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The CLARION

UNISON
Derbyshire County
MAY 2009



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Redundancies. Pay. Pensions. Negotiating in schools. Life on the social care frontline. The effect of recession on your jobs.

All these will be discussed at the UNISON Conference 2009 Mandating Meeting

At annual conference, the branch delegation cast over 11,000 votes on your behalf. The way votes are cast depends on existing branch policy and, on newer issues, the pre-conference mandating meeting. This is your chance to make sure your vote is being cast in the way you want it. Obviously conference delegates will be at the meeting, but don't leave it just to the delegates. Spare a couple of hours yourself.



**Tuesday 9th June
5.30pm - 7.30pm
Committee Room 1
County Hall
Matlock**

THIS EDITION OF THE CLARION HAS BEEN SENT IN PRINTED FORMAT EVEN TO THOSE WHO HAVE OPTED TO RECEIVE IT VIA EMAIL. THIS IS SO WE COULD INCLUDE THE VERY IMPORTANT UPDATE FORM - PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU COMPLETE AND RETURN IT IMMEDIATELY.

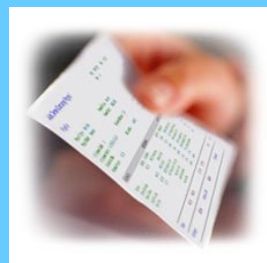
Still fighting all RACISM

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ALWAYS CHECK YOUR PAY SLIP...



... to make sure your UNISON subscriptions are still being deducted. This is especially important if you have changed circumstances such as number of contracted hours or moved jobs. Some payroll systems are not sophisticated enough to automatically transfer subscriptions to new payroll numbers. **Don't let your membership accidentally lapse to leave yourself unprotected at work.**



Warm Front Scheme

YOU could qualify for a heating grant



IF YOU NEED HELP paying for heating and insulation improvements in your privately owned or rented home, you, your partner or civil partner may be able to get money from the government's Warm Front grants scheme if, for example, you're receiving income or disability-related benefits.

Who is eligible?

You may get a Warm Front grant if any of the following apply to you:

1. You get one or more of the following benefits:

- Working Tax Credit (with an income of less than £15,460 and which must include a disability element)
- Child Tax Credit (with an income of less than £15,460)
- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Income Support (that must include a disability premium)
- Housing Benefit (that must include a disability premium)
- Council Tax Benefit (that must include a disability premium)
- War Disablement Pension (that must include a mobility supplement or a Constant Attendance Allowance)
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (that must include Constant Attendance Allowance)

2. You have a child under 16 or are pregnant and have a maternity certificate MAT B1 and get any of the following:

- Income Support
- Council Tax benefit
- Housing Benefit
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Pension Credit (Savings or Guarantee elements)

3. You're aged 60 or over and get any of the following:

- Pension Credit (Savings or Guarantee elements)
- Council Tax Benefit
- Housing Benefit
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance

4. You're not getting any benefits

You may be entitled to a Warm Front grant even if you're not yet getting any qualifying benefits. A check will be done to see if you're eligible for benefits and so a Warm Front grant.

How much do you get?

£2,700 or up to £4,000 if your home needs oil central heating.

How it works

A Warm Front appointed engineer will complete a technical survey of the work needed for the existing heating system in your property.

If for example your property needs a replacement boiler, work will be carried out within six to eight months of the technical survey.

You won't have to pay anything so long as the work

doesn't cost more than the grant.

In some cases you might have to pay towards the work but wherever possible, the scheme will try to cover these costs.

What you can use it for

The Warm Front grant provides insulation and heating improvements depending on your needs and the property you live in. The package includes:

Insulation

- loft insulation
- draught proofing
- cavity wall insulation
- hot water tank insulation

Heating systems

- gas room heaters with thermostat controls
- gas, electric or oil central heating

- converting a solid fuel open fire to a modern glass fronted fire
- timer controls for electric space and water heaters

Other measures

- energy advice
- two low energy light bulbs

How to apply

You can find out if you qualify for a Warm Front grant over the phone.

You'll need to complete an application form before a Home Energy Adviser visits you to assess and recommend work for your property.

