

YOU

are invited to our next meeting.....

Thursday 10th December
7.00-9.00pm
Chesterfield Library
New Beetwell Street
S40 1QN



Look out for our re-launched website

www.unisondc.co.uk

Maternity, Childcare & Finance

- **CHILDCARE**
www.childcarelink.gov.uk
- **TAX CREDITS**
www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/TaxCreditsandChildBenefit/TaxCredits
- **MATERNITY ACTION**
www.maternityaction.org.uk

Health

- **WOMEN'S HEALTH**
www.womens-health.co.uk
- **FEMALE HEALTH ISSUES**
www.femalehealthissues.co.uk

- **BREAST CANCER CARE**
www.breastcancercare.org.uk
- **JO'S TRUST (CERVICAL CANCER CHARITY)**
www.jotrust.co.uk

Advice & Counselling

- **WOMEN'S AID**
www.womensaid.org.uk
- **NORTH DERBYSHIRE WOMEN'S AID**
www.ndwa.org.uk
- **GLOSSOP WOMEN'S AID**
www.glossopwomensaid.org.uk
- **RAPE CRISIS**
www.rapecrisis.org.uk



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Email branch@unisondc.co.uk
www.unisondc.co.uk



women's meeting

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10th December
7.00 - 9.00pm
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New Beetwell Street
S40 1QN

