Change remains the focus, AGM told

The watch word for the next few years remains CHANGE, branch secretary Chris Hanrahan told members at the Leicestershire Police UNISON annual general meeting (AGM).

In his report to the AGM, which was held on Monday 29 February, Chris gave updates on the following subjects:

**Strategic Alliance**
The purpose of the alliance is to have a single operating model for all three forces, pooling resources where possible. The overarching theme will be savings.

Not a lot of definite detail about the alliance is currently known. However, it seems all employers wish to have the same employment model in each force, therefore the branch officials are meeting with UNISON colleagues in Nottingham and Northamptonshire to discuss a unified approach to dealing with the alliance.

“With savings there will, of course, be threats to jobs and how services are delivered in the future. The amalgamation of the three control rooms has already been muted and we were successful in seeing off G4S just before Christmas,” Chris told members.

“This does not mean that the threat has gone away, we could still see them involved in the future and we will need to mount a strong campaign of opposition.”

**PCC elections**
The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections will take place on 5 May. Sir Clive Loader, the current PCC, is not seeking re-election.

To date, there are four candidates and we have sent questionnaires to all of them and their replies are published on Pages 4 - 6.

“We want to encourage you to get involved in the elections - only staff with politically restricted posts are prevented from supporting candidates. So if you hear anything to the contrary let us know,” says Chris.

**Local matters**
We were happy to support the Force in its 180-year anniversary, celebrating nearly two centuries of service to the public of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

The voluntary redundancy register has long been an issue for the branch as it is our belief that the register should be open permanently on a no prejudice basis. Staff who have applied recently should all have received confirmation, or not, of their applications.

**Terms and conditions**
For the past two years, discussions have been ongoing with the Police Staff Council concerning the review of pay and reward. This has centred around premium pay, with the employers seeking to make considerable savings. The Trade Union side has been keen to ensure that any change has as little impact as possible on the income of our members.

No agreement has been made at present and the Trade Union side intends to do a pre-consultation exercise to gauge the views of members on whatever proposal is put forward.

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Change remains the focus, AGM told

Continued from Page 1

Members will have the final say on the proposal by virtue of a ballot.

PSD

2015 saw a marked increase in the number of police staff as the subject of criminal investigations for both conduct inside and outside of work. There was also an increase in issues relating to the use of social media.

The branch has welcomed the new head of PSD, Superintendent Martyn Ball.

Job evaluation

Work continues on the introduction of the Hay Scheme. A number of staff have been trained to carry out the evaluations and are working their way through the jobs.

Once the evaluations have been completed, the employer will make a decision as to the pay scales and how they fit onto the evaluations.

“This is something that we have no knowledge of at this time but we will seek to ensure that the decision is a fair one,” Chris explains in his AGM report.

“A number of members will be affected by the outcomes, some will gain, some will stay the same and others will lose out. We will, of course, prioritise those who lose out in any appeals.”

The branch secretary and chair have also been trained to carry out the evaluations to enable them to have an understanding of the scheme so they can assist members in the appeals process.

“We have been approached to be part of the appeals panel but have yet to make a decision,” says Chris.

Trade Union Bill

The issue is not just about the right to strike; it is more far reaching than that, the AGM was told.

“The bill is not only a threat to democracy in the UK, but a threat to the trade union movement itself. The whole purpose of the bill is to eliminate resistance to the Government attacks on the rights of workers, particularly those in public services,” Chris reports.

“The bill also seeks to prevent members paying subscriptions through payroll for no valid reason, and, to remove trade union funding of the Labour Party by putting in overly bureaucratic process and restriction.”

Health and safety

Chris told the AGM that health and safety often takes a back seat at the times of austerity but the branch, and members themselves, should not allow this to happen.

Members are being reminded to report injuries or near miss incidents so improvements can be made. To make improvements, the branch needs evidence.

Equalities

The branch has welcomed the fact that the Force was ranked at 17 in the Stonewall 100 Top Employers.

“UNISON has equalities at the heart of its principles and we strive to ensure these values are put into Force policies,” Chris points out.

