

9 September 2024

Read our weekly union solidarity round-up: 9-15 September

Read our round-up of union activity across the UK and from around the world.

In parliament last week, [Antonia Bance MP criticised Amazon](#) for its “disgraceful union busting tactics and intimidation”. In their warehouse in Coventry, recognition of the GMB union was lost by just 28 votes. Justin Madders, who is parliamentary under-secretary of state at the Department for Business and Trade as well as a GMB member, promised that the laws around statutory recognition would be simplified as part of the government’s program to make work pay.

Evidence-based activism

Madders’ commitment to supporting unions was underpinned by the results of [a survey run by the Institute for Public Policy Research](#). This shows that most managers believe in the importance of workers’ rights and believe that they are good for business. Of those surveyed, 68% thought workers’ rights should actually be strengthened. For example, 74% were in favour of giving statutory sick pay from the first day of illness.

This chimes with a report by the TUC that says that [workers are systematically cheated of holiday pay](#). Last year, one in 25 employees who were entitled to holiday pay got none at all, and the report calls for strengthening of enforcement measures. With over a million people affected, this totals £2 billion of lost pay across society. No wonder, then, that the Labour Research Department reports that over half of [TUC’s member unions have seen their memberships grow](#).

Union voices

TUC general secretary Paul Nowak demanded that [public sector wage rises should be above inflation](#) in order to redress the average real-term 3.6% fall over the last fourteen years of Tory rule. Not only as a matter of justice for those who serve society, pay restoration is vital to address the drastic recruitment and retention crises across so many sectors.

Continuing the theme of the previous government's catastrophic mismanagement of public services, CWU leader Dave Ward writes at length in the *Morning Star* on [the Royal Mail takeover bid by EP Group](#). While CWU's ultimate aim is for a return to public ownership, it is demanding that the new contractual obligations are strengthened, with a guarantee against compulsory redundancies and outsourcing.

Meanwhile, a Labour rebellion looms over the plan to cut winter fuel payments. Millions of low-income pensioners, struggling in the cost-of-living crisis, will no longer qualify for the state support that helps guarantee a safely heated home. PCS, Unite and the TUC at large are all [calling for a government U-turn on cutting winter fuel payments](#). The TUC conference (Congress) started yesterday (Sunday 9). Make sure to [read our coverage of the key motions](#) online.

Equality Audit 2024

The TUC has released its [2024 Equality Audit](#). The audit is a yardstick to measure the progress unions are making on equality across our movement. In positive news, there's been a big increase in wins for women workers. More challengingly, reps said there was a shortage in guidance on disability and reasonable adjustments and flexible working. You can [read the full report on the TUC website](#)

.

Unionreps Connect 2024

Unionreps Connect is a one-day, in-person event for workplace union reps, organised by the TUC. This essential training and networking day will include an employment law update from Thompsons Solicitors and workshops on issues that are key to the rep role. It will take place on Tuesday 15 October – please share with your networks and encourage workplace reps to [register online](#).

Megaphone – share and support!

- **Stop cuts to jobs and conditions at Sheffield Hallam University:** Campus unions are coming together to fight the university-wide cuts. [Sign and share their petition](#).
- **Protect Welsh National Opera:** [Support the Musicians' Union's campaign](#) to keep its members in secure work and keep Wales' rich musical heritage strong.