



WINTER 2024

NEWSLETTER

**Reflecting on 2024
- what a year it's
been!**

**Understanding
performance
management and
your rights**

**Enter our festive
competition to win
a £50 voucher!**



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Aegis
the union

Enter our festive competition

As Christmas is a time of giving, we've decided to run a little competition!

And there's a £50 LOVE2SHOP voucher up for grabs for each branch* - so what are you waiting for!

*Aegon/Yorkshire Building Society/Skipton Building Society/Computershare



Winners will be announced January 17th

All you have to do is look for 11 letters dotted about the newsletter. Write them down and work out this festive song



Click here to submit your answer



Reflecting on an incredible year



Wow! What a year 2024 has been for Aegis the Union.

It's been a year filled with growth, change, and countless successes that reflect the strength and unity of our membership.

As we close out the year, let's take a moment to celebrate the milestones that have shaped our journey.

One of the biggest changes this year was bidding farewell to Fiona Steele, our Deputy General Secretary, who retired on May 1 after 18 years of exceptional service. Fiona played a pivotal role in transforming Aegis from a staff association into the strong, independent trade union we proudly are today. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Fiona for her dedication and leadership over the years.

Taking up the reins, Ania Lomax stepped into the role of Deputy General Secretary, and we welcomed Steve Crotty from the Yorkshire Building Society rep community as Ania's successor. Both have embraced their new roles with energy and enthusiasm, making an immediate impact.

This summer, we also trained and developed 20 new reps, many of who are already actively supporting and representing our members in disciplinary and grievance matters. Their commitment is a testament to the spirit of Aegis, and we're proud to see them thrive in their roles.

On the advocacy front, Aegis raised significant motions at the TUC, Scottish TUC, and LGBT+ conferences this year, addressing critical topics such as neurodiversity in the workplace, AI legislation and regulation, and ensuring Labour's National Wealth Fund prioritises unionised employers. These motions received unanimous support from other unions, and we were thrilled to see Ania and Aegon Assistant Secretary Ricky Markham shine as first-time conference speakers.

Despite challenges such as widespread redundancies across our three divisions, we've seen a remarkable membership growth of over 500 new members in 2024. This incredible achievement strengthens our collective voice and influence with the employers where we are recognised, which is extremely positive news for you, our members.

We also launched a brand-new website and began publishing quarterly newsletters. We hope you agree that our new digital presence is a vast improvement, enhancing our ability to connect with and support our members. Looking ahead to 2025, we are excited to build on this year's achievements.

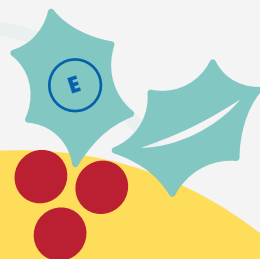
Our strategic priorities remain clear: Grow our Membership, Empower our Reps, and Improve our Digital Offering. With your continued support, we are confident that Aegis will reach even greater heights.

As we approach the festive season, I want to extend my warmest wishes to all our members. Thank you for your commitment, resilience, and the invaluable contributions you make to our union. Here's to another successful year ahead!

Enjoy the festive season!

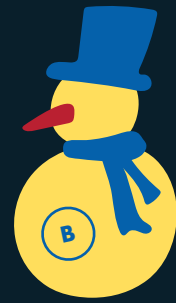
Brian Linn

General Secretary



Why are Christmas trees
so bad at sewing?
**Because they always
drop their needles!**

Reflections on 2024



Where has this year gone?!

I truly mean this. The year has flown by and it has been a year of many achievements for myself personally as well as for Aegis as a whole.

2024 started with a whirlwind of activity, including pay negotiations and a significant transition in leadership roles. I worked closely with Fiona Steele to ensure a smooth handover as she retired from her position as Deputy General Secretary. At the same time, I prepared to pass on my own responsibilities as Assistant General Secretary for the YBS branch to Steve Crotty.

