

BAKERS
FOOD
AND ALLIED
WORKERS
UNION



FOODWORKER

NEW YEAR 2023



10 YEARS ON...
THE HOVIS, WIGAN STRIKE



10 YEARS ON... THE HOVIS, WIGAN STRIKE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Editor's Notes	2
Membership update.	4
National President	5
Communication with our Members.	6
RIP Davie Fleming	8
Ten Years On: Hovis, Wigan Strike	8
International Report	
Brasil	10
Cuba	11
Palestine	11
Winning in the Workplace . . .	12
IER Manifesto for Recovery . . .	14
Dates for your Diary	15
Organise Now/Strike Map . . .	16
The Ron Todd Foundation . . .	16
H&S Reps – Your Legal Rights .	17
WASPI Update	18
Region 5 Awards	19
Reading List.	19
<i>The 22.17 Northern Rail from Liverpool Lime Street to Garswood – G Melling</i>	<i>20</i>
Young Members Development Weekend.	21
Nottingham College Funded Courses.	22
Puzzle Page	23
Contact Details	24

FOODWORKER is published for BFAWU by:
Sarah Woolley at Stanborough House
Great North Road
Stanborough, Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire AL8 7TA
Tel: 01707 260150/259450

FOODWORKER is designed and produced
for BFAWU by:
Inscape Solutions Limited
www.inscape-solutions.co.uk



EDITOR'S NOTES

"We need to be proactively talking to people – members, non- members, ex members, management – finding out why people aren't joining, why they are and why they may have left"

sarah.woolley@bfawu.org

Membership

IT IS NO SECRET that our membership has been slowly declining for a number of years. Between 2010 and 2020 our membership fell by almost 6,000. In the last 3 years we have dropped another 2000 members – due, we believe, to *Brexit, Covid and the continued cost of living crisis* impacting businesses and workers alike.

All is not lost, however, we *are* making members – last year alone over 1700 people joined our great union – but we are losing more people than are joining and we need to know *why*. Studies by Unions 21 and other organisations suggest that cost isn't actually the main factor people don't join a union or don't remain in a union. We need your help to understand why it is that people aren't staying in the BFAWU.

We know we have also had to contend with industry changes, a rise in automation which we believe will only increase after COVID – machines don't fall ill! There has been a number of redundancies and site closures since 2010 because their employer hasn't been able to reduce prices enough for a supermarket contract, a factory has been driven or burnt to the ground or has seen volume levels drop and restructured the workforce as a result. This has seen a huge number of members leave the industry and our union as a result

There is massive room for growth though. We know looking at the potential figures just in our recognised sites in comparison to membership density that over a third of branches are below 50% membership density. Working on those branches and increasing membership within them will not only help to grow the union but will also give you as members *more bargaining power* in your workplaces.

There are plenty of workplaces and organisations in the food industry and allied trades that are not organised and don't have *any* trade union members within them. These workers are likely to be the most exploited and on far worse terms and conditions – so if you are aware of any, let your Full Time Official know so we can look at mapping them out and planning a campaign!

Subscription increases

I am aware that there has been a lot of noise around the **12p increase in subscriptions** at the beginning of January and want to reassure members that the Executive did not make this decision lightly.

Since becoming General Secretary I have made sure that the decisions the Executive has made around things such as subscription rates have been done using a comprehensive method of looking at the *income*, the *expected expenditure* for the year and the rate of *membership decrease*.

We have to cover the cost of things like Regional and Executive Council meetings as well as Annual Conference and the other business-related costs that are increasing just as our personal costs are. We then look at the increase needed to ensure we can maintain the benefits members have access to and, where possible, continue to increase them.

Our membership fees are the equivalent of **47p a day** (full monthly, including political fund and not including R5 benevolent fund) and you can save plenty of the subscriptions money by utilising things such as **Benefit Hub**: www.bfawu.benefithub.com.

Last year BFAWU members received over £850,000 in legal payments through *Personal Injury Claims* and *Employment-Related cases* through the support and work of our Legal Panel – members who may have otherwise used high street *No Win No Fee* lawyers who take a chunk out of the settlement money at the end of the process.

This time next year I am hopefully going to be able to add to that how much our officials both at branch level and paid officials have negotiated in *wage talks* for members too.

Organising

Last year in the first Foodworker of 2022 I said if every member made 1 member we could double our membership and whilst this doesn't account for the leaky bucket of leaving members it would bring forward *growth*. People join our union when they see things being *achieved*.

What has been achieved in *your* workplace recently? *Have you had a pay rise, a piece of equipment fixed that has been broken for ages due to reps raising it with management? Has someone in your team, on your shift or in your department been supported through an issue?*

If you have had a positive experience in the union, share it with us and the people working beside us, or even if you have had a negative one, let us know **so we can put things right!**

Engagement Events

When was the last time you spoke to your rep? Or seen a roadshow, engagement event or union surgery happening, is there organising happening in your branch?

Do you need support helping to grow the membership (and, therefore, your power!) in your workplace?

Full Time Officials have been asked to book *engagement events* at sites We recognise that the old way of running roadshows has become outdated – many branches don't really know what they are, and the expectation is usually a lot different to the reality.

We need to be proactively talking to people – members, non-members, ex members, management – finding out why people aren't joining, why they *are* and why they may have left, identifying those who may be good reps and empowering reps to take the issues that are spoken about through the events to management to enact change.

Get in touch with your official if you haven't got an event in the diary!

Training

There has been a lot of confusion and mistruths around training provision – in particular, training for reps.

I want to be clear, neither myself nor the Executive Council pulled the funding for training, *the Tories did that*. They removed the **Union Learn Fund** leaving thousands of our members without the access to courses like English and Maths, ESOL or redundancy support and have complicated matters further by adding *devolved geographical areas*, limiting opportunities for national funding for those courses.

The Tories also decided to restrict the residential training bursaries and funding that we relied upon for our week-long reps courses in Barnsley – meaning they became unaffordable for unions to take up. It's not just the BFAWU that has been impacted.

Our union is 176 years old this year, we are the oldest trade union in the UK and even with membership as it stands today still the largest independent trade union which specialises in the food industry. We want to be here in another 176 years

This does not mean we don't have any training provision available. We have worked hard to put together a **Shop Stewards' Induction Workbook**, a printable resource designed to get newly-elected reps straight into the role, understanding the challenges in the workplace, the campaigns that are being run and ensuring they are clear on the policies and procedures in the workplace.



There are TUC courses in every region (ICTU in Northern Ireland):

www.tuc.org.uk/TUCcourses

www.ictuni.org/events

Some are online, some physical. There are also GFTU courses that, once dates are released, we will circulate to branches.

www.gftu.org.uk/education

Reps education doesn't start and stop at a level 1 or 2 course though.

Reps need to continually develop themselves and learn as the issues around our industry and those within it develop. That is why we have set up our **Network** structure to support a number of equality strands, but also a dedicated *Branch Secretary*, *Union Learner Rep* and *Green Reps* one to support those in the roles with any issues and specific learning needs that may be needed.

The GFTU has set up bitesize, *online training sessions* that can be watched live at 12.30 and 6.00 on a Monday or played back when you have a half hour facilities time. These, along with the **TUC eLearning modules** are fantastic to keep up-to-date with changes to legislation, current issues and refresh yourself in areas you may not have had to deal with for a while

We are also looking at Leadership and Neurodiversity training – and how to encourage activists to engage with the GFTU *Train the Trainers* course and develop their own sessions to support other activists and reps.

Education is a passion of mine and I have so much to thank the trade union movement for in terms of my education. The Tories thought they would put a halt to our class learning through their cuts – and, Yes, they have made it more difficult, our provision looks and feels a lot different to what many are used to, but it is there and available to reps and members alike.

Annual Conference

This year's Annual Conference will have an *Organising* theme running throughout. Fringe meetings, speakers and resources will all touch on organising around issues in the workplace. We will celebrate the historical **Hovis Wigan strike** (10 years ago this year – time really does fly!) as well as our award winners and long-service members.

We have 100 motions this year covering a whole range of topics – which is fantastic, though it does mean that we will likely only be able to fit in one round of fringe meetings Sunday, Monday and Tuesday to make sure we can fit all Conference business in.

I'm really looking forward to seeing lots of new delegates as well as returning ones. Let's see if we can encourage some more young delegates this year – don't forget if you can't be away for the week (for whatever reason) you can be an *online* delegate this year.

And for those who aren't elected as delegates from your branch, we will be *live streaming* Conference business as we did in 2022 – so you can see what is happening, keep up with the decisions and maybe decide to stand for a delegate position next year!

Priorities for 2023

Right to Food – We are still working with **Solidarity Consulting, Unity Consulting** and **Birkbeck University** in the background, bringing together trade unions, third sector organisations and academics to looking at the impact of not having access to decent, nutritious food on households, communities and workplaces.

We are determining what needs to change in our industry, structurally and legislatively, to ensure everyone has not only a *right to food* going forwards but access to **decent, nutritious food** that is made by unionised workers throughout the industry – from field to fork.

Phoenix Companies – We are about to engage on a piece of work that will look at how we can stop millionaires like **Allaistar Salvesson** (*Dawnfresh*) or Venture Capitalists such as **Elaghmore** (*Orchard House*) from using legal loopholes to relinquish themselves of responsibility when it comes to closing businesses down. In both cases they have gone into administration at the 11th hour leaving the taxpayer to pick up the bill of redundancy payments, whilst they sit with multi- millions in the bank!

We will call for director disqualifications to stop these people from moving from one company to another and for significant fines to be put in place.

