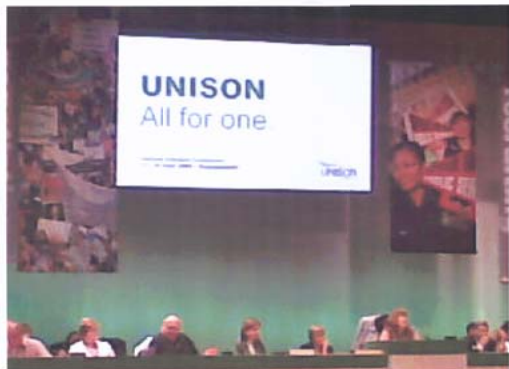




Branch Newsletter

May 2009
Issue 26

UNISON Health Conference



Lesley Hilton

Hello members.

Having just returned as a Delegate from this year's Health Conference in Harrogate it falls to me to update you on all the commitments that our Union have made to lobby Parliament, to improve our NHS. The Conference was long and tiring at times, but there were moments of lively debate where members passionate beliefs kept us enthralled, and at times irritated !

There were two motions put forward by the Ambulance Sector which both received the backing of UNISON-

- 1 **Ill health Re-Deployment**– UNISON will lobby to get a National Register throughout the NHS in order for people retiring due to ill health on tier one, will get the opportunity to redeploy elsewhere within the NHS to useful and reasonable alternative duties.
- 2 **Single Responder Ambulances**– UNISON will lobby against the continually rising use of Single responders and the so called “ front ended model” where we question the use of cars to achieve targets over the needs of the Patients for transportation to hospital.
Also UNISON is concerned for the safety of these single responders in the increasingly violent and unpredictable nature of the service in which we work
- 3 **Special Class Status in the NHS Pensions**– for Frontline Ambulance staff, (submitted by our Branch, see (Newsletter of January 09 Issue 22) this motion recognises that in the old NHS Pension scheme, some posts had special class status where post holders were entitled to retire at the age of 55. The new NHS Pension scheme does not recognise any special status and the normal retirement age is now 65. UNISON agrees to lobby for this issue to be addressed, as our colleagues in the other 999 Services all still enjoy earlier retirement ages. Firefighters can retire at the age of 55, and Police officers can retire after 30 years membership of their scheme.

We heard 3 Ministers speak during the Conference– Nichola Sturgeon (Scotland)- Michael McGimpsey (Northern Ireland), and Alan Johnson (England). All spoke very eloquently, and passionately about the NHS, but the speeches highlighted the differences on how the NHS is progressing. Well done to Scotland, and Northern Ireland for starting the process of abolishing parking fees, and prescription charges, and moving back to the fundamental principle, that the NHS care should be free at the point of use from the “cradle to the grave”.

Unfortunately there is no movement in England to follow suit and privatisation under the new name of marketisation is in full force in the PCT's. Previous experience within the NHS of ‘contracting out’ has shown that this does not always lead to the best service for our patients.

Well members, these were the main issues affecting us within the Ambulance service out of an Agenda of over 60 motions, so you can see that at times I became a bit bored, but I fully made up for this in the evenings by networking with the other delegates from other Ambulance services. It's a hard job, but somebody has to do it. !!

Lesley Hilton Beds County Lead & Women's Officer



Extension of the Dynamic Deployment trial– fact or fiction. ?

I would like to confirm to members that whatever rumours may be around at the moment suggesting that the staffside have agreed to an extension of the Dynamic Deployment DD trial beyond the 1st April 2009 are totally untrue.

Following discussions back in December 2008 regarding the use of DAP sites, the DD working group agreed to a 3 month trial to allow Staff and Managers, to locate, agree and sign off DAP sites as outlined in the SOG. To reiterate the former advice given in April's Newsletter– **Where this work has not been carried out locally, and in Partnership, then these locations should not be used until suitable sites are found, agreed, and signed off at Local LPF's.**

The Ballot for the positions of Branch Health & Safety Officer and Cambridgeshire County Lead Representative has now been concluded and the results can be found elsewhere in this Newsletter. I would like to say, thank you to all those members that took the time and trouble to cast their vote. As a democratic member led Union, this is one of those opportunities to have a real input into how your branch is run, and who represents on your behalf. I would like to thank the 4 candidates who took part in the election process, most to this work is carried out by volunteers in their own time. Without individuals taking this level of interest, our members would have no representation at all, so thank you and best wishes to you all for the future.

Following on from the 'Open letter' written on behalf of the branch to the Trust Board as outlined in last months Newsletter, a meeting was convened on the 29th April 2009 between senior branch Officers– Kevin Risley– Barry Jarvis– Frank Ward-, and Jackie Robinson. Unison Regional Officer John Toomey, Maria Ball (Trust Chair), Hayden Newton (Chief Executive) Seamus Elliot (Director of HR) and Jagtar Singh Non Executive Director.

