

# Work Voice Pay MONTHLY

Issue 19: August 2019



*“Welcome to the latest 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 2.8%

On 18 August the UK Government’s Office for National Statistics (ONS) released the latest retail price index (RPI) figure. It shows that prices are up 2.8% from a year ago.

#### Fuel and light are up 6%

The price of fuel and light continues to outpace overall inflation. Electricity costs 9.6% more, a rise three times the rate of RPI. Coal and solid fuels are also up 4.7% with gas also going up 3.2%.

#### Clothing and footwear up 5.8%

Women’s clothes are up a whopping 9.4% while new gear for the kids is up 7.8% and men’s outerwear is 6.1% more expensive than last year.

#### Leisure services are up 4.4%

The price of each leisure service has gone up by more than overall inflation. The price of holidays in the UK has risen a hefty 6.4% over the past year and foreign holidays are also up 4.2%. Even staying at home is not cheap with television licences and rentals up 4.6% and entertainment and other recreation 3.1% dearer than last year.



#### Household services are up 4%

Similarly to leisure services the price of each household services category has risen faster than overall inflation. Telephones, telemessages, etc. have gone up by 4.8% while postage rose by 4%. Fees and subscriptions are 3.7% more expensive than last year and domestic services are up 3%.

#### Catering is up 3.2%

Overall, catering has risen by more than RPI. This has largely been driven by the increase in the price of take-away meals and snacks, up by 3.9%.

## RPI Items Breakdown

Here are the latest figures for all the retail price index (RPI) items.

RPI Items	Annual Change
ALL ITEMS	2.8
Food	1.3
Catering	3.2
Alcoholic drink	2.0
Tobacco	5.6
Housing	2.2
Fuel and light	6.0
Household goods	2.6
Household services	4.0
Clothing and footwear	5.8
Personal goods and services	2.5
Motoring expenditure	1.5
Fares and other travel costs	2.1
Leisure goods	1.6
Leisure services	4.4

### NOTE: Why RPI not CPI?

Unite strongly recommends using the Retail Price Index (RPI) for negotiations because it more closely reflects the actual price rises experienced by Unite members. The RPI has been going since 1947. It is still used to decide prices such as mobile phone bills, rail fares, student loans and 'sin' taxes e.g. alcohol.

Some employers prefer the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which the government introduced in 2004 as a measure of inflation. The CPI is calculated using a different mathematical model which tends to make it lower. It includes the spending of groups not usually relevant to our negotiations. It doesn't include the price rises our members experience in paying for mortgages or foreign holidays.

RPI not CPI	CPI not RPI
Mortgage payments	The top 4% of households by income
What you spend on holiday	Pensioner only households
	Stock brokers fees
	Spending by foreign tourists

## “The extension of collective bargaining will be key”

**Writes Sharon Graham**



At the Rules Conference in June delegates made history by enshrining collective bargaining in our rule book for the very first time. Perhaps most importantly the motion committed the Union “To extend collective bargaining” and bring more workers under Union agreements. This will be key as we intensify focus on our core industrial work.

To match this ambition we must tackle a very different labour market than when we were at our peak. Outsourcing, which together with agency working has already absorbed well over 3 million workers, is set to increase by 4.5% every year for the next ten years. National and sector level bargaining are in decline with site level negotiations dominant. It is in this climate that we need to find effective ways to unite workers and bargain at scale.

So, how can we do this? First, if we are to maximise our influence we need to widen and deepen our collective. That is why we have, together with our stewards, developed in a number of industries ‘trigger’ agreements. In each case, we table the agreement, for example on New Technology, with the top ten employers in a given Sector simultaneously. Through organisation, action and in some instances leverage we demand that each sign. The agreement is triggered when all top 10 sign. One agreement across ten companies in one sector. This deals with the competitive argument and also is an attempt to prevent undercutting.

Of course not every employer is going to agree, some will be openly hostile. And it is in such cases that we must be prepared - if pushed - to act outside of the most restrictive anti-trade union laws in Europe.

Secondly, we want to increase the number of workers covered by bargaining. So, wherever possible we are looking at a single agreement covering all non-direct workers, including outsourced and agency. This fragmentation and division of work only exists so that employers can avoid responsibility. We want to again stop the undercutting.

