

NOTTS UNISON NEWS

Web Site: <http://pages.unisonfree.net/nottscounty/>

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JOB EVALUATION: *HOW AND WHEN?*

By now you should have heard something about NJC Job Evaluation from a variety of sources. Articles have appeared in Incontact, in issue one of Job Evaluation News, in Notts UNISON News, and on the Notts UNISON Web site.

These first articles set out initial answers to the questions “*what*”, “*why*” and “*who*”. We hope that we were able to explain what JE is (and what it isn't), why the County Council is implementing the NJC JE scheme for the majority of employees, and whom the NJC Scheme covers. Since then the steering group has been working hard and we are now able to try and answer the questions “*how*” and “*when*”. Details are on page 3.



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**



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JE Help Line

(to be launched on 9th June 2003)

Tel: 0115 977 3643

E-mail:

prjobevalhelp@nottsccl.gov.uk

RETIRING SOON?

If so, you can join UNISON's Retired Members Section for a one off lifetime payment of just £15. Retired Membership is open to all who have at least 2 years continuous membership of UNISON at the date of retirement. But you must sign up within 3 months of retiring. Unfortunately we do not get provided with details of our members retiring or approaching retirement age. So the onus is on the retired member to let us know. So if you are about to retire and would like to join our Retired Members Section, please contact the Branch Office for further details.

MOVED HOUSE OR WORKPLACE?

It is important that we have an accurate record of members' home and work addresses. This is so we can send you UNISON information and to comply with legal restrictions should we ever need to ballot members for industrial action. If you have recently changed address, please don't forget to inform us at the Branch Office.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

We have set up an e-mail news service for the branch.

If there is a press release, some urgent news or changes to the branch web site, we can send you an e-mail. If you are interested could you please send your name, department/ employer, and e-mail address to the Branch Communications Officer, Bob Watt, at the following e-mail address:
nottscounty@unisonfree.net



Ann-Marie Lawes, a tribute

Recently, Ann-Marie, a Social Worker, passed away peacefully on 28th April 2003. As an active member of Nottinghamshire UNISON it would be only appropriate to acknowledge the tremendous contribution she has made to this area of work in her professional life.

Ann-Marie has raised numerous issues thus setting a clear dimension to agendas when it comes to bench marking the presence of black workers and their contribution and the take up of equal services within for example, the Social Services department.

She instigated the setting up of the Black Self Organised Group in the Notts UNISON Branch. For several years she job shared the Black officer post. Furthermore, Ann-Marie was well known to a wide circle of officers within the branch and beyond including regional and national UNISON members, as one of those significant persons who was truly committed to sensitively champion unforeseen relevant causes. She attended a number of UNISON conferences including, National, Local Government and Black Members. There was also her keen interest in raising the profile and support for those workers in the voluntary sector who were UNISON members. Giving support to the community she represents as a black woman, Ann-Marie would deliver generously when called upon to assist with crisis. Amongst her numerous attributes that she has left with us, her sense of humour and contagious laughter was resounding, second to none and in a 'nutshell', unique!

In addition, her strong sense of will and genuine purposeful direction of fairness for all will help us celebrate a small part of Ann-Marie Lawes global life. A social worker by profession and particularly experienced with Fostering and Adoption Ann Marie had recently returned from Gambia, where she was involved in setting a Children's Charity Home for local orphans. She was also very involved within the local black community in Nottingham, born witness by the huge turnout for her funeral at the Methodist Church on Mansfield Road, Nottingham at which the branch was represented.

She will be greatly missed. Nottinghamshire UNISON would like to send heart felt condolences to Ann-Marie's family, friends and especially to her parents who have suffered this great loss on the narrow bend in her life

Ann Marie was buried at Redhill Cemetery, Arnold and there will be a tree-planting memorial at the Cemetery on 5th October to represent a permanent tribute and memorial to her.

Valda Murray

The branch will be involved in the tree planting memorial but for individuals who knew Ann Marie and wish to be involved please contact: budgiebird@ntlworld.com

Alternatively contributions can also be made to the Sickle Cell Foundation. Cheques payable to: OSCAR Nottingham at Oscar Nottingham, 8 Church Square, Shopping Centre, Lenton, Nottingham NG71FL

How will JE be carried out?

Benchmarking

Initially, a test run of the system will be carried out to look at sample of posts. We will need to carry out “benchmark” evaluations for a range of jobs at different levels and across departments. These “benchmark” evaluations are purely to check the system and will not count towards the results for the jobs. Any jobs used for benchmarking will have to be formally evaluated once the checks have been completed.

Putting jobs into families and groups

The steering group has been working with personnel sections and trade unions to identify families of jobs that are similar. These families will then be subdivided into groups and sub-groups across departments. Further explanation can be found in the Guidebook

Before the interview

Before an evaluation of a job can be carried out, the post holders need to prepare for the interview. This will involve meetings of jobholders in the relevant group. Details of the meetings can be found in the Guidebook.

If yours is a unique post (you are the only person holding a post that cannot be grouped with any others) you should still go through the preparation process, talking through the job with your line manager and a trade union steward before going into the interview.

If you are a unique post holder but are not a trade union member, you need to be aware that a trade union steward will be in the meeting as an observer to maintain fairness and consistency throughout all the interviews.

