



Branch Newsletter

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Going...going.. Gone ! as PTS are 'sold out' to Norvic

Private Ambulance contract puts patient safety at risk.

UNISON, the UK's largest union has warned that patient safety stands at risk, after the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust signed a 3 year contract with Norvic, the private ambulance provider.

Norvic based at Taverham, near Norwich, will supply Patient Transport Services to the trust, despite the fact that staff receive much less vital training than NHS Ambulance crew drivers,

NHS Drivers are not recruited if they have more than three penalty points on their licence and have to successfully complete an intensive three week advanced driving course. Norvic drivers are allowed to have six points and undergo a two day advanced driver course.

The Emergency medical technician course for Norvic drivers is also only five days long, whilst NHS Ambulance Drivers must complete a 10 week course, followed by 12 months of supervision.

Gary Applin, from the East of England Ambulance Service UNISON Branch, said:

We have grave concerns about patient safety with the new Norvic contract, Ambulance drivers aren't delivering parcels, they are transporting the sick, disabled, and some of the most vulnerable in our society.

Norvic Drivers receive far less training than their NHS counterparts. The public should be worried about being driven around by drivers and clinicians with very limited training.

The Trust needs to answer some very tough questions about why they are choosing to pay for the services of a private company, rather than their own experienced, hard working NHS Staff.

This is a classic example of back-door privatisation, patient care should come before huge profit margins.

The boardroom decision keeps staff and critically ill patients waiting longer...

UNISON has slammed plans to review staff numbers and hike up the amount of lone ambulance working at the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust, as they are debated at the Trust Board on the 25th May. The UK's largest union is concerned that an increase in ambulance staff heading to scenes on their own, rather than as part of a double crew, will put patient safety at risk, and that surplus staff will be sacked. The meeting follows the trust's recent decision to sign a contract with private ambulance provider Norvic to supply patient transport services, despite the fact that staff receive much less vital training than NHS ambulance crew drivers.

Gary Applin from the East of England Ambulance Service UNISON branch said:

"Emergency services in the East of England will be devastated if plans to cut staff and send ambulance staff out alone go ahead. More cars could be used in place of fully equipped ambulances, which would see ambulance staff left at the scene with seriously ill patients for longer as they wait for resources. Fewer crews will also mean that staff are forever chasing after calls to back up lone workers. This will have a huge impact both physically and mentally. Cutting the number of smaller stations in favour of bigger hubs would also be a blow for staff travelling to work in the face of rising prices.

The Trust must take our concerns into account before pushing these plans ahead, as they are putting balancing budgets before patient care".

UNISON Press Releases

Protect our Pensions

If you are reaching the end of your career, or even just starting it, if you're working in administration or in management then the changes that the Conservative- led coalition government are trying to force through will affect you.

During May 2011 I attended Unison's national Ambulance Sector seminar as one of 3 representatives of this branch. There has not been an Ambulance-only event like this for some time now, but this year there were delegates in attendance from all of the United Kingdoms Ambulance branches.

The Seminars main theme was the proposed changes to pensions- changes that will affect everybody working within the Public Services Sector. A few years ago the NHS Pension scheme was described as unsustainable at its current rate, so it was proposed and accepted that we would increase our contributions by 1% in order to improve its sustainability for future beneficiaries.

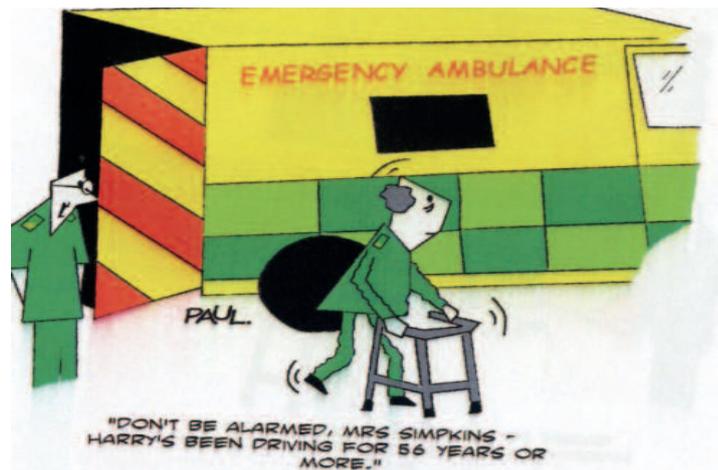
This action certainly saved the NHS Pension scheme which is now cash rich to the tune of £2.6bn. Government proposals are that all public service pension schemes, which include the NHS, will increase the contributions made by its members by a massive 50%. This hike in contributions is not to make the pension scheme viable- as I said it is 'cash rich' at present. The extra funds raised by this action will go straight into the Treasury's pockets to pay off the debt left by the legacy of the banking crises. The likelihood is that you will actually be paying more than the examples shown above with inclusion of overtime and expenses. We are all paying more for everyday items such as food, gas, electricity and petrol with little or no pay rise this year, which in effect equates to a substantial pay cut ! Changes have already been made to the state pension age which means that by the year 2046, men and women alike will have to work until they are 68 years of age before they can claim state pension. So we will all have to work longer and pay more but receive less.

