



Branch Newsletter

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2010

And.. the Patient Money Award goes to.... 'Re-structuring'

The advertisement for the Communications and Engagement Associate director of the Trust has been greeted with predictable reactions from the staff. The quoted response from our Regional Officer John Toomey when approached by the Bedfordshire 'On Sunday News' was as follows:-

Concerns have been raised at the salary being offered to a Communications and Engagement Associate Director for the East Of England Ambulance Service, the role of which offers a salary of between £69,000 & £79,000 it would be initially based at Bedford, to oversee communications and engagement in all 6 counties the service covers. The successful candidate will be in charge of internal and external communications for all the counties, as well as engagement with the public and politicians, and will be answerable to the Chief Executive. John Toomey Regional Officer for UNISON said "It is a large sum of money to be paying, especially at a time when the NHS is facing severe cuts. He added "It begs the question, can it really be afforded" ?

Mr Toomey said- "This sounds like a couple of e-mails and a meeting. We would rather have seen the money splashed out on a few luxuries, such as some extra Ambulances or Paramedics. Gary Sanderson, spokesman for the service at present, was quoted as saying- The role was created after the merger of the counties at 2006, the Salary is in line with similar roles across the country. David Jarvis currently doing the role said "It's a big job, we are the second largest geographical service in the UK, it is by no means priced above other jobs in the same area."

End

The Trust Chief Executive regularly advertises for suggestions for how to save money. Well, with all due respect the simple and honest answer is to start by not spending it on the duplication of the existing administration.

Internal Communications

I hope to be corrected, but the eventual **true cost of this new position and package, car and expenses inc Tax & NI to the NHS** will certainly be nearer to a spiralling on cost in excess of £100,000. per annum Why, when we have a good solid H.R. Dept in place, not concentrating on improving our communications structure at every workplace in the region, to do so would release all the 'hands on benefits' to be gained from developing the utilization of that existing cadre of resource ?

No one would argue that communication and geographical radius is a major problem to us, but we know from bitter past experience this will not solve it. Having now managed to lose one of the most competent H.R. Directors across the Public Sector along with all the rest, we still have some proven Senior Managers/Associate Directors in place, why are we not prepared to devolve the responsibility by increasing their salaries pro-rata to use them as a localised Team to monitor and ensure Internal communications actually cascades down and occurs in a timely fashion which it does not at present. ? We know ourselves from a Branch perspective it takes a lot more than a Newsletter to achieve that result.

External Communications & Engagement

Prior to this application for Foundation Status, the previous two mergers, and Trust applications, coupled with all of the external engagement /Communications were carried out by one person, the then Chief Ambulance Officer or Chief Executive, these posts with help from HR gave presentations at Road-shows or public forums leading up to the application of Trust Status, they also dealt fully with all media inquiries and would have competently and confidently carried out the same role with regard to any public applications for Foundation Status. Projecting Foundation status is the collective responsibility of the Trust Board overseen and led by the Chief Executive and Chairman.

The staff see this as their worst fears realised, with an extraordinary amount of money suddenly diverted to another obscure bureaucratic 'show post'. It would be really nice to be proved wrong but the acid test for staff is;

If this one is considered by the Board to be destined to work, why is it not working now ?

E..M. Communications



Diversity Conference Reports

My name is Anand Pillai, and I work out of Cambridge Station. I represent the Black

Members for the interim period up to the elections at the AGM. Myself and Peter Davis recently attended a Conference at October 2009 hosted by the South East Coast Ambulance service NHS Trust.

This was a Diversity Conference held by the S E Coast's Chief Executive Paul Sutton, formally Operations Director of the East Anglian Ambulance Service.

The Conference covered all aspects of diversity and many of the speakers present were very experienced and exceptionally well qualified, it was good to see, meet, and listen to such experts in the field.

