



# Branch Newsletter

**February 09**  
**Issue 23**

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



The UNISON Branch of EEAS is holding its AGM shortly. All members and activists are invited and encouraged to attend - This is your opportunity to influence the way in which this branch is run

A light buffet and refreshments will be provided

TUESDAY 24th FEBRUARY 2009 19.00 - 21.30hrs  
HOLIDAY INN  
Impington, Cambs (A14 Junction 32)

Agenda and information will be available on our website from 27th January 2009 and hard copies will be available upon request from Jackie Robinson.  
([jrobinson@eeas-unison.com](mailto:jrobinson@eeas-unison.com) or 07890357493)

For more information on the upcoming meeting click on

[eeas-unison.com/AGM](http://eeas-unison.com/AGM)



## Secretary's Report & Update



As many of you will be aware, the Branch undertook a survey last month to ascertain the members views on the management's proposal for future utilisation of the Ambulance Support Worker (ASW) within the Trust. Members were invited to answer three set questions with the additional option of adding their comments as well.

The Survey has now been completed and the answers and feed back have been collated with what appears to be an overwhelming majority of members indicating that the Ambulance Support Worker should not be utilised on a Front -line Ambulance with a Clinician.

I would like to thank everyone who took the time to participate in this on-line survey, and the findings are due to be taken forward to the next ASW Working Group meeting on the 30th January 2009.

It is recognised that some members experienced difficulties accessing the Survey from NSC Trust computers, and this was immediately flagged up with both the Trust's IT department, and our Information Communication Technology (ICT) Officer. The fault was found to lay with the Trusts internal IT Systems, as opposed to the Branch's own. As it is our intention to conduct further on-line consultations in the future, we will be working with the IT department in the hope of preventing any system failures of this kind occurring again.

We are aware of some rumours currently doing the rounds that all Annual Leave is to be cancelled throughout Christmas and the New

Year 2009. The fact is that, in line with the Annual Leave Policy point 9.1.4, the Staff Partnership Forum will be examining data and reviewing the level of cover that was achieved over the Christmas period in 2008. Although it is absolutely right that we carry out this work, the staff-side view remains the same, we already have an agreement in place that was signed up to by both sides when negotiating the policy. This agreement clearly sets out the level of cover that will be allowed in 2009, and we would not expect that position to change.

At a meeting of the Dynamic Deployment group on the 26th January 09, staff-side reiterated our position that all standby locations need to be signed off, and agreed between local staff and managers by the end of March, we would not expect Staff to be asked to attend any sites that have not been agreed by that date.

It is with some regret that I inform members that we have had to take the decision to withdraw from our seat on the Trust board. Until now we have been invited to the board table, but have been excluded from the 'closed session' where business, which is "not in the Public interest" is discussed.

Despite our submission, that in the true spirit of Partnership Working, this facility had always been afforded to us in the former East Anglia, and Essex localities, and had proven to be of benefit to both sides, we have continued to be excluded from these sessions. We felt therefore that unless our attendance at these meetings were to be all-encompassing, then there was little point in us attending at all. I will keep members informed if this situation changes.

A reminder that Nomination forms for Staff Representatives are coming in at a trickle. It would be of benefit to everyone, if all departments could nominate a UNISON REPRESENTATIVE, or Departmental contact at the earliest opportunity PLEASE.

And finally- remember to note in your fabulous free UNISON DIARY that the Branch Annual General Meeting is being held on 24th February- you will be most welcome.

Kevin Risley Branch Secretary

# UNISON asks the awkward questions on ECA & SW

**Recent developments** in the Great Western Ambulance (GWAS) haven't given rise to a number of queries on the Emergency Care Assistant and Support Worker situation. The National position remains that South West Ambulance (SWAST) is the accredited pilot site for this role, and whilst it was proposed last year that GWAS would be incorporated into the pilot, that has not been implemented, and the issue is now a matter for local resolution.