You can call Eaga Partnership, the Warm Front Scheme Manager on freephone 0800 316 2805, textphone 0800 072 0156 (from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday).

How safe is your child at home?

top tips room by room for parents and carers of children under five

ACCIDENTS IN THE HOME are the biggest cause of injury to children under five. Tragically, around 500,000 under fives every year are admitted to hospital after an accident at home. More tragically, many of these accidents could have been prevented by taking simple steps.

To help parents of young children and the practitioners who work with them, the Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT) have produced *Accidents and Child Development*, an easy-to-use guidance booklet for any practitioners involved with the safety, or care of children and *How Safe is Your Child at Home?* a short leaflet for parents and carers, covering common risks to children in the home and how they can be reduced.

Both of these can be downloaded free from www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00362



With 1 in 10 people having dyslexia UNISON has thousands of members who need support



HAVING DYSLEXIA NO LONGER has the stigma it once did. Albert Einstein, Whoopi Goldberg, John Lennon and Winston Churchill are just a few names which back up the idea that Dyslexia can be just a different way of thinking or looking at things.

Once you have had their assessment more support becomes available through the Government's 'Access to Work' programme. After an assessment they can provide funding for support. For example it could pay for IT software or even pay for the training which the BDA offer. Contact your local jobcentre to speak to your local disability employment adviser.

The BDA can also provide further support such as

- Advice sessions for employers
- 1-2-1 tuition
- Assisted support with technology and advice on the technology to buy

However, support is sometimes needed and the approach of employers is not always helpful. Dyslexia can be kept hidden for fear members will lose their jobs.

Dyslexia is covered under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and therefore members should be protected.

Specialist support is available from the British Dyslexia Association (BDA), whose aim is to "enable dyslexic people to achieve their potential in the workplace".

Here are some steps to help members:

If you think you are dyslexic the first thing to do is to contact the helpline (0115 924 6888) or website (www.dyslexia.uk.net).

After that you will be asked to complete a screening which should take around 20 minutes. This is not confirmation but shows 'indicators'. In certain parts of the East Midlands this is free. The BDA will be able to tell you about this.

If there are indicators then you will need to complete a full screening which can take 3 - 4 hours. It's costly at £300 but, again, there is sometimes funding. This will give a full report showing the areas with difficulties and recommendations of support.

UNISON will need to discuss with employers about how they support members.

We will be able to find out if they will pay for the cost of assessments. And also what adjustments they will make.

We will seek to develop a Dyslexia policy with an employer to make it clear that members won't be discriminated against. We will also check that job applications are available electronically to make applying for jobs easier.

For more information on the support the BDA can offer please contact them on 0115 924 6888.

1. National British Dyslexia Association - www.bdadyslexia.org.uk
2. Access to Work - www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EmploymentSupport/WorkSchemesAndProgrammes/DG_4000347
3. Dyslexia Action - www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk



"MEAN" 0.5% PAY OFFER REJECTED

UNISON, UNITE AND THE GMB described the employers' 0.5% offer as "mean and paltry", saying it meant just 3p an hour for hundreds of thousands, including nursery nurses, teaching assistants, care home workers, care assistants, school meals staff, social work assistants, cleaners, admin staff and library assistants.

- Local government workers have received a further 0.3% recently as the final settlement to the 2008-2009 pay round (awarded by ACAS). If you have retired since last year, you may have to write in to 'claim' this amount.

And for groups such as social workers and planners, where there are huge vacancies, the increase amounts to no more than 7p an hour.

"How can the employers expect their hard-pressed workforce to exist on this breath-takingly mean offer of a paltry 3p an hour extra - just over £1 a week or £55 a year?" asked UNISON head of local government Heather Wakefield.

"Who could honestly expect us to consider this acceptable? It is just not realistic and we know that the employers have already put aside money for an increase of between 1.5% and 2.5%."

To add insult to injury the employers told the unions they must accept the offer by 1st June or they'll withdraw it!

