

## PAY MATTERS ACAS AWARD EXTRA 0.3%

### 2008/9 increase up by 0.3%

The 2008/9 NJC pay award will be increased by 0.3%, backdated to 1 April 2008, following the award by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS). This will bring the final award to 2.75%, plus £100 for those on scale points 4, 5 and 6. The ACAS panel's written response to our submission can be found on UNISON's Local Government web site.

### The 2009/10 claim

The 2009/10 claim has been submitted to the employers in January, it is calling to improve real pay levels, a one year deal and to be at least the level of retail price inflation with additional increases for the lower paid. The trade unions are asking that the employers respond in time for this year's award to be in the April pay packet.

**United Learning Trust (ULT)**, the biggest school academy provider in the UK employing hundreds of support staff workers, have agreed to implement an additional pay award of 0.3%. This follows the outcome of a ruling by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) regarding pay for local government employees. ULT have agreed to pay this additional award for TUPE staff, backdating it to 1 April 2008, and staff on ULT terms and conditions backdating it to 1 September 2008. UNISON is pushing for early payment and the employers are aiming to meet this by paying the salary uplift in March's 2009 pay roll run.

## Included in your voice...

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## SSK Pay Review

Management have undertaken a series of meetings with staff over the last few weeks setting out their proposals for a new overall pay package. I, Angela Bowen along with Mark Rayner, JSSC Secretary have attended many of these meetings setting out the Trade Union opposition to the plans.

The current proposals would see an overall slash in members terms and conditions and the Union has warned that without improvement we would not agree and would seek members support in formally enacting the disputes process.

Management have agreed to meet further with the trade unions to try and reach agreement. This will be happening throughout March. UNISON will write to all our members in SSK with any proposals to ask your views before we sign any collective agreements.

## Single Status/Job Evaluation SMBC

As most SMBC employees will be aware the council are continuing to move forward in implementing the JE scheme. This scheme has been imposed and UNISON are working to assist all members with their appeals. The council has informed us that the results of the appeals will be known to individuals in April.

The council have also sent letters to individuals who have not agreed to the variation to their employment contract, these will be individuals who have gained or lost money as a result of JE. This does not constitute a formal letter of their intention, but is for information. The council have also indicated that they wish to enter into 90 days consultation with UNISON regarding the possible issue of potential dismissals. If you require any assistance regarding JE please contact the Branch office.

## Pure Innovations Review

Recently there has been a staff forum set up within Pure Innovations to look at a number of new policies within the company and a new Job Evaluation scheme. UNISON have requested a meeting with the Director of the company to outline a few concerns we have in regards to equality within the JE Scheme, sickness policy, and staff input into pay awards if they were to move away from the National Joint Committee.

We also want to see fair access to the benefits proposed which includes a 35 hour working week and additional annual leave. So far this meeting hasn't taken place. UNISON is advising its members not to sign any new contracts until we have had the opportunity to iron out some of these issues. We understand that the company are trying to do this voluntarily at the moment.

## Do You Travel?

Stockport Council has a Travel Plan, which is to encourage employees to walk, cycle or use public transport.



Having attended the Travel Plan Steering Group on behalf of Unison, I can report that there are some funds available to promote cycling and walking for staff. For example cycle stands and cycle lockers for all Council buildings, drying facilities for wet coats; perhaps a pool bike, if there are several people who would be interested in using a bike for their work journeys. What facilities are there where you work? Any suggestions? We are particularly looking at the refurbishment of Stopford House at the moment, and would like to ascertain the need for drying facilities, so employees who walk/cycle and get wet are properly catered for. Also we'd like to know the demand for showers. Please contact Phoebe Spence 474 2170 or by e mail:

[phoebe.spence@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:phoebe.spence@stockport.gov.uk) and we'll put some proposals together, and liaise with the Steering Group and NPS. I should also report that there are a number of outstanding issues such as reclaiming bus fares when travelling on Council business if you buy a discounted Megarider.

Did you know the weekly pass for Stagecoach buses is available for £8.70 (saving 80p) for staff Passes are available for Purchase from the cashier's desk at the South entrance of Stopford House weekdays from 10am – 12pm and 2pm to 4pm. Staff need to show Corporate ID or have a photograph that has been endorsed by their line manager to confirm who they are and have a current Stockport Council payslip no more than a month old. Employees purchasing weekly Megariders will be given a voucher which is exchanged with the bus driver for a Megarider. Plus look out for the free Shuttlebus going round Stockport Town Centre, outside Stopford House to the station, bus station, shops, market, etc.

