

# positive NEWS

UNISON  
Cymru/Wales



## UNISON's 6-point plan for public services

UNISON has launched its own charter for the public services as part of our Positively Public campaign. The key points are:

### 1) Democratic accountability

Decisions about the planning and delivery of local services are the responsibility of locally accountable representatives, taken in consultation with public service staff and local communities.

### 2) Effective delivery

High quality public services are best delivered by well-trained, directly employed staff who put the needs of the service users and the community first.

### 3) Adequate funding

Modern and high quality services need long term investment. This means investment in infrastructure, in information and communications technology, and training and development of the workforce.

### 4) Equality of access

Public services should be responsive to the needs of all members of the community. There should be no discrimination in service provision, but equality of access for all people, based on their needs.

### 5) Fairness at work

High quality services and good employment practices go hand in hand. Staff are the public services' greatest asset and they must be treated fairly.

### 6) Partnership at work

Genuine partnership between government, service users, the community, employers and trade unions is central to ensuring continued improvement of public services.



UNISON's General Secretary, Dave Prentis joins student nurses in a lobby of Labour ministers in Cardiff. [photo John Harris]

## Shaping the future

### By Dave Prentis, UNISON General Secretary

Thank you to all the UNISON members in Wales who have helped support our Positively Public campaign for world class public services delivered by a well trained, directly employed workforce.

It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I welcome a new report from UNISON Wales that promotes such a positive vision.

**"Serving Wales: shaping the future of public services in Wales"**, produced by The University of Wales (Swansea), shows how public service provision can be re-vitalised to tackle the common problems we face.

The Positively Public campaign, funded by both our political funds (GPF and APF), has been pleased to support the "Shaping the future" project. I believe The National Assembly for Wales has an opportunity to exert some leadership in the modernisation debate and to steer a different course than the Westminster template of increased private sector involvement.

We need to harness the experi-

ence of UNISON members delivering public services and ensure the Assembly listens to the source of the best advice going – front line staff.

The recent Budget has shown that we do share a common vision for the NHS; world class health services, free at the point of use, based on need not wealth, and directly funded from taxation. We fully support the Government's plans to raise the extra money the NHS so desperately needs.

UNISON, naturally, will continue also to highlight the areas where we disagree with the Government, most notably over increasing private sector involvement in our public services.

I believe that the agreements in England for a revised Best Value regime to eliminate the two tier workforce, and in the NHS for the vast majority of staff in new PFI Hospitals to remain public employees, are steps forward in protecting our members' interests.

Each will make PFI and PPP less attractive to the private sector and make sure that if contracting has to take place, it will not be on the

basis of cutting the pay and conditions of hard working staff. We will continue to fight privatisation.

Public authorities have always worked with the private sector – but today – they are being forced into giving the private and voluntary sectors a much larger role, delivering a huge swathe of public services.

But can we really say that the result is better public services?

First, what's the evidence? Does general experience – not individual examples – lead us to believe that the private sector is the answer to the demand for world-class public services?

Second, we need to consider who pays the price if everything goes wrong? How accountable is the private sector? How flexible are PFI contracts?

Third, we need to ask how private companies treat their employees, and what are the workforce implications?

From our point of view, this is at the heart of the great modernisation debate throughout the UK.

I am heartened by another recent report found major advan-

tages for in-house services and warned of "hollowed out" councils that no longer had the expertise to run or to contract out services.

That's because private contractors take the staff that are already there in the first place. Their success and profits are built on the back of previously in-house expertise.

How much more efficient is it therefore, to share good practice and learn from one another? Partnership above privatisation; co-operation above cost-cutting.

And so we do need to be talking about how we improve public services. And that debate must be held with those who know the services best – front line providers as well as service users.

By working together we can create a climate where innovation and improvement are encouraged and where improvement becomes second nature.

**"Serving Wales: shaping the future of public services"** sets out a new route map for the Assembly and I assure you that UNISON will be there, to help them steer a way to a better Wales.

**Gorky's  
Zygotic  
Mynci**

+ support

**May 25**

**Clwb Ivor Bach  
CARDIFF**

- see back page

## Winning the majority to defend our public services



**Dominic MacAskill, Secretary, UNISON Cymru Wales Policy & Campaigns Committee**

This Positively Public newspaper is part of UNISON Cymru Wales Region's ongoing campaign to promote public services and to expose the disastrous consequences of creeping privatisation in the NHS, Social Services, Local Government and Higher and Further Education.

