

UNISON Union eyes

Bulletin of UNISON South
London and Maudsley Branch.
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It's a date!
UNISON
to press
ahead
with
October
13 NHS
demo

It's full steam ahead for a national demonstration in defence of the NHS for Saturday October 13, according to a new circular from Head of Health Karen Jennings.

She says that the march will build on the successes of our Keep the NHS Working and NHS Together campaigns:

"The demonstration will be the focus of a public display of celebration and solidarity for an NHS that is still largely owned and run by the public sector.

"It will send a strong message to the government that we want to keep it that way."

UNISON is calling on the NHS Together alliance of unions, supporters from a broad coalition of user, patient and community groups and on ordinary members of the public, to join with us to make the demonstration a brilliant success.

"We need a strong show of support for our campaign and encourage every one of our branches to support the demonstration," says Karen.

"We must continue to resist the government's obsession with handing over our NHS to the private sector."

"There must be no let-up in our campaigning over the coming months as we build momentum toward our National Demonstration."

Unfortunately UNISON has still not fixed a venue for the march, but our branch is keen that it should be in London, and that the cuts in mental health should also feature prominently.

We will be working with members, local campaign networks and supporters to encourage as many people as possible to support the national demonstration and help us to make it a day to remember.

UNISON says: ● No more cuts! ● Meet the pay award in full!

Figures released by the Government in June show that the South London and Maudsley Trust was on course for a financial surplus of £1.93 million in the financial year just passed.

The cash position of the main Primary Care Trusts who buy our services has also improved dramatically:

■ Croydon PCT is claiming that it will balance its books and show a small surplus of £18,000.

■ Lambeth PCT is forecasting a surplus of £1.2 million

■ Lewisham PCT is predicting that its deficit of £6 million will be halved

■ Southwark PCT is forecasting a surplus of just over £1 million.

Taken at face value, the figures show that the key NHS bodies in South East London that affect SLAM are showing a net profit.

If the figures are accurate, it is a dramatic shift from the position just 12 months ago that was driving cuts and job losses across our Trust.

The financial forecasts also show that there is no need for any more cuts.



Plans to axe services like the Felix Post Unit and Eamon Fottrell, designed to save £300,000, are clearly now unnecessary and should be scrapped.

The continuing pressure on staffing costs, and shifts in the skill mix in a number of depart-

ments, are also no longer required.

The news that the books have been balanced, and that the Trust has spare cash in the bank, is as a direct result of the hard work and flexibility of our staff.

UNISON says that in recogni-

tion of the dedication and commitment of the SLAM workforce the Trust should meet this years pay award in full, backdated to April 1.

That would be a magnificent gesture from the Trust in recognition of our efforts.

At least one other Trust,

Southend, has already broken ranks with the Government and paid the 2.5% in full without any staging.

We now learn that some groups of staff in Scotland will also get the full whack.

We were promised when SLAM achieved foundation status that they would have more autonomy – now is the chance for the Board to prove it and do the decent thing for their staff.

We know that the financial situation will have to be monitored closely.

Those who have been around the NHS for a few years will know how quickly the position can shift and how what looked like a surplus one minute suddenly becomes a splash of red figures the next.

But we can only work from the information available – and these figures are official Government figures that show the Trust now has cash in the bank.

UNISON is calling for that surplus to be reinvested in our patient services by slamming the brakes on any planned cuts and in our staff by meeting the pay award in full.

Not yet a member of UNISON? Join today – see back page

Manchester activist faces victimisation

A leading UNISON activist in mental health has been suspended by her employer as we go to press . . . on the day she received a letter confirming her promotion to senior psychiatric nurse following a staff review.

Karen Reissmann, a community psychiatric nurse for 25 years, was suspended by Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust (MMHSCT) on June 15 for bringing its reputation into disrepute.

The Trust says that they no longer have confidence in her as an employee, and that they suspect her of misusing her time during her employment as a CPN.

Earlier this year we reported on the successful action in Manchester in which 260 members took two days of strike action against cuts in services and jobs and against the worsening of conditions and services which would arise from privatisation of some of the community mental health teams.

That solid, official strike was led by Karen Reissmann, who has long been well known and well respected as a UNISON activist and Chairperson of Manchester Community and Mental Health branch.

Unison has held an emergency meeting and 100 staff voted for a ballot on strike action over Ms Reissmann's suspension. Ms Reissmann said:

"What I'm guilty of is defending the NHS and its services for staff and patients and I cannot stop doing it.

"I believe in the NHS, that's why I want to work for it. What I'm not guilty of is harming a single patient in the process.

"I'm disgusted that in 2007 under a Labour government



Karen Reissmann (left) is a long-standing campaigner for the NHS

I'm facing disciplinary action and suspension for trade union activities and speaking out."

The Trust have tried to discipline Karen previously. She has effectively organised and supported members for many years, and has been particularly critical of the transfer of NHS services to the voluntary sector.