The interview

A team of analysts has been employed by the County Council to carry out the interviews. It is their job to meet with the group representative(s) (along with the manager and trade union steward) and go through a series of questions on a computer. The questions have been designed to minimise any guesswork. They are either “yes” or “no” answers, or choosing from a list of options.

The programme and questions have been agreed between the employers and trade unions at a national level as a way of evaluating jobs in accordance with the 13 factors in the NJC JE scheme.

When all the questions have been answered, you will be able to see a Job Overview on screen that describes your job in terms of the 13 job evaluation factors. If, on reading this you do not agree with the description, you can revisit any of the factors to reconsider your answers.

At the end of the interview, we are asking the person being interviewed to sign to say that they were satisfied with the way the interview was carried out. This will also be your opportunity to record if your job has changed since 1st April 2002.

After the interview

After the interview, all members of the job group will be sent a copy of the Job Overview within 10 days. This can be used to check the outcome of the interview to maintain consistency and fairness. If anyone is not satisfied with the Job Overview they will have 5 days from receipt to raise their concerns via the Help Line. If you do not receive a copy of the Job Overview for your group please contact the Help Line.

The Job Overviews are then passed to Data Monitoring Panels whose task is to look for anything that stands out such as any inconsistencies between jobs of the same type. These panels will consist of 2 managers and 2 trade union reps and will be chaired by a member of the steering group. At the end of this process, the information will be used to apply any revised pay grading system for the County Council.

When is all this going to happen?

The current plan is for the benchmark interviews to take place in June 2003. This should be followed by the first group meetings ready for the start of the proper interviews by the analysts from the end of June.

The group meetings and interviews will then continue over the summer and on into the autumn. The intention is that they will be completed by the end of October 2003, leaving November and December to deal with any outstanding issues and to list the jobs in rank order. This will be the end of the job evaluation process.

Once the evaluation exercise is completed, we expect that January to March 2004 will be spent on the grading exercise, matching the Hay and NJC evaluation results up to a new grading structure that has yet to be formally agreed.

We hope that this information helps to answer the “how” and “when” questions but we recognise that you might have other questions you want answering.

That’s why we are producing a Guidebook that will try to answer any other questions beyond the basic “what”, “why”, “who”, “how” and “when” that have been covered so far. These will be distributed through your departmental systems in the near future. If you are aware of any special language needs or formats (Braille, large print, tape etc) in your staff group please make sure the manager knows so we can ensure no one is missed out.

If you have not received a copy of the Guidebook by the time you are told your group is to have its interview preparation meeting, please contact the Help Line.

UNISON AND JOB EVALUATION

Why is UNISON supporting JE?

When the Single Status agreement was introduced in 1997, one of the key issues was the need to introduce fair and non-discriminatory grading structures to integrate former blue and white collar terms and conditions. The employers and trade unions together produced a job evaluation scheme that would enable reviews to be carried out at a local level in accordance with equal pay legislation.

Equal pay legislation has been in force in the UK for over 30 years. Despite this, women's pay still lags behind that of men. In 2002, UNISON reported that women working full time earn just 82p for every £1 of earnings for a man working full time. For part time workers the gap is even wider. Hourly pay for women working part time is just 59% of the hourly earnings of men working full time. Although the pay gap narrows the more educated women are, recent research shows that the starting salary for women graduates lags behind that of male graduates, even when they have studied similar subjects and gone into similar occupations. This graduate pay gap is estimated to be 15%.

The Single Status Job Evaluation scheme (also known as the NJC JE Scheme) is based on some fundamental principles. The scheme is jointly "owned" by the employers and the trade unions. It is required to be open and transparent. Details of the factors, their relative weightings, and how the scheme will work have to be made known to those involved. The scheme has been designed to incorporate the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. It is free from gender bias and discrimination on the grounds of race, sexuality, religion, age and disability.

The main advantage of the scheme is that it is designed for local government. It recognises that we have many jobs that face emotional and physical demands that traditional schemes designed only for office workers fail to measure. It looks at the knowledge and skills needed to do the job (recognising that keyboards and pneumatic drills are both tools used in local government jobs), what demands are involved (decision making, physical, mental and emotional), what responsibilities are placed on the jobholder (whether for other people in the caring jobs, supervision, or financial or physical resources), as well as working conditions.

Why use a computer system?

Given the short length of time available to carry out NJC Job Evaluation, we have agreed to the use of a computerised system called Gauge. This software has been agreed nationally by the employers and the trade unions as a way of evaluating local government jobs in accordance with the 13 factors. The questions are standard for all councils who use Gauge, and the level your job is evaluated at is determined by the answers to the questions in the interview, not by your job title or grade.

There are a few questions on the computer where the range of answers requires local understanding to reflect the council using the system. Where possible, we have agreed to use the nationally suggested figures. However there are some questions that must use local figures because there are no nationally suggested figures.

For example, the scheme asks about responsibility for money. Each council has to decide what it means by small, considerable, large or very large amounts of money. What might be seen as "very large" in a small borough council might be "large" in a county council. We have taken advice from stewards and members who are involved in financial matters and have suggested figures to be used.

