

A View from the General Secretary

We're well and truly into spring now - with even a glimpse of summer on a few days before having to put the garden cushions away again! Since our last Union Mail, there has been plenty of progress across a number of important areas.

We have now finalised the 2026 pay deal with Nationwide, bringing that process to a close following constructive engagement and you can find the [Joint Statement here](#). At the same time, the integration with Virgin Money has been successfully delivered - no small achievement, and one that reflects the resilience and hard work shown by so many of you throughout the process.

We recognise, however, that change on this scale can bring uncertainty. As we move through the current round of Regional Councils, we continue to receive and reflect on your feedback - particularly around how these changes are being experienced on the ground. Those insights are vital in helping us shape our approach and ensure your voice is heard clearly at every level.

The integration also marks an important moment for NGSU. We are pleased to continue to hold sole recognition rights for all heritage Nationwide employees and all new employees, strengthening our ability to represent members consistently across the organisation. Alongside this, dual recognition arrangements are now in place for colleagues from the heritage Virgin Money group, and we look forward to working constructively with Unite where matters affect this smaller cohort. Our focus remains on ensuring all members, regardless of who their former employer was (if any), are supported effectively and fairly.

Over recent weeks, several of our representatives have taken part in wider trade union events. Louise Chissell attended the TUC Women's Conference and Sarma

Gnanasubramanian attended the TUC Black Workers' Conference on our behalf, where NGSU was one of 30 unions represented. Mairi Jones also attended the STUC Congress, providing valuable insight into the priorities and challenges being discussed across the movement. The learning from both events has been extremely useful in helping us reflect on and refine our own agenda. You'll find reports from [Louise](#) and [Mairi](#) later on, and we hope to have a report from Sarma in our next issue.

In addition, Assistant General Secretary Diana Allen and I attended the Accord Union conference as guests last month. (Accord represents employees in the Lloyds Banking Group and in TSB.) It was useful to hear from their members about the issues that matter most to them. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many of those themes - such as workload, impact of AI, benefits and the pace of organisational change - closely mirror the concerns we are actively raising with Nationwide through our own channels. Engagements like these give us a broader perspective on the industry our members work in and reinforce the importance of continuing to advocate strongly on your behalf.

Finally, we are mindful that global events continue to create a backdrop of uncertainty and concern for many. We're obviously very mindful of the potential impacts on our members and the sector more broadly, and will continue to monitor developments closely.

As always, thank you for your continued support.

Emma Clay
General Secretary



TUC Women's Conference

The Union's National Equality Officer, Louise Chissell, attended the TUC's Women's Conference in Bournemouth at the beginning of March.

The Conference discussed a wide range of issues, including:

- benefits in the workplace for women, e.g. flexible working
- carers' rights
- kinship carers
- improving maternity and parental leave/pay
- health and safety
- menopause
- the gender pay gap

- the gender pension gap, and
- the "motherhood penalty".

And, as you'd expect, what employers can do to help address all these matters.

The Conference also debated several motions on AI, the impact it might have - and is already having - on women in the workforce, and how the misuse of AI can impact on women and girls.

There was also information about a campaign being run by Unite the Union, "*Get me home safely*" specifically focused on the safety of workers travelling home from working unsocial hours.

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Slater & Gordon Call Back Legal Service

NGSU's solicitors, Slater & Gordon, have changed the way they offer their legal "helpline" service to our members. Rather than calling a helpline open 9.00am - 5.00pm on weekdays, this has now changed to a call back service, where you complete an online form with your enquiry, and then receive a call from an appropriate team member.

This is now a 24/7 365-day service in so far that you can ask for Legal advice at any time. The call backs will be done the same day (within reason) i.e. if a request is made circa 4pm, this might trip into the next day, but certainly within 24 hours (excluding public holidays).

Visit [Slater and Gordon Legal Services](#)

Taking a Break

One of the topics that our Reps from the Retail Network have brought up frequently in their Regional Council meetings this year has been the inability for some of those working in the branches to take a full lunch break. This applies particularly to Branch Managers, who report having to use their lunches serving on the counter, to ensure that their teams are able to have a lunch break.

We'd like to remind everyone that the [Branch Network Working Arrangements Policy](#) stresses the importance of taking your designated break, but recognises there may be exceptional occasions where you can't, and also can't take a compensating break later in the day. In those cases, the Policy specifies that you can claim a "rest break" payment, depending on how much time you've had to work, and we encourage employees, including BMs, to do so. See the Branch Payments page of the Policy.

Discounted Gym Membership

Your NGSU Membership offers discounted gym membership from over 4,000 gyms across the country, including online classes such as pilates, yoga and cycling.

Why not have a look [NGSU Extras](#) to find out more?

Dates for Your Diary

Deaf Awareness Week	4 - 10 May
Sun Awareness Week	11 - 17 May
Mental Health Awareness Week	12 - 18 May
Dementia Action Week	18 - 24 May
Learning at Work Week	18 - 24 May
Global Accessibility Awareness Day	21 May

Visit <https://ngsu.org.uk/dates-for-your-diary-2026/> for more information about these events, and forthcoming dates.

Scottish Trades Union Congress

Mairi Jones, a Senior Cases Officer with NGSU, attended the 129th Annual [Scottish Trades Union Congress](#) in Dundee in mid-April.

It was a busy three days as you'd expect, with delegates from a wide variety of affiliated Trade Unions and Trade Councils debating over 100 motions covering a wide range of sectors/topics – Economy & Industry, Transport, Education & Lifelong Learning, Public Services, Trade Union & Employment Rights, Trade Union Organisation, Equality & Social Justice, STUC constitutional matters and International matters.

Roz Foyer, STUC General Secretary, also spoke to Congress, as did this year's STUC President Richard Hardy (from the union Prospect). From the political world, Anas Sarwar, the Scottish Labour leader; John Swinney, leader of the SNP party and First Minister; and Gillian Mackay, co-leader of the Scottish Green Party, all addressed Congress (on separate days), taking questions from the floor.

The Congress Exhibition was equally busy with a wide variety of exhibitors keen to speak with delegates regarding their specialism and/or campaign. Fringe events took place on all three days, during the day and into the evening, encouraging robust debate and offering delegates the opportunity to hear from and speak with fellow trade unionists from a wide variety of sectors and geographical locations.

The General Council revisits and refreshes its aims and objectives every five years. Following congress and considering [this year's motions](#) and those adopted in previous years, the STUC General Council will bring forward a new approach based on the mandate given.

NGSU Travel Club

The NGSU Travel Club provides fantastic travel deals and aims to beat ANY OTHER travel agent/website deal by giving NGSU members an extra discount.*

* NB: The NGSU Travel Club is not able to secure discounts on flights alone.

Visit [NGSU Travel Club](#) to find out more.

May Draw Winners

First Prize : £15,000

176428 : Name withheld at Member's request

Second Prize : £5,000

138055 : Fiona Groarke - QC Delivery

Third Prize : £2,000

173555 : Scott Wellum - Telephony

Fourth Prizes : £500

077414 : Steven Rattray - Pensioner Member

174700 : Sam Boot - Procurement

175933 : Chirinjibi Thapa - Oxford Branch

Fifth Prize : £200

171178 : Martin Phillips - Financial Crime