The Positively Public campaign launched by UNISON in 2001 has now been taken up by other unions in an attempt to persuade the Government to change its policy of using the profit making private sector to provide our public services.

In Wales, UNISON took part in a postcard 'Keep Public Services Public' sign up campaign, contributing thousands of cards to the national campaign which culminated in over 100,000 cards being delivered to Tony Blair in Downing Street.

At the end of 2001 UNISON activists from across the length and breadth of Wales lobbied the National Assembly in

support of our public services.

Our high profile presence stimulated much interest and discussion as Assembly Members were doorstepped on their way into the debating chamber.

But UNISON is aware that this campaign can not be won by lobbying on its own, and that is why we are attempting to involve the majority of the people of Wales, especially the young, in our call for democratically accountable, effective and efficiently delivered public services.

As part of this approach, this newspaper is being distributed to 50,000 workers around Wales through our two thousand UNISON shop stewards and representatives; promoting the campaign and publishing our latest Positively Public policy document '**Serving Wales – Shaping the Future of Public Services in Wales**'.

This comprehensive document will be launched at a conference on May 24 in the Institute of Sport, Sophia Gardens, Cardiff. There UNISON activists will mingle with AMs, MPs, MEPs, Council Leaders and NHS Executives.

In order to show that campaigning can also be fun, on May 25 UNISON is putting on a Positively Public music event in a Cardiff night-club (Clwb Ivor Bach), featuring the popular Welsh band Gorky's Zygotic Mynci with support acts.

So why not join in with UNISON and demand that the Government places the Fat Cats of privatisation on a low profits diet, by keeping public services public.

Find out more about our campaign by visiting our website [www.unison-cymru-wales.org.uk](http://www.unison-cymru-wales.org.uk) and/or write to your local politicians in support of UNISON's Positively Public manifesto.

## What type of services do we want to see?

UNISON Cymru Wales believes that public services should be designed on the basis of seven basic principles:

### Empowerment of citizens and service users

We believe that service users and the wider public should be given a say in the shape, design and priority of local services.

### Participatory management, and empowering the workforce

The largest single resource of public sector organisations is their workforce, and employees work best when they are fully involved in shaping as well as delivering services, and suitably valued and rewarded for the work they do.

### Democratic accountability

Politicians and other decision makers need to be ultimately accountable for their actions to the wider public who use public services.

### Public sector ethos and values

UNISON Cymru Wales believes that the public services, unlike the private sector must continue to be based not on market forces, the profit motive or the demands of shareholders, but on commitment to service, a desire to assist the less fortunate, on selflessness, integrity, openness and honesty.

### Outcome orientation

We believe that the wider ways in which public services make a difference must be recognised, rather than simply adding up the cost and volume of each service.

### Integration

Public services need to overcome the current fragmentation, cooperate and plan across narrow organisational boundaries. The development of pooled budgets and a collaborative approach will help to draw the best from each sector.

### Resources

UNISON Cymru Wales believes there is no substitute for realistically resourced public services. Previous cuts and cash limits have led to problems including old and dilapidated schools and hospitals, and unsafe and unreliable public transport. More public funds are required to improve public services.



UNISON members lobbying the National Assembly last December made sure First Minister Rhodri Morgan received his copy of our Public Services Manifesto. [photo: Mo Wilson]

## Shaping the future of public services in Wales

The election of a New Labour government did not, as many hoped, represent the dawning of a renewed commitment to the planning and delivery of high quality public services, or a retreat from privatisation.

Instead the debate over the future of public services, and especially the role of the private sector, is fiercer than ever.

UNISON Cymru Wales is committed to the maintenance and development of a strong public sector that is financed collectively through taxation, and which delivers a range of high quality public services for all citizens and communities, irrespective of their ability to pay.

But the emergence of devolved government through the National Assembly of Wales has given a new focus for political campaigns and initiatives.

UNISON Cymru Wales, as the largest public service union, is therefore pressing the Assembly to make use of its powers to do things differently from other parts of the UK, and to design services to match local needs of the population of Wales.

## Myths that help the privateers

The government's approach to the "modernisation" of public services revolves around two key ideas.

■ "Putting the customer first" – implying a turn to "joined-up services".