Indeed she is facing legal action over her comments published in a social enterprise

magazine.

A spokesman for MMHSCT refused to respond to claims they were trying to clamp down on union work.

As well as the strike, Unison organised 100 staff to drive through city centre streets to protest at proposals to cut 33 community nurses and eight occupational therapists from MMHSCT, while increasing the number of managers.

PCTs sign up for closure

The chairwomen of Lambeth and Southwark Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) have written to the South London Press saying they are backing the closure of the Maudsley emergency clinic, after months of sitting on the fence.

Cutbacks ordered by Lambeth & Southwark PCTs have been the driving force behind the recent rounds of service cuts implemented by SLAM.

UNISON and local campaigners, including Lambeth and Southwark Keep Our NHS Public, have been battling to defend the unit.

Simon Hughes, MP for North Southwark and Bermondsey handed in a petition to the House of Commons in May condemning the move.

The document was signed by more than 1,000 people.



Simon Hughes



UNISON at Glastonbury

UNISON has taken the fight for the NHS to this year's Glastonbury Festival.

At the famous Left Field stage, UNISON strung up a banner welcoming festival goers and ramming home the Keep the NHS Working message.

Sharing billing with Joss Stone, Hard Fi, Billy Bragg, Tony Benn, Lethal Bizzel and a host of others this was the union taking the NHS message right to the heart of the biggest music festival in Europe.



Your South London & Maudsley Branch reps



Branch Officers

- Secretary - BRIAN LUMSDEN** - BRH ext 4682/4124
- Chair - MAX LITTLER** - Bed management, Oak House, Lambeth Hospital 020 7411 6389
- Membership Sec/Treasurer - BRIAN ORMOND** - Estates and Facilities BRH - 8776 4729
- Learning Rep/ Black & Ethnic Minority Lead/ steward**
- ANDY AJADI** 210 Knights Hill 020 8670 4518
- Vice Chair/ Disabilities Rep - GUY CARLISLE** - Carolyn House, Croydon 020 8776 8758
- LGBT lead/ steward - ALICIA BODEN** - Estates and facilities, Maudsley 7919 3973
- A4C KSF Staffside Lead - SALLY ANN BAILEY** - Denis Hill Unit BRH - ext 4228/9
- Welfare Lead - PETER O'CONNOR** - Reception, Maudsley - 020 7919 2135
- Ageing Workforce lead LESLEY HASTINGS** - BRH 3228-4000
- Young Members Lead - GRACE DREWELL**, Risk Management, Bethlem 3228-4117



Tackling Racism Lead - EMMA OREFUWA - Clinical Governance 7411-6100

Stewards

- FREDA BELL** - Felix Post Unit - 7703-6333
- PETER CARMICHAEL** - Psychiatric Liaison, KCH 7346-7181
- MICHAEL DOYLE** - Fitzmary II BRH - 3228 4274
- MICK FITZPATRICK** - Gresham PICU BRH - ext 4074
- STEVE GWENZI** - ES1 PICU Maudsley 7919-2070
- NADIR MOTHOKAKAN** - SW Lambeth CMHT - 7919-3400
- MAGGIE NORNGROVE** - Johnson Unit PICU, Ladywell 020 8333-3487
- FINTAN O'CONNOR** - Westways, Croydon - 020 8700 8503
- BRIAN ROGERS** - Wickham Park House BRH - ext 4395
- GARRY SHAW** - AL3 Maudsley - 7740-5192
- DONALD TOSEFA** - Gresham PICU - ext 4074

Health & Safety reps

- DANNY HAIDER** Denis Hill Unit BRH ext 4228/9
- VEROD BYFIELD** FitzMary 2 BRH ext 4274/5
- MOHAMMED KANU** 210 Knights Hill 020 8670 4518
- RICHARD KANYANGU** ES1 Maudsley ext 2070



NHS pay 2007/08— UNISON gears up for ballot

All UNISON members in the NHS will be asked to check their membership details in preparation for a potential industrial action ballot.

Letters will go to the home addresses of all health members (excluding students, MiP and private company members) during week commencing 28 May 2007. Members who do not receive a letter (e.g. because they have moved) can update their records by contacting UNISONdirect on 0845 355 0845.

Not yet a member? Join UNISON today – see back page

EDITORIAL

Brian Lumsden – Secretary, South London and Maudsley UNISON



Brian Lumsden

Fighting for justice on pay

As we went to press there was no sign of any movement from the NHS nationally on the union demands on pay for 2007.

UNISON has demanded that not only should the award for this year be met in full but that it should not result in a de facto pay cut for health care staff. As we said in the last bulletin, we should not be slipping behind on pay once again, after all the hard work that has gone into Agenda for Change.

The latest financial figures reported for the NHS have reinforced our claim. The forecasts show that the NHS as a whole has recorded a surplus of £500 million. In SLAM, we are expecting to have nearly £2 million in hard cash in the bank.