Baseline national picture of T&Cs, pay etc – It has been years since we had an up-to-date national database of terms, conditions and pay rates of members.

This is something that we will be rectifying this year, building a national picture so that when we launch campaigns, we are clear on what area to target, when we negotiate wages we can confidentially shout loudly about how much in pounds and pence those negotiations have put in members pockets.

Back to basics – focusing on organising rather than just recruiting members, organising around issues in the workplace, building branch structures of reps and committees which will make for stronger branches as a result.

We aim to utilise the informal networks we have in place to support and learn from each other, develop campaigns and *make the changes members need in our industry.*

Rebuild BFAWU

Our union is 176 years old this year, we are the oldest trade union in the UK and even with membership as it stands today still the largest independent trade union which specialises in the food industry. We want to be here in another 176 years (though I'm not sure any of us will be here then!)

In order to achieve that, we need to *rebuild* our great union. Ask yourself:

- If you have ever thought about being a rep, why not *now*?
- Do you know why people are pulling out of the union in your branch?
- Do you know any workplaces we could be targeting?

Get in touch with your branch secretary, your full-time official, get in touch with me! Together, we will rebuild our great union. It's not going to be easy and changes will naturally happen as we go along – we have to learn from our past, but build our future.

I'm ready to get stuck in – ARE YOU?

Solidarity

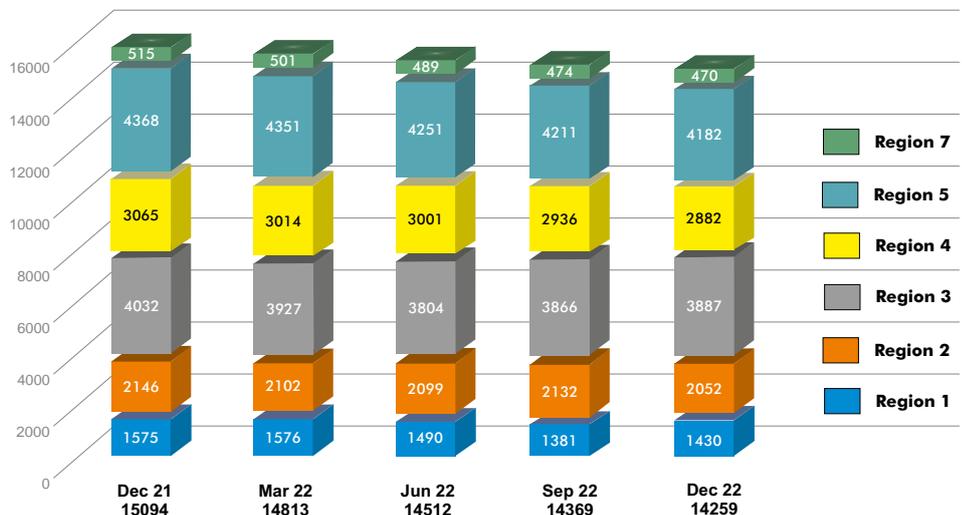
**Sarah
General Secretary**

WHY IS MEMBERSHIP SUCH AN ISSUE?

IF YOU'RE WONDERING why Sarah made such an issue of *Membership* in her Editors's Notes, the membership figures over the last year show why she, and we, should all be concerned by the trends they reveal.

What we need is *information* to increase our understanding of these trends – and how we can reverse them!

Membership throughout 2022



- **2,215** members left the BFAWU overall in 2022
- **1,715** people became BFAWU members in 2022 (of those **375** also left during the year).
- **1,330** members joined our great union using the online joining option and of those **859** were still members at the end of 2022.

We need to do some work around why people aren't staying in once they have joined, because it is clear we are making members, we are just losing more!

Some of it will be down to leaving the industry, we know at the time of writing the report that there were still real issues with staff shortages across the food industry, but what else is causing members to pull out – the engagement events the executive have asked officials to initiate through 2023 should help give us some answers so that we can develop and improve going forwards.



NATIONAL PRESIDENT IAN HODSON

"We need to open our eyes and see through the smokescreen which is the daily hate TV delivered into our homes by a corrupt BBC or a political agenda pushed by Murdoch Sky news or the media barons who own the far-right GB News who all do the bidding of their political masters."

2023 A WINTER OF DISCONTENT – with strikes to defend terms and conditions and halt the slump in pay in our public sector, a country in despair with out-of-control food prices, soaring energy costs, and attacks on desperate people seeking asylum. Politicians lying to us on a daily basis, a housing crisis, propaganda pumped out daily by so-called independent media. Tories are at war with each other, Labour is kicking out anyone that doesn't agree with its leadership cult.

More attacks on trade unions, more removals of our rights to protest, to take holidays, to be able to be off sick, scrapping health and safety legislation that protects us in our workplaces. What a complete mess the UK is in, food rationing at supermarkets blamed on the weather in Spain and Morocco whilst nowhere else in the world are they finding that they can't buy tomatoes or lettuce. An NHS being driven into the private sector, ambulances queuing up for hours in overstretched A&Es with patients waiting days in corridors for a bed just to get the care they need.

If you are not angry you are not paying attention. If you are falling for it all being the fault of 40 Albanians coming over in the dinghy guff, *you need to give your head a wobble* and ask yourself why is it always someone else's fault and not the politicians who make the laws, enact the policies. No migrant stopped building council houses, that was a *political* decision. No asylum seeker said *"let's create insecure employment and allow employers to create millions of zero hour contract workers"*, that was a *political* decision. No refugee said *"let's create energy monopolies and profiteering private companies"* ... it was politicians who did that.

When we open our eyes we see how the system is designed to maintain the status quo, designed to keep us under their control to believe somehow other desperate people forced to live in rundown hotels on £40 quid a week are responsible for our hardship. What fools we must be for falling for this nonsense. No human is illegal and they are not responsible – that's down to the people elected to represent us but who don't – the non-taxpaying elites and politicians who then become Chancellor, the greedy corporations, the already rich and powerful who want even more. The media barons who don't even live in the UK but preach about 'Britishness'.

The chosen method used is *Patriotism* – it's tried and tested. If you oppose what's happening, you're a traitor and labeled anti-patriotic. Why is it that *their* version of Patriotism is about hate and one-upmanship. Does it really make you proud that you can terrify an already terrified human being? In every age, it has been the tyrant, the oppressor, the exploiter who has wrapped themselves up in the cloak of patriotism, religion, or both to deceive the people. Why is patriotism never about how we helped people support the less fortunate? Why is it always about directing your ire? Why can't we love our differences and celebrate our humanity with one another?

We need to open our eyes and see through the smokescreen which is the daily hate TV delivered into our homes by a corrupt BBC or a political agenda pushed by Murdoch/Sky news or the media barons who own the far-right GB News who all do the bidding of their political masters.

When will we understand our airwaves are full of the same types of confirmation-fulfilling lie-peddlers who are responsible for the vile divisive poison dripped into our ears – blaming this group or that community. Every con is always done in three parts and with our written media in the hands of the same elite who are involved in both TV and radio it's easy to understand why people feel there is some truth that there's no smoke without fire right – absolutely wrong. **Before 2019 there was no issue of 'small boats'**. It is a policy enacted by the Tories (and signed off without question by the Labour Party) that failed to agree on a returns policy with the EU. But it's now used by those failed politicians as red meat to encourage the savages who want to create race hate on our streets.

On the written media if you must buy a newspaper, buying the hate-filled Mail or the Lying Scum will encourage you to do self-harm – to buy into the idea you should vote against your interests and your future. I'd encourage you to stop polluting your mind and don't buy this garbage, it's bad for you and your future.

The end has come for **Union Towns** – a project that was aimed at organising the unorganised and opening up new areas of the food sector for our union to organise in. The campaign delivered **McStrike**, and **Spoonstrike**. Some of its achievements include forcing McDonald's to pay the highest-ever pay award to its workers in the UK. The first strike forced them to roll out contracts of employment and recently the landmark legal agreement between them and the EHRC that says McDonald's must take complaints of sexual harassment seriously. They forced Wetherspoons to pay a night shift rate and when Tim Martin said he had no intention to pay his workers at the outbreak of Covid... forced him to change his mind *so none of those workers missed a pay week*. Papa Joe's reversed its decision to not pay its workers in Sheffield. Union Towns mobilised the community to come out and support those workers as well as delivering several recognition agreements, abolishing zero-hours contracts for workers at Cutlery works in Sheffield. In Leeds, bar workers are ready to strike and in Manchester their sister sites are ready to become a recognised branch of the BFAWU.

It was the campaign that delivered our online joining facility and raised our union's profile. For some, it will feel like a victory seeing its end which is sad because this has been seen as the campaign that made so many outside of our union adore us and want to support us – which meant we were able to raise significant funds to run it. It led to collaborations with Sheffield Trades Council and Leeds Trade Council that created a new model of union organising. I would like to thank Laura and Jesse and all those who have worked on the campaign and wish them luck for their futures in whatever they do.

Solidarity

Ian
National President

COMMUNICATING WITH OUR MEMBERS

Foodworker

GOING FORWARD, we are looking to retain the four issues a year that we have followed for so long. While these will always reflect seasonal concerns, we have decided on the following focus:

- **New Year edition** – to include statements on the plans for the year ahead, the highlights of the previous year, look ahead to legislation/minimum wage changes we can expect and a focus on Health and Safety campaigns and events.
- **April/May: Celebrate and Commemorate edition** – with an update on last year's Conference motions and what has happened as a result, pieces on International Workers Memorial Day and May Day events, reports on TUC Equality Conference and regional TUC conferences.
- **July/August: Post Conference edition** –focussing on Conference, the motions passed, reports on speakers, fringe events together with contributions from delegates. Also, coverage of Durham Miners and Tolpuddle Martyrs events.
- **November: Greener Future online edition** – reporting on this year's COP Conference, discussions of green issues,/initiatives and campaigns, Green motions debated at TUC Conference and reports from branches and climate organisations about work being undertaken.

