

UNISON Union eyes

**Bulletin of UNISON Dudley
Group of Hospitals Branch**

● July 2006. ● Free to members

INSIDE

- Agenda for Change – an Interserve update
- Pensioners Parliament
- UNISON Health Conference
- UNISON National Conference



Wolverhampton staff fight back

Some 99% of workers at Wolverhampton's New Cross Hospital who took part have voted for industrial action to challenge the loss of 300 jobs, with 65% prepared to strike.

The cuts are to set to save £8m for the trust which has debts of about £37m.

Unions are offering to talk to management, but Pete Lowe, of UNISON, told BBC

News:

"It's the last chance saloon for the management to sit down with us and to avoid (us) taking action."

As we go to press over 17,000 jobs and more than 1,500 hospital beds face the axe since the beginning of the year, with many West Midlands hospitals in the frame – including Sandwell and West Birmingham, and University Hospitals of North Staffordshire.



Support Peugeot workers

You will be aware the bosses of Peugeot have announced they are moving the Coventry factory abroad, which will mean hundreds of jobs will be lost, this on top of the job losses recently lost at Rover.

How much more can the West Midlands take?

UNISON in support of the workers have cancelled all orders with Peugeot and would urge you all to give your support.

NHS cuts: Join our campaign!

Angela Thompson

The branch is running a campaign against the Trust's decision to close C7 – in line with Unison's national campaign to Keep The NHS Working.

On May 11 May Hazel Priest, Tracey Nixon and I lobbied parliament, attempting to get MPs to support the campaign.

I managed to see my local labour MP, Linda Waltho, who is supporting the campaign: she has written to Paul Farrenden and the



strategic health authority and is waiting a response.

On June 14 the branch held a rally outside main entrance at RHH against the loss of a further 36

beds, bringing the total beds lost since the reconfiguration of our health service through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) to 142.

We released 142 balloons at the rally – one for each bed lost – but that doesn't count the beds lost when Burton Road, Hayley Green, and Rosemary Ednam

closed, and in patient services at Dudley Guest.

Pete Lowe, a UNISON West Midlands regional officer who you may



(Top) Health conference delegates join forces with North East branches of UNISON in a show of strength against cuts and privatisation: (above) the Branch banner was there, too ... see inside, page 2.

remember used to be branch secretary at Dudley Group of Hospitals, has also recently been elected labour councillor for Lye and Wollascote.

Pete is also supporting the campaign, and spoke at the rally: we need to get as much support as possible.

UNISON is publishing campaign postcards, and as soon as we get copies we will be distributing them.

I would urge all members to fill them in and post

them. Dudley Borough and surrounding areas cannot afford to lose any more beds.

How often have you heard or read about patients lying on trolleys because there was no bed for them: to cut beds in a brand new hospital and leave even more patients stranded is absolutely ridiculous.

Look out for further demonstrations and join the campaign.

Questionnaires

Our branch is trying to find out what our members think. We have written a questionnaire and sent it out – but only approx 100 have been filled in. We will be sending some more out, can we ask you to take part and help us improve the branch? You can also ring the office to have some sent to you.

DO YOU HAVE ANY INFO FOR OUR NEWSLETTER?

If you have an idea for the next issue, please get in touch.

NEXT SOCIAL

8th September

We have a branch meeting first, where Angela and Steve give us an update, then in September it will be SKITTLES! Contact Joyce or Barbara for tickets.

Health Conference Gateshead April 2006

The day Hewitt blew it with UNISON delegates

Steve Astill

This was my third Health Conference and they seem to be getting further away! This time the journey was three and a half hours to Newcastle followed by another hour trying to find the hotel amongst the diversion signs.

The delegates for the conference were myself and Hazel Priest and the visitors were Ian Houghton and Tracy Nixon.

Whoever booked the Sage in Gateshead had failed to notice that across the river the conference clashed with the first date of the Take That reunion tour: this meant that the walk down to the Regional meeting was against a tide of people who were more interested in whether Robbie would make a guest appearance than the future of the NHS.

After collecting our card votes we headed for a local Chinese restaurant where some of us spent our day's budget on a selection of food described as the "Emperor's Banquet".

