



## UNDERSTANDING YOUR ENERGY BILLS



**UNDERSTANDING YOUR ENERGY BILLS**

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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 The Old Bank Kilwardby Street Ashby de la Zouch LE65 2FR Tel: 01332 865111



**EDITOR'S NOTES**

*"It isn't easy being a rep but it can also be incredibly rewarding – when you have negotiated a good pay deal, or saved a member's job."*

sarah.woolley@bfawu.org

AS WE COME TO THE END OF 2023, I want to start off by thanking all of our reps and branch secretaries for their tireless work throughout the year, supporting members in a range of issues from wage negotiations to disciplinary hearings, grievances to rule book benefit claims, listening to members' issues, signposting them to support services and generally challenging bad practices, ensuring our members leave work as safely as they entered.

I am sure you will join me in sending a huge thanks also to our full time officials, clerical staff and union learn project managers for all the work they have done throughout the year.

It isn't easy being a rep but it can also be incredibly rewarding – when you have negotiated a good pay deal, or saved a member's job. I know you all do the very best you can for your members even though it can't always be seen clearly by them. You are the cogs that keep the union turning, the people who step up to be the voice for our membership in the workplace and the ones who make sure our members are up to date with everything BFAWU.

If you are reading this and are thinking I wouldn't mind being a rep, let us know! There is a process to be followed but the first step is letting us know you are interested! Just follow this QR code below.



← Are you interested in becoming a Rep?

Member details update →



**Greggs Wage Ballot**

As I write this, we are preparing to go to ballot in **Greggs**, (See page 6 for information about the deal the GNC has negotiated), so **please make sure you exercise your right to vote!**

We are strongly recommending this deal. The committee have worked incredibly hard to get the best possible deal for our members, which is well above the current RPI levels and above the medium pay awards that are being implemented elsewhere and significantly raises everyone's basic pay.

In the last 2 years we have negotiated an increase of over 15% on basic rates for our members within Greggs which is a massive achievement that has put hundreds if not thousands of pounds in our members pockets during a tough economic period that we are all working through the impact of.

We are incredibly proud of the hard work of the elected GNC members through this round of negotiations and encourage you to support that by voting 'YES'!

**Allied, West Brom**

You will remember earlier this year our members at Allied Bakeries in Liverpool went out on strike and had huge support from around the whole movement, well, I want to give a huge shout out to **Bobby Basra** and the members at Allied, West Brom, who definitely followed Liverpool in style.

They stood strong, smashed the ballot thresholds and returned a 100% yes vote for industrial action to show the company how committed they were against the deal on the table. Dates were set for them to walk out, which pushed the company to improve its offer which was then hugely accepted by the membership – **10%, 1 year deal and the removal of the 2nd generation contracts.** A massive win for the members at Allied, West Brom and a foundation for those branches who are in the negotiation process!

### Special Anti-Strike Laws Congress

**Peter Pyne** (Region 1 Exec member) and I attended the *TUC Special Conference* on the 9th December. The General Council statement was unanimously supported and over the coming weeks, we will be working on our action plan outlining how we will support pushing back against this horrendous legislation, which is designed to remove the right to strike from our brothers, sisters and friends in the union movement.

Whilst the legislation doesn't immediately affect BFAWU members, it is important as a movement that we stick together because once it is in, its only a matter of time before it impacts us all. We will be working with the TUC, GFTU, CTUF and other organisations and sister unions to put the following 15 points into a practical plan of non-compliance and push back and we will keep branches updated:

### Support

- 1 Equip every trade union member with the tools to resist this legislation in the workplace. Unions will continue to work together to adopt different tactical approaches to non-cooperation and non-compliance. We will support affiliates in deploying novel and effective forms of industrial action to maximise resistance to work notices. We will develop practical solidarity plans for unions actively engaged in strategies of non-compliance.
- 2 Support any worker subject to a **work notice**, including with support from across the trade union movement, if their employer disciplines them in any way.
- 3 Ensure that where employers fail to resolve disputes, workforces are still able to exercise their democratic right to withdraw their labour.
- 4 Ensure that where any affiliate is facing significant risk of sanctions because of this legislation, we convene an emergency meeting of the Executive Committee to consider options for providing practical, industrial, financial and/or political backing to that union.



### Resist

- 5 Continue our wider legal challenge to these undemocratic laws – leaving no stone unturned internationally and in UK courts.
- 6 Call on all employers and public bodies with oversight to oppose this counterproductive legislation. Employers and public bodies from across the public sector and the country have already signalled their opposition to the Strikes Act. All employers and public bodies must reject it.
- 7 Ensure that any employer tempted to deploy and impose work notices understands that the union movement will unite to resist them – in the workplace and in the courts.
- 8 Campaign to name and shame as anti-union and anti-worker all employers and public bodies who deploy work notices.
- 9 Seek to challenge minimum service levels on the grounds of public safety, worker safety, data protection, employees' existing contractual agreements and equalities.
- 10 Seek to ensure that the data protection and privacy rights of trades union members are fully respected and protected at all times, as we resist the imposition of these undemocratic restrictions.
- 11 Refuse to tell our members to cross a picket line.

### Mobilise

- 12 Mobilise the whole trade union movement to march with the sacked GCHQ workers through Cheltenham on 27 January, to commemorate their struggle, and to recommit ourselves to defiant opposition to Conservative minimum service levels, trade union restrictions and any threat to the right to strike.
- 13 Call an urgent demonstration in the event a work notice is deployed and a union or worker is sanctioned in relation to a work notice.
- 14 Coordinate communications and campaigning activity across the trade union movement.

### Repeal

- 15 Hold Labour to their commitment to repeal this legislation within their first 100 days of office as a key part of promoting and fully implementing the wider New Deal for working people as a flagship policy in the forthcoming general election

### Rosa Luxembourg Political Economy Pilot Course

We had an amazing pilot course in Eastbourne at the end of November, we covered the history of the movement, the history of our union, we took a detailed look at what drove us to be trade union activists and reps, the importance of organising and working together. We are looking at and working with the team at Rosa Luxembourg Stiftung to see how we build on this, run more courses and follow up with the pilot attendees to ensure it leads to clear growth in membership going forwards.

A more detailed write up on the weekend will be in the next edition, on the website soon and in the Annual Report to Conference next year.

It was fab to meet and spend time with both experienced reps and brand-new activists in our great union and I am looking forward to seeing them all develop and grow together! Thank you to **Deborah, Joe, Josh, Emma** and **Rafael** for creating and facilitating the weekend.



### Remember

As we head into the final days before Christmas please remember.

- The person behind the counter is doing their absolute best.
- The person waiting your tables is probably exhausted.
- It's not the checkout assistants fault the queue is down the aisle.
- Your takeaway might take a little longer to arrive.
- Your Postie's back is breaking from all the parcels being ordered.
- The bus/taxi drivers and train crew are dealing with Xmas party travellers.
- We all want to get to our destination safely on roads that will be busy, dark, wet, and possibly icy.
- **No one is paid enough to be abused at work.**
- You don't know what the person next to you at work is going through or dealing with.

Please be kind to others around you, so that we can all enjoy Christmas, I hope you all manage to get some time off during the period, though I know for many that time will be short and precious due to the industry we work in.

*Take care, have a lovely Christmas, and see you in the New Year*

Sarah

AND... For those of you who struggle at this time of the year, whether due to difficult home circumstances, bereavement or loneliness, **please remember that you are not alone**, you are part of the BFAWU family and you can always reach out if you need to – my socials, number and email are always open to BFAWU members if needed.



## NATIONAL PRESIDENT IAN HODSON

*"We are not more secure or United as a nation: inequality, injustice, and division have become normalised by a failed political system that is only interested in delivering for the wealthy and the powerful."*

2023 DRAWS TO A CLOSE, and what an awful year we have endured. Soaring food prices, unaffordable energy costs, inflation out of control, and rising interest rates squeezing your household in-come to reduce your spending power even further. Politicians use every tactic to divide us and divert our eyes from the mess they have created.

2024 will be an election year, and in the recent Autumn Statement, of course, the Tories took the opportunity to try and persuade you that they are on your side with a measly cut to National Insurance and trying to hide that households in the UK are seeing the biggest fall in living standards since the 1950s.

### Robbing Peter...

The sting in the tail with the cut to National insurance, of course, is that this will divert money away from our much-needed public services, so an NHS that is collapsing with waiting lists soaring to 8 million [*yes, that's 8 million*] will be forced to accept more of its services being *outsourced* (that's the name for privatisation and cuts nowadays) because they can't tell the truth they dress it up in language to confuse and mislead.

However, far from being the solution to the problems caused by a lack of funds, the cost burden on our NHS is increasing as shareholders demand more profits from their investments in our NHS.

This can only come from charging higher fees to the public purse or cutting staff and medical costs to squeeze as much profit as possible from a service that was supposed to be there in our time of need. So, as costs to fund greedy shareholders increase, more and more people are being forced into the Private sector for treatment.

The calls for drastic action, such as charging for GP appointments or top-up private medical insurance, are being pushed as a solution to the deliberate underfunding crisis of our NHS, and let's be clear – it's not just the Tories who are prepared to sell the NHS to the highest bidder, but Labour's **Wes 'rivers of left-wing blood' Streeter** has declared his enthusiasm for smashing down the doors for more private health care.