In May, I officially stepped into my new role and I've loved every second of it. Since then, I've had the privilege of supporting our Assistant General

Secretaries in their roles, attending member recruitment events, and participating in key conferences. Two highlights were the LGBT+ Conference and the TUC Conference, where I delivered my first-ever motion on Opportunities in the Workplace for Neurodivergent Individuals. It was an incredible moment and one I'm immensely proud of.

In September, I began the TUC Leading Change Course, a four-module programme running through to June 2025. This has been a fantastic opportunity to collaborate with Senior Officers from various unions, and I've already started forming meaningful connections that will no doubt benefit Aegis in the future.

Beyond my role at Aegis, I also took on the position of Chair for the Alliance for Finance (AFF). This organisation brings together union and staff association affiliates from across the banking, building society, insurance, and pension industries.

Our quarterly Executive Committee meetings and seminars focus on addressing industry challenges and sharing knowledge, including crucial updates on employment law.

2024 has been a busy yet rewarding year, and I am so proud of all that has been accomplished.

As I look ahead to 2025, I am excited about the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. My focus will be on ensuring Aegis continues to grow, thrive, and deliver exceptional support to our members.

Wishing everyone a wonderful Christmas, a restful holiday break, and a very happy and healthy New Year!

Ania Lomax
Deputy General Secretary



What do you get if you eat
Christmas decorations?
Tinsellitis!



**Steve Crotty,
Assistant General
Secretary, Yorkshire
Building Society**

E

I took over the role of Assistant General Secretary for the Yorkshire Building Society in May of this year, so it's been a big year of change for me.

I would still absolutely say that I'm getting to know what works and what doesn't, and I will keep doing that; I will keep on seeking feedback from our members and get to know how best I can support you all.

I think one of the key things for me is that we had a really good pay survey this year. It's the first year we've had to go out and ballot our members, and while I hope we can achieve a good pay deal without needing it this year, I think it shows everybody that we have a strong voice within our membership and that we will fight for you and get you what's best.

I'm looking forward to another great year and to continue representing you all as best as I can.

Wishing you all the best for the festive season
Steve



**Brian McDaid,
Assistant General
Secretary, Skipton
Building Society and
Computershare.**

As we look back on an eventful 2024, this year has been one of hard work, determination, and collective strength. We've secured significant victories for our members, from achieving better pay deals consistently higher than industry averages, to standing firm against unfair changes that impact both individuals and the collective.

This year, we also launched our campaign on Diversity and Inclusion, and I'm excited about our plans for 2025, particularly focusing on Neurodiversity in the workplace. We're pushing forward with our motion from this year's TUC Conference, which calls for employers to provide more opportunities for young people with neurodivergent conditions.

A huge thank you to all of our reps, who work tirelessly to support you. They are the driving force behind your union's success.

With them and your continued support, we will keep making strides towards a better, fairer future for all, as your voice in the workplace.



**Ricky Markham,
Assistant General
Secretary,
Aegon branch**

This year has highlighted to me just how vital union presence is in the workplace.

One of my proudest moments this year was raising motions on the impact of AI at the STUC Conference and the TUC LGBT+ Workers Conference. Speaking on such

significant topics was daunting, but it reminded me of the power of our collective voice and the importance of representing our members' concerns on larger platforms.

Looking ahead to 2025, I'm ready to stand by and support our members through whatever challenges lie ahead. Whether it's supporting members' rights, working towards fair outcomes, or ensuring your voices are heard, I'm here to represent and assist you.

Thank you for your continued trust and support. I look forward to working together to build on our successes in the year ahead.

Empowering our reps - Rory's story

At Aegis we're committed to empowering our representatives to become knowledgeable advocates for our members. A key aspect of this is encouraging new reps to attend events with us, where they can gain firsthand insights into the challenges faced by workplaces and learn how we, as union representatives, can provide meaningful support.

Computershare rep Rory Moore attended his first ICTU Biennial Conference in his hometown of Derry in November.

Rory shared his experience with us:

"At the beginning of the first morning, there was an abrupt cheer and applause from attendees following the mention of Seagate workers finally gaining union recognition at the start of this year, so I knew I was in the right place!