So why are we being punished through the staging of this year's pay increase, which turns an already paltry 2.5% into just 1.9%?

The NHS clearly has the money to pay the full award from April 1 – the estimated cost nationally is £60 million as against the £500 million the health service reckons it has in surpluses in the bank.

Are we being made an example of because the Government has decided that they want to be seen as "hard" on public sector pay?

We're told that the restraint on our pay is all about controlling inflation ... and yet the top execs in the company boardrooms are expecting a 15% rise

this year plus their multi-million pound bonuses on top. There's no restraint there.

So we need to be prepared to fight over our pay. We all know the cost of living and working in South East London, so any award below the rate of inflation hits us even harder.

As soon as we know what action is being proposed and as soon as we have a timetable for any ballot we will let you know right away. But we all have to be ready to play our part.

Meanwhile, as a consequence of the pay dispute, the negotiations over special duty payments have been suspended.

UNISON has rightly taken the view nationally that we cannot hold talks on other issues while the insulting pay offer remains on the table. Again, we will keep you posted on any developments through Union Eyes.

Welcome to Carol Shorter

The Branch extends a warm welcome to our new regional officer, Carol Shorter.

Carol has set out her priorities and top of the agenda is recruitment and organising. This matches one of the key priorities of the branch over the next twelve months.

As a result of our high-profile campaigning and our hard work on representing members we have been successful in maintaining a high level of UNISON membership in this Trust, and new staff have been

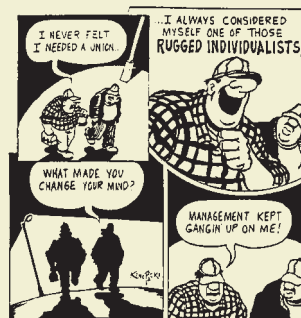


keen to join us.

But we recognise that there are always more potential members and activists out there and we are keen to sign them up.

You can do your bit – the more members we have the stronger and more effective we are, so talk to your colleagues and encourage them to join UNISON if they're not already members.

And we always need more activists. In this bulletin we set out what's involved and how being an active union rep can be really rewarding as well as opening up opportunities for our activists on a personal level to broaden their skills and training. We are particularly to get more women and BME staff involved in UNISON over the coming year.



ner with the slogan "Fighting for mental health services".

We chose those words because that's exactly what we've been doing over the past couple of years – not only campaigning for our members, but also on behalf of our services and the people who use them.

That's why we have been able to engage the wider community in our campaigns and get access to the whole range of local politicians. MPs like Kate Hoey, Harriett Harman and Simon Hughes take us seriously because they know that our priority is the future development of mental health services in South East London and that extends way beyond just the pay and conditions issues for our members.

Working with the politicians, service user groups and the wider public, UNISON has been instrumental in turning the spotlight on mental health.

Services that were once pretty much ignored by the press are now regularly reported and I thank our colleagues at the South London Press for the excellent work that they have done.

SLAM Unison is proud to be a campaigning branch – watch out for the banner on the TV.

Our new banner

You'll see the branch has unveiled its new banner

Defending SLAM's Older People's Services

The fight goes on!

As we went to press it was clear that the UNISON and community campaign around the axing of the Felix Post and Eamon Fottrell Unit's was having some success.

The initial consultation on the closures appears to have been suspended and there are rumours of a new, formal consultation – possibly in August.

This would make no sense as it would be slap bang in the middle of the holiday period and local government and Parliament are in recess.

UNISON has kept up the pressure with local MPs and Councillors.

As well as discussions with Kate Hoey and Harriett Harman we have a meeting scheduled with Bermondsey MP Simon Hughes.

Harriett Harman was so keen



Harriett Harman

to hear the views of a group of FPU staff and Unison reps who had travelled to the Commons to meet her that she actually left

the chamber in the middle of a no confidence vote in Gordon Brown to make us a cuppa in her office.

She listened closely to our arguments and has promised to visit the Felix Post Unit.

There is no doubt that we are winning the argument, and with the news that SLAM is now showing a £2 million financial surplus there is no financial case for the cuts to older peoples services.

Despite this, cuts to the staffing budgets are still being bundled through and some staff posts are up for deletion with members facing the prospect of redeployment.

This doesn't make any sense either.

It would be a deeply unpopular move on the part of the Trust if they thought they could whit-



tle away staffing levels in Felix Post and Eamon Fottrell as part of softening up exercise prior to closure. UNISON will be seeking assurances that that is not the case.

With the financial arguments for closure no longer valid the only arguments that the Trust appears to have in hand are technical – that FPU and Eamon Fottrell are 'luxury' services and that we should level down rather than levelling

up to the best possible practice. This flies in the face of everything that SLAM, with its history as an innovative and imaginative provider of mental health care services, has always stood for.

Harriett Harman certainly understood this argument and Simon Hughes reinforced it when he spoke at the recent public meeting on the cuts in SLAM organised in Camberwell by the South

London Press, the unions and user groups.

