

# A CELEBRATION OF 2016

## UNISON's charity makes a positive difference to thousands of members' lives

### Our mission:

- To be an invaluable resource within UNISON
- To provide quality advice, information and assistance
- Offer financial support to those members who are suffering unexpected hardship
- To deliver services which are flexible, relevant and responsive

"No matter how tough things are, knowing that there are people out there who care and your union is willing to help gives you hope for the future."

"You were there for me when no-one else wanted to know or help. I'm so proud to be a member of **UNISON**."

"What can I say, I cried. **There for You** have made so much of a difference, words alone cannot say."

## OUR HELP IS HOLISTIC AND TAILORED TO THE NEEDS OF THE INDIVIDUAL

### Every working day we helped improve the lives of members through:

- Rapid response to requests for help
- Help and support which is compassionate, discreet, bespoke and personal.
- Quality of life grants
- One-off grants to help with unanticipated and unaffordable expenditure
- Help in securing state benefits and assistance from other charities
- Wellbeing and respite grants
- Face to face support through our branch welfare officer contacts

“When I was at my lowest, you were there for me.”

“If it hadn’t been for your calmness and patience over the phone I could not have faced my deepening financial problems. Thank you for looking after members when we are in a ‘dark place’ in our lives.”

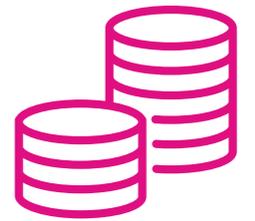
“I am disabled and live alone. The financial assistance you gave me made it possible to lead a more independent life. The motorised wheelchair means that I no longer feel isolated and I can now look forward to getting out and about.”

“I was given so much moral and emotional support that I could finally see a light at the end of the tunnel.”

# FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



**£511,382** given in financial support



An increase of  
**13.5%**  
on previous year

**25888**  
total number of  
hardship grants paid

**94%**  
of those we helped or supported  
were of working age

**50%+**  
of low income working households  
feel their financial situation has  
worsened in the last year

**336**  
Landlord possession claims and  
268 possession orders  
are made every day

**15**  
properties are repossessed  
every day or one every  
1 hour 34 minutes

Source: Turn 2 Us

Source: The Money Charity

Source: The Money Charity

# **PRACTICAL SUPPORT THAT HELPS MEMBERS GET BACK ON THEIR FEET**

**400+**

grants for kitchen appliances, household furniture, baby equipment and property repairs

**100%**

of all emergency crisis grants considered within 48 hours

**£34,215**

helped give members a break, purchase disability equipment or pay towards prescription and hospital travel

**£113,210**

supported members whose income had reduced unexpectedly with a grant for food and living costs

**£155,431**

given in help towards priority commitments and debt



**JUST A SMALL AMOUNT  
CAN MAKE A SIGNIFICANT  
DIFFERENCE ESPECIALLY  
TO THOSE WHO ARE  
'JUST ABOUT MANAGING'**



**725**

children returned to school  
in the correct uniform

Small grant  
applications represent  
**51%**  
of all requests for  
financial support

**583**

homes received help through the  
Winter Fuel grants programme

**Nearly 800,000**

pupils go to school in poorly fitting uniforms because their parents cannot afford to keep buying new items, while a further 400,000 have been sent home for wearing "incorrect" clothes

**2/5ths**

of families have cut back on  
food or skipped meals because  
of their energy bills

## LOSING A LOVED ONE AND COPING WITH BEREAVEMENT

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### 86% increase in grants towards funeral costs.

Losing a loved one can be devastating. Added to that the worry of how you'll pay for a funeral just adds to the distress.

- Funeral costs have risen by **92%** in the **past 10 years.** – source *The Cost of Dying – Sunlife Annual Report*
- **41%** of people have made no provision for their funeral – source *Quaker Social Action*
- The average **DWP** grant to successful claimants is about **a third** of the cost of an average funeral – source *Quaker Social Action*



“I have never had an occasion to ask the union for anything in the past, even though I have been a **UNISON** member since leaving school and I am so grateful to you for the grant towards my late husband's funeral costs.”

“Just to say a big thank you for all you did to help my family. The difference your financial support has made is tremendous and we will be forever grateful that **UNISON** was ‘there for us’ when no-one else seemed to care.”

## ADVICE & SUPPORT

### 5,000

5,000 members contacted **There for You** for advice and guidance

### Over 1500

Over 1500 of those who called were referred for additional assessment as well as being signposted to other specialist agencies

## Debt advice increased by 12%

In partnership with **Payplan** we provided debt advice to 509 members a 12% increase on the previous year

"I am truly appreciative of your help and support. Please pass on my thanks and praise to the volunteers who give their time to help make others' lives easier."