Their personal experiences were better than many tutorial periods over the past few years, and gave so much to comprehend, it was really impossible to miss anything. Also present were most of the committee with the B.M.E. minority groups from the other Ambulance Services in the UK, this made for good conversation. Some of us had been able to go out the evening before the conference to a dinner in a local Indian restaurant, with good company, and exceptionally good food available, it was a very good evening.

It was a time where you could understand Diversity and witness how different groups mix, as well as what they have to contend with. It was apparent that some groups of people who have come to the UK have more problems with clinical issues than some of the other Europeans, which highlights the need for total understanding.

If each group participates effectively within a multicultural society to succeed in building bridges, it leads to a greater acceptance and understanding of the mutual problems associated within the reality of diversity.

Whist on, I am pleased to announce the date of the launch of the BME Group for the East of England Ambulance service trust which takes place on Friday 12th February for Staff from BME Ethnic minority backgrounds who work for the trust.

There will be food varieties from around the world and all are welcome to bring their own, also tea and coffee will be provided. There will also be a demonstration of Tai Chi from a local health group.

Anand Pillai is the (Interim Black members officer) prior to the AGM and can be contacted on 07904450087 or email on ananadm.pillai@nt world .com

Are all your membership details correct with UNISON ? As importantly have you checked to see that they are correct with Jackie Robinson & Stuart Reeves, to include your WORKPLACE ? Give it the same importance as your Bank Details !!

Please update your Membership details

Following on from the unnecessarily long and frustrating process of issuing diaries to our members at the end of last year, and in the light of the almost certain requirement to undertake branch officer ballots following the AGM this month.

I would make the following urgent plea to all UNISON Members:

Please take a few minutes to email a few important details ie (name, Job Title, workplace, and home address to us at- detailsupdate@eeas-unison.com so that Stuart Reeves or myself can update your branch membership records accordingly.

It is essential that your details are correct on the branch records system- not only for the purpose of local branch business and communications, but also for matters such as Regional and national membership ballots and consultations (ie Pay awards, National Terms & Conditions, Industrial action etc

However, what was evident, having undertaken the diary issue task, was that the main reason people did not get their diaries was because we did not have their current workplace details. For example, a very large number of members who joined when they were in training never bothered to update us as to where they were then based, so we still have them as c/o one of the main office sites, or 'region unknown', which as you can probably imagine is of no help whatsoever ?

So having been the one who dedicated an unreasonable and disproportionate amount of time to this task. I would add that I would be so very grateful for your assistance with this request, and who knows, if we get a good response you might all get your diaries, (and on time) this coming Christmas ?

In hopeful anticipation- Jackie Robinson (Divisional Secretary)

The latest news on Pensions Choice

You may recall an attachment to your UNISON Website and previous newsletter informing you that you will soon be given the choice to move your NHS Pension from the 1995 to the 2008 section.

- All active members of the NHS Pension Scheme over the age of 50 will now be given the choice to move to the 2008 scheme from July 2010, so can expect to receive their personalised comparison statements sometime between July and September.
- All active members of the NHS Pension scheme below the age of 50 can expect to participate in the choice exercise from January 2011, so can expect to receive their personal comparison statements sometime between January and March next year 2011. Update from 05/01/2010.

If you would like to find out more information about the NHS Pension Choice Exercise Please visit- www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Choice.aspx or contact the Helpline on 0300 1231601. Ian Mc Kenna Pensions & Retired Members



Secretary's Corner

With the state of the economy as it is, and as we enter an election year, I believe that we are in for a very rough ride. To the

point that we may look back on those dark times as "the good old days"

A recent article in the Guardian Newspaper revealed the true nature of the Tories anti-trade union legislation, taking us much further than Margaret Thatcher ever dared to tread. Their proposals would shackle workers, effectively removing their Union's ability to take Industrial action.

This threatens everything we've worked for, the report stated, and it shows how dangerous a Tory Government could be to each and everyone of us.

We have to act now and send the Tories a message loud and clear- NO to Cameron's extreme attacks on our Unions.

