



ROCHDALE PIONEER

Members Newsletter from ROCHDALE UNISON

June 2011

The Great Pensions Robbery

On 30th June 750,000 teachers, lecturers and civil servants will be striking to defend public sector pensions. In the NUT 92% voted for strike action. UNISON is urging every member to show support for our colleagues on strike and to attend the protests and rallies organised on that day.

Defend Services and Pensions

Sections of the media have been parroting the Government's line that public sector workers are somehow being selfish for trying to defend our pensions. Do they really expect us to believe that if we accept higher pensions contributions for less pension they will use the money to save public services. The truth is that this Government is making massive cuts in vital public services and they want to grab our pensions as well.

If we accept a cut in our pensions not a single Sure Start centre will be saved. Not one Accident and Emergency Unit will be kept open. Has the wage freeze saved any jobs? Neither will a pension cut if they push it through. As usual the money will go to more tax breaks for the mega rich.

Not Gold Plated

Our pensions are not made of gold. The average Council employee gets a pension of £4,000 a year and for women the average is £2,600. When you retire it means you can pay your gas bill and not worry about how you are going to put food on the table.

The people who can look forward to a life of luxury when they retire are the same people telling us to tighten our belts. There have never been so many millionaires in one cabinet as there are in the Tory/Lib Government.

No crisis in our pension funds

The Local Government Pension Scheme has a positive cash flow, with income from investments and contributions exceeding expenditure on benefits by £4-5 billion every year. The financial crisis was not caused by us so why should our pensions be ruined. Why should we suffer for the bankers greed.

Biggest Strike Since the General Strike

Commenting on the Governments proposals Dave Prentis, General Secretary of UNISON said:

"You can't just look at what's happening around pensions as a single issue. All our members provide public services. You look at what this coalition has decided to do to reduce the deficit and it's decided that most of the deficit reduction programme will be at the expense of our public services

"The people that we represent are facing redundancy, a two-year pay freeze, while inflation is 5% and gas prices are going up 20%, and they are desperately worried about privatisation of the services they have committed their working lives to."

He warned the Government that if pensions proposals are not withdrawn the 4.5 million public sector workers threatened by the changes would have to consider taking industrial action together:

"It will be the biggest since the general strike. It won't be the miners' strike. We are going to win."

Figure it out

£7 billion = 339,394

**Bankers bonuses
this year**

**Refuse collectors
wages**

Half of councils backtrack on private contracts - UNISON survey

A UNISON survey reveals that more than half of all councils have backtracked on outsourcing contracts by bringing services back inhouse, or are considering it, after failings by private companies.

The UK's largest union's evidence proves that privatisation is a risky experiment, as these councils revealed money was drained, standards were driven down and they had a lack of control over the services.

60% of council officers surveyed said the need to improve efficiency and reduce service costs had led them to consider bringing services back in-house. After cost, 44% of respondents said there was a need to improve service quality.

Rochdale UNISON LGBT Group

Rochdale UNISON is forming its own Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Group.

If you are interested in making new friends, discussing any issues in the workplace, or making a difference then please get involved.

The first meeting takes place on Thursday 30 June, 6.15 - 7.30pm in Committee Room 3, Rochdale Town Hall. If you would like to get involved or have any queries please email nik.babyk@rochdale.gov.uk

Southern Cross plan to dump 132 homes - UNISON response

UNISON, the UK's largest union, warned that the huge uncertainty facing thousands of residents in Southern Cross homes poses a real danger to their lives.

Research shows that if you move elderly people, many do not live for very long afterwards. For elderly people with dementia, moving can also be incredibly confusing and distressing.

The news of the 'exit strategy', follows reports that the company is paying City firms £500,000 a week for crisis advice, as well as cutting thousands of nursing and care jobs in its homes.

Dave Prentis, said:

"Another day, another report of shocking lack of care from Southern Cross. How do this company's bosses, past and present, sleep at night? They have stripped the company of assets, made themselves millionaires in the process, and are now going to cut and run.

"But it is an incredibly distressing time for elderly residents, their families and for workers in the company's homes. Research shows that if elderly residents are moved from their homes, many do not live for very long afterwards. Even those who do not face moving are getting hit with lower standards of care as the company cuts care and nursing jobs.

"The government must step in to regulate the privatised care market. There are many other Southern Cross style companies out there, and this cannot be allowed to happen again."

If you are reading this and you are not a member but would like to join please contact Rochdale UNISON 01706 925952.

We currently represent over 4,900 members in Rochdale Council, IMPACT, RBH, Link4Life, Hopwood Hall College and other employers. We have supported hundreds of our members through formal procedures, the Pay and Grading process and the Efficiencies Programme. We will go on supporting our members affected by redundancies and any other issues.

Together we are stronger

MARCH TO DEFEND PENSIONS ON 30th JUNE

Rallies, marches and picnics are being organised across the country for 30th June in support of the strike by members of PCS and three education unions over cuts to public sector pensions.

UNISON are encouraging all members who can to attend the local rallies. We realise this can be difficult during work time. But if you are able to go, the nearest protest to Rochdale will be in Manchester.

Assemble from 11am, All Saints, Oxford Road, M1 7DU. March to Castlefield Arena, Liverpool Road, M3 4JN for a rally at noon. Speakers include: Helen Andrews, NUT NEC; Mark Baker, ATL NEC; and Dominique Lauterburg, UCU NEC.

UNITED WE CAN WIN

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