



## PoLiTics with a Capital 'T'

***I am sure we are all still reeling from the election results***

***and its fair to say that those of us who work in the public sector have chewed off most of our finger nails! We have a special article in this edition from the Lead Officer within our Region to give us a general perspective of things to come, read on if you dare!***

These are difficult times. The new Government has already announced over 6 billion pounds of cuts to public services and both the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats voiced their opposition to our pension scheme benefits. There is no doubt cuts are on there way, just when we are getting over the imposition of the JNC Pay Freeze, Pay Reviews, and reform of the

Pension Scheme, it all starts again! That's not to mention Willy Walsh and the courts attack on Trade Unions right to strike in the UK.

The UNISON Branch needs to be strong and we need to start organising now. If you would like to get involved in the union then please contact Angela Bowen or the branch. If you have changed any of your details including workplace in the last 12-18 months the branch needs to be informed. We are a well organised branch but we need to do more.

This will be the hardest times faced by public sector workers for a generation and we need to ensure we are all members of the trade union. Please do your bit by asking your colleagues if their a member and if not give them the application form on page 16 of this newsletter and ask them to join. Your union needs you and we need to send a clear message to the government,

that we value public services and we wont give them up without a fight.

Our General Secretary Dave Prentis said "without a strong union, no public service will be safe from privatisation and cuts. Without a strong union, no public service workers' pay and pension will be secure. The LibDems have already ditched their promise to oppose the Tories' plans for £6bn cuts this year. This will put the recovery at risk, and cost thousands of jobs. Plans for more cuts will follow, hitting communities hard. We will fight tooth and nail to protect our members and the vital jobs they do. We will seek to build strong alliances, particularly with local communities and service users, to campaign against cuts and privatisation. I call on every member and activist—however you voted at the general election—to join us in the fight of our lives to defend our vital public services".

### Included in your voice...

*Political Madness - Pages 1-5*

*NJC, NPS & Youth Workers - Page 7*

*Adult Services & ISSK - Page 8*

*Colleges & Young Members - Page 9*

*Disability Focus Group - Page 11*

*Join our Team - Page 13*

*Lottery Application Form - Page 15*

*Pensions - Page 6*

*SSK Update - Page 8*

*Lucky Strike Winners - Page 9*

*Members Welfare - Page 10*

*A Sad Farewell to Tommy - Page 12*

*New Fit Notes - Page 14*

*How to Join UNISON - Page 16*

# Major Funding Cuts Will B.I.T.E

Government announcements hasten council reviews – the future of public services is THE debate

*The latest Government announcements on public sector funding confirm pre-election expectations that all local authorities are going to have a lot less money for the foreseeable future. Yet the need for services will not diminish and actually increases during difficult economic times. These competing demands will force all Councils – and other publicly funded bodies – to review their functions, processes and priorities at a faster rate than previously. It is very likely that the services we provide as public sector workers will change - in some cases slightly, in others dramatically, others may be reduced or amalgamated, and some may disappear altogether. UNISON needs a strong, proactive and co-ordinated voice within all the areas we organise and represent members.*

## **What is B.I.T.E - and why UNISON members must get involved**

Stockport Council is embarking on a massive and fundamental review of its services in an effort to find savings and improvements through process and design efficiencies. This is under the umbrella of the “B.I.T.E Programme”. B.I.T.E stands for Business Improvement, Transformation and Efficiency. It underpins Stockport Council’s strategy to deal with the medium term financial situation by seeking to make the necessary savings through service improvement and efficiency.

Throughout June and July the Council will be undertaking scoping exercises in many service areas using their

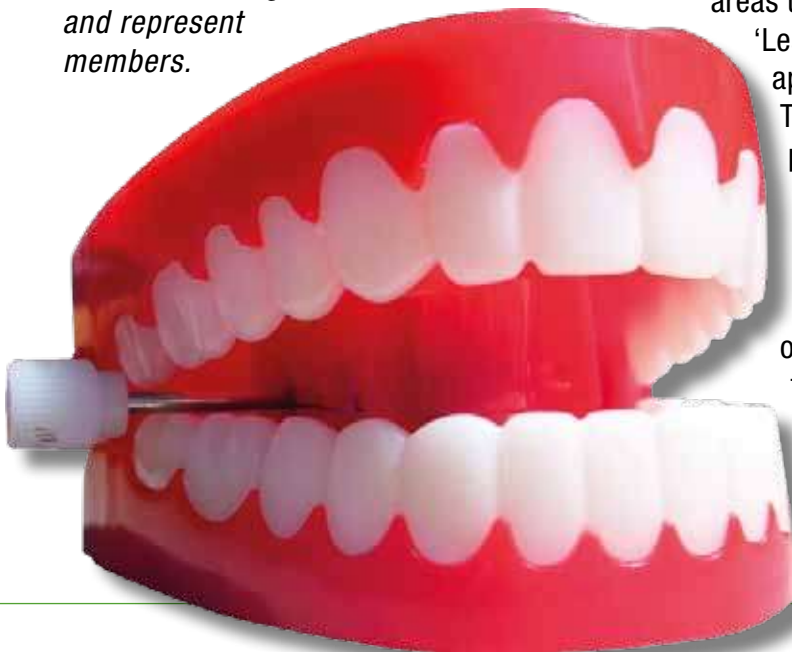
‘Lean Systems’ approach. These could potentially involve other employers and

organisations the Council deals with, where the UNISON branch

also has members, such as Solutions SK, ISSK and voluntary sector organisations.

