



Unison Newsletter

East of England Ambulance Service

East of England
Ambulance Branch
20106

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UNISON's Negotiators continue to give the 2007 Pay Offer the Carbon Footprint

Unisons lead negotiator Mike Jackson has issued further Press releases criticising the government for not stumping up enough cash to cover the N.H.S. Pay reforms, and continues to reject the 2007 Pay offer of 1.9 % on the basis of the amount and its unfair application.

In responding to the 'Kings Fund' report which claims the National pay and grading agreement, (AFC) rolled out almost three years ago has exceeded all cost estimates.

Mr Jackson pointed out that two-thirds of the additional 15 % nurses had received in the last three years was due to the annual cost of living increases. Much of the rest was to deliver fair pay and to end pay discrimination he said adding; don't forget better paid staff are more likely to stay with the NHS, Patient care cannot be improved if there are staff shortages and high staff turnover.

As the report also points out AFC offers benefits for both Staff and Patients. For example; equal Pay, simplified payroll administration and better Partnership working— something we should all support in a modern industrial setting. For patients new healthcare roles have been introduced, leading to patients being seen quicker and receiving higher quality care. Mr Jackson said that he was pleased the report recognises the Knowledge and Skills framework as a vital element of the Agenda for Change programme of continuity. However as the report warns, that unless the government ensures that the agreement is properly embedded and the associated framework becomes fully operational, the full benefits for staff and patients will never be realised.

NHS Pay Talks to resume at 30th July

NHS Employers and Union representatives meet at the 30th July to discuss a new settlement for health Staff in England. Mike Jackson UNISON's lead negotiator said the union were hopeful their would be more money on the table. The governments decision to stage the pay award in England had outraged health workers who say it reduces the 2.5% increase recommended by the independent review body to a paltry 1.9 %. The devolved governments in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales all chose to pay the award in full without staging.

Previous talks aimed at resolving the dispute broke up without agreement on July 19th.

No details of the offer expected today were available before the meeting, due to begin at 3pm.

If an improved offer is made, all UNISON MEMBERS in the N.H S. will be balloted as to whether it is acceptable to them. Ballot papers are likely to be sent out on August 20th and will be due back by September 13th. Members are advised to check the news and health pages of the UNISON and Branch Website for updates.

The normal branch circular will also be sent to Health Branches as results come in.

Greening up the Workplace

UNISON's younger members have pledged themselves to campaigning on an environmental theme this year, namely "Greening the Workplace"

At their AGM of the 15th July Unison's National young members Forum agreed to focus their energies on campaigning against climate change and for every workplace to have a trade union rep that has time off to address environmental issues.

Our own Stuart Reeves elected National Young members Chair at the meeting said "As trade unionists, and as young people we are in a strong position to campaign against the threat of climate change and for a positive approach to a sustainable future for us all. Its vital that Unison's 'Greening the workplace' campaign is supported, and our first aim must be to raise young members awareness of the issues and what they can do to make a difference. We also believe its essential to make sure campaigning is maximised in the workplace, and we will be supporting the call for workplace environmental reps with official facility time. The Forum also agreed to back calls for more young people to get involved in being Pension scheme Trustees to step up the campaigning for the right to vote at 16 years of age and to endorse Unison's strategy in winning a living wage. Unison's living wage strategy is about building broad based community alliances which recognises how low pay damages the whole community, and winning a living wage established through calculations based on real need, and which recognise, for example, geographical differences in the cost of living

Stuart Reeves Young Members Officer & Lead County Representative for Hertfordshire.





A Delegate's view from the National Conference

I represented the East of England Ambulance Branch with Jackie Robinson for the above Conference. Our Branch did not send us with any pre-determined motions, but this in no way changed my want to listen carefully to most of the proposed and selected motions / composites put forward by other branches. Some of the proposals were of great interest and far reaching, but there were also some which were somewhat repetitive of other Conferences. In some cases it was a regular group of faces from familiar locations. Prior going to Conference you receive some documents, for those who have not been before, it does help if you have a good look through them prior to your arrival at the Conference, There is a composite book, a collection of similar motions that have been 'compounded' plus also the initial layout for the days ahead.