"Sincere thanks for the generous support you have given me during a very difficult time in my life. Your case worker has been incredibly helpful, compassionate and kind. Her highly professional approach helped me to feel well supported and genuinely cared for. She went the extra mile for me and helped to improve my self esteem. She is an amazing ambassador for Unison and I cannot commend her highly enough."



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## INVESTING IN OUR VOLUNTEERS

**Over 900 volunteers provide vital practical and emotional support to families having well trained and knowledgeable volunteers is crucial to our success.**

- 296 undertook training
- New 'Introduction to Benefits' training module piloted

**Our national seminar focussed on:**

- Fuel, food and funeral poverty
- Raising awareness
- Introduction to Benefits
- Mental health in the workplace

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"It was probably the most useful course I've been on that will directly benefit my members."

"I had no idea what to expect but really feel I know enough now to help make a good case when putting forward an application."

"Now I've had the training, I can't wait to get started. It's unbelievable how much we can do to help our members."

## MEMBER'S STORY



## DENNISE

**Dennise, a health care assistant, and mum to a 4-year old came to us for help following the death of her partner Paul who was also a member.**

At 41, Paul had retired 18 months before having been diagnosed with a brain tumour. At that time, There for You had helped with a grant of £1,200 to clear council tax arrears and fuel bills as well as a grant for food costs. Dennise wasn't eligible for certain DWP benefits as she and Paul weren't married. Whilst the small savings from Paul's retirement lump sum paid part of the funeral costs there was still a shortfall. We were able to relieve her of this worry by paying the balance outstanding and, a further grant to help with living costs whilst a reappraisal of her tax credits was undertaken.



**The average**  
cost of a basic funeral in the UK is £4,104



Source: Money Advice Service

## MEMBER'S STORY



### JENNY

**Jenny, a mum of 3 school aged children, had suffered years of domestic abuse involving violence and excessive controlling behaviour.**

She came to us having moved with the children to live at her parents where they all shared one bedroom. Whilst the local authority had offered re-housing, this was in an area far away from her family support network and the children would have to move schools.

**There for You** helped firstly by contacting the local authority to support her request for more suitable housing. When it became clear that there was nothing suitable, we helped with a grant to cover one months' deposit and rent on private rented accommodation to help minimise any disruption to the children. As she was also still joint owner of the marital home which was to be sold, she was also signposted to appropriate advice as the safety of the family, child maintenance and other financial matters would need to be dealt with.



**55%**

of people in poverty are in a working family – a record high

Source: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

**More than 70%**

of private renters in the poorest fifth spend at least a third of their income on housing, compared with under 50% in the social rented sector and 28% for those who own their own homes

Source: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

# A SNAPSHOT

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## Fundraising

£87,535

Donations

£95,832

Lottery income

## Raising awareness

In 2016 we focussed on increasing take up of the small grants programme and the placement of adverts in different **UNISON** publications.



“The help we are able to give really does make a difference to people’s lives and I’m really fortunate to be in a situation where I can be part of that.”

– *branch welfare officer/volunteer*

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# JUST SOME OF OUR PLANS FOR 2017

- Introduce new branch welfare officer guidelines
- New training course ‘Introduction to Benefits’
- Lottery re-launch
- Charity challenge
- Produce recourse material to support members around bereavement
- New promotional materials to raise awareness
- Increase the number of members helped



**“There for You** helped me with my financial problems and I can now sleep at night. I will be forever grateful.”

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**WE COULDN'T  
ACHIEVE  
ANYTHING  
WITHOUT YOU**

**We should all be very proud  
of what we do and the difference  
we make together.**

**We gratefully acknowledge the support given by:**

- **UNISON**
- **UNISON** branch network
- Our partners, including **Payplan** and **UNISON** membership services providers

**The hard work of our:**

- Staff
- Branch welfare officers
- Regional welfare committees and others who volunteer their time

**We support all UNISON members when times are tough and with the problems they may have.**

**And, if we can't help, then we'll always try and find someone who can.**

## ALL IT WOULD TAKE

**£40**

is all it costs to help a member on low income with their winter fuel bill

**£104**

would help someone who is off sick and on reduced income pay for prescriptions for a whole year

**£120**

would help ensure three children went to school in the correct uniform

**£120**

would mean someone with caring responsibilities can enjoy some time for themselves

**£150**

would mean that someone in need of emergency help can put food on the table or feed the electricity or gas meter

**£200**

would provide a washing machine and reduce the cost of someone having to use a local laundry

**£400**

would provide a break for someone suffering a life-threatening illness

**£800**

would ensure someone fleeing domestic violence is provided with essential household items needed to establish a new home

**£1500**

would mean that someone isn't forced to borrow from a high interest lender to pay for their loved one's funeral

**UNISON There for You**

We support our members when life gets tough to overcome financial & emotional hardship

**Consider donating at:**

[www.justgiving.com/unisonwelfare](http://www.justgiving.com/unisonwelfare)