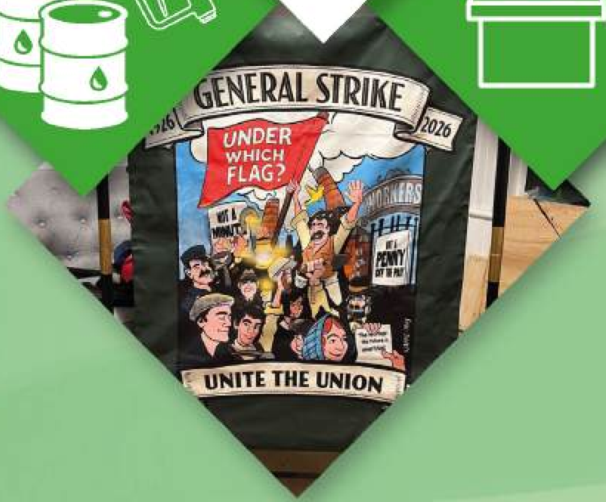
Issue 34

FACTS AND FIGURES!

August
2026



In-depth bargaining analysis for negotiators

Unite – Fighting for
JOBS · PAY · CONDITIONS

MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Sharon Graham re-elected as Unite General Secretary in decisive victory

It’s an honour to be re-elected by Unite members to serve as their general secretary. This decisive victory is a powerful mandate to continue change.

The trust that members have placed in me will be fully repaid as we step up our focus on delivering for workers.

Together we have already achieved a huge amount in the last five years.

My second period of office will continue to be marked by a relentless focus on the jobs, pay and conditions of workers. It will always be members over ministers and the workplace over Westminster.

We will continue to deliver much needed reform to our union.

It is my mission to build the industrial and political power required to better serve the working class.

Workers face many challenges in a changing world. From AI to decarbonisation and rising global tensions. Unite will be at the forefront of a stronger collective rooted in the working class.

In solidarity

Sharon

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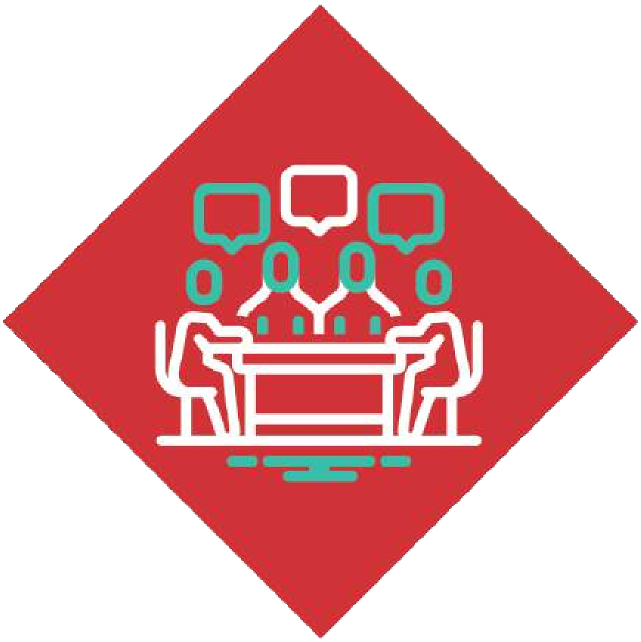


SECTION ONE

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Facts and Figures

Collective bargaining is the tried and tested method of pushing up pay. We are the great equalizer; a force for good; getting money into the hands of the working class, the real wealth creators.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

1. What is the backdrop to collective bargaining this month?

1.1 RPI is 3.2% and energy prices are the main culprit AGAIN

Inflation is up, gas price increases are their highest in the last four years, the price cap is up again, and regulator Ofgem isn't helping matters. They say that energy usage is down so they're recalculating the average cost on the price cap. Your employer may use that excuse in negotiations. The obvious counter arguments are that people are using less energy because it is so expensive and ... well, heatwaves.

It's the same perverse logic that was behind the change in inflation measures. In that case it was that we shouldn't use RPI because the formula ignores that people buy budget versions of products. Switching to cheaper versions is a sign of high prices. Don't even get us started on what happens if you were already buying the budget version.

- See Cost of Living & Pay section

The UK has had the strongest growth among the G7 countries

In the half of 2026 the economy grew the most of all G7 countries, some of the world's largest economies. The Treasury predicts we'll have the highest growth among the G7 for the rest of the year. The UK economy's prospects are good, we just need to get our fair share.

The Forbes Rich List shows more billionaires than ever, up 400 to 3,428 this year. Their combined wealth is £15.2 trillion, up 25% on 2025. There is plenty of money swilling around. We need a wealth tax to channel the proceeds where they are needed, and not just into buying football clubs.

- See Economy & Labour Market section

The Government has revisited it's plans to end to zero hours contracts

About time too. Regular readers will know that growth is not the be all and end all. Redistribution of the gigantic pie would do all but the mega rich just fine thank you. But still, lower earners are less likely to save, meaning if they have more money then it will grow the economy, so it's a win win. The devil will be in the detail and the business lobby will fight hard to water down Labour's plans. It's left to us to fight the workers' corner and make sure that doesn't happen.

- See Workplaces issues section


£700m
WINS...and
counting

SECTION TWO

VICTORIES

Unite will do everything it can to support reps building power in the workplace, at the bargaining table and in dispute. Work, Voice, Pay tools, Facts & Figures, Forensic Accounts, strike pay, Strikes Plus and organising campaigns: they're all designed for a clear purpose: To help you win better jobs, better pay, and better conditions.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

2. What have we delivered through collective bargaining?

2.1 This month, Unite members have secured large and above-inflation wage settlements and stronger collective bargaining rights across a range of sectors

Unite has continued to secure major improvements in pay across a wide range of industries, from emergency healthcare and civil aviation to defence, shipbuilding, logistics and food distribution.

These settlements include pay increases of up to **23%**, above-inflation rises and improved offers secured through collective bargaining and/or industrial action.

Emergency medical technicians, paramedics and supervisors in Ireland's National Ambulance Service secured pay increases of up to 23%, depending on length of service, after Unite and SIPTU members voted overwhelmingly to accept a substantial improvement recommended by the Labour Court. [1]

The agreement followed a 24-hour strike and the threat of escalating industrial action, after a prolonged dispute over the failure to implement recommendations recognising workers' increased skills, responsibilities and workloads.

The settlement delivers a significant and long-overdue improvement in pay for ambulance workers and demonstrates the power of collective organisation and industrial action to secure pay justice.

Facts and Figures

More than 300 Unite members employed by defence manufacturer Thales secured a 4.3% pay increase, above the rate of inflation and backdated to January, after overwhelmingly backing strike action.

The workers, based at Thales sites in Govan, Glasgow and the company's Reading headquarters, rejected the initial offer and voted for industrial action to secure an improved settlement. Following the ballot result, negotiations through ACAS led to the enhanced 4.3% offer, which delivers a welcome boost to the pay packets of electronics, software and systems engineers, manufacturing and mechanical technicians.

The agreement demonstrates the strength of Unite members standing together and being prepared to take industrial action to secure better pay. [2]

Around 200 workers employed by Navantia at its Methil shipyard secured a 3.3% pay increase, delivering an above-inflation rise for Unite members.

The settlement provides a direct improvement in basic pay for workers at the Fife yard and represents an important pay victory for skilled workers in the shipbuilding and engineering sector.

The agreement strengthens pay for Unite members working in a vital industrial and defence-related workplace.[3]

Unite Reps secured a 4.5% pay increase, for around 100 workers employed by Brake Brothers in Motherwell backdated to April 2026, after negotiations delivered an improved wage settlement.

The workers include drivers, warehouse operatives and administrative staff who had rejected an earlier offer and were prepared to take industrial action to secure a better deal. The agreement delivers an important victory for Unite members in the food distribution sector. [4]

Around 30 HGV drivers employed by GXO in Bellshill secured a 4.5% pay increase, backdated to April 2026, following Unite negotiations.The drivers deliver kitchens under the Howdens contract to centres across Scotland, and the improved settlement delivers a significant increase in pay for workers in the logistics sector.The agreement demonstrates the value of collective bargaining in securing improved wages for workers in a vital distribution role.[5]

Unite members at Aberdeen Airport secured an enhanced pay offer after standing firm in their pay dispute and backing industrial action.

The improved offer was made after the threat of strike action led to the employer returning with a better settlement, and workers subsequently voted to accept the enhanced deal. The victory builds on Unite's wider series of pay gains for airport workers and demonstrates how collective organisation and the credible threat of industrial action can deliver improved pay settlements.[6]

Tanker drivers at Prestwick Airport have secured a union recognition agreement with Unite. The agreement is an important organising victory for workers in the aviation sector and further strengthens Unite's representation at **Prestwick Airport**.It demonstrates how workplace organising can establish lasting collective bargaining rights and provide workers with greater power to improve their jobs, pay and conditions.

> *"The recognition agreement for tanker drivers is another significant win for Unite at Prestwick airport. It shows that we are going from strength to strength at the airport delivering better jobs, pay and conditions for our members."*
> **Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham**

2.2 Workers' Voice: Oxalis Grangemouth won better pay for tanker drivers

Every successful campaign has a story behind it and it's great to hear directly from Unite Reps who have organised, negotiated and delivered real improvements for members in their workplaces. These interviews show the power of collective bargaining and workplace organisation.

The Reps behind these victories explain how they engaged members, built solidarity, negotiated with employers and used the strength of Unite to deliver better outcomes. Their experiences provide practical advice and inspiration for reps across every sector looking to do the same.

This month it's **Oxalis** at Grangemouth, where airport fuel tanker drivers secured substantial improvements to pay and conditions following a TUPE transfer.

> Hear it straight from the front line! Listen to the full interviews on the Facts and Figures audio channel: **Spotify:** https://tinyurl.com/4uf9y5zc **Apple Podcasts:** https://tinyurl.com/3uv8ae8d

Like many in road haulage, workers at Oxalis Grangemouth have seen many changes of employer. It's the nature of the contracting environment which plagues the industry. One day you are working for one company, the next someone else wins the contract, often based on cutting costs.

Fortunately, by standing together the small band of specialist drivers delivering aviation fuel to Scotland's main airports were able to make sure their pay and conditions were actually improved when this happened to them. We start the story with Shop steward Chris Conlin.

Chris, tell me a bit about yourself.

CC: My name's Chris Conlon. I'm the workplace rep on the Q8 contract with Oxalis at Grangemouth. I'm one of the fuel tanker drivers delivering aviation fuel to Glasgow and Edinburgh airports. I've been on the contract since day one in 2016.

We've TUPE'd from Wincanton to Lewis Tankers, owned by Turners, and recently to Oxalis. I've been workplace rep since November 2019, which was a baptism of fire with the pandemic, furloughs and redundancies.

Tell us about the deal you managed to win with Oxalis.

CC: It was a long, hard struggle. We started negotiations in November 2024 with our previous employer. We went in with our shopping list and they came back with an exceptionally poor offer of 1%. The members unanimously rejected it.

Throughout 2025 the company became entrenched. We whittled everything down to what we thought was an exceptionally reasonable offer. Even the two managers we dealt with agreed it was reasonable, but the main decision-maker said no – it was 1%.

We ended up in meetings with Acas in Edinburgh. Even Acas seemed appalled that the company made exactly the same offer. We balloted for industrial action. By then we were down to less members after redundancies.

We took action in November, December and January, standing at the gate in the snow, knowing aviation fuel demand drops during winter. But we were determined to fight our corner.

On March 1 we TUPE'd to Oxalis. They wanted wage negotiations immediately. At one point they actually offered a slightly higher percentage than we'd asked for the previous year, but I refused it because I knew they'd undercut it somewhere else. I felt it was morally right to stick with what we'd asked for.

They wanted one deal covering last year, this year, 2027 and 2028. We thought we had an agreement but when the official offer arrived it wasn't even the same league. It was a different sport altogether. We balloted again. We unanimously voted to withdraw our labour. Once the dates were issued the company became very keen to negotiate. We sat down, traded a few things, rejected a no-strike clause, and got the deal done.

Facts and Figures

What did members actually achieve?

CC: For 2025, the original offer was 1%. We achieved 4% on all monetary items. Overtime is now time and a half. Bank holiday payments are now time and a half. The annual bonus increased by around £164 a year, and we got the company to freeze that for three years.

For this year we achieved 5.4% on basic pay and additional payments such as shift change payments.

For 2027 and 2028 the company offered 3% or RPI, whichever is highest.

We also increased sick pay from 90% for the first six months and 45% thereafter to six months full pay and six months half pay. That's a massive benefit. For 2028 we also secured an increase in the company's pension contribution from 6% to 8%.

Members clearly backed the deal?

CC: They did. You have to read the room. I think I'd rung them dry. Other drivers have told me it's a brilliant deal. As a workplace Rep your biggest concern is whether you've done the best you can. I honestly don't think we were getting anything else.

How did you judge what the company could afford?

CC: After being on the contract so long you get a feel for what's in the budget. With Oxalis we were dealing with a new employer, so you watch the body language, speak to other reps and use Unite resources like Work Voice Pay. You get a feel for what you can realistically achieve.

Did Unite's forensic accountants help?