The government makes great play of its commitment to "joined up working". UNISON Cymru Wales also believes that many issues require action on more than one front in order to meet the complex needs of service users.

Health is a good example: whether or not an individual or a population is healthy is not so much determined by the availability of health services (though this is also important) but on wider issues including social deprivation, housing, work, diet, stress, lifestyle, smoking, and so on.

Similarly crime can be seen as linked not simply to policing, but to social and economic factors.

The case for joined up government is clear: but in Wales at National Assembly and at local level most of the old fragmentation of services and professions remains intact.

■ "Expanded choice", including the widening of the market to encourage more suppliers of public services.

The privatisation of increasing sectors of what had previously been publicly funded and provided services began in earnest under the Conservative governments of the 1980s and 1990s. The introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering led to many services being taken

over by private contractors: from the early 1990s the NHS, which had already seen many hospital support services put out to tender, was 'reformed' to create an 'internal market', separating the purchaser from the provider of public services.

The privatisation of many public services involving low-paid manual workers has reduced morale but generated little if any of the promised improvement in efficiency or quality.

The election of a Labour Government in 1997 has brought a change in terminology – from privatisation to "Public Private Partnerships". However UNISON Cymru Wales believes this represents little change in practice.

The Government claims that "alternative providers can

help drive up performance across the service as a whole. ... Widening the market to create more suppliers of public services can improve the quality of management and value for money."

These assertions lack evidence, and rest on a number of fallacies: that competition in itself drives up efficiency; that the private sector is more efficient than the public sector; that the quality of private sector managers is higher than in the public sector; and that the private sector is more innovative in the design of services.

None of these can be shown to be the case: but the role of private companies means that public services are increasingly shaped by the needs of profit seeking shareholders rather than the wider public.

## No evidence for PPP/PFI

Independent analysis of PPP projects and the Private Finance Initiative has challenged EVERY ONE of the government's assertions that:

- it results in greater innovation and efficiency
- it represents value for money
- it results in more investment in public services
- it transfers "risk" from the public to the private sector
- it maintains democratic accountability.

None of these claims can stand up to detailed scrutiny. On the contrary, analysis of the PFI schemes already under way show that:

- It artificially divides the workforce in hospitals and other services
- It leads to rigid schemes, which commit the government for long 20-30 year periods
- PPP/PFI schemes have brought a reduction in jobs, a reduction in services and a 2-tier workforce, with women's jobs being the worst affected.
- The fragmentation of service delivery in PFI schemes undermines any efforts at more "joined up" services.



John Harris

## Health and social care

UNISON Cymru Wales welcomes the wider approach to health and health care represented in the government document Better Health Better Wales (1998), and the recognition that a broad range of organisations at national and local level need to work together to improve the health of the population.

However we are not convinced of the merits of the structural changes being introduced by the National Assembly, which offer dubious and uncosted benefits, but are causing turmoil and uncertainty, and leading to the establishment of new, untested Local Health Boards at the same time as a loss of managerial expertise.

In our view the key issues to be tackled by the NHS in Wales include:

- A crisis in recruitment and retention of staff, resulting in heavy use of private "agency" staff, and falling morale within the NHS.

Wales is not training sufficient health care professionals to meet future needs.

- The health needs of older people – with nearly one in five of the population now of pensionable age, and growing numbers of over 75s and over 85s, who tend to require more health services.

- An oppressive and uncoordinated regulatory regime, with several different organisations each conducting time consuming audits and investigations.

- The need for more investment, including new hospitals and other facilities, but also including research and development.

### Social Care

70,000 people in Wales work in social care, employed by public, private and voluntary sector organisations. Most of them are care assistants, mainly women, many of them employed part time in residential and nursing homes, with many private sector staff

on no more than the minimum wage.

Community care services for vulnerable adults and children are seriously underfunded: one study in 1998 found that adult community care was £50m underfunded in Wales.

Social service departments have had to compete with other council services for a share of the available funds.

However there has been much government emphasis on partnerships in the delivery of social care. However the problems which arise vary according to the partner involved:

### With the independent sector

Local authority payments to private sector providers of nursing and residential homes are lower than the fees paid by people funding their own care: in Wales as in the rest of the UK there is a growing shortage of beds as owners of residential and nursing homes

close them down in pursuit of more profitable options.

