

YOUR VOICE

Stockport UNISON Branch Newsletter

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UNISON
the public service union

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Edited by Angela Bowen, Assistant Branch Secretary

Local Government Pay Claim



UNISON members working in local government in England, Wales and Northern Ireland have been

voting in a ballot on whether or not to take industrial action after rejecting the pay offer from employers following the recent Consultation ballot.

The current offer is for a 2.45% increase on all grades from scale point 7, with an additional £100 flat rate increase on scale points 4, 5 and 6, giving workers on those points a 3.3% rise.

Employers also want agreement that the National Joint Council, the negotiating body, will seek to conclude a review of 'Green Book' terms and conditions, started as part of the 2007-8 settlement, by the end of this year, and 'seek to' agree pay rises of 2009-10 and 2010-11 by 31 December also.

The offer is below the current inflation rate of 4.2% and less than the increase in average earnings across the economy.

UNISON did not take the decision to ballot for strike action lightly and we are aware that many members are facing difficult times with prices riding high. That's why we hoped as many as you as possible voted so that we have a very clear idea of members' wishes.

If members vote Yes to industrial action, that

is likely to start with a two-day all-out strike in early July, and be followed by a sustained campaign of escalating action, involving strikes of more than two days.

Asking members to vote for action, the union is making it clear that the employers' offer is final, and "solid and sustained" industrial action will be needed to convince the employers to reopen negotiations.

As "Your Voice" goes to press we are waiting for the result of the ballot, which closed on 20 June.



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The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the UNISON branch or the editor.

JOINT WORKING WITH TRAFFORD COUNCIL ON TRAFFIC SERVICES

Our council has been in negotiations with Trafford council on joint working in delivering traffic services to both councils. The remit will be far reaching involving lots of project work and of course joint working. UNISON has been invited to start consultations with Stockport council management on the implications for employees who will be working on this joint initiative.

The first meeting is scheduled for early June and will be an outline meeting to look at what areas of employee concern are to be addressed. We will keep members fully informed on progress. If any member wants to be added to our e-mail list and be kept up to speed with developments then please contact mark.rayner@stockport.gov.uk

LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICE

It would seem that Phase 2 of the outsourcing of the service (phase 1 concerned PCT properties), has been severely delayed by SMBC's realisation that they are obliged to adhere to the Codes of Best Practice relating to the creation of two tier workforces.



As our Members in this area will be aware, this issue alongside others, (including pensions) was originally flagged up by UNISON. We have written to management asking them to confirm to us, their intention to adhere to this legislation. As of yet, we have not received a response. All of the scheduled meetings over the last few months have been cancelled, because the project team (over-seeing the outsourcing) cannot make progress on this issue.

This causes UNISON great concern, as to how the Authority intend to make savings by the tendering out of the service. Their lack of clarification upon this most crucial point, would indicate to UNISON that the creation of a two tier workforce, and the driving down of staff wages are the key motivations behind this project.

UNISON has been fully briefed by our legal department within Thompson's. The message from UNISON is clear; non adherence will be challenged. We await SMBC's next move in relation to this issue.

Charity Bike Ride

Hello my name is Steve McMahon I am a resident Caretaker for Stockport Homes and a UNISON Member. I am doing a sponsored bike ride for Francis House, Children's Hospice which offers respite for families and care for children with short life expectancy. I will be riding from Stockport to Blackpool. If you would like to sponsor me or make a donation, please ring me on 07891 949158.



Thank you

Steve

Schools Revolution?

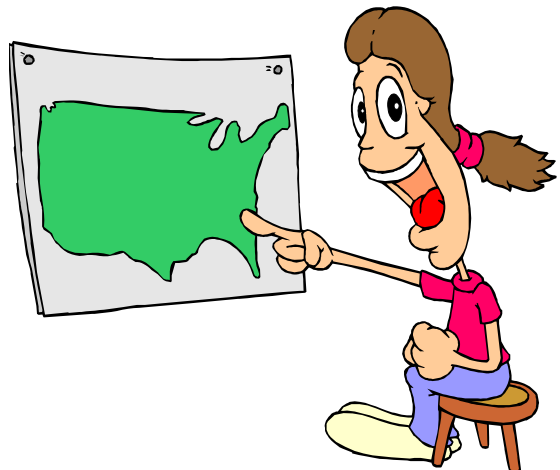
Jim Knight Schools Minister announced at a UNISON School Support Staff Meeting, that in September 2008 he will be pressing for a change in the legislation to ensure that a Framework for Support Staff applies.

What will this mean for School Support Staff?

Well at least 40% of schools in England are foundation or UA schools and do not have to follow NJC Agreements in Local Government.