Although the conference was being held at the Sage in Gateshead we had booked into a nice hotel in Newcastle opposite the station, even so the hotel contained more UNISON members than Take That fans.

The Big Event on the first day was a lunchtime rally and protest against NHS privatisation at the Baltic Square, and we had been mandated to attend by the branch with the Branch Banner.

The photographs do not do the event justice as hundreds arrived to hear speeches by UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis, MP Frank Dobson and guest speakers from overseas unions, but, due to the size of our banner, we had to move to the back just to put it up.

Without Agenda for Change to argue over I was concerned that debates would lack the edge of previous years ... but then, I didn't really expect Patricia Hewitt to turn up!

We had been asked by the chair to show respect for her attendance, and so her speech was met by a stony silence for a

few moments, until what she had to say was greeted by boos and jeers.

The largest howls of derision were saved for her claim that clinical support workers were unqualified, a statement that she was immediately forced to retract and apologise for.

I am sure you will all have seen her on the news that evening. She left the stage to another stony silence, except for one person, who politely clapped until they realised that no one else was going to join in. I wonder if she left thinking "That could have been worse, I should get it a bit easier at the RCN conference tomorrow"? How naïve.

Due to the previous evening's excess, that night saw our first visit to one of several Newcastle Wetherspoons as did many of the conference attendees – until on the last day we had literally eaten Wetherspoons out of steak and tomato sauce.

The second day saw guest speakers and also a lunchtime focus group on KSF.

The third and final day started in a lively fashion with an attempt to get important debates moved to an earlier slot as some delegates would have to

leave for home.

This was refused, and so a lively pace was set with some motions being dropped so that pensions could be debated.

For a full list of conference motions and voting results visit the UNISON website and follow the link to Health and Conferences.

If you have not been to conference it is worth a visit just to hear Yunus Bhaksh speak. His argument against recognising and rewarding members who had voluntarily taken part in the Agenda for Change process was passionate and persuasive, swinging the vote against. As he pointed out we don't do this for reward.

Sadly, I was on nights Thursday and left at the end of the last day, so missing out on the final evenings entertainment, although I don't think a return visit to the Chinese restaurant was on the cards!



Hewitt: got the bum's rush



Health conference delegates outside the giant Sage Centre in Gateshead, where UNISON raised the stakes in the fight against cuts and privatisation, passing two emergency motions after hearing from Patricia Hewitt

National Delegate Conference, Bournemouth

Strong appeal from Zimbabwe women

Angela Thompson, Joint Branch Secretary

Hazel Priest and I represented our branch at this year's NDC, Barbara Smith and Joyce Elgerton came along as visitors.

A complete list of conference motions and voting results can be found on the UNISON web site.

UNISON normally invites guest speakers to speak at our conferences, and this year was no exception: there were both national and international speakers, one of whom, Thabitha Khumalo from the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, I want to bring to your attention. I want to propose that we offer financial support and solidarity.

Thabitha gave a moving account to conference of the corruption and poverty in Zimbabwe, and some of the effects it is having on women and girls. There wasn't a dry eye in the hall as she told of what life is like under such conditions, and what she has to endure simply for standing up and speaking out for the women and girls of her country.

This heroine – yes I really do mean a heroine there is no



Thabitha (right) working with UNISON and other unions to raise vital supplies



back home safely.

Due to the economic collapse in Zimbabwe, essential hygiene products are unaffordable.

Women, mothers and girls are having to decide whether to spend the little money they have on food or sanitary wear, inevitably opting for food and resorting to using newspaper, bits of cloth or the bark from trees to stem the flow during their periods.

This brings additional prob-

Be there next year

If you want to know more about how the Union works, and want to get more involved and take part in policy making, I would encourage you to consider taking part in Unison's conferences. You can do this by attending branch committee meetings if you're a steward (the branch committee meets on the first Thursday of the month), or full branch meetings if you are a member – dates of these can be found in Unison diaries.

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Russells Hall Social Club: Are YOU a member?

If not, why not join now?
Contact BOB HINGLEY, Club Secretary, via switchboard for details

Catching up on Agenda for Change

Angela Thompson, Joint Branch Secretary

You will recall from previous reports and the Joint Statement that private companies and staff side had to confirm with trusts what services were to be funded for the implementation of pay and conditions equivalent to Agenda



for Change.