CC: Absolutely. People ask what the union does, but the support is there if you ask for it. We knew Oxalis' overall profits but we treated ourselves as a standalone contract. We weren't being greedy. Getting the improvements to our terms and conditions was a fantastic bonus.

How did you keep members engaged?

CC: I got everyone together and simply asked what they wanted. Everybody contributed, then we whittled it down into our shopping list. The company congratulated me and said it was the best shopping list I'd produced!

Communication was constant. We've got a WhatsApp group which is brilliant. I kept everybody informed every step of the way. If someone only replied with a thumbs up I'd be straight onto them: "You need to tell me what you want. I'm not here to tell you what you want. You're here to tell me." I think a lot of Reps forget that. Keep everybody engaged because without their input and support it's difficult to keep going.

Last year I started to flag. One of the guys said to me, "You're losing your fight, big man." That was enough to reignite my spark.

Finally, what advice would you give other reps?

CC: First, if you ever ballot for industrial action, don't do it in the winter. Standing on a gate in the snow is miserable!

More seriously, be honest with yourself, be honest with your members and engage them constantly. Without solidarity you'll never achieve anything. Companies will always look for the weakest link. If doubt gets into one person it can spread.

Stick together. Keep everybody motivated. If there's disagreement, keep it behind closed doors. Never show the company weakness.

2.3 Bite-sized Bargaining: Seeing more wins from the past year

When workers stand together, armed with the facts and supported by their union, real change is possible. Winning workers are telling us how they won better pay deals in their workplaces.

- **HSL** Reps on how they won 15.4% pay rise over two years after a strike action: https://tinyurl.com/29whsadb Facts & Figures December 2025, p.18.
- Unite Rep **Laurie** on how **Chartwells**' workers won full sick pay rights: https://tinyurl.com/2u24cmww Facts & Figures November 2025, p.18.
- **Unite EC South East Rep** and hospitality Rep **Megan** on working conditions in the hospitality sector: https://tinyurl.com/3mjwjm57 Facts & Figures October 2025, p.36.
- Senior Unite Rep **Kevin Byrne** at **Livv Housing** and Unite Rep **Lorraine Hanson** at **Capita** told us how they won a pay rise through determined organising, collective strength, and the support of their union. Read the interview at https://tinyurl.com/d5p4nwhp or see Facts & Figures June 2025, p.29.
- Lead Shop Steward **Sharon Williams** at **Loganir** shared how strong organising, member-led action, and sector comparisons delivered a remarkable 27% pay deal over 18 months, and what others can learn from it. Read the interview at https://tinyurl.com/53ambvb9 or see Facts & Figures April 2025, p.20.
- Unite lead Rep **Dishon Boxer-Gylenhall** shared how they secured a dramatic pay increase for cabin crew of **Qantas** in the UK. Read the interview at https://tinyurl.com/zu4228bc or see Facts & Figures March 2025, p.19.

Use Work, Voice, Pay tools to win
There are several tools in the **Work, Voice, Pay** armoury to understand more about your company's financial data and prepare better collective bargaining negotiations, all of which can be accessed at https://www.unitetheunion.org/work-voice-pay

SECTION THREE

COST OF LIVING AND PAY

Facts and Figures

We are under no illusion: this is not the end - the cost of living crisis is not over. Furthermore, those who have profited from the crisis should pay for it.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

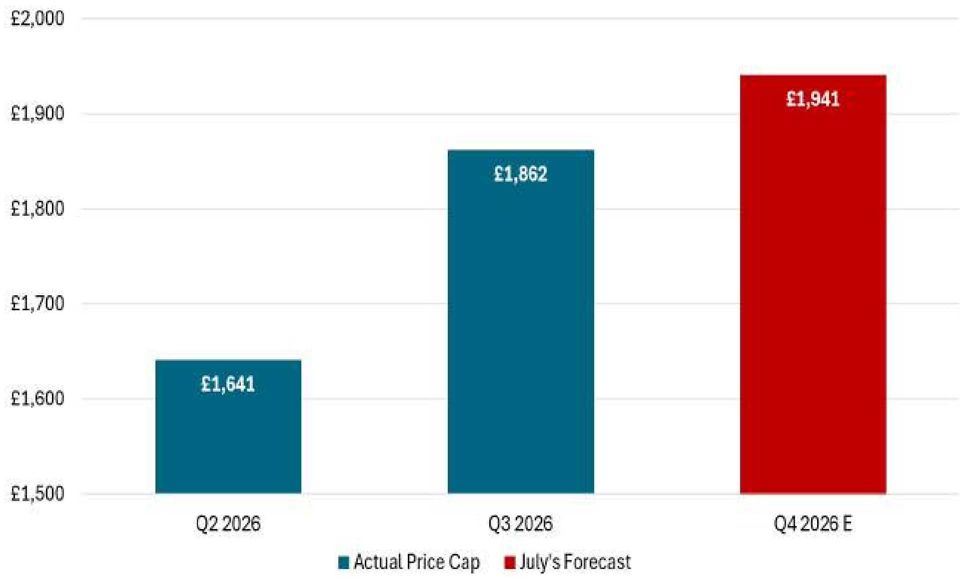
3. What is happening to the cost of living and pay?

3.1 Key figures: RPI is 3.2% and forecast to rise

The RPI inflation rate is 3.2% but will rise significantly this year. Unite Reps can use **forecast RPI** to set the floor for pay deals this month.

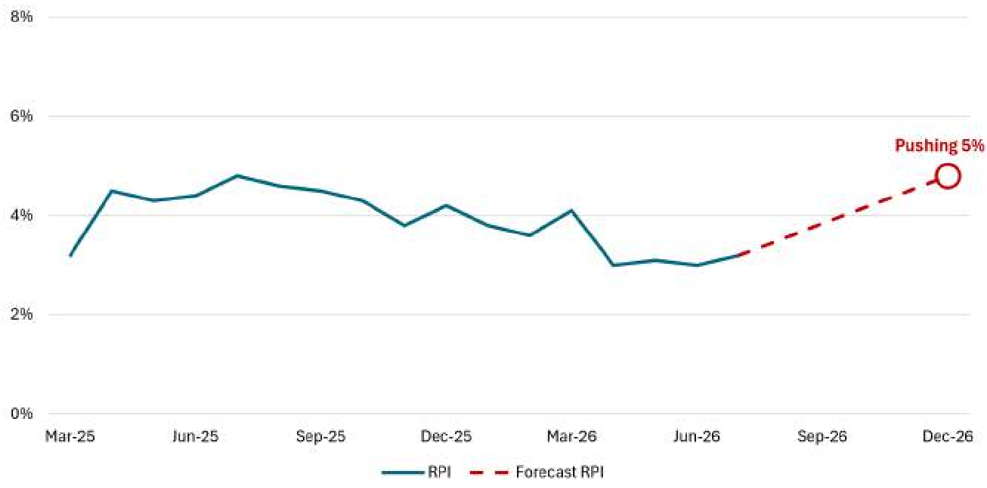
- **Prices rose 3.2% in the year to July,** as measured by the Retail Price Index (RPI).[7]
- **The cost of living is set to rise further.** The Strait of Hormuz is still closed and oil prices are back on the up. Oil reserves are running out and analysts say inflation will rise. HSBC expects RPI to hit 4.7% by year end. The National Institute of Economic and Social Research predicts 4.8%. We deserve pay deals that reflect that.[8]
- **Energy costs are expected to hit highest level since 2023.** Ofgem lowered how much energy it deems the 'typical household' uses, resulting in lower headline price cap figures. But don't assume that means energy is getting cheaper. By year-end, energy prices are expected to be at their highest level since 2023.[9]
- **Tying pay to CPI or CPIH short-changes workers.** CPI is 2.9% this month, CPIH (which includes housing) is 3.1%.[10]

The energy price cap is expected to rise 4% to £1,941[11]

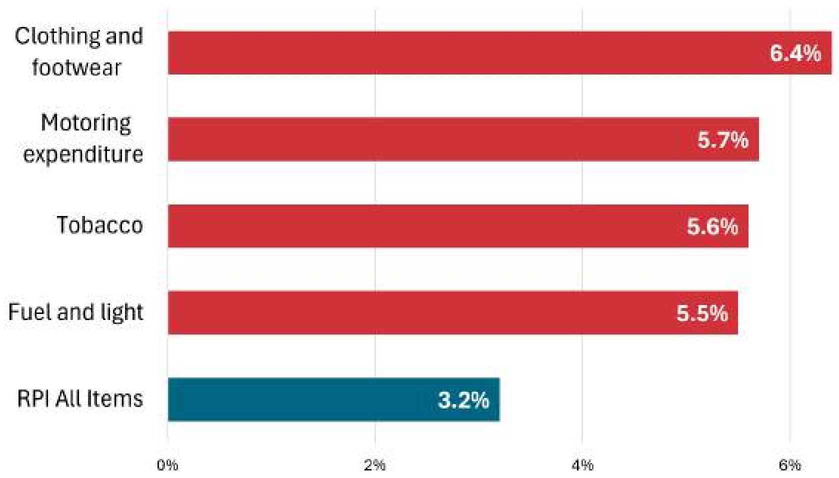


Facts and Figures

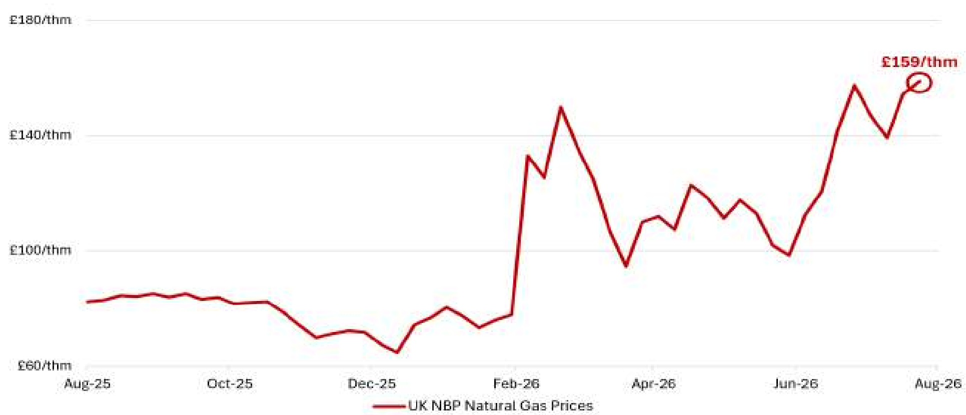
RPI is 3.2% but will go up by the end of the year



Clothing and motor costs are rising faster than the headline rate

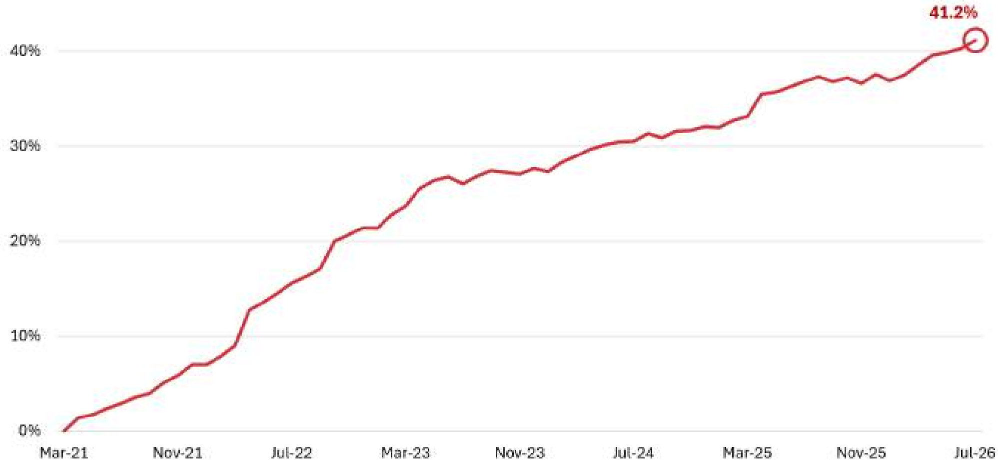


Gas prices have seen their sharpest increase since 2022

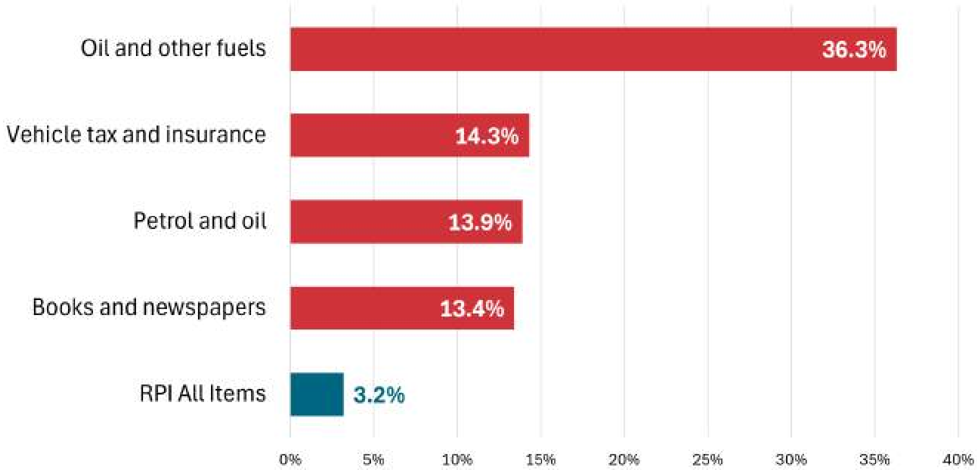


Facts and Figures

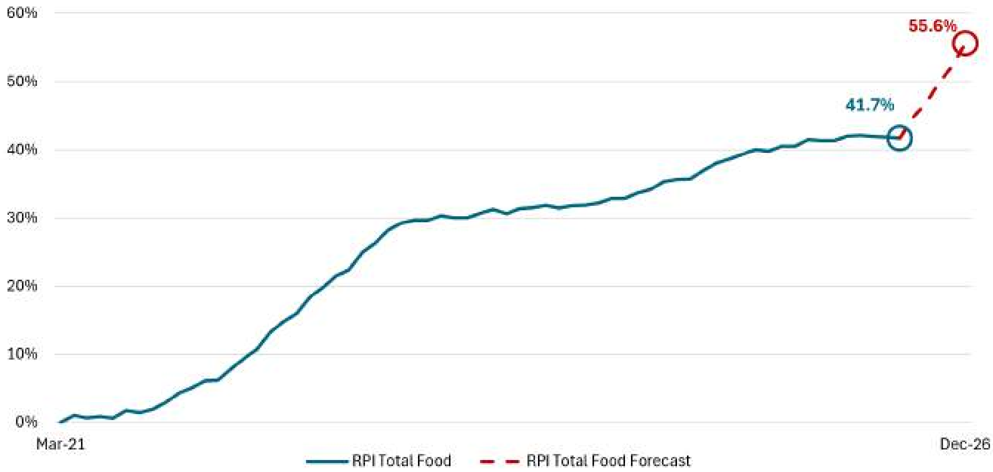
Prices have risen 41% since March 2021



Oil and fuel is 36% more expensive than this time last year



Food will be 56% more expensive compared to 2021



What is happening to the cost of living and pay?