## STOCKPORT COUNCIL DECIDES TO IGNORE CODE ON WORKFORCE ISSUES

I reported in the last Newsletter that Stockport Council had decided it may ignore the Workforce code on transfers to the private sector in any outsourcing or privatisation's that may occur in the future. The code is designed to make sure that any employees who work on public contracts are paid a fair and equitable wage along with decent terms & conditions. Our Branch has had an agreement in place in the procurement policy of the council for some time and it has worked well. UNISON put forward a strong case both morally and legally to the council but unfortunately the council decided that it had the right to ignore the code in any future potential transfers. Our



position locally remains the same. We believe that the code should be adhered to and that we shall use a legal route if the code is ignored in any transfers or contract. The Government has recently strengthened the law around the best value code to prevent a 2 tier workforce. UNISON believes this adds further weight to our argument against the councils proposal. National UNISON has launched a campaign around these issues and have highlighted Stockport as an example of poor practice.

## Life Long Learning

In October last year Alan Hodgkinson and Sharza Dethick started a project for UNISON in partnership with Unionlearn, to promote Skills for Life across Stockport Council's Directorates. Alan and Sharza have sent out 'Lifelong Learning Questionnaires' to find out what, when and where you want to learn. We are now compiling all this

information on our records, with a view to putting on courses in the very near future.

We are now in urgent need for more Union Learner Reps to take the Project forward. The main role of the Learner Rep is to raise awareness of training and development opportunities to all

staff, promote the value of learning and training, promote equal opportunities in learning, and liaise with employers on lifelong learning opportunities in the workplace. So if you would like to take a more active non- confrontational role in your union, with paid time off, or for more details contact the branch office and ask for Alan or Sharza.

# National Terms & Conditions for School Support Staff are coming, & this will affect you!

## What is this about?

In 2007, the government announced their intention to establish a new School Support Staff Negotiating Council. This will be headed by an Independent chair.

## Who else is involved?

UNISON is the largest union for school staff, and is leading the negotiations. The union make-up on the new body is:

UNISON has 8 seats,  
GMB has 4 seats  
and Unite has 3 seats.

## What will the new body do?

The body will develop a package of new terms and conditions for support staff, including job descriptions and pay.

## Will it affect me?

Yes it will affect school support staff in all LEA and non LEA schools (but not Academy Schools) as the new body will be a statutory body similar to the one for teachers. This commitment to making the body statutory is a key victory for UNISON as this has been central to our campaign.

## What next?

UNISON will be sending regular information to our branches and seeking feedback and views as the negotiations progress.



## Issues for UNISON

The issues affecting our school's staff include:

- Term-time only contracts
- Changing job descriptions (and pay rates)
- Fair access to training for school staff
- How schools might implement any new national terms and conditions

## Locally

There is a new website available for Support Staff in Stockport Schools. The School, College and Community Workforce website has been developed to support and promote continuing professional development (CPD) across the wider school workforce within Stockport. It currently offers personalised CPD portfolios to more than 6000 staff in the children's workforce in schools. The site offers access to resources that will support staff in their roles. In addition, it provides information about career pathways, funding opportunities and the facility to browse and book via an online directory of CPD opportunities: including training courses, networks meetings etc. To access the site go to <http://scwd.stockport.gov.uk> where you can browse the Directory or just check out resources and guidance.

# UNISON NEC elections

## **When?**

During April, when you'll receive ballot papers in the post to your home address.

## **For what?**

UNISON's National Executive Council (NEC) elections.

## **Why?**

Because you have the right to decide how you want to be represented.  
Plus, voting is a right that many have fought for and sacrificed everything to achieve.

## **What do these NEC members do?**

They decide on matters that could affect:

Your job.

Your terms and conditions.

Your community.

## **Does my vote really make a difference?**

Yes, because those elected will decide:

How your subscriptions are spent.

Which campaigns and issues we should fight on.

What the union says nationally about your public services.

## **What else can I do?**

Encourage other UNISON members you know to vote.

## **Who has my branch nominated?**

***Your branch nominated the following 12 candidates in the these elections:***

Angela Bowen, North West Female Seat

Glen Williams, National Local Government Seat

Carol Lukey, National LG Seat

Julie Robinson, National LG Seat

Jimmy Fallon, NW Male Seat

Michelle Bentham NW Reserved Seat

Bob Oram, NW General Seat

Elaine Cottrell, NW Female Seat

Lisa Waldock, Young Members Reserved

Lynn Poulton, National LG Seat

Liz Cameron, Black Members

June Nelson, Black Members

# **YOUR VOTE IS IMPORTANT**

# Local Government Pension Scheme Investments in PFI/PPP

The union has become very concerned that the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) has been approached by Partnership for Schools (PFS) to provide financing for its Building Schools for the Future PFI programme. An unknown number of local authority pension funds have been approached as possible sources of capital to rebuild and renovate school buildings, Partnership for Schools (PFS) has confirmed. Owing to the financial crisis, many local authorities and schools have been unable to obtain funding or to complete Private Finance Initiative (PFI) deals for the government-backed school renewal programme. This is forcing PFS to seek alternative sources of capital.