Of course, there was and is an alternative. We could have taxed wealth, asking those with the broadest shoulders to contribute to our society. However, to politicians red or blue, that's *a step too far*.

### A fair society?

Surprisingly, many who earn meagre wages seem to agree that we can't touch the wealth of those at the top of society. They believe we should be grateful for our pitiful existence and that we must not do anything to change the status quo we must doff our caps and accept the scoundrels presented to us as the real villains for our hardships.

They believe every word that comes out of the mouths of cokeheads like Stephen Yaxley Lennon, AKA Tommy Robinson. They watch GB news, thinking it to be patriotic. They join marches in support of veterans and protect statues whilst their Westminster mouthpiece, **Suella Braverman**, calls marches for peace '*Hate marches*', demonises those living on the streets. They claim that the many, many ex-service people (whom, by the way these heinous politicians have failed through deliberate lack of funding into mental health and other areas to support those leaving the uniformed services), Yes, these same politicians that want to be lauded for turning up on armistice day have declared their homelessness as a *lifestyle choice*. Figures have shown however over the years that as many as 20% of the total of homeless people are ex-service personnel. ***Why do we fail to question those who push the idea that it is other poor people's fault?***

We must burden those with the least and look to scapegoat those migrants coming into the country, not the wealthiest, avoiding their taxes and stashing it away in tax havens, of course, those newly arriving migrants are the ones who have failed to build new social housing and introduced zero-hours contracts, reducing income that forced so many in our communities to now rely on food banks.

It's those pesky foreigners coming here, in their small boats from countries that we needed to democratise with our weapons that destroyed their homes and infrastructure.

I often wonder if, instead of dropping cash in the way of bombs, we had built houses, schools, and hospitals, would those people have fled? But of course, politicians would have serious problems if we didn't have the distractions or the ability to create them.

That is the problem. We must recognise that the political ideology in power since 1979 has failed to deliver the better future we were promised. We are not more secure or United as a nation; inequality, injustice, and division have become normalised by a failed political system that is only interested in delivering for the wealthy and the powerful. We need change, and we need to discuss what an alternative future could be.

I would encourage everyone to look at the **12 principles** of the *For the Many* networks that can be found on social media platforms such as Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/650447456722266/> and X [@forthemany\\_net](https://twitter.com/forthemany_net)

Ask yourself if Politicians had adopted these principles, how much better would your life be rather than trying to cover up their failures by using the excuses they provide us with, blaming migrants, people with disabilities or other minority groups?

### 2024 The Year of...

2024 is the year we must do something about our declining wages or the year we continue to bury our heads in the sands. With the government announcing the increase of its minimum wage to £11.44, it poses many questions and issues for those on consolidated rates of pay when these rates historically got agreed, they included unsocial hours payment overtime rates and bank holiday payments.

Now, employers have failed to maintain real terms increments over the years. They should face a choice of substantial changes to pay rates, the reintroduction of shift pay and overtime rates, or ***face a wave of strikes to return our unsocial hours and overtime payments to our member's pay packets.***

2024 could be a hot year, not just in the climate expected but in the workplace. ***We must be prepared. We must be organised, united, and prepared to stand up for each other.***

### Palestine

I couldn't write this article without referencing the terrible situation in Palestine. I understand the concentration of the media and politicians in relation to the 7th of October, but the crisis didn't just begin on the 7th.

It's been ongoing for 75 years, and an occupying force carpet-bombed schools, residential areas, and hospitals, claiming self-defence in a civilized world that is unacceptable. Saying the United Nations is anti-Semitic for exposing what is happening on the ground is intolerable. The weaponising and use of such language against those you disagree with only make the opportunity for a rise in racism, as happened on the far-right march for Israel when Torah Jews who braved going to the protest to call for peace faced anti-Semitic abuse from the EDL section of the rally. **Calling for peace is not hate. It's about humanity. Calling for an end to war is not anti-Semitic.** It's about humanity. Calling to end killing is not anti-British; it is about humanity.

If we are to have belief in institutions, we need calm heads and free minds. All governments should be required to meet humanitarian needs. All should face prosecution for actions breaching human rights, and no country should be above the law – no matter what weaponry it has in its arsenal. Lets build a world for all and end injustice and inequality lets look forward to 2024 when we can kick out the politicians that favour war and hate and vote for peace and equality.

***Wishing you a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year  
In Solidarity***

Ian





## The Greggs Offer

A ONE YEAR PAY DEAL, with the Trade Unions strongly recommending acceptance of the Company's final offer.

### Pay Increase – All rates will increase by 8%

- Retail Team Member, Retail Senior Team Member and Retail Supervisor will be enhanced by **an additional 1.6%** (Total 9.6%) taking our Retail Team Member rate to £11.62.
- This base rate increase of 8% is at the top of the current level of pay settlements being awarded throughout the UK.
- This pay offer is 2.5% higher than the current median pay awards in the UK
- Over the 2 years of 2023 and 2024 this equates to a base pay increase of over 15% for our colleagues
- This pay award will be implemented for all weekly paid colleagues as of Sunday 31st December 2023 and for monthly paid from 1st January 2024

### Pensions

- In addition to the pay increase the Unions and the Company discussed the pension offering for our colleagues
- Our current pension contribution rate is 4% colleague/4% Greggs.
- From 2024 onwards, the Company will match colleague pension contributions up to a maximum of 6%
- An example of the impact this could have on your total pension contribution is outlined below:

Colleague	Greggs	Total
4%	4%	<b>8%</b>
5%	5%	<b>10%</b>
6%	6%	<b>12%</b>

- This means colleagues could have an additional 2% of their pay added into their pension, paid by Greggs, if they choose to contribute and additional 2% themselves
- Should the ballot be successful, then a full communication will be circulated to colleagues in the new year to explain how they can increase their contributions if they currently do not make additional contributions to their pension
- Those colleagues who already make additional contributions to their pension will automatically have the relevant increase applied at the appropriate time

### Grade 6 – Supply

- We currently have a Grade 6 rate in Supply that is primarily used as a starter rate across most of our sites and we currently have just over 100 colleagues on this rate
- In 2021 we removed the 'starter rate' in Retail
- As part of this offer we will remove the Grade 6 'starter rate' in Supply
- This will support the attraction and recruitment of colleagues as we can advertise a higher rate from day one in Supply
- This rate will be removed as of 1st January 2024

*Greggs Members – Make sure you vote before December 22nd!*

## BFAWU Kernow

### Pasty workers campaign heating up as we enter the new year

THE CAMPAIGN TO UNIONISE SAMWORTH BROTHERS, the Leicester-based food manufacturer and one of the region's biggest employers. They supply for Tesco's and Marks & Spencer, as well as convenience stores and petrol stations across the UK. Our campaign has been calling for fair pay, better conditions and ultimately, for the company to recognise BFAWU as their workers' union.

This year the campaign has expanded to target Ginsters – the Cornish pasty company – also owned by Samworth Brothers. We held a rally in Callington where the Ginsters factory is based, uniting workers and the local community in demanding workers get more than just the crumbs! Speakers included our General-Secretary Sarah Woolley and the founder of the Peace & Justice Project – who are organising this campaign with us – Jeremy Corbyn MP. We also heard from Kumaran Bose, a Samworth Brothers employee who was sacked in 2016 for trying to organise a trade union and I spoke a bit about the plans for the campaign here in the South West.

As well as holding the rally, we have made several visits to the factory, speaking to workers who told us about the "toxic environment" that exists on the factory floor, with a lack of health & safety training as well as favouritism by managers. Over 60% of the workers we spoke to felt they should receive higher pay for the level of work they do – with long hours, repetitive roles and poor conditions.

The campaign also did an action outside the Plymouth Argyle ground, Home Park, chatting to a couple of Argyle fans about their club's sponsorship deal with Ginsters. The two recently set up Project 35, a campaign to reduce child poverty in Plymouth – where many of the workers travel from – which is currently 35%. This is not withstanding the fact that Ginster's poverty pay and Amazon-like conditions are in part the cause of such high levels of child poverty in the area, We had a really positive conversations on the day with over 300 fans and are continuing to hold regular stalls in the city centre as part of our recognition campaign.

The campaign gets contacted by workers on a weekly basis, complaining about the conditions that they are working under. Last year, the Samworth family took £15 million out of the company in dividends – enough to give every worker an inflation-busting payrise and have some left over. Yet, they have done the opposite – cutting paid breaks, overtime rates, slashing profit-related bonuses and forcing through pension scheme changes that leaves workers worse off in the long run.

That's why we are continuing this campaign in 2024. We know that workers coming together are strong – we've seen that through the industrial action taken by comrades at Allied Bakery in Bootle earlier this year which was a real achievement to all involved. We'll continue to take inspiration from them, and from friends around the world to keep our fight going and demand that Samworth Brothers workers deserve *a fair slice of the pie!*

**Robbie McCarthy**

BFAWU Kernow branch President

Region 2

Sign the petition at

[change.org/samworthbrothers](https://change.org/samworthbrothers)

and follow the campaign on

@Union4Samworths and @Union4Ginsters



## THE TUC HUB

### TUC Solidarity Hub and supporting industrial action

THE TUC IS PROUD to present our **Solidarity Hub** which has been designed to help bring together the TUC's support for unions engaged in campaigns and disputes, with our unions being key to shaping its development and continued success.

