

NEC Elections 2021: Community General Seat & Female Seat Nomination Request

John Gray
RMS 3083288

Denise Thomas
RMS 8688788

23 January 2021

Dear Branch Secretary and Chair

Your branch is entitled to nominate candidates to the two Community seats for this year's National Executive Council elections. We're asking that you put this request to your community members for consideration - **John Gray** for the General Seat and **Denise Thomas** for the Female seat.

We are standing on a platform to unite the leadership of the union. Our new General Secretary needs unity in the National Executive Committee not factions of politics fighting internally. A united leadership will ensure UNISON concentrates on taking on the government making sure our members don't pay for the cost of Covid and fighting their plans to divide public service workers over the pay freeze. We can't do any of that if we don't have unity in UNISON's leadership.

There's been a change this year in how Community seats can be nominated to. This guarantees that members of the Community Sector can have their say. Please ensure you consult with your Community Sector members in time for your Branch Committee to nominate. Both of us are more than willing to attend (virtually) any hustings you may arrange with your community members to decide upon your nomination.

Denise is currently the NEC member for Community (Female seat). Her background is working in the Voluntary and Community sector for the past 28yrs supporting adults with learning disabilities and works for a national organisation. She holds Regional positions as Branch Black Members Officer and Welfare officer for Ymlaen/Forward Cymru Wales.

John is also currently a NEC Community member (General seat) and has been an activist in UNISON for many years and held a number of different branch and regional positions. He works for a large Housing Association and is its National Convenor. He is the former Branch Secretary and Chair of the GLR Housing Associations Branch.

Denise has served as a NEC member on Policy Development & Campaigns, Trustee for "*there for you*", Labour link. Branch Resource working group and International Committee.

John has served as an NEC member on the Policy Development & Campaigns, Trustee on the UNISON staff pension fund, Chair of Investment Sub-Committee, National Labour link and Vice-Chair of the Industrial Action Committee.

Covid 19 Pandemic This past year has been the most difficult time in our lifetimes. AS NEC members we are so proud of our members for continuing to provide much needed public services and also UNISON activists and staff who have supported sometimes very frightened members and fought hard for adequate PPE and risk assessments. But the impact of the pandemic on our members physically and mentally can't be underestimated- proper support needs to be in place for those who got the country through the pandemic as we hopefully come out of this crisis

Austerity. All of us deserve decent wages and decent terms and conditions. Instead many of us are facing cuts in pay, reduced benefits and redundancies. Both of us as your NEC members will be working and campaigning even harder with branches and regions to oppose these measures. We believe that Community members must play our part in opposing further Covid related austerity.

Equalities: We welcome that public service employers have acknowledged systemic racism in their structures, procedures and in society. The pandemic has highlighted the health inequalities with women and Black communities impacted the hardest. UNISON should be leading campaigns to end the disgraceful health inequalities in this country and holding the government and employers to their commitment to end systemic racism. We also support the Community specific campaigns below:-

- **Better funding & resources** for branches that support Community member who often work for small employers and in isolated workplaces.
- **No public money for “union busters”.** Any employer that does not have a union recognition agreement should be barred from public grants or contracts
- **Sector Wage Councils.** Set up to decide the pay and conditions of all staff by collective bargaining including a real living wage minimum for all Community workers and agency/sub-contractors.
- **UNISON Ethical Care Charter.** All employers must be called upon to sign up.
- **Better governance and democracy.** Many of our employer management boards are unelected and unrepresentative.
- **Defend Pensions.** Protect the Social Housing Pension fund and the Pension Trust from further cuts. A **decent defined benefit pension** scheme for all.
- Better **health & safety** at work in particular protecting members by supporting the UNISON “End Violence at Work” charter.
- **Recruit & train** more activists to support members

We believe that we both work together well as your Community NEC team. While Denise’s employer is a charity, John’s is a housing association, so we represent and complement both of the major sectors in the Community Service Group.

You can contact Denise on **07815 098201**/ denise_thomas2@msn.com or John on **07745 545 185**/john.gray2012@icloud.com.



Denise Thomas & John Gray