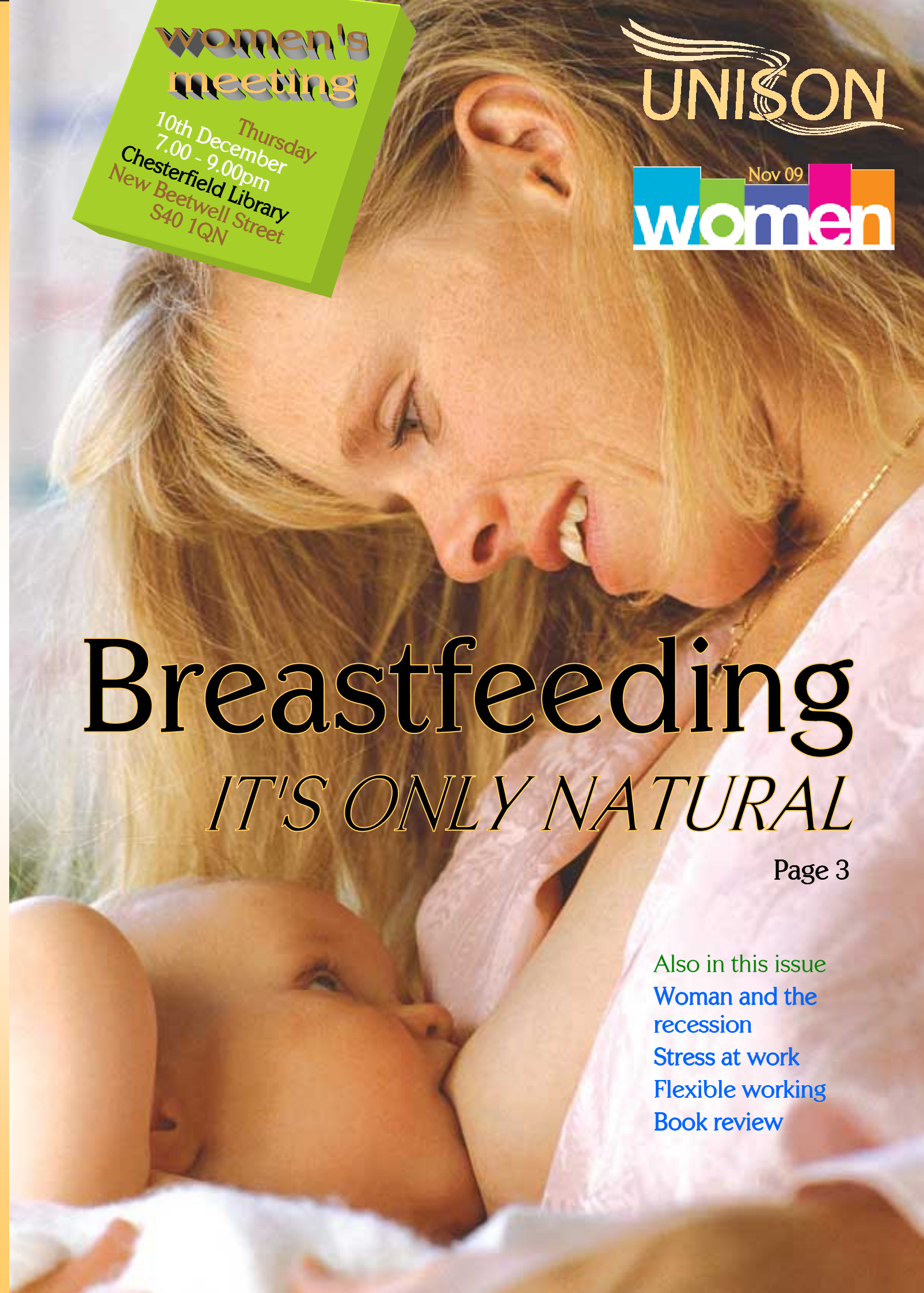


Breastfeeding

IT'S ONLY NATURAL

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Also in this issue
Woman and the recession
Stress at work
Flexible working
Book review



Join UNISON - your friend at work

PLEASE FILL IN THIS FORM IN BLOCK CAPITALS USING BLACK INK AND GIVE IT TO YOUR UNISON REP OR POST TO UNISON, FREEPOST, MATLOCK, DE4 9BR

1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Please tick or fill in the boxes below

Mrs	Ms	Miss	Mr	Other
First Name	Other initial(s)			Date of birth
Surname/Family name				Home address
Postcode				Postcode

National insurance number

Please tick this box if you require materials in a different format (eg large print or Braille) - be sure to supply contact details below

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Black UK
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Black African	<input type="checkbox"/> Black other
<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> White UK	<input type="checkbox"/> Irish
<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> Write other
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian UK	<input type="checkbox"/> Write other	

2. YOUR EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Employer's name

Your job title/occupation

Department/section

Workplace name and address

Postcode

Payroll number (from your payslip)

Contact tel/voice/text/email

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

3. WHAT YOU WILL PAY

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions

Weekly pay	Annual pay	per week	per month	Band
Up to £38.47	Up to £2000	£0.30	£1.30	A
£38.48-£96.16	£2001-£5000	£0.81	£3.50	B
£96.17-£153.84	£5001-£8000	£1.22	£5.30	C
£153.85-£211.53	£8001-£11000	£1.52	£6.60	D
£211.54-£269.23	£11001-£14000	£1.81	£7.85	E
£269.24-£326.92	£14001-£17000	£2.24	£9.70	F
£326.93-£384.61	£17001-£20000	£2.65	£11.50	G
£384.62-£480.76	£20001-£25000	£3.23	£14.00	H
£480.77-£576.92	£25001-£30000	£3.98	£17.25	I
£576.93-£673.08	£30001-£35000	£4.68	£20.30	J
£673.08+	Over £35000	£5.19	£22.50	K

4. POLITICAL FUND

UNISON's **Affiliated Political Fund (APF)** is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliates to the Labour Party.

UNISON's **General Political Fund (GPF)** is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union and for research and lobbying in Parliament and Europe. It is independent of support for any political party.

It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes below. Your subscription shown above includes a political fund payment so you do not pay any more by being in one of the funds.

5. YOUR AUTHORISATION

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

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

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

Affiliated Political Fund

General Political Fund

Now please sign and date below

Signature

Date

OTHER WAYS TO PAY direct debit cheque

DATA PROTECTION

UNISON will process your membership information together with other information for administrative, statistical analysis, conducting ballots and other statutory requirement purposes.