3.2 The Strait of Hormuz is still closed and the Bank of England expects inflation to be far above-target well in to 2027

At the time of writing, the Strait of Hormuz is still closed, energy prices are back on the up, and the Bank of England (BoE) says inflation will be well above-target until at least the end of 2027. Workers will yet again be expected to pay the price, making the need for above-inflation pay deals ever more crucial.

As we discussed in last month's Facts & Figures, the deal to re-open the Strait of Hormuz between the US and Iran fell through and the passage remained closed.

This month the Strait is still closed and oil prices have surpassed $90/barrel.[12] And what's more worrying is the oil reserves that have been softening price spikes are quickly running out.

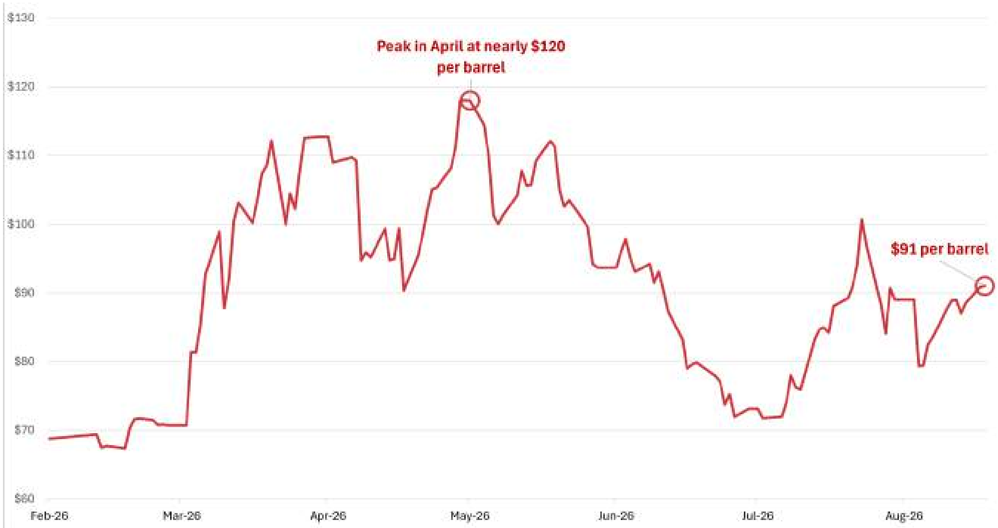
The US Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) is an emergency stockpile of oil that the US keeps to act as a buffer to limit the impacts of crises like this. But, for the first time since the 1980's, the SPR has tumbled below 300 million barrels.[13]

And while that still seems like a lot of oil, at least 70 million barrels simply cannot be touched due to the risk that the salt caverns they're kept in could collapse. But even then, some experts warn that the number is far higher than 70 million.[14]

This isn't just a problem for the US either. Oil inventories held by OECD countries have fallen to their lowest levels since 1990.[15] This means that **buffer inventory levels to soften price spikes are quickly running out.** The prolonged crisis is now also having ripple effects on global shipping routes. Vessels are seeking out alternative energy supplies, and droughts across Europe have caused water levels at some passages falling dangerously low.[16]

If rising global shipping costs are passed on, as is usually the case, it will end up with the customer being the one left out of pocket. And considering oil has surpassed $90/barrel, that's looking ever more likely.

Oil prices have passed $90/barrel



While inflation has been lower than expected these past few months, the The BoE says that this is just temporary. In its latest monetary report, it says that higher global energy prices and rising motor fuel prices in the UK will feed through to rising inflation by year-end.[17]

As a result, it expects inflation will be well-above target until at least the end of 2027, meaning RPI will likely be over 4% by year-end.[18]

Even the BoE's forecasts may be overly-optimistic though. Forecasts collected from independent city analysts by the Treasury expect RPI to be closer to 5% by year-end. **HSBC reckons RPI will hit 4.7%, while the National Institute of Economic and Social Research says 4.8%**.[19]

Prolonged high inflation means that workers will yet again be left out of pocket and pay deals need to reflect this.

And as usual, while workers pay the price for yet another crisis, firms' profits soar.

In this month's Ability to Pay section, we discuss the UK's Big 4 Bank's record-high profits and show that ability to pay is there.

So don't let your employer attempt to base pay deals on the current inflation rates. As the BoE has said, inflation will rise and it will stay far above-target going in to 2027.**Through collective bargaining, above-inflation pay deals are possible and they're the only way for workers to stay afloat.**

3.3 Bite-sized Bargaining: Increased social care, child care, and leisure costs add to workers' burden

Unite backs its members who fight collectively for inflation-busting pay in the workplaces and sectors. See below for a compiled cost-of-living and real terms pay articles in our previous issues to strengthen your negotiations.

- **Use Financial Insider to discover whether real-terms pay at your company has kept pace with inflation.** Find out more here: https://www.unitetheunion.org/work-voice-pay/financial-insider.
- **CPI and CPIH both short-change workers when used instead of RPI.** Find out more here: https://tinyurl.com/2wujk5s2 or look in the June 2025 edition, p.54-57.
- **The UK is the most expensive country for childcare in Europe, with costs for an under two-year-olds rising by 43% in the last decade.** Find out more here: tinyurl.com/2bcvj8hc or look in the May 2024 edition, p.49-51.
- **Social care has been mostly privatised, running for profit and costs its patients over £60,000 a year.** Find out more here:tinyurl.com/2xu66av4 or look in the August 2024 edition.
- **The lowest paid workers are experiencing the highest rate of inflation** Find out more here: tinyurl.com/uccet97z or look in the April 2024 edition, p.51-52.
- **The rising cost of living has made personal leisure a privilege as workers have had to prioritise bills and food.** Find out more here: https://tinyurl.com/4nu8vvbd or look in the December 2024 edition, p.32.
- **Since 1977, the income gap between the top and bottom income groups is continuing to widen.** Find out more here: https://tinyurl.com/3t9ep345 or look in the October 2024 edition, p.45-47.


Heathrow bosses!
END POVERTY PAY
WORKERS CAN'T GET BY
Unite
the UNION
#HALStrike
Unite, fighting for Jobs. Pay. Conditions.

SECTION FOUR

ABILITY TO PAY

Put simply: huge profits and dividends show that firms have the ability to pay.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

4. How much money are employers making?

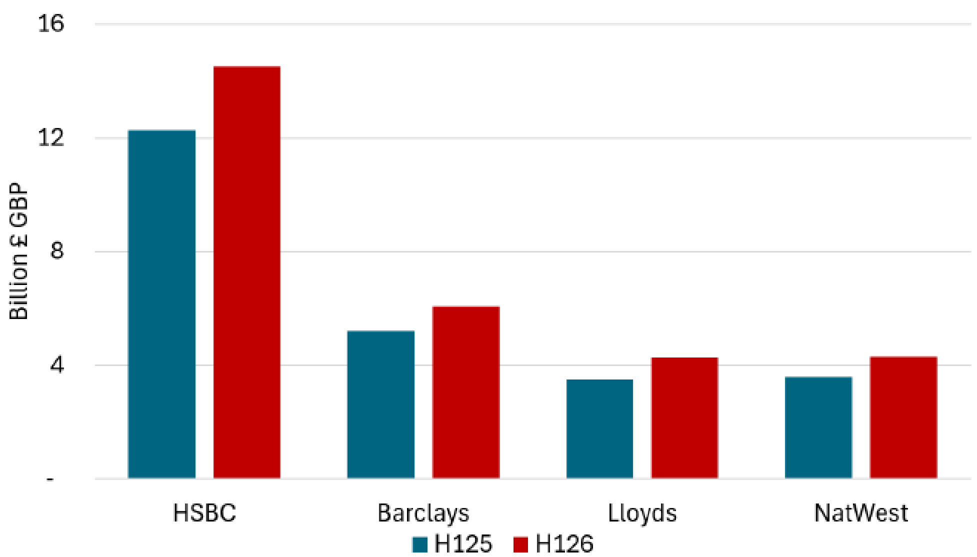
4.1 The UK's big 4 banks have raked in £29 billion in profit globally in just six months, fuelling calls for windfall taxes

As regular readers of Facts & Figures will know, the Bank of England has held interest rates at historically high levels for months, and it's only looking to put them up even higher. The move is an attempt to limit inflation, but it simply leaves workers even more out of pocket - mortgages, rent, and loan payments all cost more.

Meanwhile, the UK's big four banks - Lloyds, Barclays, HSBC, and NatWest - have **cashed in over £29 billion globally in the first half of 2026 directly driven by high interest rates.** While workers continue to be left out of pocket, firms continue to profit more and more.

Barclays led the way with pre-tax profits soaring by nearly a third in the second quarter (Q2) of 2026, taking its half-year profits to a whopping £6.1 billion.

The UK's Big 4 Banks have raked in £29 billion globally so far



NatWest's growth came in a close second, with Q2 pre-tax profits growing 29%, driven by its retail division and the sustained period of high interest rates. In response, NatWest upgraded its full-year guidance on return on tangible equity (one of the key performance indicators banks use to track profitability) from 17% to over 19%.[20]

Facts and Figures

Elsewhere, **Lloyd**'s outperformed analyst expectations by raking in £4.3 billion, and **HSBC** announced a new $1 billion share buyback scheme to reward shareholders after profits soared to £14.5 billion.[21]

And although much of this profit is a result of the banks' overseas operations, the big four have been raking it in from the UK too.

In the first half of 2026, **the big four generated £13 billion of their pre-tax profits from the UK - up 16% on the same period last year.**[22]

With these bonanza profits that are seemingly ever-growing, it's no surprise that many people, including members of parliament, are calling for windfall taxes to be placed on banks.[23]

Of course, bank executives don't share the same view and are claiming that they already pay too much tax, that means their profit margins aren't as high as they'd like.[24]

Now, the figures we reported above *are* pre-tax, but even after taking off tax payments the big four are doing very well.

£m	H1 2025	H1 2026
HSBC	9,659	11,392
Barclays	4,030	4,697
Lloyds	2,544	3,123
NatWest	2,675	3,180
Total	**18,908**	**22,392**

Table 1: Global net profits of the UK's big four banks, H1 2025 - H1 2026

As shown above, the big four still pocketed nearly £22.4 billion in net profits from their global operations, just in the first half of 2026. And that's the profit after all expenses, including tax, have been taken off.

This makes it clear. Banks are far from struggling and their profits are ever-growing, directly benefiting from workers being more and more out of pocket.

Despite these record profits, the Bank of England plans to ease capital requirement restrictions, allowing lenders to make even more money.

The restrictions mean that lenders must hold a set amount of capital in reserve to act as a financial cushion when debts turn bad. The aim is to prevent another 2008-style financial crisis.

But now, banks will be allowed to hold less in reserve and lend more, with city analysts forecasting up to £270 billion in additional loans will be put out.[25]

The banks will argue that this will bolster the economy with more money to support growth, but in reality it represents additional risk.

And if things go wrong, like they did back in 2008, it will be workers who have to cough up and bail the banks out yet again.

The easing of these regulations is nothing new though. Regular readers of Facts & Figures will remember that the Bank of England loosened the rules on bankers' bonuses at the end of last year.

That change cut the time that senior bankers must wait before receiving their full bonuses down from eight to four years, which they say was in an attempt to boost UK competitiveness.