Following consultation with members we are seeking a National Forum where talks take place on the following:

- A new Pay and Grading Framework
- Role profiles/job descriptions
- Common contract with core terms and conditions
- National Framework for Training and Staff Development
- Term Time Agreement
- Fair and Equal Pay
- Time off for TU reps



So what next?

The Government have stated that they want to start the process in September 2008, which is when detailed negotiations will commence. Once a package has been negotiated UNISON will co-ordinate briefings on the proposals and members will be balloted in 2009.

The opportunity to negotiate a national framework for school support staff will only come around the once. It will be a huge task but if we get it right, it will be rewarding for school staff.

There is no doubt that remodelling has changed the landscape in schools, borne out by the fact that we have seen a 140% increase in the numbers of support staff working in schools. UNISON has concerns regarding the growing number of working practices especially surrounding contracts of employment (split contracts) so much so that the Training and Development Agency (TDA) intend to issue further guidance shortly.

The Branch will be issuing bulletins and calling meetings for October 2008.

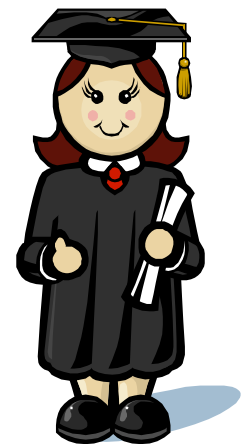
PENSION STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE



UNISON has embarked on an initiative to boost our involvement in pension schemes and bring about changes in the way our pension schemes are run. We are training many new members whom we hope eventually will take up positions reserved for UNISON within pension authorities. This will give our members a greater say in how those pension schemes are run. In some pension schemes union members don't have a vote, they cannot say how investments are made on our member's behalf, and they are not allowed to take part in the various committees that pension funds have. Unions around the world now see this issue as an important way of getting workers voices heard within pension funds and pressurise those who make investments on our behalf do so in a responsible way. Some of the companies that pension funds invest in sometimes have poor employment histories and those companies should be made to answer to their investors...which in many cases are the very employees they are exploiting!

FUNDING FOR LEARNING

Stockport Branch of UNISON has been working on putting a bid together for a 'Skills for Life Development Project'. This project will see an increase in the number of Union Learner Reps within the Council who can assist with developing individuals training and learning needs.



The Project has been approved by the North West Learning and Skills for all Fund, which comprises the North West TUC and the LSC. It is in partnership with Stockport Council and the recognised trade unions with UNISON taking the lead.

The funding is from 1st October 08 until 31st March 09 and the project will be co-ordinated by Shaza Dethick and Alan Hodgkinson from UNISON. Watch this space for further updates, for more information email shaza.dethick@stockport.gov.uk.

Stockport UNISON Lucky Strike Lottery



How it Works:

Each lottery member is allocated a number, the cost of which is £1 per month or 23p per week. Every month Stockport UNISON draw out one number and if this number is yours, you win. The more numbers you have, the more chance you have of winning and the more people paying into the lottery, the bigger the prize.

Application Form

I wish to apply to join the Unison's Lucky Strike Lottery and agree to pay the following subscription each month. I am paid Monthly/Weekly (please indicate)

Full Name:

Address:

Place of Work:

Section:

Tel No: Payroll No:

Application for Deduction from Salary/Wages.

I hereby authorise the payroll section responsible for my pay to deduct the following sum from my salary/wages, until further notice in writing by me, and forward this to the treasurer of the Stockport Local Government UNISON Branch. **(Please tick relevant Box below:** Each number costs £1 per month or 23p per week.)

1 number 2 numbers 3 numbers 4 numbers 5 numbers

Signed: Date:/...../.....

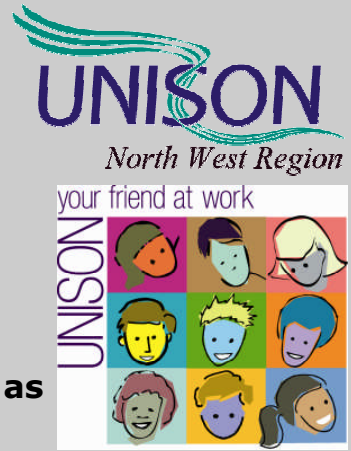
The Stockport Staff Lottery is administered by the Stockport UNISON Branch and is open to all employees, irrespective of Trade Union or UNISON membership.

When Completed this form should be returned to:
Angela Bowen, Assistant Branch Secretary, Stockport UNISON,
272 - 274 Wellington Road South,
Stockport, SK2 6ND

NON-MEMBERS NEED TO READ THIS

With more than 1.3 million members working across the public services, being part of UNISON means you have the full weight of Britain's biggest trade union behind you.