Each edition will continue to have:

- Health & Safety updates
- International reports
- Learning/education updates
- Case studies/benefit reminders from Legal Services
- A prize puzzle!

New logo

In 2022 we celebrated our 175th year as an independent trade union

To help commemorate this huge and fairly unique milestone not only in our history, but the wider trade union movements, we had a special logo created:

Leaflets

Leaflets and posters help us to portray a message quickly and clearly, they can be used on social media as well as in physical form! Some of our officials and branches have gotten creative in 2022 adding to the fantastic portfolio of leaflets we have available for branches and regions to utilise!



Leaflet sets available through Head Office

Digital comms

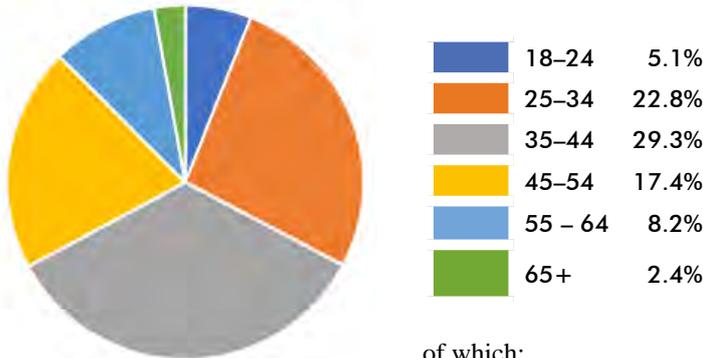
Mail Chimp

We have sent 14 all-member emails out during 2022.

We started the year with 8118 email addresses and ended the year with 10,222 – with 9614 subscribing to receive all member emails from *BFAWU News!* Whilst we have some way to go to get all our members email addresses, this isn't bad.

- We have a 40% open rate and a 1.6% click rate on links etc
- More people open our emails one a **Laptop** (53.4%) than a **Mobile** (46.6%)

Age demographic of Mail Chimp subscribers



of which:

- 32.6% identified as female
- 52.6% identified as Male
- 0.1% identified with another identity
- 14.7% unknown

Email engagement

- 22% highly engaged and often open and click on emails
- 20% moderately engaged and sometimes open and click on emails
- 53% not very engaged and rarely open emails

BFAWU Twitter - @BFAWUOfficial

- We tweeted 188 times in 2022
- We gained 2070 New Followers
- 89,608 accounts visited our Profile
- We were mentioned 5882 times
- Impressions 352,131



Top 2 tweets of 2022:

May – Top Tweet earned 21.4K impressions

Really important that business leaders understand that job insecurity doesn't build success this is a fantastic article by a man regarded as one of the UK's top entrepreneurs. If you not following the campaign please do. Let's improve lives.
[twitter.com/ZHoursJustice/...](https://twitter.com/ZHoursJustice/)

June – Top Tweet earned 17.3K impressions

We are ready to go BFAWU #Conference
pic.twitter.com/SESYIIRMXg

Videos – we need to look at these in 2023, the average is 1% of viewers watching a whole video that is posted, with a huge drop off in the first quarter of the video.

The other Twitter strands – *Green, Members, Union Learning service* and *Young members* have become inactive over the last 12 months, we will look at re-engaging those audiences throughout 2023

BFAWU Facebook



- Facebook Reach is down 72.2% on 2021, though the page visits are 13.8% up!
- Posts perform better when there are links on them rather than just text!
- *The Womens, Young members, Green, Greggs and Learning Services* pages haven't been as active as we would like through 2022, but we will work on getting them back up and running in 2023
- There are a number of branch and regional specific Facebook pages and groups that are regularly updated – have a look and see if yours has one!

BFAWU Advent Calendar 2022

M.McHugh and R.Obrebski created a fantastic advent calendar for our social media channels throughout the month of December, each day had a different theme!



The results of the how popular the different topics were is very interesting!

Cyclos

Cyclos are our internal mechanism to send information out, these typically go to branch secretaries, full time officials, the executive council and regional clerical staff.

We sent out 11 cyclos this year – mainly standard ones relating to conference or legal requirements. This will increase in 2023 to ensure communication to branches is strengthened.

We will also look at getting a second contact point from each branch so that information is getting through even if the branch secretary is off work.

WhatsApp



We are utilising WhatsApp more now thanks to the pandemic, there are a number of national reps groups – Allied, Greggs retail, Hovis are a few examples and even more regional/branch level ones – get in touch with your Full time official if you are a rep and aren't in either a branch, regional or national WhatsApp group and they will make sure you are added



Website

- We had 21,928 new visitors to our website www.bfawu.org in 2022.
- The average duration of a visit was 1 minute and 48 seconds.
- 80.07% of visitors used their mobile phone and 18.3% used a PC – the others used a tablet.

The top 10 page views in 2022 were:

• The Home page	17,197
• Contact	1475
• Where our members work – Greggs	1098
• Sexual harassment	718
• Statement on the Labour Party	713
• Membership benefits	530
• Credit Union	485
• Full Time Officials	464
• News	373
• Annual Conference	333

RIP Davie Fleming

Davie Fleming was a BFAWU member at Mothers Pride in the 70s and 80s. He also worked alongside then General Secretary, Joe Marino, on many union projects. Unfortunately, Davie passed away last year.

His son Paul has fond memories of his involvement with the union and I'm sure you will join us in sending our condolences to Davie's family.

Sarah

TEN YEARS ON – T

28TH AUGUST 2023 SEES THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY of the Hovis strike in Wigan – widely regarded as one of the most historic strikes ever held by our union.

The dispute

After many years of resisting the introduction of second-generation contracts and the use of agency 48 hours after the last person left after a redundancy exercise, the company planned to use agency and zero hour contracted labour to cover jobs that had been lost even after the remaining members had agreed to shorter hours to prevent the redundancies.

The action

Members from the branch voted overwhelmingly to take strike action if the company did not reverse its plans as they refused to work alongside workers on lesser terms and zero hour contracts. After many weeks of consultation with the company, the branch decided that the only form of action was all out – so all members had the same financial loss, no matter how long the action took. The plan was to work a week then go out for a week to lessen the financial burden that they would ultimately suffer to stick to their principles.

On the 28th August 2013, led by the branch secretary **Nik Hughes** all 220 members of Hovis branch 417 took to the gate – *not for financial gain but on principle*, against the use of zero hour contracts and agency labour – a step in to the unknown for us all. We had no experience of such action, just the thought that our presence would persuade the company to back down. The first morning was very daunting it was a Sunday and very quiet day by way of products going in and coming out so not much action.



THE HOVIS, WIGAN STRIKE [BRANCH 417]

The second day however was much different. Word had spread about the action and other people started to attend the picket line. We found out that they had come from other unions to show solidarity with the members of the BFAWU.

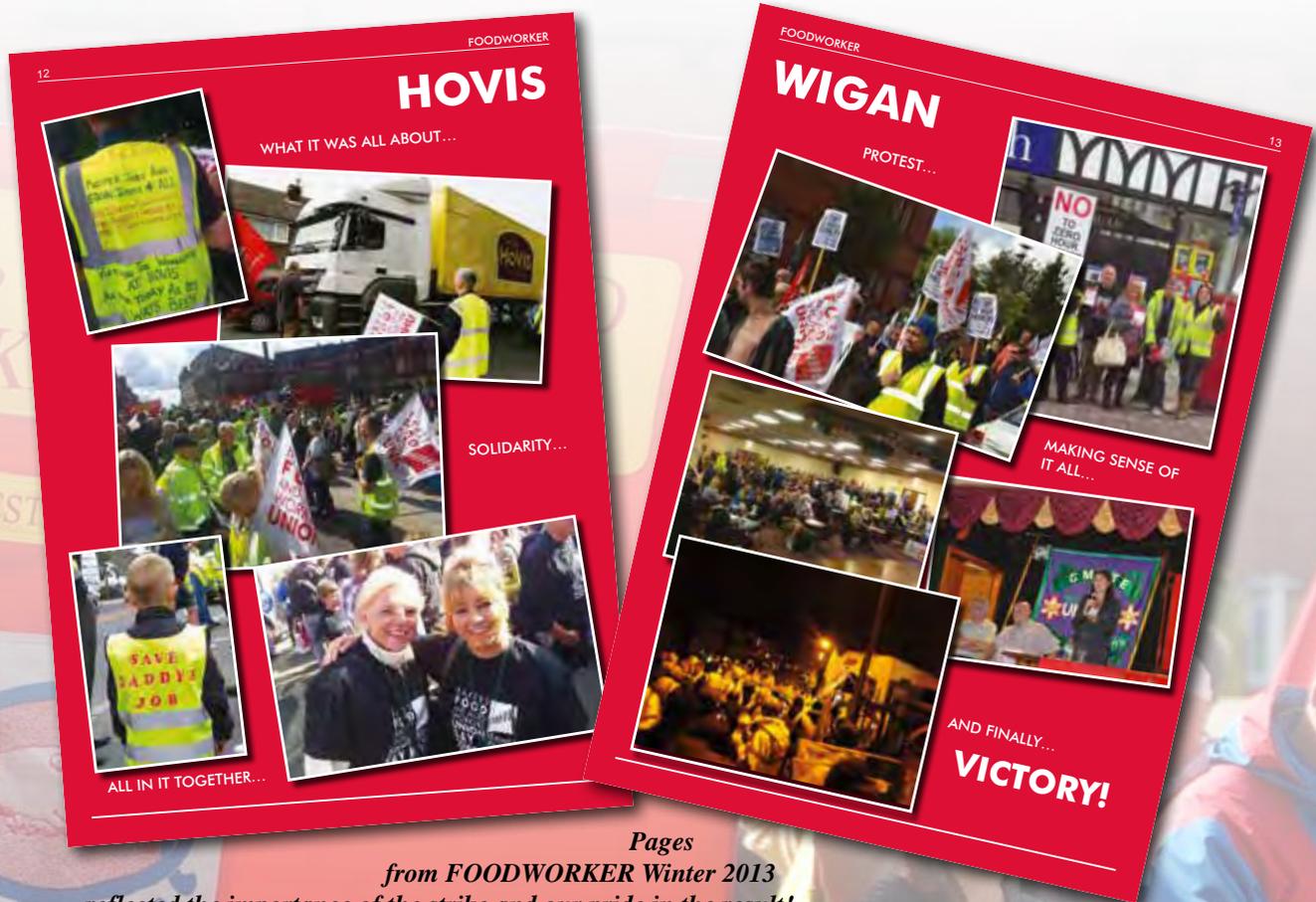
First lesson – how to stop a 40 tonne wagon