Now, senior bankers receive part of their bonus within a year and are allowed to pocket dividends on share-based bonuses while they are deferred.[26]

This is great timing - if you're a UK banking boss - considering their pay just hit its highest level in more than a decade.[27]

Barclays' boss pocketed over £15 million while HSBC and NatWest both paid out £6.6 million to their executive, and Lloyds £7.4 million.[28]

This makes it clear - bank CEOs will stop at nothing to take home more and more profit. And it's usually at the expense of everyday workers, including those at the banks, through higher mortgage payments and debt interest.

Through organising in the workplace and collective bargaining, Unite members can fight back against bad bosses pushing below-inflation pay deals.

The ability to pay is clearly there, and as members at Barclays have shown, workers can get their fair share.

4.2 Private equity has tried carving up the World Cup and feasting on British firms but Unite is on the case

Members may be aware of the rage across the football world at **FIFA** President Gianni Infantino's attempt to parcel the rights to the World Cup out to private equity sharks.[29] As we explain here private equity firms are taking an increasing chunk of businesses affecting the lives of many members.[30]

Private equity is on the rise, putting jobs and conditions at risk. An increasing number of large employers are owned by private equity investors. This means while once they were publicly listed on the stock market and subject to tight financial regulation, and reporting requirements, PE firms only have to report limited information.

Large firms that have been taken private recently include ASDA, Morrisons and G4S. Private equity-owned businesses employing Unite members include Biffa, Amey, Stagecoach and Peel Ports. [31]

Despite claims from the private equity industry that it creates jobs, firms owned by private equity often lag other private sector employers in both job creation and pay growth. And they have been criticised for cutting costs by undermining workers' terms and conditions. This article is an overview of the industry for Reps whose employers are owned by private equity or might be at risk of being taken over.

What is private equity?

In essence private equity firms borrow money to take stakes in or buy businesses. They often borrow from pensions funds, that charge high interest, and so look for high returns. **The first thing private investors look at is "stripping out" costs, often with a beady eye on labour costs.**

Private equity is a term to describe the way that an investor owns a company. The shares (equities) of a public company are widely traded on markets like the London Stock Exchange and can be bought at any time by anyone, including members of the public.

Under private equity, the ownership is held by one investor or a small group of investors and shares are not traded. When a public company is taken over by private equity investors, this is called being ‘taken private’ and the shares are no longer traded on the stock exchange. Since 2019, the number of large companies owned by private equity investors has surged by 78%, according to figures from the Private Equity Reporting Group (PERG). They define a large company as one with 1,000 or more employees or revenue of over £200 million.[32]

Who are the private equity investors?

Most private equity investment is done by specialist investment firms known as ‘PE firms’. In the UK, some of the biggest PE firms include Bridgepoint Capital, Apax Partners, CVC Capital Partners, and TDR Capital. PE firms typically run a number of different funds, each of which holds a small number of portfolio companies. Private equity-owned businesses employing Unite members include Biffa (owned by Energy Capital Partners, now part of Bridgepoint Capital), Amey (One Equity Partners), StageCoach (DWS Infra), Peel Ports (Global Infrastructure Partners) and London City Airport (owned by Canadian pension funds).

How do PE firms raise money?

Much of the money that PE firms invest comes from workers’ pension funds around the world. Both private sector and local government pension funds in the UK have invested extensively in private equity, and the government is encouraging them to invest more. Large PE firms regularly seek to raise capital for their new funds from pensions funds and other investors. PE firms charge our pension funds much higher fees than firms that invest in public companies. A common fee structure is ‘2 and 20’ - a 2% annual management charge, plus 20% of returns generated above an agreed level.

Facts and Figures

What happens to companies under private equity ownership?

To buy companies out, PE firms typically borrow heavily against the assets and cash flow of the company being acquired. This is called “leverage” and is central to PE returns, because it can boost profit for investors even if the company itself does not fundamentally improve. Although the borrowing could be entirely repaid, many companies remain heavily indebted when they are sold on to new owners. Thames Water is a high-profile example in the UK. PE firms typically own companies for around six years before selling to another PE fund, or back onto the stock market through flotation.

How leverage makes more money for PE Firms

- The PE firm buys a company for £100m using £20m equity and £80m debt.
- The company grows and pays down some debt; £50m of debt remains.
- The PE firm sells the company for £150m.
- £50m goes to lenders; £100m goes to the PE firm.
- Since the PE firm only invested £20m, this is a 5x return, driven primarily by leverage.

PE firms claim that they increase the value of companies during their ownership through 'strategic and operational improvements'. The industry has also repeatedly claimed that it creates jobs. However, unions around the world have reported that companies under private equity ownership put pressure on job numbers and workers’ terms and conditions as part of their efforts to reduce costs.

Analysis of private equity portfolio companies undertaken by EY Parthenon for the PERG found that, in many years, both pay and employment growth in PE-owned firms was lower than the private sector as a whole. In their most recent analysis, they found:

- Growth in employment for current PE portfolio companies was lower than the ONS private sector benchmark for six out of the last 10 years.
- Average annual employee compensation growth in the last reporting period under PE ownership was 2.9%, which is lower than the UK private sector benchmark of 5.1%.
- The same analysis found that, over the long term, the use of leverage accounts for more of the financial performance of PE-owned firms than operational or strategic change.

Reps should consider:
Is your employer owned by a PE firm? If so, they may have made public commitments about employment conditions, and so might their pension fund clients.
Does your pension fund invest with PE firms? If so, the fund might be investing in companies that are attacking workers' terms and conditions.

4.2.1 easyJet's sale to private equity will work out for shareholders but we need to be ready to fight against understaffing and overwork

The latest employer to be acquired by private equity being UK based airline **easyJet**. The UK based airline has just been acquired by US firm Apollo Capital for £5.7 billion.[33].

After rejecting approaches from Castlelake, US private equity giant **Apollo** has acquired **easyJet** for £5.7billion. It is important for members in easyJet, and in the wider trade union movement, to understand what private equity ownership could mean.[34]

The biggest immediate winners in the easyJet situation will be shareholders. Founder Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou, who owns around 15% of the airline, could realise around **£855 million** selling his stake. He would also continue to receive **0.25% of easyJet's annual revenues** for licensing the easyJet brand - around **£25 million** based on the airline's latest results.[35]

Facts and Figures

Apollo manages around **$1 trillion** of assets and describes itself as a long-term investor. However, analysts have already identified easyJet as a business with significant scope to increase profitability. One figure often mentioned is staffing levels. easyJet employs **54 staff per aircraft,** compared with **43** at both Ryanair and British Airways' parent company IAG.[36]

Private equity will believe that easyJet is overstaffed but the comparison is simplistic.

You shouldn't ignore differences in route networks, airport charges, aircraft utilisation and business models. easyJet operates from many of Europe's busiest airports and has invested heavily in customer service and its successful holidays business. Nevertheless, headline productivity measures often shape the thinking of financial investors.

Analysts from US investment bank Bernstein have suggested easyJet could substantially increase its operating profitability. [37]The question for employees is how would that be achieved? Greater aircraft utilisation, changes to rostering and tighter staffing levels may improve financial returns, but they can also increase pressure on employees and place additional strain on operations if taken too far.

Apollo's previous aviation investments have included Aeromexico and Sun Country in the US. The circumstances differed, particularly during the Covid crisis, but they illustrate how private equity firms typically look for operational efficiencies and higher returns.[38]

easyJet remains a profitable airline operating in a highly competitive and unpredictable industry.[39] Any new owner would still have to comply with UK and European aviation regulations and negotiate with recognised trade unions. Those protections matter, because when financial investors buy airlines, improving shareholder returns is usually their overriding objective.[40]**Unite will continue to monitor the situation and support our members to challenge any threats to their terms and conditions.**

4.3 Thames Water executives get pay rises while customers get higher bills

The two bosses running **Thames Water** received inflation-busting pay rises this April even as the company risked financial collapse, was fined for pollution, and pushed up bills for customers.

The company's latest annual report shows that the chief executive Chris Weston saw his salary increased by 13.6% in the space of a year to just under **ONE MILLION pounds a year (£995,000)**.

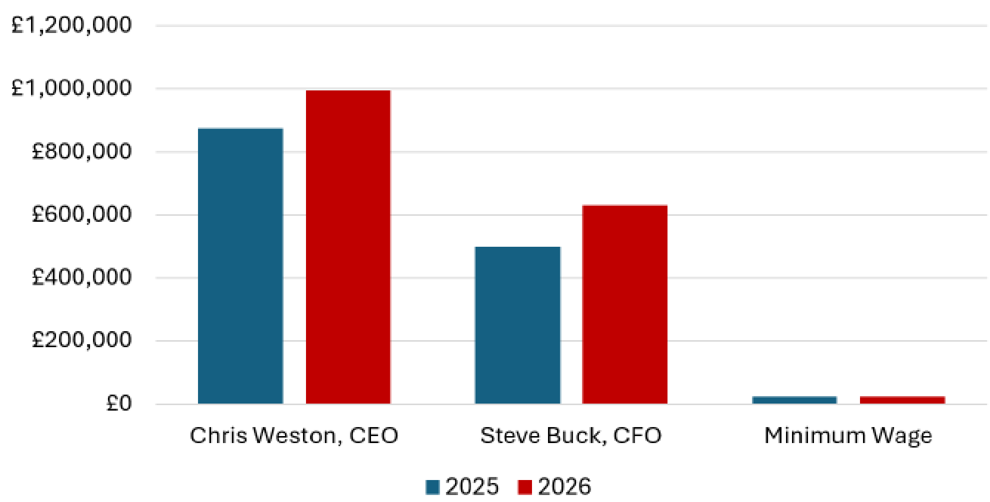
In the previous year he was paid a salary of £875,500. He also received benefits worth £34,120 related to private medical insurance, a car allowance and an accommodation allowance **PLUS a cash payment of 12% of salary (£104,200)** instead of a pension contribution.

Meanwhile the company's chief financial officer, Steve Buck, saw his pay increase in April by over a quarter (26%) to **£630,000 a year**. In the previous year he was paid a salary of £500,000.

He also received benefits of £14,871 relating to private medical insurance and a car allowance, and a one-off payment of £25,000 as compensation for expenses incurred through his recruitment. He also gets a pension contribution and further cash payment together worth 12% of salary.

In comparison, the minimum wage increased by around 4% in the same period, a rise some business leaders criticised for increasing their costs.

Thames Water exec pay rises versus minimum wage increase



Facts and Figures

Although neither the chief executive nor chief financial officer was paid a bonus, these were paid to other 'key management personnel'. Total bonuses for this group were £4.1 million in the past year, up from £2.8 million the year before.

As we reported in April's Facts & Figures, average household water bills will rise by 5.4% to £639 a year in England and Wales from this April.

The average bill for Thames Water jumped a massive 31% from £488 in 2024/25 to £639 in 2025/26 so there will be a smaller rise this year.

Overall, the water regulator Ofwat has allowed water firms in England and Wales to put up bills by 36% between 2025 and 2030.

Last year Thames Water was hit with a record £123m in fines from Ofwat.

Most of that (£104 million) was for environmental breaches involving sewage spills, with the company accused of failing to operate and manage its treatment works and wastewater networks effectively.

But Thames Water was also fined £18.2 million for breaking the rules over paying dividends.

The company paid dividends in October 2023, of £37.5 million, and in March 2024, of £158.3 million, that Ofwat said were not in line with the regulatory requirement to "take account of service delivery for customers and the environment over time, including performance levels, and other obligations".

Things won't get better for Thames Water and other utilities under the current model. Unite is fighting for public ownership of our utilities to put an end to ever-rising bills for water and other services.

4.4 Investors are piling back into stock markets, signalling companies have an ability to pay

Investors are piling back into stocks across the world, signalling confidence in firms despite the ongoing US-Iran war.

In the UK, the FTSE 100 hit a record-high at the end of July due to its limited exposure to AI companies and constant dividends.[41]

The FTSE 100 is up 17% compared to this time last year

Overseas, the same is true. The US' S&P 500 hit a record-high after its firms reported a 50% rise in earnings in the second quarter of 2026 and the global MSCI index followed suit.[42]

The S&P 500 and MSCI world indexes are up 21% and 20%

When share prices are rising like this, it usually means that **ability to pay is also on the up.**

4.5 Bite-sized Bargaining: Employers have much ability to pay

Previous editions of Facts & Figures have identified how companies maximise profits and the methods they use.

- **Unite has identified five main forms of profiteering, including windfall profits.** Find out more here: https://tinyurl.com/2dvcbwa6 or look in the March 2024 edition, p.76-80.
- **Companies paying dividends and share buybacks to shareholders indicates there is money for workers.** Find out more here: http://tinyurl.com/3e3f3wv6 or look in the March 2024 edition, p. 235-236.
- **Companies will use various different measures of profit but the main measures are explained here:**https://tinyurl.com/4z6jfbwc or look in the February 2024 edition, p.73-74.
- **Explainer: Why you can use group profits to back up pay demands:** https://tinyurl.com/yerzmsh8 or look in the June 2025 edition, p.83-85.
- **Unite Reps have been using stock market analyst research to reinforce the ability to pay argument.** Find out more here: https://tinyurl.com/4tnnvdtf or look in the March 2025 edition, p.73-74

Use Work Voice Pay's Financial Insider tool to generate a report about your employer's finances. Find out more here: https://tinyurl.com/yhk7y344.