“We are always looking for people to assist us with equalities and to get involved with UNISON’s self-organisation which includes LGBT, women, black members, disabled and young members.”

Reviews

The chancellor has said austerity will continue and further cuts will be introduced into the public sector, the AGM was reminded.

“It is not clear what this will mean for the police,” Chris says, “Despite his announcement in November 2015 the cuts do continue in policing and forces still have to make savings and reduce the workforce. As a consequence of this, reviews will continue and jobs will no doubt be under threat.”

Regional issues

The structure of the region will become a little more convoluted with the advent of the Strategic Alliance. It may make it more difficult to achieve collaboration with Lincolnshire and Derbyshire, the secretary warned members.

FREE courses for UNISON members

A range of free courses are available for Leicestershire Police UNISON members.

And for 2016/17 a number of new courses have been added to the programme.

The courses are available to all members and are designed to ensure they have access to quality training to help improve their skills.

The new courses for this year are:

- Mental Health Awareness and Wellbeing
- Deaf Awareness and Introduction to British Sign Language
- Pre-Retirement Workshops
- IT Skills - Beginner and Intermediate
- Other courses include Women’s Assertiveness, Build Your Confidence, Interview Skills and Managing Stress.

“We are aware that a number of our members have taken advantage of these free courses with great success,” says Chris Hanrahan, branch secretary at the Leicestershire Police branch of UNISON.

“But we would also like to encourage other members to see what courses are on offer since they cover such a wide range of subjects and therefore there should be something to appeal to most people.”

Angela Gerrard, UNISON regional education organiser, said: “UNISON is committed to providing free learning opportunities for its members across the East Midlands.

“We recognise the difficulties many of our members are experiencing in the workplace with the constant worry of re-organisation and change and the importance of ensuring that all our members are able to access quality training provision to ensure their skills are up-to-date and relevant.”

All the courses are free of charge and are delivered by experienced adult education providers.

For further information about any of the courses or to see what else is available contact Angela Gerrard on 0115 847 5454 or email a.gerrard@unison.co.uk or you can contact the UNISON office at Force Headquarters.

Follow UNISON Leicestershire Police on Facebook and Twitter
Pay and conditions – talks ongoing

Negotiations are still ongoing to reform pay and conditions of police staff in England and Wales.

Since July 2014, the Police Staff Council (PSC), the national negotiation body which agrees the annual pay rise and terms and conditions, has been discussing potential changes to police staff shift pay and a whole range of your other terms and conditions.

It is proposed that all the current shift allowances, unsocial hours allowance, night work and weekend working allowances in the PSC Handbook are replaced with a simpler system. This new system would split every 24-hour period into:

- standard hours: to be paid at plain time rate
- non-standard hours: to be paid at a premium rate.

While the exact details are still being worked on it is currently proposed that 7am – 7pm Monday – Friday are standard hours. All other hours are non-standard. Rates of pay have yet to be determined.

The unions have made it clear to the employers that they will consult members on any final offer if they can recommend it.

A number of forces have been asked to cost a number of different premium hour rates for evening and weekend work to see what impact it would have on the earnings of police staff shift workers.

As well as negotiating a possible new pay system, the unions have also been in talks with the employers about changes to other terms and conditions which might accompany changes to shift pay and over-time. These potential changes include:

- giving police staff three months’ notice of their start and finish times
- alterations to published working patterns to arise only from the exigencies of duty, unless they are made at the request of a member of staff, or by collective agreement
- proper definition of ‘exigencies of duty’ in line with the police officer agreement
- repeating annual events, such as Hallowe’en and New Year’s Eve, to not qualify as exigencies of duty
- a fairer threshold for police staff to qualify for temporary higher responsibility payments
- over-time rates to be replaced with payment for extra hours at the relevant ‘standard’/’non-standard’ rate
- all hours worked on a Bank Holiday, as part of a published working pattern, to be credited for TOIL, in addition to the relevant pay for the day
- all staff, not just shift workers, who agree voluntarily to work on a day not originally scheduled to get extra hours and/or a day off in lieu for working the day (depending on the period of notice for the change)
- changing the entitlement to a ‘day off in lieu’ to time off in lieu equal to the number of hours worked to ensure that staff are not short-changed
- increasing the minimum annual leave entitlement for police staff to 23 days on appointment and 28 days after five years’ service
- harmonising police staff and police officer maternity pay to give police staff an extra three months’ paid maternity leave
- giving police staff the same entitlement to a £50 overnight allowance as police officers for detached duty or mutual aid work
- replacement of all existing car mileage allowances with the 45p/mile HMRC fixed profit mileage rate
- abolition of essential car user allowance, and
- an increase in the compensation for staff who suffer death or disablement as a result of an assault at work.