A Unite member took my press release and placed it on the grill of that wagon and stood reading this for a good ten minutes.

Our members enjoyed repeating this over and over during the action especially **Pauline Nazir** – every time she heard a wagon she was there in the middle of the road waiting. Over the two week period that the action took place on many occasions we had to be fed and watered.

This happened with the help of donations from many sources – particularly other unions who gave and pledged money. One day, five teachers from Morecambe arrived with a bucket that they'd collected donations around town and made the locals aware of the struggle in Wigan. We turned John Fox's garden into what became known as 'foxes café'.

After the second week the company backed down, agreeing that we would not have to work with zero hour contracted staff and the use of agency would be a last resort if all other avenues had been used. They even issued permanent contracts to those who'd been employed on zero hour contracts. Our success also led to the Hovis workers being invited to lead the annual TUC march held in Manchester two years later.



Pages
from *FOODWORKER* Winter 2013
reflected the importance of the strike and our pride in the result!

The above is a brief outline of the action taken by the members of **Hovis, Branch 417** a decade ago and some of the support those members received from other unions and the general public alike. I believe it's entirely right that this should be celebrated in some way or another (which will be happening at this year's **Wigan diggers** festival in September) but we must also remember what the most important message is here – and that is to support one another, to stand together. It's what being part of a union is all about:

Together we are much stronger than individuals – you can't be picked off as a group: **together you can win!**

In closing, I'd like to pay tribute to the members of Wigan Branch 417 and their families who returned to work not just as colleagues but friends for life – along with those other trade unionists from **Unite the Resistance, Unite, GMB, PCS, Unison** and others for the great support we received and to remind people that *there is no 'I' in WE!*

WE STAND TOGETHER , WE FIGHT TOGETHER , WE WIN TOGETHER

Solidarity

Geoff Atkinson
Organising Regional Secretary
Region 4

INTERNATIONAL REPORT FEBRUARY 2023



Brasil

ON JANUARY 1, WE SAW PRESIDENT **Lula da Silva** take office in Brasil after his historic election victory over Bolsonaro.

Bringing an end to years of far-right rule, Lula's inauguration was cause for celebration around the globe, closing a dark period of Brazilian history. Having served two consecutive terms previously (between 2003-11), Lula's administration looks to return to, and rebuild, the hugely successful programmes implemented during his last stint in office.

His past achievements in government include implementing ground-breaking *poverty reduction programmes, eradicating adult illiteracy, massively improving access to healthcare and education and enshrining environmental protections.*

Sadly, all of these gains had been rolled back or eroded under the far right – first back in 2016 by coup-president *Michel Temer* who took power through Parliament's coup against Lula's successor, and Brasil's first female president, *Dilma Rousseff*, and second by the global far-right figurehead and former military captain, **Jair Bolsonaro**.

The damage caused by Bolsonaro's government can be seen across many sectors of Brazilian society with environmental deforestation, extrajudicial killings, hate crime and attacks on Brasil's indigenous communities skyrocketing during his term.

His record during the pandemic was nothing short of criminal, continually spreading misinformation and downplaying the severity of the crisis while the bodies piled up.

For all these reasons and more, Lula's election victory was a moment of inspiration and relief for progressive movements around the globe, yet it was not long before the lasting threat of the far right presented itself.

On January 8, Bolsonaro's supporters stormed the Brazilian capital refusing to accept the election result and laying waste to Brasil's democratic institutions — the Congress, Supreme Court and Presidential Palace.

Many of these far-right vandals carried banners calling for the military to carry out a coup as they smashed up offices, destroyed artwork and rampaged through these symbolic places of power.

Brasil's history has many examples of military coups and coup attempts, with Latin America's most populous country only returning to democracy in 1985, 21 years after the military coup against President Joao Goulart.

This context is an important factor when assessing the January 8 attack — this was an assault on democracy itself, and these acts of violence, intimidation and vandalism were aimed at undermining President Lula da Silva's newly elected government.

Bolsonaro's administration was stacked full of military officials, with over 8,000 active and retired military personnel serving at various levels of government.

His long-standing connections with military police are also well-documented, leading activists and journalists to fear that the far right will continue to lay down the grounds for a coup.

Thankfully, Brazilian civil society and the huge movement behind Lula were quick to respond. Members of the Supreme Court, state governors and national congresspeople immediately condemned the attack while tens of thousands of demonstrators took to cities across the country showing their support for democracy.

Internationally, leaders from across Latin America and the world showed solidarity with Lula, while demonstrations vocally defending democracy were held in cities across the globe, including a demo held outside the Brazilian embassy in London.

In Parliament, an early day motion was also tabled by *Brasil Solidarity Initiative (BSI)* chair **Richard Burgon MP**, and the motion has now been signed by 34 MPs.

The BSI has also launched a public statement for activists to add their name in support of Brazilian democracy and stand with Lula against far-right violence and intimidation.

Huge questions remain over Bolsonaro's role in the attack, despite his silence and cautious condemnation of the event, and the role of the military and security forces on the day.

Lula has responded by removing the head of the military, *Julio Cesar de Arruda*, after it was reported that he stopped police arresting far-right rioters who took refuge outside of the army headquarters.

He has also removed over 80 military officials from the presidential palace and other key areas as the investigation into the attack continues.

The far-right assault has shown the importance of international solidarity with Lula and the mass movement for democracy behind him.

Despite being beaten at the ballot box, Bolsonaro's authoritarian base will do anything to cling to power. The international community must make it clear that it stands by the democratic will of the Brazilian people.

But while we must remain vigilant, we can also be inspired by the return of a progressive, trade unionist president who is a well-respected champion against global inequality.

Even before the attack, Lula's government had set in motion a series of policies and reforms repairing the deep damage of Bolsonaro's rule. These include reversing a number of Bolsonaro's reactionary presidential decrees; stopping the privatisation of eight state-owned companies; recommitting financial support for the protection of the Amazon; repealed measures on illegal mining; and suspending the issuance of new gun permits.

Lula's policies will directly and positively change the lives of tens of millions of Brazilians. **And for that, we will keep celebrating.**



Cuba

TRADE UNIONS IN CUBA



The International Centre for Trade Union Rights (ICTUR) has published a new article on trade unions and trade union rights in Cuba in the latest edition of their journal, 'International Union Rights'. ICTUR is an NGO, with accredited status with the UN Economic and Social Council and the International Labour Organisation's Special List of NGOs, which aims to defend and extend the rights of trade unions and trade unionists worldwide and to collect information and increase awareness of trade union rights and their violations.

The Central de Trabajadores de Cuba (CTC, English Workers' Centre of Cuba) has been the unified trade union federation of Cuba since 1939. Currently the CTC unites 15 sectoral unions organising over 80,000 workplace branches. The unions work at municipal, provincial and industrial levels. Unions are funded by members' subscriptions, usually based upon their earnings. Every union has an elected committee at municipal, provincial and national levels.

Cuban law guarantees the right to form and join trade unions. Legally, a Cuban trade union's constitution and rules must be approved by its members. Trade unions and their members remain central to the political system and the development of the island's economy.

The CTC's latest figures show that about 96 per cent of all eligible workers belong to trade unions. Cuban unions organise in both the public and private sectors of the economy. Women are well-represented. Latest CTC figures show that women comprise about 70 per cent of union membership in education, health and public sector unions.

Following Cuba's restructuring of the economy from 2010 onward, many former state employees have found work in the private sector. Many have become self-employed. Rather than create separate unions for self-employed workers, the existing unions have recruited the self-employed. The CTC estimates that about 55 per cent of non-state workers are self-employed. Most of these workers belong to a union. There are currently about 1,500 branches for self-employed workers.



Palestine



Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) condemns Israel's brutal murder of 9 Palestinians in **Jenin** today and called upon the UK Government to end its complicity with Israel's ongoing criminal violation of Palestinian rights.



The slaughter of 9 Palestinians in Jenin on the 26th of January brings the toll of those killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank since the turn of the year to 29 – following on from 2022 when more Palestinians were killed than in any year since 2005.

