



Branch Newsletter

Regional Ambulance Seminar 2007 Cambridge



This years Regional Ambulance Seminar took place at the Health Innovation Centre in Cambridge on Friday 5th October. This was the third year that the Eastern Region Ambulance branches have hosted such an event, but the first year we have done so as a single branch. As always none of this would have been possible had it not been for the exceptional organising talents of Gwen Williams (Regional Team Administrator) who co-ordinated everything (including the four staffside leads from start to finish.

Regional Officer John Toomey opened the Seminar, and Regional Health Committee Chair Jenny Saunders chaired it for the third year running. The days programme kicked off with a presentation by the East of England Ambulance Trust Director of Operations Oskan Edwardson, entitled 'The Changing face of Emergency Care provision'. Oskan provided us with an overview of the direction that Ambulance Trusts will be expected to take into the future. The presentation took us through the evolving face of Ambulance trusts, changes in demand, the strategic direction, developing emergency care systems, and of course Call Connect, the demands and impact it will have on future workforce requirements and clinical care.

This was followed by a thought provoking presentation entitled, The Future of Ambulance Services, by Adrian Matthews, Associate Director for service delivery, who gave us a personal, but chillingly accurate view of the all too real threats that exist for today's NHS Ambulance services from both the voluntary and private sectors. It also highlighted the past the present and the future threats and, whilst in the past it appeared to be confined to the PATIENT Transport services, it is now clearly encroaching into Courier services, training provision, and A & E Services. Next up to the podium were Unison's Ambulance senior Officer, Sam Oestreicher, and Ambulance Sector Chair Jo Conaghan who incidentally is also the only serving member of

Each of the mornings presentations prompted lively discussion and debate. After Unison general organiser, Cheryl Godber gave a presentation about an often overlooked but essential element of effective Branch organisation– the Branch Development plan, Cheryl explained why having a plan is necessary, what it should cover, having provided us with an organising and development checklist and template, set us the task of completing it from our branch perspective. So having selected a 'Question Master' and scribe, (Staffside lead Barry Jarvis) the group set about completing the checklist, in theory It probably shouldn't have taken more than 15 minutes to complete but due to some initial difficulty in getting to grips with the traffic light method of scoring / evaluation, with some preferring to use a 'Yes

No' principle instead (okay okay) so it was just me that struggled with it.. we eventually completed it, and were able to identify the areas that we as a branch meet expectations for, and those that require attention. The next phase is to develop the plan taking these areas into consideration. In addition to the planned presentations we were also pleased to have representatives from two of our membership benefit providers, David Beechener from Britannia, and Ian May from UIA, who fetched along plenty of information leaflets and 'freebies'.

This was also an opportunity to meet our new Regional Head of health Tracey Lambert who took over the reins from Geoff Reason earlier this year. Tracey explained about the current Regional Cuts campaign activities including the 'Keep the NHS Working' postcard campaign, and the National Demo to take place in London on 3rd November.



Secretary's Corner

I would like to start this time around by thanking all those that came along to the Branch Seminar in Cambridge on Oct 5th. I'm sure that everyone had a good day and found the varied guest speakers interesting and informative. A thanks especially to Gwen Williams for organising and putting it all together for us. I think special mention should also go to Adrian Matthews and Oskan Edwardson who gave very honest and open presentations on the enormous challenges that we face in the future around Call Connect, and the threats we are open to from the Private sector against ALL of our services. We are currently experiencing those threats from within PTS, and I believe this just to be the tip of the iceberg. I hope that others left feeling the same as I did that now more than ever, we must get involved and work together in facing those challenges head on to preserve the rights and working conditions of our staff. On the issue of Pay, there has been a slight delay in reaching a National agreement which has been out of our hands. As you will have been aware UNISON held a democratic ballot of its membership, and the result of that ballot was to accept the offer. Unfortunately some of the other partner unions didn't act as quickly as UNISON in reporting back their position, so the Pay Negotiating Council were unable to formally ratify the award. However I have now received confirmation that the offer has been accepted by all unions, and the award can go ahead., we will therefore be working with the management side in ensuring that the uplift and backpay are put into pay-packets as soon as possible, we will do all we can to try to achieve this within the November / December pay runs. We will also be negotiating with management on the local pay award for staff still on Trust Contracts, and will report further any news.

Workplace / Station Representatives.

Due to the ongoing harmonisation of our Branch Policies, could staff please note that the election forms for these positions will be going out a bit later than previously stated. The harmonised election process should be agreed at the next branch committee meeting on December 14th, and the election papers will be sent out shortly afterwards. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of every Station and Department electing a local representative, as mentioned before, the challenges we now face are enormous, and the Trust so geographically spread, that is only with the commitment and effort of the local reps working with us that we can begin to do the best for the staff that we can.

Kevin Risley Branch Secretary



Welfare in need

Notes from the Eastern Region Welfare Committee meeting at Bury Office on 4th October.

At a previous meeting there was concern shown again about the lack of attendees, although there should be a total of 10 members on the Committee. A list of committee had been obtained, and he said members had been circulated with the date of the meeting for this date, but no apologies have been received.