If the PSC can recommend a final package all members will be invited to vote on whether they accept it.

Members will have the final say by being balloted on the proposals. The proposals will only be introduced if a majority of union members vote to accept them.

Trade Union Bill – what changes will it bring?

A new bill which could be passed by the Government threatens the basic right to strike.

Under the Trade Union Bill, employers will be able to break strikes by bringing in agency workers to cover for strikers and there are fears this could have big safety implications, lead to worse public services, and will undermine the right to strike.

But the bill also outlines other reform. It proposes restrictions on peaceful picketing and protests and also puts forward plans for picket supervisors to have to give their names to the police and to carry a letter of approval from their union.

The bill is currently at the report stage and a further line by line examination was due to be heard in the House of Lords on 16 March.

Trade unions are concerned that, if the bill passes, the right to strike will be under threat and this will result in worse pay and conditions for workers.

Under the proposals in the bill, for ‘important public services’ 50 per cent of members must turn out to vote and 40 per cent of the entire membership must vote in favour (that amounts to 80 per cent of those voting, on a 50 per cent turn-out).

While the Government argues these thresholds are aimed at boosting democracy in the workplace, trade unions are concerned that they will essentially stop people from being able to strike.

Also, all public sector employers will have to publish information on the cost of time off for union representatives, plus a breakdown of what facility time is used for – collective bargaining, representing members in grievances or disciplinary action or running training programmes.

And public sector employers won’t be able to offer the option of paying for union membership directly through salaries. Concerns over these aspects include:

- deductions at payroll are a common way that employers help their employees manage their money – often childcare, travel, bike or computer payments are made this way. It’s not clear why union membership fees should be singled out
- these moves will reduce unions’ ability to represent their members and resolve disputes before they escalate
- individual public sector employers should have the freedom to decide how they manage employment relations
- the changes add more red tape for unions, whose time and money would be best spent serving members.

For more information on the bill go to xxxx
The Police and Crime Commissioner elections are being held on 5 May 2016.

We asked the known Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland candidates to respond to the same series of questions. Their details and their responses are printed below. Oliver Healey, English Democrats, had not responded at the time of going to print.

Neil Bannister
Conservative candidate

Personal background: Aged 57, Neil and his wife, Kathryn, have been married for 33 years and have two daughters, aged 27 and 25. Kathryn works as a senior radiographer at Leicester Royal Infirmary.


He has been a parish councillor for 14 years in Broughton Astley and a district councillor since 2011 years representing the Dunton Ward at Harborough District Council.

Willy Bach
Labour Party candidate

Personal background: Married to Caroline, Lord Bach has three adult children and has lived in Leicester and Leicestershire for more than 40 years with all his children having been educated at state schools in the city and county.

Career history: A criminal law barrister, he has been practising in Leicester for 25 years and is Head of Chambers. He was a Leicester City councillor for 11 years and Harborough District councillor for four years. He was also a Lutterworth Town councillor and Mayor of Lutterworth. Lord Bach was a Government minister between 1999 and 2010 in the Ministry of Justice, and other departments. He is currently Shadow Legal Aid minister and formerly Shadow Attorney General sitting in the Shadow Cabinet.

Other interests: He has been a season ticket holder at Leicester City Football Club for 40 years and is a member of Leicestershire County Cricket Club. He used to play cricket and football for local teams.

David Sprason
UK Independence Party candidate

Personal background: Married with three grown-up children, David has lived in Leicestershire for 45 years and was born in South Wigston. He was employed as an industrial sales engineer before becoming self-employed. He has served as a county councillor for 14 years. His interests include travel, sport, films and reading.