There were motions put forward that addressed the rise of the far right and racism across the UK and Ireland. Recent presidential election results in the US and use of social media with the far right was also discussed. It was interesting to hear different points of view on these issues and how we can tackle this issue going forward. Speakers talked about the personal experiences they've had with racism and what work they are doing to combat the issue.

The rise in violence against women across Northern Ireland was discussed at length, that highlighted key issues relating to this and the use of social media from popular male online "influencers". The need to educate young men was stressed in a hope to reduce this and protect women's rights. Equality legislation and gender pay gaps was also discussed, highlighting that more needs to be done across all industries for equal opportunities for all.

The housing crisis across Ireland as a whole was discussed, with speakers highlighting ongoing issues that seem to have no end in sight and calling for better legislation for both homeowners and renters. The lack of funding across the Northwest of Ireland was also highlighted and speakers called for action from both governments on the island to address the issue. This extended to the lack of funding for the NHS and the waiting lists for NHS appointments and care, with

some speakers speaking to their personal experiences regarding this issue.

Speakers touched on the issue on better neurodiversity legislation and support from employers, along with support with workers in teaching or assistant positions when dealing with children with special educational or complex needs. The lack of funding appeared to be a trend that has impacted this area and causing a strain for workers doing a thankless job.

The winter fuel payment cut was rightfully highlighted as a concern, and a demonstration of support from all attendees took place outside the Guildhall.

On the first day, First Minister of Northern Ireland Michelle O'Neill and Junior Minister Pam Cameron attended and spoke to the attendees. They both outlined their policy of bringing change to Northern Ireland and working with unions to achieve this along with bringing better working conditions and pay to workers.

One thing I'd like to mention that happened across both days, is the number of first-time speakers that stepped up and received applause from everyone in attendance. It was great to see a high-level support from everyone in attendance for these first-time speakers and it is something that stuck with me.

Overall, I've learned a lot from listening to the speakers and advice given from people I've spoken with, and I feel I've gained a valuable experience in attending. I hope to attend similar events in the future."

Rory Moore



Interested in becoming an Aegis rep?

Becoming a union rep allows you to make positive changes within your organisation

If you're a good communicator who feels strongly about issues in the workplace and want to make changes for the better, it's likely you would make a good union rep.

All our reps get excellent training and support from a friendly network of fellow representatives, each committed to making a difference.

If you're interested in finding out more, please click here to find out more or email members@aegistheunion.co.uk

Find out more at aegistheunion.co.uk



Find out more

Understanding Performance Management and your rights



Brian McDaid

Performance Management is a critical part of most workplaces, intended to help employees reach their full potential and contribute to the organisation's success.

However, for performance management to be effective, it must be fair, transparent, and supportive.

Here's our guide to help you understand your rights, recognise fair processes, and know what steps to take if you need to appeal a performance rating.

Guidelines for fair Performance Management

Clear expectations:

At the beginning of the performance cycle, you should receive specific, measurable objectives that align with your role and responsibilities. Make sure you fully understand what's expected and seek clarification if needed. The criteria should be relevant, realistic, and aligned with both your role and the overall team goals.



Regular check-ins:

Good performance management doesn't just happen once a year. You should have regular, ongoing discussions with your manager about your progress, achievements, and any challenges.

These check-ins are essential for providing feedback, identifying areas for development, and adjusting where needed.

Objective and evidence-based evaluation:

All evaluations should be based on concrete, measurable performance. Ratings should be grounded in documented evidence, such as completed projects, feedback from peers or clients, and measurable achievements. This is essential when 'Behaviours' are being used as a performance management measurement, as this can be open to potential subjectivity.

If subjective comments or opinions are included in your review, ask your manager to clarify these with specific examples.

Consistency across the board:

Performance management should be consistent for all employees. Ensure that the criteria used to assess you are applied equally across your team. If you notice discrepancies in how ratings are assigned or communicated, this may be a sign of an unfair process.

Development support:

A strong performance management process isn't just about assessing your past work - it should also support your professional development.

