

# LGR Update



Updates on Local Government Reorganisation from the joint North Yorkshire local government branches; Craven branch, Harrogate branch, North Yorkshire branch, Ryedale branch and Scarborough branch

**Issue 10**  
**10 March 2023**

## Disappointment for District & Borough staff

*A last minute change from NYC means that district and borough staff will not be offered the new council terms and conditions on day one.*

It has been confirmed that, despite earlier assurances, staff who are transferring from the district and borough councils will not now be offered the new terms and conditions from day one.

Some staff in the so-called 'multi-faceted' roles will have to wait until their service is restructured.

When we became aware of this we met with NYC senior management and expressed our disappointment at this news, and reiterated our position which is that we cannot have a two-tier workforce and that ALL staff must be able to access the new terms and conditions on 1 April, or at least have the benefits back-dated to 1 April.

NYC have confirmed that "most" district and borough staff will be offered the new terms and conditions by the end of June and they have agreed that they will have them back-dated to 1 April.

However, they are insisting that staff who do not have an NYC-evaluated job role by the end of June will not be able to access the new terms and conditions and will lose the right to be back-dated to 1 April. We do not agree with this.

We maintain our position that everyone must have the option either from 1 April, or back-dated to 1 April. Anything else would create a two-tier workforce. Anyone who has not been offered the new terms and conditions by the end of June should speak to UNISON for help in raising a formal grievance.

It remains the case that anyone who wants to stay on their current terms and conditions will be able to do so.

### Which branch?

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#### North Yorkshire CC

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#### Richmondshire DC

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#### Ryedale DC

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#### Scarborough BC

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#### Selby DC

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# Here for you beyond 1 April

**Don't forget that your UNISON branch and local UNISON reps will still be here after 1 April to support you where you work as the new council takes shape**

In the last LGR Update we let you know about how UNISON will operate and continue to support you from 1 April onwards as we all work for the new North Yorkshire Council. We thought it would be helpful to remind you as we get closer to 1 April.

Currently, there are five UNISON branches covering the eight councils. Selby, Hambleton and Richmondshire are all part of the North Yorkshire branch with NYCC. Craven, Harrogate, Ryedale and Scarborough all having their own branches.

Since LGR was announced, the five branch secretaries have been meeting regularly to make sure we have a united voice representing all our members across all the councils.

Just as the eight councils have been through a process to come together as one, so too will our five UNISON branches.

However, we know that you want the security and stability of knowing that your current UNISON reps will still be here for you after 1 April. So, the five branches have agreed that we will stay as we are until the summer of 2024.

We know that LGR will be far from complete on 1 April, and the hard work is yet to come. By staying as we are, it means your local UNISON branch will be here for you after 1 April just as it is today.

In the longer term there will be



*Five UNISON branches working together on your behalf. Back row: Andy Adamson, David Houlgate. Seated: Serena Williams, Wendy Nichols and Neil Braham.*

benefits for members by us all joining together to form a new branch based on the new council. The new branch will be one of the largest UNISON branches in Yorkshire and will employ staff in the office to make sure there is always someone available to take your call or answer your email.

In the spring of 2024 the current branches will hold meetings to formally close down, and there will be AGMs for the new branch to elect the new branch officers.

We have agreed that the new branch should be based on an area structure, so there will be local meetings and local convenors for each area. This means we will be able to maintain the local links that you have with your union, and arrange more social events and

meetings that are based in the areas.

The key messages are:

- Nothing will change in the UNISON branches until 2024. You will remain a member of your existing branch.
- From 1 April 2023 new members will be allocated to the North Yorkshire branch.
- In 2024 we will come together as one branch.
- The new branch will be area-based to retain the local link.
- There will be plenty of roles for current and new activists.
- We want to strengthen the social side with more events and meetings for members across the new branch.

# UNISON confirmed as the recognised trade union for North Yorkshire Council

**UNISON and North Yorkshire Council have agreed and signed a new Recognition Agreement, which will replace existing agreements at the district, borough and county councils. But what does 'recognition' mean, and what does it mean for staff?**

UNISON and North Yorkshire Council have signed a new Recognition Agreement, which will come into effect on 1 April. This sets out that UNISON will be the recognised trade union for all NYC employees who are employed on NJC and JNC terms and conditions. In effect this means everyone except teachers in schools and some education staff who are employed on 'Soulbury' terms and conditions.