In his speech to TUC Congress, TUC General Secretary **Paul Nowak** made clear that one of his priorities would be a growing trade union movement with solidarity at its heart. These are the guiding principles of the solidarity hub project, which essentially can be defined by two key components, the practical support on offer to unions and the internal tracking of union disputes and campaigns through our dispute intelligence database.

We remain in a growing living standards crisis. The need for organised workplace union representation is more important than ever before and where the TUC can add value and support, our work through this project will strive to do that.

One of the ways the TUC have addressed these challenges is to make union campaigns and industrial action more effective and where unions have been winning and winning well, to amplify that and demonstrate union value. With so many of our unions engaged in national and local disputes across the UK over the course of the last 12 months, the need for a centralised platform of support for the movement is clear. The solidarity hub provides that platform.

The Solidarity Hub exists to amplify the message of workers in dispute, give confidence and support unions to make a success of their campaigns and disputes, and win for workers everywhere.

**Using a range of online tools, our expertise and wealth of experience in campaigning, organising, and engaging, we can offer very real solidarity and support.**

We've broken down how we can help in three very easy ways, either pre-dispute, in dispute or post-dispute. For unions seeking help pre-dispute, building towards a ballot, we have helped unions with advice for organising and winning ballots. We have online guides to the ballot process and very practical tips for organising and engagement.

Our **peer-to-peer texting support** has proved valuable. We have worked closely with unions to provide hands on practical support in using that new technology in ballots and we have seen some incredible turnouts as a result, in most cases comfortably beating those legal thresholds for action.

We are particularly proud of the support and guidance we have given to those unions balloting their members for the very first time. In those cases, we have helped walk through the legal framework, GDPR advice around contacting members, using new technologies and most importantly giving them the confidence to successfully ballot and to **win**.



For those currently in dispute, we have a range of support available through our website. That range of support is growing with each passing dispute. We continue to organise as many picket line solidarity visits as possible with senior TUC officials. Where possible our General Secretary **Paul Nowak** and Assistant General Secretary **Kate Bell** are keen to visit as many workers taking action as possible to bring messages of solidarity on behalf of the entire movement.



We have a range of tools available to start an online campaign through our **Megaphone** digital platform. For reps looking to build petitions, targeted email campaigns and now fundraising through our pilot Strike Funder project, support is available on our website. Megaphone is run by the TUC and *free for affiliates to use*.

A popular online feature also available to reps is our range of online **learning mini-modules** and **pocket guides**. These include resources on preparing for action, effective communications, mental health guidance, acting loud and legal, a pocket book on organising and more.

In recognising the vital role trades councils play in bringing solidarity on behalf of the local community, we have dedicated a webpage to searching for and locating your nearest local trades council. With the high traffic of reps using the website, they will be able to easily find contacts who could mobilise local support, sign petitions and help distribute local information.

Our website is now set up to receive help requests directly through our **Get Help Now** online portal. We have supported unions with a wide range of bespoke support running alongside our practical online offering, which includes research, training and development and much more.



To showcase union wins and most importantly how unions are winning, we are extremely proud of our **Solidarity Stories** collection. These case studies seek to capture first hand testimony of unions winning for workers and the methods and tactics used to reach a successful resolution. We are using our extensive media reach to promote these stories and hope that they serve as good shareable practise to benefit and inspire the wider movement.

This is a long-term project and a fundamental part of what the TUC wants to do with and for unions. If we can help support with any request, please do let us know.

[tuc.org/solidarity-hub](https://tuc.org/solidarity-hub)

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR ENERGY BILLS

WE'RE ALL UNDER PRESSURE from rising prices and inflation. We are all doing whatever we can to manage our money and our resources.

BFAWU can't physically put more money into your pockets but by looking at one of the largest areas of expenditure, HOUSEHOLD ENERGY, perhaps we can help you get some measure of control and ease some of that pressure.

The first step in managing your energy bills is to understand them! Once you can interpret all the information contained on your printed (or electronic) bill, you can find out if you need to change anything, or get help to manage them.

## Your bill should look something like this

### Check your bills for three things:

- **Check you're being charged the right amount** – your bill must show you what you are being charged for (*standing/connection charges and what you have consumed*)
- **Check that what you're paying is the right amount** – straightforward if you have a quarterly/monthly bill but most people are now on Direct Debit and you need to check you're not building a *debt* or, just as important, building up *too much credit*
- **Check you're on the right TARIFF** – your supplier has a legal obligation to confirm your current tariff and let you know what their *cheapest* tariff is.

the power of nature energy company

Mrs KW Anyone  
123 Fore Street  
Anytown  
AT6 8ZQ

### your gas and electricity bill

**1** Account number: 1234 0000 567  
Date of Bill: 10 December 2023  
For the period: 10 October 2023 – 10 December 2023

**2** Your actual meter readings:  
Gas: 8780  
Electricity: 19151

**3** Last Period  
Balance on last statement (10 Oct 2023) £10.50 in debit  
£273.00 in credit

**4** Payments received  
Direct Debit 25 September 2023 £91.00  
Direct Debit 25 October 2023 £91.00  
Direct Debit 25 November 2023 £91.00

**5** Your account balance on 9 December 2023 £262.50 in credit

**6** This Period  
Previous account balance £262.50 in credit  
Charges for this period (including VAT) £304.78  
Your new account balance £42.28 in debit

**7** What do I pay?  
**£91**  
Your next monthly payment of £91.00 will be taken on 25th January 2024. You do not have to take any action

**9** Could I pay less?  
Your Personal Projection for the next 12 months for gas is £582.54 and for electricity is £475.23 (based on your annual consumption, tariff prices, discounts and VAT)

**10** Electricity  
Our cheapest overall tariff  
Online Fixed Saver September 2024  
Estimated annual saving £43

Gas  
Our cheapest overall tariff  
Online Fixed Saver September 2024  
Estimated annual saving £56

**NEED HELP? CALL 0845 000 247**  
If you are struggling to meet your bills, all our 24 hour helpline to discuss ways in which we can help. Please have your customer reference number to hand when you call us.

**11** About your tariff

<b>ELECTRICITY</b> Tariff name: Price fix May 2023 Payment method: Direct Debit Exit date: 31 May 2023 Exit fee: not applicable Annual consumption: 2983 KWh	<b>GAS</b> Tariff name: Price fix May 2023 Payment method: Direct Debit Exit date: 31 May 2023 Exit fee: not applicable Annual consumption: 9734 KWh
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**12** About your charges

**13** ELECTRICITY | Meter: S63G090

Period	Previous reading	Latest reading	Electricity Units used	kWh rate	Charge
10 Oct 22– 10 Dec 23	18395 <i>estimated</i>	19151 <i>Customer reading</i>	756 kWh x	13.55p =	£102.44
Standing charge (88 days @ 18.00p per day) =					£15.84
Total electricity charges for this period					£118.28

**12** GAS | G4K68890234

Period	Previous reading	Latest reading	Gas Units used	kWh rate	Charge
10 Oct 22– 10 Dec 23	8440 <i>estimated</i>	8780 <i>Customer reading</i>	340 = 3776 kWh* x	4.04p =	£152.63
Standing charge (88 days @ 22.00p per day) =					£19.36
Total electricity charges for this period					£171.99

\* Your gas meter measures usage in units but we bill in kWh. Here's how it works:  
GAS UNITS USED X CALORIFIC VALUE (39.1) X VOLUME AS (1.02264) ÷ 3.6. So: 340 X 39.1 X 1.02264 ÷ 3.6 = 3776 kWh

**15** Subtotal £290.27  
VAT @ 5% of £290.27 £14.51  
**Total charges for this period £304.78**

Your electricity supply number is S 01 801 902  
12 | 0002 | 0075 | 236

Your gas meter point reference number is 50 63 45 19 04

**16**



# What am I looking at?

**1 Account or customer number**  
This is unique to you, and you'll need it when you contact your supplier.

**2 Bill date and bill period**  
The bill date is when the bill or statement was sent out. The bill period is the date range that the bill or statement relates to.

**3 Balance on last statement**  
This shows the balance carried over from the last bill or statement you received. It should match the account balance on the last bill or statement you received.

**4 Payments received**  
This records the payments you've made since the last bill or statement.

If it's a *bill*, your payment(s) to pay off the last bill should be recorded here.

If it's a *statement*, you should see all your monthly direct debits or your top-ups.

**Contact your supplier straight away if any of these payments are incorrect.**

**5 Previous Account Balance**  
This is the outstanding balance from the last bill or statement less any payments made since.

On a *bill* this figure will be **£0.00** if you have paid off your previous bill.

On a *direct debit statement* this figure should be a considerable credit of all of payments received.

**6 Charges for this period (including VAT)**  
This records the total costs incurred of all the gas and/or electricity used within this billing period.

To see more about how this is calculated see sections 13-15 below

**7 Your new account balance**  
This is what you owe (*or are owed*) in total. It's a combination of the charges for this period plus the balance from the previous period, taking account of all of payments received.

**8 What do I pay?**  
This is how much you pay currently if you are paying by direct debit, or how much you owe if it's a bill.

**It may be more or less than your average monthly usage to account for previous over or under payment.**

**9 Personal projection**  
This is a prediction of how much your gas and/or electricity will cost over *the next year*.

**10 Cheaper tariffs**  
Your bill or statement must show whether there is a cheaper tariff you could switch to with your current supplier. Their customer service team can usually also advise if there is a better tariff for you. Your supplier normally only displays cheaper tariffs they offer, but another supplier might be much cheaper.

