elections 2023: Nomination requests

## Kevin JACKSON

Berkshire Healthcare  
and Community Branch

Membership no. 8179710  
Standing in the  
**Community Service Group**  
**General seat**

email: saoirse.kevin4nec@gmail.com



## Saoirse FANNING

Community and Voluntary  
Sector Branch NI

Membership No. 17232142  
Standing in the  
**Community Service Group**  
**Female seat**

email: saoirse.kevin4nec@gmail.com



Dear Branch Secretary,

We are writing to ask your branch to consider nominating us for the following seats for the 2023 NEC elections:

- **Kevin JACKSON, Community Service Group General seat**
- **Saoirse FANNING, Community Service Group Female seat**

All UNISON members face the threat of a spiralling cost-of-living crisis and now we face further austerity from a Tory Government that is determined to make us pay for the economic crisis. These elections are hugely important in determining the way that UNISON tackles these issues. We are standing in solidarity with the Time for Real Change majority on the current NEC. We fully support the democratisation of the union and making the union's strategy and organisation fit the needs of the current situation facing our members.

## *Experience and background*

### Kevin Jackson

I have been a UNISON member for over twenty years and from day one I have been active in the community and voluntary sector. **I am the longest serving member of our Service Group Executive and I was honoured to be elected its Chair six years running.** For the past two years I have been the NEC rep for the service group and I am standing again for another two-year term. I am seeking your branch nomination along with Saoirse Fanning.

I am also a UNISON Branch Secretary in the South East region and **for the past ten years I have built up a branch, which now has more than five hundred members in the Community service group.** I also sit on the South East Regional Committee and I **also chair a number of strategic committees - the first person to do so from the service group.**

In my job I work for a small charity in Berkshire where my main job is to represent adults with autism, mental health and learning disabilities in benefit tribunals, where I use my over **forty years of knowledge within the trade union movement in representing the views of often very vulnerable and anxious people.**

**Please consider nominating me and my fellow Community service group activist Saoirse Fanning who currently holds the female Community seat on the NEC.**

## **Saoirse Fanning**

- **Have worked in the Community and Voluntary Sector for over 12 years, supporting adults with learning disabilities**
- **Elected Branch Secretary for Community and Voluntary Sector Branch NI with over 2,000 members**
- **Elected NEC member to the Community Female Seat**
- **Elected member of the Community Service Group Executive**
- **Current member of Anna McGonigle Western Women's Committee**
- **Elected Women's Officer on Derry Trades Union Council**
- **Elected Company Secretary of Eglinton Community Centre**

I am employed in a large Housing Association and work as a Senior Support Worker, supporting adults with learning disabilities to live as independently as possible, towards achieving a greater quality of life.

**Together with a dedicated organising team of reps from my branch I have recently negotiated an increase in sick pay from 1 week's full pay in any 12-month period to 3 months full pay and 3 months half pay, for the same period.**

**An above inflation pay rise of 15.5% has also been negotiated this year, for the lowest paid across my employer and an agreement on job evaluations.**

**I am part of an active organising campaign within my region, the Supporting People Campaign - which calls for better pay, enhanced terms and conditions for Community Sector-based workers and the implementation of social clauses into all public money funded contracts, which are outsourced to the Community and Voluntary Sector.**

**I am proud to be a member of the largest public sector trade union across these islands but I feel we can achieve so much more.**

Poverty pay and substandard terms and conditions of employment for frontline workers are rife within the C&V Sector and UNISON needs to adequately resource the sector to support activists who want to fight back against rising economic inequality and political failure.

Our union must continue to change to ensure that we are truly a member led union.

## ***What we stand for***

**UNISON must be a member-led union** – We believe this means that elected members should run our union, not selected full-time officials. We want to work with all our paid officials, but it is members and their elected representatives that should be the real leaders. **We need to be an organising, not a servicing, union** – we cannot solve all of our members' problems on a one-by-one basis. Members will always need individual support, but the focus should be on collective action. We need to increase UNISON's collective

and organising activities and to empower our members. **Every large city and county** should have a proud UNISON resource centre in the high street: we need to make it as easy as possible for members to find us. We must present UNISON as a vibrant, democratic, fighting and organising union.

**The pay crisis** – UNISON must end the scourge of low pay. For too long UNISON has failed to adequately fight poverty pay, pay freezes and below-inflation deals. We cannot simply approach pay negotiations the way that UNISON's leadership has done in the past. Hikes in the price of fuel, heating and food are seriously impacting our members. No UNISON member should have to rely on food banks. We need fully funded and staffed public services. Members should not pay the cost of Tory austerity. To achieve this, we want **more cooperative relationships with other unions**. We should work together whenever we can.

**We must support members needing to take industrial action**. Strike pay rates have increased substantially, but there is more to do. UNISON only has a national strike fund of £21 million. This must change if we are to show employers and government we mean business. Also, we need to ensure that every region supports branches that need to carry out effective strike action.

**UNISON's finances** – We need full disclosure and transparency as to how members' money is spent. We must make best use of the surpluses made nationally and locally during the pandemic. Also, we must review UNISON's large property estate and where appropriate, free up resources for organising. We must continue to bring the UNISON Staff Pension scheme deficit down to manageable levels. Members' subs should not be required to keep the scheme afloat. **We should insource all outsourced UNISON services wherever feasible**, based on our trade union values and our aspirations for our union. **We need a green agenda within UNISON**, including an audit of UNISON company cars and the proliferation of meetings requiring members and staff to travel long distances.

**We believe that UNISON should play a positive but challenging role in the Labour Party**. UNISON resources and influence should be used to promote the removal of anti-trade union laws, public delivery of public services and a green new deal that tackles the climate emergency through the creation of green, well-paid, union jobs.

**Equalities in UNISON** are central to our vision. There have been some major developments over the last two years. But there is much more to do to make equality a reality through our entire union, not just its NEC but at all tiers of our union, including within its staffing.

**Legal advice** – We must review UNISON's main legal services contract and particularly the difficulties branch secretaries have accessing timely employment law advice.

**We need a robust and effective review of staffing** to ensure that the great work our staff do is as efficient and meaningful to members as it can be. **We believe UNISON members should decide whether our most senior roles should be elected**.

**We must end once and for all the punitive culture of disciplinary action**. Disciplinary investigations into members take far too long, with no regard for welfare. We must continue to look at these processes from top to bottom and end their use to resolve political differences.

We are confident that the ideas we support will build on the progress made over the last two years. We urge all UNISON members to vote for Time for Real Change candidates in these NEC elections and, if you are able, to help us campaign for real change in UNISON.

Yours sincerely

**Kevin Jackson**

**Saoirse Fanning**