Five Welfare Officers were in attendance:-

Sheila Reynolds Chair

David Berridge Vice Chair

Rosemary Stebbing Suffolk County

Lyndsey Charnock Norwich City

Alan Chamberlain East of England Ambulance Service.



The Unions aspiration is that each Regional Welfare Committee should hopefully fund raise at least £1K towards the Bucket & Spade appeal, but to be realistic with the small numbers of active members of this Committee, this seems to be quite an unrealistic target at present.

Suggestions put forward included approaching individual branches for donations, and or participation, as well as contacting Brian Jones the National Fund Raiser for attendance at the next meeting of the committee in December to give support, advice and even financial support to achieve the expected outcome.

It was decided that a Training/ Seminar day will be held on Thursday 6th March 2008 at UNISON Bury St Edmunds Office with a provisional agenda of any of the following:-

Unison Case Worker Presentation

Debt Awareness Presentation

Housing Problems Awareness

Benefit Awareness

Alcohol Problems & M .E. Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

It was hoped that, although it was apparent that Welfare for various reasons, was in real terms not taken seriously within branches, a good turn out of Branch Representatives would make the day a useful and productive one. Linda Thomas is the Link Trustee for the Eastern Region, it was agreed to invite her to the next meeting.

Allan Chamberlain Branch Welfare Officer.

Diaries & Reps for 2008

Next years Diaries have arrived and the distribution is being arranged through your current Departmental and Station Representatives. PLEASE ALSO LOOK OUT FOR THE ANNUAL ELECTION FORMS TO ENABLE YOU TO ELECT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE AS WELL FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR.

Communications are available to you with a fast response from the branch's website www.eeas-unison.com

Our Disability Officer Dave Edwards attended the Conference 'Disability Capital' hosted by Ken Livingstone Mayor of London, which focused this year on London the equal City. The varied programme featured discussion about rights and equality, discrimination law, and the diverse history of Disabled and Deaf people. Delegates had the opportunity to find out more about these issues and engage with Mayoral Policies and strategies.



The Conference highlighted several areas where it is considered that people who have disabilities have been placed to the bottom of the list when it actually comes down to the implementation of policies to which would address their problems and make their lives (whilst never on a par with others) a great deal easier than it is at present. Points made:

- Their Rights are long overdue.
- Yes I have a disability, but I can still work albeit a bit slower. or I may need some assistance, so what ?
- Public Transport was well up the Agenda and now 95% of London buses are low floored and have, although limited, wheelchair and pushchair space, therefore more assessable to all.
- More spaces converted to get wheelchairs on board.

It is a shame that not only our Eastern Region, but others are not getting the message quickly enough, and following suit.

The following is an example of problems close to home arising from a breakdown of rights for those in need.

Patient Transport Breaking the Silence

For several years 'Transport for All', has been the voice of accessible transport users in London, whom are a member lead organisation that campaigns for the Rights of disabled people to travel with the same freedoms as non disabled people. T..F.A. has been highlighting the concerns for people having to use the Patient Transport Service's mainly in London. There is clear evidence that many people use their Taxi cards to travel to Hospital appointments because they find the Patient Transport Service unreliable or have had bad experiences with it. Taxi cards are used in the London area for reduced travel for people with disabilities, but it is still expensive which of course limits their number of trips, not the intention of the scheme which is meant to improve the ability of taxi-card holders to have a better social life with access to shops etc. Also it was found that many disabled and older people are unaware of how the PTS system works and how to access it.

With the recent cuts in the NHS budget in London this has become a pressing issue. The current system is that individual hospitals/ Trusts commission a service provider to supply a Patient Transport Service which is used to supply the service for a period of 5 years. Currently the London Ambulance Service, which used to supply the service for most London Hospitals only provides for about one third, the rest are contracts held by private companies.

These include Minicab firms, and organisations such as the St Johns Ambulance service. Concerns have been raised about the PTS Service by many Patients, and there are several issues which are causing serious problems. In order to examine

The London Ambulance service provided transport, paid for the Conference centre and the event was attended by Age Concern, LAS Patients Forum, Commissioners from several London Hospitals, Managers, and other providers. Unfortunately nobody from any other regulatory bodies attended.

The most powerful intervention during the Conference came from Helen Sibthorpe, a 'Transport for All' member, cancer patient and regular user of the PTS Service at Guys & St Thomas Hospital, (not run by the London Ambulance Service).In referring to the Non LAS Minicab, and Hospital Transport companies)——

Helen said:-

“ The NHS loves ‘Acronyms’ words made up from the initial letters of other words. I have one for the second category, Inefficient Non Emergency patient Transport ; INEPT. They are subject to commercial contracts that the Hospital Trusts will not discuss, but I have chatted innocently to enough drivers to have gleaned the following information. There are two types of INEPT Service, minicabs and dedicated hospital transport, INEPT minicabs drivers are monitored by the Public Carriage office, their drivers have criminal records checks. INEPT dedicated hospital transport drivers are not obliged to be monitored or checked unless the service contracts with the hospital Trusts require it.