**11 About your tariff**  
The 'about your tariff' box contains all the information needed to make a comparison with other suppliers' offers:

- The name of your tariff.
- How you pay for fuel.
- The date your defined-length tariff ends (if you have one).
- Any exit fees you may have to pay. These can apply on any defined length tariff and you pay them if you switch to a different tariff more than four weeks before the tariff end date (above).
- Usage over last 12 months. This is your estimated annual usage, calculated from all the meter readings received. This is the best figure to use when comparing tariffs.

**12 Meter readings**  
If you have an estimated read, your bill or statement will generally say 'estimated' or 'e' next to the reading.

If it says 'c' or 'a' then it's a 'customer supplied' or 'actual' reading.

**You should try to provide an accurate reading every month if possible, especially if you've recently moved in or changed supplier.**

**13 Unit rate**  
This is the price you pay per unit of gas or electricity. Units are measured in **kilowatt hours (kWh)** on your bill. Electricity unit rates are either single unit rate or a **dual rate**, which provides two meter readings and is usually called **Economy 7**.

If you are on Economy 7 and use less than a third of your electricity at night, you'd probably be better off on a single-rate tariff.

Be aware that Gas meters measure consumption by *volume* – in units of 100s of cubic feet (*hcf*) or cubic meters ( $m^3$ ). Gas, however, is sold (like electricity) in *kilowatt hours (kWh)*.

The conversion calculation **must be displayed** on your bill to show how your charges are arrived at. The example bill above shows a calculation for a metric meter.

[Convert from hcf to  $m^3$  by multiplying by 2.83.]

## Understanding your energy bills continued

**11 About your tariff**

<b>ELECTRICITY</b> Tariff name: Price fix May 2023 Payment method: Direct Debit Exit date: 31 May 2023 Exit fee: not applicable Annual consumption: 2983 KWh	<b>GAS</b> Tariff name: Price fix May 2023 Payment method: Direct Debit Exit date: 31 May 2023 Exit fee: not applicable Annual consumption: 9734 KWh
---	---

**12 About your charges**

ELECTRICITY | Meter: S63G090

Period	Previous reading	Latest reading	Electricity Units used	kWh rate	Charge
10 Oct 22–10 Dec 23	18395 <i>estimated</i>	19151 <i>Customer reading</i>	756 kWh x	13.55p =	£102.44
Standing charge (88 days @ 18.00p per day)				=	£15.84
Total electricity charges for this period					£118.28

**13**

**12**

GAS | G4K68890234

Period	Previous reading	Latest reading	Gas Units used	kWh rate	Charge
10 Oct 22–10 Dec 23	8440 <i>estimated</i>	8780 <i>Customer reading</i>	340 = 3776 kWh* x	4.04p =	£152.63
Standing charge (88 days @ 22.00p per day)				=	£19.36
Total electricity charges for this period					£171.99

**14**

\* Your gas meter measures usage in units but we bill in kWh. Here's how it works:  
GAS UNITS USED X CALORIFIC VALUE (39.1) X VOLUME AS (1.02264) ÷ 3.6. So: 340 X 39.1 X 1.02264 ÷ 3.6 = 3776 kWh

**15**

**Subtotal** £290.27  
**VAT @ 5% of £290.27** £14.51  
**Total charges for this period** £304.78

Your electricity supply number is **S** 01 801 902  
12 0002 0075 236

Your gas meter point reference number is 50 63 45 19 04

**16**

# WAYS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## Paperless billing

If you are happy receiving bills on your smartphone or your computer, some suppliers will offer you a **discount** on your bills.

This will usually be dependent on you stopping bills coming through the post (although this hasn't been in force while the Government's Energy Support scheme has been in operation).

Online accounts provide greater awareness of your gas or electricity usage and balance and allow you to see bills, provide meter readings and sometimes even switch tariff.

**However, YOU must take care to be on top of your bills – make sure you download and check every bill you receive:**

- If in doubt, print off the bill yourself and file it as you would normally – if you are more confident, make sure the bill is stored in an appropriate folder on your computer.
- When you receive a bill, check you have a copy (paper or electronic) of the previous bill so you can make comparisons.

## If you are struggling to pay your bills...

**Never ignore any errors or inconsistencies you find after checking your bills**

- If you find (or feel) that you are paying *too much*, you may find a way to pay less.
- If you are advised that you are *not paying enough* to cover your usage, **Contact your supplier immediately** – you may be able to change your tariff or payment arrangements to make the increase manageable.

If you are struggling with household bills, Energy Suppliers are obliged to help you to manage your payments – mostly through looking at your payment plans.

So, if you need help:

## Contact your supplier immediately

There will always be a support telephone number/email address on your bill. Use it!

Finally, if this is part of a picture where you are juggling several different debts – speak to a **specialist debt advice service** (like **Pay Plan**) before agreeing any new payment plan.

**PayPlan** *[see page 13 for more information]*

## 14 Standing charge

This is the charge you pay per day, regardless of how much gas and/or electricity you use.

Some suppliers will offer a reduction if you pay by direct debit.

## 15 VAT

The VAT charged on electricity and gas for domestic use is 5%.

If the VAT rate on your bill is higher than this, then you are being charged a commercial rate and should contact your supplier immediately.

## 16 Meter point reference number (MPRN) and Meter Point Administration Number (MPAN)

These are your unique supply numbers, MPRN or 'S number' for electricity and 'MPAN' for gas.

By law they must appear on your bill but are not usually printed on your meter. When you switch supplier, it helps to provide these numbers.



# a few ways to cut energy use... and save money!

### Washday

Give your clothes a day in the sun; and give your tumble drier a break. Clothes dried in the fresh air feel great, and there are drying days in winter, too.



Wait until you have a full load before running the dishwasher or washing machine. One full load uses less energy (and water) than two half-loads.

### Cooking

When you're cooking, keep the oven door shut as much as possible; every time you open it, nearly a quarter of the heat escapes.



Food in the oven cooks faster when the air inside flows freely, so don't put foil on the racks.

### Phone charger

Don't leave your phone on charge all night. It only needs three hours – and try not to leave the TV and other kit on stand-by.



### Catch 'em young

Encourage your children to switch off electric toys and lights that they're not using. They'll soon get the hang of saving energy.

### Cup of tea or coffee?



Only fill the kettle with as much water as you'll actually use (but make sure you cover the metal element at the base).

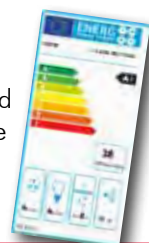
### Dodge the draught!

Fit draught-excluders to your window frames, front door, letter box and key hole, and draw your curtains at dusk to keep the heat in.



### Buying a new appliance?

Check the energy label and buy A-rated goods for the most efficient.



### Be a friend to your freezer

Defrost it regularly to help it run more efficiently.



### Turn your heating down by just... 1 degree

You'll hardly notice the change in temperature, but it'll make a big difference to your heating bill.



### Sleep tight

Make sure all the lights are turned off when you go to bed, or use a low-wattage night light if you do need to leave one on.



### New computer?

Laptops typically use around 85% less energy than a new desktop PC.





## THE DANGERS OF USING BUY NOW, PAY LATER THIS CHRISTMAS

### What is Buy Now, Pay Later?

BUY NOW, PAY LATER (BNPL) is a payment option offered by retailers to allow customers to spread the cost or delay the payment of their purchase.

It has become a very popular payment method for online purchases, but there has been plenty of controversy in the media surrounding these payment schemes.

*Klarna, Clearpay, PayPal – Pay in 3, and Laybuy* are just a selection of BNPL providers. While they allow you to split the payment, you could face late fees if you miss an instalment.

### Are people relying on BNPL?

The **Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)** announced that just over one in four adults in the UK (27%) used BNPL at least once in the six months before January 2023.

This trend has continued this year as Citizens Advice found that more than one in four UK adults (28% – the equivalent of 15.1 million people) said they were likely to use Buy Now Pay Later to help with festive spending. This rises to over one in two (56%) parents with primary school-aged children.

### It's next month's problem....

A lot of people don't realise that BNPL is a form of credit and it's important to think about whether you can afford any repayments.

And, should circumstances change, will you be in a position to cover your monthly repayments?

Speaking to the BBC, 24-year-old **Tamzin McGrath**, said using BNPL would be the only way she'd be able to get through the festive period.

*"I've already got money I need to pay back after using it during the Black Friday sales,"* She told the BBC.

*"So I think I will need to use them again for Christmas to get presents."*

*"If you've not got the money right now you think it's okay because Klarna and Clearpay can pay for it for you and that becomes next month's problem."*

**The Financial Conduct Authority announced that just over one in four adults in the UK (27%) used BNPL at least once in the six months before January 2023.**

### What are the dangers?

As the popularity of Buy Now, Pay Later continues to rise, consumers must understand that this seemingly convenient option is a form of credit.

While BNPL can prevent you from potentially turning to loan sharks and high-interest loans, the stats reveal a concerning trend, with a significant percentage of adults, including parents, relying on BNPL for festive spending this year.

It's important to recognise that deferring payments and thinking of it as 'next month's problem' can lead to a cycle of debt, especially if your circumstances change.

