HISTORY IS MADE!

Our fantastic McDs Members strike for the first time in the UK
EDITOR’S NOTES

“If the Blairite wing of the party cannot deal with the vision of Corbyn as a future Prime Minister then they should leave the party”

Ronnie Draper @ronniebfawu

Given that my last article was written in May for June publication, I thought it would be good to reflect on how the political landscape has changed so dramatically during those few weeks (I confess that I’m writing this with a smile on my face).

The build up to Conference was full of trepidation following the calling of the General Election by Theresa (Cruella de Vil) May and the almost incessant barrage of anti-Corbyn hysteria being propagated by the Tory-supporting media outlets.

Hoping for the best...
What message was I going to deliver to delegates at Southport three days after a Tory landslide?

What hope were we to give that we could ride the union bashing storm that was sure to follow?

Sighs of relief all round as the exit polls closed and the call was that the ‘landslide victory’ was to actually deliver a lost majority for the Conservatives and some hope for the electorate of our country. I wish I had a pound for every time I have been reminded that Labour lost and the Tories won the election, but I wonder if Tories truly feel like victors in what at best could be termed a pyrrhic victory or if Jeremy Corbyn was crying into his cup of tea at the loss.

How did that go, then?
The sheer arrogance of the Tories calling the election for no other reason than to destroy the opposition and, even worse, by producing a manifesto that attacked pensioners, the young, the disabled and disadvantaged alike, feeling that they were invincible and would be swept to victory unopposed.

Well, politics has a history of kicking politicians where it hurts and this was no exception.

Does the DUP have a mandate?
The Tories remain in power by the skin of their teeth having bribed the DUP in Northern Ireland into propping up the most anti-working class political party in generations. They will have to live with that decision for a long time and may well pay a high price like the Fib Dems did in 2015.

In the meantime Jeremy Corbyn is getting on with the promotion of the Labour manifesto in marginal seats, addressing mass rallies, forcing Tory u-turns and giving a message of hope to millions of people who had become disenchanted with politics and politicians.

Building an effective opposition
For the first time in a few years, we will see an effective opposition that will hold the Tories to account for their actions and hopefully we will see an end to the infighting from the right of the party as well as the constant undermining of the Corbyn/McDonnell team.

I see a future under Labour that will change politics forever – a politics that embraces young and old alike

If the Blairite wing of the party cannot deal with the vision of Corbyn as a future Prime Minister then they should leave the party and allow people who share the values embraced by increasing numbers of voters, the chance to stand. We also need to put an end to the crazy purge of people who have been expelled, suspended or excluded from our party (other than for threats of violence) and give an amnesty to the thousands who want to carry our message of hope forward.
Nurses at foodbanks? Shocking!
I fail to see how offering a living wage of £10 per hour, an end to zero hour contracts, the building of council and affordable housing or an end to tuition fees can be seen as sinister in the 5th richest nation on earth.

It could only be a Tory who claims that the only reason that people visit foodbanks is because they are there, without saying what the alternative would be for people who have had incomes or benefits slashed.

So I’m smiling because I see a future under Labour that will change politics forever, a politics that embraces young and old alike and a politics that will bring improvements in living standards for the disadvantaged who have suffered savage attacks over the last 7 years and you can all help by joining the Labour Party and airing you views in your communities.

The number and calibre of young delegates coming through are testament to how effective the campaigning on the big issues has been for our union

Our future in safe hands
This year was the 38th annual conference that I have attended and I have to say it was one of the most enjoyable. A varied agenda covering every subject under the sun was keenly debated by new as well as more experienced delegates and the toing and froing was a pleasure to witness.

The number and calibre of young delegates coming through are testament to how effective the campaigning on the big issues has been for our union. We are seeing other unions trying to copy our successes and sometimes claim them as their own, but we know that our union has been built on our ability to tackle the biggest issues without fear or favour and have grown our reputation accordingly.

Long may it continue!

Spreading the word
Over the next 5 weeks we will be hitting the conference season with the BFAWU being fully represented at the IUF, TUC and Labour Party conferences, where we will be pursuing motions that cover the demands of our members.

Thank you all for your continued support and for making the BFAWU the number one union.

Solidarity!

Ronnie Draper
General Secretary

NATIONAL PRESIDENT
IAN HODSON

The election eroded the Tories’ majority and has subsequently weakened their grip on power, making their leader a laughing stock, reduced to buying off the DUP in order to cling to power

With Annual Conference concluded for another year and our objectives set, it’s good to reflect on the fantastic contributions from delegates both old and new. Debates ranged from changing how we have to run our Political Fund (thanks to the Tories’ never-ending attacks on workers’ rights), to debates around austerity and its continued impact on our workplaces.

Unsurprisingly, the main issues on the Conference floor centred around ‘Brexit’, pay and conditions, and the farcical ‘living wage’. However, at future Conferences, I would like to see more resolutions being submitted and debated that are directly linked to baking and the food industry as a whole. There are countless issues affecting our members, such as agency labour, zero hours contracts, outsourcing, attacks on food safety regulations, health and safety and the monopoly of supermarkets to name but a few, that are all worth debate, attention and the formulation of policy. We must be mindful of this as we move forward.