Our high quality services are worth fighting for, and they are worth fighting for because they make a difference to peoples lives.

We should be proud of them and we should defend them and we should protect the reputation of SLAM as a trailblazer in the development of innovative models of care like FPU.



UNISON WELFARE SPECIAL

Highlands and Islands Challenge – May 2007

As part of its service to members, UNISON runs its own welfare fund. The fund helps out members who are going through a tough time and much of the money in the pot is raised by UNISON people in a variety of ways.

One of our members here at SLAM, Bob Rea, decided to take part in the Highlands and Islands Challenge – cycling 135 miles and walking another 35 – all sponsored and in support of UNISON Welfare.

Bob is a community nurse in the Croydon Substance Misuse Team based at Crossfield House and has been a member of UNISON/COHSE since he started work in mental health back in 1988.

Bob and his family had benefited from UNISON Welfare after his wife, who also works in the NHS, suffered a serious workplace injury. The Rea family are big fans of the services at UNISON's own holiday camp at Croyde Bay in Devon and can heartily recommend it to other members looking for a reasonably priced UK break in fabulous surroundings.

Bob spotted the details of the Highlands and Islands Challenge in the UNISON magazine, contacted Paul Barker at head office and signed up there and then.

His next task was to raise at least £500 in sponsorship. With one day to go he was still a few quid short when Brian Lumsden, who had got wind of Bob's expedition, rode to the rescue and offered to match whatever Bob raised from branch funds.

It was a done deal and Bob headed for Gatwick with some important advice from Brian ringing in his ears – watch out for the midges!

Here's Bob's diary:

Day One

Stood waiting for the gear to be loaded and got to know the locals very well – yes, you guessed it, the midges decided to put in an early appearance this year (put it down to global warming) and proceeded to have a feast on my athletically toned body parts.

Eventually we got to Loch Shiel and after a mechanical safety check of the bikes we were under way, doodling down the side of the loch on a 50 mile bike ride. Now, I am regular bike rider, I cycle to work and do about 100 miles a week and I thought prior to this trip that I was pretty fit. Soon I would test the limits of my fitness.

Throughout the morning the

only adverse conditions to deal with were the blasted midges. The loch lasted about 19 miles before we turned to the hills and it started to rain – this it did for the rest of the day.

Lunch was about halfway through, and a good job because round the bend straight after was a bloody great hill! This set the tone for the second part of the day – pain, wet and more pain. We did 50 miles in five and half hours to warm applause from the walkers.

Day Two – Isle of Skye

I woke at 6am and my wife would curse how quickly I managed to get out of my bunk. The rain was horizontal, lashing the windows but, hey, I didn't mind, well only a bit! After breakfast it cleared and we set off on our second 50 mile bike ride.

On the first leg the sun shone



and the south/south west breeze carried us around the northern tip of the island.

We climbed slowly and then once over the top, engaged our top gears and shot down the long, curvy narrow roads trying to avoid the hazards. No, not cars, people or the views but the kamikaze sheep with newborns at their sides. Owing to my skills and no amount of luck I managed to avoid any collisions.

Then the weather really turned. We pushed on full of resolve only to be met by higher hill climbs made tougher by strengthening winds.

Around the 25 mile mark we were pedalling all out but were being savaged by what felt like force ten gales. At times it was becoming dangerous and we ended up walking up the hills.

The final straw came at the 30 mile mark – we had pulled into a lay-by when the hailstones came, alongside them the wind became cold and it stole our energy. So we called it a day and jumped into the support truck and retreated to the next town and a nice warm hotel.

Day Three – Cup Final Day – Island of Uist

This was a walking day for all of us. We were taken on a guided tour of the North Uist Island where we learnt about the local tradition of crofting – growing crops all but on the beach.

Plant life on the island was limited to 4 inches in height, such is the severe nature of the weather that trees and bushes cannot survive.

I was very keen to get back to the hotel and bar to watch the Cup Final which we managed to do by half time – my team got beat.

Anyway, we had a great night socialising and my bed finally materialised about 3am before the dreaded alarm sounded for yet another 6am start to do some more walking in the national park on South Uist.

Day Four – Sunday

Not hung over – unlike some – but glad this was a slower day. Two walks through bogs, onto the “waker”, the bit where crofters grow crops using seaweed. Well, it's a bit more complicated than that, and very difficult to do.

By now I was really enjoying every minute. Energising fresh air, long walks and great company. I managed to get around the group, talking to most folk. All were somehow involved in the union, members, activists and even a few who worked for

the union.

That night after dinner I got talking to Julie Grant who heads up the UNISON Welfare charity. She was lovely and told me lots about the charity and its work. I knew then I was doing the right thing being on the event, helping others doing the things I like doing – cycling, walking and, of course, talking.

Day Five – Oban

We were shaken out of bed at 4.30am the next morning and on the road at 5.30 to get the ferry to Oban back on the mainland. Oban is a beautiful town, harbour front, nice architecture and shops.