Each day on your seat in the hall you are greeted with some more updated material, Conference bulletin and Conference Today, which does help you through each day. In the hall there is a Loop system which assists those with hearing problems to understand the events as they happen. Also issued each day is the programme of motions scheduled, it is quite common for some to be withdrawn, or fall due to one of the others being accepted or fail. Each session at this Conference there was an invited speaker, they did not all speak for a set time due to their subject, so this affected the amount of business that could be cleared as far as motions were concerned. The President usually kept a reasonable rein on each motion. I was interested in Composite A, the Arms trade, and the speeches this would generate. It was apparent that not many delegates may have fully comprehended the trade and its impact on the UK as a whole, it was an emotive subject as the delegates going up to the platform demonstrated. Composite G, the comprehensive spending review was also well discussed and passed. Again an emotive subject with many views on how the cash should be spent, in other cases where the money should come from, some suggestions were quite amusing, not least the distribution !

On Wednesday there were quite a few contentious issues ie; The Marketing of Public Services. - Organising and recruiting of members to the Union— Organisation of Migrant Workers.— Climate Change chaos — Unison's commitment to the environment, with a guest speaker from the Philippines. These were followed by Cuba— Palestine— Public services in the developing world— Composite H Europe. On this particular day there were many subjects that interested me for one reason or another. The subject on Migrant Workers revealed some of the hardships encountered when you go abroad to work and do not necessarily have full command of the language let alone local conditions of employment. It looked at the plight of these people, as to why they have come here to work, many have a grasp of the language but need confidence to use it and participate within the community. Some of these are all too willing to put up with the difficulties because they want to send their earnings home to their families, many of whom live in sparse conditions, a topic I found interesting. The speaker from the Philippines gave vivid details of life out there with all the local problems.

The Island of Cuba a place dear to many, was well represented. An Island set in the Caribbean sea with sugar plantations, bananas and warm seas. The situation of that islands economy was well illustrated, much of the problem stemming from the embargoes of trade with the USA since the 50's, but to our surprise the Health service there is one of the worlds best. There is little waiting time for treatment after diagnosis, with none of the queues we experience in the UK. The subject of Palestine, an old chestnut from earlier conferences reappeared again, it was apparent to me that the speakers had not understood the history of the state of Israel, created out of WWI, and post the end of the Ottoman empire. (The countryside of the area was well documented by T.E. Laurence following his exploits during 1918-1922 when he carried out a survey from Alexandria to Damascus and from the Med to Iraq) The speaker at the conference mentioned the recent wars of 1967 and 1973 but with some confusion about the history, however it is very apparent that the Palestinian people as well as the Israelis are doing far from well in their current situation. The situation de-stabilising the whole of the middle east, let alone the western world relying on the oil supplies from the Gulf. In 1973 I remembered the petrol rationing in the UK 2* was easy to obtain but not 4*, it was scarce, the price of all oil products went up significantly. Going back to the discussion there was talk of boycotting Israeli products and trade. it was pointed out that boycotts did not work as expected, with examples of Africa and Iran. I found that discussion very one sided this year, no one looked at life as seen by a Jewish resident in the region. Composite H, Europe again was a reasonable discussion and it dealt with the imminent changes, agreements, treaties especially where they will affect Public services in the UK. It is believed that these if implemented, could privatise and affect the services and the people eligible for them, ie people with limited incomes.

Thursday started with a debate on equal pay, followed by a guest speaker Baroness Howells speaking on the bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, listening to the speaker I felt some of the statements went a little too far, for example compensation in one form or another. I found myself recalling the days of the Empire Wind rush journeys from the Caribbean to the UK bringing people to work for London Transport, now two generations on one can see the effect on the capital, but what would have happened if these willing volunteers had not come to work for London Transport. In many cases these people were / are happy with their lot, what would life back home for them been like today I ask ?