Contact Unite's forensic accounts team for a bespoke analysis of your employer's finances.
forensic.accounts@unitetheunion.org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Workers
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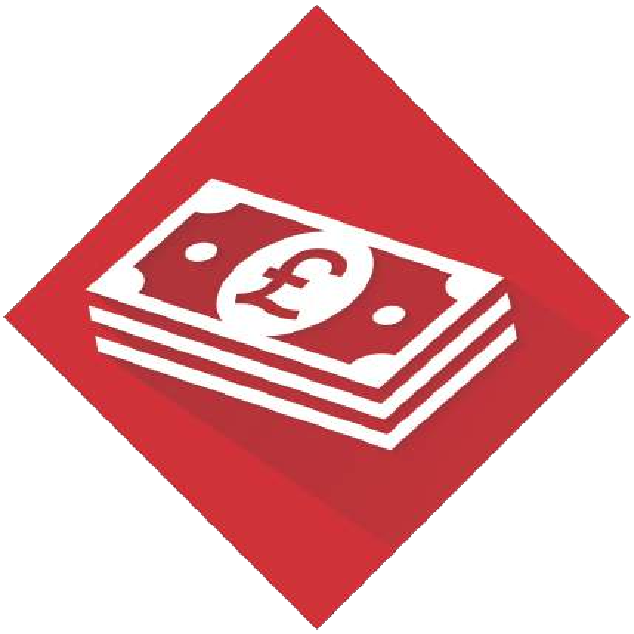
www.housingworkers.org.uk



SECTION FIVE

ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET

Facts and Figures

Workers earn less today in real terms than they did in 1997, and the divide between the rich and the rest of us is growing ever wider. We need to fix our broken economy right now and not allow growth targets to be used as an excuse for a smokescreen for fresh rounds of austerity.

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

5. What is happening to the economy and labour market?

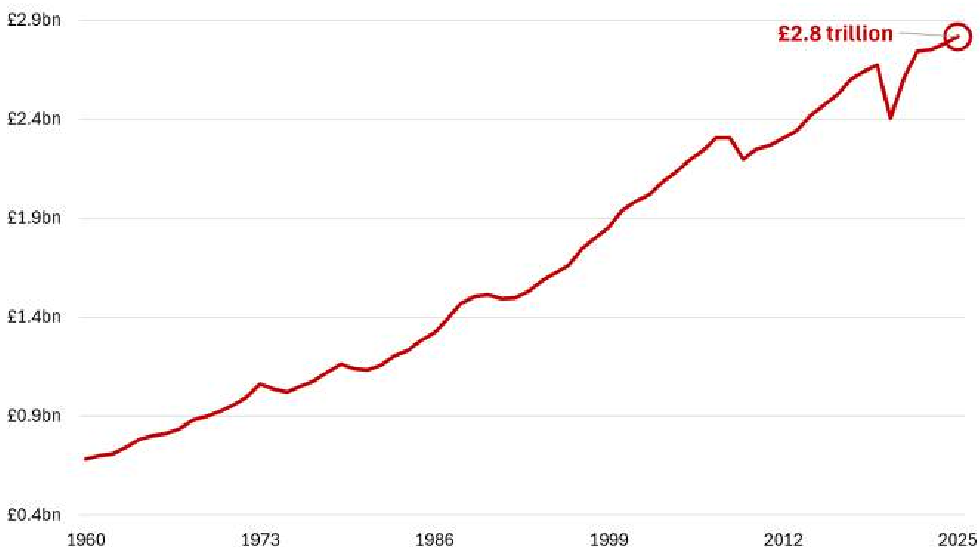
5.1 Despite bosses' negativity, the UK economy grew 0.4% in quarter two 2026, after growing 0.6% in the first quarter

UK GDP is currently worth £2.8 trillion, making it the fifth largest economy in the world.[4344]

The UK economy started the year well, 0.4% bigger in the second quarter of 2026, on top of 0.6% growth in Q1.[45] This was despite a gloomier picture painted by bosses about the state of the economy.

Taken together, that means the economy was about 1% larger by the end of June than it was at the end of 2025.

UK GDP since 1960



The latest quarterly growth was driven by an increase of 0.5% in services, with the biggest contribution coming from information & communications (up 2.7%), and professional & scientific output (up 1.7%). The construction sector expanded 0.3%, while production (including manufacturing and utilities) was flat overall.

The FT reported that real GDP per person was 1% higher than a year earlier. But this does not mean that workers are 1% better off. **GDP measures the size of the economy, not how the gains are shared or what is happening to wages and living standards**.

Facts and Figures

If the economy is growing, we should be asking: who is getting the benefit? **Only by organising in our sectors, standing together and fighting for our share can we improve our working and living conditions and win a fairer share of the wealth we create in the world's fifth-largest economy**.

5.1.1 The Treasury expects the UK economy to be the strongest among the G7 throughout this year, with 1.5% annual growth predicted until the end of the decade

The UK's GDP is incredibly high and there is more than enough money for good jobs, pay and conditions for workers.

Despite the size of the UK economy, read the news and you'll get a different impression. It's "flat-lining", growth is "weaker than expected", and so on. They aren't entirely wrong - GDP growth has been sluggish recently - in June, the economy only grew 0.3%.[46]

But the important thing is that the economy *is* getting bigger. The UK's growth in the first three months of 2026 was the fastest out of all G7 countries.[47] The same was true after half the year and the Treasury boasts that this will remain the case by the end of the year.[48]

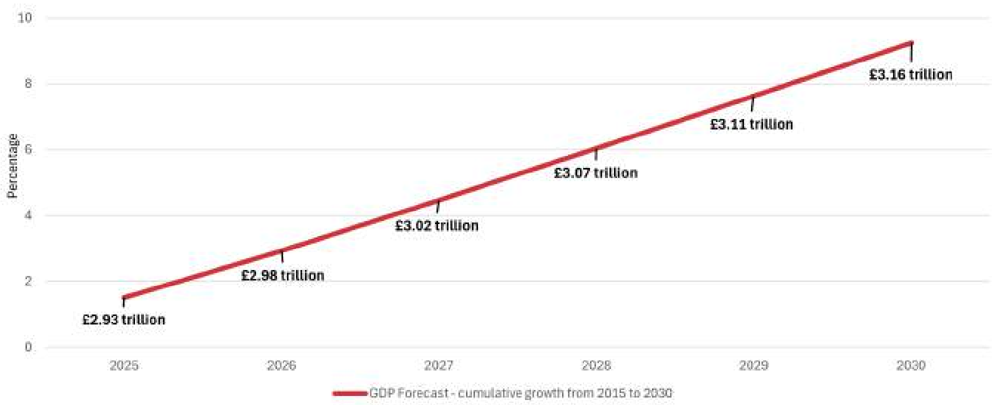
UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) versus other G7 countries

As Unite's General Secretary **Sharon Graham** has repeatedly argued, the economy won't grow without a sustained and strategic ramp-up of public investment by the Government.

Until then though, there is easily enough money to go around even with slow growth. According to the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), GDP is set to grow by an annual average of 1.5% up to 2030.[49]

Even if these forecasts are too optimistic **the UK economy is still very likely to be worth more than £3 trillion by the end of the decade**.

GDP Forecast - cumulative growth from 2015 to 2030[50]



The "low growth" narrative risks distracting from the real issue: Workers' share of the pie. **Growth alone doesn't raise living standards. Collective bargaining does.**

Collective bargaining raises wages and protects conditions. It stops employers hoarding the wealth, and ensures productivity gains lead to pay gains. This is exactly why **Unite emphasises stronger collective bargaining to convert economic growth into pay growth.**

> If bosses use "slow growth" or "falling monthly GDP" excuses, use Unite's **Work, Voice, Pay** tools to look at your employer's finances, or contact the forensic accounts team at forensic.accounts@unitetheunion.org to uncover the truth.

In the meantime, Unite is fighting on the political front to move the Government toward a serious industrial strategy and real investment to boost jobs, productivity, and GDP.

The slow growth of the UK economy is a direct result of years of weak public and industrial investment.

Facts and Figures

5.2 Forbes' rich list shows money available to pay more

There has never been a better time to be a billionaire. Thanks to AI's explosion, sizzling markets and favourable fiscal policies, a record 3,428 entrepreneurs, investors and heirs made this year's World Billionaires list.[51]

This is a direct quote from the latest Forbes rich list, a record of global billionaires. It shows how the billionaire class is becoming richer while many struggle to get by. Among these celebrations of obscene wealth and resource-starved public services, Unite has consistently called for wealth taxes.[52]

The time has come to make the rich pay their fair share. According to Forbes there are 400 more billionaires this year than in 2025 and their combined wealth amounts to £15.2 trillion.

That is a near 25% rise in billionaire wealth since last year. Elon Musk and the other 'tech bros' top the list.[53]

It can be hard to get our head around billions and trillions. A million seconds is just over 11 days. A billion seconds is nearly 32 years. A trillion seconds is 31,700 years.

These mind-blowing numbers are often generated by exploiting workers, the planet, monopolising information and interfering in democracy.

If all 85,000 at the World Cup opener in Mexico City equally shared half of Elon Musk's wealth, they would each get about £5 million. That would leave him with over £415 billion, keeping him top by a comfortable margin.

In the UK key billionaire bosses own Unite employers **Ineos** and **JCB**. Chemicals magnate Jim Ratcliffe (£13.9 billion) owns Ineos, as well as **Manchester United Football Club**.[54] He complains about immigration but lives in Switzerland. Surely it isn't for 'tax purposes'?!? Jim Ratcliffe could give each fan in the Azteca a life-changing £80,000 and still have £6.9 billion left over.

This would still give him annual interest of £208.1 million. That's £570,000 per day, equivalent to 15 years' pay for the UK average full-time worker. It's over 18 times what a newly qualified nurse earns annually. This is unearned wealth of the easiest kind. But it's hard to make sure the mega-rich pay their fair share.

Anthony Bamford (£7.8 billion), whose company **JCB** make machinery that helps build our infrastructure, does at least live in the UK.[55] Bamford, made a Lord for his services to industry, has repeatedly argued that there are excessive regulation, taxation and labour market interventions.

Modern tax systems collect income taxes efficiently from workers, and small businesses both through income/payroll tax and consumption taxes like VAT. While this brings in most government revenue it allows some of the largest fortunes to grow for decades paying relatively little tax.[56]

Jeff Bezos, who owns Amazon, will buy (with other billionaires) a third of **Liverpool Football Club**.[57] Football clubs, super-yachts, private jets and film companies are all playthings to the billionaires. As governments search for money to rebuild public services and invest in infrastructure, attention is once again turning to the taxation of extreme wealth. Few have done more to shape that debate than French economist **Gabriel Zucman**.

His central point isn't simply that billionaires are rich. It's that many pay remarkably low effective tax rates because wealth is held through companies, trusts, and unrealised capital gains rather than ordinary income. Many pay half the effective tax rates compared to workers and even highly paid executives. Taxing billionaires is difficult because they are incredibly mobile, and for every country they leave another is ready to welcome them.

The only solution as Zucman points out is a global taxation regime.[58] In the meantime, **Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham is calling for an emergency 1% wealth tax in the UK levied on fortunes above £4million. This would raise £25 billion per year for our public services**.[59]

Facts and Figures

5.3 Bite-sized Bargaining: Collective bargaining reduces inequality

Employers rely on our labour. Our members, through their union and collective bargaining, can shift the balance of power in the economy. **Whether it's winning above-inflation pay rises, improving conditions, or securing a fair share of public investment, this is about building real market power from the ground up.**

- **Studies show that greater union membership leads to money being distributed more evenly across society.** Find out more here: https://tinyurl.com/382n83mf or look in the March 2024 edition, p.210.
- **CMA studies show that without collective bargaining, concentrated labour markets reduce wages.**Find out more here: https://tinyurl.com/bddn5x88 or look in the March 2024 edition, p.211.
- **Union power extends beyond its membership, with collective agreements covering 40% of the workforce, and we can increase this by organising more.** Find out more here: tinyurl.com/3akae4w7 or look in the March 2024 edition, p.208-209.
- **Government's failure on the economy is no excuse for employers offering poor pay deals**. Find out more here: tinyurl.com/4pxcmt4p or look in the April 2024 edition, p.110-111.
- **Investment is a collective bargaining issue where worker focused investment can benefit employers and employees.** Find out more here: https://tinyurl.com/2wx2mtvj or look in December 2023 p.182.
- **UK companies lag behind peers in comparable countries with far lower investment levels.**Find out more here: https://tinyurl.com/4fpa8ytx or look in November 2023 p.144-145.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BAEM
RISC
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combines
BAEM
NISC
BAEM
RISC
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the UNION

SECTION SIX

WORKPLACE ISSUES

Facts and Figures

Equality, safety, and decent conditions aren't extras. They're the basics. When workers stand together, we win better pay, safer jobs, and real equality. That's what Unite is built for.