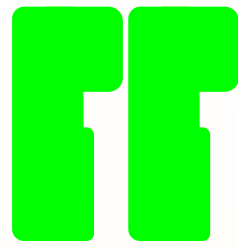
We may also send you newsletters, journals and surveys and let you know about educational and campaigning matters. We will disclose your information to our service providers and agents for these purposes.

If you do not want any mailings from UNISON besides those required by statute as shown in bold above, please tick this box.

We may share your information with organisations with whom we have a business relationship for your benefit. We, or they, may contact you by mail, telephone, SMS, fax or e-mail to let you know about goods, services or promotions which we think may be of interest to you.

If you do not wish to receive such information please tick this box.

RECEIVED



This is the second edition of your revamped newsletter - what do you think? Don't be afraid to let me know - it will only improve if you give me some feedback.

There were some encouraging comments following the last edition - thanks for those! Why don't you have a go at writing an article yourself for the next one?

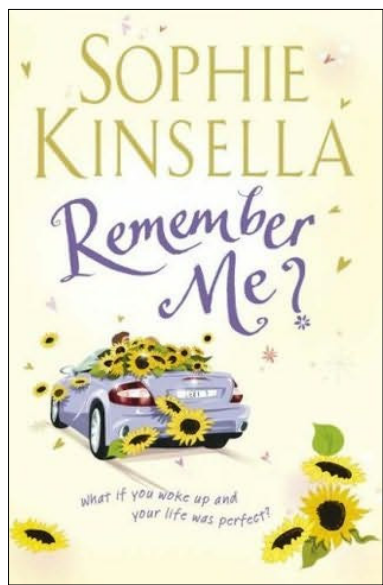
Our next meeting will be on 10th December at Chesterfield Library between 7 and 9pm. These meetings are not like 'normal' union meetings; we like to keep them short, informal and friendly! We discuss issues that matter most to women; stuff that affects us in our daily home and work lives.

As it'll almost be Christmas, we'll be going out for a quick drink after. Come and join us, I look forward to meeting you.



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Book Review by Kate Sarvent



With the same wicked humour and delicious charm, the best selling author of the "shopaholic" series returns with an irresistible new novel.

When twenty eight year old Lexi Smart wakes up in a London hospital, she's in for a big surprise. Her teeth are perfect. Her body is toned. Her handbag is Vuitton. Having survived a car accident - in a Mercedes no less - Lexi has lost a big

chunk of her memory, three years to be exact, and she's about to find out just how much things have changed.

Somehow Lexi went from twenty five year old working girl to corporate big shot with a sleek new loft, a personal assistant, a carb free diet and a set of glamorous new friends. And who is this gorgeous husband - who also happens to be a multimillionaire? With her mind still stuck three years in reverse, Lexi greets this brave new world determined to be the person she.....well, seems to be. That is, until an adorably dishevelled architect drops the biggest bombshell of all.

Suddenly Lexi is scrambling to catch her balance. Her new life, as it turns out, comes complete with secrets and intrigues. How on earth did this happen? Will she ever remember? And what will happen when she does?

UNISON's Pregnancy Diary

UNISON's pregnancy diary has been updated to support expectant mothers in the workplace. The diary takes members from the time of conception up to a couple of months after the baby's birth. It provides general information on their baby's development, and explains their statutory rights as a working woman. Members can get copies from the branch office 01629 582266 or email branch@unisondc.co.uk



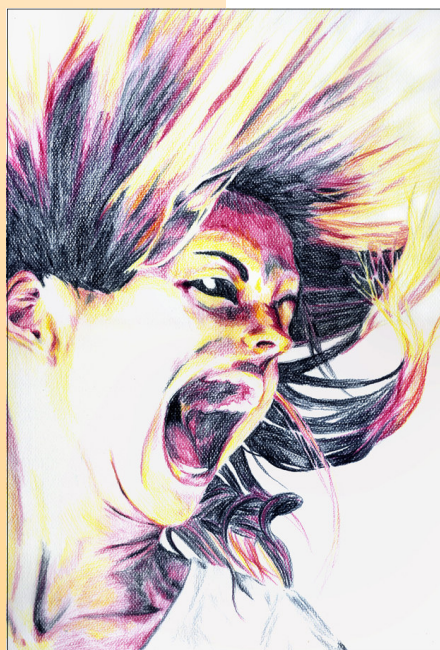
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great way to get things off your chest and work through issues.