The meeting went well even though time was not on our side, and some of our concerns were unable to be discussed in great detail.

There was recognition from all those present that the Partnership working arrangements that have proven to be very successful in the past had been allowed to deteriorate in some (but not all) areas of the trust.

There was also an apology given, (which was accepted) by the management team that the 'invitation' had not been extended to some important high profile strategic meetings recently, which had prevented the staffside involvement into the decision making processes from taking place within the trust.

The management team gave assurances, and stated that they were still fully committed to working with Unison's Staffside Officers, and suggested that it was now time to draw a line in the sand and consider the way forward.

It was agreed by all those present that we hold a complete review of all partnership activities within the trust, both locally and centrally, to allow staff at all levels to have fair input into the trust's forward plans. External expertise is available and would be sought where appropriate.

I will as always, keep members posted of further progress.

K Risley Secretary

Are you a UNISON member that's due to retire ?



As well as offering our Retired members the opportunity to take up UNISON's lifetime Membership offer, the East of England Ambulance branch will give you a retirement gift to the value of £50 .00 as well.

Eligibility to receive this gift is currently the same as with all UNISON benefits and financial awards– ie that you have been a fully paid up member for a minimum of 4 weeks immediately prior to your retirement from employment, the £50 gift will only be awarded once, so if you are presented with a branch gift upon your official retirement, but then chose to return to work again, you will not be eligible to receive this gift when you retire for the second time. However, unless you tell us that you are retiring, we will not necessarily be aware of it, which means that some of our members might lose out. So if you are a fully paid up member of this branch, and are due to retire, PLEASE LET US KNOW as soon as you have your retirement date.. Your first points of contact should be the Branch Retirement Officer, Ian Mc Kenna and Branch Secretary Kevin Risley, alternatively you can contact your relevant County Lead rep or Divisional Secretary, who will pass your details on to Ian and Kevin. Contact details for the aforementioned can be found on the back page of this newsletter, or on the committee members page of the branch website- www.eeas-unison.com Thank you Jackie Robinson Divisional Secretary Beds & Cams

Mailing your courses



A reminder from your Education Officer.

Please can all reps, both H & S and Stewards, either e-mail or send by post (NOT internal as they can and do get lost) all applications for UNISON courses and TUC run courses to me— IAN COOK, and not to the Regional office; so that the applications can be processed and the abstractions be applied for, as in line with Facilities Agreement. Please note a minimum of 4 weeks is required by the Scheduling Departments for abstraction requests.

If any information is needed about courses being run this year, contact myself and I will send the Education programme.

Just one last thing, if you do apply for a course, and you suddenly find that you are unable to go, please let me know as soon as you can, because if you do not attend the branch will be charged **£60 00 for a 'non attendance' penalty.**

The Contact details are:-

Ian Cook Education Officer, Sudbury Ambulance Station, Acton Lane Sudbury Suffolk CO10 1QN
ian.cook@eastamb.nhs.uk or ickook@aol.com

Many Thanks Ian Cook Education Officer.

Rare sightings !

Directors must “ lead by Actions, not Words ”

The Health & Safety Executive has called on Directors to demonstrate personal commitment, and spend more time outside the Boardroom to show they really care about Health & Safety. HSE Chair Judith Hackitt, told a meeting of the Chartered Secretaries and Administrators in London. “ Personal responsibility is fundamental to credibility and strong leadership.

The first requirement is to get outside of the boardroom— visit work stations, and talk to staff.

Ask them what their Health & Safety concerns are and show genuine interest in, and consideration for their response. In the speech Ms Hackitt challenged the growth of ‘box-ticking’ and the ‘do as I say, not as I do’ culture amongst managers”.

She said: “if the actions of the Board are inconsistent with the directions given to staff, this creates a huge integrity gap”.

H.S.E’s voluntary safety code for company directors, which was published jointly with the Institute of Directors, and which the HSE says was “written by directors for directors”, was branded as a complete failure by campaigners after an evaluation published this year by HSE, found three quarters of businesses were unaware of its existence.

Unions and corporate accountability campaigners continue to press for statutory safety duties on employers, and they have urged the HSE to back the approach in its new safety strategy.

Submitted by -Dave Edwards Disabled Members Officer & Health & Safety Lead Norfolk

Direct Debit Subscription Method

If you are a non -member reading this Newsletter, but thinking of joining UNISON, and are based in an Essex workplace or if you work for one of the private providers covered by this branch, then read on because this will be relevant to how you pay your union subscriptions.

Currently Essex members do not have their subscriptions deducted from their salaries like the majority of their branch colleagues. Likewise, neither do our members working for the private provider employers covered by this branch, albeit for differing reasons.

Therefore it is important that, if provided with a tri-fold application form, you complete the Direct Debit mandate on the third page as well as the other two, otherwise it will delay your application being processed as we will have to send you a DD form separately.

