



# Annual Report 2025-26



# £Pay! Our three-pronged approach

**National Pay  
Bargaining  
(annual % rise)**

**Local Pay  
Table (Making  
Sure  
Denbighshire  
get the best  
out of national  
agreements)**

**Fair Pay and  
Grading  
(Making sure  
your paid fairly  
for the work  
you do)**

## National Pay Bargaining

In 2025 we achieved a 3.2% increase effective from 1 April 2025. This increase applies to all locally determined pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer. The NJC also has agreed to permanently delete Spinal Column Point (SCP) 2 from the NJC pay spine starting from 1 April 2026.

We have submitted the following claim for 2026 and are awaiting a response from the employers.

The claim aims to reverse long-term pay erosion, particularly at the lower end of the pay spine, where wages have fallen behind inflation and the Real Living Wage.

Key elements of the claim include:

- Minimum hourly rate of £15 for all NJC staff, with bottom-loading adjustments for SCP 2–9 to exceed £15/hour.
- Increase of at least £3,000 or 10%, whichever is greater, across all spinal column points.
- One extra day of annual leave for all staff.
- Reduction of the working week by two hours without loss of pay.
- Flexibility for school staff to take at least one day of annual leave during term time without pay reduction.
- Abolition of Level 1 Teaching Assistant roles, moving all Level 1 staff to Level 2.

# £Pay!

## Local Pay Table

This year we have been able to work closely with HR and the other unions to implement changes to the Denbighshire County Council NJC pay table. The national agreement required that we remove the bottom point. We were able to go much further and have agreed a new pay table that begins at SCP5 as well as removing some longstanding anomalies and ensuring a much fairer and more equal distribution of incremental points throughout the different grades.

## Fair Pay and Grading

This year we have negotiated many personal cases that have helped improve staffs pay as well as working on some substantial improvements for teams across the council including:

- Family Support Workers in Children's Services
- Social Care Practitioners in Adult Social Care
- Team Leaders in Cefndy
- and the longstanding dispute on pay for staff performing the vital Winter Maintenance service (gritters).

# £Pay!

# Protecting You At Work

The last 12 months have been busy for the branch and our members. We've been involved with a wide variety of cases across the spectrum of workplace situations.

Our caseworkers have guided members through sickness absence meetings and the ill health retirement process. We have supported members to bring up concerns about their workplace and follow their workplaces grievance procedures. We have fought for flexible working and fair leave allocations. The branch has assisted members when they have questions about their contracts and have taken part in job and pay evaluations to ensure our members pay grade represents their day-to-day responsibilities.

Please see below some of the feedback we have received this year for from our members', identifying information has been redacted for privacy.

*"I had help through a very difficult period from (caseworker), I can't honestly thank her enough for her professional support, her belief in me and her fight for what was right. I really don't think I would have still be working for (workplace) without her help. Her dedication to fight for what is right is beyond words and I will be forever grateful to her and all she did for me."*

*"No one ever wants to find themselves in a position where they need the support of a Unison representative or legal services. Unfortunately, I found myself in that situation through no fault of my own, and I can honestly say that without my rep, I would not have made it through what became an exceptionally difficult, emotional, and mentally draining period. (Caseworker) went above and beyond from start to finish. no point did she make any judgement; instead, she provided calm, steady guidance throughout the entire situation. Without this invaluable service, I doubt I would have been able to navigate everything as quickly or as effectively as I did."*



# There's a lot going on for school staff

This year has also seen a significant victory for schools staff who have been spared a registration fee rise following a Unison campaign. Since 2016, all 50,000 learning support workers in Wales must be registered with the Education Workforce Council. The certificate costs £45 a year but was subsidised by the Welsh government so learning support workers only paid £15. This support was axed last year and the Education Workforce Council agreed to step in only for the current financial year. Following Unison campaigning, the subsidy is to be paid in 2025/26, meaning learning support workers will only need to find £15 next year.

Schools staff do an amazing job but also face many challenges such as violence in schools and poor pupil behaviour, being asked to go above and beyond job descriptions, many individual school specific issues and like all public sector workers and our whole community we all continue to suffer with the cost of living crisis.

Unions work best when we bring staff together to work on positive solutions to the challenges they face. We believe public services function best when workers have a strong voice too.

That is why we have launched a Denbighshire schools project and are gathering your views via a survey. You can access the form here [UNISON CYMRU – Denbighshire Schools Campaign – Fill out form](#) One of the reasons we have launched the project is because we have had quite a few cases in individual schools during the year.