PFS said it had already closed three deals so far this year, including a £50m PFI deal in the Tameside area, but would explore other options to secure funding for the programme. The projects are supposed to draw on finance from banks in a consortium with a construction company and service delivery company. However, the economic crisis is causing banks and finance companies to withdraw from the programmes. In fact, press reports have suggested that the Government's entire programme of new PFI projects, which requires funding of some £9.4billion, is under threat. It is likely that LGPS advisors could be suggesting funding these as well. The funding and risk arrangements for these PFI investments are at present very unclear. But UNISON is concerned about the nature of the financing arrangements, and the potential risk that may be placed on UNISON members' pension schemes.

The LGPS schemes are under the control of local authorities, which means there are potential conflicts of interest between the needs of authorities for finance for schools, and the proper investment of pension assets. Councillors are likely to come under considerable pressure to close PFI deals within their authorities and that pressure could be placed ahead of the interests of scheme members.

## What is the national union doing?

We have taken urgent steps to find out as much as possible about approaches by PFS to local authorities and the implications of LGPS investments in PFI projects. We have also:

- Asked questions to the Public Accounts Committee
- Sent a request for an urgent meeting to Hazel Blears, Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government
- Prepared questions to be laid in Parliament about LGPS investments in PFI
- Commissioned research into LGPS investments in PFI/PPP and other aspects of privatisation last autumn. The first analysis will be presented at the national LGPS seminar on 26 March. This research will continue through out 2009.

## Welfare Support

In these testing financial times its important members are fully aware of help that is out there for them. UNISON Welfare is a charity set up to help

our members who find themselves in financial difficulties. We can help with all sorts of payments and it is not means tested against your income.

Please don't suffer in silence visit our website, or Email [welfare@unison.co.uk](mailto:welfare@unison.co.uk) ,or call us on 020 7551 1620.



## Other UNISON matters



### C&YPD Social Workers

Child protection social workers will again find their work and practice under the microscope following the Laming Inquiry report into the tragic case of Baby P. Mountains of bureaucracy and an unwieldy IT system are eating into the time social workers have, leaving not enough time to visit families and talk to children.

UNISON are concerned to ensure that our members who work within this difficult field are supported and have adequate resources to do their jobs. The serious shortage of social workers increases caseloads, leading to fears that important information may be missed or overlooked. Improving recruitment and retention is at the heart of tackling all these problems, as well as valuing and supporting social workers for the tough job they do.

Locally we have worked hard with members and management to identify where problems currently exist and make improvements. The current areas of concern identified are adequate training, caseload management, and admin support. If any members want to feedback their concerns or suggestions for improvements UNISON will be happy to add them to the agenda in confidence. You can email me direct at [a.bowen2@unison.co.uk](mailto:a.bowen2@unison.co.uk)

### Cheadle & Marple 6th Form College - Privatisation

Privatisation, a word which can strike fear into the heart of the hardest HR manager. But you would expect, even during these tough financial times, that those of us fortunate enough to work in the public sector would have some protection, being publically funded, and it is important that we don't jump on the credit crunch band wagon. You may be shocked that the governors at CAMSFC have bought a first class ticket, and have decided to look into outsourcing the Catering function. With so many strong links between what students eat, their behaviour and how they learn then surely it makes absolutely no sense what so ever to exchange the current in house service, which have won various awards and is run by a team of dedicated long serving members of staff, for mass produced, high fat and high sugar rubbish!

As you can imagine UNISON are very active within the college and have secured the unconditional support from all of the teaching unions and the NUS, we are meeting with the colleges consultants to scrutinise their figures and findings and come up with our own proposals. Everyone knows the key to success is to invest in staff, invest in the kitchens, invest in the product, not sell out to the highest (or lowest) bidder. It is proven that outsourcing functions is not a long term solution, you only need to look at similar colleges in the area and the trouble they are in. It would be unfair of me to slate management completely; they are so far running the best UNISON recruitment campaign I have ever seen!

***Privatisation works? You try telling the cleaners that.***

### Lucky Strike Winners

I'm pleased to report that cheques have gone out to recent winners of the lucky strike. The Winners are:

Oct :	T B Magowen	£189.17,
Nov:	J M Holmes	£193.35,
Dec:	A C Feerick	£194.63
Jan:	A Darke	£195.86

If you'd like to be a member of the Lucky Strike the application form is on page 8.

### Sports Med Warning

The branch has received a number of complaints from members who have used the sports med service and their tax code has been changed as a result. We are warning all members who access this service to be diligent when your deduction is made within your wages as members have found they have been charged too much as the Inland Revenue have changed their tax code. If you do find yourself in this situation you need to contact personnel who can assist you in amending it.

## 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.

**Please return completed form to:**  
**Angela Bowen, Assistant Branch Secretary,**  
**Stockport UNISON,**  
**272 - 274 Wellington Road South,**  
**Stockport, SK2 6ND**