Some folk made the most of the shopping that afternoon but the diehards like me went on another walk in the nearby area and it was very pretty and relaxing.

Day Six – Isle of Mull

Last day. Bike ride. Another early start, another ferry to the Isle of Mull, to Ballamory (aka Tobermory): that was the finishing point. This was a very pretty day, the scenery was first class – coastline, mountains and the weather played its part.

Blue skies all morning, and just as we crossed the finish line the rain clouds gathered and the rain fell. After a celebration in the pub we were back in the vans and on the ferry and back to Oban.

Then it was all back to the hostel for the official certification process, wind down and in depth analysis of the past 6 days. All agreed that it had been a positive group. I had a





fab time and was keen to get signed up for the next one. Then sleep overcame me.

Day Seven – Home

No rest for the knackered. Wake up and out on the road by 7.30am packed like sardines in the vans. Typically it was chucking it down with rain all the way back to Glasgow airport where we all said our farewells and then they were all gone.

I got back to Gatwick to warm sunshine with a heavy kit back, heavier legs but my memory stuffed with a truly

amazing array of the experiences in Scotland. I was touched by the great spirit and comaradery of the group. I'll be up for it next year and will be coming to you for sponsorship!

Heartfelt thanks to Brian Lumsden and the branch, Paul Barker, the support team and Julie Grant for a wonderful week in Scotland.



KAREN CARPENTER, Lambeth Estates and Facilities

This month's Star Prize winner is Karen Carpenter.

Karen is the Deputy Estates and Facilities Manager for Lambeth, and looks after a range of support service on the Lambeth site and out into the community units. Her brief includes catering, cleaning, security and reception.

Her NHS career started 20 years ago at the old Tooting Bec Hospital where she took a post as the Deputy Catering Manager.

Karen says that at the time many of her friends and family questioned the wisdom of opting for a career in the NHS, but she hasn't looked back since and is still enjoying the new challenges that go with the territory.

Karen progressed through the managerial grades within the Trust and has been through numerous mergers and reorganisations over the past two decades.

Her job has taken her on a tour of current and former and Lambeth sites including the Lambeth New Home and the South Western and she's now located in Reay House on the Lambeth site.

When we arrived to talk with her, boxes were stacked up in the corridors and a major shift around of office space was in full flow. So we found a bit of space and got down to the infamous Union Eyes grilling.

Karen started off by telling us how proud she was of the services that she was involved in providing and just how crucial team working was to maintaining the high standards rightly demanded by the clients.

She took us through the core challenge that she and so many others managers face – a demanding framework and

statutory regulation, including directives like the Better Hospital Food Programme and NHS Cleanliness Standards, against a background of continuing financial pressure.

Throughout the years of compulsory competitive tendering, Karen is proud of the fact that she and her team have managed to keep the catering service in house and hold on to their own central production unit that means real control and real accountability when it comes to quality control.

We talked about the extension of Agenda For Change to contractor staff and Karen warmly welcomed the fact that in the future all staff working in the NHS will ben-

STAR PRIZE WINNER

efit from harmonised terms and conditions:

"I think it's a real step forward that those staff working in the Trust for external contractors will be able to benefit from career development and improving working lives. I hope that it will open up some genuine career opportunities for support staff who deserve the opportunity to progress."

Karen also thinks that the development of partnership working has been beneficial all round and talked about her

constructive relationship with the trade unions on the Lambeth site.

Just as we were wrapping up Karen told us that all recent audits of the food standards in her department and come out with high ratings. One had been conducted by the Improving Working Lives team and another by Clinical Audit. Karen put this success down to the hard work and commitment of all the staff involved in the service.

"That's the way it should be...."


UNISON Welfare



Debt advice service

UNISON Welfare's free and confidential debt advice service is provided in partnership with Payplan, who are experts in helping people in financial difficulty.

Call 0800 389 3302 FREE



We need YOU!

Have you ever thought about getting more involved in your Union?
If you have, we can guarantee that we won't throw you in at the deep end. We'll only ask you to do as much as you're prepared to take on.
Although we're always on the look out for new stewards and health and safety reps there are plenty of other ways that you can get involved. If you are interested please don't hesitate. Just a tick a box or two on this slip and send it back to us. Go on, you know it makes sense!
I'm interested in getting more involved in UNISON and would like more information on the following:

Name

Department

Phone/Extension/Address

.....

Please return to: Rep enquiry, UNISON Office, Bethlem Royal Hospital, Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 3BX

Shop Steward
 Health and Safety Rep
 Workplace contact
 Black Members Rep
 Gay and Lesbian Rep
 Welfare Committee
 Social Committee

SLAM Unison launches new recruitment drive

Regular readers of this bulletin will know how hard UNISON works for its members at South London and Maudsley.