## Denbighshire Leisure Privatisation

UNISON campaigned hard to ensure that privatisation proposals for Denbighshire Leisure Ltd have collapsed. The proposals would have been damaging to workers pay, terms and conditions and would have seen private individuals extracting profit from the company in a way that can only have harmed the services for the residents of Denbighshire.

Our campaign to keep Denbighshire Leisure in the public sector has ensured that DLL staff will continue to benefit from national pay bargaining and the new local pay table as well as continuing to participate in Denbighshire County Council's Job evaluation scheme.

Our priority now, as ever, is to ensure the service is sustainable, fairly and democratically run for the benefit of the residents of Denbighshire. We have reached out to the council once more asking for staff and their unions to be involved in the process of planning the future. As we have said throughout this process a range of stakeholders also need to be consulted including the service users and the public.

A variety of options should have been explored from the outset with a proper appraisal of the merits of different options considered. We now have the opportunity to re-set and to deliver a sustainable public service for the benefit of the public and not for the enrichment of a few private individuals.

# Save Cefndy!

Cefndy Healthcare, a long-established supported employment and manufacturing service in Denbighshire, is currently the subject of significant scrutiny following financial challenges and a Cabinet decision in October 2025 to close the service.

Staff learned of the proposals in September and UNISON immediately began engaging with staff talking to everyone at Cefndy and asking them their views on whether Cefndy should close or their alternative suggestions.

UNISON members came together to suggest a range of alternative options that could save Cefndy and needed to be explored. We engaged with Councillors, held a public meeting and raised the issue on ITV Wales news. Although not initially successful members persisted and there was a great turnout of staff and councillors to a call in meeting. We were able to present evidence of the potential future options and to challenge some of the details in the reports that had recommend closure.

The collective action of UNISON members and Councillors was able to persuade Cabinet to change its position and we were granted a reprieve.

## What we achieved

After representations from Scrutiny, UNISON, staff, and elected members, Cabinet agreed on 18 November 2025 to pause the closure to allow the exploration of alternative, sustainable options.

- Scrutiny and UNISON challenged the initial closure decision, highlighting the need to fully explore all viable alternatives.
- Cabinet therefore agreed to a six-month pause, during which Scrutiny, UNISON, and stakeholders will develop a detailed business case for Cefndy's sustainable future.
- A Working Group has been established, with staff and elected members represented supported by a Project Manager, a Head of Service, and up to £50,000 for external advice. It started work in January and will present its findings in the summer.

We are now working hard to come up with a plan for a sustainable future for Cefndy.



# North Wales Fire Service Culture Review

Throughout the year Denbighshire UNISON have been engaging with the Service and fellow union colleagues in the FBU with the Culture Review. We worked with members to ensure that Corporate (Green book) staff had a voice in the process. We gathered views through meetings, calls with members, and insights from officers involved in previous reviews.

Overall, staff felt that recent changes—particularly improvements in transparency, leadership, and flexible working—were positive, though the cultural journey is still ongoing. Key concerns included inconsistent management practices, high turnover among managers, insufficient time for new managers to learn their roles, and over-reliance on frontline staff to train inexperienced managers.

Corporate staff highlighted issues around career progression, the lack of clear pathways linked to training, and potential unfairness where roles favour operational experience without genuine need. They also stressed the importance of job evaluation keeping pace with role changes. We emphasised the need for consistent implementation of good practice across all teams, stronger career development structures, and further exploration of management turnover.

We are now working on policy, training and support for Staff Facing Online Abuse and looking for volunteers among the corporate staff to participate in this initiative or our general activities within the Service. If you would like to get involved with this work in Denbighshire then contact [unison.admin@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:unison.admin@denbighshire.gov.uk) and put the word 'Fire' in the subject line.



**Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub  
Fire and Rescue Service**

**UNISON**  
*the public service union*

# Self-Organised Groups

## Race

We have focused on two priorities during the year. We have offered protection and reassurance to members affected by racist graffiti and other incidents and far-right campaigning, through our safe space initiative. Committee members have participated in anti-racist protests locally, regionally and nationally.

We have supported members who are skilled workers in the social care profession who have been facing visa issues due to the poor behaviour of private sector employers. This has included supporting individual cases and engaging with UNISON Cymru campaigns which had led to the establishment of...

