

## National Executive Council Elections 2023: Nomination requests

<p><b>Becky Brookman</b> Dorset Branch Membership No. 8613126 Standing for the South West Female Seat</p> 	<p><b>Kevin Treweeks</b> Plymouth in UNISON Membership No. 1661590 Standing for the South West Male Seat</p> 	<p><b>Avril Young</b> Cornwall Community Health Membership No. 20471839 Standing for the South West Low Paid Reserved Seat</p> 
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Dear Branch Secretary,

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

- **Becky Brookman – South West Female Seat**
- **Kevin Treweeks – South West Male Seat**
- **Avril Young – South West Low Paid Reserved Seat**

All UNISON members face the threat of a spiralling cost-of-living crisis and now we face further austerity from a Tory Government which 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**

#### **Becky Brookman: about me**

I am currently Assistant Branch Secretary of Dorset Branch, a large and active branch representing members in over 240 employers. I have been seconded to the branch for two years now, but I am a Flood Risk Engineer by profession and before that I worked in Environmental Protection. I have been involved with the union from branch to national levels, always campaigning for members' rights with equalities being at the heart of everything I do.

I have now served my first term on the NEC and am really **proud of the changes we have made** as a new NEC over these past 2 years: these couldn't have been achieved without a Time For Real Change majority. I would love to continue to help make positive changes in our union for the benefit of our members. These have included:

- Doubling strike pay from £25 a day to £50 per day and making it payable from day 1 of strike action and not day 4 as it was previously.
- Proposing and strengthening motions to conference including passing a £15 per hour minimum wage as UNISON Policy. This was one of my campaign pledges in 2021, I'm really pleased that this was passed at conference and is now UNISON Policy.
- Stopping the carrying of gambling adverts in UNISON publications.

With this Tory Government continuing their attacks on our pay, cuts to our terms and conditions and threatening our right to strike, we need a strong leadership in UNISON that isn't afraid to fight back and stand alongside our sister unions to say enough is enough. I believe only with a continuing Time For Real Change majority on the NEC can we achieve this.

#### **Kevin Treweeks: about me**

I have had a long career in local authority housing before taking the reins of a large multi-sectoral branch covering Health, Local government, Academy schools and community sector employers like care providers.

I have served the region in several roles mainly on the local government service group and I currently sit on the NJC. I am a regular contributor at national conferences and regional councils and currently serve on the finance working group of South West regional committee.

However, I am much more at home organising in workplaces, and I have recently been instrumental in leading a **successful unionisation effort at a local care company** which led to a pay deal for some low paid staff just before Christmas. I can frequently be found on the picket lines of striking workers bringing solidarity from UNISON to sister unions in struggle.

If elected I want to deliver better support to branches so they can concentrate on delivering for members such as Caseweb and other IT supplied to all branches without charge, Payroll and HR support for branch employed staff, and BSOF arrangements that allow the process to centre on branches rather than the region.

I also want to see UNISON take the lead in the fight back against the cost-of-living crisis. Too often in the past we have been behind other unions in a variety of fights by taking an overly cautious legal approach. We need an NEC that will make use of our excellent legal team to deliver action instead of providing reasons why we can't.

#### **Avril Young: about me**

I have worked within Health and Social care for 35 years in a number of frontline roles, until this last eight months where I now hold an Admin role within the Cornwall Foundation Trust. I am still very much delivering an essential service to people who require health and social care support.

I am new to the branch I have recently joined, but not new to being an active member within UNISON. I currently sit on the **Southwest Regional Women's SOG Group and have the role of Joint Co-ordinator**. I also sit on the regional Campaigns, Communications and Policy Development Committee and the Standing Orders Committee for National Women's Conference. I am also a TULO representative for my local Labour Party branch.

I am always problem-solving, looking at sectors that have no union recognition and coming up with ideas particularly within the community health and social care sector on how to encourage workers to challenge their employers. We need them to join and be active in their union, to create safe working environments and improve workers' rights.

I have been successful over the years in promoting equality within the workforce and developing policies in the workplace such as negotiating neurodiversity and well-being policies. I am passionate about education and learning and have negotiated learning agreements within my previous branches. If elected I want to help

change the union, making it more democratic and organised around the needs of our low-paid women members who are continuing to bear the brunt of this Government's continuing Austerity.

### **What we stand for**

**For nationally coordinated action to defeat the cost of living crisis** across service groups and with other trade unions. If we are serious about winning pay disputes we need joined-up UNISON approach and we need to see other unions as allies, not competition.

**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.

**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.

**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 who 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

**Avril Young, Cornwall Community Health Branch**

**Kevin Treweeks, Plymouth in UNISON**

**Becky Brookman, Dorset Branch**

**PS** You might be interested to attend an event with speakers from the current NEC seeking re-election, including our UNISON President Andrea Egan, alongside some who are standing for the first time. The meeting will be chaired by long-time UNISON member John McDonnell MP and also speaking will be the fantastic MPs Nadia Whittome and food poverty campaigner Ian Byrne. Find out more about our campaign, what the NEC has achieved so far since June 2021, and what we want to do going forward. Our campaign is committed to transparency: you're invited to the meeting so do please come along and find out for yourself how we can change and build our union for the better.

**Tuesday 17 January 2023, 6.30-7.30pm**

More information and to register for a Zoom link:

<https://nec2023-change-the-union.eventbrite.co.uk>