Arrangements outside of SWAST vary from trust to trust. However all English Trusts through the National Ambulance Partnership Forum (NAPF) have signed up to follow the pilot model and abide by the outcome of a National evaluation of the role as represented in the National ECA Resource pack. Any local concerns over the deployment of the ECA / SW role should be raised with reference to the Deployment scoping document contained in the resource pack.

The pack has been forwarded by the NAPF to the NHS Staff Council Job Evaluation Group (JEG) with a request that they evaluate the role with the aim of producing an ECA/ SW National job profile.

A programme is being initiated to conduct an in depth analysis of the SWAST pilot by an independent expert that will examine aspects of the role relating to service delivery. It is hoped to be able to publish a detailed action plan including a timetable of this process in October.

**UNISON has previously raised concerns in relation to the level of responsibility expected of Paramedics in the supervision of this role. The Health Professional Council (HPC) response to these concerns is reproduced as follows in full. BUT In short, it is the Employers responsibility to ensure any role they deploy is fit for the purpose, although Paramedics are under a duty to formally report any evidence that suggests this might not be the case. Paramedics should also ensure that anyone under their supervision does not work outside of their scope of practice, and in the case of ECA/ SW's, this is defined by the ECA resource pack and their employer.**

There follows- The Response from the Health Professional Council HPC to UNISON's concerns over Paramedic responsibilities relating to the Emergency Care Assistant/ Support Worker Role.

*Thank you for your recent letter regarding the responsibilities of HPC registrants with reference to supervision and delegation.*

*As you are aware we consider every matter referred to us via our fitness to practice process, on a case by case basis. Taking into account the individual circumstances in order to decide whether we need to take any action in order to protect members of the public. The purpose of the fitness to practice process is to protect members of the public, not to persecute registrants for following the policy or practice of their employer in good faith. The purpose of this process is also not to persecute registrants for the errors or failings of other staff they work with.*

*We consider that if registrants make informed, reasonable decisions, in good faith, with the care of patients at the heart of the decision, they are very unlikely to have any contact with our fitness to practice process.*

*In your letter you outlined sections of our standards of conduct, performance and ethics, two of which are reproduced below with our comments:*

*Whenever you give tasks to another person to carry out on your behalf, you must be sure that they have the knowledge, skills and experience to carry out the tasks safely and effectively.*

*This standard is about ensuring that tasks are not delegated inappropriately in circumstances where an employer has clearly certified that an employee working with the registrant is competent in certain areas. The registrant would be able to be reasonably sure that they have the knowledge, skills and experience to carry out those tasks. If we were to consider a case about delegation we would want to assess the registrants responsibility, and in circumstances such as this I think that is highly unlikely that a panel would consider that the registrant had acted inappropriately.*

*You also refer to a duty to report; Standard one of the Standards of Conduct, performance and ethics says that registrants have a duty to protect Service users from any situation which might place them in danger. It is therefore important that registrants bring to their employers attention matters about the conduct of competence of the registrants or other staff they work with.*

*You must always continue to give appropriate supervision to whoever you ask to carry out tasks. You will be responsible for the appropriateness of the decision to delegate. You express concerns about the ability of the Paramedic to properly supervise such tasks, if he or she is treating another Patient, or driving. You ask whether it would be appropriate to delegate in such circumstances.*

*“The important part of this standard is ‘appropriate’ and as such we would not make a blanket statement that it was inappropriate to delegate in such circumstances.*

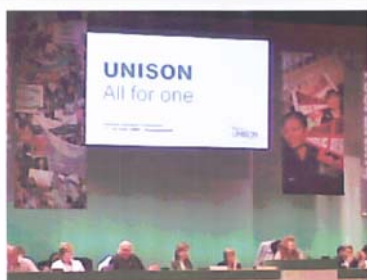
*Whenever we consider a matter referred to us, we need to make decisions in light of the individual circumstances, taking into account, amongst other things, the environment in which the registrant works.*

*In the context of paramedic practice, any decisions would take account of the working environment and the constraints this can place on the direct ‘one to one’ supervision of delegated tasks.*