All staff should be involved in the process and this includes UNISON members in their workplaces. The UNISON branch has been involved in the two ‘systems thinking interventions’ that have already completed or are nearing completion. In both of these service areas our local UNISON stewards have assisted members on a collective and individual basis, with direct engagement and consultation with the local service managers.

It is imperative that UNISON is involved in the process at a local level as well as corporately. You, the members, are the ones who know best what happens in your services and how those jobs are done. You are the ones best placed to ensure that job-specific input is represented to managers and that local stewards and the branch are fully informed of the issues in each area. We have committed UNISON stewards in many areas of the Council, and in other employers and organisations that the Council works with, but we need a presence in every area if we are to effectively represent members’ issues within this challenging process.



# Organising from the 'shop floor' upwards - your union needs you!

**The significant challenges presented by BITE - and the sheer scale of the exercise – clearly demonstrate the need to build our union capacity**

***The branch has recently reviewed the way we provide support to members and stewards within the Council and within other employers where we organise. This is part of our Branch Development Plan and we have allocated support officers to each Council Directorate and other employers:***

**Sue Glithero** - Branch Secretary; Business Services; CRE - Environment; Solutions SK; C&YP - Schools

**Angela Bowen** - Assistant Branch Secretary; C&YP – non schools; CRE - Communities; Individual Solutions SK; NPS; Borough Care

**Nick McCall** - Assistant Branch Secretary; Adult Social Care; CRE - Regeneration and Special Projects; Stockport Homes; Stockport College; Cheadle & Marple College; Pure Innovations; Together Trust

**Mark Rayner** - Branch Chair; Chief Executives

In this role the impetus is to provide day to day support for stewards, guidance and advice with casework and in bargaining with managers, and helping them with recruiting new members and encouraging new activists to come forward.

The significant challenges presented by BITE - and the sheer scale of the exercise – clearly demonstrate the need to build our union capacity. And that's just BITE, not to mention changes that may flow from the raft of legislation being lined up for Parliament! This means we need to work from the roots upwards and not be overly reliant on a few. Members need to contact their local steward in the first instance on all issues. The vast majority of concerns and questions can be dealt with best and quickest at the local level. We need to ensure all our stewards have the training, skills, support and confidence required. We need our branch committee's time to concentrate on the overview across the Council and other employers, bringing the pieces together in the 'big picture'. We need to free up time for the senior branch officers to enable them to focus at the corporate level and develop branch wide strategic responses.

It's really a back to basics approach. If you do not have a UNISON steward or contact already in your area then we need you or a colleague to come forward as the contact point for the branch and UNISON members. If you or a colleague are interested (and why wouldn't you be!) then contact one of the UNISON

***“It's really a back to basics approach. If you do not have a UNISON steward or contact already in your area then we need you or a colleague to come forward as the contact point for the branch and UNISON members”***

stewards within your Directorate or employer (if you are unsure who they are then ring or email the branch office and we will put you in touch).

This is going to impact on ALL of us and it's in ALL our interests that we ALL get involved.

**Sue Glithero** – Branch Secretary



# SPECIAL REPORT Apocalypse Soon?

## *An Age of Austerity in Public Sector Funding*

*John Lewis - Regional Lead for Local Government, UNISON North West (john.lewis@unison.co.uk) - Looks into the not to distant future*

***At your May Branch Committee I introduced a discussion on the potential impact of public sector cuts and what it may mean for the very future of public service provision.***

It's a debate that has been taking place for some time, in which the public finances deficit has acted as an accelerant but is not the sole catalyst. Beforehand I met with Sue, Angie and Nick (Mark couldn't make it) to talk through the issues. I've been friends with your senior branch officers for many years and after two hours of gathering depression we were all agreed that for UNISON our principle challenge at branch level is embedding an organising culture that is member and steward upwards rather than branch officer downwards. Without this we will simply not have the capacity both on the ground and corporately to deal with the huge workload and major challenges that are just (quite literally) around the corner. That two hour chat was distilled to a 45 minute discussion at Branch Committee.

Since then, of course, we have had the 'Emergency' Budget and the slash and burn scenario I outlined has deepened to a full scorched earth policy from this coalition – **a 25% cut in budgets over 5 years.**

**Change in a global context – how deep is your cut?**

The economic crisis occurs with profound changes taking place in a

global context; ecological, political, social and technological. On the deficit Coalition policy is to cut deepest and cut fastest. But is it really necessary? This deficit is no worse in comparative terms than those of the mid 70's and early 90's and is much less than what the country faced at the end of WWII. On those occasions the recovery plan was long term and balanced.

