

Eleanor Smith, UNISON President

Eleanor Smith, a theatre nurse from Birmingham, is president of UNISON, the UK's largest public sector union.

She is the first black woman to be elected to this position in UNISON - it is the highest position a member can hold within the union.

Eleanor was born and raised in Birmingham and went to Mount Pleasant comprehensive school (now Highgate school). She began her nurse training at the age of 19 at the city's George Elliott Hospital, and now works at Birmingham Women's Hospital.

Eleanor became a NUPE shop steward in 1990 and nine years later was voted in as branch secretary. Following NUPE's merger into UNISON she became the union's assistant convenor for the West Midlands region, a post she held from 2003 - 2004. In 2004 she was elected onto the National Executive Council, UNISON's ruling body, to represent the West Midlands.

Since 2007, Eleanor has represented UNISON on the TUC General Council and has been a member of the TUC Race Relations Committee since 2005.

Apart from holding down a demanding job in the NHS, Eleanor is very active in the union in the region and was elected vice-chair of the Midlands TUC in 2008.



Eleanor wants to concentrate on promoting equality during her time in the UNISON Presidential team. She said:

"I am proud to be president of the union as we face some of our biggest challenges. Tackling inequality in the workplace and promoting fairer access to public services has always been a priority for me, but it is even more so now, as Tory-led cuts drive a wedge through local communities.

"Everyone is suffering, and women, young people, and ethnic minorities even more so as the vital public services, and jobs they rely on are being taken away."

Eleanor Smith is married with two daughters aged 21 and 23, and is the proud grandmother to seven month old girl. She also keeps fit. Any spare time she has in between the union, her family and her work is spent in keeping fit by running 20-25 miles a week.

UNISON Breakfast Meeting

If you are interested in becoming a steward, workplace contact or a Health & Safety Rep, come and join us for a breakfast on:

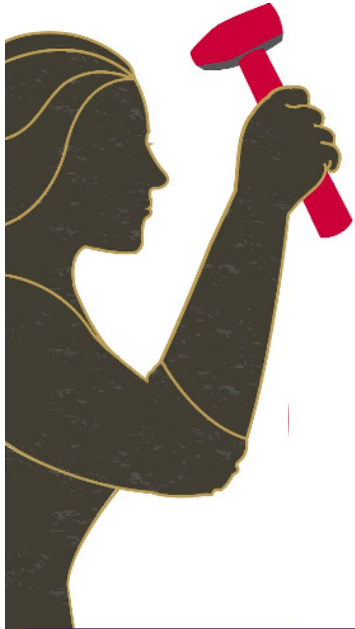
Thursday, 3rd May 8:30—9:30

UNISON Offices, 6 Ednam Road, DY1 1HL

If you are interested in joining us for a chat then please telephone the office on 01384 233870.



THE WOMEN CHAINMAKERS' FESTIVAL 2012



Date: Saturday 9 June

Time: 11am - 6pm

**Venue: Bearmore Park,
Bearmore Road,
Cradley Heath,
B64 6DU**

New Young Members

Are you a young female member aged below 26 by June 16th 2012? Are you interested in becoming more active in Unison? Would you like to take part in Unison's Local Government and National Delegate Conference this year?

If this could be you, please give us a call on **ext 5394**. We are looking for a young female member to represent others locally.

This year's conference runs from Saturday, June 16th to Saturday, June 23rd and will take place in Bournemouth, with all out of pocket expenses covered by the branch.

LGPS Negotiations - would you use a 'low cost' option?

The team involved in negotiating over the 'new' Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) from 2014 has been considering whether to propose a 'low cost option' as part of the new scheme.

This would enable members to opt for 50% contributions - and 50% benefits - for future service.

The option would probably apply for up to a maximum of three years, during periods of financial hardship or reduced pay and might also help those members not in the scheme to join for a short period before entering the full scheme.

At the end of that period, members could either opt out or transfer to the main LGPS. We also want to encourage as many non-LGPS members as possible to join.



Workers' Memorial Day

27 April

2012

Join us at 12 noon on Coronation Gardens as we commemorate those who have died or been made ill by their work.