All new members application packs now contain the tri-fold style forms, and are being handed out to existing staff, and all new starters at the Trust Corporate Induction Sessions.

If however, you can only find an older style bi-fold version of the form then please use this anyway and forward it onto the branch membership officer Stuart Reeves at - East of England Ambulance Station Ascots Lane, Welwyn garden City, Hertfordshire AL74HL. A Direct Debit form will be sent out to you in return. Jackie Robinson Beds & Cambs

The branch needs you



Have you got what it takes to stand up for your colleagues ? The branch believes that it is essential for all workplaces to have their own designated Staffside /Steward, and Health & Safety representative in order to provide a ‘first line’ contact for Union support, help, and/or advice. As the only union recognised by the East of England Ambulance trust, we continue to seek out and recruit volunteers to support our continued efforts to ensure a safe and fair working environment for all staff.

As a Steward or Health & Safety representative you will be responsible for representing the best interests of members and maintaining our pursuit of effective partnership working— often in the face of adversity in order to perform union duties. UNISON Representatives are entitled to reasonable paid time off; access to trust facilities and certain expenses.

If you think you are up to the challenge and /or would like to know more about becoming a Workplace representative, PLEASE contact the Branch Secretary Kevin Risley on 07866573149
Kevin.risley@eastamb.nhs.uk Jackie Robinson Div Sec Beds & Herts

Branch Committee Election outcomes



At the Annual Branch Meeting held in Cambridge on the 24th February 2009, two posts received more than one nominee as follows:-

Health & Safety Branch Officer

Alan Chamberlain (Current Health & Safety Officer)
John Lee (Waltham Abbey H & S Rep)

Cambridgeshire County Lead Rep

Peter Davis (Current County Lead Rep)
Tim Killick (Huntingdon Station Rep)

The branch Rules state that in the event of more than one person being nominated, election to that post will be determined by way of a ballot of those members who fall within the geographical remit for that specific post. In this case it meant a full branch ballot was required to elect the H & S Branch Officer, and a Cambridgeshire workplace ballot for its County Lead.

A Health & Safety Branch Officer ballot paper and associated election statements went out to everyone of our 1832 members home addresses. In addition to the aforementioned ballot form, 226 members who's workplace is located within the County of Cambridgeshire, would have also received a blue/green coloured 'Cambs County Lead Rep' ballot form in their envelope alongside the H & S Officer one. Both forms asked that the member indicated their preferred appointment, and return the form's in the enclosed SAE by the closing date of Friday May 1st 2009, at which time all the ballot forms received were counted in the presence of independent staff members working at the UNISON Bury St Edmunds Office. The outcomes were as follows:-

Branch Health & Safety Officer

Total Number of H&S Branch Officer ballot papers posted = 1832
Total Number of H&S branch officer ballot papers returned = 374
Total Number of votes cast in favour of appointing **Alan Chamberlain to this role** 202
Total number of votes cast in favour of John Lee to this role 172



Alan

Cambridgeshire County Lead Representative

Total Number of Cambridgeshire County Lead rep ballot papers posted 225
Total number of Cambridgeshire County lead rep ballot papers returned 79
Total Number of votes cast in favour of appointing Peter Davis to this role 34
Total Number of votes cast in favour of appointing **Tim Killick to this role** 45



Tim

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

Therefore congratulations go to Alan Chamberlain who retains the H&S branch role, and Tim Killick who takes over the Cambridgeshire County Lead role. However, whilst commiserations go to Peter Davis this at this time, the branch would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to Peter in recognition of his many years of unstinting efforts and dedication on behalf of the members and the branch.

Commiserations must also go to John Lee, but it is hoped this will not dampen his enthusiasm and determination to represent the best interests of his members within his locality.

Finally it has to be said that the low number of ballot returns reflects a disappointing level of member participation in what is a very time consuming exercise. Having said this, I would like to take this opportunity to say a very big 'Thank You' to those members who did take the time and made the effort to participate in an important election process to elect two Senior staffside representatives whose role it will be to provide support and advice, as well as act in the best interests of all of the branch's many and varied membership groups.

Jackie Robinson Secretary Beds & Cambs

Deployment Plans Secretary's Statement

As previously stated the Dynamic deployment Plan, trial, and consultation period concluded at the 31st March. Please see current position in Secretary's Corner Pg 2 Quote-

"I would like to confirm with members that whatever rumours may be around at the moment suggesting staffside have agreed to an extension of the DD trial beyond 1st April 09 are totally untrue. Following discussions back in Dec 08 regarding the use of DAP sites. The DD working group agreed to a 3 month trial to allow Staff & managers, to locate, agree and sign off DAP sites as outlined in the SOG. To reiterate advice given in April's Newsletter-

Where this work has not been carried out locally and in partnership, then these locations should not be used until suitable sites are found, agreed and signed off at local LPF's."

Branch Secretary Kevin Risley



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