

Work Voice Pay MONTHLY

Issue 9: October 2018



“Welcome to the October edition of 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”.

Sharon Graham, Executive Officer – Work Voice Pay



Cost of Living – Going Up

The latest RPI figure shows inflation at 3.3%

On 17 October the UK Government’s Office for National Statistics (ONS) released the latest retail price index (RPI) figure. It shows that prices are up 3.3% from a year ago.

Fuel and light are up 8.3%

Fuel bills continue to hurt. Oil and other fuels are up a massive 28%! Electricity costs 9.3% more than it did last year and gas remains higher than RPI at 5.5%.

Clothing and footwear up 5.5%

The price of clothes beats inflation yet again. Men’s clothes have risen 7.4% while women’s outerwear is up 6.2%.

Motoring expenditure up 4.9%

Driving continues to get more expensive – which for many members means the cost of going to work. Petrol and oil prices have risen 10.8% over the past year.



Travel and Leisure is up 4.5%

You could get hit by 5.4% higher bus and coach fares or rail fares up 4.4%. Holidays abroad cost 6.8% more than this time last year. Entertaining yourself and the family at home is also pricier with CDs and tapes up 7.4%.

"Overall UK wage growth remains slow and trade union organisation remains the answer" says Unite Executive Officer Sharon Graham



"In this edition of WVP Monthly we have provided the latest data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), with details of the new average earnings figures by industry, occupation and location.

October saw the release of the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) by the Office for National Statistics. This dataset revealed that average earnings had grown by 3.5% in the year to April - 0.1% above RPI. This demonstrates the fact that earnings growth remains slow. In a press call ONS statistician Roger Smith said, "after taking account of inflation, earnings are still only where they were in 2011, and have not yet returned to pre-downturn levels". In fact the ONS themselves admit that without rises in the National Minimum Wage and Living Wage the figure would likely have been lower.

Trade Union bargaining is key. On average those in Unionised industries receive higher wages. Unite's Work, Voice & Pay industrial strategy exists to give our frontline Shop Stewards and Rep's access to relevant information and key tools for bargaining pay and conditions. Whether it is; template agreements, digital tools e.g. the Pay Claim Generator, investigations into issues such as outsourcing, or providing information on pay and the cost of living, we continue to support our members to get them a better deal."

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Graham'.

Sharon Graham
Unite Executive Officer

Who owns who?



Mergers and Acquisitions News

The 'Big Six' soon to be to the 'Big Five'

The merger between SSE and npower has been given the green light by the UK's competition watchdog. When it goes ahead, the new company will be the biggest electricity provider in the country, with 24% of all UK customers. The merger is expected to be finalised in either the last quarter of 2018 or the first of 2019.

ThyssenKrupp and Tata Steel want to weld together in Europe

At the time of writing ThyssenKrupp Steel Europe and Tata Steel in Europe are waiting for Brussels to give the go ahead for their new joint venture. If it happens they will become one company in Europe.

For Coca-Cola the Costa Coffee is £4bn

Whitbread shareholders have voted in favour of selling their multinational coffeehouse chain Costa Coffee to Coca-Cola for £4bn. Pending regulatory approval the sale should close during the first half of next year.

DS Smith is repackaging itself

Packaging group DS Smith has bought one Spanish company, Papeles y Cartones de Europa, and is about to close on its purchase of another, corrugated packing provider Europac. Meanwhile there are rumours that it is about to sell its own plastics packaging division.

Debenhams Direct?

Rumours are circulating that Debenhams is about to be the subject of a takeover. Speculation has been building that Sports Direct owner Mike Ashley is set to buy it and merge it into his newly-acquired House of Fraser.

Bite Sized Bargaining – ONS releases new average earnings data

Every October the Office for National Statistics releases its Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). The latest results show that in the last year the median increase in average wages across the economy was less than 0.1% above the April RPI figure of 3.4% (the end of year for ASHE). This means that many workplaces in the UK continue to experience sluggish wage growth and that talk of a return to real growth in earnings across the board is premature. Clearly the extension of collective bargaining and trade union organisation will be critical if the economy is to deliver to sustainable, real terms increases in pay year on year.

Standard Industry Classification (SIC) Sections relevant to Unite

Code	Description	Median (£)	Change (%)
A	AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING	457.80	5.3
B	MINING AND QUARRYING	777.40	4.5
C	MANUFACTURING	585.00	2.7
D	ELECTRICITY, GAS, STEAM AND AIR CONDITIONING SUPPLY	766.30	2.8
E	WATER SUPPLY; SEWERAGE, WASTE MANAGEMENT AND REMEDIATION ACTIVITIES	606.40	5.5
F	CONSTRUCTION	624.00	4.0
G	WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE; REPAIR OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND MOTORCYCLES	473.70	3.0
H	TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE	575.50	2.8
I	ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICE ACTIVITIES	387.10	4.7
J	INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	766.60	5.3
K	FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE ACTIVITIES	768.00	2.7
M	PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES	678.30	1.9
N	ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICE ACTIVITIES	479.10	4.5
O	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEFENCE; COMPULSORY SOCIAL SECURITY	642.70	3.2
P	EDUCATION	607.60	1.7
Q	HUMAN HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK ACTIVITIES	528.90	3.8
R	ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION	471.60	2.0
S	OTHER SERVICE ACTIVITIES	492.70	3.2

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