**Spreading the cost may be appealing short-term, but only if you have the means to make the repayments when they're due.**

Falling into the BNPL trap without a realistic repayment plan may result in financial strain and potential long-term consequences. Our **BudgetSmart** tool can help you maximise your income, reduce your spending and find savings in every corner of your finances.

**BUDGETSMART** 

### Get in touch

If you are struggling with debts call us on

**0800 072 1206**

We're open from:

8am – 8pm *Monday to Friday*  
and

9am – 3pm on *Saturdays*.

Alternatively, you can visit us at [www.payplan.com/bfawu](http://www.payplan.com/bfawu) ...to speak to us via live chat or to find out more information.

# #RIGHTTOSTRIKE

To **protect our planet**  
we need to **protect our rights**  
to **strike and protest**

**What has the right to strike to do with climate activists?**

Our basic rights are essential not just to protect individuals but to challenge wider injustice, including the climate crisis.

**Rights to protest:** Last year's Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, and now the Public Order Bill, give the Home Secretary and the police sweeping powers to restrict protest and target individuals.

**Rights to strike:** British workers already face some of the most restrictive laws on trade unions in Europe. The government wants to be able to set arbitrary 'minimum service levels' taking away the meaningful right to strike for workers in key sectors.

**Rights to seek asylum in the UK:** Plans to deport refugees to Rwanda are both inhumane and breach our international obligations.

**Environmental and workers' protections:** with the Retained EU Law Bill, set to scrap thousands of laws at the end of 2023.



**Climate activists and trade unions can work together for positive change.**

**The working class should not bear the brunt of the cost of living crisis**

One of the biggest factors driving inflation is high gas prices. These are bad news for those struggling to afford their energy bills – and great news for energy companies raking in billions in excess profits. But the government has refused to tackle our dependence on fossil fuels by investing in warm homes and cheap renewables, with only half-hearted efforts in this direction.

Setting workers against each other and imposing further real terms pay cuts in a race to the bottom is not the answer.

**We need a workforce fit to tackle the climate emergency**

The only solution to the climate crisis is to build a cleaner greener future. That doesn't just mean jobs building new renewable energy, insulating our homes and in greener industry. We also need to restore and fund properly the essential social infrastructure that keeps this country running, including education, health, transport, emergency services and social care.

The **Campaign against Climate Change** campaigns for the urgent action we need to avoid catastrophic climate breakdown, and for a just transformation of our economy which puts people and planet before profit. Find out more at [campaigncc.org](http://campaigncc.org) info@campaigncc.org / @campaigncc (FB/Twitter)

Our **trade union group** is supported by many national unions and local branches, campaigning on climate breakdown as a crisis of social justice and inequality and for effective solutions as set out in *Climate Jobs: Building a workforce for the climate emergency*. Find out more at [cacctu.org.uk](http://cacctu.org.uk) climatetradeunion@gmail.com / @cacctu (Twitter)



## ACTIVIST CALENDAR 2024

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# MEMBER OFFERS

## ★ Morning Star

### Are you dreaming of a Red Xmas?

**We can't buy a revolution but we do hope to tempt you with one of two fantastic seasonal gift offers!**

**Offer 1: £199&P&P (Save over £50)**

- + One year's subscription to our premium e-edition
- + water bottle
- + thermal flask
- + cd
- + pen
- + badge
- + gloves
- + baseball cap
- + ice scraper
- + t-shirt

**Offer 2: £49&P&P (Save over £25)**

- + Three month subscription to our premium e-edition
- + t-shirt
- + cd
- + water bottle
- + Don't be Left Without Us CD, featuring 34 tracks from great bands and artists — recorded in the spirit of socialism

**Visit [www.mstar.link/shop](http://www.mstar.link/shop)**



## DECRIM NOW

### ANTI-CRIMINALISATION CAMPAIGN BRIEFING NOVEMBER 2023

#### Campaign overview

Decrim Now has launched this 2023 campaign against the criminalisation of sex work in the UK because the situation is *urgent*.

The cost of living crisis is driving more and more people into sex work as they struggle to make ends meet, and the partial criminalisation of sex work in the UK makes sex work *more dangerous*.



SEX WORKERS ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY women and mothers, bearing the brunt of over a decade of austerity and the decimation of our social security system, meaning they have to resort to sex work in order to survive. Many migrants with no recourse to public funds use sex work to support themselves, and we frequently meet women who have turned to sex work because their benefits have been sanctioned. Sex workers who are migrants, trans, or people of colour, are disproportionately criminalised.

Successive governments have failed to take action to protect sex workers from poverty and violence. We can't wait any longer: we're calling on everyone to speak out against the criminalisation of sex work, and to join us in the fight for full decriminalisation.

#### About Decrim Now

Decrim Now is a grassroots campaign for the full decriminalisation of sex work in the UK. Decrim Now's members include feminists, allies, and representatives from sex workers' rights organisations including SWARM (the Sex Worker Advocacy and Resistance Movement), the English Collective of Prostitutes, the Sex Workers' Union, Sex Workers' Alliance Ireland, and National Ugly Mugs.

#### The legal situation in the UK

Within England, Scotland and Wales, the acts of buying and selling sex are legal, but almost all associated acts are criminalised: for example, soliciting and kerb-crawling, sex workers working indoors with friends (defined in law as 'brothel-keeping'), or third parties controlling or 'facilitating' sex work.

#### The consequences of partial criminalisation in the UK

**Sex workers are put at increased risk of violence from clients and managers**

Street-based workers are forced to work in more isolated areas to avoid the police, which makes it more difficult for them to get help if a client becomes violent.

Indoor workers are unable to work with a friend for safety, forcing them to work alone, with no one to help if a client becomes violent. If indoor workers do work together from the same premises, they risk being arrested for 'brothel-keeping'.

As a result, street-based sex workers are pushed into the hands of 'pimps' who claim to offer protection from violent clients, and indoor workers are made more vulnerable to exploitative brothel managers. If a brothel manager is harassing, abusing or exploiting a worker, it is hard to report them to the police as the premises are likely to be shut down and the worker loses their source of income.

*"The biggest problem I face is the laws. If we didn't have to worry about the laws we could deal with the pimps. We are working together here. We want to stick together but that means we are breaking the law. Arresting sex workers is offensive when hundreds of thousands of people around the country are living on the edge and women are expected to fill the gaps and make up when there is nothing."*

Louise

#### Sex workers face increased risk of harm from the police

Sex workers frequently experience harassment, abuse or violence from the police. A 2021 report found that 42% of street-based sex workers in East London had experienced violence from the police.

Workers are unable to report violence or exploitation to the police due to risk of arrest, eviction, deportation, or of having their children removed.

*"I left Romania to escape violence and to save my life. What is sure is that I didn't have all my papers, and I didn't have really good language, so it was hard to get a job so I end up working in a flat with another girl. I was scared to work by myself. We got visited by the police, well I say visited, they came in with immigration and then deported my friend. They told me that because there was two of us I could be arrested too for prostitution. They filled me with fear. We can't rely on the police to protect us or even worse they are the ones that abuse us."*

Ionana

### Sex workers are pushed further into poverty and unable to exit sex work

Street-based workers are frequently prosecuted and fined either for 'loitering or soliciting', or for breaching civil orders. This means that they have to spend more time working on the street in order to make the money to pay the fine.

Sex workers who have received a 'prostitute caution' or conviction are left unable to exit sex work because of having a criminal record, and because of the stigma.

*"I've been arrested –you go to court and get a fine, so that's another night I've got to work to earn the money to pay it. The police are of no help. They say 'well you can go home, you don't have to be on the streets', but we do. It's pure necessity. ... I've been disqualified from jobs purely on the grounds that I've been charged with prostitution. Once you've got that record, it's there for life. All they're doing now, by keeping it criminalised, is keeping women out on the streets, you are taking from them the choice to leave."*

Rachel

### The consequences of the Nordic Model (client criminalisation)

Some politicians are trying to introduce the 'Nordic Model' (criminalisation of the purchase of sex) in England, Scotland and Wales. Northern Ireland and Ireland implemented the Nordic Model in 2015 and 2017 respectively. Some MSPs are currently preparing to introduce a client criminalisation bill in Scotland, and there are a number of senior Labour politicians who wish to do the same in the rest of the UK. In every country where the Nordic Model has been implemented, it has exposed sex workers to more poverty, violence, eviction, and exploitation.

A wealth of evidence shows that sex workers are still criminalised under the Nordic Model: sex workers in Nordic Model countries continue to report receiving fines, being arrested, being evicted from their homes or deported, as a result of doing sex work.

*"I have never been able to fully relax in my home, knowing that someone could with very little effort ruin my life by exposing me as a former or current sex worker to my landlord, whereupon I would be forced to move and hope my current landlord doesn't spread my name to every other landlord in the city."*

Sarah, Norway

Client criminalisation also puts sex workers in danger, forcing them to avoid the police, and increasing the poverty, stigma, and violence they face. Criminalisation means that sex workers are more reluctant to engage with support services for fear of being 'outed', which worsens their health outcomes.

Fewer clients willing to risk criminalisation also means that workers have to accept riskier clients, lower payments, and to offer services they do not want to.