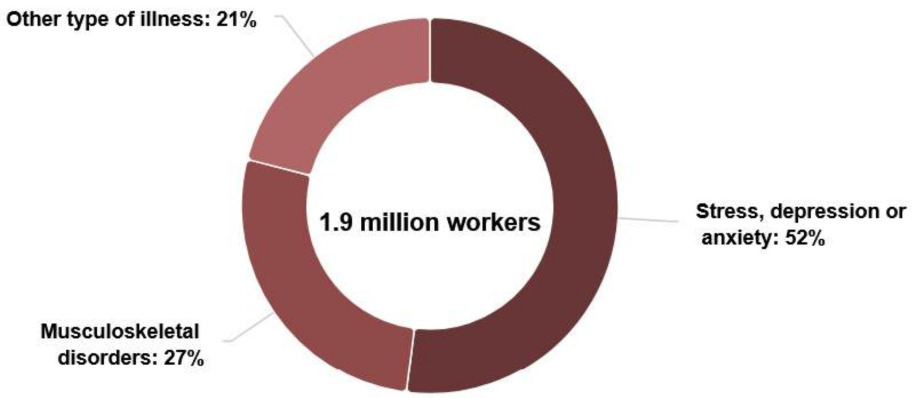
Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

6. What's happening in our workplaces?

6.1 The latest health & safety statistics show nearly two million workers suffering from work-related illness but their stats under-estimate the true human cost

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) has released its latest statistics on work-related health & safety in Britain for 2024-25. The headlines make for grim reading, as nearly two million working people suffer from a work-related illness.[60]

Work related ill health 2024 to 2025 in Britain[61]



These statistics make it clearer than ever - workers must stick together through collective bargaining and campaign for better conditions in the workplace.

The latest HSE statistics for Britain show:

- 964,000 workers suffer from work-related stress, depression, or anxiety
- 511,000 workers suffer from a work-related musculoskeletal disorder
- 124 workers were tragically killed in work-related accidents
- 40.1 million working days were lost due to either work-related illness or workplace injury
- The cost to the economy of these failures to protect the health & safety of our workforce is estimated at a humongous £22.9 billion

Workplace H&S statistics for Northern Ireland for 2024-25 aren't out yet but stats for 2023-24 reveal a similar story:[62]

- Over 300 workers tragically pass away each year from work-related illnesses
- 15,000 suffer from work-related stress, depression, or anxiety
- The cost to the economy of these workplace health & safety failures is a hefty £607 million

Even these figures for Britain and Northern Ireland are likely to be a vast underestimate of the true human cost. Hazards Magazine's Rory O'Neill puts the total of annual death's at 50,000, if you include things such as driving accidents on the way to work, but especially deaths from long-terms work exposure e.g. cardiovascular disease (CVD).[63]

Workers fighting for improved conditions in the workplace will always have the full backing of Unite.

The 37th National Hazards Conference 4-6 September 2026
Further information/ queries: please contact at email: hazconf@gmhazards.org.uk or phone: 0161 884 4229
Reservations – Now Open:
https://gmhazards.org.uk/index.php/ev/the-37th-national-hazards-conference-2026/

6.2 Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reforms must go beyond technical changes

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) requires employers and other responsible people in Britain to report certain serious workplace incidents to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) or the relevant enforcing authority.

Modernising RIDDOR means updating what must be reported, how incidents and diseases are defined, and how reporting works so the system better reflects current workplace health & safety risks.

Unite broadly supports the legislative and non-legislative changes proposed in the RIDDOR consultation. Clarifying definitions, expanding reportable occupational diseases, broadening diagnostic pathways, updating dangerous occurrences, and improving reporting are positive and proportionate steps towards modernising the system.

However, these reforms must go beyond technical changes. To have a meaningful impact, **RIDDOR must also address how workplace harm is experienced, understood, and reported**.

The reforms also don't include any changes to the separate RIDDOR (NI) 1997 legislation that covers Northern Ireland's health & safety.

RIDDOR currently covers, among other things: work-related deaths, serious injuries, such as specified fractures, certain occupational diseases, dangerous occurrences (serious incidents that could have caused harm), certain injuries to people who are not at work, depending on the circumstances.

At present, the system remains:

- Inconsistently applied due to ambiguity in key definitions
- Overly focused on acute events, with insufficient visibility of occupational ill health
- Heavily employer-driven, with limited integration of worker voice and experience
- Less effective at identifying harm experienced by vulnerable, isolated, or otherwise under-represented groups of workers

Addressing these issues is essential if RIDDOR is to function as an effective tool for prevention rather than a retrospective record of harm. A modernised RIDDOR framework should:

- Provide clear, practical, and consistently understood definitions
- Capture the full range of work-related harm, including long-latency disease and psychosocial risk
- Enable greater transparency and worker involvement in the reporting process
- Improve visibility of harm affecting vulnerable and under-represented workers
- Ensure that all workers, including domestic workers and those working in private households, are visible within health and safety reporting systems and afforded appropriate protection
- Support high-quality, actionable data that informs regulatory intervention and organisational learning
- Strengthen the focus on prevention rather than retrospective recording

Facts and Figures

Unite won't stand for workers being excluded from effective health & safety protection simply because they work in a private home.

All workers across all sectors must be included. Many experience isolation, fatigue, hazardous exposures and barriers to reporting concerns, and they must be visible within systems designed to prevent harm and promote safe and healthy work.

Ultimately, **the effectiveness of RIDDOR should be judged not only by the volume of reports submitted, but by its ability to reveal where harm is occurring, enable timely and targeted intervention, and drive continuous improvement in how risks are managed.**

By addressing both structural and cultural barriers to accurate reporting, the HSE can ensure that RIDDOR evolves into a framework that reflects the realities of modern work and supports the shared objective of preventing harm in all its forms.

We are calling for a modern framework to regulate against modern risks!

National Health & Safety Committee meeting:
September 2026, for further information please email:
healthandsafety@unitetheunion.org

6.3 With the law failing to protect workers during heat waves, workers must take matters into their own hands

With heat waves hitting the UK at the moment, temperatures are reaching record highs. But many workplaces haven't adapted to the heat, and the law provides very little protection for workers' whatsoever.

Unite is calling for a maximum working temperature of 30 degrees to be put in place for all workplaces - or 24 degrees for strenuous work - but we can't wait around for politicians to make their minds up.

As shown in our Know Your Rights guide for Reps last month, working in excessive heat can cause problems like heat stress, dehydration, fatigue and in severe cases heat stroke.

Bus drivers, for example, often have to work in cabs that exceed 40 degrees with no functioning air conditioning units.[64]

Unite has already pushed Sadiq Khan to call for the government to introduce a maximum working temperature across the board, but in the meantime workers' must stick together through collective bargaining.[65]

Bus drivers for **Arriva North London** are balloting on strike action over working conditions in hot weather. Unite has provided an official letter they can show their employer which cites the Employment Rights Act. You can access this letter by following the link here:https://www.unitetheunion.org/media/ubmpnsrk/25-extreme-heat-letter.pdf

See our Know Your Rights guide and learn what protections and rights you have in place when it comes to working in the heat. See Facts and Figures June 2026, p.74 or follow the link below for the full guide: https://tinyurl.com/23m6v3ra

6.4 Know Your Rights: Your right to be represented

Employers can't legally just discipline or dismiss workers without following a procedure, and if they try to do this, it will have important legal consequences. Workers also have the right to be accompanied to formal meetings by a trade union representative.[66]

Union members are more likely to get a good outcome than non-union members, and you have the back-up of the union's reps, officials, and solicitors, should it come to that.

So, the most important piece of advice here? Join your union!

Discipline at work

If your employer accuses you of misconduct or poor performance, they may start a disciplinary process.

Find out what procedure your employer is using to deal with your case. In most cases an employer is required by law to have a written disciplinary procedure. This should include the disciplinary rules, stages and timelines. If your employer doesn't have a written procedure, the ACAS Code of Practice is the minimum an employer should follow for handling these issues at work.[67]

You have the right to:

- Know the allegations against you
- See the evidence before the hearing
- Be accompanied at a disciplinary hearing by a trade union rep or colleague
- Appeal any disciplinary outcome

Possible negative outcomes range from receiving a warning to dismissal.

Facts and Figures

Key advice

- Read all the evidence carefully
- Stick to the strongest points in your defence
- Prepare notes, timelines and questions in advance - keep them simple and to the point
- Raise all relevant evidence during the process - don't hold anything back
- Be honest with your Unite rep so they can support you properly

Suspension

Suspension is normally treated as a "neutral act" while investigations take place. Follow any conditions set out in writing, including rules about workplace contact. You are always entitled to ask for suspension to be reviewed, and it should always be for as short a period as is necessary.

After the hearing

You should receive:

- Notes of the meeting (only sign if accurate and you are entitled to ask for them to be amended)
- A written outcome
- Information about your right to appeal (make sure you appeal within the deadline notified by your employer)

If dismissed, speak to Unite immediately about possible legal claims. Most unfair dismissal claims require a length of service and strict Tribunal deadlines apply. Talk to your union rep or officer about these deadlines to make sure you don't miss them.

Raising a grievance

A grievance is a formal complaint about treatment at work. As with disciplinaries, most employers are required to have a written procedure they should follow, and the ACAS Code of Practice makes up the minimum standard.

Where possible, you should try to resolve issues informally first. If this fails, submit a formal grievance under your employer's grievance procedure.

Facts and Figures

Your Grievance should:

- Clearly explain what happened
- Include dates, facts and witnesses
- Explain the impact on you
- State what outcome you want
- Be kept focused and concise

Grievance meetings

You have the right to be accompanied at formal grievance hearings by a union rep or colleague.

Prepare by:

- Writing a timeline of events
- Listing your main points – keeping them short and relevant
- Considering supporting witnesses
- Staying focused on the issues raised in your grievance
- Stressing what outcome you would like to resolve the grievance

If you are unhappy with the outcome, you normally have the right to appeal – check the time limits.

Performance management / capability

Performance management or capability process should support improvement – not be used to intimidate workers by setting standards which can never be achieved.

You may not have a legal right to representation in informal meetings, but local agreements often allow support from a Unite rep and you should discuss any measures with your rep if you have one.

Any improvement plan should be SMART:

Specific - Measurable - Achievable - Relevant -Time-based

Do not agree to targets that are unrealistic or outside of your control. Raise concerns immediately if:

- Training is needed
- Staffing/resources are inadequate
- Health or disability issues affect performance
  - Consider whether you need to request reasonable adjustments because of a disability

If you disagree, you can:

- Challenge unreasonable targets in writing
- Use appeal procedures where available
- Raise a grievance if the process is unfair or discriminatory

If capability procedures eventually lead to dismissal, you have the right to representation during that process, to appeal a dismissal and you may have legal claims, depending on the circumstances.

Redundancy dismissals

If your employer is going through redundancies, it is likely that the union is engaged in formal consultation. It is likely that you will receive information about the redundancies from your union rep and from the employer.

In redundancy situations, many employers decide who will be made redundant by applying criteria, for example, looking at quality of work, disciplinary records, length of service, absences, and other factors. You are entitled to know what these criteria are and to be consulted about the procedure for assessing each worker. You should be asked to meet with your employer to go through the criteria, and to allow you to challenge how they are being interpreted.

Consultation may happen both individually and collectively -by your union reps negotiating directly with your employer. You should discuss any meetings or concerns with your union rep.

A redundancy process must seek to minimise job losses, for example by exploring job-sharing or reducing hours. It should also include considering whether there are other job vacancies for you to apply for.

The level of redundancy payments are often negotiated by the union, and the minimum payment is determined by a statutory formula based upon age, length of service, and pay. You should receive a clear statement of your entitlement if you are selected for redundancy.

Facts and Figures

If you are selected for redundancy, you should be allowed the chance to appeal, when you might challenge how the criteria were applied, and any other issue you wish to raise impacting upon your personal case. If you are dismissed by reason of redundancy, you may be able to pursue a legal claim alleging that you have been unfairly dismissed. Your union can advise and support you.

Your union is there for you in these situations. In larger workplaces, with a recognised trade union, the employer must negotiate with the union. ACAS Guidance says you should be allowed to take a union rep (or a colleague) with you to any individual meeting and Unite has agreements with many employers that insist on your right to be accompanied by your rep. So, as always, **you are better off in Unite.**

Important legal points

Claims for unfair dismissal or discrimination have strict time limits: Usually **three months less one day**.

- Before lodging any Tribunal claim, you will need to comply with the ACAS Early Conciliation process, and you can discuss this with your rep
- Most unfair dismissal claims require **two years' service**, but this will come down to six months in January 2027
- If you are pursuing a different claim, such as discrimination, the standard time limit is **three months less one day**, and it is important to ensure that you take prompt advice

Discrimination claims must relate to one of the 'protected characteristics'. These are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Employers are also prohibited from discriminating against you for membership of, or activity in, a trade union. If you believe union activity, discrimination or unfair treatment is involved – contact Unite immediately.

And remember: If in doubt, talk it through with your Unite rep. And fighting your boss through statutory procedures or going through legal process on your own can be daunting, isolating and expensive.

6.5 The Government is finally ending exploitative zero-hours contracts and of course employers are complaining

The Government is finally working on plans to abolish exploitative zero hour contracts to give people security and predictability at work. But, as ever, employers are complaining that the changes will cost them too much - despite estimates suggesting that the benefits would far outweigh these costs.