Whatever figures are used, whether locally or nationally agreed, the advantage of the JE scheme is that every job in the council that is evaluated is measured on the same basis. The other major advantage of the NJC JE scheme is that it does not discriminate against part time workers. The questions ask about the percentage of time a post holder has to do things rather than the number of hours. For example (and using made up numbers) a school crossing patrol can perhaps say that they have to be outside for 100% of their time rather than 1 hour a day (5 hours a week). For this part of the working conditions factor they would be evaluated at a higher level than a full time worker who also has to be outside for 5 hours a week which is only 13.5% of their time.

The other factor in favour of using a computerised system is that, even with jobs grouped together and people being interviewed on behalf of a group, we are still looking at having to carry out over 1000 interviews in 18 weeks. This is achievable with 5 analysts working full time from the end of June. Using the Gauge system also means that we can have Job Overviews produced for each job and circulated to members of the job group. This means that even if you are not interviewed you will know what the outcome for your job is in terms of the 13 JE factors.

We've seen the JE newsletters and booklets, but what is the branch doing?

For NJC Job Evaluation, the County Council and the Trade Unions have introduced joint working practices. This is a new approach for both parties.

The main area of joint working has been the formation of a 6 member Steering Group made up of equal numbers of management and trade union representatives. The 2 UNISON reps are Jackie Johnson from Social Services and Bob Watt from Environment, and the GMB has a seat at the table. Joint working has meant that trade union reps have

been involved in working out the practicalities of implementing NJC JE, jointly selecting, short listing and interviewing for the posts of Project Coordinator, Analysts and Admin Support, as well as producing the publicity that explains NJC JE to employees.

Another area of joint working will come into play once the evaluation interviews are under way. The results of each interview will be checked by a Data Monitoring Panel. There will be two of these, each consisting of 2 managers and 2 trade union stewards and chaired by a member of the Steering Group.

Your Notts UNISON branch has been preparing for NJC JE through the spring of 2003. The reps on the Steering Group have been keeping the branch informed at regular JE Working Group meetings that include representatives from each County Council based Stewards' Committee.

Stewards' Committees have checked early drafts of the lists of jobs to be evaluated to see if any posts have been missed. For example, we spotted that one group of workers had been missed by the department where they were based on 1st April 2002 and by their current department because both thought the other would include them. The Stewards' Committees have also been advising the UNISON reps on the Steering Group about jobs to ensure that they are put in their relevant groups.

We have also held 2 stages of training sessions for stewards so that we will have a large pool of stewards who can attend the group meetings and follow through into the interviews.

After they have been trained, stewards should also be able to answer most members' questions once the interviews get under way.

The branch has also tried to keep members informed. We have put the jointly agreed text from the JE Newsletters into Notts UNISON News and onto the branch website.

What can I do as a member?

As a UNISON member, you should make sure that you know what is going on by reading the JE Newsletters and Guidebook when they are circulated in your workplace, reading Notts UNISON News, and visiting the branch website: http://pages.unisonfree.net/nottscounty/njc_je1.htm

You can help yourself and your colleagues by starting to think about your job in terms of the 13 Job Evaluation Factors before the group meetings. Think about:

=> How long does it take to learn to use software, equipment, tools etc? How far ahead do jobs have to be scheduled? How far ahead do you have to plan work? What length of spent is spent planning?

=> What proportion of your working time are physical demands placed on you? How long do you need to concentrate for? Are you in a job where you are frequently interrupted? How often are you set deadlines? Are they predictable or unpredictable?

=> Do you face emotional demands as an integral part of your job i.e. at least twice a year? How often do you have to deal with upsetting behaviour?

=> How many staff do you supervise? How many different areas/types of work do they do? And how many workplaces are they in?

=> In your job, are you accountable for money? Or do you account for money? Or do you handle money? Do you have a level of discretion over how money spent?

=> What range of equipment are you responsible for and what is its relative value? Are you responsible for other peoples' possessions, and if so what are their values?

=> If you have to work outdoors, what percentage of your working time is exposed to weather? Wherever you work, what percentage of working time exposed to disagreeable, unpleasant or hazardous situations (assuming of course that all H&S Regs have been met)? How often are you subject to antisocial behaviour and for how long?

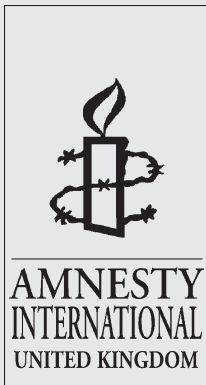
If your workplace doesn't comply with H&S Regs, Job Evaluation will not deal with the problem. We have H&S Reps and Officers who should be told about these issues. Similarly, if you are concerned that you face abuse because of your race, gender, disability or sexuality, you need to recognise that this is not a matter for Job Evaluation. Any such abuse is a serious matter that should be dealt with under the County Council's harassment procedure and with the branch's support.

When you are told about your group meeting, make sure you turn up to have your say. If you are the person chosen to be interviewed, make sure you turn up on time and prepared with notes from the group meeting of what everyone agreed your jobs involved on 1st April 2002.

When the Job Overview is sent out to your job group (within 10 working days of the interview) make sure you read it. If you are not satisfied that it accurately reflects your job let the project coordinator know. You only have 5 working days from your receiving the Job Overview to register your concerns. If you haven't received yours within 10 working days of the interview it is up to you to contact the Help Line to ask where your copy is.