Sarah Hill
Liberal Democrats candidate

Personal background: Married, no children, one dog! Sarah has had a varied working life, starting in sales and marketing at BT; later working for a Hinckley based hotel group, as well as for a number of years for a management consultancy based in Norway and London. More recently she has had her own business, as well as working for a company that recycled school furniture, which was part of a charity.

Her interests include computers and old cars. She is an active member of Lions, a school governor and helps run Arts Fresco in Market Harborough.

1. ARE YOU A MEMBER OF ANY UNIONS?

WB: Although I was self-employed, I am, and have been a member of a trade union for more than 40 years. I joined a Leicester branch of the TGWU and am now a member of UNITE. I am also a long standing member of the Co-operative Party.  
DS: None  
SH: None

2. WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE LEICESTERSHIRE PCC?

WB: I believe that given my experience, both locally and nationally, I can contribute to the important job of holding the police to account on behalf of the citizens of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR). I believe in the police’s role both to protect people from crime and also to help maintain the vibrant and diverse communities we enjoy in LLR. I share Sir Robert Peel’s view that “The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police actions”. The police are a vital public service, and must remain so.

DS: It would be an honour to represent Leicestershire and Rutland residents in...
a truly independent way.

SH: I want to see the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner cut down to size, to free up hundreds of thousands of pounds for policing, to get communities more involved in policing and raise the profile of the role. Too few people even realise the job exists; which is scary given the amount of potential power put into one person’s hands.

3. WHAT PARTICULAR SKILLS/QUALITIES WILL YOU BRING TO THE ROLE?

NB: I have worked closely with the police for many years in my work with the CPS. I understand the police processes and policies. I can see the police’s strengths and where improvements need to be made. In addition, I have worked closely with victims of crime and have developed an empathy for their difficulties.

I have had to deal with significant public sector budgets and appreciate the value of working in close partnership with a number of other agencies.

WB: I believe I have the experience from both my legal and political careers to be an effective and innovative Police and Crime Commissioner (PPC). Having worked in the courts for a quarter of a century alongside the police, I am confident that I have the background to work closely with the Leicestershire Force in good times and bad.

The width of my experience has enabled me to effectively manage colleagues with strongly held opinions and diverse experiences. My style of leadership is to bring together people from different backgrounds channelling their experience and enthusiasm to deliver for the public.

DS: 14 years as an elected member on Leicestershire County Council.

SH: I’ve been a district and county councillor and was vice chair of the old Police Authority for a while. This, allied with working for international businesses in the past, gave me good strategic thinking. Plus I’ve got a scientific PhD, with means I’m good at understanding statistics and evidence in decision-making. This needs to be allied with a feel for what the public want, as public perception plays a big part in their attitude and co-operation.

4. TURN-OUT FOR THE FIRST PCC ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER 2012 WAS VERY LOW. FOUR YEARS ON, DO YOU THINK:

a. “TURN-OUT WILL BE HIGHER THIS YEAR?

NB: Yes, turn-out will be higher. The current PCC, Sir Clive Loader, has done an excellent job in establishing this new role but also making it relevant. A very tiny minority of people knew about the old Police Authority or who chaired it.

A significant majority of people now know about the role and the importance of it. All the mainstream political parties understand the importance of the role and supporters are being encouraged to bring out the vote. It also will help the election for PCC will take place in May as opposed to a cold, dark November day.

WB: Yes, but I still believe the turn-out will be too low because, in spite of great efforts, there is still a considerable lack of knowledge of what the PCC does.

DS: Residents are now more aware of the PCC than when first elected so turn-out will be higher.

SH: I doubt it, the role hasn’t exactly caught the public imagination. Many people I talk to don’t even know it exists.


NB: Yes, there is and again credit goes to Sir Clive for publicising the role and explaining its importance and relevance. Sir Clive has been excellent in reaching out to the communities holding regular meetings and getting his messages across in the media. There is a clear understanding that the PCC has to be accountable to the residents that elect him or her as PCC the need to be visible is a big part of the job.