- **Set limits** when it comes to things like work and family, figure out what you can really do. There are only so many hours in the day. Set limits with yourself and others. Don't be afraid to say NO to requests for your time and energy.
- **Try to avoid dealing with your stress in unhealthy ways** this includes drinking too much alcohol, using drugs, smoking or overeating.

As working women, we have many roles: spouse, mother, caregiver, friend and worker. With all we have going on in our lives, it seems almost impossible to find ways to de-stress. But it's important to find those ways. Your health depends on it.

But there is a further health warning! Such diet and relaxation techniques may go some way to alleviating stress. However, these only temporarily relieve a condition that already exists. What needs to be done is to remove the root cause of the problem. In the majority of cases, this cannot be done by individuals alone. That is why you are in UNISON - so we can provide help and assistance and a collective solution to your stress. And don't leave it till its too late - if you're under stress and it is causing health problems, call us immediately.



STRESS and WORK

Work-related stress has long been a major hazard for a wide range of workers and this is increasing during the current economic recession. Since 1996, all seven Trades Union Congress (TUC) surveys have found that stress was THE major workplace concern for union safety reps. Indeed, it is the second most widespread occupational health problem in the UK, after back pain.

Women workers aged 45-54 have the highest rate of stress and these are made worse in some occupations. Higher than average stress levels, for instance, are found in local government workers and teachers, which then has a direct impact on teaching assistants and other schoolworkers.

The most recent local government sickness absence survey (2006/7) found that stress was the most important single cause of absence, accounting for nearly a quarter of all days off sick.

And the bad news is that things will get worse during the recession. This can provide many stumbling blocks – tipping individuals from 'coping well' into stress, or from stress into anxiety or depression.

A report for the mental health charity Mind identified the main sources of work-related stress as:

- **Poor working conditions**
- **Long hours**
- **Relationships at work**
- **Job insecurity**
- **Travel**
- **Organisational structure**
- **A mismatch between job requirements and the individual's capabilities, resources or needs.**

Further research concludes that most stressful jobs involve "emotional labour". Workers in such occupations have to interact with members of the public or service users as part of their jobs and are also required to display a set of emotions adhering to strict rules. Social care workers, in particular, will recognise this 'emotional labour'.

Food for thought?

Breastfeeding is as controversial as it is natural - why should a breastfeeding mum be shoved into the toilets to feed? Would you eat your dinner in a toilet? Why should a breastfeeding mum be put into a quiet corner where she can't 'offend' anyone (unless she asks for a quiet corner, of course)?

Breastfeeding mums don't 'expose' themselves

and certainly show much less than can be found daily in popular newspapers, magazines and on TV.

Breastfeeding is normal - what could be more normal than feeding your baby the way nature intended? Breast milk costs nothing, yet some feel coerced to pay hundreds of pounds a year for commercial alternatives. It's normal to feed a baby anytime and anywhere; on the train, at home, in the park, at friends....yes, even at work.

Breastfeeding is good for the health of mother and baby. Women have been doing it since humans evolved, yet today many find they don't get the support they need.

Often **it's other people's attitudes that make breastfeeding difficult**

for them. In England a woman was taken away by the police for breastfeeding on a park bench. Yet if you're in Scotland, you have a legal right to do it - and anyone who stops you faces a £2,500 fine!

Many women are unaware of their rights when returning to work. If you need to work different hours due to childcare responsibilities, or you want to continue breastfeeding, your employer has a duty to consider your request seriously. If your employer refuses your request without a good business reason, you may have a claim for indirect sex discrimination. You should seek advice in such cases from your UNISON steward or the branch office 01629 582266.