*"The criminalisation of clients means that [clients] get to call the shots. They refuse to give me their real name or to meet me in a safe place like a hotel. The Nordic Model literally forces me to go and meet unknown men out in the woods somewhere. This is not the fault of the job –this is strictly because of the law."*

Rita, Sweden

### Sex workers demand full decriminalisation

Every sex worker-led organisation in the UK is calling for the full decriminalisation of sex work: a legal model which decriminalises the sex worker, the client, and third parties such as managers, drivers, and landlords. Decriminalisation means that sex workers can work where and with whom they choose, without interference from the police unless workers choose to call them for help. Decriminalisation allows workers to access labour law to secure their rights, improve their working conditions, and tackle exploitation and harassment. Trafficking, exploitation, coercion and violence remain illegal under full decriminalisation.

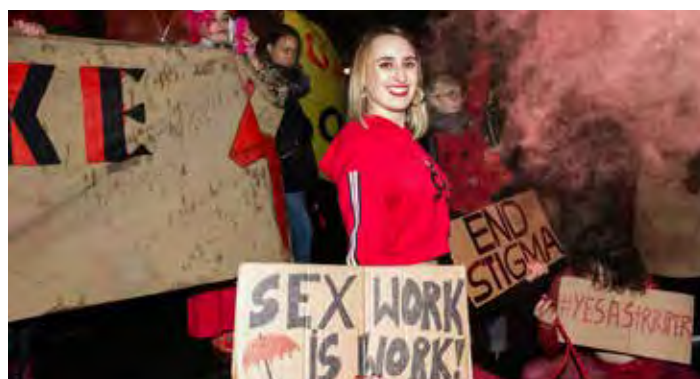
Decriminalisation has been implemented in a number of Australian states over the past three decades, in New Zealand in 2003, and in Belgium in 2023. Sex worker-led organisations in these countries report an overall increase in safety, as workers feel more able to refuse risky clients, to report violence from clients, and to access healthcare. The full decriminalisation of sex work is endorsed by Amnesty International, the World Health Organisation, UNAIDS, the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls, StopAIDS, Liberty, Freedom United, JCWI, the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women, and many other organisations.

Full decriminalisation is a necessary first step on the road to keeping sex workers safe. Sex workers also demand stronger anti-poverty measures from the Government, to ensure that no one is forced to resort to sex work if they don't want to. The *Hookers Against Hardship* campaign makes demands to address this crisis, including: universal access to benefits at a living wage level, rent controls, an end to benefit sanctions, and ending the 'no recourse to public funds' condition for migrants.

### What can you do to help?

We are asking the public to:

- Share our content on social media to help raise awareness
- Sign our petition calling for the full decriminalisation of sex work
- Email your MP to call on them to support the campaign, and to fight for the full decriminalisation of sex work in the UK.



# BFAWU GUIDELINES ON WRITING MOTIONS

IT'S THE SEASON OF THE YEAR – and your thoughts are turning to the issues you want to hear debated at Conference.

We pride ourselves on the range and quality of debates we have and our start point is the motions that you submit for consideration at Conference.

To maintain this quality, I ask you to read through these guidelines and put them into practice when you start composing.

Check your progress against the *criteria for accepting motions* that follow the guidelines.

Sarah

## 1 What are Motions?

Motions are **formal proposals** that are debated and voted on at the BFAWU national Conference. Motions passed and accepted by delegates become *resolutions* and the **policy** of Conference.

Motions need to be worded *clearly*.

## 2 Who can submit Motions?

- **Branches** – via their December quarterly meeting
- **Regions** – via the January regional council meeting
- **The Executive Council** – via the February Executive Council meeting.

## 3 Writing Motions

When writing your motion:

**Make sure it is topical, accurate and concise**

Check the motions debated at the previous Conference before submitting your motion.

These are available on the BFAWU website: [www.bfawu.org/annual-conference/previous-conferences/](http://www.bfawu.org/annual-conference/previous-conferences/)

Also check the website to see what has been *achieved* over the last 12 months and what is being *planned* for the next 12 months.

**Make sure it is likely to prompt a good debate.**

Be original – Conferences need exciting debates. Even if your motion fails, it can still offer a valuable perspective.

**Make sure it is clear and logical**

Be concise and clear – write in plain English, explain any abbreviations, and try not to exceed 200 words.

**Make sure you include a proposal of action and indicate who is to take this action.**

Your motion needs to include a call for a clear action that the BFAWU/Executive Council can take forward. It also helps to include a *timescale*.

## 4 DOs and DON'Ts

**DO ask for help if you're struggling**

Each region has a member of the standing orders committee who can support with motion writing, you can also reach out to your Executive Council member or Full Time Official.

**DON'T write long, verbose motions or be repetitive or vague.**

Conference votes on the wording of the motion, therefore the ask needs to be understandable and clear.

## 5 Example – writing a motion

*"The BFAWU should ensure all workplaces provide a crèche facility."*

This is **poorly worded** for the following reasons:

- It is a *statement* and therefore not actually asking for anything
- The BFAWU cannot 'ensure' this as it is outside its powers.
- There are no *timescales* given.
- There are no *reasons* provided.

**Here's how this statement can be turned into a motion:**

### Motion Start

*This Conference believes/demands/requests that...*

### Action by whom?

*The BFAWU...*

### What action?

*should work with other trade unions and professional organisations to campaign strongly for the provision of crèche facilities in workplaces...*

### When?

*Immediately...*

### What reason?

*Particularly in view of the staffing crisis in the food industry and the need to retain staff following maternity leave.*

## 6 Amendments to Motions

Motions approved by the Standing Orders Committee (See the *Criteria for Acceptance of Motions*) will be published by **the last Friday in March**.

At this stage, all branches and regions can review the motions and decide if they want to submit an amendment to any motion.

An Amendment should be an *alternative* or *addition* to the original motion and should not distort or contradict it.

**Amendments should be submitted to the General Secretary:**

[Sarah.Woolley@bfawu.org](mailto:Sarah.Woolley@bfawu.org)

**by the last Friday in April.**

- If the mover of the original motion accepts the amendment, it becomes part of the main motion, and goes forward to Conference as amended.
- If the amendment is not accepted, both the amendment and the original motion will be debated and voted on separately at Conference, starting with the amendment.
- The group proposing the amendment becomes the seconder of the substantive motion as amended.

## 7 Compositing Motions

Where there are multiple motions that are submitted on the same subject, the Standing Orders committee may decide to *composite* the motions so that they are all combined, debated and voted on as one.

Branches would be contacted about this to check whether they agree to their motion being composited and to sign off the final composited motion and to determine movers and seconders.

## 8 Emergency Motions

An emergency motion deals with business that has arisen since the final date for submission of motions – so anything after **the last Friday of the January that year**.

Emergency Motions must be submitted in writing by e-mail to:

[sarah.woolley@bfawu.org](mailto:sarah.woolley@bfawu.org).

**Remember – the deadline for submitting motions for next Conference is Friday January 26th 2024**



# CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTANCE OF MOTIONS

- 1 A BFAWU Conference motion is a form of words formally proposing an action or policy.
- 2 Motions are debated and voted on at Conference. As part of its responsibility for determining conference business, the Standing Orders Committee considers any motions proposed by branches, regions or the Executive council in line with the BFAWU constitution.
- 3 Proposed conference motions are assessed against these criteria, to ensure they are clear, consistent, and fit for purpose.
- 4 Motions may include issues:
  - Specific to the food industry and allied trades.
  - Relating to the wider political environment.
  - Concerning BFAWU members as moral and ethical agents outside of their workplace responsibilities.
- 5 Motions will be declared **in order** if:
  - They are expressed in the form of a motion.
  - They are requesting something new or a change to existing policy.
  - They are unambiguous.
  - They ask the BFAWU to do something which is possible and legally permissible (e.g., acting within our powers), and within realistic financial costs.
- 6 Motions will be declared **out of order** if:
  - They address staffing issues relating to the BFAWU as an employer, which will be dealt with by BFAWU internal procedures; or
  - They are drafted in a way that is improperly critical of BFAWU members and/or staff.
  - They refer to the structure or rules of the Credit Union as it is a separate entity.
- 7 In some cases, where the content of the motion is in order, but there is a need for some rewriting for clarity, the Standing Orders Committee may request the proposing branch to redraft and resubmit the motion and may offer advice to the group regarding more suitable wording.
- 8 All motions that are accepted will be placed on the Final Conference Agenda – the proposing groups will be informed of the Standing Orders Committee’s decision and approved motions will be published on the BFAWU website.
- 9 The Standing Orders Committee has a responsibility to exercise its discretion to ensure that BFAWU Conference provides a meaningful debating forum for the benefit of the BFAWU and its members.

# LET'S UNITE AGAINST SANCTIONS



**CHANGES TO UNIVERSAL CREDIT are about to affect over a million working people. We believe the changes will affect thousands of our members.**

More of our members will need to turn to the BFAWU for support. We want you to be armed with all the relevant information so when members come to you for help, you feel able to support them in the workplace. This doesn't mean you need to become an expert in the Benefits system. This guide explains where you can signpost people for advice.

There is a model agreement which will be shared with reps in coming weeks, that is based on the Unite version they have put together.

*Thank you for all that you do for our members, we need you now more than ever.*

## SUMMARY

### Universal Credit and what's changing

**Universal Credit** is a benefit you can claim if you're on a low income or unemployed.

It's a *means-tested benefit* that replaced several other benefits. For people who are fit to work, the **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)** treats Universal Credit claimants on low incomes in groups determined by how much they earn per calendar month against **The Administrative Earnings Threshold (AET)**.