If you receive a rating that suggests room for improvement, your manager should outline clear steps to help you grow, such as additional training, mentoring, or resources.

A two-way process:

Performance management is a two-way process, so it is down to you and your leader to agree the objectives being set as well as both of you being able to evidence the successes and completion of these both during the year, as well as at the end of the year.

What to look out for

Lack of documentation:

If feedback or ratings aren't backed up by evidence, this may indicate an unfair assessment. Always request documented examples to clarify where you might improve.

Changing expectations:

Your goals and objectives should not change drastically without your knowledge. If they do, make sure that any revised expectations are clearly documented.

Biased or inconsistent ratings:

If you see colleagues with similar achievements receiving higher ratings, or if there seems to be favouritism in the ratings process, this may indicate bias.

Limited feedback opportunities:

If you're not given an opportunity to discuss your performance regularly, or if feedback is only provided at the end of the year, this doesn't align with fair performance practices.

Appealing Your Mid-Year or End-of-Year Rating

If you feel your performance rating doesn't accurately reflect your work, you have the right to appeal either through the Performance Management or Grievance process (dependent on the company internal policy).

Here's how:

Gather documentation:

Start by collecting evidence of your performance, including completed projects, metrics, feedback from others, and any emails or notes from previous performance discussions. This documentation will be essential in making your case.

Prepare for a constructive conversation:

Request a meeting with your manager and approach the discussion openly. Explain why you believe the

rating is unfair, using specific examples and evidence to support your position. Be open to listening to your manager's perspective as well.

Escalate if necessary:

If your manager doesn't agree to reconsider the rating and you still feel it's unjustified, follow your organisation's formal appeal process. This may involve bringing your case to HR or a senior manager.

Be sure to understand your rights and the proper procedure before proceeding with an official appeal.

Seek union support:

If you're a member of Aegis, we're here to support you. Reach out to us for guidance, and we can help you prepare for meetings, understand your options, and ensure that the appeal process is fair and transparent.

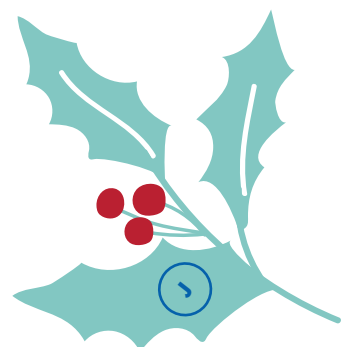
In Summary

Fair performance management is your right, and a transparent process benefits everyone in the workplace. Remember, your performance review should be a supportive tool to help you achieve your best, not a hurdle.

Your mid-year and end of year rating should never be a surprise.

If you encounter issues, know that you have options, and Aegis are here to support you every step of the way.

If you have any questions about performance management or your rights, don't hesitate to reach out to your union rep for advice.



Successful pay negotiations: Skipton Building Society

We are proud to share the success of this year's pay negotiations with Skipton Building Society, where Aegis secured a fairer deal for our members through collective strength and determination.

The negotiation journey

The company's initial offer fell short of reflecting the hard work of Skipton employees. Following our first indicative ballot—where over 80% of members rejected an increased proposal—we intensified efforts to ensure fairness.

A key achievement was removing pay variability from this year's offer, preventing potential confusion and inequity. This win guarantees a consistent and transparent pay approach while the company commits to introducing a clearer, structured system in 2025 through continued dialogue with us.

Why we accepted the offer

While negotiations were challenging, we secured a 3.1% overall pay pot increase—improved from the initial 2.75%. Though some members may feel disappointed, we explored all options, including ACAS conciliation, which could have prolonged the process. After careful consideration, accepting the improved offer was in the members' best interests.

Collective bargaining works

This outcome underscores the power of collective bargaining. Without Aegis, pay variability could have been implemented, creating uncertainty for many colleagues. Instead, we achieved transparency, equity, and a tangible improvement for all.