*Ultimately it would be an individual professional decision for the Paramedic to take, as to whether the delegation was appropriate in the circumstances, (taking into account any other relevant factors, such as the Policy or the guidance of their Employer.*

*UNISON National Ambulance Sector Committee September 2008*

# Patient Transport Services Seminar



**On 28th November** a group of NSC/PTS Representatives myself included travelled to London for the second PTS Seminar.

This was attended by PTS Representatives from all over the country, including Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

Once again the Agenda centred around the Privatisation of PTS, and how this has become a huge threat to our jobs, discussion took place, and ideas were raised as to how as activists we can fight to help prevent this from happening, whilst UNISON officers are actively working behind the scenes taking to government, the reasons why PTS Contracts should stay within

the NHS Ambulance Services, Where they belong !

Other items tabled were around the KSF, (stop laughing!!), this was discussed at length, and it was clear that the Officers were unaware that this no longer exists in NSC/ PTS, the reasons given by our Trust ? lack of money has been blamed amongst others as to why this is so. Whether this will bring about a change or not, Watch this space.....

Carole Taylor Norfolk Lead Representative

## UNISON condemns threat to the South West's Patient Transport Services

**UNISON**, the union that represents Ambulance staff in the South West condemns the threat to privatise its Patient Transport Services, which has historically been provided by the South West Ambulance Service Trust.

The PTS conveys some of the most vulnerable NHS Patients to and from Hospital and clinical appointments. The staff ensure that patients arrive on time for their appointments and would normally be transferred by qualified Ambulance personnel who have the training, experience, and equipped to deal with any complications that may arise during these journeys.

Ian Hopkins the Ambulance Branch Secretary said:-

“ Services to these vulnerable patients need to be provided by trained , skilled and dedicated staff. Patients and their relatives need to feel they are in safe hands. We understand the NHS is striving to cut costs and save money, but these patients need more than just Taxis. It would be better for all concerned if PTS remained the responsibility of Ambulance Trusts.

**UNISON** is also concerned that the loss of the staff and the vehicles would compromise the service's ability to cope with major incidents. The PTS staff are used to back up the front line service in times of extraordinary demand. They are used by the service to transport the less injured patients away from incidents as varied as explosives, motorway incidents, and civil emergencies such as floods when people need evacuation. Services so far out to Tender include:- Outside core hours, Short notice timed response, Long distance, Repatriation, Mental Health, Renal and Neonatal. However UNISON believes this could be the start of a process that would lead to all services being tendered for.

**UNISON** are taking their concerns to the local Overview and Scrutiny committees that cover Health issues, we believe that these proposals represent a significant change in service delivery and have not been consulted upon.

Ian Hopkins said:- “**UNISON** as a public service union is committed to maintaining a safe and secure ambulance service as well as being committed to the maintenance of our members employment status and future. We believe that the proposals put forward undermine both of these considerations.”

Courtesy of UNISON Branch South West Ambulance Service

## Your rights to time off as ACAS consults



ACAS the Employment relations service, is today issuing a revised code of practice on the time off for Trade Union activities and duties for consultation. The Code at present acknowledges that Union Representatives often need time off to conduct their extra duties and receive additional training. This draft knowledge can be downloaded from the link below, which includes other related information. The deadline for comments on the revised draft code and guidance is 16th March 2009. ACAS [www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2122](http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2122) Also Fax 02072103664 or Email [timeoffcode@acas.org.uk](mailto:timeoffcode@acas.org.uk)

Reference this item, the Branch Officers are currently in the process of reviewing our three individual but current local agreements, with the aim of creating a single harmonised version that will incorporate all of the key elements required and indicated by ACAS, and also found in the current version of the AFC Terms Handbook and Conditions Handbook. Wherever possible we will endeavour to maintain any additional 'legacy' benefits we can.

Thanks to Dave Edwards & Jackie Robinson Divisional Secretary for this important update.

