

Trade Union spotlight

The bank for trade unions owned by trade unions

Unity Trust Bank is majority owned by 24 trade unions, the TUC and GFTU and we bank 82% of TUC affiliated unions.

Unity's business model of being socially focused, customer centred and commercially driven is at the heart of all that we do. Our vision to be the bank of choice for trade unions and civil society organisations remains steadfast.

The depth of our relationship with the trade union movement as both shareholders

and customers has proved a stabilising influence and a great foundation for our business success. This partnership of shared values and social responsibility, combined with financial prudence and expertise is unique in the banking sector.

In this edition of spotlight we highlight some examples of how Unity is working with unions to take care of their day-to-day banking and support their members across the UK.

95%

of trade union members affiliated to the TUC are represented by those TUC affiliates we have a banking relationship with

Proud to be President

"I am proud to be President of a bank that is genuinely different from the mainstream and one that puts social responsibility at the heart of its business model. I can't help but feel that if the rest of the banking community had been guided by these principles, the UK economy would probably be in a far better position than it is today."

Dave Prentis, General Secretary, Unison and President of Unity Trust Bank



Dave Prentis

82%

of TUC affiliate unions have a banking relationship with us

24

trade unions, the TUC and GFTU own the majority of the bank

Highlighted organisations in this issue include:



Spotlight on the Communication Workers Union



With 215,000 members, the Communication Workers Union (CWU) is the biggest union for the communications industry in the UK. Unity's ALTO prepaid card is helping the CWU make life easier for its staff, speeding up expenses payments and reducing the administrative burden.

"We used to reimburse personal expenses by cheque," explains Pete Metcalfe, the union's Senior Policy Advisor. "Now the ALTO card gives us a more modern, straightforward way to handle expenses. It allows people to buy things like travel tickets easily with their cards. It also

reduces the amount of administration and the time it takes to repay expenses. Once they're authorised, they can be repaid online straight away. That's a great benefit for us."

Adopting the ALTO card is the latest chapter in the CWU's long history with Unity (the union is a shareholder in the bank and is represented on its board). For Pete and his team, the service they get as a Unity customer is vital to the continued success of the relationship between the two organisations.

"As a customer, we expect great service from our bank," he says. "And that's what we get. With Unity, you don't feel like a number; you feel part of an organisation. They make us feel valued. We get a development manager who's always on hand to help and sort out any issues we

have. If we have any problems, they listen to us and help find the answer."

With its banking taken care of, the CWU is free to concentrate on getting the voices of its members heard on issues such as fair pay, just terms and conditions, health and safety, equal opportunities and politics. "The CWU represents the interests of members who work in organisations like Royal Mail, the Post Office and BT," explains Pete. "So our reps are at the front line of a rapidly changing industry. Their roles have always been challenging and that's certainly no different today."

What would Pete say to other organisations considering making the switch to Unity? "Move to Unity and you'll receive a professional and personal service," he says. "You'll be valued as a customer and the service you'll get will reflect this."

"The ALTO card gives us a modern, easy way to handle expenses. It reduces the amount of administration and saves time. That's a great benefit for us."

Pete Metcalfe, Senior Policy Advisor, Communication Workers Union (CWU)

Spotlight on the National Society for Education in Art and Design



The National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD) is the leading national authority for art, craft and design across all stages of education in the UK. After more than 50 years with a high street bank, the organisation's management grew tired of deteriorating service and switched to Unity.

"We came to Unity in 2008 because we were increasingly frustrated with our existing bank," says Dr John Steers, General Secretary of the NSEAD. "It's been a great move and I wish we'd done it years ago."

"With our old bank it got to the point that I didn't know who to phone," he continues. "There were call centres across the country and bank staff would move on constantly. When we were recommended supposedly

ultra-safe investments that turned out to be anything but low-risk, we moved to Unity."

For John and his team, Unity's personal service makes a big difference. "With Unity, it feels like a relationship," he continues. "We get a far, far more personal service because I know who to call and they're always at the end of the phone. Our development manager visits us and understands what we do."

For day-to-day banking, the NSEAD makes use of Unity's internet banking and the ability to pay money in at local branches. Recently, the bank also provided a £220,000 loan to help the NSEAD buy its own offices.

"We'd outgrown the offices that we rented from Bath Spa University," John explains. "The university was also looking to expand so we decided the time was right to buy offices of our own. Unity were very accommodating and helped us through the purchase."

Unity's ethos as a specialist bank for social enterprises, charities and trade unions is another important factor for the NSEAD. "They're altogether more sympathetic," says John.

"In the current climate the challenges in education are enormous; government cuts are biting and we're having to make major changes," he continues. "In times like these I hope that being with a bank that understands our sector will make a difference."