Acknowledging your support

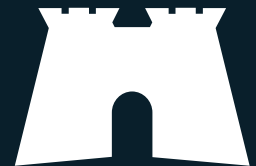
We extend sincere thanks to our members for their invaluable involvement and support. Your collective strength made this success possible. We also appreciate the constructive engagement from Skipton Building Society. Mutual respect and transparency were key to reaching this agreement and strengthening our partnership.

Special thanks to our reps

A heartfelt thank you to our reps, whose dedication and hard work ensured this positive outcome.

Together, we have shown what a united workforce can achieve.

SKIPTON
BUILDING SOCIETY



Since 1853



Why did no one bid for Rudolph
and Blitzen on eBay?
Because they were two deer!

What is a National Council meeting and why are they held?

Aegis holds its National Council meeting twice a year and is driven through input from the Aegis representatives. This two-day event is a cornerstone of the union's operations, and while much of the discussions are confidential, here's an overview of what typically takes place at such a meeting and how it impacts you as members.

National Council meetings focus on key issues central to the union's mission and members' well-being. They provide an opportunity to align strategic goals with the workforce's current needs and challenges. Leaders review long-term plans, address workplace issues, and develop national campaigns advocating for labour rights and member welfare.

Union representatives update the council on ongoing or upcoming negotiations with employers, and strategies for resolving disputes are explored. Member engagement is also a priority, with plans to increase involvement and attract new members. These discussions often intersect with legislative and political advocacy, including lobbying policymakers or challenging unfair laws.

Financial and operational matters are reviewed, with decisions made on resource allocation and efficiency improvements. Reports from local branches provide insight into regional challenges, helping leadership tailor solutions to members' needs.

The council also prioritises health and safety campaigns, training, and development initiatives to improve workplace conditions and strengthen members' skills. Leadership appointments and governance matters ensure the union remains strong and effective.

In summary, the National Council meeting is vital for shaping the union's future, addressing challenges, and ensuring Aegis continues to advocate for its members. These meetings uphold the principles of solidarity and commitment that define the union's mission.



What do you call an elf who sings?
A wrapper!





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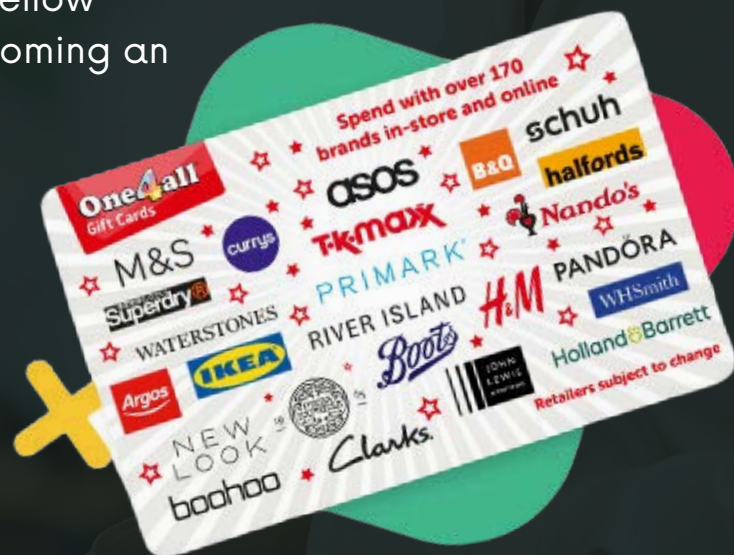




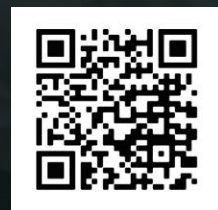
And you will both receive a £10 One4All shopping voucher.*

We encourage you to talk with your fellow colleagues about the benefits of becoming an Aegis member.

Know someone who is interested?
Email members@aegistheunion.co.uk and a member of the team will be in touch.



*Vouchers to be given to both parties in month 2 of the new member's subscription.



Wishing you a joyful
festive season and a
Happy New Year!



Contact us

If you have a story you would like to feature in our next newsletter, please email Fiona@welovecreative.co.uk

For all other member enquiries, please email members@aegistheunion.co.uk

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