

admin

News for UNISON members
in the NHS clerical and admin sector

matters



Floating a solution to ever increasing workloads

By Tina Cross, Eastern Region Sector Rep

This article is written mainly on the basis of my experience at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, but I know that an “ever increasing workload” is a problem experienced across all trusts.

With the introduction of the “18-week pathway” the extra clinics and extra theatre lists etc that we all predicted are with us. This impacts on many administrative and clerical staff, from booking clerks to receptionists, medical secretaries to “manic managers,” all desperately trying to meet trust targets.

Here at the Norfolk and Norwich, we have had many calls from members who are being asked to incorporate this extra work into their existing hours. The first thing we do is to demonstrate to managers where the extra work is and show that it is

clearly on top of existing workloads.

It is a reasonable assumption that if you substantially increase the workload without any thought of increasing staffing levels, problems will arise. In my workplace we have staff who can't cope with the extra work that is coming their way. And all administrative and clerical staff dealing with patients along the “18-week pathway” have been affected. The union is resisting calls for staff to take on extra duties without an adequate assessment of workload to staffing ratios being undertaken. For example, our medical secretaries have not been typing up the extra

clinics or validating patient pathways relating to the “18-week pathway.”

The trust has responded by supplying departments with extra staff to cope with the extra work. We are now starting to see the development of “float teams” – staff who are trained in-house to cover the work of receptionists, medical secretaries, waiting list co-ordinators and patient pathway co-ordinators.

Reports from departments have shown support for these teams. However, the work here at the Norfolk and Norwich is still ongoing!

Medical secretaries defeat Gwent cuts

By Chris Jones, Wales Sector Rep

UNISON members in Gwent have seen off proposals by Price Waterhouse for the outsourcing of medical secretarial work, a substantial reduction of numbers and the restructuring and consequent downgrading of medical secretarial posts. These proposals have all been scrapped in spite of the trust's projected deficit of £43 million and the fact they could have saved £1.6 million.

UNISON members took action after the proposals leaked out in August 2006. Medical secretaries, together with branch officers,

organised a picket of the trust board annual general meeting. They then held a meeting of over 100 staff members who unanimously rejected the proposals and decided to fight them. Thirty representatives stepped forward in order to facilitate communication.

Over the next 16 months, meetings were held with the trust where the secretaries demanded a no-redundancy agreement before being willing to talk about modernisation. This was not forthcoming.

In the summer of 2008, the trust held

workshops in an attempt to convince UNISON members to change their minds. This was unsuccessful and instead the trust received 168 critical questions, many of which were about the quality of the service.

At the end of 2008, agreement was reached to call it a day and a return to normality.

Medical secretaries in Gwent are to be congratulated on their stand and their immediate response to proposals to reduce the quality of the service to patients and cut staff terms and conditions of service.

Win a break at Croyde Bay

The first issue of this newsletter is called Admin Matters. However, we are keen to see if our readers can come up with an alternative title for this newsletter – and win a break at Croyde Bay at the same time. If you have an idea, please send it to:



Title Competition
Health Group
UNISON
FREEPOST (WC5652)
1 Mabledon Place
London WC1H 9AJ
Don't forget to include your contact details.

If your suggestion is chosen as a new title for the newsletter, Croyde Bay Holiday Village will offer you a three night break for up to two adults and two children.



Setting new health and safety standards

POSHH (the NHS Staff Council sub group on health and safety) has agreed and published a set of occupational health and safety standards. These have been written in partnership between NHS trade unions and NHS Employers to help employers comply with their legal obligations. They cover a range of health and safety issues, including tackling and managing violence and aggression in the workplace, bullying and harassment, stress, musculoskeletal disorders and the use of display screen equipment. Details of the standards can be found at www.unison.org.uk/file/Occupational%20health%20and%20safety%20standards.pdf

UNISON publications

UNISON has produced new guides on tackling violence and aggression, as well as the health and safety dimension of display screen equipment. Both these publications emphasise the importance of risk assessment and the involvement of trade union safety reps.

“It’s Not Part of the Job: UNISON’s guide to tackling violence and aggression at work” emphasises that employers need to look after the safety and security of all staff, including admin and clerical staff.

