

Welcome to the February edition of Branch News.

It's a while ago now; but we thought you would like to see some pictures of what happened on the October 20th march in London.

Firstly; St Helens and Knowsley Health Branch would like to give a heartfelt thank you to all of the 80 members of staff including the Unison reps and officers who took part in the March against Austerity Measures on October 20th 2012.

The day had a very early start and as it turned out it was a bright, warm and dry day. On arrival everyone who was taking part in the march made their way to the River Thames embankment. The North West Banner was quite near to the front and that's where a lot of people from our branch could be found.

Armed with banners, flags whistles and vuvuzelas the march started at 12 sharp and everyone started to move, there were brass bands, and a swarm of young and old; from every kind of job and town; all united in the goal to stop the cuts to our services and support the public sector. The whistles and vuvuzelas were blown, the flags and banners were waved and the loudest boos of all were heard as everyone passed by the end of Downing Street.

The sheer volume of people on this march was amazing to see, and there were huge groups of people still passing the starting point at 3pm; this was at a time when the speeches were already in full flow in Hyde Park. Some pictures of the day are below:



ARE YOU A DISABLED MEMBER OF STAFF

If you are a disabled member of staff and currently have a council issued Blue Badge and have not got your staff blue car park permit yet; you need to take your car permit and council issued blue badge to the main reception with your work security badge to prove the Blue Badge is your property. Then when you pick up your blue staff parking permit you can park in one of the disabled staff car park spaces.



There have been some issues across the sites with Blue Badge spaces being used illegally, also there have been reports of some members of staff using the public disability areas for parking. If you have one of these badges please make sure that you park in the allocated spaces provided and not in a normal parking bay.

The staff Disabled Action Group campaigned for a long time for enough spaces for disabled staff to be able to park on site, so park responsibly so that we don't lose them. More information about the car parks can be obtained from Medirest on ext: 2507



Be aware: These areas are being monitored for the correct parking permits.

A New Way of Connecting With the UNISON

On 27/09/2012 UNISON became the first trade union in the UK to introduce a smartphone App that provides in-app guidance about your rights at work. This free App will be useful to anyone employed in the UK. It's useful for both members and activists it carries news that is relevant to you, and did we mention it's FREE?? The UNISON app offers the following:



- Up to date advice on your rights at work
- Inside news on protecting public services
- Animations
- Get active – information and advice on how to fight Austerity
- Join UNISON from your phone
- Update your membership details



To download the app all you need to do is scan the code above with your phone's QR reader. It is available for the iPhone now, and its coming very soon for the Blackberry, Android and Windows 7. Alternatively you can search on your phones app store.

Thompson Solicitors - Did you know?

As a UNISON Member you receive: Free legal advice and representation on:

- Personal Injury at work (including assaults)
- Personal injury away from work
- Road traffic accident injury
- Holiday injury
- Slips and trips
- Industrial disease or illness
- Employment law accessed through your UNISON branch

For UNISON Members and their families we offer:

Free legal advice and representation on:

- Personal injury away from work
- Road traffic accident injury
- Holiday injury
- Slips and trips away from work
- Industrial disease or illness incurred away from work
- Special terms for clinical negligence cases
- Reduced rates for conveyancing and family member Wills

Thompsons Solicitors is the largest national specialist personal injury practice in the country with over 1200 staff in a network of offices nationwide. They secure over £150 million compensation each year for people who have been injured and suffered loss as a result of accidents caused by the carelessness of others.

Thompsons only work for injured people, never for insurance companies or employers.

[Legal Helpline 0845 355 0845](tel:08453550845)

[Textphone: 0800 0967 968](tel:08000967968) Mon-Fri 6am-midnight

Sat 9am-4pm or the hard of hearing:

Mon-Fri 6am-midnight/Sat 9am-4pm

N.B. UNISON and Thompsons have just achieved a fantastic result for one NHS worker in the North West whose foot was partially amputated after a horrific accident; he has just received compensation of more than £ 1.5m after a seven-year legal battle.

Agenda for change

Proposals on changes to the Agenda for Change agreement

This document sets out the proposed changes to the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook. This is a joint set of proposals on changes to the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook in England only which covers staff on Agenda for Change contracts.

If health unions agree to the modified proposals, the employers' side intends to implement these proposals by 1st April 2013. This timeline gives UNISON time both to consult and to provide additional information and options to branches.

If UNISON's Health Service Group Executive agrees a timetable and method for consultation, UNISON will produce a full pack with a commentary on the proposals, a FAQ and copies of the proposals' annexes. All UNISON members will be contacted shortly for their views.

Here in branch; we held meetings across the Whiston and St Helens sites to update our members, more information will be released later.

Help with winter fuel bills- a reminder from Anthony Lockhart, UNISON Branch Secretary

This winter, many UNISON members will be worried about paying their gas and electricity bills as prices go up and wages stay the same. And they're not alone. Fuel poverty in the UK is increasing and today one in four households are in fuel poverty. Unison has set up an energy switching scheme - a new way to save on gas and electricity bills. It works by getting as many UNISON members as possible to register their interest in taking part so that we can go to the energy companies and negotiate a competitive energy deal.

The more members that register, the better the offer we can get and the more money you can save, it's as simple as that. There is no obligation when you register to sign up to the new offer, so please register your details so we can send you more information. You can find out more and register at unison-switch.co.uk. Registration closes on 25 November, so please register now.