The reality is these cuts are driven by the demands of the money markets - not to improve trade in goods and necessities but to rescue transactional finance. The failed free market capitalism of monopoly-money that caused the crisis is now dictating terms to a friendly government at the expense of ordinary working people. UNISON has presented an alternative budget that identifies £77bn per annum without hurting economic recovery and people. **Each year £100bn is lost through tax avoidance and tax evasion – enough to wipe out the entire deficit in just 18 months then fund a sustainable programme for growth.** The cuts mask an ideological agenda aimed at reducing the public sector itself. But as the world, in thrall to the financiers, swings rapidly rightwards nobody really doubts that significant cuts are what we face. Job losses of up to 750,000 are predicted in the public sector. On top of that 1.2 million private sector employees work in jobs that are entirely dependent on public money.

**The cuts are not necessary, they are a political choice.**

The detail in each Government Department will not be known until the Comprehensive Spending Review on 20 October (at least). 25% is the headline cut to total funding, but some services will be ring fenced so deeper cuts in other 'unprotected' areas will be made to achieve the headline. **Potentially some council services could be cut by 40% over this period.** The logical conclusion is that we are facing an age of public funding austerity that may last a generation and could change our society significantly.

### **The future shape of Public Services?**

With cuts at this level many services we currently provide are simply not sustainable and people are looking at what it means for the shape and nature of public services in such a climate. The varying strands of thought can be broadly set out under three outlines:-

### **Redefining The Relationship Between The State And The Individual:**

Radically reduce or discontinue some services provided by the state; and/or reduce the 'population' entitled to receive services; and/or provide services only if paid for. On a cultural level this leads to a quantum shift whereby people look firstly to themselves and others and less frequently to the state. This goes beyond our current understanding of "personalisation", to a level where (depending on the service) state funding given to public bodies and individuals is stopped or reduced and



the ‘responsibility’ to fill that gap is passed from the state to the individual. Universal benefits – including pensions – will be challenged by this and services likely to be affected include waste collection, cleansing, grounds maintenance, adult social care, leisure, museums and libraries, pest control, etc. A prerequisite for this approach is a developed, collective, civil society with capacity. Quite simply the UK hasn’t got that.

### **Increased Localism With Minimal Central Oversight:**

Devolving more decisions to local bodies with minimal central inspection. This potentially re-empowers local councils and could reinvigorate both local democratic accountability and a sense that individuals can truly influence their local areas through engagement and voting. But it carries several health warnings. If councils have complete freedom they cannot expect any central state safety net if things go wrong. And though localism can better shape services to local demographics, there is a significant risk those local variations produce the classic “postcode lottery” where those in most need are the ones with lesser services available.

### **Collaboration and Reconfiguration Across The Public Sector:**

Better horizontal collaboration across public bodies. The emphasis on efficiency for the past decade or more has been on improving individual organisational efficiency without really accounting for the role of each organisation within the broader public service needs. This encompasses “whole systems thinking” and “organic networks” and is premised on looking at the outcome required then working out which bodies have a role to play, how they should fit together, what needs doing to achieve that outcome – and what is no longer required to be done. In Stockport terms you could say this was “B.I.T.E and beyond”. It also poses the possibility of combined public services operating across

localities – not just One Stop Shops or single access points, but actually reconfiguring the public sector so that services currently controlled by several different bodies are brought together under the control of fewer bodies. This approach could generate improvements without actually realising cost savings and brings with it the need for a critical assessment of governance and public accountability.

### **Challenges for UNISON – Organising for the future and can we shape “The Big Society” to be “Our Society”?**

It’s self evident the scope of the debate is central to the jobs of UNISON members, the services we provide (and use as citizens) and goes to the core of our identity. It presents us with a range of challenges and questions, some obvious and others that may not have easy answers or definitive solutions.

- To minimise the impact of cuts on jobs, services and communities.
- How to engage with the decision makers at local, sub-regional and regional level where multiple bodies are involved?
- Organising from the ‘ground up’ to increase skills and capacity and free resources.
- How can we use the skills and experiences our members gain outside work to shape UNISON responses - and as ‘ambassadors’ for our core values in their communities?
- How do we deal with potential conflicts between our members’ interests as workers and their interests as citizens accessing services outside of their work?
- Does UNISON sit in the wings or take centre-stage in the emerging debate? Do we try to be part of shaping things or do we just respond/oppose on an issue by issue basis?

### **Bringing it all together – hopefully...**

To say we live in interesting times is

an understatement. This Government is not well predisposed to trade unions, yet some aspects of the Queen’s Speech mark territory that matches UNISON policy – devolution of powers to Councils and reducing quangos as examples. It is clear that nothing exists in isolation (pay, pensions, cuts, restructures) yet we are bound to see an increase in disputes over specific issues. By the same token if we just adopt a position of outright opposition to everything we will be sidelined, increasingly irrelevant and will lose the support of our members. We will face complex situations where potential solutions may first appear contradictory - eg it could be that a managed reduction now protects more jobs for a sustainable longer term.