Whether it's the day-to-day work of representation or negotiations, or the high profile campaigning work around cuts and redundancies, we have a proud track record as an independent organisation looking after our members and the services that they work on.

We are a big branch and we cover a big area right across South East London. We are proud of our record as a campaigning branch that has the ear of politicians and opinion formers on the key issues that affect our members.

But there's an old trade union saying: we are only ever as strong as our members and our activists – and that's why we are launching a new recruitment drive across the Trust.

There are two things we are aiming for – more members and more reps. The key point is that the more members and activists

your friend at work

UNISON



UNISON
the public service union

we have in the Branch, the stronger we are and the more we can achieve for staff.

We already have a good mem-

bership density for UNISON in most areas of the South London and Maudsley Trust but there is always scope for improving our

organisation – and that's where you come in.

If you're not a member, and you are reading this bulletin – what are you waiting for?

You can see that we are your union, representing you and your colleagues with the interests of your job and your services right at the heart of our priorities.

If you join today, you strengthen our organisation and it means we can achieve even more.

If you are already a member, you can help by talking to your colleagues. Find out if they are in UNISON and if they're not, explain to them what the branch is doing and how much more impact we could have if we improved our membership density. It's the age-old principle that Unity is Strength.

And why not think about becoming a UNISON rep? Being a steward or a health and safety rep, or even a work place contact, is incredibly rewarding. You'll have the full backing

of Britain's biggest public sector trade union.

There are many people who have become union activists in the health service as part of their own personal development, and who have found that it opens up whole range of opportunities for them.

You are entitled to paid time off for training and we run some excellent education courses for UNISON reps that you can access.

You also get paid time to carry out your trade union responsibilities and the opportunity to represent the branch and your workmates at conferences and meetings.

Here in SLAM, UNISON is a force to be reckoned with. The management take us seriously, as do the wider community and the political representatives right across South East London.

If we want to meet with cabinet ministers and senior MPs like Harriet Harman, Simon Hughes and Kate Hoey then

they make time for us because they know that what we have to say is important to them and their voters.

You can be a part of the strong voice that we are building for mental health workers and mental health services in South East London – either as a UNISON member or as a UNISON rep.

Think it over. You can join us today by filling in the form on the back of this bulletin and if you'd like to discuss becoming a rep in your workplace give us a call.

We are particularly keen to get more union members involved from amongst our BME staff and more women.

UNISON has a proud record on equalities and that is reflected in our agreements with the NHS at both a national and local level.

You can help us to drive that equalities agenda by taking an active part.

As someone once said – there is power in a union.

Post Office invokes small print to leave her stranded, but ...

Angie's accident brings out UNISON solidarity

Mental health nurse Angie Gower, a member of UNISON's Bro Morgannwg health branch in Wales has been at the centre of a remarkable show of union solidarity after she suffered a freak accident while on a diving holiday in Egypt back in February.

As a trained diver herself, and with a partner (Mark Phillips) who is also a former professional diver, Angie thought her diving expedition was a routine holiday outing ... until she



Angie Gower (picture courtesy BBC website)

came to the surface suffering severe discomfort, and was diagnosed as suffering from the 'bends' (too rapid decompression).

This affected her spine and she found herself paralysed from the neck down, and was taken to hospital.

Her problems grew worse when her insurers, the Post Office, decided she was not covered by their policy, since she had exceeded the stipulated maximum depth.

They refused to pay up, leaving Angie facing £10,000 in medical bills even after hospital staff in Egypt, sympathetic to her plight, cut their bill almost in half.

But UNISON swiftly got on the case, with an appeal led by a member who had recently joined UNISON from the RCN.

The branch was quick to donate to the fund, and Regional Secretary Paul O'Shea circulated the appeal to all Welsh branches, resulting in donations from Carmarthen

County branch, Cardiff & Vale Health, and Caerphilly County, while Swansea Health made a direct contribution.

Such was the scale and rapidity of the response that UNISON donations completely covered the costs, and paid up all that was owed. There were even more offers of support which have been declined with thanks.



Angie, a psychiatric nurse working in Bridgend's Caswell Clinic, is extremely grateful for the solidarity – and has responded with a tremendous recovery. She is now hoping to be back in work soon.

Angie's experience helps underline what is so special about UNISON and union membership: it really does bring you support on a level that no other organisation can deliver, even on issues that are not related to the workplace.

If you're not a member, then act now, and join us at once!



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UNISON splits from Mental Health Alliance

In May UNISON, along with Amicus, the British Psychological Society, the College of Occupational Therapists and the Royal College of Nursing, suspended its membership of the Mental Health Alliance.

The MHA has been the umbrella body of campaigners fighting for improvements in the controversial mental health bill that which has had a rocky passage through parliament, is currently awaiting its third reading.

The five organisations represent some 85 per cent of NHS mental health staff, and the split is seen as a firm stand to support improvements in mental healthcare which will benefit both patients and members working in the field.

The unions have formed a new coalition to send out a strong message of support for the new ways of working contained within the mental health bill.