As a UNISON member, you could also save up to £175 on your energy bills with free loft insulation and up to -£135 with free cavity wall insulation from British Gas. Call 0800 107 2547 quoting IUM001 or visit britishgas.co.uk/insulation for more information. You need to apply by 30 November. In addition UNISON's charity 'There for You' can help. 'There for You' will be offering a winter fuel grants programme - members whose net household income is less than £18,000 a year can apply for help with their fuel payments. The application form will be available on the web at www.unison.org.uk in December.

We also know that we need to tackle the issue of high fuel costs head on. That's why we've joined forces with the Energy Bill Revolution to campaign to end fuel poverty. The campaign aims to use the billions of pounds raised by the government's carbon emissions tax to end fuel poverty, create jobs and help the economy to grow.

Please take two minutes to sign the petition at energybillrevolution.org and ask all your friends and networks to do the same. This will help put real pressure on the government to sort out fuel poverty, and not a moment too soon.

UNISON and Healthcare

UNISON is the UK's largest healthcare trade union - over 400,000 people who work in the NHS and for private contractors providing NHS services are UNISON members. Our health members are nurses, student nurses, midwives, health visitors, healthcare assistants, paramedics, cleaners, porters, catering staff, medical secretaries, clerical and admin staff and scientific and technical staff. And that's not all of us! UNISON is a powerful voice for working people in the United Kingdom. We have over 1.3 million members working in public services, the community and voluntary sector and for private companies.

Looking after people at work

We represent our members in many ways, offering help and advice at work, raising your professional/local concerns or by highlighting issues that will affect all health workers at a national level. We work together to make sure our members' concerns are heard - whether it is about pay, health and safety, discrimination or the future of our NHS.

Looking after the NHS

But there is more to UNISON than looking after people at work. We care passionately about the future of the NHS as a publicly funded service that is free at the point of delivery. This makes campaigning to stop the increasing involvement of the private sector in the provision of health care services a top priority for us.

BRANCH NEWS

Have you got some information or an idea that you would like to see covered in this branch newsletter? Have you got a question that you would like to ask Unison to find out the answer for you? Then please contact me at Jeanette.Foster@sthk.nhs.co.uk or ring ext 1852.



Or contact: UNISON Office, Staffside Offices, Nightingale House, Whiston Hospital.
Opening Times Monday-Friday 9am - 5pm Phone ext1852

ARE YOU READING THIS BUT STILL NOT A MEMBER OF UNISON

It's easy to join the North West's brightest and best public service trade union. Contact the branch office on ext 1852/7612 or contact the North West regional branch on 0845 355 0845, Any UNISON steward or branch officer on both the Whiston or the St Helens Hospital sites can get you a membership form and application forms can also be found online at. www.unisonnw.org.uk.

Have you misplaced or lost your union membership card? It is very easy to do especially if you have moved house or lost a bag. Getting a replacement card is a very simple and straightforward process. Follow this UNISON website address you can soon get a new one. <http://www.unison.org.uk/help/membershipcard.asp>

If you don't have internet access you can call UNISON direct 0845 355 0845. You can expect on average to wait 2 to 3 weeks for your new card.

Please let the unison office know if you have moved house so we can make sure that your details are amended for any correspondence.

Recruitment days and nights

There have been a few recruitment drives going on at the hospital lately.

If you're still not a member yet please ask at one of these recruitment drives or stop any branch officer and ask them for a form.

Online details are above.



Britannia Mortgage Challenge
Why not take the mortgage challenge?

£ 150 CASH BACK: for Unison Members who are first time buyers, home movers or remortgaging from another lender.

Are you **100%** confident that you're getting a great deal from your current lender? Our Mortgage advisors can check to see if they can save you money on your current deal. Britannia is a trading name used by The Co-operative Bank p.l.c. Registered office: PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester, M60 4EP. Registered in England and Wales No. 990937. The Co-operative Bank is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority (No.121885), subscribes to the Lending Code, the Financial Ombudsman Service and is licensed by the Office of Fair Trading (No. 006110).

The Co-operative Bank reserves the right to change or withdraw this or any of their mortgage offers at any time.

MACMILLAN CAKE SALE

A Macmillan cake sale was held on the 27th of September by branch officers Janet and Steven Stout on behalf of Macmillan Cancer Relief.

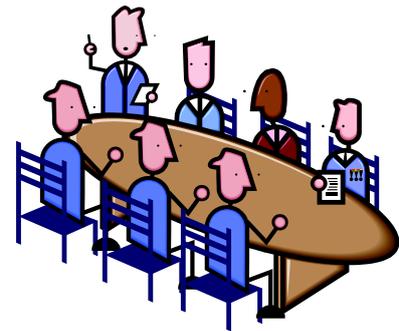
Held in the Spice of Life restaurant on the 5th Floor of Whiston Hospital, members of staff were invited to come for a cake and a coffee/tea and donate to this worthy cause.



This event rose over £130 and will be repeated again this year.

And finally -

The AGM dates have now been confirmed and are listed below, if you are a member please try and attend one of these meetings.



- Wednesday 27th February 2013 at 12pm in Seminar Room 3, Orange Level, Whiston
- Thursday 28th February 2013 at 12pm in Gamble Seminar Room, St Helens
- Monday 4th March 2013 at 12pm Gamble Seminar Room, St Helens
- Thursday 7th March 2013 at 12pm Seminar Room 1, Red Level, Whiston
- Thursday 7th March 2013 at 1.45pm Seminar Room 1, Red Level, Whiston