WE ARE STILL INVOLVED in consultation and negotiation over the Local Government Pension Scheme arising out of the 2003 dispute. The branch has been making the necessary representations to the Department for Communities and Local Government on calculations and reductions in final pensionable pay if a member's pay is reduced within the last ten years of their employment; partners pensions; casual employees on zero hours contracts; flexible retirement and cost sharing.

We continue to support the state pension campaign calling for pensioners to receive a better share of national prosperity by increasing the basic state pension at least in line with whichever is the higher of prices or earnings.





British jobs for British workers?

THE RECENT STRIKES OF oil refinery construction workers were portrayed by the media as being about 'British jobs for British workers'. This was not the case. Workers were taking action to protect the 'going rate' for the job, set by an industry-wide collective agreement.

Employers were trying to bring in workers at lower rates of pay. Despite attempts by the British National Party (BNP) to jump on the bandwagon, workers at the sites quickly got rid of them from their mass pickets.

Polish workers in Plymouth took solidarity strike action - something they were hardly going to do if the issue was about 'British jobs'. The deal won by workers at Lindsey oil refinery in Lincolnshire meant not one of the Italian workers lost their job.

Creating jobs and developing policies for full employment should remain the number one economic priority. That means bringing forward public expenditure for investment in public services and infrastructure projects to create work for the many living and working in Britain, irrespective of age, colour, disability, gender, race, sex or sexuality. Join us in the campaign for jobs and social justice and against racism.

Trade unions and migrant workers

MANY MIGRANT WORKERS ARE often exploited by unscrupulous employers and the best way to deal with this is for trade unions to organise ALL workers to fight exploitation. That is what Derbyshire County UNISON is seeking to do.

The same is true of temporary and agency workers and we are campaigning hard to achieve equal rights for these workers



Local residents and trade unionists demonstrating in Amber Valley last year against racists meeting in their town

and to create a more level playing field for ALL workers.

The far right

EXTREME FAR RIGHT GROUPS in Britain, such as the BNP, make great efforts to portray themselves as patriotic and solely concerned with the plight of British workers. But they mix with racist and fascist groups all over Europe and the rest of the World such as the fascist Jobbik Party in Hungary, the Czech National Party and even the Ku Klux Klan! They send speakers and representatives to meetings and rallies of some of these other far right wing organisations.

Some of those now claiming to be just 'standing up for' British workers have dubious backgrounds in extreme racist circles. In fact, they're only interested in white British workers, conveniently ignoring all those black, Asian and others born and bred in Britain.

Putting all people first

UNISON SAYS NO TO the politics of hate as we continue to campaign for putting people first. That is why we are

backing the Statutory Redundancy (Amendment) Bill - to increase redundancy pay for workers - and the Equality Bill - to achieve equal pay for work of equal value. That is why we are backing the Temporary and Agency Workers Bill - for equal rights - and that is why we are campaigning on climate change as well.

Tackling climate change could bring huge job opportunities and up to 160,000 jobs could be created in Britain in the next few years due to the renewable energy targets we have been campaigning for. We are also lobbying for money, generated from polluting industries, to be used to help combat fuel poverty by protecting energy customers against rising prices.

More money for jobs, more money for public services, more money for families and more money for pensioners is our clarion call. Hope not hate with UNISON - not divide and rule with the politics of hate.

AS A TRADE UNION with more than 1.3 million members, mainly in public services, UNISON knows how important migrant workers are to our public services and the economy.

UNISON believes that migrant workers have a right to dignity and respect and that like all other workers they should be treated fairly.

UNISON believes that migrant workers are often unfairly exploited by unscrupulous employers and that the best way to deal with this is for trade unions to organise migrant workers and for them to become active in the trade unions so that they are empowered to fight exploitation.



MYTH We are being swamped with migrant workers

FACT Most so-called large-scale immigration has occurred since 2004. In a typical year like 2006:

- 591,000 people arrived to live in the UK for a year or more (of which 157,000 came solely to study)
- at the same time, 400,000 people left the UK for a year or more.

This means that net long-term immigration to the country in 2006 was around 43,000 people. In terms of an overall increase in the population this is a drop in the ocean.

The reality is that people worry about change and when they see more foreign-born people on the streets they can easily be misled by sensationalist headlines making false claims about migrant numbers.