The Guardian goes on to say "the Conservatives are looking at introducing laws setting new minimum turnout thresholds, this means that a majority of people eligible to vote in a ballot would have to vote Yes, not just those people actually taking part in the ballot.

The CWU's Industrial action against the management at Royal Mail was backed by 76% of members in a ballot, but their action would be under threat by the Tories new scheme. As would the refuse collectors strike in Leeds, removing the right for the GMB and UNISON to fight for fair wages for their members, even though two-thirds of the workforce turned out, and the workers voted to strike 2-1.

The law would fundamentally undermine every single Unions's ability to represent their members.

All this comes from a party where not one single Tory MP was elected by 50% of the voters eligible to vote in their constituency, Not one. ? ?

At UNISON'S leadership seminar in January, Dave Prentice told Senior activists and staff-

" We are facing the most significant political movement in a decade, as we approach the general election, our members future is in the balance" All the main political Parties are talking about spending cuts, Local government employers are trying to impose a pay freeze, and thousands of jobs are being cut, but rather than falling prey to fears about the future, he said its time to show our vision for the future. Unions were created for difficult times and to deal with conflict, he declared, I believe this is really our time, it is our time to be bold, to speak up for our people and for the public services they provide Whoever wins the next general election ,UNISON must have the strength and flexibility to be a powerful voice for our members, we are up for the challenge he concluded, we have the vision, We have the people, We have the ideas, we will meet any challenge together". So although we may not think too much of the present government, come polling day I think we have to ask the questions, in Tory hands, how safe is our National Health Service, our jobs and our Trade Union rights to represent our members?

This is also the time for staff to join UNISON, a strong and powerful UNION that is able to act united against the difficult and challenging times that lay ahead. K Risley Secretary

Incapacity benefit stopped ... ?

Towards the end of 2008 a retired Ambulance

Member of this Trust was contacted by the Department of Health and glibly informed that his Permanent incapacity benefit as a result of an injury at work had been stopped forthwith. It was a significant sum of money amounting to several hundred pounds per month. The member contacted me for advice.

It appeared that some sort of covert review had taken place and out of the blue the member was deemed to no longer qualify for a substantial amount of money which was a legal entitlement that clearly the family depended on.

The decision was a forgone conclusion, but following advice the member responded and was cordially invited to attend a meeting with the Department so that they were able to claim that justice had been seen to take place.

No room for details but the upshot was the member was subjected to an insulting subjective interview regarding his current ability to work and need for the current benefit to continue. Needless to say the interview was one of the '5 star Tick Box' quality assurance schemes, dwelling on carefully prepared questions specially designed to exclude everybody that it had already decided to exclude.

The only time it deviated from the prepared menu was when the interviewer made the observation that the members colour resembled that of a 'tanned nature'. !!

Take that comment as a genuine concern about the members future health prospects if you will, but the member didn't. It was interesting to note that few of the questions related to the updated Medical Statements provided at the interview, were given the same scrutiny.

As a retired member, he immediately involved, and was supported by UNISON from the outset, of course he was advised to appeal.

He was supported at the Incapacity Tribunal by UNISON's Regional Organiser John Toomey the result- The Judge threw the case out, overturned the decision and re-instated his Incapacity Benefit. I have since received a letter of thanks from the member informing me that the benefit was re-instated and moreover was also backdated from 2008. This is just one case that we know of under the Departments blanket misguided directives, there would have been hundreds more this time round, and undoubtedly will be in the future.

These cases do illustrate the need to join UNISON not only at the outset of your employment, but also to make sure that you retain that link when you retire. This relates to all matters concerning the Law. We all do it, it is easy to automatically assume sound judgement simply because you believe it should be there, sadly that is not the case and we cannot take any decisions for granted, and we have to put ourselves through a process to get fair play which at times in itself is quite daunting, its made easy through UNISON.