The branch has recently had a number of non-members wanting to join following a serious conduct allegation being made against them at work. The Branch will not represent people on issues that arise prior to joining UNISON so its imperative that you don't delay in joining as you never know when you'll need support.



Please fill in this application form form in BLOCK CAPITALS and send it to the address shown below.

1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Mr/Ms/Miss/Mrs/Other	First Name	Other Initial										
Surname		Date of Birth / /										
Home address												
Postcode	Home											
National Insurance No. (from your payslip)												
<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>												

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> Black African | <input type="checkbox"/> White UK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Irish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani | <input type="checkbox"/> Black UK | <input type="checkbox"/> White Other |

Please tick this box if you require materials in a different format (e.g. large print or Braille) - be sure to supply contact details below

Please give a telephone number/voice/text/email address for UNISON to contact you - indicate if work or home

2. YOUR EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Employers Name
Job Title/Occupation
Department/Section
Workplace Address
Postcode
Payroll No.

**When completed please send to:
UNISON Stockport LG Branch
272—274 Wellington Road South
STOCKPORT
Cheshire, SK2 6ND**

3. WHAT YOU WILL PAY FROM 1 OCTOBER 2003

Please tick your earnings before stoppages

Weekly Pay	Annual Pay	✓	Band	Per Week	Per Month
Up to £38.47	Up to £2,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	A	£0.30	£1.30
£38.48-£96.16	£2,001-£5,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	£0.81	£3.50
£96.17-£153.84	£5,001-£8,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	C	£1.22	£5.30
£153.85-£211.53	£8,001-£11,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	D	£1.52	£6.60
£211.54-£269.23	£11,001-£14,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	E	£1.81	£7.85
£269.24-£326.92	£14,001-£17,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	F	£2.24	£9.70
£326.93-£384.61	£17,001-£20,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	G	£2.65	£11.50
£384.62-£480.76	£20,001-£25,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	H	£3.23	£14.00
£480.77-£576.92	£25,000-£30,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	I	£3.98	£17.25
£576.93-£673.08	£30,001-£35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	J	£4.68	£20.30
£673.08 +	Over £35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	K	£5.19	£22.50

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid

Weekly

Fortnightly

Four Weekly

Monthly

Please tick this box if you are a student member in full-time education (including student nurses or modern Apprentices). Your subscription is £10 per year.

4. POLITICAL FUND

UNISON'S **Affiliated Political Fund (APF)** is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliates to the Labour Party.

UNISON'S **General Political Fund (GPF)** is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union and for research and lobbying in Parliament and Europe. It is independent of support for any political party.

It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes below. Your subscription shown above includes a political fund payment so you do not pay any more by being in one of the funds.

5. YOUR AUTHORISATION

- I wish to join UNISON and accept its rules and constitution.
- I authorise deduction of UNISON subscriptions from my salary/wages at the rate determined by UNISON in accordance with its rules to be paid over to them on my behalf and I authorise my employer to provide to UNISON information to keep my records up to date.
- I authorise deduction of the following political fund payment as part of my subscriptions: *Tick one box only*

Affiliated Political Fund

General Political Fund

Now please sign and date below.

Signature

Date

If you have been a member of a trade union before, please state which one below:

DATA PROTECTION
UNISON will process your membership information together with other information for administration, statistical analysis, conducting ballots and other statutory requirement purposes. We may also send you newsletters, journals and surveys and let you know about educational and campaigning matters. We will disclose your information to our service providers and agents for these purposes.

If you do not want to receive any mailings from UNISON besides those required by statute as shown in bold above, please tick this box.

We may share your information with organisations with whom we have a business relationship for your benefit. We, or they may contact you by mail, telephone, SMS, fax or e-mail to let you know about goods, services or promotions which we think may be of interest to you.

If you do not wish to receive such information please tick this box.

If you tick either of these boxes then you will be removed from the appropriate mailing lists as quickly as possible but for administrative reasons this may take a couple of months.

CONSULTATIONS UNISON ARE INVOLVED IN

UNISON are currently involved in many consultations across areas where we have members. Consultations vary and involve either employees meeting with UNISON, or direct consultation and negotiation between UNISON and management. Listed below are some of the current consultations taking place. If you wish to be added to our e-mail contact list for information on these projects, please contact **mark.rayner@stockport.gov.uk**

- Modernising Older Peoples Services
- Reorganisation of Young Peoples Services
- Pay Strategy in Solutions SK
- Waste and Recycling Services
- Early Years Workforce Review
- Joint Working with Trafford Council on Traffic Services

Equal Pay Matters

Members will be aware that the Council are evaluating all posts in each department. One of the consequences of this change is that some staff who had previously received lower rates of pay than other staff are now paid within the same grade, or a higher grade. This change in the hierarchy of staff pay could mean that you have a claim against the Council under the Equal Pay Act 1970. Under this law you could be entitled to a backdated claim of up to six years of the difference in salary between you and your previously higher paid comparator, who must be of the opposite sex. There is a strict statutory time limit to lodge a grievance against your employer. It is within six months, less one day, of the date when your contract was varied.

