



rganise!

Adult Social Care UNISON newsletter – September 2016

Surrey Pay Agreement 2016/17

We are already well over half way through 2016 – we thought a newsletter would be helpful to members. UNISON Surrey County Branch, based at County Hall, has over 500 members who work as SCC employees in Adult Social Care, but we also have many members in the branch whose social care employer comes under the private or community and voluntary sector.



One of the biggest pieces of work the branch has undertaken in a long time has been the Surrey Pay and Reward consultation and negotiations. The final outcome is now well known, but the impact and implications in practice will take time to unfold and will affect everyone slightly differently dependent on individual circumstances.

Some of the detail, such as how the county applies the new, long-term sickness absence policy, will be monitored by us on a case-by-case basis. For many people, the new arrangements are unlikely to improve 'recruitment and retention' and are the 'best of a bad job' – but we believe overall that the settlement compares reasonably with some other local authorities in the South East and is better than the majority of councils who are on national pay arrangements.

Alan Clyne, UNISON Adult Social Care Convenor (pictured above)

Welcome to our new Director



Helen Atkinson (pictured left) and her senior management team undertook a staff engagement process during April and May 2016, under the heading of 'feedback on the 2015 corporate staff survey results as they affected Adult Social Care and Public Health. The trade unions were invited to these sessions and we managed to attend most if not all. The general feeling was that these meetings were positive and useful and a chance for staff to hear the latest from our new director and her team – as well as to take staff suggestions and comments.

If these meetings are to actually be more than a bit of good PR, staff will need to see some of the results mentioned in their own teams/workplaces. The council's difficult budget position and savings target of £54million for Adult Social Care this year is a huge ask but hopefully Helen's openness and approachability will be a big asset. Staff will have another chance to air their views towards the end of the year when the next corporate survey is launched. There are also a number of follow-on meetings planned for October locally (see e-brief for details). Please participate and see if you feel any improvement in senior management visibility/access and if you feel any better valued post-'Pay and Reward'!?

Adult Social Care – Where are we Heading?



Nationally, in these post-Brexit times, uncertainty and change is the new normal. You could say it seems to be the experience of local government since time immemorial. The only thing for sure is that everything changes or, in fact, goes around in circles. Whatever your role within the organization, you will have been affected by the ‘change management’ policy - with the only prospect on the agenda being yet more operational changes to the way we do our work.

Nationally, the size and structure of the workforce in adult social care is changing – so says a recent ‘Skills for Care’ report. The key findings are that the current 1.55million people working in social care in England is fragmented, now comprising thousands of separate provider organisations. The decrease in local authority jobs has been significant. In 2015, only 8% were employed in local government compared with 59% in the private sector. Professional, regulated roles, such as social workers and OTs, only make up 6% of the workforce. Direct Payments and the direct employment of staff has increased slowly – remaining at just 28% of disabled people overall. Based on population forecasts, the workforce is set to need to increase by a further 18% by 2025. With questions already over the quality of some care alongside serious training, recruitment and retention issues, these questions are going to affect us all.

The other major change heading our way is that of shared services. We talk a little about integration with the NHS later in this newsletter but local authorities are looking to share many more services – with each other and with other public and private sector providers. In SCC, we now have ‘Orbis’ (a new project combining HR, IT and many other ‘business functions’ of the council with councils across the south east). Local devolution, changes to council boundaries and increased local responsibility for income generation will all feature heavily in the future as a response to central government grant funding being withdrawn entirely by 2020.

Social Work

The government is looking to make far reaching changes to children’s and adult’s social work. UNISON have got together with other organisations in the sector to try to highlight and campaign against some of these proposals. These ‘reforms’ will affect social work education, training, accreditation post-qualification, a new regulatory body, as well as giving hard-pressed local authorities the chance to opt out of certain duties and to incentivize private and voluntary sector providers. Rather than promoting innovation – it is possible that this will be just another social work version of what has been happening to our schools with acadamisation.



UNISON have been seeking social workers’ views via an online survey to those directly affected. We are also holding another e-survey ‘Social Work Watch’, run with Community Care Magazine on 21st September. You will have received information about this from us already. The average career of a post-qualified social worker is now only 8 years (much less than other, equivalent professionals).

In June, UNISON commissioned a report called ‘Under Pressure, Under Funded and Under Valued’. It was a big national survey of our local government membership – not just those in social care – but its findings on working hours; pay; workloads and morale will come as no surprise to you. Despite this, the majority of staff still support change if it would lead to an improved service for the vulnerable people we try to support – a testimony to staff commitment, despite all the above.

Social Care and Health Integration

This topic seems to have been around forever but is now being given priority, with a big push nationally and in Surrey. Good integrated care can avoid delay and duplication by bringing together professionals to give better outcomes. There is now a government demand to redesign care to be delivered in an integrated way – and Surrey have set up various pilot local projects across the county. Some have been given fast-track status and it now looks as if whole locality teams will be moving across to an integrated model.

People want to believe in the concept of integration – its an attractive proposition – but UNISON is concerned that it is not a ‘magic wand’ to resolve all the problems of social care and the NHS. The rush to scale up pilot projects into whole teams will be a complex operation and it may not deliver the hoped-for ‘vision’. Currently your UNISON branch has been liaising with management and HR on the Surrey Heath and Waverley team projects. What staff want to know are the basics, such as: What will the new structure be? Who is my line manager? How will the duty system run? Will I get a new contract in a new 8am-8pm service? How will support and specialist roles, admin and finance fit in? Will I continue to be employed by SCC? Where will my office be based? What’s the parking arrangements? We already work with district nurses so what’s the difference?