The AET acts as a *dividing line* – those above the threshold fall within the 'Light Touch' (LT) group and those below go into the 'Intensive Work Search' (IWS) group.

The Government are raising the AET to **£812 pcm** for individual claimants. This is equivalent to someone working 18 hours per week at the National Living Wage (NLW). **This is an increase of 6 hours per week from September 2022.** Anyone earning below that will be moved out of the LT group and into the IWS group – and will be expected to look for *more work*, even though they're already working.

The Government are also removing *couples' AET*. This will mean that individuals in a couple will *both* need to reach the individual threshold of the AET to be placed in the LT regime.

All those placed in the IWS group will have to meet with a **Work Coach** every week (or fortnight) and actively look for ways to increase their earnings. **They will be sanctioned** (i.e. they will have money taken away from them for a set period) **if they don't comply with their work search requirements.** These requirements are known as '*in-work conditionality.*'

Need to claim  
Universal Credit?

Do it online at  
[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

UC Universal  
Credit

## 5 KEY FACTS

- 1 Changes to Universal Credit will take effect from **Autumn 2023**
- 2 If you earn less than **£812** per month, you will need to do *Intensive Work Search*
- 3 Over a million workers will be affected
- 4 Thousands of BFAWU members may be impacted
- 5 **Low paid women** could be hit hardest

Our thanks go to **Unite** who have shared the information with us from their **Cut Sanctions not Incomes** campaign.

Making work pay

## YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

### *Q: How are workers on UC expected to increase their earnings?*

They will be expected to increase their hours with their current employer, find additional work or a better paid job. They could be mandated to look for work for up to 35 hours a week and attend compulsory support and training courses.

### *Q: Who will be most affected by these changes?*

**Young people:** those under 23, who are not entitled to the National Living Wage, along with those on a lower National Minimum Wage, will have to work more hours to reach the AET. Claimants who are aged 16-24 comprise a larger proportion of those moved into the Intensive Work Search group.

**Disabled people:** The DWP's own Equality Impact Assessment admits that: 'UC claimants who have declared a health condition and/or disability that doesn't affect their ability to work or those awaiting a Work Capability Assessment (WCA) are affected by the change in AET' and 'Raising the AET will therefore result in more claimants who are awaiting for WCA being in the IWS regime.' The DWP also say that: 'if claimants with a health condition or disability fail to comply with work-related requirements without good reason, they will be liable for a sanction.'

**Women:** In the main, it will be women who are impacted negatively by these changes. The removal of the couples' AET is more likely to affect parents of young children and women are more likely to be the lead carer. Currently women make up 62% of what the Government classify as Non-working/Low Earning Partners (NW/LEPs). In essence, mums of young children will be forced out to work or forced to work more hours.

### *Q: What is 'compulsory in-work progression'?*

**Compulsory in-work progression** means claimants are expected to look for further opportunities to progress in work. This means earning more, primarily by working more hours, rather than training to qualify for better opportunities, risking sanctions if they do not comply. Manchester Metropolitan University described this approach as "*work first, and then work more*". Jeremy Hunt said, "*Sanctions will be applied more rigorously to those who fail to meet strict work-search requirements or choose not to take up a reasonable job offer.*"

### *Q: How will the changes affect parents of young children?*

The 'lead carer' of children aged three to twelve can be expected to increase their work search and preparation activity and be required to be available for work up to 30 hours, depending on their circumstances. Lone parents will always be listed as the 'lead carer'. This is likely to affect over 700,000 people who will be expected to look for work or increase their hours.

### *Q: How long do sanctions usually last?*

Currently, the average length of a sanction is estimated at 11-12 weeks (this has to be an estimate as DWP has stopped publishing the statistics), that is **between £935 and £1,020** that is being stopped.

**In 98% of cases, the reason people are sanctioned is for being late or missing an appointment that has a ten-minute window**

## What is the impact of sanctions?

The system of conditionality and benefit sanctions hits people when they are at their most vulnerable, triggering debt, rent arrears, food bank use and, ultimately some will become homeless, destitute, or suicidal.

The impact is not limited to claimants. When benefits are cut, other support must pick up the pieces. In the past this has included friends and family, local services, housing providers and the voluntary sector, such as *Citizen's Advice* and foodbanks.

Now that Jeremy Hunt has added working claimants to the conditionality and sanctions regime people are going to turn to Trade Unions for the help and support, they need.

## Where to signpost BFAWU members who need help

Once sanctioned, people lose their Universal Credit for a set period of time – increasing the likelihood of them falling into debt.

Encourage them to seek help from *every source as soon as possible*. Explain that if they have debts, it's important to tackle them in a certain order because the consequences of missing some types of bills can be more serious than others. The **Money Helper** website has an online tool that explains how to prioritise debts and work out which to pay off first. Other useful sites with advice or online tools include:

- **Local Councils** – some still have welfare benefits advisors.
- **Citizen's Advice**
- **Turn2US**

Find more information and research at:

- **Citizens Advice – *The sanctions spiral*** The unequal impact and hardship caused by sanctions in Universal Credit
- **Citizens Advice – *Is in-work conditionality working?*** The impact of changing conditionality requirements on in-work Universal Credit claimants
- **New Economics Foundation – *From compliance to engagement:*** Rethinking the use of conditionality in our social security system.
- **IPPR – *Jobcentres failing both businesses and jobseekers*** Working together towards a new public employment service.
- **Trussell Trust – *Half of working families claiming Universal Credit ran out of food in the past month.***
- **Wright and Dwyer – *In-work Universal Credit*** Claimant Experiences of Conditionality Mismatches and Counterproductive Benefit Sanctions



Let's unite against sanctions

## What is BFAWU doing?

We are:

- **Campaigning** for the removal of conditionality and sanctions for everyone on Social Security along with sister unions such as Unite.
- **Lobbying** the Labour Party to remove conditionality and sanctions from Social Security.
- **Working** with employers to increase understanding of Universal Credit and raise the profile of key issues emerging for working UC claimants.
- **Continuing** to fight for a £15 per hour minimum wage now for all workers regardless of age.
- **Embarking** on an urgent campaign of awareness raising across the movement in order to support low-waged workers.
- **Demanding** the restoration of central government funding to frontline debt advice services.



## TEAMWORK AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AT MANOR, CARLTON

2023 HAS BROUGHT MANY new challenges at Manor Carlton: a new Branch Secretary, (with Pauline McCarthy leaving after 25 yrs) and Andy Merton beginning to slowly establish a strong relationship with his team of stewards as well as a new HR manager who joined at the end of 2022.

Our membership, already struggling with the economic squeeze, was depleted even further as the company offered a voluntary leaving program which unfortunately saw many members take the offer.

With the assistance of our Organising Regional Secretary, **Jit Singh**, we began by holding our first road show and mapping the workforce to try and improve our understanding of our potential members. This start didn't have the desired effect but it gave us a platform to plan ahead and look at improving our organising skills. We have been in discussions around increasing our training allowance and managed to negotiate a significant increase from £1 to £10 per shift from June.

At July's number 5 regional council meeting we took advice from a guest speaker, West Yorkshire learner organiser Phil Day, to contact the South Yorkshire organiser Janet Johnson and arrange a meeting. The learning centre had taken two hits at Carlton over the years with Covid impacting our learning centre, which was transformed into a testing station for employees, and the removal of the learning fund. We discussed a way forward with the help of Janet Johnson and the company and we have a new room being developed with new laptops being provided and a new team of ULRs being recruited.

A second road-show in July helped us discuss all issues factory wide with everyone on site and recruit a few extra new members. We were very pleased to hear the announcement that Premier were increasing paternity leave from 2 to 6 weeks from the 1st of September. The gains we had fought for galvanised us further to target the potential members, using our successes and team-work from the last few weeks as a recruitment tool. We discovered that sometimes if a potential member was spoken to by different stewards then one may achieve more success and recruit them than another.

During the last few weeks the company decided to relocate the smoke shelter on site, building a new structure but not providing any seating. We were able to use the discontent from this to encourage staff to voice their anger in the right way and persuade a reversal, not only working towards new seating in the shelter but gaining new members as a direct result of the outcome. We have also managed to persuade the company to make improvements to the bike shelter, providing a temporary fix before a new and larger secure shelter is built.

So far a very productive year but we are not complacent about our recent activities. We understand the difficulties in recruiting with the financial situation many find themselves in, all we are offering is to provide our strength and help to those who wish to join us because we have many more challenges ahead and many new ideas to continue increasing our membership and strengthening our working relationship at Carlton.





# BFAWU PRODUCTS



**Cotton Shopper Bag**  
BFAWU-001

5oz cotton shopper bag.

Unit price: £1.85  
Minimum order quantity: 5 pieces



**Recycled Beanie Hat**  
BFAWU-002

Beanie with turn-up, made from recycled polyester.

Unit price: £5.50  
Minimum order quantity: 5 pieces



**Nature Plus Ballpen**  
BFAWU-003

Made from renewable raw material (PLA based on sugar cane).

Unit price: £0.95  
Minimum order quantity: 5 pieces



**A5 Softcover Notebook**  
BFAWU-004

Recycled Ecoflexi card cover, sheets from sustainable managed forests. Made in UK.