Israel's far right government is making clear its intentions to intensify its attacks on Palestinians and its violations of international law, comfortable that it will be granted impunity by Governments like the UK. This sense of impunity was made viscerally clear today when a member of the governing coalition called publicly for the IDF to "keep killing them."

PSC has renewed its demand on the UK Government to end the two-way arms trade with Israel and on banks like *Barclays* to end its investments in companies supplying the weapons and technology used to gun down Palestinians, like those killed in Jenin today.

PSC Director **Ben Jamal**, "We condemn Israel's brutal assault on Palestinians in Jenin today. As long as the UK Government continues to trade weapons with Israel and as long as banks like *Barclays* continue to invest in companies supplying weapons, then they remain complicit in Israel's criminality.

We call upon the British public to join us in ramping up pressure on MP's and to join us in the ongoing protests outside branches of *Barclays* across the country."

WINNING IN THE WORKPLACE

By
Gareth Lane
fast food and hospitality
lead organiser.

Organising

What is *Organising*? A lot of people throw this word around without really understanding what it means or what it is to be an 'organiser'.

Certainly there is no black and white strategy to organising and winning at work. Human beings are complicated and hold contradictory ideas so it's always necessary to bend or change strategy on your course to winning improvements. However I believe there are some simple methods that if applied appropriately will lead to a stronger workplace organisation – **A UNION**.

Organising at work is the attempt to build collective power in the workplace to win improvements. Essentially, bosses have all the power: they decide your pay, what you will be doing all day, the machines you will use, even how long it's acceptable for you to use the toilet. **They control you to maximise their profits.**

What is the role of the Manager?

Employers distribute some of the power they have to *managers*. Their role is to control you more closely, ensuring that you're working to the standard they have set which maximises profit. You have no or very little say in those structures.

Over centuries workers have sacrificed their time, energy, freedom and even their lives to develop ways of asserting their own power in a workplace. The primary power that has emerged is the **union** – *workers coming together to use their strength in numbers to get things changed that we can't change alone.*

If you want to have a say in how the workplace is ran then you need to strengthen the union and you do this by **organising**, building collective power (the union) to win improvements at work.

The Organiser

Those individuals that set out to build this power are called *Organisers*.

Here are 15 hints and tips to help you become a successful organiser, each one can be developed. It only takes on average two months to form a habit that can stay with you for life.

- 1 Perseverance** – Not everyone will agree with you or even understand that change is possible but with persistent work people will join you. Remember people's views are not fixed they are changing all the time. Anti-union can and will become pro union given the right circumstances.
- 2 Nothing changes if nobody does anything** – If change is going to come, then the people who *need* change are going to be the ones to take action. Nobody is coming to the rescue. Nobody will do it for you.
- 3 Leading from behind by pushing** – Many working-class people are told that they are rubbish, and they can't achieve anything throughout their lives. Well, that's simply not true. But if we want to see change people have to step out of their comfort zone and take on new challenges, a good workplace organiser pushes people to do it for themselves.
- 4 The fine Detail** – You've heard the saying '*take care of the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves*'. When you're organising at work, if you take care of the minor detail the big things will take care of themselves.
- 5 Ask them to do it themselves** – You are offering people the opportunity to be all they can be and to take action to improve their lives and the lives of their family.
- 6 Mean it** – Mean what you say and say it from the heart. People respond to emotion, *anger* and *hope* are the catalyst for action.
- 7 Have you heard this story?** – People don't remember dry facts and statistics, they remember *stories*. A win in another department or site can be the catalyst for action on your site. *Tell a beautiful story.*
- 8 Questions, Questions and more questions** – Listen to what people say and respond accordingly a good question can give someone the opportunity to tell you what is wrong and what they want to see changed. Ask don't tell and listen, really listen.
- 9 Show don't Tell?** – Nobody likes to be told what to think and feel. Let them see what the union is about and then *make up their own minds.*
- 10 Don't mess about** – Give everyone a job to do. If there is nobody taking action, there is no union
- 11 I haven't got all the answers** – If you don't know, if you can't do. Find someone who does/can.
- 12 Never Lie** – It's *manipulating* not organising
- 13 The situation is urgent** – It's happening *NOW* so we are doing it *NOW*.
- 14 Why did you start this?** – The most important thing you can do is remind people why they are doing this.
- 15 It's a community** – Celebrate success together. Eat Together, be a family. Everyone loves a party.

Steps to winning by organising Collectively

The first thing to say about building power in the workplace is that it isn't going to be straightforward. There is no instruction manual, it isn't like assembling a flat pack or fixing a car. Its dealing with fellow human beings who are often under a lot of pressure with life as it is. There may be financial pressures, emotional pressures, they may have had bad experiences of trade unions, they may be politically opposed to unions – all of this is normal in any workplace.

But with a plan and the will to succeed you can achieve some serious changes.

Stage one**What's the problem that needs fixing? (Mapping the issues)**

- Make a map of every area and department of the workplace and write down the names of who works there.
- Go round and ask everyone one question, "if you could change one thing about working here what would it be"?

Wants you have collected this information you now know what people care about. Now you can see a pattern developing, you can see that in X department people are unhappy about Y, and across the whole site people are unhappy about XYZ

So, you now have information that you can use to decide what the union is going to campaign on.

Stage Two**Who's in? Where are the leaders?**

A leader is someone who can organise their co-workers in some way, you can spot this by how they interact with others.

To have any campaign in a workplace we need to win the leaders to it. Nobody can lead an entire workplace. A strong leader may lead up to 10 workers, most leaders will lead 3/4 and some leaders may only lead 1/2 but it's important to win *all* these leaders to the union in order to increase power on the shop floor.

Note: You can test leaders by asking people to sign someone up to the union if they succeed you know they are a leader and can influence at the very least the person they signed up to the union.

You can spot a leader by assessing the following a leader may have one or all of these valuable qualities.

- Do they organise social events?
- Do they provide emotional or physical support to co-workers?
- Do people listen to the leader when they have something to say?
- Are they popular?

Go Back to your map of the issues and ask yourself these questions and make a list.

- Who in each department has the most influence over their co-workers?
- Who is a **leader** (who leads other workers)?
- When we asked the initial question about what people would like to see changed who was the most animated?
- Who offered solutions? Did anyone talk about the union? (Were they pro union or anti union)

Make a list!

Stage Three**Identify your objectives**

Once you have identified leaders Bring them together in a meeting. Identify the campaign demands and agree.

This can be in a pub or someone's house, if there is food and drink its likely to go much better,

Let's all agree to build a strong union, and our campaign will be XYZ using the information from your issue map. Remember it's what the majority want to see changed but make sure its winnable.

Note: at this stage it's important to remember that if you are going to win and if everyone attending the meeting is going to go above and beyond to win xyz its important that you have created a friendly open environment. Where everyone feels they have had a say and feel ownership over the union campaign.

Make a plan Detail things you could do or say.

- **Raise a grievance** – this is more powerful when raised collectively. Employers don't like multiple grievances, it takes up time and resources on the part of managers,
- **Decide who is going to speak to who to recruit to the union** – remember *who leads who?*
- **Raise a petition.**
- **Make a collective letter and ask everyone to sign it.**
- **Get everyone together and go and talk to which ever manager has the power to give you XYZ** – we call this a *March on the Boss*

There are pros and cons to each of these suggestions and you should use the appropriate one for the scenario you face.

Stage Four**Implement your plan**

If the owners are going to change anything about their business, they need to understand that the majority of the workers on the site/department, feel strongly about the issue. A petition or grievance can be a way of raising the issues in a powerful way,

- Go and recruit to the union.
- Go and get your petition signed.
- Collect signatures for the letter.
- Raise the grievances.
- March on the boss.
- Submit your grievances/letter etc and wait for the manager's response.

Stage Five**Grievance hearing/managers response**

Its often at this stage that the management will make concessions.

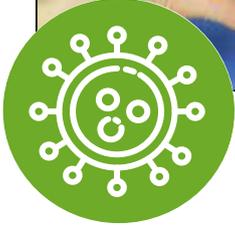
Congratulations. you have organised an improvement to the workplace and shown everyone why the union is important and what it can do when everyone sticks together,

Call another meeting decide if you are collectively happy with the employers offer, if so thank them for listening to your concerns, if not you have options to escalate action using the methods provided.