Refocusing on our core industrial work through Work, Voice, Pay will enable us to assist our stewards and officers to drive through good agreements by Sector.

In solidarity

**Sharon Graham**  
Unite Executive Officer

## Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produced its Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) in October 2018. This can be a useful tool for activists to benchmark against in pay rounds. See how your pay compares to the median pay of workers in your industry or region.

### Industry and Regional Data

Code	Standard Industry Classification	Median £ per Week
A	AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING	457.8
B	MINING AND QUARRYING	777.4
C	MANUFACTURING	585.00
D	ELECTRICITY, GAS, STEAM AND AIR CONDITIONING SUPPLY	766.30
E	WATER SUPPLY; SEWERAGE, WASTE MANAGEMENT AND REMEDIATION ACTIVITIES	606.40
F	CONSTRUCTION	624.00
G	WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE; REPAIR OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND MOTORCYCLES	473.70
H	TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE	575.50
I	ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICE ACTIVITIES	387.10
J	INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	766.60
K	FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE ACTIVITIES	768.00
M	PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES	678.30
N	ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICE ACTIVITIES	479.10
O	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEFENCE; COMPULSORY SOCIAL SECURITY	642.70
P	EDUCATION	607.60
Q	HUMAN HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK ACTIVITIES	528.90
R	ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION	471.60
S	OTHER SERVICE ACTIVITIES	492.70

ONS NATIONAL REGION	Median £ per Week
United Kingdom	569.00
England	574.90
Northern Ireland	521.20
Scotland	563.20
Wales	509.00

ONS ENGLISH REGION	Median £ per Week
London	713.20
East	558.10
East Midlands	515.90
North East	506.80
Yorkshire and The Humber	520.80
North West	529.60
South East	589.20
South West	531.20
West Midlands	536.60

## Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

ASHE also records the average median pay for occupational groups.

### Occupational Data

Code	STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION	Median £ per Week	Annual % Rise
<b>1</b>	<b>MANAGERS, DIRECTORS AND SENIOR OFFICIALS</b>	<b>835.10</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
11	CORPORATE MANAGERS AND DIRECTORS	912.70	1.8%
12	OTHER MANAGERS AND PROPRIETORS	582.00	1.2%
<b>2</b>	<b>PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS</b>	<b>745.50</b>	<b>1.7%</b>
21	SCIENCE, RESEARCH, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS	804.90	2.1%
22	HEALTH PROFESSIONALS	691.10	1.5%
23	TEACHING AND EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS	740.40	1.1%
24	BUSINESS, MEDIA AND PUBLIC SERVICE PROFESSIONALS	757.00	2.3%
<b>3</b>	<b>ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS</b>	<b>620.20</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
31	SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONALS	555.80	1.9%
32	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONALS	495.90	1.4%
33	PROTECTIVE SERVICE OCCUPATIONS	748.40	2.4%
34	CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORTS OCCUPATIONS	536.60	3.7%
35	BUSINESS AND PUBLIC SERVICE ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONALS	661.20	4.6%
<b>4</b>	<b>ADMINISTRATIVE AND SECRETARIAL OCCUPATIONS</b>	<b>446.30</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
41	ADMINISTRATIVE OCCUPATIONS	454.70	3.6%
42	SECRETARIAL AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS	409.80	2.5%
<b>5</b>	<b>SKILLED TRADES OCCUPATIONS</b>	<b>524.60</b>	<b>2.9%</b>
51	SKILLED AGRICULTURAL AND RELATED TRADES	393.60	3.6%
52	SKILLED METAL, ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC TRADES	595.70	3.5%
53	SKILLED CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING TRADES	536.30	3.5%
54	TEXTILES, PRINTING AND OTHER SKILLED TRADES	415.80	4.0%
<b>6</b>	<b>CARING, LEISURE AND OTHER SERVICE OCCUPATIONS</b>	<b>373.50</b>	<b>3.4%</b>
61	CARING PERSONAL SERVICE OCCUPATIONS	371.40	3.9%
62	LEISURE, TRAVEL AND RELATED PERSONAL SERVICE OCCUPATIONS	384.50	2.2%
<b>7</b>	<b>SALES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE OCCUPATIONS</b>	<b>383.40</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
71	SALES OCCUPATIONS	359.80	2.8%
72	CUSTOMER SERVICE OCCUPATIONS	421.60	4.8%
<b>8</b>	<b>PROCESS, PLANT AND MACHINE OPERATIVES</b>	<b>490.00</b>	<b>3.8%</b>
81	PROCESS, PLANT AND MACHINE OPERATIVES	458.50	4.9%
82	TRANSPORT AND MOBILE MACHINE DRIVERS AND OPERATIVES	521.60	3.3%
<b>9</b>	<b>ELEMENTARY OCCUPATIONS</b>	<b>385.20</b>	<b>4.4%</b>
91	ELEMENTARY TRADES AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS	402.20	5.3%
92	ELEMENTARY ADMINISTRATION AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS	380.50	4.3%
	<b>ALL EMPLOYEES</b>	<b>569.00</b>	<b>3.5%</b>

