

Dear Branch Secretary,

My name is Sarah Feeney and I am the Branch Secretary of Coventry City Local Government Branch. I have been the Branch Secretary now for 12 years and like you have found the last year incredibly difficult supporting our members through this crisis – but also incredibly inspiring seeing our branch reps and members come together to organise and support each other.

I am writing to ask for your Branch nomination for UNISON's National Executive Council, Local Government Female seat.

I am standing for our NEC because I want the union to change and am not convinced the current National Leadership will do it. **I am a grassroots lay member Candidate that wants our union to be better at supporting our members. I have been active for many years in UNISON and I am frustrated that we do not always use the strength of our union to fight for members.**

**I believe our union needs to change if we are to become the member lead union we proudly say we are.**

Covid has exposed the many ways that cuts to our public services over the last decade and more have left our vital services ill equipped to cope. Branches like mine and yours have worked flat out to ensure that workplaces are safe, members are supported and employers are prevented from using this crisis to drive down terms and conditions and cut jobs. As a branch secretary myself I've seen the impact on our members and our colleagues and if we don't change our members will continue to suffer. Our reps are burnt out with the support they are giving and the impact on our physical and mental health.

Our Local Government members in every area need more support, from social care, to libraries, to schools, to environmental health and all of the back office functions that keep our councils running – we need more support from this Government – but we won't get that without a fighting union that demands more support.

The huge resources of our union must be directed as a matter of urgency back to branches and to Organising Campaigns but also to provide us more legal advice in branches and regions where it is needed. This must be a National Priority because it is the only way we can win power for our members.

Our union nationally needs to be more proactive. We have more members than the RCN in Health, more non-teaching members than any other union in the Education sector and yet we are always trying to catch up when it comes to National Advice and National public support for our members – it is rarely UNISON that is the union voice in the media supporting our members - This must change!

With organising as our national priority we can tackle one of our biggest issues – that our union density needs to be bigger so that we are stronger. Overall, our National density on average is 26%, which means nearly three quarters of workers choose not to join UNISON. In many parts of the union it is even lower than that. In Local Government we have seen some increase in membership because of COVID and I want to continue and increase this organising activity across the union so we are strong, together as a whole Union to win with our members on things that matter to them. We need to build our membership to make us stronger and we need to organise those members to take their own power.

**PAY**

Our Pay Demands must be backed up with credible activity and campaigning. What do we do when the Government says no? We need a plan and leaders who will fight for us.

I am not part of any faction but I am an activist who wants to work in Solidarity with other candidates from #OrganiseTogether. This means **I will** vote to back policies that will bring about **meaningful and immediate** change, to reach our target of 2 million members and 100,000 trained activists in the next few years.

As your NEC rep I will ensure thorough engagement with branches across **Local Government and those with Local Government members** to make sure **your** voices are heard at National level. **I will** work with other NEC members from across the Union to get the **best outcomes for members** and I will be your voice as a branch secretary with many years experience of working in the front line of our union.

I would also ask you to nominate the following Candidates for Local Government NEC seats as I believe them to be good people who share our priorities.

**Sean Fox** Male Local Government seat

**Emma Garson** Female Local Government seat

In solidarity

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