## Access Denied

Members are reminded that there is a separate News-sheet issued on behalf of Disabled Members throughout the Eastern Region , the most recent one, is issue No 3 and is available in most formats for those requiring it. Your Branch Officer and Representative is Dave Edwards, he is also the Disabled Members Committee's Communications Officer, and can be contacted at the East of England Ambulance Service Hospital Lane Hellesdon Norwich or at [dave.edwards@eastamb.nhs.uk](mailto:dave.edwards@eastamb.nhs.uk)



# February 09 main news Updates

## The Pay Review body say NO

UNISON, the UK's largest Health Union, today said it was disappointed by the HHS Pay Review Body's decision not to ask the Government to re-open the 3 Year deal for Health Workers.

Karen Jennings, UNISON Head of Health said-

The Pay Review Body's decision not to call for the Pay Talks to be re-opened will be disappointing for nurses, midwives, paramedics and other Health Workers.

Whilst inflation has started to come down, UNISON members entered into the 3 year deal in good faith, based on the governments predictions that inflation had peaked and would fall. Yet Health Workers have experienced big increases in food prices and other costs over the last 9 months, having said that we respect the independence of the Pay Review Body and believe their report is a balanced judgement looking at all factors. We are pleased that the Review Body has stated that it will look again at the position in the Autumn 2009. **UNISON Press Release**

## D / Deployment Plans sites progress



A meeting has taken place of the Deployment Plan Group on the 26th January 2009.

The staff-side reiterated their position that all Standby locations need to be signed off, and agreed between local staff and managers by the end of MARCH, we would not expect staff to

be asked to attend any sites that have not been agreed by that date.

Kevin Risley Branch Secretary

## Job Advert spotted in the NHS Job Section ?

Job Title Assistant Practitioner.

Yorkshire Ambulance Service Operations

Salary £17.316 to £20 . 818 Working Pattern 37.5 Hours per week

Job Type Permanent Staff Group Additional Clinical Services.

PAY SCHEME:- AGENDA FOR CHANGE BAND 4

Qualifications 3 GCSE passes or 1 years experience in a Healthcare environment. Provisional CI Driving Licence Category. Assistant Practitioners drive a range of Ambulance vehicles at times under Emergency 'Blue Light' driving conditions, and work under the direction of a qualified crew member, with 4 weeks clinical training and 3 weeks emergency driver training.

Submitted by Ian Cook

## Branch Contact Details

Our branch website provides the most up-to-date information on UNISON's work within the Trust. Visit it at [www.eeas-unison.com](http://www.eeas-unison.com)

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Membership Officer	Stuart Reeves	07772 479434	sreeves@eeas-unison.com
Communications Officer Newsletter	Eric Miller	07789 723387	emiller@eeas-unison.com
Disabled Member's Officer	Dave Edwards	01603 422717	dedwards@eeas-unison.com
Women Member's Officer	Lesley Hilton		lhilton@eeas-unison.com
Lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender members Officer	June Felstead		jfelstead@eeas-unison.com

## Staff Reps

### Nominations.

Have you nominated your Station/ Department Representative yet?

Nominations are now well overdue for these posts for the year 2009.

Please consider standing again as Rep, or finding a committed person within your workplace who is prepared to act as a contact to do so.

Full training is provided with paid time off to enable your own full involvement at the negotiating table.

Please Contact your Branch Secretary K Risley

## Annual Leave Review

This document is to be reviewed from 1st January 2009, for consistency of administration, and amounts of leave outstanding. Do you have any feedback on your own experiences of the Annual leave Policy over the last year ?

Please feel free to contact Barry Jarvis or the Annual Leave W/ group at any time if you are unclear about any issues, or feel that you have any ideas to which could be incorporated into any review which would be to the **advantage of all staff employed at the Trust.**

Even better still, PLEASE tell us, if at the sharp end you have any observations or any new methods for improving the provision of the associated cover, which of course we all know is the essential ingredient to its enablement.

E.M Communications