Whether you're one of the lowest or the highest paid workers, if you are in the NHS pension scheme then you will be affected. Its time to put a stop to this now by joining UNISON and stand alongside other public service workers in the fight to save our pensions.

There are several ways you can do this;

1. JOIN UNISON if you are not already a member because this will let you have your say in what happens-a chance to fight for the right to protect your pensions.
2. Become a 'Pensions Contact' You will take on the role of discussing with colleagues the issues we face, passing on news about campaign activities. You don't have to be an expert on different types of pension schemes. You just need to be good at talking to colleagues and keeping them up to date with our campaign. You will be a guide giving members information on how they can find out what UNISON is doing, what changes the government wants to make to their scheme and how they can get involved in saving our pensions.
- 3 Provide feedback to your UNISON branch, this keeps us updated on how people are feeling and what they are saying; it lets us make decisions on the strategic course of action.

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN NOW TO STOP THIS ATTACK ON OUR FUTURE !



*These figures are based on-Pay Circular (AFC) 2/2011 assuming top of the spine point within the banding plus 25% unsocial hours paid.

	Annual Earnings *	Current Contributions Per annum	Proposed Increase per annum	Proposed Contributions Per annum
Band 2	£21,253.75	£1275.23	£637.62	£1912.85
Band 3	£23,533.75	£1412.03	£706.02	£2118.05
Band 4	£27,247.50	£1634.85	£817.43	£2452.28
Band 5	£34,531.25	£2071.88	£1035.94	£3107.82
Band 6	£42,736.25	£2564.18	£1282.09	£3846.27
Band 7	£50,196.25	£3011.78	£1505.89	£4517.67

Above are some examples, based on Salaries per banding, of what you could expect to pay for the purpose of paying off the bankers debt.

Steve Imrie UNISON Joint Norfolk County Lead



Don't gaze into the crystal ball read the history book

It may be of

some value to members in particular new personal to the NHS, when looking at the Trust's proposals for Foundation Trust Status to understand what has gone before and to be more familiar with all of the rationale behind it, UNISON Ambulance Sector has advice for the branch and members on this subject to be found on their website.

The current A3 Cartoon advertising the advantages of Foundation Status conveys very little of the whole of the rationale for yet another title, re-jigged to speed up the whole of the NHS Reforms. The PTS contractual award to Norvic is an integral link and impossible to divorce from these reforms.

The broad speak is the 'parable of an invitation' to embark on a "journey" none know better than ambulance staff for the need to not even rely on the Sat Nav but to ensure that the road map for "the journey" is ready and clear at hand, this one even with the benefit of past experience is conspicuous in its absence.

In short the NHS reforms are about Leadership, Accountability failure, Performance, Funding, with dabbling politicians easily mistaken as Commissioners and Regulators. There are many staff present with 20 years or less service to recall the original selling menu for Trust Status both to the Public, the Patients and those Staff employed at the time. This time around there is no detailed brochure, only a repeat journey of 21 years ago. The selling points then were- Local Autonomy and control over our own finances- Higher local pay rates- being able to retain our surpluses to plough back into equipment, Personal and manpower statistics etc, it even went further to include- Income Generation schemes- to include Transport- Communications and Training innovations. Leadership and Total Quality Management (TQM) and last but not least the enigma of accountability and funding.

As others in 1990 I attended umpteen road shows both public and in house; the man in the back row shouted; "your Trust will sink before it leaves the harbour" well it didn't, not because it was to be autonomous, but because the government was never prepared to let it sink, and so it is the same this time, the politicians Commissioners, or regulators are certainly all in it together, still pulling the strings especially the purse strings, but the funding unfortunately is only one part of the problem.

