



Branch Newsletter

Sept 2009
Issue No 30

Secretary's Corner.

By now I'm sure you will be aware of the very sad, sudden and untimely passing of Archie Morson. Archie was a member of UNISON and its predecessor union for over 23 years, and was always very supportive of our work. I personally found Archie a very easy Manager to work with, who was prepared to listen, discuss and find solutions to issues in a fair and proper way.

The work that he undertook in pushing forward the pre-hospital thrombolytic agenda, the training and support that he offered to clinicians in having the confidence to treat patients in early cardiac arrest, and his passion for arguing the case for highly trained and well equipped Ambulance Staff were, I believe, second to none. Archie was well thought of by his friends and colleagues, and will be sorely missed by those that knew him.



A card has been sent to his wife Lizzie on behalf of the branch, and a donation will be made to a suitable cause in his memory. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Lizzie and the rest of Archie's family at this very sad and difficult time.

You may recall from our last newsletter, that the branch wrote to the Trust Board with a list of questions that had been put to us by the membership. At the time of going to print, no response has been received in answer to those questions. I have been assured by the Chief Executive that a response is being prepared, and I would hope to be able to report further in the October edition.

We are aware that some staff, when applying for annual leave over the Christmas period, are being told that the length of time when leave limits are reduced has been extended to encompass the weeks 23rd November to January 3rd. Whilst this may be the case, I would like to inform staff in the strongest possible terms that this is a decision that has been taken in isolation by management. Staffside have NOT signed up to or agreed this position. Management contacted us back in April/ May asking that we review the annual leave policy for the coming Christmas period due to dangerously low levels of resources that were available over the Christmas period 2008. Our current position is, as it has always been, that we have an agreed policy that was signed up to some 2 years ago. However if the management side were to put forward a written proposal, we would take that back, consult with our members, and act on their behalf. We were promised that written proposal on 14th July, and to date we have still not received it. Please keep an eye on the UNISON notice boards and the Branch Website as we will be reporting further on this situation over the next few weeks.

On a similar note, there have been other decisions made recently where no discussion or involvement has taken place with staffside. Deploying students on frontline vehicles, and backing up singletons with PAS and VAS vehicles are prime examples. In view of this total break down in partnership working and staffside engagement at any level, it was decided at a meeting between Senior branch officers and Senior Executive managers on the 29th April that we would enlist the help of an external expert in getting partnership working back on the agenda. The meeting took place on the 24th August, it was fairly well attended, and some open and forthright views were aired. Management expressed their view that they are as committed to the partnership approach as we are.

We will continue our endeavours in getting partnership working back on track, as history has proven that more can be achieved in this way, than the mess we currently find ourselves in. I also believe that the difficulties that we are currently up against are merely the tip of a much bigger iceberg that is heading our way. Lets just hope the commitment from the Management side will match the rhetoric.

K Risley Branch Secretary



There's nothing in the post ...

These pages of this month's Newsletter were to be devoted to the response from the Board to set the record straight on the questions posed from their Staff within pages 2 and 3 of the August newsletter, to date nearly 7 weeks later the branch has not received a response.

Are these not standard everyday questions that any Director of any Trust occupying the position of spending public money would rightly be expected to answer at any public meeting or at any other forums to any stakeholders of the trust, who would settle for no less than an instant answer, without the need for reference back to any other source or manual. ? Sorry, these are high profile jobs, arguably a well briefed school leaver would be expected to answer simple questions like these in less than an hour.

On the plus side, Monitor the Independent Government regulator come Watchdog set up in 2004 to monitor and regulate Foundation Trusts, will welcome the good news that the Trust Board at the recent meeting expressed its commitment to the 'Partnership' approach to working practices which is the only sensible way forward, but also doubtless getting confused as to why the Trust cannot continue in the interests of good industrial relations, as well as in the organisations best current interests to put the same stated principles into practice. ?

After all any formal application for Foundation Status has to demonstrate that it has the support of its Staff and all its stakeholders. Quote- "Applicants will need to demonstrate amongst other elements of- having support from staff and other stakeholders for their vision for reform."