As a UNISON member and County Council employee, you can save yourself a lot of stress and worry by remembering this basic but fundamental fact:

**Job Evaluation is about the requirements of the job,
not about how well you do the job.**



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK AGM

"Open your newspaper -any day of the week -and you will find a report from somewhere in the world of someone being imprisoned, tortured or executed because his opinions or religion are unacceptable to his government. The newspaper reader feels a sickening sense of impotence. Yet if these feelings of disgust all over the world could be united into common action, something effective could be done."

This Branch of UNISON is affiliated to Amnesty International UK and is entitled to send a delegate to the Annual General Meeting. This year we elected Jim Connolly, Joint H&S Officer to represent us at the event in the Queens University, Belfast. This is Jim's report.

Friday 11th April 2003

This is when all the various groups get together to discuss their particular strategy for the weekend. These meetings are prior to the AGM itself but have become a regular 'Must Do' event for everyone. I attended the Trade Union Network, which was very well attended, if a little bit mundane. This had more to do with the motions submitted, or lack of them, than anything else. It didn't take long for all unions present to agree a common line.

One of the International guests Samuel Morales Florez a teacher and Human Rights activist from Colombia attended this session. He identified a catalogue of Human Rights violations in his country, which was followed by a short debate with a UNISON national executive speaker, Mike Folliard, relating his experiences following his recent visit to Colombia and reporting on the solidarity work UNISON is involved in.

Saturday April 12th

Traditionally AI have a musical opening ceremony and this year they brought together the indigenous drums of Ireland, the Lambeg from the Protestant marching bands tradition and the Bodhran from the Catholic folk music tradition. Together and combined with the likes of the African Djembe drum, they made a unique sound the likes of which has never been heard before. (And should never be again!)

Their contribution was followed by a minute's silence as a symbol of solidarity and sorrow for all the innocent victims of the Iraq War.

The lighting of the Amnesty candle marks the beginning of the conference proper. A number of reports were presented including: minutes of AGM 2002, the UK Section Annual Report, Implementation of 2002 AGM decisions, and the Treasurer's Report.

The really interesting part of the AGM for Trade Unions apart from the Friday night "networking" is the workshops where all motions submitted have to be discussed first by working parties under one of the following categories: Vision, Mission & Strategy; Actions & Campaigns; Organisation, Administration & Development; or Board Election Proposals

The working parties discuss amend and try to seek a consensus on a final wording to be put to the plenary session which is held on a Sunday morning. The original mover can either accept amendments as friendly or retain the original wording if she/he wants. However if an amended motion has the support of the working party this is also put to the plenary session. This is "usually good fun" so I was told but this year there was very little controversy.



With the exception of motions on the War in Iraq and after considerable debate motions were supported overwhelmingly at the plenary session. On Iraq there was a common debate with some opposing views.

We also heard various guest speakers throughout the weekend, The Right Honourable the Lord Judd of Portsea spoke on "Human Rights in Russia", Kerry Max Cook on the death penalty (via video link), and Eve Ensler spoke on Women's Human Rights. We also heard from Sergei Nitkin, Director of Amnesty International Moscow, and Samuel Morales Florez who is a Colombian Human Rights defender.

All were well received and in particular Playwright and Activist Eve Ensler renowned for her award winning play "The Vagina Monologues". This play has now been presented at over 1100 venues around the world including a full house at Madison Square Gardens in New York.

I left this AGM under the cloud of the War in Iraq and feeling more than at anytime previous how pressure of opinion must be maximised if Amnesty International is to ever achieve its ultimate objective, which is to close for business.

"Only then, when the last prisoner of conscience has been freed, when the last torture chamber has been closed, when the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a reality for the world's people, will our work be done." (Peter Benenson, founder of Amnesty International)

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the branch for allowing me to attend and represent the branch at this crucial gathering of individuals and organisations so that together we can give a voice to the disenfranchised, the illegally detained and disposed of this world.

Jim Connolly

BACKGROUND TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Peter Benenson, a British Lawyer, was spurred into action by reading an article in The Observer. The article was about how two Portuguese students had been arrested and sentenced to imprisonment for drinking a toast to liberty in a Lisbon restaurant.

It so enraged him at the time that he walked straight out of the underground and up the steps of St Martins-in-the-Fields church (Trafalgar Square, London) and went in to see what could really be done effectively to mobilize world opinion.

From such beginnings Amnesty International was launched in 1961. His newspaper appeal, "The Forgotten Prisoners", was published worldwide on 28th May 1961 and brought in more than 1,000 offers of support for the idea of an international campaign to protect human rights.

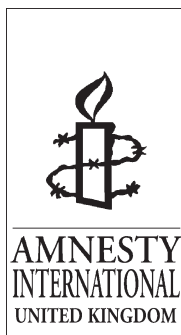
Within 12 months the new organisation had sent delegations to four countries to make representations on behalf of prisoners, had taken up 210 cases, and had organised national branches in seven countries.

From the beginning, the principles of strict impartiality and independence were established. Amnesty members were to act on cases worldwide, but not become involved in cases in their own countries and the emphasis was on the international protection of human rights.