If you have found this helpful and want more support and advice, feel free to contact me:

gareth.lane@bfawu.org

IER – PRESENTING A MA



WHY WE NEED A MANIFESTO FOR RECOVERY

Workers before Covid:

- ▶ 5.1m people earned less than the Real Living Wage (£9.30 per hour)
- ▶ For 12 years, average wages had not increased, and now they are falling as prices increase
- ▶ 3.6m workers in insecure work

Workers during Covid:

- ▶ Real terms earnings fell 0.9% for workers between 2020–2021
- ▶ Inequality led to those on lowest pay suffering highest levels of infection and death
- ▶ 1-in-10 workers forced to reduce pay and terms & conditions via fire and rehire

Workers and the cost-of-living crisis:

- ▶ Inflation soars at 10.1%, predicted to continue climbing
- ▶ Wages are slowly rising in nominal terms but nowhere near the rise in prices; the result are real wage cuts for the vast majority of workers, more sharply for the lowest earners.
- ▶ UK economy heads for further economic downturn and recession

What we want & what we need:

- ▶ Fulfilling, secure, sustainable and well-paid jobs
- ▶ H&S law and enforcement fit for workers in the 21st century
- ▶ Legally abolish coercive fire & rehire, or P&O style fire & replace tactics.
- ▶ Restore democracy and worker voice through collective bargaining across sectors & industries.
- ▶ A just transition to an environmentally sustainable economy
- ▶ Radically reform and increase workers' rights and the enforcement of them, to address power imbalance at work
- ▶ Negotiated, reduced working time without loss of pay, so workers have more time to enjoy the fruits of their labour
- ▶ Use automation to ease workers lives, not to intensify them or keep them under surveillance
- ▶ Increase wages and tax big business to stimulate demand, support public services, and grow out of recession



www.ier.co.uk/manifesto
@ieruk #ierrecoverymanifesto

NIFESTO FOR RECOVERY

10 STEPS TOWARDS A RECOVERY MANIFESTO

- 1 There is a need for co-ordinated and progressive international action, as in the ILO Declaration of Philadelphia (1944).
- 2 In the UK, sector-wide collective bargaining must be restored, as a key lever for redistribution, the promotion of equality, and to raise wages.
- 3 A true green and just transition in energy (and elsewhere) is required to save the UK and the world and to provide a new generation of worthwhile jobs.
- 4 At domestic level, radical and transformative fiscal policies must be adopted to raise taxes, in order to increase spending, in order to promote income equality and equality of wealth.
- 5 The State must be rebuilt as the expression of collective solidarity, not just in health, but also in employment, housing, education, transport, and income maintenance.
- 6 Participation in government must be expanded to give trade unions a voice in public policy development, while all public services must be delivered directly by public bodies.
- 7 The economic constitution must be restored to recreate an open, robust, resilient, and inclusive democracy based on entitlement through strong industrial citizenship.
- 8 Steps must be taken to ensure the dignity of all workers, and to end the various forms of exploitation through non-standard employment. Enough is enough.
- 9 We must re-assess the value of work and its rewards. Wage rates should be based on service to the community not market value, with much greater State intervention. In particular wages, through sectoral collective bargaining must rise in our vital public services so as to recruit and retain staff to fill the tens of thousands of vacancies.
- 10 Steps must be taken to disempower global corporations and to democratise companies, as an integral part of the new economic constitution which includes public ownership of the fundamental services.



NOTICEBOARD

- 1 New Website
- 2 H&S Conference
- 3 ULR national meeting
- 4 Email addresses
- 5 With banners high!

**dates for
your diary**

8th March	International Womens Day
31st March	Deadline for Delegates to BFAWU Annual Conference
28th April	International Workers Memorial Day
1st May	International Workers Day – 'May Day'

Coming Up!

ORGANISE NOW

WE BEGAN WORKING with *Organise Now* during 2022. The project is designed to enable any worker in the UK to complete a form to say they want help organising and then receive a call from an experienced rep/steward/organiser volunteer within 72 hours to help them get started. The aim is to get more people organising and part of the labour movement.

Learning from the Emergency Workplace Organising Committee (EWOC) in the USA, who have organised thousands of workers this way, the BFAWU were the initial trade union to support the project and throughout 2022 it has grown from strength to strength, working with trades councils and taking a lead role in the Starbucks Day of action.

In the first 4 months

- Volunteers **154 in total:**
- 39% UNITE
 - 15% National Education Union
 - 10% UNISON
 - 7% UCU
 - 6% BFAWU
 - 5% CWU
- Workers helped so far by sector
- Hospitality: 21%
 - Charity: 16%
 - Health and social care: 14%
 - Education: 13%
 - Retail: 5%
 - IT: 5%

The project is now 6 months old and to celebrate this we are holding a public meeting on the **20th March online**. Join the call and hear about our *Successes, Challenges and the Next steps*

- **6.30pm**
- **Zoom registration:** <http://bit.ly/ON6months>

STRIKE MAP

WE WOULD RECOMMEND that BFAWU members, activists and reps keep an eye on the *Strike Map* website so that you can support striking workers on their picket lines!

<https://strikemap.org>

Strike Map was launched in December 2020 because there were no coordinated records kept of the strike action happening across the UK.

They are still a young organisation made up of volunteers and activists and are seeking to build solidarity across these islands. The map is an attempt to start to catalogue the action taking place and we hope will be useful to other workers.

This site is a 'worker-powered' attempt to map the industrial action taking place and relies purely on the information supplied via our submission form. They do not claim to be an official account of all action across the country, or represent all the collective action and different tactics of disruption that people are engaged in.

The people behind Strike Map are trade union activists that work full time and were behind the Red for Key Workers initiative on May Day 2020.

They are independent of any one union, party or candidate and the map was inspired by strikethreat.org

Aims of the strike map website

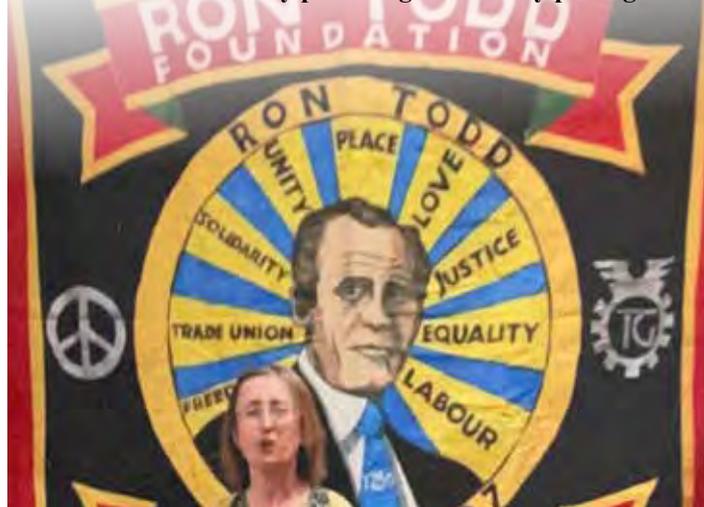
- Document and present the levels of strike action in the country.
- Enable others to see the levels of action and pass on messages of solidarity.
- Encourage other workers in their struggles.
- Bring those leading struggles together through a network.

How to get in touch

This website is staffed by activists who have other full-time occupations. However, you can get in touch anytime via all our social network channels and: strikemapuk@gmail.com

THE RON TODD FOUNDATION

RON TODD WAS BEST KNOWN for his unwavering commitment to building a better world. In 2022, The Ron Todd Foundation supported 1893 BFAWU members – either by welcoming them to Ron Todd House or by providing a solidarity package.



The objectives of the Ron Todd Foundation are:

The prevention or relief of poverty anywhere in England and Wales in particular but not exclusively by:

- Providing or assisting in the provision of education, training and projects;
- Providing: grants, items and services to individuals in need and/or charities, or other organisations working to prevent or relieve poverty;
- Undertaking and supporting research into factors that contribute to poverty and the most appropriate ways to mitigate these;
- Providing housing, support and education.

The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by:

- The elimination of discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or religion;
- Advancing education and raising awareness in equality and diversity;
- Conducting or commissioning research on equality and diversity issues and publishing these results to the public.

H&S REPS – YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS

AS WE ENTER 2023 Its worth reminding ourselves of the Legal Rights of a Health and Safety Representative

The legal rights of a Health and Safety Representative are governed by the:

- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**
- **Safety Representatives & Safety Committees Regulations 1977**
- **Health & Safety Executives ‘Brown Book’**

Summary

Recognised trade unions have the legal right to appoint workplace Health and Safety representatives.

The Health and Safety representative has a number of rights.

- The Health and Safety Representative has a legal right to information about accidents and must be given it.
- The Health and Safety representative has the right to the necessary time off work to perform their duties.

[Safety Representatives & Safety Committees Regulations 1977]

Appointing Health and Safety Representatives

In a workplace where a trade union is recognised, a trade union may appoint safety representatives. The employer must be notified in writing by the trade union of the names of the persons and the group(s) of employees they represent.

The Function of the Health and Safety Representative

A Health and Safety representative has the right to **Investigate**:

- potential hazards
- dangerous occurrences
- complaints by any employee he/she represents (relating to health, safety or welfare at work)

A Health and Safety representative has the right to **make representations**

- regarding the above investigations
- on general matters relating to health, safety or welfare at work

A Health and Safety representative has the right to **carry out inspections**

They also have the right to:

- Represent union members in consultations at the workplace with inspectors of the HSE and of any other enforcing authority

- Receive information from inspectors
- Attend meetings of safety committees

Inspections

Health and Safety representatives are entitled to inspect the workplace every three months. They are required to give reasonable notice to the employer.

[More frequent inspections can be arranged with the agreement of the employer.]

If an incident/accident occurs the Health and Safety representative may carry out an inspection only when it is safe to do so. They must not disturb or destroy any evidence

The purpose of investigations is to identify measures to prevent a reoccurrence.

Safety representatives are legally entitled to inspect records of accidents that employers have to keep under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

Releasing Information

The HSE website states:

“Employers have a responsibility to provide information to all workers that will enable them to participate fully and effectively in any consultation about their health and safety”

Safety representatives must be given information necessary for them to fulfil their function, for example:

Proposed changes to current working practices which may affect the health and safety at work of their employees.

Technical information about hazards to health and safety and the necessary precautions to prevent or minimise them

Information on equipment, materials, or substances

The results of any action taken by the employer in the course of checking the effectiveness of their health and safety arrangements

The employer must be given reasonable notice of any request for documents.

Safety Committee

Where at least two safety representatives make a request in writing, the employer must establish a safety committee. They must do so:

- following consultation.
- having notified the work force; and
- no later than three months after the request.