It’s also an interesting time for Stockport Council. For many years a Lib Dem administration able to enjoy the ‘freedom of blame’ that comes from not having your party in government. Now, with this budget from the coalition government, that’s changed in an uncomfortable way.

Stockport UNISON members have a core team of senior officers that are dedicated, experienced at all levels of our union, and already planning for the organising and political challenges we face. They will provide the strategic leadership and collective drive locally to make sure your voice is heard. Part of my job is to ensure they get the necessary support and guidance from the Regional service group. Part of your job – as a UNISON member - is to ensure they get the engagement and participation of every UNISON member.

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***This is a real debate taking place within surrounding uncertainty. It’s an urgent debate and one that we cannot ignore. UNISON needs to be part of it. That means all of us. If you have a comment to make then why not drop us an email?***

***unison.stockport@stockport.gov.uk***

# Local Government Pension Scheme

## *Our mythbusting guide*

**You may have read some articles in the media claiming that local government workers receive 'gold plated' pensions and that because of poor investment performance in the current economic climate the scheme has become unaffordable. Are we right to worry or is this just media scaremongering? Read our guide to the myths and realities of the LGPS to find out...**

**MYTH:** 25% of council tax is spent on the LGPS

**REALITY:** Less than 6% of council tax revenue is used to fund the scheme. The pensions received by our members are just sufficient to keep them above the poverty line, below which state benefits payable. If the LGPS didn't exist the tax payer would foot the bill in any case.

**MYTH:** The current economic climate means the LGPS needs to be cut

**REALITY:** The costs of all defined benefit schemes such as the LGPS fluctuate, but the LGPS is in a better position than most other schemes as it can plan its funding over a longer period, making it much less vulnerable to short term fluctuations. Year on year the LGPS makes billions of pounds more in contributions and investments than it pays out to members.

**MYTH:** Local government workers receive gold plated pensions

**REALITY:** The large pay outs which are widely reported in the right wing media are paid to the highest earners in the public sector. The average local government scheme member retires with a pension of just £4,000 a year, dropping to just £2,600 on average for women.

**MYTH:** Local government pensions are paid straight from the public purse

**REALITY:** The LGPS is funded by its members, employers and the profits earned from investments and assets. There are 89 separate funds in the LGPS – your fund is administered by Lancashire County Council – and together they are worth £100 billion. The scheme is the largest in the country and the fourth largest in the world. If the scheme was wound up not only would it have a devastating effect on its 3.5 million members but it would have a knock on effect in the private sector because of its investments.

**MYTH:** The LGPS can't afford to meet its demands

**REALITY:** Some newspapers are reporting that the scheme can't afford to pay pensions for those members who



are retiring. This is a falsehood – the figures used are based on what would happen if every single member of the scheme retired tomorrow. In reality most scheme members will be paying into the scheme for years or decades, and as they retire new members will start paying. The scheme can well afford to meet its demands.

**MYTH:** To make pensions fair, public sector provision must be reduced to the levels common in the private sector

**REALITY:** This would increase the number of older people living in poverty, which will in turn increase the cost to the taxpayer of state benefits, health and care services. We should not react to inequality by stooping to the lowest lever – rather we should work to ensure that pension provision is fair for all and campaign to end poverty in older age.

**For more information please visit [www.protectourpensions.org.uk](http://www.protectourpensions.org.uk)**

## NPS Group

There are a number of issues currently ongoing within the wider NPS Group and specific to Stockport. The pay deal has been re-opened at the request of NPS. It is clear that the group could not afford the 3.5% that was originally negotiated as part of the 3 year pay deal. We have consulted all members and the consensus was to request a 2.5% pay award and look to protect jobs in the current uncertain climate. Management have responded with "You are aware of the delicate balance between maintaining as

many jobs as possible and potential increases in our wage bill and any pay increase would be at the expense of jobs.

The current market conditions are such that fees are under intense pressure which coupled with falling construction costs is reducing our income by over 10% for the same work. The new government ( what ever shape ) will be making deep cuts in public expenditure which will be a major challenge for the Group over the next three years. Given

all this we can only pay more by making significant job cuts. I would have hoped that Unison would have supported the need to maintain jobs over increases in pay especially as staff have indicated a willingness to make this sacrifice rather than suffer job losses or reductions in travel etc. I would hope that Unison would re-consider their position in light of this." UNISON have asked for further details on the link between the pay award and job cuts. UNISON will continue to fight any potential job loses. These are uncertain times ahead of us.