We'd like to do much more in this area but we need you to help us do it! UNISON operates Black Members groups and networks locally, regionally and nationally as well. If you would like to get involved with this work in Denbighshire then contact [unison.admin@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:unison.admin@denbighshire.gov.uk) and put the word 'Race' in the subject line.

## Disabled Members

Our Save Cefndy Campaign has been a major element of our work on disabled issues this year. But this has been alongside a wide range of other work in this area.

We have worked on many individual cases relating to disability throughout the year.

Denbighshire County Council have demonstrated a willingness to engage with disabled people and UNISON members by participating in our group to look at the necessary equipment, policy and training to support Hearing Aid users in jobs throughout the council.

We have also arranged training on neurodiversity aimed specifically at managers working with neurodivergent staff. These are free courses funded through the Wales Unions Learning Fund.

We'd like to do much more in this area but we need you to help us do it! UNISON operates Disabled Members groups and networks locally, regionally and nationally as well. If you would like to get involved with this work in Denbighshire then contact [unison.admin@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:unison.admin@denbighshire.gov.uk) and put the word 'Disabled' in the subject line.

# Self-Organised Groups

## Women

This year our Womens's Officer has set up Coffee Morning Drop Ins to bring together our female staff. These informal sessions are a time for mutual support, sharing experiences and focusing on both employment related issues and wellbeing more broadly. There also just a great chance for a Coffee and a chat.

We have been involved in negotiating policy improvements in the areas of Sexual Harassment Policy and have supported many individuals with menopause, women's health related absence and carers leave.

In the coming year we hope to expand our work on wellbeing and mutual support by drawing on resources from the Wales Union Learning Fund who will be offering courses free in wellbeing topics from April onwards.

We'd like to do much more in this area but we need you to help us do it! UNISON operates Women Members groups and networks locally, regionally and nationally as well. If you would like to get involved with this work in Denbighshire then contact [unison.admin@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:unison.admin@denbighshire.gov.uk) and put the word 'Women' in the subject line.

## Retired Members

We made a good start early in the year engaging retired members through lunch meetings. We have also benefited from retired members participation in regional and national conferences and the life of the branch.

Its clear that in order to keep the momentum up throughout the year we need a volunteer to take on the organising from among the retired members. Following our good start engagement dwindled as committee members became overwhelmed in our two big campaigns and in the day to day case work.

Retired members are an essential part of our union with vital skills and expertise that we need to harness. We look forward to engaging better in the coming year. If you would like to get involved with this work in Denbighshire then contact [unison.admin@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:unison.admin@denbighshire.gov.uk) and put the word 'retired' in the subject line.



# Social Partnership Brings New Opportunities

We have gained new rights and responsibilities created by the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023. The Act expands trade union participation in public-sector decision-making, particularly around wellbeing objectives, fair work, and public procurement. Our approach focuses on three main areas:

1. Relationship with existing collective bargaining structures
2. Participation in setting Wellbeing Objectives
3. Influencing procurement frameworks and contract performance

## Fair Work Agenda

The most developed part of the Act relates to Fair Work, defined by Welsh Government through six elements:

- Employee voice and collective representation
- Security and flexibility
- Opportunity for access, growth and progression
- Safe, healthy and inclusive work environments
- Legal rights respected

UNISON emphasises that:

- The Act must not undermine existing agreements.
- Existing wins are not up for renegotiation.
- Collective bargaining remains central to Fair Work.

## Trade Union Participation in Setting Wellbeing Objectives

Under the Act, unions now have the right to participate in setting public bodies' Wellbeing Objectives, which must align with the seven national wellbeing goals (e.g. A healthier Wales, A more equal Wales).

Branches must:

- Translate wide-ranging UNISON policy into a manageable set of local priorities.
- Link union priorities to the national wellbeing goals.
- Agree local objectives through democratic branch processes.

UNISON Cymru is expected to produce an annual set of national priorities that branches can adopt and adapt.

## Wellbeing Impact Assessments(IAs)

Wellbeing impact assessments are a crucial way in which the union can participate in decision making on; Strategic plans, Projects and programmes, Restructures and Major procurement decisions.

The Denbighshire UNISON branch must be proactive, organised, and strategic to make full use of the Act's extended participation rights. That means ensuring we draw on your expertise when proposals for change come for your department. If you would like to learn more on helping to organise and influence things in your department then contact [unison.admin@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:unison.admin@denbighshire.gov.uk) and put the word 'Workplace' in the subject line.