

# Work Voice Pay MONTHLY

Issue 13: February 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 2.5%

On 13 February the UK Government's Office for National Statistics (ONS) released the latest retail price index (RPI) figure. It shows that prices are up 2.5% from a year ago.

### Fares and other travel costs are up 3.9%

Rail fares have risen 4.3% and other travel costs are up 4.1%.

### Clothing and footwear are up 4.5%

Women's clothes have risen 7.1% while new gear for the kids is 4.1% more expensive than last year and men's outerwear is up 3.8%.

### Leisure services are up 5.1%

Foreign holidays are up 6.4%, while the price of holidays in the UK has risen 5% over the past year.

### Household services are up 3.3%

Telephones, telemessages, etc. cost 4.4% more than last year.



### Catering is up 3%

Take-away meals and snacks have gone up 3.5% over the last year! Canteen meals were up 2.8%. The price of a meal in a restaurant was up 2.6%.

## Our inquiry should look at reduced hours with no loss of pay

### Says Sharon Graham



Since 2017 we have been talking to and working with Unite Shop Stewards and reps about the new round of automation - Industry 4.0. One of the key areas we are looking at is the increased money that is going to be made from this wave of new technology. We want to ensure that workers get their share of this increase and are not simply brushed aside or told their job is gone. We are working with stewards and reps to shape an industrial and political response to this round of automation, including a shorter working week with no loss of pay.

A shorter working week can help ensure that members stay in work when new technology reduces the number of tasks that need to be done by people. Research suggests that working shorter hours is also good for workers' health. It can even be good for employers, with a positive impact on absenteeism, quality of work and employee turnover. That is why we have made sure that reduced working time is part of Unite's New Technology Agreements. We must now consider what else Unite should be doing to help shop stewards and reps who want to take this path. That is why we will be asking the inquiry on the 'cost of living' - that we announced last month - to also look carefully at all the issues around the shorter working week.

Of course, shop stewards and their members must be able to make their own decisions about what improvements they want to demand regarding their pay and conditions. They will decide whether a shorter working week should be part of that and - if so - which of the various options they prefer. At Bentley Unite stewards successfully negotiated a reduction in their working week to 35 hours without any loss of pay. In Sweden a local authority changed nurses at an old people's home from 8-hour days to 6-hour days. It improved staff satisfaction, health and patient care. We can also look at options to reduce working time at particular times in life. In Germany unions have negotiated agreements to let workers reduce their working week to 28 hours for a temporary period of up to two years when they need time to care for dependants. In the Netherlands they have "generational agreements" which allow older workers to reduce their working hours for no loss of pay prior to retirement. The '4-day-week' is not the only option for reducing working time. We will be exploring all the possibilities.

Please contact me with your views so that we can feed them into the inquiry

In solidarity,

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

**Sharon Graham**  
**Unite Executive Officer**  
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# Who owns who?



## Mergers and Acquisitions News

### Sainsbury's - Asda merger facing defeat

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has issued a damning report on the proposed merger, effectively ruling it out. Angry Sainsbury's boss Mike Coupe said the CMA had "fundamentally moved the goalposts, changed the shape of the ball and chosen a different playing field".

### Provident Financial faces a takeover bid from its old boss

Doorstep lender Provident Financial has been hit with a hostile £1.3bn bid from a firm led by its former CEO. John van Kuffeler is now head of a smaller firm Non-Standard Finance (NSF) but is backed by shareholders who own more than half of Provident's shares.

### Canadian big cheese is buying Dairy Crest

Canadian group Saputo has announced a £975 million takeover of Cathedral City and Clover owner Dairy Crest. Dairy Crest's management is recommending the deal. The Canadians say they want the UK HQ to stay in Surrey. They have also stated that they "do not envisage any material change to the research and development functions" and also that they don't intend to dispose of any "material part of the group's operations".

### DP World buys back P&O Ferries

P&O Ferries is coming back to its old owners for £322m. Port operator DP World bought the P&O group in 2006 and then sold off some divisions, including P&O Ferries. The decision to buy it back again has come as a shock to some in the shipping industry but DP World say it will build on their acquisition of Unifeeder last year. No mention of Brexit was made in the announcement but sources believe it played a part in the decision - especially as they actually have some ferries.

### Flybe takeover lands after a bumpy ride

Flybe has now completed its controversial sale to a consortium led by Richard Branson's Virgin Atlantic, along with the Stobart Group and investment firm Cyrus Capital for just 1p a share. Arizona-based company Mesa Air came in with a higher bid but Flybe said it did not believe the "highly conditional" plan could be carried out quickly enough to allow it to continue to trade.

## Bite Sized Bargaining - Time Off for Family and Dependants

A partner goes into labour unexpectedly; a child is injured on a school trip; an elderly parent falls and is taken to hospital ... looking after our loved ones sometimes means it is impossible for us to be at work. All employees, from day one, are entitled by law to take unpaid time off to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. However, you only get paid time off if it's in your agreement or your employment contract.

Parents, spouses, civil partners and your children all count as dependants. Any other relatives, friends or unrelated children who live in your home as family also count - but only if they are living there 'as family' (so not lodgers etc.) Other people who 'reasonably' depend on your help will also qualify as your dependants. For example, an elderly or disabled neighbour who needs your help in an emergency would also count. However, the law does not recognise animals as dependants – so an emergency involving a pet dog or cat won't count.

Because this right relates to emergencies, it doesn't normally apply to situations that are known about in advance. For example an employee wouldn't be covered if they want to take a child to hospital for an appointment booked some time before. It is also important to note that the law doesn't count personal crises, such as relationship problems, as emergencies. Nor is there any legal right to time off for emergencies that just involve your home or possessions, such as a burglary, a fire or a broken boiler. Situations that do count include illness, injury or assault of a dependant; death of a dependant; disruption of normal care arrangements, an incident with your child at school; and a dependant going into labour. As well as dealing with the emergency itself, employees are entitled to time off to make arrangements related to the emergency such as arranging and attending a dependant's funeral or arranging long-term care for an injured or ill dependant.

Of course, a good agreement can always do better than the legal minimum and that counts for leave policy as much as anything else. If members want to improve their current arrangements for taking time off for family and dependants you might want to think about:

- Paid time off for all emergencies involving family and dependants
- Expanding the definition – e.g. to cover emergencies involving your home
- Extending the right to workers who are not employees – such as agency workers
- Having a specific compassionate bereavement policy (you can make this demand in the Unite Pay Claim Generator).

For more information on time off for family and dependants read the ACAS guidance:

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3235>



## 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.

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