

# UNISON *news*

UNISON in Vertex Newsletter October 2011

## Vertex Private Sector Sale to Capita

Dear Colleague,

You will have heard, or seen, the announcement that the Private & Utilities Sector of Vertex is being sold to Capita.

All employees that carry out work for the Private sector for the majority of their time will TUPE to Capita on sale completion date estimated towards the end of October. Whilst for many this will be a simple transfer, for others in the Corporate and Shared Services departments it is not so clear cut based on whether the majority of time worked is aligned to Private Sector.

UNISON is part of the consultation, along with representatives of the Private Sector Employee Consultation Forum. We will be meeting regularly, with Capita, to ensure that your terms and conditions of employment remain the same, or are enhanced where they can be.

TUPE is an acronym for Transfer and Undertaking of Protection of Employees and is governed by law. Vertex has taken the first step by announcing the transfer and the

estimated date for it to take place. Capita, like Vertex, are one of the national target companies that UNISON organises in.

Head of the UNISON Private Contractors Unit, **Dave Johnson**, has stated "Capita are a company UNISON works reasonably with". So for our members who transfer this represents a degree of comfort.

A number of you will already have gone through a TUPE transfer at some point, either in the Public or Private Sectors. In the Business Process Outsourcing businesses it is a common occurrence and UNISON is used to consulting on your behalf. Our commitment to you, our members, is to fully represent your best interests and keep you updated throughout the consultation period.

Headed up by UNISON Senior National Officer **Dave Johnson**, there is a strong lay representative involvement in the consultation of **Carol Wetherell**, **Liz Long-Frey**, **Kerry Abram**, **Adam Taylor** and **Dave Faulkner**.

Clearly the focus is on ensuring

## STOP PRESS

At the point of this newsletter going to print briefings to employees in the Corporate and Shared Services sector indicate a brutal redundancy situation. A small portion of this sector will TUPE to Capita, for the remainder then in excess of 25% are at risk of redundancy.

For a population that has taken job cuts upon job cuts (projects Reps, Blue, Rebalancing, Sandown...) the model of Private Equity asset stripping of its acquisitions to the cost of the livelihood of its hardworking employees is an unpalatable truth.

Our representatives in this sector will endeavour to support members to the utmost through redundancy consultation at this most distressing period.

Terms & Conditions continue and any Capita Statement of Measures is examined thoroughly.

But we are also more than aware of the major questions around accommodation and pension.

UPDATE

# Pathways Pay 2009

**Two years have now passed since the introduction of the CA 1-2-1 pay progression in 2009 and it is time to give you an update on how things have gone.**

To refresh your memories; pay progression was introduced to give employees an added incentive to perform well.

It consists of 4 pay bands – probationary rate, Main Rate (3% above the Probationary Rate), Rate A (1% above Main Rate) and Rate B (1% above Rate A). To move from the Probationary Rate an employee completes the probation period and moves to the Main Rate.

To move from the Main Rate to Rate A, a CA would need to perform at Meeting Expectations for 4 quarters of 1-2-1 reviews, or 3 quarters rated at Exceeds or 2 quarters of Exceptional performance.

However, if there were 2 quarters rated at Some Development Needs, or below, your pay can be reduced to the Main Rate. Once Rate A has been attained the cycle begins

again to move to Rate B.

When an increase has been achieved the pay will be backdated to the first of the month following the end of the quarter. For example: Q1 quarter 1-2-1 completed in July, results collated by HR in August and letter sent to CA confirming pay increase backdated to 1st July.

To check if your ratings at the end of a 1-2-1 review indicate an increase in pay could be on the way both performance and competency ratings must be at least a 4 for Exceeding Expectations and both at 5 for an Exceptional performance.

There is a grid on the 1-2-1 pages that show this, if in doubt ask your manager to show you.

Your UNISON Stewards keep a close eye on the reports that are generated each time a quarterly review is held so we can bring any discrepancies to the notice of senior management in Vertex.

If you feel that your review results indicates an increase in your pay please speak to your line manager first, keeping your Steward updated.

## Tesco Broadband Relocation

The relocation of the Tesco Broadband contract from Phoenix House to Hale Court should be all but complete when this newsletter lands. A small number have opted to relocate to Hale Court with the contract whilst the majority will have been redeployed to other contracts in Phoenix House.

Should any members affected by this change have any outstanding issues then contact Dave Faulkner on 07811 778258 or email: [David.Faulkner@vertex.co.uk](mailto:David.Faulkner@vertex.co.uk) for further guidance.



## Bolton CMEC contract

Despite initial proclamation of contract extension earlier this year, there has been understandable nervousness within the employees on this contract that the actual signing of the new contract has been delayed. But there is much to be optimistic about as the contract has expanded initially into another site at Stockport and now it appears that extra space within the Bolton site is to be utilised.