We live in a rapidly changing world where international migration is a fact of life not just for the UK but around the world. Around 5.5 million British citizens live as migrants in other countries.

MYTH Our public services can't cope with the influx of migrant workers

FACT Without migrant workers our public services would be in real trouble. Migrant workers make up:

- 19% of social workers (22,000)
- 16% of care workers (105,000)
- 11% of housing/welfare workers (19,000)
- 10% of nursing assistants (23,000)
- 8% of education assistants (29,000).

In total, around 13% of all workers in health, education and public administration are migrants.

The UK has a falling birth rate and an ageing population. If we don't bring in migrant workers, the work won't get done.

MYTH Migrant workers cause unemployment

FACT There is no fixed number of jobs in the UK - migration has increased the number of jobs, not reduced it.

Put simply, immigration increases the size of the economy creating more jobs for everyone.

That's not to mention the taxes and National Insurance that are paid into the UK economy providing more resources to better fund our public services.

MYTH Migrant workers take our social housing and get priority in NHS services

FACT A study by the Equality and Human Rights Commission revealed that new migrants made up less than 2% of those in social housing throughout the UK.

MYTH Migrant workers undercut our wages

FACT Migrant workers do not take jobs at a lower wage than someone else doing the same job. They do tend to work in the lower paid jobs.

MYTH Migrant workers come to the UK as it's a soft touch for benefit scroungers

FACT Migrants contribute more to the UK tax and benefits system than they claim from it, and make a proportionately greater contribution to it than UK citizens.

MYTH Migrant workers mean increased crime

FACT According to the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), Peter Fahy, Chief Constable of the Cheshire constabulary, and co-author of a study on the subject:

"The evidence does not support theories of a large-scale crime wave generated through migration. In fact, crime has been falling across the country over the past year."

UNISON says that the reports of large-scale crime waves associated with migrant workers are racist scare stories aimed at causing community strife.



Europe, Elections and Employment rights

Dear Member

We are approaching the European Elections as well as the County Council elections on 4 June in challenging times.

Europe has had a massive impact on our everyday working lives over the last few years. Members might not realise that Labour in Europe has helped improve maternity and paternity leave, that they introduced measures to control working time as well as brought in equal rights for temporary and agency workers and the right to paid holidays.

Britain under the Conservatives used its opt-out to avoid most of these employment rights becoming part of British law. Now the

Tories and the Lib Dems vote together to stop Labour's proposals on health and safety and to end the abuse of part-time and agency workers.

Glenis Willmott, the Leader of the Labour Group in Europe and our current Labour MEP for the East Midlands knows all about employment rights. Before Glenis was elected as an MEP she was a full time union official so Glenis knows how important employment rights are to us and battles on a daily basis to preserve and improve on them.

Derbyshire County Council is a 4 star authority, It's not hard to work out that a large active UNISON branch coupled with a Labour controlled authority makes



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for public service excellence.

The fight against the far-right BNP cannot be underestimated. They are exploiting people's uncertainty with supposed solutions which would actually cause real damage in Britain. Yet only about eight per cent of the vote would give them a seat in the European Parliament.

To maintain and improve on your employment rights and to keep the BNP out vote Labour in the elections on June 4th.

Yours sincerely

Pam Shepherd
East Midlands Labour Link Officer



The Clarion welcomes your letters on any issues. See back cover for address or clarion@unisondc.co.uk

Thanks!

[to David Wood]

Just a few lines to say a big "THANK YOU" for all your help, advice and support over the past few years. I could not have coped without your input or that of Unison. Whatever the outcome had been I could not have asked for any more from anyone. I have had the papers regarding my pension and have filled them in and sent them off. I'm now waiting for my pension to start plus all the backdated monies.

Thank you once again for all you've done for me in getting me my Ill Health Retirement.

SB [name and address supplied]
North East Derbyshire

Job evaluation and schools



We hope to have a special update on job evaluation out to all county council members over the coming month. But we know there are rumours circulating about job evaluation, particularly in schools.

NOTHING HAS BEEN AGREED BY UNISON...

