

Work Voice Pay MONTHLY

Issue: 4 – May 2018



“Welcome to Work Voice Pay Monthly, as a part of Unite’s industrial strategy, each month we will be bringing you the very latest bargaining data and news in your sector”.

Sharon Graham, Executive Officer – Work Voice Pay



Cost of Living – Going Up

The latest RPI figure shows inflation at 3.4%

On 23 May the UK Government’s Office for National Statistics (ONS) released the retail price index (RPI) figure from April 2018. It shows that prices were up 3.4% from one year ago.

Clothing and footwear went up 7.8%

Updating your summer wardrobe is getting more expensive. Kid’s clothes are 7.7% pricier than this time in 2017 and if you want to buy women’s clothes you should budget for 9.2% more!

Household goods rose 3.5%

Household inflation is on the rise with the cost of furniture being 4.6% more than the previous year. Electrical appliances were also up by 5.7%.

Leisure Services are up 4.6% more

Escaping for a well-earned break is costing people 6.0% more than this time last year. Entertainment and other recreation has also risen by 4.0%.



Vehicle Tax and Insurance up 6.3%

The cost of running a car is hitting car drivers this year, having increased by a significant 6.3% over the last year.

Stagnant wages and worse conditions

This is the story of deregulation and a divided labour market, says Sharon Graham.



"At the Organising and Leverage Department we have just finished a new investigation into how our labour market has been fragmented and split. Our Shop Stewards see first-hand just how many jobs are getting worse, with different types of insecure employment being introduced and outsourcing continuing to grow.

This is just part of a wider strategy of deregulation, which has created a 'race to the bottom'. Getting rid of employment protections, breaking-up the workforce and mass privatisation, are all part of the reason why workers' wages are not growing and jobs are insecure.

Our new report has looked at this in detail by Unite sector. We not only found out how insecure employment and outsourcing is impacting on our industries but also, who the biggest enterprises are. We now have an initial list of 296 employers that generate the most revenue in our 19 Sectors. This means that we can now identify the pace-setters where the Union is strong and we have the power to negotiate, as well as those major firms where there is no strong union and the jobs are likely to be worse and wages poorer.

A blue ink signature of Sharon Graham.

Sharon Graham
Unite Executive Officer

We are going to put this critical information into the hands of our activists and build on it, developing alternative strategies and industrial plans. We now need a co-ordinated, proactive programme of action to raise wages and deliver good jobs."

It's Your Work, Voice, Pay:

Use the Work, Voice, Pay Database to check pay rises and help co-ordinate bargaining

As part of our ongoing work to develop the Work, Voice, Pay toolkit, all Shop Stewards with WVP login details can now access the WVP Pay Database, and see what pay rises other Unite workplaces have negotiated.

Shop Stewards/Reps have already used the information to secure better deals for their own members. You can search pay deals by Sector and Region to give credible comparators for your negotiations. You can also get the latest dates for Unite negotiations to help you co-ordinate bargaining with other workplaces in the same company and Sector.

Workplace name	Anniversary date	Current pay deal	Employee	Region	Recognition	Sector Name
Company A Cargo Care (CH09 127) (99999T)	01/01	5.00	Company A	NW	✓	Autom Indus
Company B Heat Office (CH05 127) (99999T)	01/01	5.00	Company B	NW	✓	Autom Indus
Company C Bath (L09 927) (9997M)	24/11	4.50	Company C	NW	✓	Autom Indus
Company C South (L09 927) (9999M)	24/11	4.50	Company C	NW	✓	Autom Indus

You can login to the database here: <https://workvoicepay.unitetheunion.org>

If you don't have your WVP login details please contact: david.wesson@unitetheunion.org



Who owns who?

Mergers and Acquisitions News



Last month's proposed merger between Asda and Sainsbury's has triggered contract changes that threaten the income of our members up to the sum of £3,000 a year. The Union had already warned of the impact on workers when the merger was first announced. Workers will gain a pay rise but will lose paid breaks and annual bonuses. The Competition and Markets Authority last Friday said it had started gathering information into the proposed merger ahead of a formal investigation.

In other M&A news:

- In the Food sector, KP acquired Tyrrells for an undisclosed sum. The Tyrrells business includes a head office and two manufacturing sites in the UK.
- Finance members in Virgin Money will be interested in the outcome of a £1.6 billion takeover bid by Clydesdale Bank and Yorkshire Bank Group that could turn it into one of Britain's biggest banks.
- In hospitality, French property group, Fonciere des Regions has made a deal to buy 14 upmarket hotels from Starwood Capital for £858 million. The transaction will see InterContinental Hotels Group sign long-term leases for 13 of those 14 hotels.

Bite Sized Bargaining

Using new data regulations as a negotiating opportunity

Unite Shop Stewards / Reps have an opportunity to further improve conditions for our members. This is particularly the case regarding workplace surveillance. As of now everybody has new legal rights to access information held on them. Most of you have probably received emails from organisations you can't remember, asking you to sign up to something you can't recall! That's because of these new rights.

In the workplace, every worker now has the right to;

- Know what information the employer holds on you and how they are processing it.
- Access any information that the employer holds on you. This includes information regarding grievances or disciplinary action, or information obtained through a monitoring process/system.

As Shop Stewards / Reps you will see the potential in these rights and not least for helping to protect activists. Think 'blacklisting' or less systematic discrimination: this could help you find out if the employer is planning anything. On a wider level, think performance related pay, think 'bell curve' – what could our members find out about unfair pay systems? Importantly, workers also have a right to request that the employer delete personal information if it is no longer relevant - particularly useful if a disciplinary issue should be taken off someone's record.

Of course, as always we should try and extend these rights by negotiating new or improved agreements on monitoring and surveillance. The team is working on a draft WVP guide as we speak, so watch this space.

Link to the official guide on GDPR: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>

Please let us know if you need any support: sharon.graham@unitetheunion.org

Tricks of the Trade

Bogus self-employment

Fancy doing the same job you're doing now for your employer but being your own boss and paying less tax? Sounds too good to be true right? Right. Chances are that if you go down this route you will be joining the growing ranks of bogus self-employed in the UK.

Bogus self-employment exists when workers are declared as self-employed even though legal tests would likely define them as employees or workers working for a particular employer.

Our estimate is that there are currently more than 720,000 of these workers in the UK. Many are lured into this position by the promise of reduced tax bills. However, in reality the arrangement means that the employer can avoid paying the minimum wage, employers' National Insurance, sick pay, holiday pay and pension contributions, thereby reducing costs for them and shifting risk onto the worker.

Unite research found that bogus self-employment is prevalent across our industrial sectors. The growing use of 'umbrella' payroll agencies and sub-contracting has led to workers losing out on rights, protections and pay. If not addressed, it will further under-cut wages and collective bargaining power.

Look out for more information and what Unite members can do about it over the coming months. Does your employer use 'bogus self-employed' workers? Are they covered by your agreements? Send us your stories: sharon.graham@unitetheunion.org