### With the NHS

The government has extended the powers of NHS bodies to work jointly with social services in commissioning and providing continuing care, notably to free up hospital beds. But problems remain, not least in the distinction that ministers have drawn between nursing care – provided free of charge – and 'social care', for which residents must still pay means-tested charges.

### With other local authority departments

Inter-departmental divisions can make it hard to tackle more complex issues.

### With users and carers

More than 90% of the care needed by vulnerable adults and children is provided by family and friends, making them key stake holders who must be fully consulted and empowered in any future system of care.

## Ein gwerthoedd ni

Beth yw undeb llafur?

Pobl sy'n cyfuno er mwyn cefnogi ei gilydd. Trwy ymuno a'r undeb, cydnabyddwn bod ni'n gryfach ynghyd nag y byddem ni ar wahan.

Ys dywed y baneri undebol: 'Mae niwed i un yn niwed i bawb'.

Yr ydym i gyd yn cyfrannu i gronfa gyffredin, er creu gwasanaethau na fyddai'n bosibl i'w creu gennym fel unigolion. Yna gelwir ar y gwasanaethau hynny pan fo angen, mewn argyfwng, heb boeni am sut y gellir eu ffordio.

Mae gwerthoedd yr undeb yn gyfystyr a gwerthoedd y sector cyhoeddus – sef cefnogaeth, cydymlyniad a chyfiawnder.

Yn yr un modd a wna'i aelodau undeb, mae dinasyddion yn cyfrannu'n ariannol er creu gwasanaethau cyhoeddus. Mewn llawer maes, gellir defnyddio'r gwasanaethau hyn am ddim, boed hynny yn yr ysgol, yn y llyfrgell, yn y ganolfan gynghori neu yn y parc chwarae.

Mewn argyfwng, ceir gwasanaethau a buddiannau cymdeithasol neu driniaeth feddygol am ddim. Ble byddem ni onibai am y Wladwriaeth Les a'r Gwasanaeth Iechyd Cenedlaethol?

Fel yr ysgrifennodd George Galloway AS yn y Morning Star yn ddiweddar, wrth son am driniaeth feddygol yn yr Unol Daleithiau, 'Yno, mae nhw'n trin a'ch gwaled cyn iddynt drin a'ch calon'.

Nid ar hap ydyw fod 'ethos' neu gred yn dod ar ben y rhestr o resymau i Unison wrthwynebu Partneriaeth Breifat-Cyhoeddus.

Wedi'r cyfan, beth yw cred y sector cyhoeddus? Bod darparu gwasanaethau dosbarth cyntaf i bobl gyffredin yw prif nod y gwaith. Beth yw cred y sector preifat? Bod gwneud yr elw mwyaf bosibl yw prif nod y cwmni cyfalafol.

Amodau gwaith da a chyflog teg yw'r ffordd i sicrhau bod gweithwyr yn y sector cyhoeddus yn darparu'r gwasanaethau gorau. Gwasgu costau gwaith, gan gynnwys cyflogau, yw polisi cyflogwyr yn y sector preifat.

Felly mae'r ysbardun elw yn mynd yn gwbl groes i gred a gwerthoedd y sector cyhoeddus. Trwy gwrthwynebu Partneriaeth Breifat-Cyhoeddus, mae Unison yn amddiffyn ein gwerthoedd sylfaenol ni fel undebwyr, ac fel dinasyddion sydd eisiau gwasanaethau cyhoeddus o'r safon uchaf.

Safwn yn y traddodiad o ddau Gymro enwog a sefydlodd y Gwasanaeth Iechyd Cenedlaethol a'r gyfundrefn Yswiriant Genedlaethol, sef Aneurin Bevan a Jim Griffiths. Undebwyr a sosialwyr yr oeddynt hefyd. Dyna ein gwerthoedd ni.

## Our agenda for local government in Wales

UNISON Cymru Wales is concerned to ensure that the restructuring of local authorities to establish cabinet-style government must also involve the training and support for "back bench" councillors to continue their vital role in the monitoring and scrutiny of local services and raising local needs.

The Union is also keen to ensure that we are included among a wider cross section of local interests, which should be drawn more into the reviews and studies conducted by councils. And we call for a campaign – in which we too must play a role – to draw more young people into active involvement in local community affairs and local democracy.

UNISON Cymru Wales welcomes the new power for

local authorities to "promote economic, social and environmental well-being", which can be used to promote a more innovative approach and more joint working.