## Youth & Community Workers

*The restructure in this section has now been completed and any savings made are being ploughed back into the front line youth services. In the branch pay consultation exercise members voted by 71% to accept the offer.*

*In responding to the Employers, the staff side deplored the Employers' failure to give proper consideration to the staff side claim and the circumstances and needs of youth and community services; and their failure to negotiate properly with the staff side or observe the independent status of the JNC. Consultation is now taking place on the claim for 2010/11.*

## NJC Pay Negotiations update

***UNISON, Unite and GMB public service unions, have submitted a 2.5% or £500 pay claim on behalf of some 1.5 million local government workers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.***

The claim covers care assistants, cleaners, teaching assistants, librarians, social workers and refuse collectors among others, who are at the bottom of the public sector pay league. The employers are still refusing to make an offer to the trade unions and the result of the general election doesn't help our plight.

The consistent message sent from

our members in the region is whilst there is genuine discontent with the employers position there is no mood to take industrial action. Our members are more concerned with protecting jobs than an increase pay offer.

Some employers have suggested making an offer outside of the NJC but the note of caution is experience

tells us that local pay bargaining might deliver a little bit more in the short term but less over the medium to long term and is very much dependant on branch organization, density and skills. The details of the full pay claim are available on the UNISON website:-

[www.unison.co.uk/localgov](http://www.unison.co.uk/localgov)

# SSK Pay Review

***SSK have looked at their single status package in two phases- the pay and grading in 2007 where 92% of employees got an increase in their basic pay. Over the last year they have revised their terms and conditions package to be applied to all employees to create a set of SSK Terms and Conditions enhanced by NJC Green Book National agreements.***

Discussions concluded last summer, following this it was necessary to obtain further information from the employer to enable UNISONs head office to undertake a detailed Equality Impact Assessment. This is a requirement of UNISONs Single

Status Protocols and determines whether or not UNISONs head office gives the go ahead to ballot members on accepting the package.

UNISON balloted and returned a 67% vote in favour of accepting so were in a position to enter a collective agreement. Of the other trade unions URTU with 11 members also voted to accept but UCATT with 9 members and GMB (the only other union of any size) informed SSK that they had rejected the proposals. As the company only wanted a collective agreement if every union agreed to it, irrespective of the membership numbers, they have now decided to implement

the proposals by seeking each individual employee's agreement to voluntarily accept changes to their contracts. And at the same time the company has informed the unions in accordance with legislation that they will move to dismissal with offers of re-engagement if necessary. We have kept members informed through meetings and letters and the stewards together with the Branch Secretary (and Regional Organiser) meet regularly.

The JNC For Local Authority Craft & Associated Employees pay settlement for 2009/10 will see an increase of 1-1.25% on pay and 1% on allowances.

## Social Care - Adults & ISSK



***Personalisation of budgets will be a hot topic over the next couple of months. This could mean changes to the way the council manages its budgets and commissions care packages. UNISON has commissioned an independent report. The report highlights a number of important issues that have to be resolved in rolling out cash for care schemes under the personalisation agenda. The full report can be downloaded from: [unison.org.uk/localgov/personalisation.asp](http://unison.org.uk/localgov/personalisation.asp)***

It was reported that Adult services is on target with this years finances, which includes the budget for learning disability services. All properties within learning disabilities will be receiving broadband very soon. This will enable all support workers to have better access to

information and communicate much more effectively between teams and management. The broadband will also be available to service users and could mean a reduction in cost for telephone and broadband.

There are a number of key issues within ISSK at the moment and it will be difficult times whilst we try and resolve the problems. There has been issues raised as part of the new recording system and UNISON has requested a meeting with Management to look at the teething problems faced by our members and the implications of recording for the service. It has flagged up issues of funding and allocated time to service users. There is also a problem with the overall budget of ISSK and UNISON is part of those discussions. It is clear that there are no plans to in anyway put the company at risk.

It is a great resource and provides an excellent service. None of the issues outlined are insurmountable and the Council will continue to support the growth of ISSK in the future. The plans however do mean the staffing structure will be reduced and we are committed to ensuring this is done voluntarily with the workforce agreement. UNISON has made it clear we will fight any downgrading of staff or compulsory redundancies. We will continue to keep you all informed of progress.

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***For more info contact your local reps or (for SMBC Adult Services) Nick McCall, Assistant Branch Secretary, at [nick.mccall@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:nick.mccall@stockport.gov.uk) or (for ISSK) Angela Bowen from the UNISON Office on 07977517585.***

# Colleges

**L**ike other parts of the public sector FE & 6th Form institutions within the North West face a number of challenges as a result of the economic situation. Colleges are trying to make substantial savings that will effect our members. The national agreed pay award was 1.5%.

*It is vital we organise our members in this section and we gather resources to ensure our members are looked after through these difficult times. If you are interested in getting more involved then please get in touch. Redundancies and outsourcing are a real possibility over the next 24 months. In the North West 1000 redundancies have already been announced. UNISON organised a day of decent on 10th June.*

*Visit the North West website for further details.*



## Lucky Strike Winners

I am pleased to list below the latest winners of the lucky strike. If you'd like to join and be in with a chance to win fill out the application form on page 15. The prize money is linked to the numbers of players. The more players the more money there is to be won.