WB: At the time of the first elections there was just about no understanding of the role of PCCs. I hope there is a little more understanding today – and, if I am elected, I see it as an important part of my role to increase dramatically that position.

SH: I don’t think so, for most people they just don’t care. If they are victims of crime they want the police to turn up and catch who did it. Other than that the vast majority have no reason to understand what a PCC does. They just want visible local policing.

c. “THERE NEEDS TO BE A REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ROLE?

NB: Yes, I agree the role should always be under review to ascertain how much more effective the PCC can be. There is already work in place as to whether the role of the PCC should be responsible for the Fire Authority. Given the “crime” part of the PCC’s responsibilities, how much more effective can the PCC be if he took the lead in other areas within the criminal justice system to support the agencies helping to prevent re-offending? As mentioned above, the remit could bring in areas relating to housing, skills and employment.

WB: Yes, because of the comments I have made above.

SH: Yes, see answers to (a) and (b). I don’t see much “added value” from the role, which is why spending almost £1 million on it seems an awful lot given the cuts to services elsewhere.

5. WHAT WILL BE YOUR PRIORITIES IN YOUR FIRST YEAR IN OFFICE?

NB: It will be a busy year! My Police and Crime Plan will be settled and agreed, the budget for 2017/18 will be completed, I will hold a number of meetings in the community to gain views on the effectiveness of policing in their areas, have regular meetings with the trade unions, begin work on whether it is desirable to bring the Fire Authority within the remit of the PCC, task the police to improve on stop and search and the handling of complaints and misconduct issues. I also want to begin a review on how the police Force recruits from our diverse communities with a view to improving on our performance.

WB: I have three key priorities:

(a) Given the enormous cuts that the Coalition Government and the present Tory Government imposed on the police, I will protect, to the best of my ability, neighbourhood and community

Continued on Page 6
Continued from Page 5

6. UNISON IS COMMITTED TO WELL RESOURCED, PUBLICLY ACCOUNTABLE, IN-HOUSE POLICE SERVICES. WILL YOU SUPPORT US AS WE OPPOSE PRIVATISATION AND OUTSOURCING?

NB: I am fully committed to a well resourced and publicly accountable police service. The PCC will have a duty to the taxpayer to ensure the best possible service delivery while ensuring value for money. If I am persuaded that a support service can be delivered better and for less money I would be failing in that duty if I were not to consider it. I am aware that a number of private contracts are already in place at Leicestershire Police.

WB: I share UNISON’s commitment to well resourced, publicly accountable, in-house police services. Yes, to the second part of the question.

DS: As far as possible, but I am unable to give any guarantees.

SH: The honest answer is it depends. I do think that a well run in-house department is likely to beat the private sector on cost and quality, because of the ethos and lack of need for a profit of in house. Looking at various forces’ attempts to outsource to G4S show the truth in this.

7. HOW WOULD YOU SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE DEDICATION, CONTRIBUTION AND SKILLS OF POLICE STAFF?

NB: I will be visible and accessible to police staff. I will meet regularly with UNISON and consult fully with UNISON on the work that I will be doing as PCC. Most of all I will be very public with my thanks for the dedication and skills of the police staff.

WB: Through being supportive at all times, but being prepared to be a critical friend when I think it is necessary. I believe that I understand, and respect, the boundaries between the role of the PCC and the role of the Chief Constable.

DS: Supporting all as equal partners in delivering an excellent service.

SH: By being visible and supportive of staff; be at the various awards ceremonies that take place, or sitting in on their work to understand the realities of their working life.

8. WILL YOU VALUE AND PROTECT PCSOs?

NB: PCSOs are an extremely valuable part of our police service. They have a vital role to play in protecting our communities. I am pleased to note that the current PCC is planning on strengthening the numbers. I will take this forward and do my best to protect and add to the number of PCSOs wherever possible within the confines of the police budget.

WB: Yes.

DS: As far as possible, but Government funding cuts could impact on this.

SH: Yes, they could be given more powers, which the public often think they already have.

9. WILL YOU GIVE A COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT ONGOING NATIONAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR POLICE STAFF AT THE POLICE STAFF COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES?