I’d like to congratulate all those who spoke and contributed to Annual Conference, including our many guest speakers, and I look forward to seeing the same passion displayed at every workplace, as we continue to fight for rights and seek to improve lives. Next year’s Conference will be our 100th (despite the origins of the BFAWU going back as far as 1847) and we intend to make it one to remember. The groundwork has already begun, with the possibility of some very special guests being lined up. Watch this space…

Strong and stable?
Theresa May’s snap General Election didn’t turn out the way the Tories and most of the media expected. Even many Labour Party figures were taken aback. Confidence in the Tories melted, as the attacks on pensioners in their manifesto only stopped short of mandatory euthanasia, and their leader appeared more weak and wobbly than ‘strong and stable’. The Tories’ campaign was a total disaster.

Conversely, the policies in Labour’s manifesto were well received and the down-to-earth, easygoing charm of Jeremy Corbyn won over large swathes of the public, particularly young people, who turned out in their droves to vote. No, Labour didn’t win. My own opinion is that had the election been two weeks or so later than planned, we would’ve been looking at some form of government led by Corbyn.
Not a total disaster
The election did, however, erode the Tories’ majority in the House of Commons and has subsequently weakened their grip on power, making their leader a laughing stock – especially as she and her party were reduced to buying off the DUP in order to cling to power. Whether this will turn out to be money well spent for them remains to be seen.

One thing’s for certain; those who spent their time questioning the ‘electability’ of Jeremy Corbyn and his party since he was elected leader in 2015 must’ve needed at least a gallon of Gaviscon to deal with all that humble pie.

Grenfell Tower
In the last edition of the ‘Foodworker’, I made mention of the shocking terrorist attack in Manchester. It was only a short period after that, when we woke up to the news of the horrific and totally avoidable disaster at Grenfell Tower.

It’s appalling that there still hasn’t been confirmation of how many lives were lost. Understandably, a lot of this has to do with the volume of ash and body parts riddled throughout the building, but there can be absolutely no doubt that the reaction and response of the respective council and indeed the government, has been sadly lacking. Grenfell has now become a symbol of inequality in Britain today; a totemic figure of the impact that the government’s unnecessary programme of austerity and cuts has had on sections of our society.

Tories still don’t seem to understand that cost-cutting and profit should never come before people’s safety. What they see as ‘pointless red-tape’ is literally a matter of life and death to everybody else. They couldn’t even see their way clear to give the emergency services a pay increase, particularly the firefighters who were running into the burning building, as everyone else was running out.

The fact that they are so low on human empathy in the face of such a catastrophic loss of life, is to their eternal shame and something that they should never be allowed to forget.

Wigan Diggers
September 9th will see the birth of Gerald Winstanley being celebrated at the Wigan Diggers Festival. It’s a great event that features live music and other entertainment across two stages, film showings, children’s activities, talks and exhibitions. There’s also the ever popular ‘Occupie Wigan’ beer tent, and over fifty food, book and campaign stalls. I heartily recommend it for a fantastic day out and I would like to congratulate all our members, friends and activists who take part in organising the event.

#McStrike (see page 9!)
As I write this, McDonald’s workers across two restaurants have voted for strike action which will take place on September 4th, something that nobody ever thought was possible in this country. The ballot came as a result of the failure of local management to deal with issues such as bullying, harassment, cutting hours (due to Trade Union membership) and breaches of health and safety.

This could be an historic moment for the UK Labour/Trade Union Movement, as it could bring about an end to the myths and stigmas surrounding fast-food workers. The belief among sections of society and the media that they are nothing other than ‘here today, gone tomorrow’, ‘spotty’, teen-aged ‘burger flippers’, earning a few quid on a flexible basis until they leave college, is an absolute nonsense that we will be highlighting as the campaign gathers pace.

The UK and indeed, it’s economy relies heavily on the food service sector. These jobs have effectively replaced the manufacturing jobs of yesterday. All we are asking is that standards are raised in this hugely profitable sector. Future generations of workers depend on us ensuring that these employers pay a decent wage and that those working in this sector have contracts. Once we achieve that, we can bring an end to the ‘race to the bottom’ culture that has spread like a cancer over recent years. This action, and the fantastic BFAWU workers taking it deserve our support and respect. All we need to do now, is win.

Solidarity!

Ian Hodson
National President
AWARD WINNING PRODUCTION COMPANY, Keo Films are making a documentary series for BBC 2 looking at the realities of life for many of Britain’s working population. These are unique and some would say, challenging times.

Five years of ‘austerity’ have impacted on most of us, but has not yet beaten the British determination to keep going. For many of us, the safety net of savings, jobs for life and financial stability is long gone and when the car breaks down, or our relationship falters or our health takes a turn for the worse, staying on top can become threatened in ways we never imagined would happen to us.

We’d like to talk to as wide a range of people as possible who are experiencing these types of challenges:

- Families trying to keep up with rising house prices
- Single parents adjusting to becoming the main breadwinner after a relationship split
- Workers on zero hours contracts – often working two or three jobs to keep the family together
- Those managing debt
- Those working for our public and voluntary services
- …anyone who wants a voice and would like to talk to us.

We are keen to shine a spotlight on a diverse range of jobs and professions from around the country, to highlight that living and working in the UK can be challenging for anyone, regardless of what job you do or what part of the country you live in.

We want to capture the essence of the great British spirit.

We’d love to hear YOUR story

To have your story heard (and perhaps included in the programme), please email us at:

enquiries@keofilms.com

or, if you’d like to talk to us in person:

call 07465 728 720
The campaign around freedom of movement is being seen in some circles, as a back door strategy to re-run the EU referendum by the ‘remoaners’ who won’t accept a democratic decision and the ‘will of the people’. If that was truly the case, then I don’t think Unions like the BFAWU would be involved, as we campaigned to leave the EU ourselves. Besides being a long-held position, our Annual Conference held a very constructive debate on the issue before finalising our position.