The new duty for each local authority to prepare a community strategy for sustainable development also offers opportunities for more long-term planning.

Our Union believes such strategies must be based on:

- The active involvement and empowerment of local people and service users

- Collaborative working – though there is a danger that too many "partnerships" can lead to confusion and "partnership fatigue".

- Collaborative accountability – ways of measuring the effectiveness of partnerships

and organisations working together. This is important if the old problem of rule by non-elected quangos in Wales is not to be replaced by the new version of rule by unaccountable "partnerships".

While we are committed to the provision of high quality public services, and recognise that these must be measured through some form of performance management framework, UNISON Cymru Wales is opposed to the old system of Compulsory Competitive Tendering, and to the "Best Value" regime introduced by New Labour.

We therefore welcome its replacement by the 'Wales Programme for Improvement', offering local authorities flexibility to adapt to local circumstances while establishing a consistent all-Wales framework. The Improvement Plan moves from emphasis on individual services to a

"whole authority analysis".

We also note the establishment of a Partnership Committee between the National Assembly and local government in Wales, and the policy statement "Freedom and Responsibility in Local Government".

However the freedom is limited by the marginal financial flexibilities the policy offers local councils, and there are fears that short term political priorities and too many initiatives launched by the Assembly may militate against longer-term planning.

UNISON Cymru Wales supports the continuation of a local tax raising power, and believes councils should be free to decide on the use of any internal reserves.

We welcome the Assembly's proposal to reform and simplify local government finances.



## The Welsh Way to PFI?

The National Assembly for Wales has concluded its own consultation on the role of PPP/PFI, but without any indication that they will take the opportunity to adopt a different line from the Westminster government.

Instead it has adopted a stated aim of increasing the share of the private sector in the delivery of public services, arguing that the private sector is more efficient.

The Assembly has also adopted its own "Welsh Way" for employing PPP and PFI, stipulating that "the interests of employees should at least be maintained".

Though we know there are currently 31 PFI schemes in Wales, mainly involving hospitals, schools and roads, there is no definitive wider list detailing the involvement of the private sector in Welsh public services.

## YES to salaries, NO to poverty!

UNISON is campaigning for a fairer deal for all nursing and midwifery students.

Unlike the Royal College of Nursing, which is committed to keeping the bursary system that has left many student nurses in poverty, existing on the equivalent of £2.60 an hour, we say salaries are better than bursaries because they help:

- Combat financial hardship
- Create loyalty to the NHS, and a commitment to provide a post for newly-qualified nurses
- Give students greater protection such as maternity leave, sickness leave, and industrial injury benefit.
- Create equality of opportunity between nursing students
- Improve recruitment and retention

If you want to join the campaign, contact UNISON, free of charge on



**Don't miss UNISON's  
Positively Public gig at  
Cardiff's Clwb Ivor Bach**

## Young people and UNISON

Young members are important to UNISON and the union is working hard to make sure that it is welcoming, relevant and interesting to young people.

UNISON offers young members many **opportunities** for activity, involvement, training and support in relaxed, informal situations. We want to make sure that our young members have the chance to take part in UNISON at all levels and in all possible ways.

If you have concerns about your job, your workplace or your employer, UNISON can help with support, advice and practical assistance. Sometimes young people are picked on or put upon at work because they are young. Being part of UNISON and working with other young people can help to deal with this.

UNISON's **campaign for a living wage** is based on a proper Minimum Wage level for everyone. We do not accept that there should be a lower rate of pay for young people and we are working hard to change Government policy on this. With your help we might just change it sooner.

UNISON's Young Members' groups and Forum are the opportunity for those aged 26 and under to get involved in the union. If you want to get involved please contact the Branch Young Members' Officer or one of the regional contacts.

### Trouble at work?

UNISON and the National Union of Students have teamed up with a web site for young people called Trouble at Work.

The site is informative and has loads of interactive information about your rights at work.

Rights at Work: 12 hour shifts and no holidays? Problems on your nursing placement? We've got jargon-free help on your rights..

Get the **respect** you deserve at work. If you need help visit [www.troubleatwork.org.uk](http://www.troubleatwork.org.uk).

## Get **your** copy of the full report "Serving Wales"

Yes, I would like to order ... copies of the full report "Serving Wales":

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