

Welfare Officer and Central Site Lead Annual Report

Prepared by Val Donegan

I am one of three Branch Welfare Officers and I am based at the Oxford Road Campus. Branch Welfare Officers provide emotional support and give confidential advice and information to members and their dependents in times of need. In many cases we can offer financial assistance too.

This year, the cost of living crisis and in work poverty has meant more and more members are turning to Unison's dedicated welfare charity, There for You, for help. I have assisted members to access to food banks, helped them apply for fuel and school uniform grants and signposted them to organisations who can help when they are in debt.

Our help as a Branch Welfare Officer goes beyond financial assistance though. For example, I have offered advise and support for women and men who are victims of domestic abuse and who have had to leave their homes and start a new life.

There for You grants and activities are paid for by donations from UNISON members, branches, UNISON itself and the general public. Your Branch makes regular monthly donations to There for You and in addition, around Christmas time, we make donations to three food banks across Greater Manchester.

Being a Welfare Officer is a challenging but hugely rewarding role and I am passionate about helping our members when they are in crisis and times of need. If you ever need financial or welfare assistance or advice, please do not hesitate to contact us.

I am also the Unison site lead for this Branch in Central Manchester. We have had a busy year in terms of representing our members and I have supported staff through grievances, disciplinaries and flexible working applications to name a few. I have supported members through their sickness journeys attending review meetings while they are still absent from work and then during their return to ensure any reasonable adjustments are being met.

As site lead, I have also been co-ordinating recruitment and drop in stall across the Oxford Road Campus. At least once a month we will be holding a stall so look out for us and stop by and ask any questions you may have. We might even have some goodies to hand out!

I have again nominated myself for both of these roles for 2024/2025 and I am committed to supported you, our members, in any way I can.