“Are You Sitting Comfortably?” explains how employers should minimise the risk of display screen equipment (ie computer) work by ensuring that workplaces and jobs are well designed and workers have adequate rest breaks.

Copies of these publications can be found on the UNISON web site.

It’s Not Part of the Job: UNISON’s guide to tackling violence and aggression at work: www.unison.org.uk/file/4096.pdf

Are You Sitting Comfortably?: www.unison.org.uk/file/4095.pdf



Meet the Administrative and Clerical Sector Committee

Bryan Robertson, Sector Chair

Employment history

I have been employed in public services since 1970, after starting with Newcastle Local Authority and then being transferred into the NHS in 1974. In total I have done 38 years in public services and 34 years in the NHS.

Employed as a clerical officer with Community Health Services in 1974, I was involved in supporting, in an administrative capacity, activities at 25 clinics and health centres situated throughout Newcastle upon Tyne.

Over time I have become involved and appointed to various jobs within the community sector, dealing with a wide range of services, from postal and courier services, welfare foods, loan equipment, staff accommodation to personnel and admin support services. Eventually I was appointed as a bereavement advisor for Newcastle General Hospital in 1998 until I was seconded to full-time trade union activities as staff side secretary/UNISON branch secretary in 2001.

Trade union history

I was a NALGO member from 1970 until merger into UNISON in 1994.

I became a NALGO steward in 1983 and was soon appointed to a position of recruitment officer for the branch in 1984.



I was elected branch secretary for NALGO in 1986 and continue in this role in UNISON Northumberland, Tyne & Wear Branch.

I have continually represented my branch at regional level since 1984.

I have been a member of the Admin and Clerical National Negotiating Committee since 1986 and have been involved at national level with Health Standing Orders Committee since 1995 and as a member of the National Standing Orders Committee between 1997 and 2005.

Negotiators set out agenda for 2009

The Health Service Group Executive (SGE) has decided to push forward with a major negotiating agenda during 2009 on terms and conditions issues that have the potential to deliver new benefits to members.

Its decision followed the NHS Pay Review Body's announcement in December 2008 that it would not ask the government to conduct a review of 2009/10 pay rates agreed under the multi-year deal.

Therefore, the SGE recognised that against a background of rapidly declining inflation and fears over job security there was no immediate prospect of re-opening the pay rates in the multi-year deal and, while keeping pay under review, the focus in 2009 would be on key terms and conditions issues.

Your regional reps on the Administrative and Clerical Sector Committee

Eastern Tina Cross

East Midlands To be confirmed

Greater London Jim Mansfield

Northern Bryan Robertson

Northern Ireland Catherine Farrell

North West Pauline Gregory

Scotland Aileen Stewart

South East June Harewood

South West Sue Orwin

Wales Chris Jones

West Midlands Nina Wood-Ford

Yorkshire and Humberside Tony Bryan

National Black Members Committee Co-optee: Jenny Forbes

National Women's Committee Co-optee: Katrina Purcell

Contacts

The full-time officers supporting the Administrative and Clerical Sector are

Dave Godson

Email: d.godson@unison.co.uk) and

Robert Baughan

Email: r.baughan@unison.co.uk

who can also be contacted in the UNISON Health Group on 020 7551 1418.

Keep up to date

Don't forget, you can visit the UNISON website for further information about the administrative and clerical sector at www.unison.org.uk/healthcare/administrative

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Textphone users call FREEPHONE 08000 0 967 968

Lines open from 6am to midnight, Monday – Friday and 9am to 4pm Saturday

Or go to www.unison.org.uk

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First name Other initial(s)

Surname/Family name Date of birth / /

Home address

Postcode

National insurance number (from your payslip)

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

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 Chinese Black Black Other
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Your job title/occupation

Department/section

Workplace name and address

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£384.62–£480.76	£20,001–£25,000	£3.23	£14.00	H	
£480.77–£576.92	£25,001–£30,000	£3.98	£17.25	I	
£576.93–£673.08	£30,001–£35,000	£4.68	£20.30	J	
£673.08+	over £35,000	£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.

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Date

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

DATA PROTECTION

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

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