An employer must provide adequate rest, meal and refreshments breaks for women who have given birth in the last six months and women who are breastfeeding, and provide 'suitable facilities' for a breastfeeding mother to 'rest'. Recent guidelines from the European Commission recommend that rest facilities should include access to a private room, provision of a clean fridge to store milk and time off to express milk or to breastfeed.

UNISON women's conference this year passed a motion, 'Breast is best', which commits the union to auditing workplaces to determine the level of provision of facilities for working mothers to express milk in comfort.

They also agreed to produce materials that highlight the benefit of breastfeeding and what branches can do to support members who may be affected. There is also an agreement to work with UNISON's national executive council to lobby Westminster to ensure that a bill similar to the Scottish one, is introduced in England.

www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk
www.equalityhumanrights.com
www.nct.org.uk
www.laleche.org
www.abm.me.uk

Working Women and Flexible Working

Derbyshire County Council says its "ethos is to support and recognise employees' work-life balance and to provide policies and guidance that reflects the needs of employees who have family and consequent caring commitments, whilst maintaining a high standard to our customers".

Their Leave for Working Families policy covers

- **maternity and paternity rights**
- **adoption guidelines**
- **urgent, personal and domestic leave**
- **bereavement and flexible working arrangements**

Occasionally UNISON finds some managers are unaware of the existence of some of these policies or claim they no longer exist. This is not so.

There are various forms of flexible working available including job shares, term-time only working, a compressed pattern of working like 4-day weeks or 9-day fortnights etc

Obviously, the type of working available depends to some extent on the work discipline. However, in general, UNISON believes that nothing should be ruled out automatically.

You should first discuss working flexibly with your manager and then submit a formal written request. Your manager must meet with you to discuss your application within 28 days and inform you of their decision within another 14 days. You can appeal if the request is turned down.

However, many members don't work for the county council. Some larger employers will have similar policies but other smaller concerns may not yet have them in place. But this doesn't mean that they are outside of the law! You have a legal right to request flexible working. And if you need UNISON assistance, contact your local steward or the branch office.



JOB CUTS Public services cuts will hit women harder

No matter who wins the next election the next government agenda seems set in stone - cuts, cuts and cuts! Especially to public services and especially in local government.

This will have a huge effect on women as we are the majority of workers in the public sector. Our wages are not 'pin money' (they never were!) but an essential, even main, part of our family finances.

Vicky Ingram, a community care worker in the High Peak and Chesterfield, currently on UNISON's national local government executive said "We have to fight against this - it affects us all; we cannot sit back and let others fight on our behalf. So let's start now by pointing out how these cuts will disproportionately affect us through lower incomes, increased care responsibilities and less independence."

The next women's meeting on 10th December (see back page) will start to consider motions to next year's UNISON conference. Come and have your say on these issues that affect us all.





While we're still catching up with men in some aspects of our lives, we appear to be way ahead in one undesirable category... **STRESS!**

Over the last few decades, the British working environment has become increasingly populated by women. Roughly the same amount of women work in the UK as men. So, as women we not only face the stresses that come with childcare, housework and general caring but also those the modern workplace brings with it.

Our parents now live longer - into their 80s and 90s - adding to our caring responsibilities when we are already juggling demands of work and children. Budgets for social services are tight; the policy is to keep elderly people at home increasing the pressures of caring. It is evident there is extra pressure on women. With job losses and cuts in income looming in the recession, demands are likely to grow disproportionately on us as we bear the main caring role. The burdens of keeping a job, raising children and looking after elderly parents are driving more than ever before to the edge of a nervous breakdown.

A 2003 report by the charity Women at the Crossroads showed how many women in mid-life found themselves in a poverty trap, as a result of lower pay, part-time working and relationship breakdown. We are less likely to own our home, have lower status at work and carry a greater share of household duties.