<b>December</b>	<b>E Lomas</b>	<b>£206.25</b>
<b>January</b>	<b>J Welch</b>	<b>£207.13</b>
<b>February</b>	<b>J Nagle</b>	<b>£205.13</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>J Cowell</b>	<b>£203.25</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>H Jackson</b>	<b>£204.90</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>£200.17</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>TBC</b>

Best of Luck. x

# Young Members: Play your part

UNISON wants young members to play a full part in union activities. At the same time we know for many young people it can be difficult getting time off work for union activity, being taken seriously, or speaking out with confidence in a room full of older people who can give the impression they know it all.

That's why we have created a young members organisation in UNISON which is designed to:

encourage recruitment and participation by young members;  
provide a voice for young members;

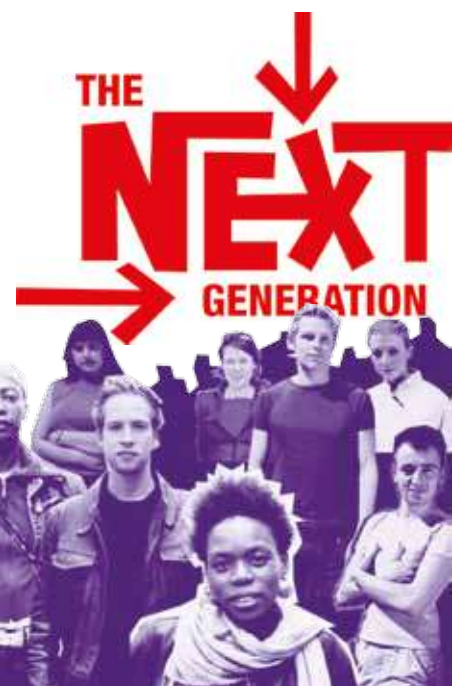
give young members the chance to develop their skills and knowledge; support young members in becoming active in the wider union.

There are all sorts of ways you can be more involved at all levels of the union.



### In your workplace and branch

Locally we have a Young Members Officer who is keen to build up local links with other young members within the branch. If your under 27 and would like to be on the mailing list or find out more please contact Andrew Jackson on

484 6726 or email:  
[Andrew.Jackson@camsfc.ac.uk](mailto:Andrew.Jackson@camsfc.ac.uk)



# Welfare Ball in October (10 tickets to win)



The North West Welfare Committee would like you to join them to celebrate  
100 Years of UNISON Welfare

at the


De Vere Whites Hotel at the Reebok Stadium, Bolton  
Friday 1 October 2010 from 7.30 pm until midnight

Guest speakers, dinner, followed by a disco

- Leek & Potato Soup
- Breast of Chicken Forestier (Sauté Chicken with red wine, mushroom, shallot & bacon sauce)
- Apple & Blueberry Crumble (with Devon clotted cream)
- Vegetarian Option – Asparagus & Wild Mushroom Risotto

£35 per head (both members & partners are welcome)

For further information please contact:  
Diane Daniels - [d.daniels@unison.co.uk](mailto:d.daniels@unison.co.uk) / 0161 661 6713



## **Stockport UNISON has agreed to sponsor the event and we have ten free places up for grabs!**

*If you would like to go to the ball then please contact Shona Robinson, Branch Welfare Officer, at [shona.robinson@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:shona.robinson@stockport.gov.uk) or via the UNISON Office on 0161 480 6335 with your contact details by the end of August 2010 and names will be drawn out of a hat. You must be a UNISON Member to enter. Members will be informed immediately after the draw.*

## Welfare Assistance at the time of need for all UNISON members

UNISON Offers Welfare Assistance to all its members, this includes a Unison Welfare Officer who can offer a listening ear to members and at times a financial safety net. We offer both financial and emotional support. We have access to grants from a wide variety of charities (as Unison Welfare is a registered charity) and can fund household items etc when people have financial need. We can signpost to other organizations. We offer Well Being Breaks after illness to people

who cannot afford them. We also offer subsidised family holidays to members subject to criteria. We can assist where there is bereavement or stress related issues. For local advice please contact Shona Robinson, our Branch Welfare Officer, as above. Nationally UNISON has a Welfare Debtline and online Debtclinic that provides services with a partner, Payplan. This is just a call away on Freephone 0800 389 3302 and is open Monday-Friday 8a.m. to 9 p.m. and 9

a.m. – 3 p.m. Saturdays. We can act for both the member and their family. UNISON Welfare Debtclinic, the online version of our debt advice service, contains advice and debt information and outlines some of the main debt problems. There are also diagnostic tools to help you set up the best recovery plan for your particular problem. Like UNISON Welfare the Debtline service is completely free to UNISON members. [www.debtclinic.co.uk/unison](http://www.debtclinic.co.uk/unison)

# Disability Employee Focus Group

**The group exists as a forum for all Stockport Council staff with an interest in disability issues, to network, share ideas and experiences and support each other to make the most of working for Stockport Council.**

*This group is committed to raising awareness throughout the Council and ensuring that solutions are found to the varied difficulties and discrimination that disabled staff feel they encounter within the workplace. New staff and existing staff can face isolation and as a group we aim to ensure that such staff have a support network when needed.*

The first meeting took place on 24.6.05 and since then we have been consulted by many Council departments and Action Groups regarding the specific issues faced by disabled staff.

