

# National Executive Council Elections 2023: Nomination requests

## Alejandra NAVARRO

Sefton LG Branch  
Membership No. 21002105

Standing in the  
National Young Members'  
Female seat



## Sam HARRIS

Nottingham City Branch  
Membership No. 21706459

Standing in the  
National Young Members'  
General seat



Dear Branch Secretary,

We are writing to ask your branch to nominate us for the following seats for the NEC elections:

- **Alejandra Navarro, National Young Members Female Seat**
- **Sam Harris, National Young Members General Seat**

All UNISON members face the threat of a spiralling cost-of-living crisis and now we face further austerity from a Tory Government which is determined to make us pay for the economic crisis. These elections are hugely important in determining the way that UNISON tackles these issues. We are standing in solidarity with the Time for Real Change majority on the current NEC. We fully support the democratisation of the union and making the union's strategy and organisation fit the needs of the current situation facing our members.

### **Experience and background**

#### **Alejandra Navarro: about me**

I am a **young, low paid worker in the care sector** who understands the challenges young people face in our society but also in our own union and I want to be part of a high profile, collective and powerful union that makes a real difference to all workers but particularly young members.

I am already the Young Members Officer for my local Branch and the **Young Members Regional delegate to my North West Regional Council**, so I am trying to show leadership on behalf of

young members and getting active, just as, in my experience, thousands of other young members in our union want to get active, but who feel ignored.

I want to be active on the NEC and promise to raise and campaign on the following three key issues for young members:

- **Young people are the hardest hit by this cost-of-living crisis so UNISON has to reach out to us at every level asking us what will make a difference.**
- **Young people are ready and committed to being part of a collective that makes a difference - we want to be part of campaigns and action not endless committee cycles and inactivity.**
- **Young people will make a real difference as we understand poverty, we understand injustice and we understand discrimination - we need to feel valued and empowered and that is what I will fight for if elected to the NEC.**

## **Sam Harris: about me**

As a young person, working in the charity sector, I have seen first-hand the direct impacts of this government's actions on our communities across this country.

In response to the attacks on workers, we have seen trade unions take the fight to the government and demand real terms pay rises for workers everywhere.

As a Young Labour candidate for the upcoming Local Elections, I will be hitting the doors **showing people why the Labour & Trade Union Movement has the answers to bring about real change for workers.**

The reason I have decided to stand for UNISON's Young Members' NEC seat is because, as a union, we must be at the forefront of the fight for better pay and terms for workers.

As an NEC Young Member I will:

- **Prioritise the issues facing young workers across our union.**
- **Coordinate with other young member representatives from other unions.**
- **Ensure we remain a fighting, member-led union, one ready to defend members' interests.**
- **Make certain the National Young Members Forum has all the tools it needs to develop up a new generation of trade unionists.**

From the Labour Party to UNISON we must take a stand, united in our defence of workers and in our plan to build power in our workplaces.

## **What we stand for**

**UNISON must be a member-led union** – We believe this means that elected members should run our union, not selected full-time officials. We want to work with all our paid officials, but it is members and their elected representatives that should be the real leaders. **We need to be an organising, not a servicing, union** – we cannot solve all of our members' problems on a one-by-one basis. Members will always need individual support, but the focus should be on collective action. We need to increase UNISON's collective and organising activities and to empower our members. **Every large city and county** should have a proud UNISON resource centre in the high street: we need to make it as easy as possible for members to find us. We must present UNISON as a vibrant, democratic, fighting and organising union.

**The pay crisis** – UNISON must end the scourge of low pay. For too long UNISON has failed to adequately fight poverty pay, pay freezes and below-inflation deals. We cannot simply approach pay negotiations the way that UNISON's leadership has done in the past. Hikes in the price of fuel, heating and food are seriously impacting our members. No UNISON member should have to

rely on food banks. We need fully funded and staffed public services. Members should not pay the cost of Tory austerity. To achieve this, we want **more cooperative relationships with other unions**. We should work together whenever we can.

**We must support members needing to take industrial action.** Strike pay rates have increased substantially, but there is more to do. UNISON only has a national strike fund of £21 million. This must change if we are to show employers and government we mean business. Also, we need to ensure that every region supports branches who need to carry out effective strike action.

**UNISON's finances** – We need full disclosure and transparency as to how members' money is spent. We must make best use of the surpluses made nationally and locally during the pandemic. Also, we must review UNISON's large property estate and where appropriate, free up resources for organising. We must continue to bring the UNISON Staff Pension scheme deficit down to manageable levels. Members' subs should not be required to keep the scheme afloat. **We should insure all outsourced UNISON services wherever feasible**, based on our trade union values and our aspirations for our union. **We need a green agenda within UNISON**, including an audit of UNISON company cars and the proliferation of meetings requiring members and staff to travel long distances.

**We believe that UNISON should play a positive but challenging role in the Labour Party.** UNISON resources and influence should be used to promote the removal of anti-trade union laws, public delivery of public services and a green new deal that tackles the climate emergency through the creation of green, well-paid, union jobs.

**Equalities in UNISON** are central to our vision. There have been some major developments over the last two years. But there is much more to do to make equality a reality through our entire union, not just its NEC but at all tiers of our union, including within its staffing.

**Legal advice** – We must review UNISON's main legal services contract and particularly the difficulties branch secretaries have accessing timely employment law advice.

**We need a robust and effective review of staffing** to ensure that the great work our staff do is as efficient and meaningful to members as it can be. **We believe UNISON members should decide whether our most senior roles should be elected.**

**We must end once and for all the punitive culture of disciplinary action.** Disciplinary investigations into members take far too long, with no regard for welfare. We must continue to look at these processes from top to bottom and end their use to resolve political differences.

We are confident that the ideas we support will build on the progress made over the last two years. We urge all UNISON members to vote for Time for Real Change candidates in these NEC elections and, if you are able, to help us campaign for real change in UNISON.

Yours sincerely

**Alejandra Navarro**  
**Sam Harris**

**PS** You might be interested to attend an event with speakers from the current NEC seeking re-election, including our UNISON President Andrea Egan, alongside some who are standing for the first time. The meeting will be chaired by long-time UNISON member John McDonnell MP and also speaking will be the fantastic MPs Nadia Whittome and food poverty campaigner Ian Byrne. Find out what the NEC has achieved so far since June 2021, and what we want to do going forward. Our campaign is committed to transparency: you're invited to the meeting so do please come along and find out for yourself how we can change and build our union for the better.

**Tuesday 17 January 2023, 6.30-7.30pm**

More details and to register for a Zoom link: <https://nec2023-change-the-union.eventbrite.co.uk>