Stress is one of the biggest causes of ill health in the workplace with 1 in 5 of us reporting we feel very or extremely stressed at work. Anxiety and depression are the most common mental health

problems, and the majority of cases are caused by stress. We are particularly susceptible to developing depression and anxiety disorders in response to stress compared with men. A survey by the NHS showed a rise of more than 12% in the proportion of women suffering depression and anxiety since the mid-1990s. There was no corresponding increase amongst men.

WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is the reaction of our body to something that upsets the normal balance in our life - a situation where demands on us exceed our ability to cope. Stress affects different people in different ways. Too much stress can affect our bodies and minds. The chemicals that are released by our bodies as a result of stress can build up over time and cause various mental and physical symptoms:

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) says the symptoms of stress can become visible in behavioural, physical, mental and emotional changes:

Behaviour

- Find it hard to sleep
- Change your eating habits
- Smoke or drink more
- Avoid friends and family
- Have sexual problems

Physical

- Tiredness
- Indigestion and nausea
- Headaches
- Aching muscles
- Palpitations

Mental

- Be more indecisive
- Find it hard to concentrate
- Suffer loss of memory
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Low self-esteem

Emotional

- Get irritable or angry
- Be anxious
- Feel numb
- Be hypersensitive
- Feel drained and listless

If you have been experiencing some of these symptoms for a long period of time you are at risk of developing high blood pressure which can lead to heart attacks and stroke. Long-term exposure to stress can lead to serious health problems. Chronic stress disrupts nearly every system in your body. It can raise blood pressure, suppress the immune system, increase the risk of heart attack and stroke, contribute to infertility, and speed up the aging process.

HOW CAN I HELP HANDLE MY STRESS?

As women, we tend to carry a higher burden of stress than we should - don't let it make you sick. Often, we aren't even aware of our stress levels. Listen to your body, so that you know when stress is affecting your health. If you frequently find yourself feeling frazzled and overwhelmed, it's time to take action to bring your nervous system back into balance. You can protect yourself by learning how to recognise the signs and symptoms of stress and taking steps to



reduce its harmful effects. Here are ways to help handle stress:

- **Relax** it's important to unwind. Each person has her own way to relax.... deep breathing, yoga, meditation, massage therapy. If you can't do these things, take a few minutes to sit, listen to soothing music, read a book....
- **Make time for yourself** it's important to care for yourself. No matter how busy you are, you can try to set aside at least 15 minutes each day in your schedule to do something for yourself - take a bubble bath, go for a walk, call a friend....
- **Sleep** sleeping is a great way to help both your body and mind. Your stress could get worse if you don't get enough sleep. You also can't fight off sickness as well when you sleep poorly. With enough sleep you can tackle problems better and lower your risk of illness. Try to get seven to nine hours of sleep every night.
- **Eat right** fuel up with fruits, vegetables and proteins. Good sources of protein can be peanut butter, chicken, or tuna salad. Eat
- **wholegrain**, such as wheat breads and wheat crackers. Don't be fooled by the jolt you get from caffeine or sugar. The energy will rapidly wear off.
- **Get moving** Believe it or not, getting physical activity not only helps relieve your tense muscles but helps your mood too! Your body makes endorphins after you work out; these relieve stress and improve your mood.
- **Talk to friends** talk to your friends to help work through your stress.
- **Get help from a professional if you need it** Talk to a counsellor. There also are medications that can help ease symptoms of depression and anxiety and help promote sleep.
- **Compromise** it's not always worth the stress to argue. Give in once in a while.
- **Write down your thoughts** have you ever typed an email to a friend about your lousy day and felt better afterwards? Grab a pen and paper and write down what's going on in your life! Keeping a journal can be a

(Continued on page 6)



Who can I go to?

There are certain things you can do with regard to diet and relaxation techniques that may go some way to alleviating stress. However, these only temporarily relieve a condition that already exists. What needs to be done is to remove the root cause of the problem. In the majority of cases, this cannot be done by individuals alone. That is why you are in UNISON - so we can provide help and assistance and a collective solution to your stress. **And don't leave it till its too late - if you're under stress and it is causing health problems, call us immediately.**

What needs to be done is to **REMOVE** the root cause of the problem.