The proposal is centred around three new rights:[68]

- **Right to guaranteed hours:** Employers will have to offer qualifying workers a guaranteed number of work hours.
- **Right to reasonable notice of shifts:** Employers will have to give workers reasonable notice in advance of shifts.
- **Right to payment for shifts cancelled, curtailed, or moved at short-notice:** Employers will be required to make payments to eligible workers if they cancel, move or reduce a shift at short notice.

The Government says these changes will end one-sided flexibility that gives bosses all the power and workers all the risk.

When workers face job insecurity and are vulnerable to shifts being cancelled at short-notice, they're more reluctant to spend and rightly choose to save any extra money to act as a safety net. This reduces the amount of money going round the economy, and everyone pays the price.

But with these new changes, workers will be able to better plan their finances and daily lives, or of course enjoy the benefits of a zero-hours contract should they wish to keep one.

In some of the most deprived areas, workers will save up to £600 in lost income from the hidden costs of insecure work that is millions of people's lived experienced.

Facts and Figures

These changes have clear benefits - not just for the worker's own well-being - but for the economy as a whole. The Trades Union Congress (TUC), for example, estimates that the economy will see a £10 billion boost, and the Government says the benefits will far outweigh the costs.[69]

But, predictably, employers are yet again complaining that the changes will cost too much.

The latest estimates from The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) have the cost to employers at between £350 million and £2.9 billion per year, depending on what threshold of hours the Government considers "low-hour contracts".[70]

Employers are scaremongering that the changes will worsen the youth employment crisis the country is facing - despite the crisis long predating the moves.[71]

The British Retail Consortium also complains that the Government should not "regulate flexible jobs out of existence".[72] But it fails to recognise that is not part of the Government's proposals. Job flexibility will still be on offer, but the worker will be able to decide how they use it.

As the DBT rightly put it: *"Reducing uncertainty over hours and pay will boost living standards for millions of workers, benefit businesses and support economic growth."*[73]

Regular readers of Facts & Figures will know that employers will complain about anything that threatens to increase their costs even slightly. But these reforms are about more than just boosting the economy. They're about giving workers the job security and quality of life that we all deserve.

Zero-Hours Contracts are an equality issue

TUC revealed that [74]

- Women are 34% more likely than men to be on exploitative zero-hours contracts.
- The average zero-hours contract working woman typically earns around £10/hour less (£11.80 an hour) than the average man not employed on a zero-hours contract (£21.20).
- Women tend to be employed in sectors characterised by high levels of insecurity and high prevalence of zero-hours contracts, such as social care and hospitality. For example, there are nearly twice as many women working as waiters compared to men – a profession where 33% of the workforce is on zero-hours contracts

Facts and Figures

- Three-quarters of care workers, the occupation with the second highest number of zero-hours contracts, are female.
- BME women and disabled women are among the groups most affected by exploitative zero-hours contracts:
  BME women are 103% more likely than white men to be on zero-hours contracts. Disabled women are 49% more likely than white men to be on zero-hours contracts.

		on ZHCs	%
	Male	506,488	2.9
	Female	641,371	3.9
Male	White	379,503	2.6
	BME	126,985	4.3
Female	White	488,504	3.6
	BME	152,867	5.4
Male	Equality Act Disabled	95,646	3.6
	Not Equality Act Disabled	404,936	2.8
Female	Equality Act Disabled	147,135	4.1
	Not Equality Act Disabled	477,471	3.7

Table 2: Number on zero-hours contracts, by protected characteristics, analysis by TUC, based on Q3 2024 of the Labour Force Survey

Facts and Figures

6.6 Bite-sized Bargaining: Research shows that women, the young, LGBT+ and disabled people face disproportionate discrimination in the workplace

See below for a compilation of Equalities articles in our previous Facts & Figures issues. **Unite represents all its members equally and will fight and defend against all forms of discrimination**

- **Under the Worker Protection Act 2023, employers have to take reasonable steps to stop their workers from being sexually harassed at work.** Find out more here: https://tinyurl.com/mj2apcj3 or look in the January 2025 edition, p.50-52.
- **Know your rights as a young worker or apprentice in the UK.** Find out more here: https://tinyurl.com/3apsvm2y or look in August 2025 edition, p.121-123.
- **The TUC reports over half of LGBT+ people experienced workplace bullying/harassment in the last five years.** Find out more here: https://tinyurl.com/yc8hz43j or look in the February 2025 edition, p.48-50.
- **Support for workers with caring responsibilities: session for reps** Find out more here: https://tinyurl.com/9vvjt9mv or look in the April 2026 edition, p.78.
- **Brits are working more and paying for it with their health** Find out more here: https://tinyurl.com/9vvjt9mv or look in the April 2026 edition, p.76.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SECTION SEVEN

BUILDING INDUSTRIAL POWER

Facts and Figures

We will look to join up local fights and maximise our power through coordination. Without coordination, how can you build solidarity? Without solidarity, how can you build an effective Union or deliver results at the workplace?

Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary

7. Where are we building our industrial power this month?

7.1 Thousands of Unite members are taking action in multiple sectors including Health, Auto, and Local Authorities

Nearly 4,000 Unite members are taking action to improve their pay, terms and conditions in the month ahead. Members across multiple sectors are on strike, including Passenger Transport, Health, and Community, Youth Workers and Not-for-Profit.

- Over 1,500 Unite members at **Arriva London North Limited** are taking strike action over the company's failure to ensure safe and comfortable working temperatures, and bullying of drivers and Unite stewards by I-bus controllers and management.
- Unite members at **Cwm Taf Health Board** are continuing strike action after a director received a £30,000 pay increase, all while hundreds of health workers are losing up to £9,000 per year.[75]
- **South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust** workers are striking for improvements in their grading and Ts&Cs.
- Unite members in the Blood Sciences Department at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital of **Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust** are on strike after the Trust's failure to correctly apply ERA provisions in the calculation of holiday pay.
- Over 300 workers at the **Institute of Cancer Research** performing roles including research, laboratory support, and site management are continuing strike action. While its CEO pockets £400k per year, nearly a quarter of workers on strike say they're falling behind on bills.[76]

Facts and Figures

The table below shows the workers across many sectors who are fighting for better pay, improved working conditions, and union recognition.

Employer	Region	Unite Sector	Dates
Birmingham City Council - Waste Management Refuse Collection	WM	LAs	Continuous
Job & Talent - Birmingham City Council agency workers	WM	LAs	Continuous
Institute of Cancer Research	LE	CYWNFP	Continuous
Alexander Dennis Limited	NEYH	AUTO	TBC
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (Blood Sciences Department at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital)	NW	HEALTH	17/08 - 21/08, 24/08 - 28/08, 31/08 - 04/09
CWM TAF MORGANNWG - South Wales NHS	WA	HEALTH	17/08 - 21/08, 24/08 - 28/08, 31/08 - 04/09, 07/09 - 11/09, 14/09 - 18/09, 21/09 - 25/09, 28/09 - 02/10, 05/10 - 09/10, 12/10 - 16/10, 19/10 - 23/10, 26/10- 30/10
SPS Technologies Limited	EM	AS	24/08 - Continuous
Great Yarmouth Services Limited	LE	LA	26/08 - 28/08
Balcas Timber Limited	NI	CONS	TBC
Manchester Oxford Street Hotel OpCo Limited The Refuge, Oxford Street, Manchester	NW	SI	TBC
South London and Maudsley Foundation Trust	LE	HEALTH	25/08 - 30/08 01/09 - 06/09
HSBC Global Services (UK) Limited	LE	F&L	22/08 - Continuous
NEU (All members)	LE	CYWNFP	09/09 - 10/09

Employer	Region	Unite Sector	Dates
			28/09 - 29/09
Arriva London North Limited	LE	PT	18/08 - 20/08 25/08 - 27/08 04/09, 07/09, 18/09, 21/09, 02/10, 05/10, 16/10, 19/10 All strikes dates include all shifts that begin before approx. 4am the following day.
Royal National Lifeboat Institution	SE	CYWNP	19/08, 25/08
Pilgrim’s Food Masters UK Ltd	NI	FDA	17/08 - 28/08
GMB Branch Secretaries	LE	CYWNP	21/08

Table 3: Unite workplace industrial action (as of 17 Aug 26)

7.2 Get involved: Unite's Industrial Combines are already raising standards in Finance, Civil Air Transport, and Health

Our Industrial Combines join Reps to coordinate action sectorally. They are also the most effective way to raise awareness and understanding among workers within a specific industry.

Unite's Finance Combine meets to coordinate pay claims

It meets to coordinate negotiations in the Banking and Insurance sector.

To get involved, please email Michelle.Smith@unitetheunion.org

Unite's Ground Services Combine meets about pay and conditions, including health issues

It is open to those working in ground handling. Reps can join future meetings to discuss pay and working conditions.

To get involved email: christine.vera@unitetheunion.org

Facts and Figures

The Ground Services Combine is also conducting an **online survey about health within the aviation industry**. To take part, click below.

https://surveys.unitetheunion.org/250274033423042

The Health Combine (England) helps NHS reps win

Reps meet ever second Wednesday of the month(and any Rep in the sector can join) to discuss, agree and develop campaigns across the NHS in England. It supports health workers to win on their key issues.

To get involved email: onay.kasab@unitetheunion.org

7.2.1 The Health Combine takes on reorganisations – don't let employers use consultation as a rubber stamp

The Health Combine has agreed its campaign priorities. Briefings will follow for reps on each one.

First up: **reorganisations.**

Reorganisations happen all the time in health. They come under different names, but the effect on members is always the same – instability and worry.

Too many employers think that once they've "consulted," they can just impose their plan. We're pushing back on that.

This means using every tool we've got – including industrial action and legal challenge, and sometimes both together.

When does the law require consultation?

If an employer wants to make 20 or more people redundant at one site, the law says they must consult reps. This comes from s188 of the 1992 Act.

The employer has to put the details in writing.

Consultation only counts if the employer goes in with an open mind – genuinely willing to change their plan, not just going through the motions.

Tip for Reps: compare the employer's original proposal with the final outcome.
If nothing changed, that's strong evidence the "consultation" was a sham – and that can win a protective award.

Where redundancies are on the table, the employer must discuss:

- Avoiding the dismissals – could this be done with no job losses?
- Reducing the numbers – are there real alternatives?
- Softening the impact – redeployment, financial protection, or voluntary redundancy terms.
- Watch out for: employers claiming a "trial" proves their plan is the right one. If they do this, we're entitled to see that evidence – and to challenge it.

Fire and rehire in disguise

Sometimes an employer says they're scrapping one role and creating a new one. Don't assume that's fine just because they've "consulted." This can amount to fire and rehire – and can be challenged, including as unfair dismissal. Health reps have already run strike campaigns on exactly this issue.

Key rule: employers shouldn't offer members a new role until grading and banding is fully sorted. Members can't make an informed choice on a role if the pay grade is still up in the air.

"Consultation can be challenged. Not through argument alone – through action. Reps keep winning the arguments against HR, only for them to be ignored. The question is how we make ourselves more effective – don't let employers get away with it, and be ready to organise." **Onay Kasab, National Health Officer**
Any questions contact onay.kasab@unitetheunion.org

7.3 The next National Industrial Sector Committees (NISCs) are in October but Regional Industrial Sector Committees (RISCs) will take place in August and September

Here are the next **National Industrial Sector Committees (NISCs)** meetings[77]:

NISCs	Date	Location
Graphical, Paper, Media & Information Technology	01-Oct	London
Community, Youth Workers & Not-for-Profit	01-Oct	Glasgow
Education	01-Oct	Bristol
Finance & Legal	01-Oct	Birmingham
Health	01-Oct	London
Food, Drink & Agricultural	1-2 Oct	Liverpool
Passenger	1-2 Oct	Wales
Energy & Utilities	1-2 Oct	Newcastle
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	1-2 Oct	TBD
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	02-Oct	London
Docks, Rail, Ferries & Waterways	02-Oct	Birmingham
Retired Members	08-Oct	Birmingham
LGBT+	12-Oct	Birmingham
Disabled	13-Oct	Birmingham
Women	14-Oct	Birmingham
Young Members	16-Oct	Birmingham
BAEM	23-Oct	Birmingham
Automotive	26-Oct	Sheffield
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	29-Oct	Sheffield
Civil Air Transport	29-Oct	London
Construction	29-Oct	TBD
Government, Defence, Prisons & Contractors	29-Oct	Cardiff
Local Authorities	29-30 Oct	Cardiff
Service Industries	TBD	TBD
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	TBD	TBD

7.4 Balloting Brief: Unite Reps across 27 workplaces are balloting their members in the coming months

Unite members are fighting for better jobs, pay and conditions with fair and decent pay rises being essential during this cost-of-living crisis.