A serious applicant would therefore be working towards that objective whatever their differences. 'Partnership working' whilst working towards the same goals and objectives does not necessarily mean that all sides sit around the table all of the time agreeing on same ways to get there, at times they have to agree to disagree and move on in an adult fashion, not form an agreement, leave the table and run off acting in reverse of the agreements which has been the evidence of late, there is no gain or credibility for either party acting in this fashion, it simply brings the whole service into disrepute.

One of the main catalysts within the partnership, is that UNISON and the staff not prepared to compromise themselves by knowingly accepting underfunded directives and targets which in turn induces privatisation. Staff realise that the board has a job to do, but they expect their board to be far more publically pro-active to their stakeholders and less accommodating to the government, which is why the Trust Board is currently unable to "take its staff with them." The answer to that is not easy, recognising the problem and talking far more openly and transparently about it would send better signals.

Aspiring to Foundation Status and issuing a Code of Governance for best practice quoting the (Nolan principles) A 1.9, Pg 9 does raise ongoing expectations.

Noting that The Nolan Principles are also the currently accepted NHS standards. Yet again, it is not the striking postman that has not delivered the mail it is the responder that has not responded.

E M Communications

East of England Ambulance Trust meets Response times... or does it ??

Isn't it interesting how this Trust is so keen to publicise its success at meeting national Response requirements, yet maintains a palpable silence as regards their failure to respond to their own staff's questions and concerns. ?

They continue to pat themselves on the back for achieving a timely response to emergency and or / urgent calls, yet can take almost two months to acknowledge and respond to each of the two open letters sent to them by their recognised Union and Workforce.

Although they did a least muster an acknowledgement in relation to the notification of a formal dispute that the staffside registered last month, following the Trusts failure to consult over the use of , 'non yet qualified' Student Ambulance Paramedics as part of a double staffed crew for emergency work on front line vehicles.

It is worth noting that it was suggested that the formal dispute was effectively covered by the simultaneous collective grievance initiated by frontline staff working in the Cambridge locality in relation to the potential and /or actual impact's of using unqualified staff in this way.

Or maybe it's just a bit naïve of an employee to expect their employer to respond to, and address their issues and concerns. Hmm, I don't think so- do you?

Jackie Robinson Beds & Cambridge Lead

Extra Edition

Members Please note- at the time of going to print there has been no response from the Board to your questions. IF any response is received between now and the October Newsletter we will do a special re-run on that response alone and get it out to you, as opposed to leaving things until the next natural edition date. Thankyou

E.M Communications

Letters to the Health Professions Council

The Branch has sought advice on members behalf on the HPC position of current practice.

The following is a response from the Health Professions Council in respect of the recent controversial decision by the Trust to the use of unsatisfactory skill mix on front line vehicles.

Letter from Mrs Jackie Robinson State Registered Paramedic and UNISON Divisional Secretary (Beds & Cambs)

To Megan Scott Policy and Standards Department
Health Professions Council
Park House 184 Kennington Park Road
London SE11 4BU

Dear Megan

I wonder if you would be able to offer an opinion on the appropriateness of sending, not-yet qualified Student paramedics out on Operational duties prior to their basic training course ?

Whilst I recognise that they do not currently fall under the HPC's standards of conduct and fitness to practice, I believe that the HPC approve the IHCD paramedic training programme and these students will seek registration with the HPC upon completion of their 2 year programme.

I would just clarify that these students are 'Direct entry' into the ambulance service as opposed to existing Emergency Medical Technicians on a Paramedic development pathway, so I believe this means that their operational experience at this stage would be non-existent.

I would really welcome a registration body's opinion, if appropriate to offer one, on this matter.

Regards Jackie Robinson.

The response from the Health Professions Council Policy Officer Megan Scott.– as follows-

Dear Mrs Robinson.

Thank you for your e-mail, it was forwarded to the policy & Standards department for a reply.

We do not set any rules regarding not-yet qualified student ambulance paramedics being sent out on operational duties prior to completing their basic training course. This is a decision that would be made at a local level by the employer, (and the professional concerned) and as such is unfortunately not within our remit.

I would like to stress that as 'paramedic' is one of our protected titles, a person commits an offence if they use a protected title if they are not registered with us. It is also an offence to intend to deceive by implying that you are a member of one of the professions that we regulate. An example of this is if someone states that they provide chiropody services when they are not on our register.

