



UNISON in Nottinghamshire FE & 6th form colleges

Autumn 2021

Sitting here starting to write the first newsletter of this academic year I took a look at my email inbox – this time last year it was awash with risk assessments and revised risk assessments. I can't help but think about how we have all managed to work together to help keep colleges as safe as they can be in the pandemic. Branch officers had some very constructive discussions with HR and Principals and shared best practice across the county.

If you have any health and safety worries whether they are COVID related or not you should raise them with your manager, H&S officer or HR. If that doesn't resolve things then get in touch with the branch. Our Health and Safety Officer is around on Wednesdays but any one of us can give you some initial advice. You could always book a slot at one of our bookable advice sessions. Don't let small concerns

become bigger – book on and get some advice early. *Jo Myers*

Meet the team for 2021/22 ... Workplace stewards

West Notts College

Jane Hawksford

Ian Shaw

Josh Levy (VBSS)

Nottingham College

Paul Bateman

North Notts College

Dawn Casey

Bilborough College

No stewards



**College based
stewards:
Could one be you?**



Jo Myers
Branch Organiser

Take some time out from helping others to help yourself

It's so easy especially right now to forget how important it is to take some time to do things for yourself. Notts UNISON has run wellbeing workshops that members have found useful. Keep your eye out for emails from the branch with information about workshops.

In the meantime here are some things that you can do:

1. Make sure your contact details are up to date with UNISON/ your employer/LGPS
2. Check that you have nominated someone to receive your LGPS/UNISON death grant
3. Take out a Free Will with UNISON - call UNISON Direct 0800 0 857 857
4. Become a UNISON rep so that you have someone who can help in your college – we have various roles for you (Learner reps, stewards, Health and safety reps.) We make all new reps very welcome and provide excellent training and support. Who knows where it might take you? Contact the branch branch.office@nottsunison.org.uk to find out more.
5. Take your breaks, make 2021/22 the year that you do take your breaks that you are legally/contractually entitled to.
6. Get to know a bit more about your terms and conditions, what pay point are you at? What Grade are you on? What hours are you actually paid for? What time are you supposed to start/finish? These things matter.
7. Locate the policies for your employer. How would you know what they say? Often people need them at a time of crisis, don't leave it until then to know where they are.
8. Put your steward/ branch contact details in your phone – you never know when you might need to call or where you might be when you do! Tel: 0115 9810405

Vacancy for UNISON reps in all colleges

Stewards are members of UNISON who are elected by members to be a representative for the members in a workplace.

The vacancies are for stewards to represent the interests of members in their college.

You would work within the college and be supported by the wider college stewards team and the Branch officers. We would train you so that you could do the work needed. Along the way you will gain knowledge, confidence and transferable skills.

If you are interested and want to know more contact the branch office branch.office@nottsunison.org.uk using the subject ***FE workplace steward enquiry***

What do stewards do?

- *Make sure that members concerns are listened to – make some time to talk with members (facility time is allowed for this)*
- *Bring member's collective issues to the attention of managers –“ there is never any paper in the printer when staff send documents to the central printers” “ the new working hours are fair for working parents”*
- *Ask colleagues to join UNISON, being in the union gives people a voice when there is a big issue and reassurance that someone can support them if things are not going well.*
- *Represent people with casework such as ill health issues and when more experienced, disciplinary and grievances. All this is with support.*
- *Meet with management at the local consultation/ negotiation meetings. Never on your own, always with a more experienced rep/officer.*

Every campus would benefit from having a UNISON steward. We have lots of support for stewards. We have a WhatsApp group, stewards' meetings through the year and we are always on hand to give advice and support. Campuses with stewards have someone on hand who can find out if something you're being told is right, can bring things to our attention quickly and can attend low level meetings such as welfare or investigation meetings that we can't routinely attend. Think about it, why isn't there a UNISON steward at your campus?"

UCU industrial action advice for UNISON members

On Tuesday 28th October UCU members will be involved in strike action at 13 colleges in England.

Unison members should carry out their duties as per normal. They should not carry out duties normally done by UCU members taking Industrial Action. If asked to do this, UNISON member should contact their branch.

Whilst UNISON members can show solidarity with those on picket line, they should not actually join another union's picket line.

And finally

- Follow UNISON Campaigning Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges on Facebook for updates including information about workshops and seminars