## Who owns who?

### Mergers and Acquisitions News

#### Toyota and Suzuki are strengthening their alliance

Since 2016 Toyota and Suzuki have collaborated in areas such as hybrid technology, engines for compact vehicles and in markets such as India and Europe. They now look

to build on that relationship by buying stakes in each other. Japan's largest carmaker, Toyota, has agreed to pay \$908 million for a 4.9% stake in Suzuki. Likewise, the smaller Suzuki will pay \$453 million to acquire roughly 0.2% of Toyota.



#### BP is selling to fund shale

BP will sell operations in Alaska to Hilcorp for \$5.6 billion. The sale is part of BP's plan to sell \$10 billion of assets to pay for its move into US shale. Last year BP paid \$10.5 billion for BHP's US shale assets but shareholders were worried that the company might be overstretched by the acquisition.

#### Meanwhile a rival comes out of its Shell

Royal Dutch Shell has entered the Australian electricity market with a \$418 million deal for ERM Power that is expected to close by the end of the year. ERM is Australia's second-largest energy retailer and provides electricity to industry. It generates electricity from two gas-fired power plants and Shell could supply ERM's power stations with liquefied natural gas. Shell is already one of Australia's biggest gas producers but wants more of the electricity supply chain.

#### Bidcorp needs to stay focused ... on food

Food company Bid Corporation Ltd (Bidcorp) expects to sell its UK logistics business by October. Bidcorp has been trying to sell the previously loss-making UK contract distribution business for more than a year to allow it to focus on its core business. That should be helped by a 12.5% rise in full-year earnings which returned it to profitability.

#### The idea of combining two smoking giants got a lukewarm response

The owners of Marlboro cigarettes Philip Morris and Altria are in talks to create a \$200 billion tobacco group. Last year the two reported combined sales of nearly \$50 billion and net profit of \$15.3 billion. Philip Morris would own nearly 60% of the combined group and it would be the sixth largest takeover ever! The companies' logic is that it would help them to grow in e-cigarettes but investors are yet to be convinced of the merits of the deal.

## It's Your Work, Voice and Pay Toolkit

Work, Voice, Pay is our Union's broad industrial strategy led by Unite Executive Officer Sharon Graham. It is founded on core principles:



- Securing good jobs and decent **work**
- Making sure workers have a strong and effective **voice**
- Getting decent **pay** and conditions

Unite reps have access to a whole WVP toolkit to support and help you to get organised and win where you work. Just go to <https://unitetheunion.org/work-voice-pay/> and log in. There you will find a number of tools including:

- Campaign Templates
- Work, Voice, Pay guides
- Pay and Anniversary Date data
- Pay Claim Generator
- Work, Voice, Pay Monthly
- Employer Profile Generator
- Collective Agreements Database

We are adding to and improving WVP tools all the time. If you are a Unite rep and you have suggestions for WVP tools, Executive Officer, Sharon Graham would welcome your input. Email: [Sharon.Graham@unitetheunion.org](mailto:Sharon.Graham@unitetheunion.org)

If you don't have your login details just email [david.wesson@unitetheunion.org](mailto:david.wesson@unitetheunion.org)