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Conference votes to protect NHS pay and pensions

UNISON members vowed to fight any future government attempt to impose a pay freeze on NHS staff at their 2010 conference in Brighton.

Recognising that the NHS faces tough political and economic challenges, delegates voted on a comprehensive and coherent strategy to defend and improve future pay, terms and conditions.

In particular, the conference called on the union "to organise during 2010/11 among branches, regions and nations a high profile campaign in opposition to the public sector pay freeze and to begin preparatory work for a potential industrial action ballot including strike action of all members covered by Agenda for Change" if government tried to impose a pay freeze next year.

Delegates also vowed to defend the NHS pension scheme.

Delegate after delegate spoke in support of the strategy and one common theme ran throughout their contributions: health workers didn't cause the economic crisis, and the health service shouldn't be made to pay for it.



As Gordon McKay of Scotland stated: "This union will protect our members' jobs and our members' pay. We will not accept a pay freeze or pay for their mistakes".



Scottish National Blood Tranfusion Service (SNBTS) Review

The proposal for a new single centre site that will accomodate several functions within SNBTS, is still ongoing. The proposals are for this new centre to be up and running by 2014. The location of the new centre is still to be decided, with various options to be explored. The location of the centre will ultimately decide what functions are moved there. Process and Testing, and Donor Administration remain the big two areas that will be based here. The location of the centre will determine which areas may retain some regional work. A single garaging facility is also expected to be based there, at the moment we are unsure to what extent this will affect staff.

Workstreams within Donor Services blood

collection have been up and running now for approx 18 months, with full participation from UNISON Stewards Patricia Powell, Margaret Macdonald and Tam Hiddleston. These groups have moved forward trials within blood collection which have taken place already, such as the Home DSR, The slots exercise, 2-4 bed sessions etc. Initial thoughts by Management, staff, donors and UNISON are that these trials have largely been succesful. However, no final decisions on moving these and other issues forward will be taken without full agreement being reached in partnership, after consultation with UNISON members.

Although the new centre

will have minimal issues for the blood collection teams, new ways of working, changing roles etc could have bigger implications, and full consultation will be required before agreements are reached.

Opportunities MAY arise for some career development for staff AND we WILL ensure that any concerns and detriments linked to the strategy are discussed at UNISON MEETINGS and MEMBERS ARE FULLY CONSULTED before agreements are reached. UNISON will continue to be involved in these groups and feedback to members.

Patricia Powell
Margaret Macdonald
Tam Hiddleston
SNBTS Stewards

Occupational Health privatised at Health Scotland

UNISON are very concerned about privatisation within the NHS and are very disappointed that NHS Health Scotland have failed to engage with staff side and have went ahead and replaced an excellent NHS Occupational health provider with a private company.

Gary Wilson Health Scotland Lead Steward stated

“I was shocked to find that HR had gone ahead and allocated a contract to the private sector without even consulting staff side. Obviously UNISON are extremely concerned by this and we intend to

raise this issue with the Government. It is very sad since staff that used the previous NHS provider were very happy with the service”

UNISON are committed to the NHS and to excellent public services and we think this action is deeply shameful on behalf of NHS Health Scotland.

Branch adds its support to Million Voices Campaign

The Branch Executive urges stewards and members to add their support to the UNISON campaign.

UNISON are currently campaigning for a fairer society through the campaign 'a million voices for change'. To date the campaign has largely focussed on local government issues, however Scottish Healthcare Branch recognise that we must start putting the down groundwork for the potential assault on the health sector once the current election campaign has been fought and won. We believe that Healthcare will soon be faced with

many of the difficulties and tough choices that local government are currently facing – with cuts to services and jobs.

The Scottish elections are scheduled for 2011, and we believe that we should start now to show the strength of support for our public services – for us focussing on Healthcare. The NHS in Scotland is one of the largest employers and we need to protect members jobs, whilst ensuring that services and care are available to everyone when they need them.

The Scottish Healthcare Branch have agreed that all Stewards need to become active and work

with members to gain support. The enclosed leaflet explains in more detail the aims of the campaign. Stewards will be asking them to sign up to the campaign – either electronically or using the 'bubbles' issued. We're also hoping that members will be able to get friends and family to sign up to the campaign as well – we need to show Government that we are serious about saving jobs and services in the public sector.

Viv Thomson
PSD Steward

Duncan Service
Branch Communications
Officer

Donor Services Annual Adjustment

Since the Whole Blood Review in 2003, some staff within Donor Services have been paid, on a yearly basis, a sum of money known as the Annual Adjustment. This sum of money differed from staff member to staff member, depending on contract, number of hours worked, sickness etc.

With the implementation of the AfC terms and conditions the method and payment of the

annual adjustment has been legally questioned for a number of years. The AfC Terms & Conditions state quite clearly that Occupational Sick Pay (OSP) should be paid to all staff when on sick or Annual Leave and this calculation will be made " As if you were at work" The Annual Adjustment has in fact paid an element of this, although not fully compliant. This payment will no longer be paid as it usually is, in the

November wage. OSP will now be paid as AfC states. To calculate this payment, it has been agreed to use a 12 month previously worked reference period. This allows for the busier work schedules and quieter periods to be added together and an average outcome is reached. This will be paid monthly, and not as previously as a one off payment.

Tam Hiddleston
SNBTS Steward

Scottish Dental Reference Jobs retained in Glasgow

Early in 2009 the senior management for NSS Practitioner Services Dental & Ophthalmic advised UNISON that they were reviewing the operations of the Scottish Dental Reference Service (SDRS) based at Corunna House in Glasgow. The SDRS are a department of PSD who specialise in the pre-approval and post treatment checking of work carried out by Dental Practitioners in Scotland, and they do so on behalf of the Scottish Dental Practice Board.

Although the initial phases of the review had involved elements of Partnership Working the outcome recommended by the managers involved, specifically to move the work to Edinburgh while closing the Corunna House office and redeploying the staff, fell well short of the Partnership Working we expected. Our issues were raised at the divisional Partnership Forum and the outcome

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of the discussion was to reconsider all options but this time in proper Partnership with UNISON stewards. This allowed the UNISON stewards involved the opportunity of suggesting an alternate solution that allowed the managers to realise the savings on the accommodation costs they anticipated and at the same time keeping this established team together at another Glasgow site.

The SDRS relocated to Clifton House on the 22nd of March and, given their managements initial proposal, the UNISON members involved are reasonably happy with the outcome so far. Although there are likely to be more discussions regarding the work the SDRS does this solution removes one of the main arguments for moving the work away from Glasgow.

Gerry McAteer
Steward PSD

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