## What does being 'recognised' mean?

Some employers formally 'recognise' trade unions, others do not. Most public sector employers do recognise trade unions.

This is a legal term which simply means that the employer agrees that a trade union (or a number of trade unions) will be the collective voice of the workers and that the employer will negotiate collectively with the union(s) rather than individual staff.

It means that, in the case of North Yorkshire Council, UNISON is the official representative voice of the workers.

This is good for the employer (easier to negotiate with elected

representatives than 15,000 individuals) and good for workers (we are stronger when we speak with one voice, rather than 15,000 voices).



*If you want to be heard  
—speak in UNISON*

## What other rights does 'recognition' give us?

With formal recognition comes a lot of rights for the union and our members.

Members can elect representatives to negotiate with the employer. In UNISON we do this at our AGMs, so everyone who is negotiating on your behalf is elected by you.

Recognition also means that the employer has to follow a law called the Safety Representatives and Safety

Committee Regulations. These Regulations give us the right to have elected Health & Safety Representatives who can investigate accidents and incidents, inspect the workplace, raise complaints on behalf of staff, and who must be consulted on any change in the workplace that might affect the health, safety and welfare of workers.

## How does negotiation work?

We have agreed new processes for collective bargaining at North Yorkshire Council. There will be a number of Joint Consultative Committees (JCC), each of which will meet at least four times a year:

Each Directorate will have a JCC. These will have four UNISON representatives and four management representatives.

There will be a whole-Council JCC. This committee will have five UNISON representatives and five management representatives.

Finally, there will be a whole-Council Safety Committee. This will have five UNISON representatives and five management representatives.

# Strike ballot at Selby leisure services

Our members who deliver the Selby District Council leisure service contract and work for Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles are currently being balloted for strike action.

The Selby leisure contract covers the Selby Leisure Centre, Tadcaster Leisure Centre and the Selby Park. There are about 45 staff working on the contract, which was privatised a number of years ago.

Since privatisation of the contract, our members terms, conditions and pay have fallen well below those given to staff directly employed by the council,

During Covid, leisure centres closed and our members were unable to work. They were put on furlough, but unlike staff employed by the council, they did not have their furlough topped up so they lost 20% of their income.

Despite this, and despite remaining loyal to IHL and Selby DC, they had a pay freeze in 2020 and 2021, with pay only rising for those below the minimum wage.

For 2022, IHL have offered just 4% for those earning more than £25,000 and 6% for those on below £25,000. This is well below inflation, and below what council-employed workers have been awarded over the same period.

Our members at IHL have rejected this offer twice and we



have now started a formal industrial action ballot.

The ballot closes on Thursday 23 March, and if a majority of our members vote in favour of action we could announce a strike day as early as Easter.

We remain in discussions with IHL and also the new North Yorkshire Council about the situation.

Our members want, and deserve, a fair and reasonable pay increase that:

- Reflects the current cost of living crisis and inflation
- Reflects that they have not had a pay rise since 2019
- Reflects that they lost money during Covid, but remained loyal to IHL and Selby DC.

In the longer term, we are pleased that the new North Yorkshire Council is not renewing the contract with IHL when it expires next year. The Selby leisure service looks likely to come 'in-house' via the Brimhams company which will be wholly-owned by North Yorkshire Council.

## Don't forget pay date changes!

If your pay date is changing and you need financial help from the council, the deadline to request support is Friday 17 March.

North Yorkshire Council has decided that it wants all staff to be paid on the same day. As most current staff are paid on the last weekday of the month, this will be the arrangement for everyone from 1 April.

The first few pay dates for everyone will be:

- Friday 28 April
- Wednesday 31 May
- Friday 30 June
- Monday 31 July
- Thursday 31 August

If you work for one of the district or borough councils and you are currently paid earlier in the month you might want to consider either a bridging loan or an advancement to help manage the extended gap between pay dates. Find out more on the intranet:

We have also agreed with NYC that any costs you incur as part of the change to your pay date (i.e. bank charges, fees from insurance companies) will be reimbursed by the council. You need to inform your payroll if you need to claim any costs back.