However, in stark contrast to the rhetoric used by many sections of the Brexit campaign, our angle wasn’t driven by fear and paranoia in relation to migrant workers. A good number of the BFAWU’s membership is made up of workers not just from the EU, but from all corners of the world, who have chosen to live and work in the UK. They make a positive contribution to the industry that we represent.

The divisive campaign run by the official ‘Leave’ campaign was funded mainly by wealthy individuals with their own agenda. For the most part, they targeted low-skilled and low paid workers, who merely want to get on with living lives in the UK in peace and dignity. The irony, is that these people make a far larger and important contribution to our society and our communities than the wealthy Brexiteers, who sought to do nothing other than de-humanise them, cheered along by a rabid, right-wing press.

**The BFAWU believes that it's a human right to have the freedom of movement to travel and work anywhere in the world**

Part of our campaign to leave the EU called for people to have the ability to travel freely from inside and outside of the EU. We also believe that those who live and work here (or in other countries) should have their skills recognised and enjoy the same rights as those born in that country – including the right to vote. Those who are calling for end to freedom of movement fail to realise that it’s people, rather than land and borders, that makes the world we live in.

Division works only in the interest of those that want to hold on to power, control, influence and wealth. Unfortunately, despite a rich history in terms of where division leads us, a good chunk of the UK population still falls for it.

**The inconvenient truth for those who voted to leave the EU (as a result of media influence, their own prejudices or some form of cognitive dissonance), is that workers born outside of the UK contribute more than £328 million to the UK economy every day.**

They are actually net contributors, which means that they put more in to the economy than they take out. Our NHS depends on their labour in order to keep it running; the leisure and hospitality industries depend on them in order to function and remain competitive in their respective markets; the food industry (including farming to a degree) is often propped up by their work. The list is endless and yet despite this truth staring us right in the face, many people still buy into the narrative that somehow, ‘foreigners’ are to blame for all of society’s ills.

**The real architects of our misery and hardship reside in Westminster.** It is they who introduced legislation designed to allow exploitative and greedy bosses to act without impunity and pay poverty wages. And the only way we can really improve our lives is not, as some would have you believe, blaming or hating other poor workers from some foreign land – it is through standing together in solidarity by organising and combining that we become stronger.

It is they who are starving our schools and hospitals of the money they so desperately need in order to educate our children and treat the sick. It is their police that are forcing people into homelessness and foodbanks, whilst stripping back the public and social services that people pay for and rely on.

In deciding our position on Brexit, the BFAWU debated the argument that leaving the EU would put workers rights at risk. However, members made the point time and again that despite being members of the EU, Trade Unions had become weaker, rather than stronger and workers rights had been weakened, rather than strengthened. The EU had become a bloated bosses’ club that didn’t lift a finger to stop the Conservatives from creating the disgustingly unequal society we now live in.

The Agency Workers Directive was also debated at length, with members raising issues surrounding the negative impact it has had on our workplaces. They have seen first-hand a race to the bottom as employers took the opportunity to look for ways to erode Terms and Conditions, opening the door to companies introducing second and third generation contracts and dodging negotiated rates of pay, along with the cancer of zero hours contracts.

Our union has held the long term view that we should have a planned economy with an ability to own and control the means of production.

The EU had proved to be an obstacle with regard to re-nationalising our industries and we felt that the trade deal being negotiated at the time (TTIP) put our NHS at significant risk. Our members saw the EU as a gravy train, working in the interests of wealthy elites and industrial scale tax avoidance.

They felt that leaving the EU would give the UK the best opportunity to renationalise our key industries and begin a programme of manufacturing on a scale that would allow us to be self-sufficient and independent whilst enjoying solid trading relationships with other countries. Obviously, a key component in terms of facilitating this, is freedom of movement.

Many of our members come from communities that voted to leave the EU. They are a reflection of real life that the movers and shakers in both the Leave and Remain campaigns took for granted. We weren’t surprised by the outcome of the EU referendum – after decades of politicians heaping blame on the EU for everything from the shape of fruit to personal hardship, what else could we possibly expect?

However, we cannot allow migrant labour to remain as a political football to please the masses and give succour to the prejudices of the uninformed. Given the same rights and freedoms as UK citizens, foreign workers have the ability to ensure that the UK actually makes a success of Brexit, bringing benefits to the many, rather than the few.
It was a wet morning, with rain pouring down for most of the day. The journey down the motorway was one I was very familiar with, especially with my FTO Bro, Roy Streeter.

Another old mate who was sat in the front was Bro Ken Pritchard. The usual banter unfolded, catching up with life in general, and the lack of heavy traffic which was welcome. Travelling through Bolton reminded me of when both Roy and myself spent many days at Warburton’s negotiating terms and conditions.

Arriving at Rumworth Hall I was well aware of the procedure, ‘grab everything you can carry’ from the car boot then on to the club. As always, priority goes straight to ensuring the tea urn is filled adequately with water, and switched on...a hot drink is essential for everyone after travelling.

This room held so many memories for me today. The times I had sat in awe listening to how individuals had served the union for many years, and often wondered how they managed to stick it out so long. I remembered the ‘round the branches’ reports and, of course, those sombre moments of silence for those who had passed on during the previous period.

I found myself looking at the empty seats where all the reps from Warburton’s once sat and where we had exchanged information and discussed the business of the day, and what was going on in the company...plenty of time for reminiscence as it was still early.