E.M. Communications

UNISON 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
Divisional Sec	Barry Jarvis	07725065539	Barry.Jarvis@eastamb.nhs.uk
Norfolk & Suffolk			
Divisional Sec	F Ward's Ex post	(For Temporary Cover for this post- See Changes)	
(Essex) Note these changes are temporary cover until the AGM in February 2010			
Divisional Sec	Jackie Robinson	07890357493	Jackie.robinson2@nhs.net jrobinson@eeas-unison.com
Beds & Herts			
Branch Health & Safety Officer	Alan Chamberlain	07736110725	alan.chamberlain@eastamb.nhs.uk alan@archamberlain.co.uk
Communications Newsletter	Eric Miller	07787644678	eric_miller@talk21.com Tele/ Fax 01603-737176
Herts County Lead Rep	Stuart Reeves	07772479434	sreeves@eeas-unison.com sreeves@btinternet.com
Young Members Officer and Membership Officer			
Education Co-ordinator	Ian Cook	07932680885	Ian.cook@eastamb.nhs.uk ikcook@aol.com
Welfare Job	Alan Chamberlain	07736110725	alan.chamberlain@eastamb.nhs.uk alan@archamberlain.co.uk
Shared with	Carole Taylor	07745549287	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
Information Communication & Technology/Website	Darren Meads	07534900247	dmeads@eeas-unison.com
Pensions Retired Members Officer	Ian Mc Kenna	07870544241	ian.mckenna@eastamb.nhs.uk iantracey@mckenna2003.fsnet.co.uk
LGBT Members	Craig Borrett	0771680070	craig@hotmail.com
Women's 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	Tim Killick	07730703569	tkillick@eeas-unison.com
also Life-long Learning Rep (Temp Divisional Cover Cambs)			
ULR Rep			
Essex County Lead Rep	John Davey	07713259924	johndavey@essexamb.nhs.uk
(Temp Joint cover Divisional with John Lee for Essex) until AGM.			
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
Black members Officer (Interim)	anand pillai	07904450087	anand.pillai@eastamb.nhs.uk Anandm.pillai@ntworld.com
John Lee Labour Link Officer (Temp Joint Cover Essex Division) until AGM.		07719660747	John.Lee@essexamb.nhs.uk
John Toomey Regional Organiser UNISON			j.toomey@unison.com



Members are advised that this years Branch Annual General Meeting will be held between 1830 and 2130 hours on Tuesday 9th February 2010 at the Cambridge Professional Development Centre, Foster road Trumpington Cambridgeshire CB29NL. A light Buffet and refreshments will be available upon arrival at 1830 Hours. Further information including the agenda, proposals, direction to the meeting venue can be found on the Branch Website www.eeas-unison.com- or by contacting— Divisional Secretary Jackie Robinson on- 07890357493 or jrobinson@eeas-unison.com.

Posters advertising the AGM will also be circulated to all sites falling within this Branch's geographical and employer group boundaries and any assistance with ensuring that they are prominently displayed would be appreciated. Jackie Robinson Divisional Secretary

Tories in Bed with Private Health Companies

UNISON the largest Public Sector Union, today warned that the Tories are in Bed with the private health companies and cannot be trusted to run the National Health Service for the benefit of us all.

The warning in response to revelations that the Shadow Health Minister Andrew Lansley's private office received £21.000 from Care UK's Chairman, John Nash, is part of much larger donations given to the Tory Party. Dave Prentice said "These donations show the Tories are in bed with one of the country's biggest Health Care companies.

They simply cannot be trusted to run the NHS for the benefit of us all. Labour has pledged to make the NHS the preferred provider, but the Tories plan to crack the NHS wide open for the benefit of private health companies and their friends in big business. Dave Edwards

Your 2010 UNISON Diary

Any branch member that has yet to receive their annual diary, please contact Divisional Sec Jackie Robinson on jrobinson@eeas-unison.com or 07890357493 providing details of your name and workplace so that one can be sent out to you.