In less than 5 years the problems associated with this were becoming painfully apparent as Norfolk first wave Trust merged with Cambs and Suffolk in 1995; in the events leading up to 1998-99 there were increasing leadership and funding problems culminating with a full public inquiry; more changes were followed by a period of sustained recovery. Norvic first emerged as an organisation doing PTS work about this time and was started by an ex member of road staff from Hellesdon, it has grown significantly since then to the extent where some of our own road staff have been working in tandem with them, openly saying that they could earn higher rates of pay; in later years it has set up its own training centre and diversified its interests, the association with them has been a long one, it is an association which of course has given rise to all sorts of conclusions and rumours, and now the loss of this PTS contract. The real significance of this is that like any other private provider it has to make a profit, we do not; the staff are asking the obvious question, the one we should all be having an open and honest debate about; **"Why then have we lost it?"**

We were not all automatically made members with any need to opt out, we listened, heard the prophets, trusted the speakers, and looked into the crystal ball, we now know what happened with the benefit of the history of mergers, re-shuffles and politics. Staff ask about the membership issue; the membership issue is pretty irrelevant in the well manufactured foggy uncertainty of things, in or out, just a demonstration of 'all in it together' tick box feel to add weight to the application, but Staff do respect hearing it as it is and will rightly draw their own conclusions.

It seems this time we are only stakeholders not shareholders as last time, in some years the (Trust EAAT) would give staff vouchers to the tune of £25 pounds at Christmas time, sort of a bonus if the surplus had been surplus enough, how on earth it was worked out no one knew, (perhaps a bit like the targets!), but we didn't rely on it, or complain when we got it, or didn't get it; of course the projected higher local pay rates were not viable and soon fell by the wayside in favour of a return to National Terms & Conditions.

On the plus side we have seen real efforts from staff and managers rising to the challenge to improve and install Patient care and employment law in every way possible; but since 1990 the journey has been a 'rough old ride' with in all 4 Chair's and 6 Chief Exec's and far to many recently unexplained re-shuffles. Time to refuel and make the first stop to re-connect with a real investment to produce a credible "Investors in People" qualification to underpin the application for Foundation Status and then; Belt up for 'the journey' this time it may be as well to not only invest in a spare tyre or two but to enlist the help of a reputable roadside recovery service. Whatever happens "Its Your say" as the slogan goes, so check for full visibility, choose your route, then sit back and count the milestones.

E.M Comms

Hospitals exposed yet again on spot checks

How obvious does it have to be, Self regulating is like asking a group of aspiring degree seeking 6th Form Students to mark their own exam papers, as once again a spot check exposes the system of 'Self Regulation' as a dangerously flawed practice.

The Government throws caution to the wind in its blind panic to get Trusts into Foundation Status at any price, its already clear that there is insufficient monitoring taking place with some insular Multi Million pound Trust boards who, in far to many cases are allowing for ambition to take priority over ability and getting away with the usual cavalier cracked record of explanations - "we were unaware" this is a learning curve, we are reviewing things to put systems in place, we need to move on" they certainly do. There are it seems, too many faces easily able to get into the wrong places. So much for the 'Board to the Ward' leadership approach, currently much vaunted in the NHS statements of intent.

Bad practice is apparent both before and when the application process is being presented, and therefore is encouraged to continue when given the rubber stamp of acceptance, the few it seems are still able to undermine the many.

EM Comms

Tim's doing OK

Tim Papworth from Lodge Farm Felmingham Nr North Walsham
His Dad (Jim Papworth) asked if I would just put an acknowledgement in our Newsletter to again thank all those who were instrumental in contributing to his care and attention when in attendance at the fall incident last year.

Tim continues towards making a full recovery.

I do not know who attended, but the ones that did, do. E.M Comms

A day at the fair



A sunny day at the East of England Craft Fair in April at the Norwich Showground from left to right-

Gina Pryon- Victoria Maillardet- Hugh Kingwell

Reproduced by- Kind permission of all.

E.M Comms

UNISON Branch Officer Listing 2011

Please note where a Branch Officer has taken on other roles these are also listed.

Chairperson Tim Killick 07540079994 tkillick@eeas-unison.com
Secretary Gary Applin 07773136495 gaplin@eeas-unison.com
Branch Convenor Barry Jarvis 07725065539 Barry.Jarvis@eastamb.nhs.uk
Treasurer Wendy Senter 07900272897 w.senter@eastamb.nhs.uk
Membership Officer Jackie Robinson 07890357493 Jackie.robinson2@nhs.net
Branch Health & Safety Officer Rick Gray 07876182084 rick.gray@eastamb.nhs.uk
Casework Coordinator Tim Killick 07540079994 tkillick@eeas-unison.com
Communications Eric Miller 07787644678 eric_miller@talk21.com
Newsletter Tele/ Fax 01603-737176.

Communications

Please Note- Your items and input into the Newsletter is always appreciated, remember we are circulating & servicing an area of 7500 sq miles. Each Newsletter as it goes out, also goes straight onto the branch website and can normally easily be accessed by going into the Branch site at www.eeas-unison.com as well as all the "back issues" of the newsletter since the merger, so it is a two way street.