As the Brothers and Sisters started to arrive, I found myself shaking hands with (and being welcomed by) numerous people from all levels of the union. There were a lot of new faces today, and I wondered what challenges they were facing in their respective workplaces.

It was heartwarming to see so many old faces again and to chat and get up to date with how things are going. The General Secretary Ron Draper and myself had a good chat about the days of Scott’s at Liverpool and when they were on strike and we were on the picket line back in 1977. Then there was the National Bread Strike in 1978 to talk about. I recall how back then I had entered into the industry under a Closed Shop Agreement, no-one got anything from the union for nothing.

When I joined tin 1977 Sam Maddox was General Secretary, followed by the election of Joe Marino in 1979. In June 1981, Nigel Bryson was appointed as the first National Health and Safety Officer in the BFAWU at the age of 24 – becoming the youngest National Officer in the UK Trade Union movement at that time.

Business commenced and it wasn’t long before Presentations – first a 20 yrs then my own 40 yrs. I had a feeling of enormous pride to still be a part of this great union which had seen many changes but was still at the forefront of championing the cause of workers.

Looking around the room, empty seats had now been filled and one of the faces looked familiar, this revelation became clear later. Around the branches there were issues to be discussed, and then we had lunch. It was at this point I realised that these new faces were indeed from Warburton’s and a good chinwag ensued.

I have to say it was heartwarming to be able to catch up with so many friends who I had lost contact with for some time. To many it may have seemed like just another Regional Council meeting, but for me it was very different. Faces had changed, but there was no change in the warmth, camaraderie, and solidarity towards each other, and towards other workers in the struggle.

A very satisfying day, feeling back in fight mode again. The adrenalin was still flowing for hours after. Thanks To Ronnie Draper for attending in spite of his tight schedule.

Bill Clegg
ex-Warburton’s Pennine 469 Branch

Bill receives his 40 year award

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Bill receives his 40 year award

On Saturday 1st July 2017, I had the pleasure of representing the BFAWU at the Chainmakers Festival at Cradley Heath. This was the second time we had been represented at this festival and we had a great day – already looking forward to next year’s.

History of the Chainmakers

In 1910 there were 3,500 chainmakers working in small shops in the Cradley and Cradley Heath district. Two thirds of them were women. Tired of working day and night for starvation wages, the women chainmakers downed their hammers and stood up for their right to earn a living wage.

In March 1910, the Chain Trade Board agreed a minimum wage of 2½d an hour to replace the old piecework system. Although low, it meant a 100% rise for most of the women, giving them 10 to 11 shillings for a 55 hour week.

Many companies did not keep to this and tricked women (many of whom could not read or write) into consenting to a contracting out of this agreement.

The women, led by the founder of the National Federation of Women Workers, Mary Macarthur, began a 10 week strike and successfully established the right to a minimum wage.

The Chainmakers’ Festival has been running for over a decade. Originally based at the Black Country Museum, the festival has now relocated to Cradley Heath, the home of the famous 1910 struggle.

The Chainmakers’ Festival was the first trade union festival dedicated to female trade unionists. It is rightly an important date in the movement’s calendar.

It’s a great family fun day out with music, theatre, comedy, kids’ activities as well as speeches and stalls.

Jit Singh
Region 3 Organising Secretary
Myself, the General Secretary Ronnie Draper and EC member John Fitzpatrick (from No 4 Region) were delegates to the 27th IUF (The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations) Conference. There were 216 unions present from around the world. The compassion, support, solidarity, and love for all in the room no matter what your age, gender or colour was amazing.

339 delegates were present:
208 men = 61%, 131 women = 39%.
From the UK: male delegates = 54%, female delegates = 46%.
The IUF, held its first Youth Conference and 75 delegates participated. It was agreed to include young workers in decision-making in the IUF. Young workers are the present and the future. Quote from a young member, "This year the IUF is 97 years old, let’s make sure its membership doesn’t look that old".

The first LGBTI held its first Conference. Participants agreed on the need for the IUF to incorporate into its structures/activities its commitment to justice and equality for all LGBTI workers. The conference fully supported the rule changes, setting up an LGBTI Workers and Allies Committee and delivering representation of the committee on the IUF Executive Committee and Administrative Committee.

At the Women’s Conference, 150 delegates from 55 countries participated. Priority areas identified were the need to tackle gender-based violence, tackle all forms of discrimination, access to affordable childcare and to eliminate the gender pay gap.

At the main conference many motions were raised – eliminating child labour in agriculture, food safety after Brexit, defending and organising migrant workers and opposing behaviour-based safety to name a few.

Ronnie moved an emergency motion – Solidarity with striking UK McDonalds workers. Joe Carolan from Unite New Zealand and Nick Allen from SEIU spoke in support of this motion.

A new General Secretary of the IUF was elected – Sue Longley – the first women in IUF history.

What is clearly happening around the world is more young people are joining and growing unions. More women are getting involved. All issues are happening nationally. We need to organise together, fight together and win together.

The only struggle we lose is the struggle we give up.

Lizzie Dinning
National Vice President

Region 3 and General Secretary Ronnie Draper had the pleasure of meeting Olivier Ripoche, Commercial Director of Brioche Pasquier, and Sylvester Mathias, their HR Manager. Following our campaign, a series of meetings and presentations, a Recognition Agreement was signed on 29th June 2017.

Brioche Pasquier is a massive player in the French market with fourteen bakeries across the country. Their products are recognised and well-known for their quality. They have recently opened two factories in Spain, with another in USA and one in UK.

I personally have fallen in love with their products and the quality which is the main drive of the company’s success in France. My favourites so far are ‘Pitch Chocolate’ and their famous Macarons.