It offers, for the first time, statutory support for a multi-disciplinary and holistic alternative to the medical, doctor-knows-best approach that still dominates mental healthcare.

UNISON and its coalition partners believe that the best quality mental healthcare is provided by multidisciplinary teams working together to provide the care people want and need.

Today a wide range of experts

from a range of professional backgrounds – nurses, psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists, as well as psychiatrists – plan care, and lead clinical teams.

“The law should reflect this important clinical reality,” says the coalition.

However, some member organisations of the Alliance have sought to limit the bill’s new treatment powers to doctors.

UNISON and its coalition partners fear this sends out mixed signals.

They believe at this critical stage in the parliamentary process, it is essential that MPs and Lords have clear and



Putting on the pressure: an MHA lobby

unambiguous messages from all stakeholders.

Gail Adams, UNISON head of nursing, explained: “We are passionate about mental health services and want to see more effective use of the recovery model and non-pharmacological methods of care.”

“We believe that the wider multidisciplinary team is essential to this; it’s what health workers are already doing as a direct result of patients’ demands.”

SALUD! SLAM Branch donates to Cuban medical fund

The SLAM branch of UNISON has agreed to donate £1000 to SALUD! – the appeal for medical equipment and supplies for Cuba.

Salud International is a non-charitable Trust that grew out of a campaign launched in 1998 to send a ship full of medical aid to Cuban hospitals which were suffering heavily from the illegal American blockade of trade with Cuba which has been in force for nearly 50 years now.

Initially UNISON raised enough money to buy and donate 17 London Ambulances that were shipped down to the Caribbean.

Other unions donated items such as fire engines and safety equipment along with \$100,000 worth of powdered milk and \$150,000 worth of food and items of medical equipment and hospital beds.

In 2001 SALUD! was formally constituted as a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) and Salud International was born. The second cargo of medical aid included 51 ambulances.

Since then Salud International has been working in a number of other countries needing aid and support. Cuba, despite the US blockade, has a fantastic health set up and sends doctors and other medics all around the world and is quick off the mark when there are disaster areas that need urgent aid.

One of the key players in the campaign to raise funds and locate medical equipment for Cuba is Eric Roberts from the UNISON London Ambulance Service Branch.

It was Eric who first approached us here at SLAM for support for a project to refurbish the ambulance control centre in Havana.

Eric told us: “SALUD certainly welcomes the very generous donation from the South London and Maudsley Unison Branch and would ask that our appreciation and thanks be passed on. The campaign is to modernise and re-furbish the Havana City Ambulance Service Control Room.

“I visited Havana last

December to follow up on the ambulance campaign and also to help forge other solidarity projects.

“Coming from London Ambulance Service with its multi million, state of the art Control Room, I was quite taken aback by the conditions I found our Cuban brothers and sisters working in. It was my first visit to the Control Room as I have mainly concentrated on ambulance stations.

“The Control Room is very basic to say the least. No computers and no integrated radio systems. This means that all the calls have to be dealt with via the telephone, of which there are only twelve.

“Because of this, the people in Havana are restricted calling for an ambulance because the system would just not cope. Of the calls that do get through, they are sent to crews on ambulances via one radio (a



(above) Salud’s medical aid to Cuba also helps Cuba support initiatives around the world, like this project in Honduras. (below) London ambulances en route to Cuba



very old set at that).

“The whole infrastructure in the Control Room needs changing. Computers and new communication

systems need to replace the over-stretched, antiquated phone system and a proper, modern radio system needs installing. Radio systems on the ambulances also need replacing and updating.

“Our campaign will save lives without a doubt. People will be able to phone for ambulances and ambulances will be able to be sent in a quick and safe manner. In the big scheme of things this is a simple thing to do, but the benefits are huge.”

SLAM Unison believes that we have an important role to play internationally as trade unionists and we welcome suggestions from members of any other solidarity projects that we should consider supporting.

Drop us a line at the union office. We will keep you updated on the Cuban initiative.

WEALTH WARNING



Unison Members booking through the Unison Holiday Club saved on average an extra £200 on their Summer Holiday booking*



Your chance to win the GRAND UNISON PRIZE DRAW!!



JUST FILL in this form, send it to us – and win a cash prize!
 UNION EYES is a regular bulletin for all staff, and we want to make sure it covers the issues you think are important. If you have any suggestions, let us know. We always put all the names of UNISON members responding in the hat for two £25 book tokens. Don't miss your chance to win!

Name Department

Address

email Phone/ext

I think future editions of UNION EYES should carry articles or interviews on

Are you prepared to write something for UNION EYES? YES/NO

Please return to: PRIZE DRAW, c/o Brian Lumsden, UNISON Office, Bethlem Royal Hospital, Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 3BX



"Rule book" BENEFITS

Death benefit

Years of membership	£
1-5	72
5-10	118
10-15	158
15-20	198
20-25	244
25-30	282
Over 30	346

Fatal accident benefit

£1,295 after one year's continuous membership, £2,875 after ten years' membership, to be paid to the member's partner or children.

