

UNISON 'There for you' NEWSLETTER

We are UNISON's registered charity offering FREE and confidential services, benefits and support including:-

- Financial Assistance - if you are in financial hardship due to unforeseen circumstances
- Links to Credit Unions - for loans/savings
- Small Grants - School Uniform May-July & Winter Fuel Dec-Feb
- Debt advice - freephone 0800 389 3302
- Wellbeing breaks - during illness/respite for carers
- Support & information – listening support & sign posting

To access support:

- contact your local branch welfare officer. If you do not know who this is please contact :
- UNISON Direct on 0800 0857 857 or
- There for You 0207 121 5620;
thereforyou@unison.co.uk;
- For work issues contact UNISON Direct 0800 0857 857
- To join UNISON please contact 0800 171 2193

WINTER FUEL GRANTS

Get help staying warm this winter

With rising fuel costs and another cold winter many members are worried about how they're going to pay this year's winter fuel bills



Help is on hand

“There for You” has set up a limited fund to help UNISON members on low income by way of a one-off payment of up to £50

To apply and download the application form visit unison.org.uk/thereforyou or simply contact your local UNISON branch office

Eligibility

To be considered for a grant, you must be able to show that you meet the following criteria:

Either

- You are in receipt of housing benefit

Or

- Your household **net income** is less than £18,000

And

- Neither you/your partner have savings in excess of £800 (including rolling bank balance)
- You have not received a grant from UNISON There for you in the last 6 months.
- You must have **paid a minimum of 4 weeks subscriptions before 1st December 2016**

Deadline

Your application must be received no later than **17 February 2017**. Applications will then be processed and decisions communicated over the following weeks

Tax Credit Calculator

Time is running out...

For you to claim the tax credits that you might be entitled to. About a million people are missing out on up to £50 a week. To make sure you aren't one of them you need to apply now before it's too late.

Why?

Tax credits are being replaced with Universal Credit which is less generous for most working people. It is mostly single people who currently get Universal Credit but the plan is to move everyone on to it. When that happens where you live, new claims for tax credits will stop unless you have more than two children. The government says no-one who moves from tax credits to Universal Credit will be worse off unless there is a big change to their circumstances, but UNISON believes it's important that you claim tax credits before Universal Credit arrives where you live.



Make sure the amount you get is protected so you don't lose out. UNISON has created an easy to use calculator which tells you in two minutes if you qualify and how much you should get. It even has a link so you can immediately order a tax credit claim form online.

Go to: <https://unison-takeup.entitledto.co.uk/>

If you have any tax credit queries please contact HMRC - Tel 0345 300 3900, your local Citizens Advice Bureau or the Welfare Rights section at your Council. **Claim now before it's too late**

State Pension forecasts online



One million State Pension forecasts have now been viewed online using our new 'Check your State Pension' service - It doesn't matter if you're two years from retirement or 20, you can find out how much State Pension you may get, the earliest you can get it, and if you can improve it. You can also see your National Insurance record. All you need to do is go to the website, create an account and verify your identity (it's useful to have your payslips, passport and/or driving licence to hand).

Visit [Check your State Pension](#).

Warm Home Discount Scheme



1. What you'll get

For winter 2016 to 2017, you could get £140 off your electricity bill through the Warm Home Discount Scheme. The money isn't paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill between October and April. The discount won't affect your [Cold Weather Payment](#) or [Winter Fuel Payment](#). Not everyone gets the discount - [check if you qualify](#).

[Pre-pay/pay-as-you-go meters](#) - You can also qualify for the discount if you use a pre-pay/pay-as-you-go electricity meter.

2. Eligibility

You qualify for the discount if on 10 July 2016 all of the following applied:

- your electricity supplier was part of the scheme
- your name (or your partner's) was on the bill
- you were getting the Guarantee Credit element of [Pension Credit](#) (even if you get Savings Credit as well)

[Check with your supplier to see if you're eligible and how to apply](#)

3. How to claim

If you [qualify](#) for the discount, you'll get a letter this autumn or winter telling you either:

- you don't have to apply - you'll get the discount automatically
- to apply by 28 February 2017 - the letter will tell you why and how
- You'll receive your letter by 16 December at the latest.

[If you don't get a letter](#) - Contact the Warm Home Discount Team if you don't get a letter but believe you qualify.

Telephone: 0345 603 9439 Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm – or by post at
Warm Home Discount Team

2.1.P, Peel Park, Brunel Way, Blackpool FY4 5ES

[If you don't qualify for the discount](#) - You may be able to apply directly to your electricity supplier for help if you don't qualify because you don't get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit but:

- you're on a low income
- you get certain means-tested benefits

SCHOOL UNIFORM GRANTS

There for You is pleased to report that 725 children were assisted this year with a grant for school uniforms. In total £29,000 was paid out.

Region	children assisted	Region	children assisted
Eastern	38	Greater London	43
East Midlands	37	Northern	110
Northern Ireland	39	Scotland	65
North West	181	South East	30
South West	29	West Midlands	46
Wales	27	Yorkshire & Humberside	80

"I just would like to thank you for your help, which has helped me a lot, I do very much appreciate it, as my younger son's trousers were getting too tight and my older son's trousers were getting too small on the leg as he has grown several inches since he started 2 years ago. Thank you again"



"Your grant has helped me to purchase new school trousers and shoes for my children - they are very happy!"



"The £80 I received from Unison helped to go a long way towards the cost of buying for 2 growing children, so thank you very much!"

"I really appreciate your help, I don't think I would have managed without it"

"Thank you for unison's support at a difficult time working part time and being a single mother"

For further information:

please contact [UNISON There for You](https://www.unison.org.uk/thereforyou)

020 7121 5620 thereforyou@unison.co.uk

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