The First Roadshows are planned in for this September.

I would like to thank George Atwall, Jit Singh and the office staff for their hard work and the time they put into this campaign to reach agreement with the Company.

Lukasz Bemka
Region 3

Ronnie Draper shows the completed agreement, along with George Atwall, Jit Singh and the management team from Brioche Pasquier
On September 4th 2017 the first of our members walked out of their jobs at McDonalds and into the history books

All we need to do now is WIN!
Tyrone’s story

Read about Tyrone’s working life:

Be prepared to be shocked.
THE ORGANISING CHALLENGE

THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IS IN CRISIS:
- Less than 5% of members are 16–24.
- 39% of the movement’s membership are over 50 meaning that over a third will have retired in the next 10–15 years and over 50% of those will have been representatives of one sort or another.
- We need to identify a new generation of not only members but representatives too.

The TUC recognises that the challenge is so profound that it is bigger than any one union – it is a movement-wide problem which needs to be approached and dealt with collectively. For the last few months the TUC has been working on new, innovative ways to collectively organise young workers – bringing together experience and knowledge from within the movement as well as those new to it (or not even involved at all).

They began by contacting a number of young people between 21 and 30 who had never been in a trade union but who work full- or part-time in retail, hospitality or the care sector and who aren’t in full time education and who earn low to average wages. They spoke to the group and kept in regular contact via WhatsApp, phone calls and face-to-face meetings, setting the group of workers challenges both in and out of work on a daily basis.

At the first workshop I attended we were told that four types of worker had been identified in the group:
- Desperate – wanting to feel safe and secure in their job and life
- Progressive – want to feel like they are investing in their future
- Too comfortable – they need to feel strongly about their situation to change it
- Stop gap – they need to feel like they are investing in their own personal development

These four types of worker aren’t solid and aren’t restricted to just young people. Workers will move around the four types depending on their circumstances and how they develop and in a single workplace there will be multiple examples of each type of worker.

When organising all workers (but especially younger ones) we need to adapt our styles to their type whilst bearing in mind three areas:
- Realisation/low expectation – young people may be in their first job, or have similar experiences in a few jobs. They don’t always see that they have a problem, ‘It’s just the way it is’
- Trust – young people generally don’t trust colleagues, they tend to see issues being down to an individual and the employer
- Futility – some have tried to speak up for themselves, when it hasn’t worked they have given up and don’t bother again – others around them witness the ‘failure’ and don’t even attempt themselves.

Another issue is their lack of knowledge of what a trade union is or their employment rights.

From this a number of ideas have been developed that are almost ready to be sent out to try in the real world. The first being the Great Jobs Agenda. From the research ten challenges were identified that incidentally weren’t just restricted to young people:
- Low pay
- Poor quality jobs
- Lack of training opportunities
- Over qualification
- Weak opportunities for progression
- Underemployment
- Precarious working conditions
- Bullying and harassment
- Pressure on working parents
- No voice in the workplace

As part of the great jobs agenda each of these challenges has been covered in six key areas, with each area explaining why it matters, what the TUC want employers to do and what they want politicians to do too. The six areas are;
- Having a voice at work
- Fair and decent pay
- Regular hours
- Fair treatment and respect
- Healthy workplaces
- Learning and progression

Tied into the Great Jobs Agenda is the Great Jobs Audit. This is a series of simple questions that will tell you how your workplace is doing – are you in a poor, good or great workplace and which areas need improvement.

The TUC will keep the data BUT we want you to use it alongside your full time official to make our workplaces great, so we’d be grateful if you would communicate your results to them or email them to: sarah.woolley@bfawu.org … along with your branch number and I’ll pass them on!

To access the quiz go to: www.tuc.org/greatjobsquiz

Remember to let us know your results!

Sarah Woolley
EC Female Representative

The TUC would like to hear your success stories, but so would the BFAWU!

Wouldn’t it be great to have our Foodworker full of great examples of us delivering for our members whether they’re big successes or little ones. Send your articles to:
ronnie.draper@bfawu.org

For more details on the innovative work being done by the TUC, drop me an email and I’ll send you the information: sarah.woolley@bfawu.org

AUTUMN 2017
**STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE**

**Stress and mental health at work and home**

Our National Safety Committee, as well as our National Conference, have been discussing the issues relating to stress and mental health in the workplace. This purpose of this article is to give some guidance for members who may be suffering at work on how to identify and respond to potential health issues.

The BFAWU offers a number of courses for representatives to support members in the workplace. Contact your branch secretary or Full time official for further information.

A person can experience excessive pressure and demands outside work just as much as they can at work. Stressors at home can affect those at work and vice versa. It is difficult to control outside stressors, but you need to take a holistic approach to employee well-being. To manage work-related stress effectively, you need to recognise the importance and interaction of work and home problems.

**Common Mental Health Problems (CMHPs)**

One person in four in the UK will have a mental health problem at some point in their life. While mental health problems are common, most are mild. The family doctor and primary healthcare team can usually deal with them without referring the person for specialist help.

Anxiety and depression are the most common mental health problems. Often these are a reaction to a difficult life event, for example moving house, bereavement, or problems at work. CMHPs tend to be short-term and are generally treated by medication from a GP. The GP will review this treatment and if there is no improvement, consider referring to a specialist.

**How CMHPs and work-related stress go together**

Work-related stress and mental health often go together. The symptoms of stress and common mental health problems are similar, for example, loss of appetite, fatigue and tearfulness can be symptoms of both.