NB: As PCC, I will take pay and related issues very seriously both at national and local levels. I appreciate negotiations can be complex but with consultation and engagement difficulties can be overcome. I understand the current PCC has a very good relationship with UNISON and I intend to build on that once elected.

WB: Yes.

DS: Impossible to say at this stage.

SH: I’m not sure how much PCCs get involved or can influence such things. At the moment I can see no reason to change collective bargaining, but who knows what may happen in the longer term?

10. HOW WOULD YOU WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH POLICE STAFF TRADE UNIONS?

NB: By maintaining the current regular meetings between the PCC and the trade unions. I will fully support and engage with the Joint Negotiating Consultative Committee. I am committed to fostering good working relationships with the trade unions and this means being accessible not just at meeting times but at all times whenever the need arises to meet, clarify and consult.

WB: By regular meetings. However, more importantly, my door will always be open.

DS: To engage with the unions on all decisions affecting all who work in the service.

SH: Get them involved in shaping the future of the Force. Much of the change up until now has had to be top down. It’s time to work collaboratively to make further changes. This means staff re-designing their own work and thinking in new ways. Unions have a vital role to play in this, bringing their members in to make the Force the best it can be. There are all the usual meetings and rest of it, but I’m talking about collaboration to make things more efficient and the money go further.
New Force policy will help staff victims of domestic abuse

A new policy has been written which outlines how the Force will deal with domestic abuse cases involving employees.

This follows a claim put in by Leicestershire Police UNISON which has praised Sergeant Gail Simpson for her work on the policy.

The Employee Welfare Procedure for Leicestershire Police employees affected by Domestic Abuse is there to ensure that both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse are aware of the support that is available within the Force and provide guidance to line managers when supporting staff who are affected by domestic abuse.

It outlines how Leicestershire Police, as a police force, has a statutory obligation to record incidents of domestic abuse, safeguard victims and carry out a proportionate investigation. However, as an employer, the organisation has a responsibility, and a desire, to create a safe and effective workplace environment and ensure the welfare of its employees.

The document states that no employee is compelled to disclose that they are affected by domestic abuse and that self-referral to external voluntary sector support services is an option. However, the Force can offer extensive support through line management and the specialist Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit.

It states: “Therefore, anyone affected by domestic abuse is strongly encouraged to disclose it, to access the support that can help them to regain control of their situation and for the safety of themselves, children, other family and colleagues in the workplace.”

“There may also be circumstances where appropriate help and support can prevent the possibility of action being taken due to a decline in performance, poor timekeeping or absence.”

It continues: “Anyone who discloses being affected by domestic abuse can be assured that they will be dealt with in a sensitive, compassionate and professional manner.”

NICHE records will be restricted so that they are not viewable by all, but only to those who need to access them for the purposes of investigation or risk management.

If there are issues involving child protection or protection of a vulnerable adult, then the Force has a duty to act accordingly and this may involve sharing information with colleagues within the Force and/or partner agencies.

Discussions will be held with the employee as to why information is being shared, information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis and it will be done with the employee’s agreement as far as possible.

Where domestic abuse in a same sex relationship is disclosed, due regard will be paid to the double disclosure of confidential information, particularly where the sexuality of the individual may not be known at work.

The document goes on to say: “The Force recognises that it may be very difficult for an individual to disclose being affected by domestic abuse under any circumstances, but it may be particularly difficult to disclose it to someone they know or work with.

“Anyone who discloses they are, or have been, affected by domestic abuse can be assured they will be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity without prejudice. Leicestershire Police recognises that it has a role to play in encouraging and supporting employees to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds.

“The Force also recognises that developing a life free from abuse is a process, not an event, and will provide ongoing support for employees who disclose abuse, bearing in mind that some time may be needed to decide what to do and many different options may be tried during this process.”

For the full policy, visit the Force intranet.

EVOLENT FUND

illness.

In addition, police officers who are members would receive payments towards the use of Flint House Rehabilitation Centre following illness, injury or surgery. Travel costs incurred to Flint House would also be paid.