THE WASPI CAMPAIGN has been running since 2015 when five women started a Facebook group to raise awareness of increases to women's State Pension age. The Campaign now has nearly 120,000 followers on Facebook. We have a membership scheme and formed a limited company to ensure transparency and proper business practice.

Background

In 1995, the Government legislated to increase the women's State Pension age to 65 by April 2020. However, in the succeeding years the change was not communicated to the women affected. Targeted mailings to the women whose State Pension Age would change were only sent in 2012, with many getting only one year's notice of a six-year delay to their retirement.

After thousands of affected women made four stages of complaint to the Department of Work and Pensions, (DWP) the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) began investigating complaints about the DWP's communication of changes. Their first report on the subject confirmed that the DWP's handling of the matter over the course of more than a decade amounted to maladministration.

The PHSO found that "The opportunity that additional notice would have given them [1950s-born women] to adjust their retirement plans was lost." The report continues, "DWP failed to take adequate account of the need for targeted and individually tailored information...Despite having identified there was more it could do, it failed to provide the public with as full information as possible."

WASPI's campaign

WASPI accept the equalising of the State Pension age (the 1995 Act) and for increasing it to 66 (the 2011 Act). However, we don't accept that women who were not given due notice of the changes to their State Pension age – proven maladministration – should simply put up with the dreadful disadvantage they have been placed at to help the Treasury's coffers.

The DWP failed women born in the 1950s, denying them the opportunity to plan their retirements properly. Women took life changing decisions to give up work in their late fifties (usually to take on caring responsibilities) in anticipation of being able to take a State Pension at 60. Had they been properly informed about the changes to the law, they would have stayed in the workplace and planned accordingly.

Our simple ask is that the affected women are offered fair and fast compensation now, to remedy the financial and emotional damage caused by failures in communication by government. WASPI isn't campaigning for the reversal of the State Pension age to 60, nor for women to be paid 'lost pensions.

Instead, we ask only for modest compensation for successive governments' mishandling of the pension reforms. The highest awards should be made to women who were given the shortest notice of the longest increase to their pensions.

No time to lose

Research commissioned by WASPI and undertaken by expert analysts *Statista* shows that 220,000 women have died waiting for justice. Meanwhile, every fourteen minutes another woman born in the 1950s dies.

Political response

The Government has repeatedly and disrespectfully ignored the plight of WASPI women, with ministers admitting that nobody from the DWP has even met with the campaign since 2016.

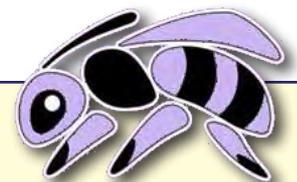
But the PHSO has already made clear that the DWP is guilty of maladministration.

There is no time to wait for yet further reports to be released on this issue, since every day that passes sees 103 more WASPI women die awaiting the compensation they are owed.

Cost of living crisis

The cost-of-living crisis is engulfing everyone in every community. But women born in the 1950s are particularly hard hit since the mistakes made in government resulted in very many of us spending our savings before reaching the new State Pension age. WASPI women used any 'cushion' they may have had long ago and have no protection against soaring prices. Compensation is needed right now to remedy the injustice meted out to WASPI women and as a 'shot in the arm' during this crisis.

How can you help?



You can support the campaign by joining on our website:

<https://www.waspi.co.uk/how-to-join/>

You can write to your MP and ask them to write to the Pension's Minister on behalf of WASPI women in your area.

Share our [change.org](https://www.change.org) open letter to the new Prime Minister to show the broad support for our campaign – over 20,000 people have already signed.:

<https://www.change.org/p/new-prime-minister-must-deliver-fast-fair-compensation-for-waspi-women>

REGION 5 AWARDS



**Branch 558,
Rathbones**
Mark Hilton, Sean
Molloy and Keith
Towler

Fast Food Organisers

**Jesse Enfield and
Nick Dance**
(Sheffield Needs a
Pay Rise)

**Laura Dickinson
and
Llyr Watson Jones**
(Leeds Get
Organised)

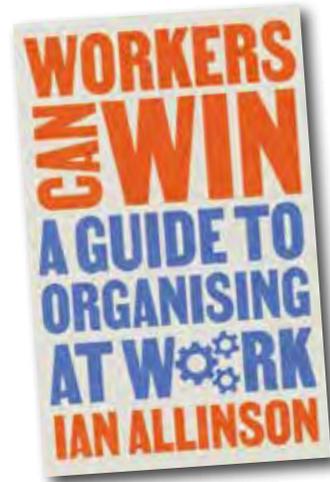


Lizzie Dinning had the honour of presenting **Vi Carr** with her 40 year membership badge this year, Vi was an incredibly active Executive Council member for many years and represented the union at TUC and GFTU events and conferences as well as on international trips.



WHAT ARE WE READING?

Workers Can Win – A guide to Organising at Work
by Ian Allinson

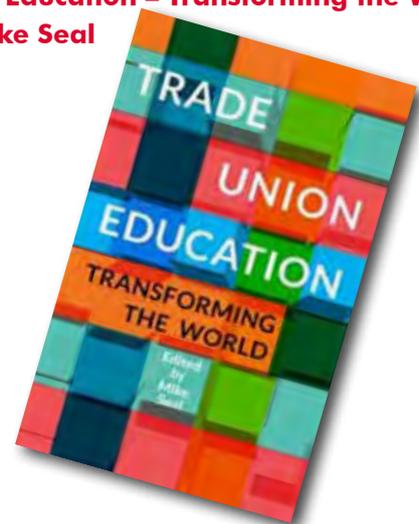


Workers Can Win is an essential practical guide for rank-and-file workers and union activists. Drawing on more than 20 years of organising experience, Ian Allinson combines practical techniques with an analysis of the theory and politics of organising and unions.

The book offers insight into tried and tested methods for effective organising. It deals with tactics and strategies, and addresses some of the roots of conflict, common problems with unions and the resistance of management to worker organising. As a 101 guide to workplace organising with politically radical horizon, *Workers Can Win* is destined to become an essential tool for workplace struggles in the years to come.

<https://workers-can-win.info/>

Trade Union Education – Transforming the World
Edited by Mike Seal



Trade union education has been in the doldrums for years – it generally lacks modern teaching methods, has outdated content and avoids key areas of history, economics and politics.

This book aims to change all that – to mark out new ground that will bring trade union education back to life. This book has inspired new courses to train people to become better mentors in the trade union context.

<https://gftu.org.uk/product/trade-union-education/>

The 22.17 Northern Rail from Liverpool Lime Street to Garswood

It all started with an e-mail from Becky,
Producer,
"A Lovely Word Festival," Everyman
Theatre, Liverpool.

"Dear George and Sharon,
we'd like you both to be our warm-up
poets
leading up to our poetry slam
competition.
There'll be a modest remuneration
and expenses,
maybe enough to pay for a month and a
half of your TV licence,
don't I remember you telling us that
you went on a free one
upon turning 75
and the three-faced Tories,
with the connivance of the BBC
took it back when you turned 76?

And whilst we are unable, on this
occasion, to provide your normal
dressing room,
the amply proportioned and adjoining
disabled toilet,
with built in automatic bum spray,
will be placed at your disposal,
where you can eat at one end
and have a bath at the other end,
all at the same time.

Which finds us on the 13.05 Northern
Rail
from Garswood to Liverpool Lime
Street, arriving at,
Ar Sharon disappears
into the bustle of Bold Street for the
afternoon,
whilst I meamble
to the Pier Head
and the 15.00 sailing of
the Royal Iris.

Bracing,
don't have a cheese and onion pie
before embarking.

Regurgitated at Woodchurch.

Up the hill to
Hamilton Road train station,
retrace my journey
but this time *under* the River Mersey,
I can't really give you the highlights of that,
it was a bit like taking tea with
Liz Truss I imagine,
bland,
or going for a pint with
Kwasi Kwarteng,
don't expect *him* to get his round in.

To offset his predicted dark winter
I've got a few copies of my book at a fiver
and you get a free tea-light thrown in,
you might need it.

Meet up with Ar Sharon,
and we stroll up to the Everyman.

Prosecco and fruit juice
and a welcoming party for the glitterati,
I think we might have qualified for that
category
on account I had a drink shoved in mi hand,
I was hoping for a vegan sausage roll
but we can't have everything in life,

Time for the paying public
to swell the ranks
until those magic words from
master of ceremonies Allan,
"ladies and gentlemen,
welcome to the stage
to open the evening....

George, Th'Owd Chap,"

as I totter up the ramp
and regale with
the warts and all grimshow of getting old,
it seemed to put them all in a good mood
although one or two were grey with the
realisation,
"sodding hell, is that where we're heading?"
They got up on their feet at the end,
I don't think they were making for
the exit
but I could be wrong.

"Ladies and Gentlemen,
welcome to the stage....

Ar Sharon,"

tale completed and further rapturous applause,
relax
and watch what we're all here for,
the cream of N.W. slam poets
battling for top honours
and fantastic prizes,
until
21.45,
down the hill to
Liverpool Lime Street for the
22.17
Northern Rail
to Blackpool North
via Garswood.

"Step in here sir and madam,
it's a quieter carriage,
the boozers
are all further up the train,"

and thus
our first meeting with Mebz,
11 years a Northern Rail guard,
wife and two children,
resident of Bolton,
as he steps aboard.

The two policemen who've been stood by
him
retreat back to wherever they retreat back
to,

probably a kettle and tea bags
and the Sun quick crossword,
it lasts them all week
and even then
they don't finish it,
and we're off on time,
and between stops we regale Mebz
our poetry adventures....

"can you perform a poem for me?
My wife will be thrilled when I tell her."

