

Gordon McKay for Unison NEC

Health Service Group

Male seat



Dear Colleague

I am writing to ask if your branch will consider nominating me for **the Health Service Group Male seat** in the forthcoming UNISON National Executive Council elections. I have had the privilege of being elected to the NEC by our members for the last fourteen years. In 2019 I did not think I could ever have been prouder than being elected President of UNISON but I have realised my proudest achievement is being an NHS worker. While I am a nurse it is every member of our health team that has held our country together. Our NHS and our union is about all our members. My priorities will be pay, jobs, our NHS and our union.

Defending our Members

In this election I am standing on a clear platform of defending and building the NHS and campaigning for our members. I will not only oppose cuts in funding and service delivery in the NHS but will argue for increased funding to allow our members to do the jobs they are rightly proud of. Health Service workers should not be paying for Tory greed and incompetence. Job cuts, pay cuts, attacks on our pensions are not acceptable and must be opposed by our union.

As someone who has worked in the NHS as a mental health nurse for over thirty years I want our union to campaign on three major issues over the next two years. Our members deserve a substantial and significant pay increase. Our members were there when they were needed and deserve to be treated fairly. This Government has attacked health workers and their pay for thirteen years but when a crisis happened they clapped for the NHS and as soon as they thought the crisis was over they called for cuts in NHS pay. The hypocrisy of this Government is staggering and as a union we cannot let them get away with it. Branches have my 100% commitment and guarantee to campaign, work for, and speak up for a significant and substantial pay rise for all health workers. Scottish health branches have shown an incredible lead in winning the biggest pay rise in the UK health service and the biggest one year pay deal in the public sector. What Scottish branches achieved this year made a huge difference to our hard pressed members but we know it wasn't a victory, it only bought us time and there will be a major battle on pay this coming year. Pay is rightly a devolved matter to Scotland but I want branches to know all of my efforts will be towards a pay deal that is at least in line with inflation for 2023/24 and starts to get back the money stolen from our members. At a UK level any offer less than that would result in me recommending our members support industrial action, but as always it will be our members who decide. Where our members have voted for industrial action it has been an honour to stand with them on picket lines. I offer 100% support to our members in dispute defending their jobs, their pay and our NHS.

Our second major campaign in Scotland must be to defend our members against those governments and employers who have brought our NHS and our members to exhaustion in the last year. Employers putting out calls for staff on leave to come into work, ambulances queued up outside hospitals, patients not being seen, mortality increasing and staff calling on Health Boards to declare health emergencies have been caused by under staffing and under investment. I will be campaigning for increased investment, more jobs, an end to zero-hour contracts and proper jobs rather than relying on agencies.

The third issue I give my promise on is health workers are never let down again on their health and safety. We remember how staff were put at risk during Covid and it must never happen again. Employers must provide more support for whose mental health is impacted on due to work pressures.

I want to say thank you to our members who work in care homes for everything they have done for those they care for, I promise you I will ensure our union works for your pay, your jobs and your safety. The work done by our members in the Ambulance service sometimes is forgotten and I am proud to give my thanks for your commitment and my support in ensuring a fair deal for you.

Our members deserve a leadership that listens and obeys the rules of the union. For the first time ever, our National Conference passed a motion of no confidence in our ruling body. When our Conference did that, I believed the only honourable thing was for the NEC to stand down and submit to new elections and I moved a motion to that effect, and I was shocked when our NEC refused to support it. Branches have my 100% guarantee that I believe our members are the heart and soul of our union and I will only ever act within the rules of our union and for our members benefit.

Defending Public Services

For thirteen years we have seen an unprecedented attack on the NHS by a Tory Government, in a deliberate attempt to starve the NHS of funding to support their plan to privatise our most valued public service. Their plan has failed because of the continuing dedication NHS staff have shown in ensuring delivery of a world class service, and by UNISON members who every day have defended and campaigned for the NHS. My pledge to UNISON members is that I will continue to campaign and fight for an NHS that is properly funded, that is wholly owned by the public and is staffed by public service workers being paid a decent wage on fair national terms and conditions of employment.

Defending Our Branches and our Union

The other commitment I give is to put our branches at the heart of our union. Our branches need to be properly resourced to represent our members. This certainly means financial resources but above all it means time and support. As an activist I see every day our stewards who are loyal to our union and to our members worn down by unremitting workloads. As a union we need to examine what support can be put in place to assist with casework and facility time. There is no doubt some branches also need more money to fund campaigns in defence of our members and our union. I will work tirelessly on recruitment to our union. There are going to be battles ahead and to win them we must have a united campaigning union and we need every member we can recruit to ensure our voice is so loud it cannot be ignored. As a Union we also need to ensure that we have proper funding for our core services at Scottish level that means a strong legal team, funded regional support and first-class welfare services for our members that need them.

I believe I have spoken up for UNISON members in Scotland and I ask you to give me a chance to continue that. In the other Health Service seats in this election I ask you consider nominating Michelle England and Pat Heron for the Female Seats and James Anthony for the General Seat who I believe will put our Union and our Members first.

Yours fraternally

Gordon McKay

Seat – Health Service Group – Male

Membership Number – 659558. **Nomination Period – Opens January 9th and nominations must be submitted via the CES online portal by 5 pm on February 13th. The processes are to be found on the UNISON website.**