...about term-time working, pay or anything else!

The head of Children and Younger Adults has agreed he will also try to stop the rumours by telling head teachers that negotiations have not started on these issues.

If you hear anything you're not sure of, contact the branch office - don't spread the rumour!



In recent weeks we have been briefing and lobbying MP's and minister's on a number of issues including:

Redundancy

The Statutory Redundancy (Amendment) Bill This is a private member's Bill put forward by Lindsay Hoyle MP (Labour). The aim of the Bill is to improve and increase the rate of statutory redundancy pay here in Britain. We asked our Derbyshire MP's to support the Bill in parliament and we received positive responses from Judy Mallaber (Amber Valley), Dennis Skinner (Bolsover), Bob Laxton (Derby North), Tom Levitt (High Peak) and Mark Todd (South Derbyshire).

The Bill successfully completed its second reading in the House of Commons and we are pressing for its implementation as soon as possible.

The Affiliated Political Fund (APF) is UNISON's link with the political mainstream (where our members have to live and work) through our affiliated political links with the Labour Party. This is where we pursue UNISON policies both inside and outside of parliament.

Equality Bill

This Bill has just been published (28th April) and includes all equality legislation, including discrimination, public sector duties and equal pay.

The new legislation will affect all UNISON members.

The Government proposes:

- Increased transparency in the public sector;
- A "Kitemark" system in the private sector for those reporting on their pay gap;
- The publication of an average pay gap figure per organisation;
- The ending of pay secrecy clauses.

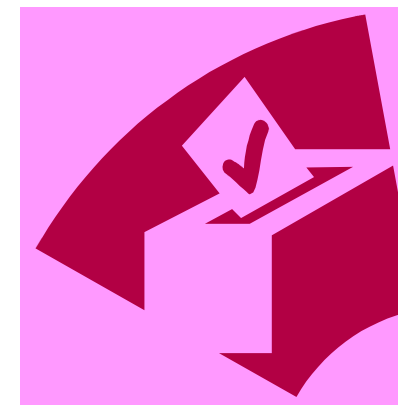
UNISON says:

The right to Equal Pay is set out in the Equal Pay Act 1970 and also in subsequent legislation. There is still a 17% pay gap between men and women in Britain. The Government's Equality Bill should increase pressure on all employers to progress towards equal pay.

Funding equal pay across the public sector will cost £mil-lions and hard pressed public services should not be forced to bear the brunt of achieving equal pay at the expense of jobs and services, particularly for the low paid.

The law does not recognise the complex processes involved in introducing job structures that comply with equality legislation and which also help to safeguard current jobs and services.

Our branch has been asked to lobby Dennis Skinner MP (Bolsover) and Natascha Engel MP (North East Derbyshire). We have sent them our briefing papers on UNISON's key points and Dennis has taken up our issues with the Minister for Equalities and Women. We will continue to campaign on equal pay for work of equal value.



National executive elections - Have you voted?

It's your last chance to vote in UNISON's national executive elections; all ballot papers must be returned by 15 May. This is your chance to have a say in the leadership of your union.

Your branch has nominated **ANN MACMILLAN WOOD** as a candidate in the East Midlands region.

Flexible working extended

Do you have a child aged 16 or under? Read on ...

FROM APRIL, THE RIGHT to ASK employers for flexible work arrangements has been extended to parents of older children.

The move to include parents of children aged 16 and under is aimed at helping families balance their work and home lives.

Before now the right to ask to work flexible hours was limited to parents of children up to the age of 6 or disabled children aged up to 18.

Recently published research among 1,000 parents showed half believed their relationship with their child would improve if they could work flexibly.

Two thirds of those surveyed by the Government's Equalities Office said it would be helpful to work flexibly as their children became older.

Half of parents of children aged between 11 and 16 said they would help with homework if they could find the time.

The exact method of requesting flexible working will undoubtedly differ from employer to employer. If you believe you may benefit, you should, in the first place, ask your manager how the new procedures operate in your workplace.

You should note that - regardless of who you work for - your manager cannot initially just say no.

If you want any assistance, please contact your local steward or the branch office.

