

The Daily Townsman (Cranbrook)

Community living workers strike in Cranbrook

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Page: 3

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Illustrations: Photo: Submitted / Community social services workers were on strike from Cranbrook Society for Community Living on Friday, February 1 near Baker Park. Members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Hospital Employees' Union are taking job action for a wage increase.;

Social services workers set up a picket line on Friday in front of the Cranbrook Society for Community Living offices.

They were some of 231 striking workers across the Kootenays and Salmon Arm who took job action last week.

Community Living workers who support people with developmental disabilities at agencies in Trail, Castlegar, Creston, and Salmon Arm were on strike on Thursday, January 31. Workers in Cranbrook took strike action on Friday, February 1.

The striking workers -members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Hospital Employees' Union -are employed by the Trail Association for Community Living, the Kootenay Society for Community Living (Castlegar), the Creston & District Society for Community Living, the Cranbrook Society for Community Living, and the Shuswap Association for Community Living (Salmon Arm).

"The time is long overdue for this government to show some commitment to community living and other community-based social services, and improve the funding," said CUPE BC president Barry O'Neill. "This includes a fair and reasonable wage increase for the

people who support some of our most vulnerable citizens."

Some employers are now voluntarily paying above collective agreement rates because of recruitment issues.

The CUPE action in Cranbrook on Friday was joined by 30 members from the Hospital Employees' Union (HEU), and it took place from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

These strike actions are part of larger job action in the community living sector taking place last week at several locations throughout B.C.

In Victoria last Thursday, HEU took strike action at 10 different agencies representing more than 800 workers in the sector.