So next time you go to hospital, you will have no way of knowing as to the CRB status of the particular driver. One driver boasted to the patients he was carrying that he had lost his licence, but had obtained another one under another name., so if the Cancer doesn't get you, the driving might.

Neither type of driver has to have any type of first aid training and most do not. They do not have to carry a first aid box, tissues, water, oxygen, or sick bags, and therefore normally do not. They will usually play loud music or Radio shows to cheer you up and help get rid of your headache. They will tell you where you can get in and out ,of even though they have no medical training, and some of them drive aggressively over speed bumps and kerbs, braking and accelerating around corners like a demented fairground ride, one driver broke part of my wheelchair. I am still waiting for compensation following pointed questions being put to the commissioner “

The worst aspect of the INEPT system is the appalling amount of time you have to spend waiting around for the service. This contrasts sharply with the efficiency of the Ambulance Services. You have to be ready for collection in the INEPT system two and a half hours before your appointment, and there is no guarantee that you will get there on time. “

A commissioner from a London hospital Trust spoke about the problems from their side, she explained that after the contract was awarded, normally for 5 years, there was no organisation responsible for monitoring how things were carried out, it became clear there were no equal opportunities monitoring, nor C.R.B, no compulsory first aid training etc. This raised concerns and pointed questions from patients attending the conference. Unfortunately none of the regulatory bodies were present to hear the various shocking stories directly from the patient experiences. Following a vote it was agreed:-

There should be a proper London monitoring body for Patient Transport Services. This type of conference or similar needs to be carried out on a quarterly basis. The major factor was that PTS needed to be on time, and not have to wait for hours on end to be taken home.

Voting the

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.

Eric Miller Bure View Mill Road
Horstead Norwich Norfolk NR12 7AT
Phone 01603 736155
Fax: 01603 736155
E-mail: eric_miller@talk21.com
Mobile 07789723387

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

UNISON Regional Office & Mabledon 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**
Circulation 800 Copies

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

Are your membership details up to date ? Then Contact STUART REEVES on 07772479434 for amendments.

Over a period of four days in October, Divisional son visited 13 main Sites-Stations across Essex-Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire venues are course.

The purpose of these visits Leads the opportunity to staff working in and around these main sites,

UNISON Branch Road Shows

answer any questions they may have about ongoing or current branch, and/or Trust issues. Posters advertising the visits were sent out with information sheets and newsletters, and a few UNISON freebies were taken along. Attendance varied mainly dependent on the site location and timing of the visit, but the questions asked were of a similar nature and included- Ambulance Care Assistants- Band 3 Drivers-Student Ambulance Paramedics-Pensions-A & E Management issues- Unsocial Hours- Meal Breaks — Annual Leave. In addition Uniform, Driving Regulations, and Shift Pattern Changes were also of concern.

It is expected that these site visits will become a regular feature in the future as it is hoped that it will provide members, staff and senior branch representatives alike with a more direct means of contact. Jackie Robinson Divisional Secretary

Secretaries Frank Ward and Jackie Robinson-Hertfordshire-and Bedfordshire. Visits to in the pipeline and will be advertised in due

was to give the branch meet the members and and hopefully



Branch Contact Details

Position	Name	Telephone	Email address
Branch Secretary	Kevin Risley	07866 573149	krisley@eeas-unison.com
Treasurer	Steve Beckley	01692 582913	sbeckley@eeas-unison.com
Divisional Sec Herts & Essex	Frank Ward	07767 754590	fward@eeas-unison.com
Divisional Sec Norfolk & Suffolk	Barry Jarvis	01485 600801	bjarvis@eeas-unison.com
Divisional Secretary Beds & Cambs	Jackie Robinson	07890 357493	jrobinson@eeas-unison.com
Patient Transport Officer	Ross Stanton	01493 730092	rstanton@eeas-unison.com
Norfolk Lead County Representative	Carole Taylor	07745 549287	ctaylor@eeas-unison.com
Suffolk Lead County Representative	Steve Beckley	01692 582913	sbeckley@eeas-unison.com
Cambs Lead County Representative	Peter Davis	01480 451288	pdavies@eeas-unison.com
Beds Lead County Representative	Jackie Robinson	07890 357493	jrobinson@eeas-unison.com
Herts Lead County Representative	Stuart Reeves	07772 479434	sreeves@eeas-unison.com
Essex Lead County Representative	John Davey	07713 259924	jdavey@eeas-unison.com
Education Officer	Mike Pelling	07790 866137	mpelling@eeas-unison.com
Health & Safety & Welfare Officer	Alan Chamberlain	01480 451486	achamberlain@eeas-unison.com
Membership Officer	Stuart Reeves	07772 479434	sreeves@eeas-unison.com
Communications Officer	Eric Miller	07789 723387	emiller@eeas-unison.com
Disabled Members Officer	Dave Edwards	01603 422717	dedwards@eeas-unison.com

Our branch website provides the most up-to-date information on UNISON's work within the Trust. Visit it at:

www.eeas-unison.com



www.eeas-unison.com

the public service union

A UNISON Branch publication. © 20106 UNISON East of England Ambulance Branch.

The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the East of England Ambulance Service.