Incapacity benefit

Members who suffer partial or total incapacity due to injury while at work are entitled to £1,437 for partial, or £2,875 for total incapacity, as described in the rule book.

Convalescence

Members can apply to the Welfare Fund for convalescent accommodation:

- To recuperate from an illness.
- To have a temporary rest for the benefit of health.
- To take a holiday they could not otherwise afford.

Accident benefit

£2.90 per day of sickness, £14.50 per week maximum, up to a maximum of 30 days or £87 in any calendar year.

Education and training

Members can be considered for a grant by the NEC for training or study courses.

FREE indemnity insurance

UNISON provides free professional indemnity insurance of up to £1 million for a wide range of health service professionals, including nurses, ambulance staff, PTAs and PTBs.

Don't delay, join today!



Ten good reasons to join UNISON

If you are not already a trade union member, then why not consider joining UNISON?

Here are TEN good reasons for doing so:

- UNISON represents nearly 1.5 million employees across Britain, making us the biggest trade union in Britain. We only recruit people who work to provide services to the public - so our size and our specialisation mean that we offer strong, professional and effective protection to all our members.

- UNISON's trained representatives provide free support and advice on any problems you might have at work.

- UNISON provides professional negotiators to sort out your pay and terms and conditions of employment both nationally and locally.

- UNISON membership brings free legal representation for accidents at work and while travelling to and from work, and free representation on other employment related issues.

- We also offer legal advice for domestic and other problems at much reduced rates. UNISON's trained health and safety representatives provide free services to make your workplace safe to be in.

- UNISON pays benefits to members, including accident and death benefits.

- UNISON looks after you. We provide convalescent facilities at reduced rates, offer financial assistance to members suffering unforeseen hardship, and give free advice on state and welfare benefits.

- UNISON provides a wide range of competitive financial services. These include reduced mortgages, home, car and holiday insurance, road rescue, personal loans, credit cards and financial planning advice.

- UNISON offers great break-away holidays through our travel club, as well as our own family holiday centre in Devon.

- UNISON offers you a range of education and training courses. These include courses leading to professional qualifications, GCSEs and vocational qualifications.

Your chance to join Britain's biggest health care union

UNISON

To join, please fill in this form in BLOCK CAPITALS, and send it to: Membership, Union Office, Bethlem Royal Hospital, Monks Orchard Rd, Beckenham Kent BR3 3BX.

YOUR DETAILS

Mrs Ms Miss Mr FIRST NAME Other initial(s)

SURNAME

ADDRESS

Postcode

WORKPLACE ADDRESS (if different from above)

Postcode

JOB TITLE/OCCUPATION

National Insurance number (from your payslip)

If you have been a member of a trade union before, please state which one:

Employer's name

Payroll number (from your payslip)

I wish to join UNISON and accept its rules and constitution.

I authorise deduction of the following Political Fund payment as part of my subscription:
Tick one box only

Affiliated Political Fund

General Political Fund

I authorise deduction of UNISON subscriptions from my salary/wages at the rate determined by UNISON to be paid over to them on my behalf and I authorise my employer to provide to UNISON information to keep my records up to date.

If you are, or have been, a member of the Freemasons you must declare this in writing when completing this form.

I wish to pay by direct debit/cheque (please tick if appropriate)

3. WHAT YOU PAY - CURRENT RATES (SET OCTOBER 2003)

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions.

WEEKLY PAY		ANNUAL PAY		PER WEEK PER MONTH BAND		
Up to £38.47	<input type="checkbox"/>	Up to £2,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£0.30	£1.30	A
£38.48-£96.16	<input type="checkbox"/>	£2,001-£5,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£0.81	£3.50	B
£96.17-£153.84	<input type="checkbox"/>	£5,001-£8,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£1.22	£5.30	C
£153.85-£211.53	<input type="checkbox"/>	£8,001-£11,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£1.52	£6.60	D
£211.54-£269.23	<input type="checkbox"/>	£11,001-£14,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£1.81	£7.85	E
£269.24-£326.92	<input type="checkbox"/>	£14,001-£17,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£2.24	£9.70	F
£326.93-£384.61	<input type="checkbox"/>	£17,001-£20,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£2.65	£11.50	G
£384.62-£480.76	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20,001-£25,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£3.23	£14.00	H
£480.77-£576.92	<input type="checkbox"/>	£25,001-£30,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£3.98	£17.25	I
£576.93-£673.08	<input type="checkbox"/>	£30,001-£35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£4.68	£20.30	J
£673.08+	<input type="checkbox"/>	over £35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£5.19	£22.50	K

Please tick this box if you are a student member in full-time education (including student nurses or Modern Apprentices). Your subscription is £10 per year.

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid

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Now please sign and date below and return this form to:
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