This contract has been subject to a year on year extension for the past three years or so. The indication of a degree of security with a contract of several years length is welcomed by UNISON in Vertex on behalf of its members.

# Attendance Management

Your Stewards have noticed that there are some areas of Vertex where the Attendance Management Policy is not applied in accordance with the correct procedure. We have collated a number of cases and presented them to senior management for their comments.

One of the most important documents relating to this policy is the Self Certification Form (self cert) and the Return to Work Interview (RTW). If you have been absent from work due to ill health on the first day of your return you should request, and complete, a self cert.

There will be areas that you can't complete until your RTW interview; this too should be completed on your first day of returning to work.

The RTW interview should be carried out from a welfare perspective. If your line manager is not in then another line manager should complete the interview.

The main purpose of the interview are to see how you are feeling, if you are fit to be at work, if you visited your GP or a hospital. If you did, did you follow their instructions to return to health as soon as possible? Your line manager will also have any previous absences recorded on the RTW interview form, number of occasions and

number of working days you've been absent for.

You should be as open and honest as you can be, but if you are uncomfortable talking to the manager about your absence you can always ask for someone else to conduct it.

One part of the form is, perhaps, more important. This is the section on any underlying illnesses, or medical conditions that you may suffer from. If you suffer from any medical condition that may not be related to your most recent absence then this is the place to have it recorded. It is better to record it here so that your manager can take it into consideration if the future, if need be.

If your absence is classed as 'temporary' make sure that you ask if the occasion will be counted for future triggers; make sure the decision is documented on the form.

This is IMPORTANT. If you've been absent following, say, an operation,

for 3 months (75 days) and then have a stomach upset for 4 days a trigger level will have been met for the number of days – 79 in total. If the absence for the operations RTW form has words along the lines of "not to be counted towards trigger levels" on it then those 75 days are taken out of the equation and no trigger has been reached, and you will not be invited to an Absence Review Meeting (ARM). If the form does not have those, or similar words on it, then you will be invited to attend an ARM.

Similarly, if your absence is due to an underlying medical condition or illness then manager has discretion about whether to invite you to an ARM.

Above all, remember:

1. A RTW interview should be about your welfare.
2. It should not be about getting you into a room to issue a sanction.
3. A RTW interview SHOULD be completed on your first day back in the office.

## Your UNISON Stewards

**Dave Faulkner** (Applications) – Gemini

**Adam Taylor** (Document Management) – Gemini

**Anjum Iqbal, Ellen West, Andy Hill, Michelle Dixon, Darren Atkinson, Fayyaz Musa** (All Bolton)

**Martin Taylor** (M&S Hale Court)

**Carol Wetherell** and **Jeff Polder** (M&S Forres)

**Liz Long-Frey, Kerry Abram** and **Jon Paul Lavin** (Phoenix House)

# Agency Workers

## in Vertex



**M**embers who are agency workers with Randstad will be aware that Vertex is changing its provider to Adecco. For such members this does also represent a TUPE transfer. All current terms and conditions should transfer to the new provider.

But for our agency members there are another couple of significant events.

Firstly, for those agency members attached to Vertex Private Sector contracts then it cannot be avoided that there is potential impact of those contracts transferring to Capita. Your UNISON representatives involved in TUPE consultation with Capita are seeking clarification on what its intentions are with regards to the agency workforce. Not least who is the agency provider of choice for Capita?

Secondly, many will be aware that the **Agency Worker Regulations 2010** come into force from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011. The simple explanation is that after a 12 week qualifying period the agency worker will be entitled to the same basic conditions of employments as permanent employees. That is hourly pay rate and annual leave. However it excludes redundancy pay, sick pay, and maternity, paternity or adoption pay.

**Whether it is Vertex or Capita, your UNISON representatives intend to press on our agency members' behalf how these employers intend to ensure these legal rights are in place.**

## PAY 2011

**You should all have seen the company announcement that the pay review for 2011 has been postponed until, at least, later in the autumn after the Q2 financial results. For those who TUPE to Capita this then adds a further complication, but we can assure you that Capita are extremely aware of this situation via the consultation.**

Your negotiating team of **Dave Faulkner** (Senior Steward in Vertex) and **Dave Johnson** (UNISON Senior National Officer) communicate regularly with senior Vertex management and board directors to see when they can get round the table to discuss this year's pay award.

Whenever the pay review is completed increases will be backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011.

They are mindful of the promises made for the last two years about looking at the Pathways Policy, grading structure and pay for all areas of the Pathways population.

They are also aware that membership amongst managers is increasing due in no small part to the fact most have not had an increase in pay for 3 years or more. As such UNISON is lobbying to have collective bargaining recognition for these members – watch this space.