## **The group**

The group has made good progress on a wide range of issues and our membership continues to grow. We have three officers, Chair, Vice Chair and Information Officer however many members are actively involved in the continuing success of the group. We are all Council staff and both individual members and officers devote their time to the group in addition to their normal work commitments.

## **Meetings**

Meetings are held on a quarterly basis with valuable support from our HR representatives.

Meetings are often attended by guest speakers, contractors, service representatives and many more. Some are invited at the request of the group and others express a specific interest in attending our meetings. This all makes for very interesting, varied and often lively debate.

We have specific rules and terms of reference due to the personal nature of some of the issues covered. There is a great deal of respect amongst members and everyone has the opportunity to have 'their say'.

After dealing with the official business there is an open forum session and all members have the opportunity to discuss issues.

This focus group is committed to ensuring that the meetings are accessible to all and regular feedback is welcomed. We are in consultation with all related groups concerning the 'new Ponsonby House' building to ensure that Disability needs are met as fully as possible.



The Disability Employee Focus Group continues to raise awareness of its activities and has a dedicated website which is updated regularly.

## **DISABILITY EMPLOYEE FOCUS GROUP**

**For further information please contact:**

**Sharon Hladchenko**  
DEFG Chair

**Neil Harrop**  
Vice Chair  
[Neil.Harrop@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:Neil.Harrop@stockport.gov.uk)

**Liz Ladley**  
Information Officer  
[Liz.Ladley@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:Liz.Ladley@stockport.gov.uk)

*All communication is treated in complete confidence and will not be disclosed without your prior permission.*

# Publicity Update within Stockport Branch

*As far as publicity within the Branch has gone we have been busy recently trying to raise the profile of our Branch here in Stockport.*

We have had numerous requests from different organisations where our members work to sponsor events in support of our member's achievements at work.

These events are around the WOW awards at the council and other organisations that have employee awards events where we have membership. We continue to raise our profile in various publications including free publications that are sent round to Stockport residents, this enables the Union to raise its profile in the Community.

One of our many aims is to raise our profile with members of the Community at large, as we face very harsh economic conditions its vital that the work the Branch does in raising the profile of public service is increased, the public need to be informed of the vital role our members play in providing the services the public rely on. UNISON's Million voices campaign is a good example of how UNISON is making sure that public can join us in their support of public services.

The branch at the moment is seeking to develop a website which we believe will enable us to communicate quicker with members, have relevant up to date information, news articles, occupational workgroup



information available, and be an interactive resource between the branch and our members. If any members wish to be added to our e-mail list for circulation of UNISON, please contact me at [mark.rayner@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:mark.rayner@stockport.gov.uk) or call me on **07814 562693**

## Tom Ainscough – Sadly Missed

**The branch was deeply saddened to learn that one of our long standing activists, Tom Ainscough, had died suddenly on 31st May 2010.**

Tom was a great asset to the branch and the wider union. He was an active member in NUPE, one of our founding unions, and continued this work when UNISON was formed. He worked tirelessly for members as a workplace steward within the Learning Disability Service he was the Disabled Members Self Organised Group Representative for the Branch. In this role

Tom was also active at Regional and National level within UNISON and campaigned throughout his life on disability issues. His experience, enthusiasm and dedication were invaluable to the branch.

Tom's funeral was attended by work colleagues, stewards and branch officers and UNISON Regional staff, showing the respect and affection in which he was held as a trade unionist and as a person. Our condolences go to Tom's family and he will be greatly missed by those of us who were fortunate to know him well.

# Why not join our team?

## Self Organisation in the Branch

UNISON has four Self Organised Groups (SOGs), enshrined in our constitution, for Black Members, LGBT Members, Women Members and Disabled Members. These are integral to UNISON achieving equality for members who may face particular prejudice and discrimination, and providing an organising focus for members who are traditionally under-represented in union structures.

The SOGs elect, from amongst members of their Group, their representative to Branch Committee and make nominations to other bodies within UNISON. The branch is seeking to increase self organised participation.

### Black Members

Marsha Branagan is our Black

Members Self Organised Group Representative. If you would like to become involved in Black Members self-organisation in the Branch please contact Marsha via the Branch Office.

### LGBT

Eileen Best is our LGBT Self Organised Group Representative. We would welcome LGBT members to join the branch group and if you are interested please contact Eileen via the Branch Office.