Unit price: £4.45  
Minimum order quantity: 5 pieces



**Flag - 600 x 400mm**  
BFAWU-005

Knitted polyester handwaver. Size: 600 x 400mm.

Unit price: £9.99



**500ml Water Bottle**  
BFAWU-006

500ml, single-wall bottle with integrated finger grip design. Made in UK from recyclable PET material.

Unit price: £4.99  
Minimum order quantity: 5 pieces



**Cotton T-Shirt**  
BFAWU-007

100% cotton t-shirt. Available in sizes S-5XL

Unit price: £8..10  
Minimum order quantity: 5 pieces

for large quantities, please contact us for pricing



Please contact us on:  
[bfawu@tc-group.co.uk](mailto:bfawu@tc-group.co.uk)  
01844 275 700

all prices exclude carriage and VAT

## WHAT WE ARE READING

MANIFESTO PRESS in partnership with *StrikeMap* present their new **Industrial Unionism** series.

*The Workers' Committee* is classic and important text exploring the incredible organisation of the first Shop Stewards' Movement in early 20th century Britain. Discussing the development of shopfloor power and how to organise industrially, sectorally and geographically, Murphy's text holds many ideas important to today's struggles, including what next for the strike wave? and how do we continue to build organisation to fight today and build a better society tomorrow?

These texts have been chosen as they are influential, historical texts that are not currently printed or require royalty costs to reprint and provide valuable insights into questions of trade union organisation which apply today.

[www.organiseandstrike.sumupstore.com/product/the-workers-committee-strike-map-x-manifesto-re-print-2023](http://www.organiseandstrike.sumupstore.com/product/the-workers-committee-strike-map-x-manifesto-re-print-2023)



Just a Pit Lass is being Launched on Monday December 11th at The People's Bookshop, Durham

Look on Heather's Facebook page to find out how to buy a copy.

BORN INTO A MINING FAMILY in the pit village of Easington, County Durham, **Heather Wood** has been involved in virtually every aspect of her community.

She became most famous, perhaps for her work with **Save Easington Area Mines (SEAM)**, a group that provided crucial support to the striking miners in 1984/5. At its peak, SEAM ran 14 free cafes for anyone in the community who needed feeding and served as many as 500 people a day -- and often, in Heather's words, 'much more than that during the school holidays when the children came down.'

I say perhaps her work with SEAM is what made her most famous, but that would be to overlook her roles in the two most recent Ken Loach films, 'Sorry We Missed You' and 'The Old Oak.'

And now she has written her autobiography.

## 40 YEAR AWARD



ON 8TH MARCH 2023 I ATTENDED our Region 5 March meeting (Retired branch 560) held at our Pudsey office, West Yorkshire. Mr **Ian Woods** (Region's 5 FTO before retiring), now chairs our retired branch meetings. We had an agenda to go through: Conference, ratification of conference delegates and AOB

Ian then had the duty of making a presentation to a special visitor, **Mr Brian Scarth**. Brian was the Branch Secretary for the BFAWU members at Fox's Biscuits, Batley for 20 years. He was also a long-serving and respected BFAWU Executive Council member for 15 years before his retirement. The reason for Brian's special visit was so that Ian could present him with his 40-year union member's badge.

This was well received by Brian, who was presented with a certificate, badge, and a cheque for his long-time service to the union. The cheque was a nice surprise! We wished him well and may he continue for many years to enjoy his retirement with his wife Sandra.

**Helena England**  
(Retired union member)

## H&S AWARD

### Midlands TUC Health and Safety Awards

EVERY YEAR THE TUC likes to recognise the important role of Health and Safety representatives at its award ceremony. The award shows how important the union representatives health and safety are in keeping workers safe in the workplace and improving the conditions people work in. This year one of our own was so recognised, **Virginija Mazintaite** from branch 357. The first time that someone from the BFAWU has won this.

Virginija was recognised for all the hard work she has carried out in looking after the Health and Safety of her comrades at *Greencore*. Virginija has stood out in the workplace helping to improve the health and safety of her colleagues at Greencore. She has help many of her migrant comrades communicate with healthcare professionals, acting as translator.



Virginija thanked not only the TUC but **George Atwall** (Regional Officer), **Dumitru Manole** (Greencore Branch Secretary), and the National Officers for the opportunity she has been given.

It must be noted that Virginija is a history maker in being the first Lithuanian to win this award. It goes to show how the BFAWU is a forward-thinking progressive union, one that sees our migrant comrades as an important part of our union. What Virginija's award shows is that multiculturalism works and that our union along with the TUC will defend and promote *all* of the working class.

## FAMILY VISIT...

by **Doug Nicholls**  
General Secretary  
General Federation of Trade Unions  
(GFTU)  
2011-2023

THOUSANDS OF PALESTINIAN children arrive at our door,

Lucky our garden is big.

They run through the house into the sun

And climb our trees and make swings,

Play chase getting puffed out in stitches.

You get out every single pot and tureen

And whip up the greatest meals you've ever made,

With lashings of ice cream and hearty dishes.

We find sacks and sacks of fruit pastels.

Hundreds run to help with the washing up,

The kitchen is loud with clatter and rows  
About putting things in the right place.

They love our dogs and take turns  
throwing their ball

Amidst the scurrying legs of friends.

There are games going on we've never  
seen and some sing

Their favourite songs beautifully in the  
shade,

While others rattle off their rhymes

And shriek with laughter at their naughty  
puns.

At dusk they snuggle down together,  
exhausted by the fun.

# WORK YOUR BRAIN

## WORDSEARCH

How many words can you find?

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

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

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

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](mailto: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 **31st January 2024** and winners will be announced in the next Foodworker.

## CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8								9				
10						11						
12		13				14			15			
								16				
17					18							19
					20							
21						22		23		24		
25						26						

### Across

- 8 Its capital is Kyiv (7)
- 9 Jewelled headdress (5)
- 10 Pawnbroker (5)
- 11 Ignorant (7)
- 12 Deep-pitched band instrument (4,4)
- 15 Fourth Gospel (4)
- 17 Above (4)
- 18 E.g. Germaine Greer (8)
- 21 Glass containers (7)
- 23 Cutting instrument (5)
- 25 Vision (5)
- 26 Advantage (7)

### Down

- 1 Urban commuter belt (6)
- 2 Voracious aquatic reptile (Abbr.) (4)
- 3 Fruit drink (7)
- 4 List from which to choose (4)
- 5 Water vapour (5)
- 6 Tubular pasta (8)
- 7 Collapse (4,2)
- 13 Dearth (8)
- 14 Exploit (3)
- 16 Going down (7)
- 17 Surprise attack (6)
- 19 Agreement (6)

# BFAWU OFFICERS AND REGIONAL ADDRESSES

## Head Office

email: [info@bfawu.org](mailto: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](mailto:sarah.woolley@bfawu.org)

Mr I Hodson — National President  
email: [ian.hodson@bfawu.org](mailto:ian.hodson@bfawu.org)

## Also Credit Union

Tel: 01707 259455

email: [admin@bfawucreditunion.co.uk](mailto:admin@bfawucreditunion.co.uk)

## No 1 Region

email: [region1@bfawu.org](mailto: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](mailto:frank.loveday@bfawu.org)

Mr H Rashid — Organising Regional Secretary  
Mobile: 07726 902807  
email: [haroon.rashid@bfawu.org](mailto:haroon.rashid@bfawu.org)

## No 2 Region

email: [region2@bfawu.org](mailto: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](mailto:gary.johnston@bfawu.org)

Mr J James — Organising Regional Secretary  
Mobile: 07739 326004  
email: [john.james@bfawu.org](mailto:john.james@bfawu.org)

## No 3 Region

email: [region3@bfawu.org](mailto: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](mailto:george.atwall@bfawu.org)

Mr H Rashid — Organising Regional Secretary  
Mobile: 07726 902807  
email: [haroon.rashid@bfawu.org](mailto:haroon.rashid@bfawu.org)

Mr L Bemka — Organising Regional Secretary  
Mobile: 07912 760261  
email: [lukasz.bemka@bfawu.org](mailto:lukasz.bemka@bfawu.org)

## No 4 Region

email: [region4@bfawu.org](mailto: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](mailto:roy.streeter@bfawu.org)

Mr G Atkinson — Organising Regional Secretary  
Mobile: 07834 930002  
email: [geoff.atkinson@bfawu.org](mailto:geoff.atkinson@bfawu.org)

Ms L Graham — Regional Officer  
Mobile: 07739 326020  
email: [laura.graham@bfawu.org](mailto:laura.graham@bfawu.org)

## No 5 Region

email: [region5@bfawu.org](mailto: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](mailto:mark.mchugh@bfawu.org)

Ms L Dinning — Organising Regional Secretary  
Mobile: 07739 326016  
email: [lizzie.dinning@bfawu.org](mailto:lizzie.dinning@bfawu.org)

Mr J Singh — Organising Regional Secretary  
Mobile: 07739 326012  
email: [jit.singh@bfawu.org](mailto:jit.singh@bfawu.org)

## No 7 Region

email: [region7@bfawu.org](mailto: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](mailto:laura.graham@bfawu.org)

## Branch 600

email: [swu/branch600@bfawu.org](mailto:swu/branch600@bfawu.org)

## Branch 601

email: [saltbranch601@bfawu.org](mailto:saltbranch601@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!*