The Benevolent Fund makes payment to the Police Dependents Trust which helps members, or their dependants, who are killed or become incapacitated in the line of duty.

And it makes payment to the Gurney Fund for police orphans, which provides money for children of members who become incapacitated or die.

“The Benevolent Fund provides a lot for a relatively small subscription fee. Even if you don’t need it yourself, you could help a colleague in need by supporting the Benevolent Fund,” says Chris Hanrahan, secretary of Leicestershire Police UNISON.

“I would urge everyone to join because, both in and out of the police service, you never know what’s round the corner and this not only supports members, it also allows members to support their colleagues.”

One subscriber had no idea how becoming a member could help him:

“Due to a change in personal circumstances, I found myself struggling financially. After speaking with colleagues I was encouraged to apply to the Benevolent Fund for a grant.

“So I did apply and spoke to Dom Allen from the Benevolent Fund who was very understanding, helpful and quick to turn the application around. I was informed of the outcome within three hours of that application, and I was extremely grateful.

“I would like to thank Dom and the Benevolent Fund for their sensitive and discreet approach to helping me out of a very tight situation.”

Another said: “What the fund did for my family during a very difficult time was truly wonderful.”

Information about the Benevolent Fund and its benefits can be obtained from Dominique Allen, the fund administrator, or from fund representatives based on area/departments. Details can also be found on the Benevolent Fund page via the internal website.

Another support fund, the Death Benefit Scheme, pays on the death of a subscribing member. The deductions are £15 per death and this is deducted in the month following the death. The scheme is insured for more than seven deaths in a calendar year and the cost of the insurance depends on the premium divided by the members at the time; this year the cost was £1.75.
Prizes including £10,000 in cash, family holidays and health and dental plans are up for grabs in The Big UNISON Prize Draw.

For a chance to win, all you need to do is ensure UNISON has your up-to-date contact details.

The prizes are:

1 x £10,000 CASH
Provided by UNISONProtect.com – life insurance with money back if you don’t claim.

3 x family holidays worth up to £2,000
Provided by UIA Mutual – UNISON’s home, travel and pet insurance partner.

20 x health and dental plans worth up to £300
Provided by UNISON Health & Dental Plans – get 100 per cent money back at the dentists, opticians and more.

Support your union and let your union support you

With police staffs jobs on the line as the Force tries to deal with its funding shortfall and a pay rise of just one per cent on the table, the Leicestershire Police branch of UNISON is busier than ever but is also encouraging all members of staff to join the union.

“Now is the time for anyone who is not a member to join up. By everyone working together we are stronger,” says Chris Hanrahan, branch secretary.

“We are also calling on more people to become union representatives so that they can offer support to colleagues and help us collect and spread information among the membership.”

Please fill out the form below if you can spare a little time to help UNISON, and other staff. Or sign up online by visiting www.joinunison.org.uk

FAQs

Entering the prize draw

Can I join UNISON and enter?
Yes! If you join UNISON in March and April 2016 you will have a chance to enter the prize draw. We will contact you by email once your membership is confirmed with instructions on how to enter.

I don’t know my membership number or National Insurance number, can I enter?
We do need to have some way of linking your details to your member record before you enter the prize draw. Your National Insurance number is often the easiest to find, as you’d find it on your payslip. If you are having lots of trouble getting the information needed to enter, call UNISONDirect on 0800 0 857 857 and they should be able to help find your member record.

UNISON already has my email address and mobile number, can I enter?
Yes, you can. Just visit the prize draw entry form on the UNISON website (unison.org.uk) and verify the email address and mobile number provided, and agree to the terms and conditions of the prize draw.

Member benefits:

UNISON membership gives you essential cover. They full range of benefits includes:

- advice, support and help when you need it at work
- a helpline that is open until midnight during the week and 4pm on Saturdays
- legal help for you at work and your family at home, subject to certain criteria
- financial assistance and debt advice in times of need
- compensation for accidents and injuries at work
- a range of exclusive member discounts that can save you and your family money when you are shopping, buying insurance or going on holiday
- education and training advice and courses, leading to vocational and professional qualifications.