Peter Benenson's choice of a symbol for Amnesty International was inspired by the following ancient Chinese proverb.

"It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness"

The candle in barbed wire is still used today.



The UK Section of Amnesty International has more than 189,000 members, 289 local groups, 400 youth groups, 90 affiliated student and Trade union organisations throughout the United Kingdom. They have a £14million budget with offices in London, Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff.

UNISON
the public service union

YOUNG PEOPLE *in* UNISON

I've recently been elected as Branch Young Members Officer. I'm here to represent unison young members under the age of 27 years, help recruit young workers and improve communication.

I've been a Unison member for two and a half years and have actively been involved in helping to attract more young members to Unison. The average age of a Unison member is 47 years. Each year the average age increases by 1 year.

Over the past year Unison has managed to recruit over 50,000 young workers, we have approximately 335 young members in our branch, but a lot more young workers who may not be in a union.

Unison doesn't just want to recruit members. Unison wants you to become active in improving working conditions and pay, campaigning for better public services and attending educational courses run by Unison.

I'd like to see more young members becoming involved so we can:

- => Get our voice heard
- => Be effective on issues that matter to young workers
- => To give young people a chance to gain experience
- => To become the future of our union



If you're interested in writing articles for the newssheet please e-mail: branch.office@nottsunison.org.uk

If you're interested in educational courses or becoming a steward, please contact the branch office or myself. Whatever issues you want to talk about, whatever your interests please contact me via the branch on: 0115 981 0405 or e-mail: I_mclean50@hotmail.com

Lesley McLean

UNISON and the Local Government Pay Commission

Last year's pay settlement was just the start of UNISON's determination to tackle the neglect of all our members working for local councils. Under the terms of the pay deal agreed, the National Joint Council Employers and Trade Unions have established a Local Government Pay Commission (web site: <http://www.lgpay.org.uk/>).

The commission is investigating the key long-term problems of equal pay and low pay which UNISON highlighted in the pay dispute. Implementation of single status also falls within this remit. The commission will report to the NJC in September and its recommendations will provide the basis for future negotiations. UNISON and the trade union side have now made submissions to the pay commission. The employers have also submitted their case.

The trade union side submission

The trade union side submission was underpinned by our commitment to providing top quality services that people want and read. We argued that the "culture of neglect" of local government staff will prevent "modernisation" because it has led to low pay, unequal pay, widespread recruitment and retention problems and a high degree of casualisation. We argued that the government and councils need to "invest to improve" and that with substantial increases in funding it will be impossible to significantly improve services.

The key findings outlined in the submission were:

- => Local government pay continued to fall behind economy-wide average earnings between 2000 and 2002
- => Overall NJC women workers earn just 65% of the average gross pay of their male colleagues
- => Full-time women staff now earn only 63% of economy-wide male gross annual earnings
- => For part-time workers, the equivalent figure is a shocking 46% pro rata
- => 59% of part-time women workers earned below £6.07 pence an hour in 2002
- => 90% of councils have recruitment and retention problems, which are not confined to the south east and Greater London or white collar staff
- => Councils' responses are ad hoc and uncoordinated
- => Agency staff are frequently used in an unplanned way, with no monitoring of impact on services or other staff
- => Chief executives, Best Value officers and personnel officers in a UNISON survey reported that recruitment and retention problems are having a negative impact on staff and services
- => Working Tax Credits and research by the Family Budget Unit on a 'low cost but acceptable' wage both suggest a minimum wage target of £6.50 an hour.

Key recommendations

- => Pay and related rewards, including Greater London weighting and fringe allowances, should be brought into line with other public sector groups
- => A centrally driven approach to implementation of Single Status pay and grading reviews is needed, with allied funding and compulsory pay audits
- => There is already sufficient flexibility in the Green Book to allow councils to take labour market factors into account
- => We oppose any moves to more localised bargaining as unnecessary and likely to lead to more discrimination.

UNISON's submission

In addition to the overall points made in the joint submission on pay trends, equal pay and Single Status, UNISON also submitted key supporting evidence, based on in-house and commissioned research. UNISON's detailed briefing papers comprise:

- => 'Cold Comfort' and 'More Cold Comfort' by Dr Carole Thornley of Keele University, analysing local government pay trends
- => 'Failing to Deliver - Implementing the Single Status Agreement', also by Dr Carole Thornley. This reports on the survey of branches and employers to ascertain the reasons for slow progress with Single Status. It highlights that cost and complexity of the process are key blocks to implementing pay and grading reviews. It concludes that "the major impediments to progress...are seen to be primarily on the employer side"
- => 'All Credit to You - How Working and Pension Tax Credits affect local government workers', by the New Policy Institute, looks at the impact of Working and Pension Tax Credits on local government workers and the overall pay bill. The report concludes that the WTC has effectively established a "real" minimum wage of £6.20 per hour for a couple with no dependant children and £5.20 for a single person with no dependants. It suggests that a minimum wage of £6.50 for our members would be appropriate in this context. It also suggests that Treasury "savings" on pay increases through reduced credits and tax revenue should be put back into local government. The overall Tax Credits bill for local government is £1.1 billion
- => Briefings based on research into the impact of privatisation on pay and conditions in Brighton, Tower Hamlets, Heart of England Care and Rotherham by Dr Peter Ambrose, Centre for Public Services, Jane Wills and IMPACT/ Centre for Public Services
- => Research by CURDS, University of Newcastle entitled 'Our Members from the North', highlighting the importance of local government employment and pay to local economies
- => UNISON surveys on recruitment and retention reporting the findings from surveys of Chief Executives, Best Value and Personnel Officers and branches. Both found that recruitment and retention problems are impacting badly on services as well as staff
- => 'All Work and No Pay' - UNISON's survey of unpaid overtime - found 57% of UNISON members surveyed work unpaid overtime each week. The value of unpaid overtime equates to 15% of average annual salary
- => 'Holiday Pay? No Way' looks at the problems faced by term-time workers, and shows that many earn less than the minimum wage once unpaid holidays are taken into account. Far from being a "family friendly" arrangement, it exploits already low paid women workers
- => 'Working for Local Communities', also produced by the Local Government Section, takes an in-depth look at domiciliary care workers, social and residential care workers, school support and housing staff. They highlight the extent and impact of low pay and under-valuation of our members' jobs on their lives and services. The impact of recruitment and retention difficulties on services is also discussed.

The employers' side submission

The employers' evidence consists of an overview of their position on local government pay and related issues, followed by more detailed sections on each of the Commission's nine terms of reference. The employers' side evidence argues that:

- => The NJC system needs a radical change away from a "one size fits all" approach
- => "Any attempts to impose national grades, or even prescriptive procedural arrangements, would serve to undermine (that) responsiveness."
- => Lowest pay rates have to conform to "the disciplines of the market"
- => The Green Book "should be made still more flexible by setting a forward date for the abolition of its Part 3"
- => Two or three year national settlements should become the norm
- => Local pay structures should reward employee contribution through "fewer, broader pay bands to facilitate contribution pay, increase flexibility and reflect real levels of responsibility"
- => There is "no need for national strikes in local government because both parties have unilateral access to binding arbitration".

UNISON SAYS: Blair is wrong on PFI

The Prime Minister is mistaken if he thinks the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) is the solution to public service reform.

Responding to Mr Blair's comments, UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis said:

"It is an extraordinary claim from the Prime Minister to link the future of public service reform with the Private Finance Initiative, as if there is no alternative way of improving our public services. This is nonsense."

"The government's mistake of 'absolutely fundamental historic importance' has been to prevent the public sector from using other methods of procurement, leaving PFI as virtually the only option."

"PFI is not building world class public services. In fact, there is overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Only last week new research in the BMJ revealed that using public-private partnerships to build hospitals was poor value for money and resulted in falling bed numbers and service cuts."

"The Government should ask itself why it continues to support the use of PFI in the face of mounting criticism from many quarters. It should carry out the independent review of PFI called for by the Labour Party conference and establish once and for all whether it is delivering value for taxpayers' money."

Mr Prentis also criticised the Prime Minister over his support for foundation hospitals.

"Foundations hospitals will be like a Trojan horse, bringing private companies into the heart of the NHS. They will create an internal market and will lead to a two-tier health service."



Proposal to Change the Subscription Bands

UNISON is proposing to change the subscription bands to ensure that our rates are fairer. At present (see table 1 below) our lowest paid members pay a larger proportion of their earnings in subs than our higher paid members, and I am sure we all agree that this is not fair.

Table 1

Band	Income £	Weekly subs £	Monthly subs £	Percentage %
A	0 to 2,000	0.42	1.81	2.17
A1	2,001 to 5,000	0.90	3.90	1.34
B	5,001 to 7,000	1.23	5.34	1.07
C	7,001 to 10,000	1.52	6.59	0.93
D	10,001 to 15,000	1.80	7.78	0.75
E	15,001 to 20,000	2.21	9.57	0.66
F	20,001 to 25,000	3.13	13.57	0.72
G	over 25,000.00	3.88	16.81	0.73

The proposals (see table 2 below) split subscription rates more evenly over the salary range, and allow a decrease in subs for our lowest paid members, a small increase for the middle ranges and a larger increase for our higher paid colleagues.

Table 2

Band	Income £	Weekly subs £	Monthly subs £	Percentage %
A	0 to 2,000	0.30	1.30	1.56
B	2,001 to 5,000	0.81	3.50	1.20
C	5,001 to 8,000	1.22	5.30	0.98
D	8,001 to 11,000	1.52	6.60	0.83
E	11,001 to 14,000	1.81	7.85	0.75
F	14,001 to 17,000	2.24	9.70	0.75
G	17,001 to 20,000	2.65	11.50	0.75
H	20,001 to 25,000	3.23	14.00	0.75
I	25,001 to 30,000	3.98	17.25	0.75
J	30,001 to 35,000	4.68	20.30	0.75
K	over 35,000	5.19	22.50	0.72

This proposal is going to our National Conference in June and our Stewards will be discussing it at Branch Committee on 5th June. Please make sure that your steward knows how you feel so that we make the right decision about whether we should support these proposals or reject them.