Unlike some other claims the Employment Tribunal is unable to grant an extension of time if your claim is lodged outside the strict time limits. If you feel you have a claim and you want UNISON to act on your behalf please return the Enquiry Form, either electronically to:

Email: **nwequalpayunit@unison.co.uk**

or in paper format to: Equal Pay Unit
UNISON Regional Office, Arena Point, 1 Hunts Bank, Manchester,
M3 1UN. Tel: 0161 661 6740

If you believe that you have a potential claim and that the deadline of six months less one day for making a claim is running out of time, please contact the UNISON Equal Pay Unit as a matter of urgency.

CHANGES TO YOUR CONTRACT COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO YOUR CLAIM AND START THE TIMELIMITS.

Lucky Strike Winners

January	2008 -	B Moorehouse
February	2008 -	J M Steele
March	2008 -	S Loggenberg
April	2008 -	J L Rennie

Price money is currently well over £100!

cheques to these lucky winners have gone out in the post. If you'd like to join and be in with a chance to win, please fill out the application form on page 5.



CUBA Special Report from Nick McCall

Earlier this month, I was fortunate enough to visit Cuba on behalf of UNISON. I was one of eight delegates from the Northwest, who were sent to Havana, and then the North Eastern and Industrial province of Matanzas.

Our trip had been scheduled to coincide with Cuba's May Day parade; an event where we had been invited to march in Matanzas, alongside members of the Cuban Health Workers Union (SNTS). The Matanzas SNTS are twinned with the North West region of UNISON. The intention of our visit, was to strengthen links with our sister union in the province. This intention was by no means an empty gesture. SNTS are a large group of workers. It is difficult to convey their reliance upon, and their appreciation of our solidarity and support. The links made between our union and theirs, have been made because of, and in spite of, the very visible back drop of international oppression against the Cuban people; the protagonists of which are the USA.

In the absence of a comprehensive report of our trip, which is currently under completion, please accept the following. This newsletter is perhaps not the appropriate place to discuss the very substantial arguments against the US's behaviour towards Cuba. However, even the most un-informed reader will be aware that the US have embargoed the islands for many years. This sustained act (amongst others) lacks any justification, either morally or legally. The results of the allegedly pro democratic policies of the US, create nothing else, but an environment which is entirely at odds with their purpose. Castro is certainly not regarded, as the figurehead of oppression in a way the US would like to convey. The Cuban people I encountered say that this description belongs in Washington.

On visiting the SNTS offices, and the various workplaces and homes of our counterparts, the impact of the embargo is evident. The regional SNTS offices, which serve over 80,000 members, have one computer, which was donated by UNISON on a previous visit. The building itself contains four rooms, all of them small. Half of the roof was not attached, because of a cyclone a year earlier. The one toilet was broken. There were no taps throughout the whole building. Evidence is everywhere. The Chemist shops contain nothing but dust. The food is limited in choice. This description of bleakness is by no means the end product of the embargo. The reaction of the Cuban people to these limitations is startling. There, exists a resourcefulness we might have experienced in wartime, but have since lost. The cars left by the Americans fleeing the revolution in 1959, are a testament to this resourcefulness.

On our first tour of a hospital, both the directors, and senior consultants greeted us. They had time to talk to us. Their resources were again limited. For example, a hospital the size of Stepping Hill had one sterilizing machine. The workers in that department folded the sterilised instruments meticulously into clean towels. The process was regimented and done in house. The people in the hospitals do not get MRSA or anything similar. The Health Service, alongside education, is remarkable. The statistics are the same as ours, in terms of death/birth rates etc. However they do not have waiting lists. Doctors are heavy on the ground. In fact Cuba trains doctors from third world countries as a policy. It provides more doctors to the third world than the entire World Health Organisation. Such acts of altruism go largely unreported in our press.

On May Day, it was estimated that 100,000 people walked through Matanzas. Millions walked in Havana. The US's explanation for such action, is that it is undertaken by means of duress. On marching shoulder to shoulder with my UNISON and SNTS comrades through Matanzas, I can inform you that this is simply not the case. The people acted voluntarily when they marched. There are various arguments concerning Cuba, not least it's abhorrent past record of its treatment of Gay, Lesbian and Trans Gender Groups. However, the treatment of the Cuban people by the US is not justifiable on such grounds. US policies have galvanised the people with the state, and as such are not conducive with the regime change that the US are so apparently desperate for.