The next subject was the effects of BNP in the areas where they have won elections, and the effects that it may have on the local population was well debated. After lunch Rulebook changes were debated and most passed. On Friday the situation on Pay was well and truly aired, how unfair a 2.5 % pay rise is which is well below inflation, but compounded by staging to 1.9 % gave a lively debate with warnings of potential action. Many other motions were up for debate, some lost some not but I have recollected what I found to be the most interesting or controversially representative of the Conference.

Report submitted by Peter Davis County Lead Cambridge.

UNISON National Delegate Conference 2007

I attended this Conference for the third year running as the Beds & Herts Branch Delegate, but this will be the last year that we three former branches can allocate individual places. This will therefore on the overall number we can now send as a branch– despite the significant increase in our post-merger membership base. However, the rules do allow for an additional women's delegate per branch, so this will provide an additional opportunity for one of our many female members to actually attend as a delegate in their own right.

Delegate Conference, whilst fundamentally the same as the Health Sector Conference held earlier in the year, deals with a far wider- ranging agenda of issues. Its function is to facilitate and consider motions that ask for changes to the UNISON rules. It also encompasses and addresses all the many varied issues that UNISON is involved with, examples of which are listed below.

- International Issues, such as the never ending Palestinian / Israel conflict, arms to Iraq etc.
- The fight against fascism / BNP, the abolition of the slave trade and the mistreatment of migrant workers, human rights, anti-poverty and gender equality. Pensions, Privatisation. Public services and equal pay. Local Government, Education and Health.

Personally, I have found that the National Delegate Conference tends to attract less branch interest than the Health Service. Nonetheless we did manage to send two delegates and two visitors this year, but it can make for a very long day when you are stuck indoors with the sun shining. However there were four things that really pricked my interest this year.

Privatisation of Public Services.

With Privatisation of public services on the increase I went along to the women's caucus meeting after the Conference closed on Day 1 to listen to a group of Care workers whose employment has been taken over by a private company called Freemantle.

The women work with vulnerable adults in Barnet, Hertfordshire, and were at Conference to seek support from UNISON because after just a few months with their new employers, and despite the company's profits not being under threat they have cut the basic hourly pay of these workers from £8.37 to £5.63 and their annual leave allowance from 39 days to 28. !!

These staff believe that Freemantle want them and the union out of there, and they are considering taking strike action. Their main concern is the welfare of their clients, all of whom are vulnerable adults, as they feel that the standards of care will be allowed to deteriorate. Unison has offered their support to the staff at Freemantle. I shall watch their progress with interest because it is a timely reminder of the risks of privatisation, and having just recently lost over 100 of our Beds and Herts PTS Staff to the private sector, I shall certainly be keeping a close eye out for any such similar changes appearing on the horizon for our recently TUPE's staff.

Public Services International

Guest Speaker, Annie Geron received a standing ovation as she talked to conference about her work with PSI and the constant risk of danger and intimidation she faces as she continues her work as a unionist fighting to protect the rights of migrant workers in the Philippines. Annie is currently the General Secretary of PSI and has played a key role in securing the arrest of a senior member of the Union on the grounds of corruption. She described how she has had to endure frequent false arrest, torture, and abuse, with threats made upon her life simply because of her union activities. Annie asked UNISON to petition our government to continue their support of overseas unions with their work in protecting migrant workers, so if we think we are having a hard job of it guys, spare a thought for Annie Geron ..?

Card Votes

There were two card votes this year, the first of which only required a majority vote to be carried, whilst the second which because it would effect a rule change, required a clear two thirds majority to be carried.

To Lobby or Not ?

The NHS "Stop the Cuts Campaign" have named the day for their National demonstration– Oct 13th 2007, and the plan is to hold this event in London. The debate centred on whether or not a march should take place. Plenty of speakers stood up in support of a march whilst only a few stood against the idea on the basis that unless we ensure a really impressive turnout, it would be better not to have it, as it is not a very good demonstration of public– workers strength of feeling if only a token number of people turned out. When the question was put to conference, the delegates card votes were too similar in number to count as a clear steer, and therefore a call for a card vote was made with the result announced the following morning indicating that a clear majority existed in favour of the march to take place. So that motion was carried.