Jill Turner
Branch Chair

MARCH/APRIL NUN: AN APOLOGY

Many of you received the March/April edition of Notts UNISON News in early May. This was due to a combination of factors and I am apologising to members. The last edition was late getting to the printers because too few articles had arrived at the deadline and we were waiting for details of the march and rally in Manchester (which we put on the website and out via the e-mail newsletter as soon as they were available).

To remind any potential authors of articles, the deadline for each edition of Notts UNISON News is noon on the following Fridays:

27th June (July/August edition)
29th August (September/October edition)
31st October (November/December edition)
19th December (January/February edition)

Bob Watt

Branch Communications Officer

INTERNATIONAL RSI CONFERENCE HELD IN NOTTS

The branch sent Jenny Hogg and Reneen Hopewell along to find out more. With a recent HSE survey estimating that 1.1 million people are suffering a Musculo-Skeletal Disorder (MSD) caused by or made worse by work, they found the RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury) Conference at the Albert Hall in Nottingham to be an interesting and informative day.



Delegates heard from guest speakers on HSE research, revised DSE guidance, Ergonomics of using a mouse, economic consequences, treatment options, case law update, workplace ergonomics and access to IT in the workplace. Jenny reports that RSI can occur in a wide variety of occupations such as catering, cleaning and construction work but in recent years it has become associated with computer working.

It is estimated that 4 million working days a year are lost in Britain because of RSI, costing employers in excess of £200 million. But any cost cannot just be that of sick pay for the employee. The employer also has to account for the cost of the temporary or permanent replacement worker, retraining, loss of production, management and personnel time, pension drain, compensation claims, fines, legal expenses, increased insurance premiums etc. Last year the HSE visited 8,000 workplaces concentrating on MSD risks and served 250 improvement notices and 50 prohibition notices. The cost to society with the drain on the NHS and social security budgets and to the individual (in the worst cases involving permanent disablement) is far more.

Jenny added, *"I learnt that there were 22 medical conditions which came under the RSI 'umbrella'. Ranging from familiar ones such as carpal tunnel syndrome and vibration induced white finger to De Quervain's Syndrome and Dupuytren's Contracture. I was surprised that only five on the list may under certain circumstances be accepted as 'a prescribed industrial disease' and may attract industrial injury benefit. Recently introduced reforms have made this even more difficult, leaving people with RSI unable to work and ineligible for state support. I feel that, as a union, we should be more actively campaigning to change legislation. Surely if something you do at work makes you ill, it should be classed as an 'industrial illness'?"*

The guest speakers included a solicitor who specialised in serious injury cases who spoke of the difficulty of winning with RSI. Listening to the solicitor, it became clear that you must make an accident book entry each time you have a problem so that your employer is aware it is ongoing. You have to establish a whole chain at trial. Jenny understood the relevance of all she was hearing about RSI to her role as Joint Environment Convenor. A school meals worker she has been representing has recently been "retired" on ill health due to severe tennis elbow at just 37!

All the speakers agreed that it was in everyone's best interest to prevent RSI. The body at first is quite resilient and proper risk assessments, varying jobs and posture, the correct equipment, and regular breaks will stop conditions getting worse. Rest and drug treatment are essential for more severe cases. Looking at work practices to prevent injury is important. Jenny is representing another member who is "retiring" because of soft tissue and nerve damage to her right hand that is so bad she has a problem writing her name. The member is convinced that it has been caused by holding the trigger down for hours at a time when she was buffing large floor areas. Yet Jenny met a delegate from the South West who told her that her Health Care Trust had stopped using buffing machines because of the H&S problems. The floors no longer had a nice shiny surface but swab tests had been done and they were just as clean.

It was also reported that computer mice are causing RSI by not being used properly and in cramped conditions. Some of the suggestions e.g. wrist supports, using full size keyboards instead of smaller laptop ones, larger mouse mats, changing the screen height and providing footrests need minimal financial outlay. Software should be altered as continual double clicking, and clicking and dragging are particularly harmful.

Jenny was also surprised to hear that there is no legislation in place covering the use of computers in schools. She said, *"It is just to be hoped that schools observe 'good practice', but in how many (especially primaries) are computer suites a last minute afterthought perhaps consisting of a row of desks in a cramped corridor? How many teachers have been trained in the correct use of computers including good posture, risk assessments etc? You have got children using improperly set up computers at school who then go home and play on an improperly set up PC or computer game at home for the evening, and in the intervals texting their friends on their mobile phones. A Dutch press release of 2002 stated that 40% of university students have RSI. How many of our children will have RSI before they even start work?"*

Jenny concluded by pointing out that *"delegates from all over the country and from abroad attended the conference but I was disappointed that I couldn't find any representatives from Nottinghamshire County Council other than Reneen and myself who were there as UNISON delegates."*

More information can be found on the Ability Net website: www.abilitynet.co.uk and if any members would like copies of the handouts please contact either Reneen or Jenny at the Branch Office.

Application for Membership - Notts UNISON

I apply to join UNISON and agree to pay the appropriate subscription, to comply with the rules and constitution, as in the UNISON rule book.

BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

Title (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss): _____ **Surname:** _____ **Forename:** _____

Payroll No.:
ES(establishment code):
N.I. No.:
Scale/Grade:

Home address	:					
Home Post Code	:					
Home Tel	:					
Department	:					
Employer	:					
Work address	:					
Work Post Code	:					
Work Tel	:					
e-mail	:					
Job Title	:					

Subscriptions

ANNUAL PAY

Weekly/Monthly

SUBS

Tick box

up to £2000	£0.42	£1.81	BAND A1	[]
£2000-£5000	£0.90	£3.90	BAND A2	[]
£5001-£7000	£1.23	£5.34	BAND B	[]
£7001-£10000	£1.52	£6.59	BAND C	[]
£10001-£15000	£1.80	£7.78	BAND D	[]
£15001-£20000	£2.21	£9.57	BAND E	[]
£20001-£25000	£3.13	£13.57	BAND F	[]
£25000+	£3.88	£16.81	BAND G	[]

Retired Members £15(Life) Students £10pa Unemployed £4pa

Conditions of Service:(Tick all those boxes that are appropriate to you and your post.)

Full Time	Part Time	Term Time Only	Job Share	Permanent	Temporary
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*CAR ALLOWANCE:

*DISABILITY

Essential	Casual	None	Yes	No
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*ETHNIC ORIGIN:

Afro-carib	African	Indian	Pakistani	OtherAsian	White Euro	Other
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* This information is entirely voluntary, however it will help the branch ensure that minority groups are kept informed of any National or Local events that might effect them. Any information provided will be completely confidential.

POLITICAL FUND

I authorise the deduction of the following Political Fund payments part of my subscription.

Delete where appropriate.

Affiliated Fund / General Fund

Affiliated Political Fund (your subscription includes 6.5% contribution to this fund) campaigns for members through affiliation to the Labour Party both locally and nationally. Those paying the affiliated levy can take part in the APF activities and make their contribution on policy issues, including Labour Party policy.

General Political Fund (your subscription includes 5p a week or 22p per month contribution to this fund) is independent of support for any Political Party but liases with MP's from all Party's to pursue UNISON's interests. It is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union.

YOU MUST INDICATE AT LEAST ONE OPTION
as the NEC will automatically allocate you to the
APF if this section is left blank.

AUTHORISATION FOR DEDUCTION OF SUBSCRIPTION

I hereby authorise the deduction from my salary, for payment to UNISON on my behalf, of the subscription appropriate to my annual earnings.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

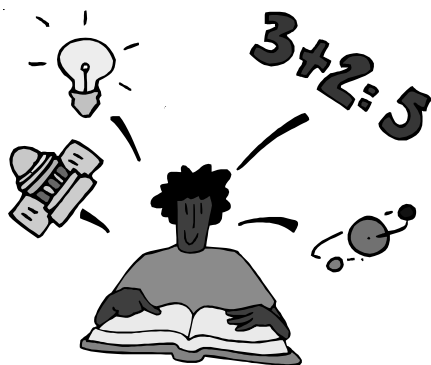
OFFICE USE ONLY

Actioned by Branch Office: LAF 02305

Allocated to Branch: NOTTS COUNTY

Please return your completed application form to:
NOTTS UNISON, FREEPOST,
NOTTINGHAM, NG2 1BR

JOIN THE LEARNING REVOLUTION



New legal rights for Learning Representatives are contained in the Employment Bill that is expected to become law in June this year. Statutory recognition will mean more representatives will be trained and their effectiveness will increase.

The Union Learning Representative is a new type of union activist. They will be trained in advising members on learning needs and opportunities. They can compliment and add value to employer's efforts to engage those who would be embarrassed about admitting their learning needs to their employer.

The benefit to the employee will be a completely independent advisor who will treat everything in confidence. The benefit to the employer being increased participation in workplace learning, improving the skills and employability of the workforce, helping them to become more adaptable for change.

Further information can be obtained from the branch office, also stewards who have completed the UNISON Learning Representative courses are ready to advise and support.

Alternatively, ring 0115 8475400 to speak to UNISON Regional Education Officers/Fieldworkers for a full remit of the extensive education programmes available for our members/activists.

Barbara Miller

Joint Service Conditions Officer



TRAVEL ALLOWANCES AS OF 1st APRIL 2003

Car Users

Engine size	451-999cc	1000-1199cc	1200+cc
Essential Users			
Lump Sum p.a.	£657	£735	£945
Lump Sum per month	£54.75	£61.25	£78.75
First 8500 miles	28.6p	31.5p	38.7p
Over 8500 miles	10.6p	11.3p	12.8p
Casual Users			
Per mile, first 8500	36.4p	40.2p	49.9p
Per mile, over 8500	10.6p	11.3p	12.8p
Other Users			
Charges for use of NCC vehicle	28.6p	31.5p	38.7p
Leased cars	7.1p	7.4p	8.0p

Three Wheeled Vehicles

Essential Users Lump Sum (p.a.): £510 (£42.50 per month) First 8500 miles: 21.1p
Casual Users 1-8500 miles: 25.2p

Other travel allowances (per mile)

Motor cycles	Under 500cc: 40.2p	over 500cc: 49.9p
Mopeds	12.2p	
Cycles	16.7p	
Social Services Volunteers	38.7p	
Conveyance of Clients/passengers	2.2p	
Trailers	Privately owned: 2.6p	NCC owned: 2.4p
Public Transport rate	19.0p	