I wait for the longest slot between stations
which is
after St. Helens and before Garswood.

For the second time that evening
I perform to an audience,
albeit an audience of one
as I tell him the tale of
"Mi Grandad."

Finishing it as we arrive at Garswood,
we step off onto a deserted platform,
the black evening air
cloaking us into its embrace

as,
wiping a tear from his eye,
Mebz waves us off,
and as the 22.17
from Liverpool Lime St. to Blackpool
North
disappears into the distance,

quiet descends,
and we stroll back to real life,
and I think to myself....
"did I dream all that?"



**George
Melling**
Th'Owd Chap

Poet and proud
lifetime member
BFAWU

2022



The Young Members' Development Weekend is back this May from Friday 19th to Sunday 21st 2023 at GFTU's own Quorn Grange Hotel.

Established over many years, this is really one of the best Labour Movement events. Engaging, challenging, fun, an inspiring weekend to make new friends, learn about the Movement and develop skills to organise and build your union.

Every year it's been a game changer for those involved and many new leaders have come forward following this motivational experience.

This weekend is aimed at existing union members with some experience. There will be another event later in the year aimed at young workers thinking of joining or are new to union memberships.

These are free events for members of GFTU affiliated unions. If you are interested and not part of a GFTU affiliated union, there is a day rate cost.

To apply, please visit:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/55864467>

[0247](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/55864467). All applications must be completed by Monday 20th March.

Please direct all enquiries to Education Administrator, Mark Robinson, via mark@gftu.org.uk or by calling 01509410978.

“Throughout the weekend, collectively, we learnt so much about how to stand up for ourselves and our fellow young workers.”

“... the things we learnt throughout the weekend are lifelong skills. Skills that we will use for long into the future as trade unionists. Empowering young workers this way is vital to the future success and strength of our movement. These weekends are essential for young trade unionists to attend.”



86 Wood Lane, Quorn, Loughborough, LE12 8DB | 01509410970 | [gftu.org.uk](https://www.gftu.org.uk)



**NOTTINGHAM
COLLEGE**



**Level 2
Qualifications**
(equivalent
to GCSEs)

Funded Online English and Maths courses for adults*

*Funding is available for those living within a non-devolved area.

All classes have full support available from our tutors. Sessions are taught either online or face to face.

SCAN HERE to apply



If you require more information on these courses or have any questions about funding please email e.learning@nottinghamcollege.ac.uk

WORK YOUR BRAIN

WORDSEARCH

How many words can you find?

O	H	O	V	I	S	D	U	M	W	X
Y	L	X	O	E	T	L	E	A	A	L
Q	O	E	I	R	A	I	L	P	S	I
P	C	U	A	Z	W	U	W	M	P	V
A	H	V	N	D	L	B	I	A	I	E
H	I	N	P	G	E	E	N	T	W	R
C	M	E	M	B	E	R	S	H	I	P
D	P	Y	T	E	F	A	S	S	G	O
W	Y	R	E	V	O	C	E	R	A	O
O	E	D	U	C	A	T	I	O	N	L
T	N	E	M	P	O	L	E	V	E	D

WORDS CAN GO IN ANY DIRECTION (inc diagonally)!

Clue: you will find all of the words in this Foodworker... if you look closely enough!

SUDOKU

Fill the 9x9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3x3 section contains all of the digits between 1 and 9

6		4		8			7	
		9		7		3		
		2	4	5				
	6	3					2	
4	7				5			
	9					6		
					1			
						4	8	2
5					4	7	1	

difficulty: medium

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Prizes to be won!

These puzzles are designed as a piece of fun to keep your brain active and perhaps while away a bit of time on your break. There are, however, prizes to be won!

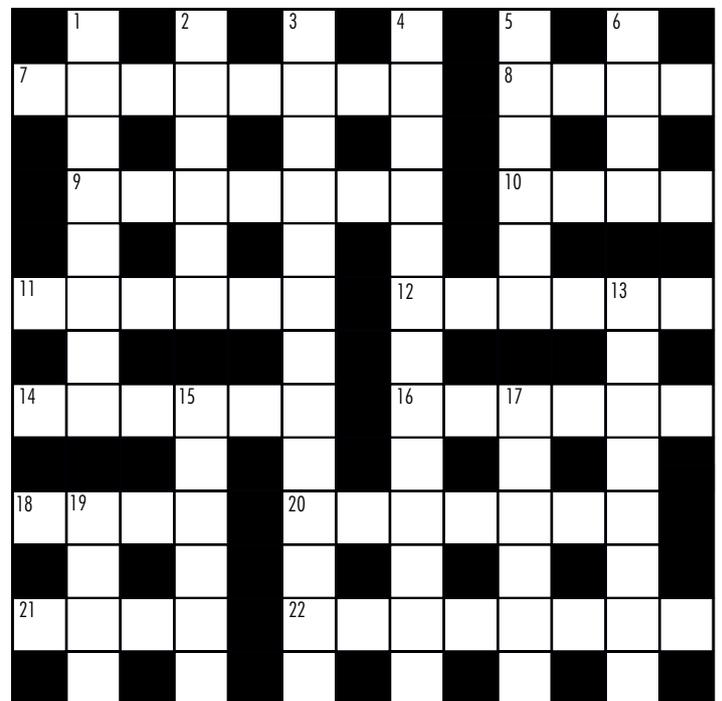
If you have completed a puzzle, take a picture of your answer and mail it to us at BFAWU Head Office:

foodworker_puzzles@BFAWU.org

We will check each entry and will contact you by email if you have won a prize.

Entries must be received by **30th April 2023** and winners will be announced in the next Foodworker.

CROSSWORD



Across

- 7 Set free (8)
- 8 Horse's gait (4)
- 9 Difficult question (7)
- 10 Among (4)
- 11 Flowing water (6)
- 12 Composer of "The Messiah" (6)
- 14 Hedge plant (6)
- 16 Have no obligation to (6)
- 18 Increases (4)
- 20 Nightclub (7)
- 21 Midge (4)
- 22 Compulsive slimmer (8)

Down

- 1 Duce (8)
- 2 Lower (6)
- 3 One skilled in algebra, for example (13)
- 4 Directory of contact numbers (9,4)
- 5 Achieve (6)
- 6 Central Chinese desert (4)
- 13 Physicist (8)
- 15 Calls on (6)
- 17 Weirder (6)
- 19 Ridge of sand (4)

BFAWU OFFICERS AND REGIONAL ADDRESSES

Head Office

email: info@bfawu.org

Stanborough House, Great North Road,
Stanborough, Welwyn Garden City,
Hertfordshire AL8 7TA

Tel: 01707 260150/259450

Ms Sarah Woolley – General Secretary

email: sarah.woolley@bfawu.org

Mr I Hodson – National President

email: ian.hodson@bfawu.org

Also Credit Union

Tel: 01707 259455

email: admin@bfawucreditunion.co.uk

No 1 Region

email: region1@bfawu.org

c/o Head Office

Stanborough House, Great North Road,
Stanborough, Welwyn Garden City,
Hertfordshire AL8 7TA

Tel: 0208 801 0980

Mr F Loveday – Organising Regional Secretary

Mobile: 07739 326002

email: frank.loveday@bfawu.org

No 2 Region

email: region2@bfawu.org

Cardiff House
Cardiff Road
Barry
CF63 2AW

Tel: 02920 481518

Mr G Johnston – Organising Regional Secretary

Mobile: 07739 326005

email: gary.johnston@bfawu.org

Mr J James – Organising Regional Secretary

Mobile: 07739 326004

email: john.james@bfawu.org

No 3 Region

email: region3@bfawu.org

Suite 1C3, Park Business Centre
Wood Lane, Erdington
Birmingham
B24 9QR

Tel: 0121 237 3720

Mr G Atwall – Regional Officer

Mobile: 07739 326009

email: george.atwall@bfawu.org

Mr H Rashid – Organising Regional Secretary

Mobile: 07726 902807

email: haroon.rashid@bfawu.org

Mr L Bemka – Organising Regional Secretary

Mobile: 07912 760261

email: lukasz.bemka@bfawu.org

No 4 Region

email: region4@bfawu.org

348 Chester Road
Cornbrook,
Manchester, M16 9EZ

Tel: 0161 872 6621

Mr R Streeter – Regional Officer

Mobile: 07739 326011

email: roy.streeter@bfawu.org

Mrs P Nazir – Organising Regional Secretary

Mobile: 07739 326013

email: pauline.nazir@bfawu.org

Mr G Atkinson – Organising Regional Secretary

Mobile: 07834 930002

email: geoff.atkinson@bfawu.org

No 5 Region

email: region5@bfawu.org

10 Greenside, Pudsey,
West Yorkshire LS28 8PU

Tel: 01132 565925

Mr M McHugh – Regional Officer

Mobile: 07727 907218

email: mark.mchugh@bfawu.org

Ms L Dinning – Organising Regional Secretary

Mobile: 07739 326016

email: lizzie.dinning@bfawu.org

Mr J Singh – Organising Regional Secretary

Mobile: 07739 326012

email: jit.singh@bfawu.org

No 7 Region

email: region7@bfawu.org

Suite 105, City East Business Centre
68–72 Newtownards Road
Belfast BT4 1GW

Tel: 028 9094 1693

Ms L Graham – Regional Officer

Mobile: 07739 326020

email: laura.graham@bfawu.org



JOIN THE
BAKERS, FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION

If you or any of your work colleagues are interested
in what the BFAWU can offer, scan the QR code to find out more
and **Join this Great Union!**