The 13 Week Rule

Currently when anybody joins Unison they cannot access any membership benefits or Legal services until they have been a member for a qualifying period of thirteen weeks. The motion proposed at conference was that this should be reduced to 4 weeks. There are mixed views about this; those who support the change believe that 13 weeks is too long, and their speakers usually use the example of taking out any insurance policy and being covered from day one, as opposed to having to wait. Those against including the National Executive Council themselves argue that it takes thirteen weeks of subscriptions to equate to the basic engagement costs for a Solicitor. There were many speakers for and against this motion, and after a lengthy debate the question was put to Conference, but as with the previous motion was too close to confirm through a visible card count in the hall. As this would be a rule change it would require a clear two thirds majority decision and the outcome of the subsequent card vote showed a clear majority against the proposal to reduce the qualifying period. So this rule remains unchanged. What I found ironic was this very same rule change was proposed two years ago at this Conference and went to a card vote, and, yep you've guessed it, it failed then too. So I'm afraid our newly joining members will have to continue paying their subs for 13 weeks before being in receipt of benefits.

So that's Conference over for another year. Next years venue is likely to be Bournemouth again and dates will be confirmed in the near future. If you think you would like to go next year either as a visitor or a delegate then please make your branch or divisional secretary aware in advance as delegate/visitor places accommodation and abstractions from duty (where appropriate) need to be booked in advance. Delegates and visitors are appointed at the AGM's and you do not have to be a Steward or rep to attend for the branch.

Submitted by Jackie Robinson Beds & Cambridge
Divisional Secretary & Lead County Rep for Bedfordshire

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Occupational Hazards ? its not too early to get your FREE WILL set up by UNISON - JOIN NOW



Unison Newsletter

This Monthly Newsletter is for the benefit of UNISON East of England Ambulance Branch consisting of (Beds & Herts- Essex & EAAT) UNISON Membership. It is produced on a Monthly basis under the new UNISON East of England Branch No 20106

Your Contributions are therefore welcome BUT must reach the Editor by the last day of the month for the next edition.

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Circulation of this Newsletter is to all Workplace addresses within the East of England Ambulance Trust & all UNISON Contacts.

UNISON Regional Office & Mableton Place.
Please note in future Newsletter Monthly publications can also be found on the on the new UNISON East of England Branch Website.
At WWW.eeas-unison.com

Your UNISON Regional Officer John Toomey is based at Bury St Edmunds on 01284-772111 or j.toomey@unison.co.uk and Team Administrator Gwen Williams on 01284-772115 - g.e.williams@unison.co.uk

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WEEKLY PAY T	ANNUAL PAY	YOUR SUBSCRIPTION - WHAT YOU PAY PER WEEK	PER MONTH BAND	WHAT YOU PAY
Up to £38.47	Up to £2,000	£0.30	£1.30	A
£38.48-£96.16	£2,001-£5,000	£0.81	£3.50	B
£96.17-£153.84	£5,001-£8,000	£1.22	£5.30	C
£153.85-£211.53	£8,001-£11,000	£1.52	£6.60	D
£211.54-£269.23	£11,001-£14,000	£1.81	£7.85	E
£269.24-£326.92	£14,001-£17,000	£2.24	£9.70	F
£326.93-£384.61	£17,001-£20,000	£2.65	£11.50	G
£384.62-£480.76	£20,001-£25,000	£3.23	£14.00	H
£480.77-£576.92	£25,001-£30,000	£3.98	£17.25	I
£576.93-£673.08	£30,001-£35,000	£4.68	£20.30	J
£673.08+	over £35,000	£5.19	£22.50	K

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Weekly Four Weekly Monthly

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Now please sign and date below.

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YOUR Unison Branch 20106 Contacts down to & inc County Leads are:-

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- | | | |
|--|---|--|
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