Work-related stress may trigger an existing mental health problem that the person may otherwise have successfully managed without letting it affect their work.

For people with existing mental health issues, work-related stress may worsen their problem. If work-related stress reaches a point where it has triggered an existing mental health problem, it becomes hard to separate one from the other.

**Definitions**

**Work-related stress** is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work.

**Mental health**

Mental health is how we think, feel and behave.

Common mental health problems are those that:

- are most frequent and more prevalent
- are successfully treated in primary care settings like GPs (rather than by specialists such as Psychiatrists).

**Anxiety**

Anxiety is an unpleasant feeling when you feel worried, uneasy or distressed about something that may or may not be about to happen.

**Depression**

Depression is when you have feelings of extreme sadness, hopelessness and despair.

**How CMHPs and work-related stress are different**

Common mental health problems and stress can exist independently. For example, people can have work-related stress and physical changes such as high blood pressure, without experiencing anxiety and depression. They can also have anxiety and depression without experiencing stress.

The key difference between the two is their cause and the way they are treated.

- Stress at work is a reaction to events or experiences at work. CMHPs can arise through causes outside work for example bereavement, divorce, postnatal depression or a family history of the problem. However, people can have CMHPs with no obvious causes.

- Organisations can manage and prevent stress by improving conditions at work. Doctors usually treat common mental health problems by prescribing medication. However, your employer and managers have a role in making adjustments and helping the person to manage the problem at work.
Mental health problems
In practice, it can be hard to distinguish when ‘stress’ turns into a ‘mental health problem’ and when existing mental health problems become exaggerated by stress at work.

Many of the symptoms are similar to those that people experience when they are under considerable pressure; the key differences are in the severity and duration of the symptoms and the impact they have on someone’s everyday life.

Usually a general practitioner (GP) will make the diagnosis and offer treatment – for example medication, talking therapies or a combination of both.

The majority of people with mental health problems are treated by their GP and most are capable of continuing to work productively. Evidence shows that employment can be of great benefit, both to the employer and to the employee.

Dealing with my mental health
If you already feel under pressure, it’s hard to distinguish when that ‘stress’ turns into a ‘mental health problem’ and when an existing mental health problem becomes aggravated by stress at work.

Many of the symptoms of stress and a mental health condition are similar; the key differences are in the severity and duration of the symptoms and the impact they have on your everyday life.

The majority of people with mental health problems are diagnosed and treated by their GP and most continue to work productively. In fact, evidence shows that staying in work can be of great benefit to those affected.

Take action at an early stage
If you feel you have a problem, the earlier you take action the better – early action can help prevent you becoming more unwell. Line managers and colleagues can also play a key role in identifying when you are behaving out of character, so be cooperative if your line manager approaches you.

Using ordinary management tools to identify problems and needs
It might be that certain tasks, work environments, times of the day or being part of a particular team is associated with your difficulties. If you feel you are having a problem raise it with your line manager, HR or someone else in the workplace.

You could make use of the scheduled meetings, appraisals or informal chats about progress that you have with your manager; these may provide neutral opportunities to find out about and discuss any problems you have.

Remember:
- stress does not affect everyone in the same way
- your employer can make adjustments to ease your stress, but only if you give them a better understanding of your position
- discussions can be positive - working out how your employer can help
- If you have had time off sick, you should discuss how you can return to work and integrate in advance of any return date. A documented plan that helps you both to agree when you have reached the stage of ‘business as usual’ can be valuable.
- If you remain unwell despite support then you should seek appropriate help, consider asking to be referred to the organisation’s occupational health department if it has one or see your GP.

If you are returning to work after illness
Most people who have had an illness will recover but there will be a stage during your rehabilitation when you will return to work with some remnant of your ongoing mental health problems. This may mean that you need some support or changes in your role or work to make the return easier. You should talk to your manager and working together try to satisfy your needs.

It is possible that your condition may be one that is subject to the provisions of Disability Discrimination Act which may require your employer to make reasonable adjustments to help you get back into work – but if you don’t talk to your manager and discuss these issues honestly they will be less likely to be able to meet your requirements.

If you are going through a hard time and would like to talk to someone, there are a wide range of organisations that may be of assistance.

Causes of stress outside work
Many things in people’s lives outside work can cause them stress, for example:

Family
- death (of a loved one)
- divorce or separation from a partner
- marriage
- pregnancy
- holidays
- changes in health of a family member or close friend
- trouble with in-laws
- family arguments
- childcare
- remarriage of a family member
- caring for other dependents, such as elderly relatives
- family reunion
- relationship breakdown or having a long-distance relationship.

Personal or social issues
- change in financial state, or debt or money worries
- changes in personal habits such as giving up smoking, dieting
- problems with weight
- experiencing prejudice or discrimination
- lack of friends or support
- personal injury or illness

Daily hassles
- traffic jams
- public transport
- time pressures
- car troubles

Other
- moving house, including taking out a mortgage
- difficulties with neighbours
- living with someone with an alcohol, drug problem or other addiction
- (if studying) a deadline for coursework, exam results or trying to balance work and study.
Dealing with my stress

Stress produces a range of signs and symptoms, the following is not an exhaustive list of the symptoms of stress but if you feel that your attitudes or behaviour is changing due to a situation at work or home, these may indicate stress and a need to seek further advice from your GP.