On May 8 a tripartite meeting took place, at which the trust confirmed that "hard services" – estates and grounds and gardens – would not be included.

They also needed further clarification from NHS employers on Medical Records, although we have now received confirmation that Medical Records are within the scope of the agreement.

All other "soft" services are within the scope of the agreement and will be funded.

Job evaluation (J/E)

Joanne Hickman is staff side lead on J/E, and is on the national project board.

The process of matching jobs is well under way with many more arranged, it is envisaged all posts will be matched by September, the next step is for those posts matched to go through the consistency checking, once this process is completed members will know where they have been banded, if you believe you have been

banded incorrectly contact Jo who will advise you.

Job Descriptions

Since February 2006 jobs at DGH Interserve have had their Job Descriptions 'refreshed'. Every job should have this done.

What has been happening is: the staff in post have had a consultation with management, HR and a staff side rep.

The management read from a script, so every one has the same. You are given your up to date job Description (JD), and a form to sign so HR know you are happy with your JD.

If you are not happy with your JD you do not sign, and you talk to your manager, HR or the staff side (Joanne Hickman is the lead).

If you have not had this done, get in touch.

Terms and Conditions (T&Cs)

I am the staff side lead on T&Cs and on the national project board.

You will recall the Joint Statement gives scope for contractors to offer something other than the NHS terms and conditions, Job Evaluation and KSF, but it has to be equivalent and no less favourable.

I am pleased to report Interserve (FM) Ltd have adopted the NHS J/E, and KSF.

We have been working through the sections of the NHS T&Cs handbook: so



Newcastle UNISON members pressing for progress on A4C

Interserve staff and Agenda for Change

A4C is due to start on 1st October 2006.

There is still a lot of work to be done before this, and also after.

A number of staff side reps have been trained and are very involved, but there is always room for more people.

In the very near future we will be asking again for people to help with KSF, the Knowledge and Skills Framework.

What is KSF?

Everyone in health that has gone on to A4C now has a personal plan, for their job role: with Interserve all of these job plans need to be written up alongside the management.

What we would like is a team of about 10 staff side members trained to take part. If you are interested, or for more information please contact the Branch.

Back Pay

The staff side have won back pay for our members who met the criteria for extra hours.

The back pay owed to them is for A/L and Sick Pay taken while working regular extra hours.

If you haven't received it and believe you are entitled to it please contact either your steward Jo or myself as soon as possible.

2006/7 Pay Award

You will be aware this year's pay award is 2.5%: this is for staff covered by the AFC agreement.

This meant because implementation onto AFC Joint Statement for contracted out staff is not until 1st October 2006 we would not have had the pay increase.

UNISON have been in negotiations with Interserve, and they have agreed to pay the 2.5% from April this includes those staff who come under hard services.

lems with infections and no access to medical aid; the average life expectancy of Zimbabwean women is 43.

Thabitha has a child. She earns the equivalent of £12.50 per month, but when her child needed tonsils removed, there is no NHS: all medical treatment has to be paid for.

To keep the cost down she took the child to hospital the day the tonsils were being removed, and took her back home the same day: but the cost to Thabitha in our money is £84.00, and she was unable to pay this amount.

As a result she will therefore have to pay interest on it, and it will probably take years to settle the bill.

Can you possibly imagine what it must be like for these women?

Can you also imagine what it would be like if it wasn't for the courage of this courageous woman.

Action for South Africa (ACTSA) is working with Thabitha and they need us to support their campaign 'How much would you pay for your dignity?'

Already one million packs of sanitary wear have been sent to Zimbabwe with the help of UNISON, Amicus and Action Solidarity.

However this has incurred around \$23,000 (Zimbabwe dollars) in tax at the border for Thabitha and her colleagues.

Let's show our solidarity here in Dudley and launch ways in which we can raise money for this very worthy cause. Please Support Dignity!period.campaign.'



UNISON local government staff are still fighting for justice on pensions

Pensioners Parliament 2006

Sid Ashmore, Secretary (Retired Members).

I attended this year's Pensioners' Parliament in Blackpool as a representative of the Pensioners Convention.