A person is not committing an offence if they use a prefix such as 'assistant', trainee, or student. By using these prefixes there is no intention to deceive the public because the prefix implies they are not fully qualified. I would strongly advise you that if a student was to be sent out on operational duties, it was made clear to the public that the individual was a student and that appropriate supervision was in place.

I hope the above is helpful but please do contact me again if you require further information.

Regards Megan Scott Policy Officer.

UNISON Officers Branch Officer Listing 2009

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

Chairperson	Ross Stanton	07733225887	ross.stanton@eastamb.nhs.uk zolaisgod@hotmail.co.uk
Secretary	Kevin Risley	07866573149	Kevin.risley@eastamb.nhs.uk
Treasurer	Steve Beckley	07765423849	Stephen.beckley@eastamb.nhs.uk S.W.beckley@homecall.co.uk
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Divisional Sec Essex & Herts Ambulance Sector Representative	Frank Ward	07767754590	Frank..ward@essexamb.nhs.uk frank.ward2@btopenworld.com
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Branch Health & Safety Officer	Alan Chamberlain	07736110725	alan.chamberlain@eastamb.nhs. alan@archamberlain.co.uk
Communications Newsletter	Eric Miller	07787644678	eric_miller@talk21.com Tele/ Fax 01603-737176
Herts County Lead Rep Young Members Officer and Membership Officer	Stuart Reeves	07772479434	sreeves@eeas-unison.com sreeves@btinternet.com
Education Co-ordinator	Ian Cook	07932680885	Ian.cook@eastamb.nhs.uk ikcook@aol.com
Welfare Job Shared with	Alan Chamberlain Carole Taylor	07736110725 07745549287	alan.chamberlain@eastamb.nhs.uk alan@archamberlain.co.uk carole.taylor@eastamb.nhs.uk
Non Emergency Services	Carole Taylor	07745549287	carole.taylor@eastamb.nhs.uk
Disabled Members & Norfolk County H & S lead	Dave Edwards	07884327916	dave.edwards@eastamb.nhs.uk redfire@googlemail.com
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Pensions Retired Members Officer	Ian Mc Kenna	07870544241	ian.mckenna@eastamb.nhs.uk iantracey@mckenna2003.fsnet.co.uk
LGBT Members Herts County H & S Lead			Vacant
Womens Officer Job Shared with	Carole Taylor NSC Lesley Hilton BHE	07745549287 07989786661	carole.taylor@eastamb.nhs.uk lesley.hilton@sky.com
Beds County lead Rep	Lesley Hilton	07989786661	Lesley.hilton@sky.com
Cambs County Lead Rep also Life-long Learning Rep	Tim Killick	07730703569	tkillick@eeas-unison.com a
Essex County Lead Rep	John Davey	07713259924	johndavey@essexamb.nhs.uk
Suffolk County lead Rep	Tim Ingall	07920442315	tim@driftway.plus.com
Essex County H & S lead	Peter Kelly		peter.kelly@essexamb.nhs.uk Peter.kelly@talktalk.net
Beds County H & S lead	Vacant		
Suffolk County H & S lead	Vacant		

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



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Ambulance Branch.
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UNISON Legal Services

UNISON has issued a new Branch Guide on legal Services it is available from - stockorders@unison.co.uk

The following is designed to inform and provide information to access your way to these benefits.

The simplest way to access most services is by contacting: **UNISON DIRECT** on:-

0845-355-0845 (Voice) or
0800 0967 968 (text phone)
Lines open : 06am to midnight–
Monday to Friday or
09am to 4pm Saturdays.

CRIMINAL LAW.

Contact outside UNISON direct hours is through the UNISON 24- Hour Criminal Help Line on 0800-587-7530

WILLS

A Wills questionnaire can be downloaded from 'Thompsons' Website:
www.thompsons.law.co.uk/wills/your-will

UNISON only instructs specialist Lawyers. Our lawyers work to agreed standards of service required by UNISON, and are audited and judged against those standards.

For more information about our appointed lawyers, Thompsons Solicitors, PLEASE see- Legal Help– A members guide to UNISON Legal Services– or Visit their website:
www.thompsons.law.co.uk

Members are encouraged to use the above as a timely means to access services, but are also encouraged to contact their representatives for advice should they have any problem.

E. M Communications