Anyone can suffer from work-related stress, no matter what work they do. You may:
- find it hard to sleep
- change your eating habits
- smoke or drink more
- avoid friends and family
- have sexual problems

Physical symptoms might include:
- tiredness
- indigestion and nausea
- headaches
- aching muscles
- palpitations

Mentally, you may:
- be more indecisive
- find it hard to concentrate
- suffer loss of memory
- feelings of inadequacy
- low self esteem

Emotionally:
- You are likely to:
  - get irritable or angry
  - be anxious
  - feel numb
  - be hypersensitive
  - feel drained and listless

What can I do if I think I’m stressed?

There are many organisations that may be able to help you with the issues that are causing your stress. If you think you are suffering from any mental health problem or any of the symptoms identified in the table above, it may be advisable to speak to your GP. It is also a good idea to talk to your line manager, Human Resources department or Occupational Health provider.

It is important to take action and to review your lifestyle to see if you can identify any contributing factors.
- eating on the run, or in a disorganised manner
- smoking, or drinking excessively
- rushing, hurrying, being available to everyone
- doing several jobs at once
- missing breaks, taking work home with you
- having no time for exercise and relaxation

Stress at work is a reaction to events or experiences at work. Common mental health problems can arise through causes outside work for example, for example, bereavement, divorce, post-natal depression. However, people can have common mental health problems with no obvious causes.

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Two night winter break offer for only £79 per person

An invitation to...

Quorn Grange Hotel are delighted to offer an exclusive leisure break to Trade Union members.

Through January, February and March we are offering you the chance to come and stay at our beautiful hotel in Leicestershire, the package includes:
- Welcome drink on arrival
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Quorn Grange Hotel
Your Perfect Setting

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88 Wood Lane, Quorn, Leicestershire LE12 8DB

GFTU Winter Union Break 2018

GFTU Educational Trust

All revenues at our hotel go to support trade union education.
SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

At our recent National Safety Meeting, it was agreed that we remind our branches about the importance and the rights of safety representatives. A full download of this document is available on our website.

Legal Rights of a Health and Safety Representative
The legal rights of a Health and Safety Representative are governed by the:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Safety Representatives & Safety Committees Regulations 1977
- Health & Safety Executive’s ‘Brown Book’

Summary
- Recognised trade unions have the legal right to appoint workplace Health and Safety representatives
- The Health and Safety Representative has a number of rights.
- The Health and Safety Representative has a legal right to information about accidents and must be given it.
- The Health and Safety representative has the right to the necessary time off work to perform their duties

Safety Representatives & Safety Committees Regulations 1977
Appointing Health and Safety Representatives
In a workplace where a trade union is recognised, a trade union may appoint safety representatives. The employer must be notified in writing by the trade union of the names of the persons and the group(s) of employees they represent.

The Function of the Health and Safety Representative
A Health and Safety representative has the right to

- investigate:
  - potential hazards
  - dangerous occurrences
  - complaints by any employee he/she represents (relating to health, safety or welfare at work)

- make representations:
  - regarding the above investigations
  - on general matters relating to health, safety or welfare at work

- carry out inspections

- represent union members in consultations at the workplace with inspectors of the HSE and of any other enforcing authority

- receive information from inspectors

- attend meetings of safety committees

Inspections
Health and Safety representatives are entitled to inspect the workplace every three months. They are required to give reasonable notice to the employer. More frequent inspections can be arranged with the agreement of the employer.

If an incident/accident occurs the Health and Safety representative may carry out an inspection only when it is safe to do so. They must not disturb or destroy any evidence

The purpose of investigations is to identify measures to prevent a reoccurrence.

Safety representatives are legally entitled to inspect records of accidents that employers have to keep under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

Document templates, such as the Workplace Safety Inspection and the Safety Reps report are available from Head Office: info@bfawu.org

Releasing Information
The HSE website states:

‘Employers have a responsibility to provide information to all workers that will enable them to participate fully and effectively in any consultation about their health and safety.’

Safety representatives must be given information necessary for them to fulfil their function, for example:

- Proposed changes to current working practices which may affect the health and safety at work of their employees
- Technical information about hazards to health and safety and the necessary precautions to prevent or minimise them
- Information on equipment, materials or substances
- The results of any action taken by the employer in the course of checking the effectiveness of their health and safety arrangements

The employer must be given reasonable notice of any request for documents.

Safety Committee
Where at least two safety representatives make a request in writing, the employer must establish a safety committee. They must do so:

- following consultation,
- having notified the work force, and
- no later than three months after the request.
THE TORIES PRETEND TO CARE...

Tom Jones, Head of Policy, Thompsons Solicitors

The Tories pretend to care about workers’ rights and fall short. This summer, the government had a chance to tackle issues faced by thousands of workers across the country, such as weak contracts, job insecurity and watered-down rights and regulations.

The Taylor Review was billed as going to make strong recommendations to government for how the future of work could be made more secure. But the end result was a report that merely skimmed the surface of what needs to be done. Instead of digging deep and showing real commitment to positive change, workers were brushed off with half-baked recommendations and no real actions for the government to follow.

What needs to change?

We know workers in the food industry are concerned about widespread zero hours contracts which hit the young and the vulnerable the hardest. Since 2010, restrictions have been placed on access to justice - limiting employees’ ability to hold employers to account in the Employment Tribunal and now more restrictions are being threatened for those who have been injured at work too. Real, affordable access to justice is looking more and more precarious.

The Taylor Review not only failed to do anything to strengthen the position of workers – it may even weaken their rights.