As you are aware the policies of the group have been to get a Universal Bus Pass, and also to get the retirement pension linked to average male wages or inflation whichever is the greatest.

Previous parliaments had adopted a Pensioners Charter, setting out additional policies, which I append below in full.

Edna Ashmore reports

This conference coincided with the leak of the Turner Report, which announced the acceptance of our fight to get back the link between the state pension and

average male wages or inflation, whichever is the greatest. This was taken from the pensioners by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s.

Turner proposes that the basic retirement pension should again be linked to the average male wage – but the sting in the tail is that this would not be until 2012: this is an affront to existing colleagues who have been campaigning for years.

This issue was taken up by all speakers in the opening rally: Chris Perry (Age Concern), TUC leader Brendan Barber, Paul Cann (Help the Aged), John Lister (Keep our N.H.S. Public), former UNISON leader Rodney Bickerstaffe and in particular Kate Hoey MP who gave a brilliant speech on the way Tony Blair had led the government towards a Conservative policy.

Her best comment was

"The government say they cannot afford a reasonable pension. Tell him to take our troops out of Iraq, and return to a proper Labour policy toward people that are less fortunate."

The programme of events regards the audience as Members of Parliament, and calls on them to debate 'bills'.

[1] Make provisions for an

adequate basic retirement income by means of a Universal State Pension. [2] Nationwide Travel and Accessibility Bill. [3] Preventative Health Care Bill and various other Bills.

You had your choice which to attend: I chose the Pension Bill. The afternoon session was similar but different Bills, I chose Social and Residential (Long Term

Care).

The standard of debate was exceptional. All Bills were accepted and passed with amendments.

I commend this type of exercise to Unison Retired Members Working Groups.

I thank Dudley Group of Hospitals for allowing me to be their Representative at this exciting conference.

The pensioners charter

Every man and woman on reaching state pensionable age will have the right to:-

- a basic state pension set above the official poverty line and linked to average male earnings.
- a warm and comfortable home.
- free health care treatment based on clinical need and an annual comprehensive health check.
- free community care and services to assist living at home
- free long term care
- free nationwide travel on all public and local transport
- free education, access to and participation in leisure and cultural activities
- goods, services and benefits without age discrimination
- active engagement and consultation on national and local issues affecting older citizens.
- Advocacy, dignity, respect and fair treatment in all aspects of their lives



"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.

Your Branch ... and how to contact a UNISON rep

Here at DGH we have over 1,800 members, over 40 stewards and 70+ contacts. Whilst this is brilliant we still have some areas or shifts that don't have a steward/contact.

The roll of a steward/contact is very important they are the back bone of DGH

UNISON, they are a contact point for member and officers to make sure any issues get dealt with smoothly. If you are interested please have a chat to Steve Astill, Trust Branch sec or Angela Thompson Interserve Branch sec.

CONTACT NUMBERS

Steve Astill	079707 88873	Trust Branch Sec
Angela Thompson	079673 25733	Interserve Branch Sec
Paul Hickman	079707 38633	Treasurer
Anthony Smith	079440 52722	Interserve H&S (Joint)
Tracey Nixon	077579 37843	Interserve H&S (joint)
Joanne Hickman	079741 55621	Membership & Branch Assist
Ian Houghton	079603 75514	Chair
Sam Pearson	079575 61644	Vice Chair
Amanda Waterfield	078353 33689	Education
Tony Vowles	078041 67922	Press and Publicity
Union Office	01384 244350/ ext 3350	



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.

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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.

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£96.17-£153.84	<input type="checkbox"/> £5,001-£8,000	£1.22	£5.30	C
£153.85-£211.53	<input type="checkbox"/> £8,001-£11,000	£1.52	£6.60	D
£211.54-£269.23	<input type="checkbox"/> £11,001-£14,000	£1.81	£7.85	E
£269.24-£326.92	<input type="checkbox"/> £14,001-£17,000	£2.24	£9.70	F
£326.93-£384.61	<input type="checkbox"/> £17,001-£20,000	£2.65	£11.50	G
£384.62-£480.76	<input type="checkbox"/> £20,001-£25,000	£3.23	£14.00	H
£480.77-£576.92	<input type="checkbox"/> £25,001-£30,000	£3.98	£17.25	I
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