"We came to Unity because we were increasingly frustrated with our previous bank. Now we get a far more personal service because I know who to call and they're always at the end of the phone. It's been a great move and something that I wish we'd done years ago."

Dr John Steers, General Secretary, NSEAD

Spotlight on Usdaw



Representing workers in shops, factories, offices, warehouses and other businesses, Usdaw is one of Britain's largest trade unions. With over 391,000 members nationwide, Usdaw relies on a bank that understands its needs: Unity.

"Because the bank was founded by trade unions, Unity has a unique understanding of the movement," says Usdaw's Finance Officer John Youd. "Unions can be very complicated, and each one has a different structure. At Unity, they understand this."

John believes this makes Unity the ideal choice for organisations that operate a branch structure and need to balance local administration with central oversight. All of Usdaw's branches and local offices bank with Unity and the union is currently trialling internet banking in seven local offices.

With the newly-connected local offices able to transfer money between accounts, Unity's internet banking also enables the union's central team to keep an eye on its finances. "With over 100 bank accounts across the union, internet banking gives us a quick way to keep track of everything," says Usdaw's Audit Officer, Graham Robson. "Being able to see them all in one place is a great advantage."

"Internet banking is incredibly useful," agrees John. "We can see our balances and payments in real time without needing to wait for paper statements. It means we can use our money more effectively, transferring and investing funds instantly."

For John and Graham, internet banking is just part of the service that makes Unity so special. "Although, as shareholders in Unity, we naturally want to see the bank succeed, it's equally important that we get a great service," explains John. "And that's what we enjoy with Unity."

The key to Unity's quality of service? The personal touch. "Our Unity development

manager knows the union well and keeps us up to speed about new services and opportunities," says John.

"We have a good working relationship with Unity," agrees Graham. "We always know who we'll be talking to and whenever we call them they're extremely helpful and sort out any issues quickly."

"The first-class service and personal contact Unity provides makes it feel like a partnership," he adds. "They really are the natural choice for a trade union."

"Unity has a unique understanding of the union movement and of Usdaw. Their internet banking service helps us use our funds more effectively. When you combine this with their first-class service, they really are the natural choice for a trade union."

John Youd, Finance Officer, Usdaw



Usdaw central office, Manchester

Spotlight on Trades Council Conference



Congress House, London, home to the TUC and Unity Trust's London office

As a bank backed by trade unions, Unity was the perfect partner for this year's Trades Council Conference. The bank funded extra delegate places, ensuring the event was more diverse than ever, and enabled members from across the country to socialise together.

"Unity is a bank that's committed to the trade union movement and supports the aims of the trades councils," says Tom Mellish, Organising Policy Officer for the Trades Union Congress (TUC). "Unity has a real community link – it's important for us to have a sponsor whose approach reflects the work unions do."

From Tyneside to Taunton, trades councils bring unions together to work and campaign around issues affecting working people in their local workplaces and communities.

Held in Blackpool over the weekend of 15-16 May, the conference gave members of trades councils the chance to network, debate and hear high-profile speakers.

With trades councils funding delegates to attend the conference, Unity's sponsorship paid for nine extra places and ensured as many people as possible could attend. "We try to have the broadest range of delegates we can," says Tom. "Unity's sponsorship allowed us to expand the experience of conference and make it more diverse."

Delegates had the opportunity to listen to thought-provoking speakers, including UNISON Vice-President Eleanor Smith and Columbian trade unionist Jorge Gamboa. Trades council members also used the opportunity to develop a programme of work for the coming year.

In 2010-11, trades councils will focus on developing a greater union presence in the community and encouraging more people to join a union. They will look at how unions can work with community groups to defend and promote public services. They will explore ways in which they can fight fascism as far-right parties attempt to adopt a respectable face. And they will focus on greening the workplace to build a sustainable economy.

With the conference held at the Savoy Hotel, Unity's sponsorship also supported a social event on the Saturday evening. The event gave delegates from across the country the chance to catch up in an informal setting.

For Tom and his fellow organisers, this all added up to a successful conference – thanks in part to Unity's support. "With Unity, we know the support is coming from an organisation that is committed to the union movement," he says. "This meant we were able to work together to create a conference everybody could be proud of."

"Unity Trust's sponsorship allowed us to expand the experience and diversity of the 2010 Trades Council Conference. Unity's links with the union movement and with communities was vital; it was important for us to have a sponsor that reflected the work that trades councils do."

*Tom Mellish, Organising Policy Officer,
Trades Union Congress*

**Can we help you with your banking or financing needs?
Contact the Trade Union Team for a chat:**



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