What the report says

- The introduction of a new basic pay calculation, based on a ‘piece rate’ could mean employers no longer have to worry about making sure every individual worker earns the minimum wage, as long as they can show their ‘average worker’ earns 120% of it.
- New proposals to introduce a different category of worker are set to confuse the system further, and may well dilute the rights to which workers are entitled.
- Taylor ducks extending all employment rights to all workers and instead proposes that a person who provides personal service to an employer should be treated as a contractor not a worker – and thereby gets fewer rights.
- Even the good ideas he comes up with barely scratch the surface of the problems out there.
- He recommended a reduction of tribunal fees for employment status hearings, but didn’t have the bottle to propose banning them altogether, which has only since been achieved thanks to a Supreme Court victory by UNISON.
- Most disappointingly of all, even the positive proposals (such that there are) aren’t commitments – and without legislation none of them have any hope of being implemented.

Once again, the Tory government is likely to make the chances of workers standing up to bosses even harder than it already is.

Our verdict

This review was supposed to be about protecting workers, but it looks more like a PR exercise which the Tories hope will make them look caring – whilst giving them the option to ignore it and carry on just as they were.

Workers’ experiences in recent years makes clear that it has, and never will be, a Conservative priority to ensure workers have proper access to workplace protection and access to justice.

The Taylor Review hasn't changed a thing.

As a BFAWU member, you have access to a legal scheme which protects you from some of the worst effects of a Tory government’s in-built dislike of workers’ rights and provides you and your family with access to expert legal advice and representation – free of charge.

Your union and Thompsons will continue to fight together for stronger protections, and against attempts to weaken workers’ rights.

For more information about your legal service and what Thompsons Solicitors can offer to you, visit: www.thompsonstradeunion.law/trade-unions/bfawu.
SKILLS PLEDGE AT FOX’S

Fox’s biscuits in Batley are again taking the lead when it comes to commitment to learning with the signing of a Skills Pledge.

Paul Carbutt, Fox’s Training and Development Manager, and Kamran Ali, Branch Secretary.

NATIONAL UNION LEARNING REP AWARD

Please join us in congratulating Aaron Bonsell from Pennine Foods in Sheffield. Aaron is this year’s Union Learning Rep Award winner which is sponsored by Watkins & Gunn. Aaron has given a lot of time and effort to helping support his colleagues at Pennine, often giving up his own time to help.

He is a worthy winner and we would like to thank him for all the help he has provided the Learning Services and hope he continues to show the passion he has for learning as it’s obviously showing in the progression within the classes at Pennine.

40 Year Award

Ian Wood presents David Ratnik with his 40 year badge at Regional Council

MORRISON’S RATHBONES WAKEFIELD

On Monday 17th July 2017, I visited Morrison’s Rathbones along with photographer Charlotte from Guzelian. We were shown around the bread plant by Dominic Eyckens, Site Operations Manager. We met staff who worked in the plant in various roles. The purpose of the visit was to capture employees at work in a diverse work environment. The visit went well and the employees were really helpful when having their pictures taken.

The employees at Rathbones are always friendly and they are a great bunch of people, from my experience every time I have been on site I have always been made welcome and enjoyed chatting to the employees and Union Members in the canteen. We are hopeful to build further relationships and help employees improve their knowledge and gain new skills.

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He is a worthy winner and we would like to thank him for all the help he has provided the Learning Services and hope he continues to show the passion he has for learning as it’s obviously showing in the progression within the classes at Pennine.
Under Section 8 of the Trade Union Reform & Employment Rights Act 1993, the Union is obliged to give the following Statement of Finances to members.

1 Salaries
Executive Council Members — In 2016 no payments were made to members of the Unions’ Executive Council under Rule 21.1 (p).

National Officers — In 2016 the salary paid to the General Secretary was £47,384. Other benefits paid to and/or on behalf of the General Secretary were £16,708.

2 Income and Expenditure
Total Income 2016 £3,158,078
Total Expenditure 2016 £3,064,068

3 Contributions from Members
Contributions from members in 2016 totalled: £2,664,157

4 Political Fund
Total Income 2016 £79,525
Total Expenditure 2016 £78,649

5 Benevolent/Social Funds
Total Income 2016 £5,654
Total Expenditure 2016 £3,136

6 Auditors Report to Members
We have audited the financial statements on pages 1 to 15 which have been prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting pages 1 to 15 which have been prepared under the requirements of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (Amended).

Our audit work has been undertaken so that the Union is obliged to give the following Statement of Finances to members.

We have nothing to report in respect of the matters we are required to address. We have formed.

Respective responsibilities of Executive Council and Auditors
As described on page 16, the Union’s Executive Council is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. It is our responsibility to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the Union’s affairs as at 31 December 2016 and of its surplus for the year then ended; have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

Opinion on financial statements
In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Union’s affairs as at 31 December 2016 and of its surplus for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- Adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- The Union has not maintained a satisfactory system of control over its transactions; or
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- Certain disclosures within the form AR21 of Officers’ remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Conclusion
As normal practice, each Conference delegate was supplied with a copy of the full, detailed Accounts of the Union for 2016.

Any member wishing to avail themselves of these Accounts should contact their Branch Secretary.

Alternatively, copies of the Union’s Accounts for 2016 and the Treasurer’s Report are available from Head Office, free of charge, to members.

Ronnie Draper
General Secretary
31st May 2017
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Address ................................................................................................................................................

......................... Postcode

Contact Phone .......... Email address ..............................................................

Where employed at present. ..................................................................................................................

Occupation ............................................................................................................................................

Signature ................................................................................................................................................

Date ......................................................................................................................................................

Please complete details above and hand to your local representative, Branch Official, Regional Office (for addresses see above) or send to Head Office at the FREEPOST address shown.