

UNISON MATTERS

Issue 6

MORAY

January/February
2002

TMC COMPUTER USE POLICY



Unfortunately, the announcement of this policy came too late for an article in our last newsletter. We therefore take this opportunity to update members on the negotiations which took place and to state our bargaining position.

The Council have implemented a policy on use of computer equipment using the legal powers available to employers. Obviously the policy is a complete contradiction to the practice we were all used to. Therefore, we have sought from the beginning to ensure that there is some form of personal use of email and the internet for all members of staff.

Moray UNISON have sought full legal advice as part of the negotiations and whilst the business use only policy was viewed by the Branch as somewhat narrow sighted, the Council are exercising their rights to protect the integrity of their system. It is fair to say, however, that following our position on business use only, the Council are prepared to consider some form of personal use. Negotiations on this front will continue when the new policy is being reviewed in the coming months.

There are some elements of the policy which the Branch have welcomed. The policy assists with the protection of individuals who are the target of harassment where the perpetrator uses email for example. UNISON therefore has supported this area of the policy.

One of the main areas of concern, however, is with the monitoring of individual's use of email and the internet. There is much national controversy of this issue and these concerns were put to the Council during the negotiation. We were successful in getting your rights under the Data Protection Act included in the policy. This gives you the right to access all records, electronic or paper, held in your name and to see details of any monitoring of your use of the Council's system. We believed that this was a fundamental position for negotiation and we're happy that these rights are asserted through the policy.

MORAY BRANCH OFFICE
Council Offices
12/14 Greyfriars Street
ELGIN
IV30 1LS

Tel. 01343 563170
Fax. 01343 563437
E-Mail unison@moray.gov.uk
Mobile 07779 155101

We will continue to be involved in the negotiations on the issue of personal use of the Council's system and would welcome your views and experiences in light of the implementation of the policy to date. Please send your comments to the Branch office using the contact details shown on this page.



MORAY BRANCH AGM

This year's AGM will be held in the Gallery, Elgin Library on **Tuesday 5th March 2002**.

WHAT'S ON

- FREE Buffet commencing at 6pm
- Member's annual meeting – Guest Speaker – Dougie Black, Chair, UNISON Side of the SJC
- 'Market Place' stalls on Health & Safety, Membership Benefits, Equalities, Welfare Fund, Educational Opportunities including 'Return 2 Learn', Positively Public campaign, and much more
- FREE Crèche – booking required
- **Single Status** meeting for member in TMC – this will include an update on what's happening, including Car Allowances, and give members the opportunity to ask questions.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

- **COME ALONG ! – YOUR UNION NEEDS YOU SUPPORT**
- **ENCOURAGE YOU COLLEAGUES TO COME ALONG.**
- **ELECT YOUR STEWARD FROM YOUR WORKPLACE** – we must increase the number of stewards to support our increasing workload and campaigning agenda.
- **IF YOU ARE A STEWARD, SEEK RE-ELECTION.**
- **If you have any special requirements, please contact Ken Matthews at the Branch Office.**

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Violence in the home or domestic violence is abusive or violent behaviour between partners or ex-partners. Overwhelmingly, the abuser is a man the abused is a woman. The violence will often be physical or sexual, visible effects can range from bruising to permanent injury.

However, abuse is often mental or verbal; threats, belittlement or control. This abuse is less visible but is equally damaging to the woman experiencing it.

One in five of our work colleagues are affected by domestic violence at some time in their lives.

There are many myths and prejudices surrounding domestic violence, which make women afraid to speak out. Outsiders do not always understand why a woman "doesn't just leave".

Leaving an abusive relationship takes a great deal

of strength and resourcefulness and a woman breaking away from such a relationship may be lacking the courage, strength or confidence it takes to make such a life changing decision.

There are various organisations that can offer advice and practical help:

Scottish Women's Aid offer advice and refuge, they can be contacted on **0800 027 1234** – 10am to 10pm, 7 days a week, or at **www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk**

Assistance can also be given to women leaving abusive relationships through Unison Welfare, contact the Welfare Officer - Jeannie Henderson at Elgin library 01343 546697.

Giz yer guilders!