### Disabled Members

With Tom Ainscough's untimely death we also lost our Disabled Members Self Organised Group Representative. Unfortunately this Group is dormant so the Branch is now looking to re-establish

it. If you are interested in being part of this Group please contact our Equalities Officer, Lorraine Goulson, on **07800 617978** or email **Lorraine.goulson@stockport.gov.uk**. Once up and running the Disabled Members Self Organised Group will elect, from amongst the Group, its representative to our branch committee, and also nominate from amongst the Group the branch delegates to attend UNISON's Disabled Members Conference.

### Women Members

The branch also wants to see if there is interest in setting up a Women Members Self Organised Group. If you would like to be involved then, again, please contact our Equalities Officer, Lorraine Goulson as above.

## Other ways to join in...

UNISON has a number of ways for members to become more active. This can be as a workplace contact, workplace steward, health and safety rep, learner rep or even environment rep. All these positions come with the full support from a dedicated group of officers and fellow trade union activists. It needn't mean you giving up hours of your own time and will enable you to meet new people, develop yourself professionally and find out about what happens within your employer and workplace.

Our union would not be as strong without the dedication of its activists. To find out more please contact the Branch Officer who covers your area (see page 3) or the Branch Office on **0161 480 6335** and we will get back to you as soon as possible. I promise we don't BITE!



The UNISON logo, featuring the word "UNISON" in a bold, purple, sans-serif font. Above the letters "I" and "S" are three green, wavy lines that sweep across the top of the logo.

# Changes to the Medical Certificate: **The new 'Fit Note'**

## The New Process

*The new medical statement will still be evidence that an employee cannot work due to injury or illness, and normally will not be required until after 7th calendar day of sickness. The present arrangements for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and any occupational sick pay scheme that you may have will not be changed. As at present, the form is advice that is given to the worker to use to give to the employer as evidence of illness for the purpose of sick pay and is not binding.*



**The new Fit Note:**  
Contact us for advice on how it might affect you in your workplace

### The changes will be:

The form will have two options. That the patient is “not fit for work” or that the patient “may be fit for work” taking account of the following advice: There will be four types of alterations listed which the GP can tick. These are:

- **A phased return to work**
- **Altered Work**
- **Amended Duties**
- **Workplace Adaptations**

There will be a space for the doctor to provide more information on the condition and how it may affect what they do. In most cases there will be nothing to recommend and, as at present, the worker will go back to work once the GP feels they are ready to. There will not however be an option for the GP to say that a person is “fit for work”

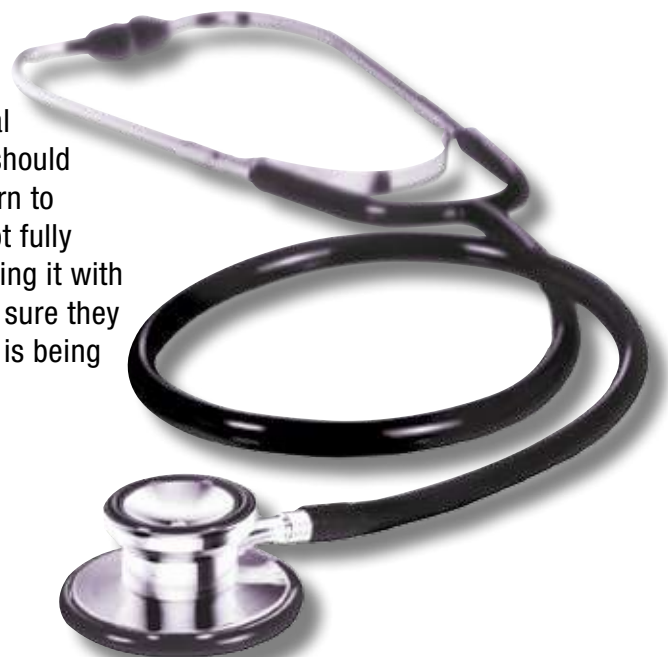
The doctor will simply not issue a new medical certificate. The doctor should only recommend a return to work if the person is not fully recovered after discussing it with the patient and making sure they are fully aware of what is being suggested.

### For further detailed information

Visit:  
**TUC website**  
**[www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk)**

or contact:  
**Mark Rayner**  
**[mark.rayner@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:mark.rayner@stockport.gov.uk)**  
who will forward a paper copy of the advice.

Our Branch Health & Safety Officer, Joan McNulty, has done a lot of work around this issue and if you need any advice regarding the operation of the new ‘Fit Note’ in your workplace then contact Joan at **[joan.mcnulty@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:joan.mcnulty@stockport.gov.uk)** or via the Branch Office on **0161 480 6335**.



# 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**

*It's time to join...*



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.

*These are difficult times and we need strong trade unions with strong leadership.*

Be part of that team and join UNISON.

**Please fill in this application 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)			

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"/> White Other     | <input type="checkbox"/> Black UK    |

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  
SK2 6ND

### 3. WHAT YOU WILL PAY (FROM 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	£25,001-£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 email 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