Employer	Region	Closing
Hovis Limited	SW	20/08
Neo Next + Energy Resources UK Limited	SC	20/08
ABM Aviation UK Ltd	SC	20/08
Thomas Tunnock Ltd	SC	24/08
J.W Suckling Transport Ltd, Oxalis Logistics UK Ltd, Reynolds Logistics UK Ltd	National	26/08
Movianto UK Limited	LE	26/08
Veolia Water Outsourcing Limited	NI	27/08
Mitie Ltd	NW	27/08
Bilfinger UK Limited	NW	27/08
Sharpak Bridgwater Limited	SW	27/08
Clydeport Operations Limited	SC	27/08
Johnson Matthey Davy Technologies Limited	NW	02/09
Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHSFT	NW	02/09
London Borough of Haringey	LE	03/09
Cardiff Council	WA	03/09
East London Bus & Coach Company Ltd	LE	03/09
Forged Solutions Group Limited	EM	07/09
Wilson James	SE	07/09
Purflux Filtration Limited	WA	08/09
Arriva London North Limited (Re-ballot)	LE	08/09
Bristol City Council	National	10/09
Hampshire County Council	SE	15/09
CNOOC Petroleum Europe Limited	SC	15/09
DO & CO Event & Airline Catering Ltd	LE	16/09
Tower Hamlets GP Care Group CIC	LE	17/09

Table 4: Unite workplaces currently balloting for industrial action. Source: Unite Balloting Department (as of 14 August 2026)

8. Appendix 1: Significant Unite wins on pay and conditions

Major trade disputes won by Unite members over the last 12 months:

August 2026 wins

Sector	Company	Results
Government, Defence, Prisons, & Contractors	**Thales** in Govan and Reading	4.3%
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	**Marshall Aerospace** in Cambridge	5.75% increase on base pay and allowances was secured
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	**Navantia** in Methil	3.3% in the basic hourly wage
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	**GXO** in Bellshill	The one year pay deal consists of a 5% pay rise alongside all breaks being paid which is worth a further 5.5%.
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	**Brake Brothers** in Motherwell	Pay increases of up to 4.85% on the basic hourly wage.

July 2026 wins (RPI was 3.2%)

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	**ICTS** at **Aberdeen airport**	6.5% pay increase alongside an improved overtime rate.
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	**Oxalis Logistics UK Limited** Avonmouth's Tanker Driver members	For "12 shift" colleagues: 9% on the base rate backdated to 1 February 2026. For "14 shift" colleagues: 11.8% on the base rate backdated to 1 February 2026. For all colleagues: The higher of RPI or 3.5% on the base rate from 1 February 2027. The higher of RPI or 3% on the base rate from 1 February 2028. The

Sector	Company	Results
		higher of RPI or 2% on the base rate from 1 February 2029. The higher of RPI or 2% on the base rate from 1 February 2030.

June 2026 wins (RPI was 3%)

Sector	Company	Results
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	**Geberit Service** all members	4.25% backdated to 1 January 2026.
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	**Qioptiq Limited** at Saint Asaph	3.5% Base pay (all elements of pay) increase from April 2026. 4.5% Base pay (all elements of pay) increase from April 2027.
Passenger Transport	**Go North Westin** Bolton, Denton, Heywood and Wigan	Pay rises of between 23 and 56% over three years. The deal sees baseline pay for most drivers increase from £15.51 an hour to £18 backed dated to April 2026. From April 2027 pay will increase to 19.50 an hour, before rising to £21 an hour from 2028.
Civil Air Transport	**Edinburgh Airport Limited**	Two-year pay deal: - £1800 or 5.5% increase, whichever is greater, in 2026. - 4% or the RPI+0.5% effective of January 2027. There are improvements to shift, sickness and paternity pay.
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	**Amcor** in Northumberland	12.3% increase over three years (4.8% in the first year, 4% in the second, and 3.5% in the third)
Civil Air Transport	**Prestwick Airport**	from 5.1% up to 8% alongside an extra day annual leave for this year, and improvements to shift payments and pension contributions.

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	**ICTS** and **Menzies Aviation** at Glasgow airport	5% increase in basic pay and shift allowances will be backdated to 1 January with a one-off bank holiday included in 2026. In 2027, the workers will receive the RPI+1% in basic and shift pay alongside a boost to terms and conditions from 1st January.
Civil Air Transport	**Aberdeen International Airport**	4.2% pay deal in a one-year deal
Civil Air Transport	**ICTS** at Aberdeen International Airport	5% increase in basic pay and shift allowances will be backdated to 1 January with a one-off bank holiday included in 2026. In 2027, the workers will receive the RPI+1% in basic and shift pay alongside a boost to terms and conditions from 1st January.

May 2026 wins (RPI was 3.1%)

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	**ABM**at Stansted Airport	3.8% pay increase backdated to November 2025 plus 1% from May, and 3.5% next year
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	**Resideo**	8% pay increase this year with a further 5% in 2027
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	**Oxalis** at Grangemouth	4-year pay deal: - 4% rise in 2025 alongside an increase in the annual bonus to £1500, and improvements to shift rates. - 5.4% for 2026, - pay increases matching the inflation rate or 3%, whichever is the higher, for 2027 and 2028. In the last year of the deal, the employer

Sector	Company	Results
		pension contributions will also go up from six to eight per cent in addition to enhancements to sick pay and rest day allowances.
Finance & Legal	**Barclays**	An overall 4.6% increase and a 5.35% pay rise for around 20,000 lower-paid Barclays employees

April 2026 wins (RPI was 3.0%)

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	**GH Luton Ground Handling Services**	7.5% effective from 1 April
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	**National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry**	4.5% pay increase
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	**North Air**	4.2% pay rise + 5% increase to shift allowances and over-time rates
Construction	**Bear Scotland**	5.5% pay increase
Civil Air Transport	**Bidvest Noonan** at Aberdeen Airport	Up to 10.2% pay rise and union recognition agreement

March 2026 wins (RPI was 4.1%)

Sector	Company	Results
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	**Oregon timber**	4.8% pay deal, plus significant enhancements to conditions including the introduction of a company sick pay scheme and paid time off for hospital appointments alongside the restoration of a service-related bonus scheme.
Aerospace & Ship-building	**BAE Systems** at Warton and Samlesbury	6% pay deal, plus additional annual leave and a one-off payment
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	**Oxalis**	RPI+2% - which works out as 6.2 per cent as it was based on December 2025 RPI.

Facts and Figures

Sector	Company	Results
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	**Lochcarron Mill**	6.7% pay increase
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	**Bilfinger UK Limited**	5% increase in company's pension contribution
Civil Air Transport	**ICTS** at Glasgow airport	7% pay rise backdated to October + overtime rates being increased to time and half

February 2026 wins (RPI was 3.6%)

Sector	Company	Results
Docks, Rail, Ferries, & Waterways	**Orkney Ferries**	Two-year pay deal. In year one, a 5% pay increase and a non-consolidated £600 payment. In year two, a 3.5% pay increase or January 2026 RPI rate - whichever is higher.
Service Industries	**Sodexo Remote Sites Scotland Limited**	Two-year pay deal. In year one, a cost of living payment of up to £1,225, a 4% pay increase backdated to 1 April, and retention of the attendance bonus of up to £1,000. In year-two, a 4% pay increase and retention of the attendance bonus of up to £1,000.
Civil Air Transport	**ICTS at Glasgow airport**	9.8% increase for the baggage screeners last year backdated to October 2024
Food Drink & Agricultural	**Diageo**	15.5% in a three-year deal

January 2026 wins (RPI was 3.8%)

Sector	Company	Results
Civil Air Transport	**Heathrow cabin crew at SAS airline**	8% pay increase, overtime pay go to a maximum of £240, two additional days of annual leave, and an additional pay grade
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	**Glen Dimplex**	Between 6% to 8% pay increase

Sector	Company	Results
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	**Bosch Rexroth Limited**	4% pay increase backdated to 01/01/26.
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	**Menzies Distribution Solution Limited**	4.25% pay increase for 2025, and 3.75% for 2026
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	**Safran Nacelles Limited**	4.5% pay increase backdated to February 2025 in year one, and 3.3% in year two. New employee incentive scheme worth up to £750 introduced.
Civil Air Transport	**DHL Services Limited**	18-month pay deal including a 5.5% pay increase backdated to October 2025, a 25% increase to night shift premiums, and a £250 payment.
Passenger Transport	**First Glasgow**	5% pay increase

December 2025 wins (RPI was 4.2%)

Sector	Company	Results
Health	**GFM at Newham Centre for Mental Health**	Up to 15% pay rise, five days additional annual leave, improved full & half day sick pay. Plus a recognition agreement
Passenger Transport	**Arriva Leicestershire**	6.5%, one off non-consolidated payment of £1,000 and an improvement to their bank holiday working rate
Passenger Transport	**First Aberdeen**	5.3% for one year
Passenger Transport	**First Cymru**	5%

November 2025 wins (RPI was 3.8%)

Sector	Company	Results
Docks, Rail, Ferries & Waterways	**Immingham DB Cargo**	£11,723 in back pay for each worker
Road Transport Commercial, Warehousing & Logistics	**GXO Logistics**	4%, boost to overtime payments

Facts and Figures

Sector	Company	Results
Government, Defence, Prisons, & Contractors	**Amulet Security at Bank of England**	4%+4% over two years, additional day of annual leave
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	**Leonardo**	8% over two years (across five sites)

October 2025 wins (RPI was 4.3%)

Sector	Company	Results
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	**Altrad** on EnQuest's Magnus and Thistle Alpha platforms	4.5%
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	**Lufthansa Technik**	5%
Passenger Transport	**Ribble Motor Services**	Birkenhead - 10% Chorley and Preston - 6.2%
Passenger Transport	**First West of England**	8.6% over two years
Aerospace & Shipbuilding	**Collins Aerospace**	A fully consolidated 10.3% over a 28-month period
Civil Air Transport	**Bournemouth International Airport**	4.5% in year one, plus an additional £1/hour for workers classed as front of house backdated to 1 April. In year two, an additional pay rise of inflation plus 0.5%, or 3.1% (whichever is greater)

September 2025 wins (RPI was 4.5%)

Sector	Company	Results
Engineering, Manufacturing & Steel	**EPTA UK**	6% increase on all rates backdated to 1 April 2025, bonus scheme, improved holiday scheme, and improved maternity/paternity policy
Civil Air Transport	**OCS Group at Edinburgh Airport**	Two-year pay deal of 6.1% backdated to 1 January 2025 and a further 5%

Sector	Company	Results
		from 1 January 2026. Overtime rates increased by time and a half, as well as improved sick pay
Passenger Transport	**First Potteries**	9.8% pay deal over two years and £250 payment
Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles	**Alpla UK**	Two one-off payments of between £1,000 and £9,000 based on experience and one additional day holiday

9. Appendix 2: Unite recognition agreements

Over the last 12 months, Unite has secured many recognition agreements across the UK, with thousands more members now being covered by Unite in their workplace.

See below for a list of major recognition deals in the last year.

Date	Employer	Note
Aug-26	**North Air**	Tanker drivers employed by North Air who supply fuel to airlines operating at Prestwick airport will be represented by Unite in negotiations over enhancing jobs, pay and conditions through collective bargaining.
Jul-26	**Milk & More**	Statutory recognition at three depots, restoring collective bargaining for workers less than a year after the company terminated its national voluntary recognition agreement.
Jul-26	**North Tyneside Citizens Advice Bureau**	Unite now has formal recognition with the workforce electing two workplace representatives and two health and safety reps.
Jun-26	**OCS** at **British Airways HQ**	The recognition agreement provides sole bargaining for Unite over pay, terms and conditions, including working hours and annual leave.
May-26	**Seagate Technologies**	Third workforce recognition agreement with Seagate, covering administration staff in Northern Ireland.
May-26	**St John Ambulance & Rescue Service**	Union recognition agreement for 56 workers in Guernsey.
May-26	**EnQuest**	Union recognition agreement in the North Sea.
May-26	**Harrods**	Union recognition agreement for engineering, maintenance staff, and members of fire, health and safety.

Date	Employer	Note
Apr-26	**Apache**	Union recognition agreement in the offshore sector in the North Sea.
Mar-26	**Bidvest Noonan** workers at **Aberdeen Airport**	Union recognition agreement and double digit pay deal covering cleaners.
Feb-26	**Glasgow Community Food Network**	Union recognition for Glasgow food workers.
Jan-26	**Trescal**	Recognition agreement for Trescal employees based in Derby Riverside Court.
Dec-25	**Grosvenor Facilities Management (GFM)**	Union recognition and wage win (up to 15% and improvements to annual leave and sick pay).
Nov-25	**Amulet Security** at the Bank of England	Union recognition and enhanced pay.
Oct-25	**Bear Scotland**	Union recognition and wage win (up to 7.25% and improvements to standby payments).
Oct 25	**Norwich Eaton Park Café**	Voluntary recognition agreement marking the first ever hospitality venue in the city to sign an agreement recognising its workers' chosen union.
Sep 25	**Gipson Supported Independent Living**	Recognition agreement for everyone from housing support workers and counsellors to advice and employment workers.

10. Appendix 3: Other unions' major pay increases

The following table details private sector pay deals of 5%+ won by other unions over the last year, taken from the **Labour Research Department.** They may include multi-year deals.

Name	Date	Result (%)
G4S (Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service)	Nov-25	6.2
G4S (PSNI)	Nov-25	6
Sofina Foods (Cookstown)	Jan-26	5.5
Wrightlink	Jan-26	5.2
Grand Central Rail	Jan-26	5
Serco Northlink Ferries	Oct-25	5
Koura	Jan-26	5
Unipart Rail Doncaster	Apr-26	5

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