(& fetch us yer francs)

Got any old foreign currency?

If you've any obsolete eurozone currency, but not enough to be worth converting, why not send it to War on Want?

We'll make sure it goes to help some of the poorest people on this planet.

Just follow these easy steps:

- Stuff your money into an envelope remembering to give us your name and e-mail address (fraid we can't take coins).
- Address your envelope: **War on Want**, Freepost 37-39 Great Guildford Street London SE1 0YU
- Post your envelope (no stamp required) as soon as possible.

Thank You!

Registered Charity

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7620
1111

Here's a list of the obsolete currencies:

Austria (schilling) - **Belgium** (franc) - **Finland** (markka)
France (franc) - **Germany** (mark) - **Greece** (drachma)
Ireland (punt) - **Italy** (lire) - **Luxembourg** (franc)
Netherlands (guilder) - **Portugal** (escudo) - **Spain** (peseta)

Unison Welfare

Unison Welfare is Unison's registered charity.

We can provide support at times of unforeseen financial hardship or personal difficulty such as redundancy, bereavement, illness or relationship breakdown.

Financial assistance is available to members and their dependants who meet our criteria and charitable objectives. There is no guarantee that applicants will be offered financial help, but every year hundreds of members and their families benefit in this way.

Help can be given in a variety of ways in direct response to the applicant's individual circumstances. This could be, for example, to help with household bills, ease debts or help with the cost of a much needed break.

If you are in need and think we might be able to help contact the Branch Welfare Officer.

Jeannie Henderson – 01343 562600.



Workplace Stress

More than half of UK employees suffer from stress at work, with long hours blamed as the main culprit. A recent survey found that 53% have experienced stress at work within the last twelve months and one in four have required time off work as a result. Too much work is the most common cause of stress, with almost three quarters citing it as the main reason. Other stress catalysts include deadline pressures, an unsupportive work environment and problems with maintaining an acceptable work-life balance. More than half said that stress was damaging their health; 65% believe it is reducing job satisfaction and 41% feel it is lowering productivity. Stress also causes social lives to deteriorate and leads to problems with relationships. One in four employees

said they work more than five days a week and almost a third work more than 48 hours a week. Of those who work more than five days a week, 54% said they do so because it is required by their employer, and three out of five said they are not being paid for the extra hours they work. Women are less likely to be paid than men. Do you have problems with stress at work? Have you raised the issue with your line manager but felt dissatisfied with the response you have received? If so, why not contact the Unison office for advice on what you can do? Similarly, if you feel under stress at work but feel unable to speak to your line manager about it then contact us.

Unison Golf Outing

Last year's golf outing took place at Elgin Golf Club on 18 October 2001. First prize (trophy and cheque for £20) went to Derek Davidson (score - nett 74, better inward half), second prize (cheque for £10) went to Mike O'Brien (score - nett 74), third prize (cheque for £5) went to John Anderson (score - nett 74) and nearest the hole prize (cheque for £5) went to Bruce Roy.

Photos will appear in a later newsletter !

Shorts

Below are examples of recent legal victories that Unison has won for its members.

£40,000 for a housing manager who was seriously assaulted whilst making an inspection.

£2,000 for a youth worker who was assaulted during attempted theft of property.

£150,000 for a council worker whose feet were badly burned during an inspection of tarmac. The Council was held liable for failing to provide proper protective footwear.

Scottish Careers staff have returned to the public sector fold following a vigorous campaign by Unison. Careers staff will now be employed by Scottish Enterprise.

Unison Welfare is about to launch a new debt advice referral service. The introduction of this service was planned to follow the annual upsurge in debt problems experienced by families following the Christmas period. A high proportion of those seeking help from Unison's charity Unison Welfare have debts, reflecting the huge scale of the problem as it affects members and society in general.

To access the service Unison's welfare application form will require to be completed. If you wish to discuss a referral to this service please contact the Branch office. As always all members' queries are treated in the strictest confidence. Publicity material on the service will be available in the near future and will be circulated to members.

**If you have read the newsletter and are not a member but would like to join please call the recruitment hotline on 0800 70 70 77 or if you have access to the internet go to :-
<http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/join.html>**