Its circulation is 750 copies, sent via County Leads for distribution, it is also sent out on PDF, if you wish to be included in this mailing please forward your e-mail address to myself. Also other up to date branch business can be found on this site including the Minutes of branch committee meetings and other activity taken on your behalf by the Branch Officers. To assist communications best practice we have also requested that all minutes of the Trust Staff Partnership Forums where branch activity takes place on your behalf, are also made readily available for members information as well as all those employed by the Trust.

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Branch Website address is www.eeas-unison.com

Retired Members Secretary & Pensions Steve Beckley 01692-582913

s.w.beckley@homecall.co.uk

Education

Education Coordinator & Lifelong Learning Ian Cook 07932680885

ian.cook@eastamb.nhs.uk or ickook@aol.com

NON EMERGENCY SERVICES Officer Carole Taylor 07745549287

carole.taylor@eastamb.nhs.uk

Disabled Members Dave Edwards 07884327916 Dave.edwards1@nhs.net

LGBT Members Candy Tillson candy.tillson@aol.com 07970952234

County Leads

Beds County lead Rep Vacant ?

Herts County Lead Jackie Robinson 07890357493 Jackie.robinson2@nhs.net

Cambus County Lead Rep Peter Davis p.davis21@ntworld.com 07718904993

Essex County Lead Rep John Lee 07719660747 John.Lee@essexamb.nhs.uk

Norfolk County Lead (Job shared) Stephen Imrie 07717738038

Stephen.Imrie@eastamb.nhs.uk - and- Carole Taylor 07745549287

carole.taylor@eastamb.nhs.uk

Suffolk County Lead Darren Jones 07709353919 Darren.jones@eastamb.nhs.uk

Women's Officer Carole Taylor 07745549287 carole.taylor@eaamb.nhs.uk

Black Members Officer Anand Pillai 07504703170 anand.pillai@eastamb.nhs.uk

Equalities Officer Anand Pillai

Health & Safety Leads

H & S Lead Beds Vacant - For the time being contact Rik Gray

H & S Lead Essex John Cogan John.Cogan@eastamb.nhs.uk

H & S Lead Norfolk Janet Flack 07592074972 janet.flack@eaamb.nhs.uk

H & S Lead Herts Vacant- For time being contact Rik Gray

H & S Lead Suffolk Jeff Pittman 07941436112 jeff.pittman@myway.com

H&S Lead Cambridge Phil Ecuyer philecuyer@hotmail.com 07929548163

Branch Accounts Auditors Andy Broad - Brenda Palfreman- Helen Leek- Richard Lewis

Young Members Officer Vacant

Regional Organiser UNISON Tim Roberts t.roberts@unison.org.uk

UNISON Direct 0845 355 0845 or visit UNISON at www.unison.org.uk

Note- Please inform Communications if your details change in any way at all.

Candy Tillson



I would like to introduce myself, my name is Candy Tillson, I have been in the Ambulance service for the last 23 yrs and a UNISON rep for quite a few of them. At the last Unison AGM I made the decision to stand for the post of LGBT Officer for the East of England Ambulance Service. No one opposed it, so here I am. The first thing I would like to say is...

You can be assured of my confidentiality regarding any

matter you wish to discuss. UNISON and the Trust believes everyone should be treated equally regardless of race, disability, or sexual orientation.

I see one of my roles as 'being the mouthpiece' to raise any issues that affect any LGBT member, that doesn't mean I will only deal with LGBT problems, as first and foremost I will be a UNISON rep for all staff.

On a brighter note:-

UNISON in partnership with the Trust will be attending Brighton Pride to take part in the parade in a Trust Ambulance on August 13th, I do believe this is the first time this has happened, so it would be nice if you could join us. There will be a Poster out soon (sent out with this Newsletter) with more information.

On UNISON's website at www.unison.org.uk/out there, is a dedicated section to LGBT, from there you can read 'out in unison' newsletter.

On a final note I would like to say; if the Trust and UNISON are not aware of the issues you might face, how can we begin to resolve them ?

Please note my contact number etc are on the back of this Newsletter. Candy Tillson LGBT Officer.

Members Surveys

Recent discussions at Branch Committee level have revealed that it would be of benefit to members and those that represent them, to at appropriate intervals give the membership an opportunity to take part in various surveys, this will be carried out electronically as and when the Branch Survey Working Group in conjunction with the branch committee agree on the subject matter.

Members will be given good prior notice and kept informed as this new initiative goes along.

Cambridge Health and Safety Lead Ballot Results

The result of the above elections was that:- Phil Ecuyer is the new Health and Safety Lead for the County of Cambridge. Well done Phil- We thank Alan Chamberlain for taking part in this ballot and for all his work in the past on the subject of Health and Safety.