There is no one right way to integrate services, but locally-developed, collaborative, co-designed projects are more likely to succeed. Any drive to pool resources just to save money will end in difficulty as is borne out by most recent research evidence. UNISON’s role is to question, monitor and defend our members’ rights, terms and conditions of employment. We want to keep our members informed and not let people get carried away by the rhetoric and hype. After all, this could be just a short cut to privatization. We will keep asking ‘what do we want to change and why?’ Good communication on any project is vital.

Previously, such teams as mental health services have had well established multi-disciplinary teams under Section 75 agreements but current proposals are potentially going well beyond this. It is important to keep in touch, whatever your views, so that we can represent members fully and influence the detail of how integration plays out locally.



So far this newsletter has focused on some of the big themes – these may explain why you may be feeling more than a bit busy right now. Here’s a few more localised issues.

Mental health [Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Trust]

UNISON Reps, Brendan Melvin, Andrew Pattinson and Alan Clyne, attended a liaison meeting at the Trust HQ on 18th August. We met with director Andy Erskine and the agenda included the outcome of recent AMPH meetings and the response to a letter Andy had written around the headline issues of bed accessibility and secure patient transport.

We now need AMPH members to keep in touch with Brendon and Andy direct to chart any further developments since the letter. We also touched on the staffing protocol and a slightly amended version that will allow SCC existing staff to accept a new integrated role, but can choose to retain their existing terms and conditions of employment. This was particularly aimed at team manager roles.

AIS to LAS - By the time you read this, most of you that need to, will have completed your IT training for 'go live' with the new social care database tool, Liquid Logic. The general feedback thus far is that its going to be an improvement and a more intuitive system to navigate. Let's hope so, as previous systems in ASC have been far from perfect tools in aiding our work – SSID/SWIFT/AIS have all had major issues. LAS is still at first glance a very process-driven system – let us know how it is working out for you during the transition. The new email system 365 that has replaced Lotus Notes has also caused headaches for many of you. Let us know if this system becomes easier to use with time.

Service Delivery - This year (July) has seen a further two Surrey in-house older peoples' residential homes close – Cobgates in Farnham and Dormers in Caterham. This was a sad and difficult process for many of those involved. It was also a decision that UNISON strongly objected to. In the end the decision was made and the process was managed as carefully as possible by a project group, that included trade union representatives. UNISON was able to take up individual staff issues behind the scenes with management in order to get as fair a result as possible. Lessons learned from these closures can be put into practice next year as Pinehurst and Park Hall are due to close under phase three. UNISON are still asking what the future holds for the buildings, as although they will no longer be SCC homes, why can't they be used in some way as part of the integration process with the NHS?

PLD Residential and Outreach - Two years after the TUPE transfer of day services staff to the 'Surrey Choices' trading company and it is only fair to say that those staff involved have seen an awful lot of turmoil. We have asked to meet with Surrey ASC senior management to get assurances as to the viability of the organization and to hear what plans SCC have with Surrey Choices going forward. UNISON members who transferred are still part of the Surrey County UNISON branch and they are represented by our branch-employed caseworker and our local Surrey Choices UNISON reps.

Both Surrey Choices and First Point (Deaf Services) experiences are recent reminders that new service models launched by Surrey in keeping with government third-sector initiatives are no guarantee of success.

Extra Care - Halleys Approach are undertaking a consultation as part of the change management process which we are monitoring closely with staff.

Emergency Duty Team (EDT) - Within EDT Surrey UNISON requested that any proposed changes to working patterns (eg rota's) were consulted with staff prior to implementation. This was important because there were areas in the original proposals that raised concerns for employees regarding a work/life balance. Management withdrew the original proposals and through informal consultation with employees prepared a new rota that went out to formal consultation with staff. This process has now concluded with improvements made that are to the benefit of the service delivery and to the health and wellbeing of the staff.

Health, Safety and Welfare - Healthy working conditions is an area we are keen to promote and where necessary challenge for all areas staff are working in. Please do contact us with any areas of good practice or poor practice within working environments which UNISON can take forward at Local or Corporate level to share and discuss from members directly with senior Management. I am also Welfare Officer in the Branch. We have been able to assist with members who have found themselves to be in financial hardship at a time when they have most needed it. This is a service we would like to promote because this really is a great benefit for members who require assistance.



Andy Pattinson, Health, Safety and Welfare Officer and EDT Rep (pictured above)



Your UNISON Reps in Adult Services

Trevor Radley – Arundel House
Brendan Melvin – EILP, Farmside
Sharon Bothwell – St Peter's Hospital
Alan Clyne – Surrey Heath Locality and Convenor
Sithy Hedges – Reigate Town Hall, Re-ablement
Andy Pattinson – Emergency Duty Team

No rep/steward in your team? Why not get yourself elected? We offer great training, a detailed induction and a fantastic UNISON team to work with in SCC. Just contact Alan on 020 8541 9091 or alan.clyne@surreycc.gov.uk for more info.

Sithy Hedges is a long standing member in reablement.

Sithy decided this year to become a REP. She has been on her initial UNISON training (with the full cooperation of management for paid time off) and has promoted her new role via a local news sheet and at reablement staff meetings. The VALUE OF A LOCAL REP/STEWARDS OR CONTACT IN THE WORKPLACE CAN NOT BE OVERSTATED. We need more people like SITHY to decide to get more involved. As Sithy says:

"Bare in mind as REABLEMENT ASSISTANTS, our paths with colleagues can rarely cross. Uniform is one area where staff continue to have niggles. By being proactive via UNISON, members can improve job satisfaction. Hopefully with time and an influx of new members the situation will improve"



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