

# NOTTS UNISON NEWS

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

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## FE PAY STRIKE

*"The 5<sup>th</sup> November was a day for Further Education support staff to let everyone know that we deserve a fair wage for a fair day's work. We can no longer afford to be the poor relations of education. We are constantly told by college management how much we are valued. What we need is tangible proof that our value is recognised, not more empty words!"*

These were the stirring words of Sandie Wolf, a UNISON Steward at South Notts College. UNISON has branded the industrial action in further education colleges a "terrific" success. Across the country, 60,000 further education college staff - cleaners, technicians, support staff and lecturers - joined together to strike for fair pay. Branches reported "rock solid" turnout on picket lines with major rallies in nine regional centres, including Nottingham.

UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis said: *"I would like to congratulate all our UNISON members who took action today. There has been tremendous support across the country. The employers have clearly been rattled by this show of support. Let them be in no doubt - we will continue to fight for fair pay for our FE members."*

Pay in FE colleges has fallen in comparison to the rest of the public and private sector since colleges became incorporated in 1993. In a ballot earlier this month, two-thirds of UNISON members voted to take action after rejecting a 2.3% offer from the employers. The unions involved in the dispute are seeking a minimum wage of £11,000 and to catch up with other public sector workers' pay.

The Association of Colleges tried to get a last-minute injunction against UNISON from the High Court on the Friday before the strike. But the judge threw out the AoC's case. McAnea said it was a *"disgraceful attempt by incompetent employers to stop the strike. We have consistently urged the employers to negotiate with us but rather than talk to us they try to drag us through the courts on technical legal points. UNISON members will not be intimidated by the bullying tactics of college employers."*



You can contact your Branch of UNISON at:

**Nottinghamshire County  
UNISON**  
**39-41 Loughborough Road**  
**West Bridgford**  
**Nottingham**  
**NG2 7LJ**  
**Tel: 0115 981 0405**  
**Fax: 0115 981 5697**  
**E-mail: [nottunison@aol.com](mailto:nottunison@aol.com)**

## 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**



## 5th NOVEMBER FE STRIKE PHOTO GALLERY



Standing firm on the picket line at South Notts College



Strikers rallied in Nottingham's Market Square



Picketing at Peoples College



## BRANCH CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of our members for the support you have shown for the many campaigns we have fought this year. Many of us have been involved in pay disputes, including strikes at the County Council and Further Education Colleges. These were overwhelmingly supported and very successful and I would like to thank each and every member who stood with their colleagues to demand an end to low pay.

We have also had a busy year fighting privatisation, successfully at the County Council and less successfully in the Probation Service. But win or lose I again want to thank all of you, members and activists, who have made a stand against the creeping destruction of our first-rate, publicly owned and publicly accountable services.

We have continued to fight for our members, winning many important improvements. For example we have won regradings for many workers including members in the Fire Service and the Probation Service. We continue to fight for the rights of our members who work under very difficult conditions in the Private and Voluntary Sector.

Ultimately our strength comes from our solidarity with each other. An injury against one is an injury against all. This is the basic tenet of the trade union movement, it gives us the power to negotiate both on behalf of individuals or collectively. As we approach the New Year I hope that you will continue to support our collective crusade to protect public services, both for the workers and those we serve.

*Jill Turner*  
Branch Chair

## BRANCH OFFICER ELECTIONS

The senior 'core' officer posts within the branch are due to be elected once again at the end of the year. The period of office runs from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December. The posts up for election are:

Branch Chair  
Branch Secretary  
Service Conditions Officers (2 posts)  
Branch Equalities Officer  
Branch Education Officer  
Branch Treasurer  
Health & Safety Officers (2 posts)

If you are interested in any of the posts, full job descriptions are available upon request from the branch office (details on page 1). If you do decide to stand for a post you need to complete and return the nomination form below and this needs to be signed by a proposer and seconder who must be members of the branch.

**The closing date for receipt of nominations is 12 noon on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2002**

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### NOMINATION FOR BRANCH OFFICER POST

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Department/Employer (if not NCC): \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to be nominated for the post of: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded by: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to branch office by 12 noon on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2002

## PRIVATISATION'S BEATEN OFF WHAT NEXT?

All of you will remember the tremendous campaign we ran against the privatisation of Finance, IT and Personnel staff across the County Council. It was so successful that the Councillors vetoed privatisation in favour of in-house provision. However this also involved a lot of change in the way these services are organised and delivered. UNISON has now begun discussions with the Council on the implementation of these changes.

The most important issue for staff at present is the management of vacancies in these service areas. The proposal is that such vacant posts graded Scale 6 and above will be reviewed by a 'vetting panel'. This panel will decide whether to:

- => Delete the post
- => Fill the post on a temporary basis
- => Fill the post on a permanent basis

Vacant posts at Scale 5 and below in the affected areas will initially be offered on a temporary basis and will only go to the 'vetting panel' if it hasn't been possible to fill it on this basis.

Whilst we welcome the efforts of our employer to ensure that there are no redundancies we cannot endorse the different treatment of posts depending on their grade. We believe that all vacant posts should be reviewed, against an agreed final structure, to ensure that existing staff are retained. An early decision on whether a post is necessary in the new structure will help us all feel more secure and be more cost effective.

We continue to work hard to ensure that your knowledge and experience is at the heart of the decision making process. We also need to maintain our solidarity for our colleagues who provide these essential services. Please look out for information about this issue, we won the battle against privatisation but we need to stand together to protect these services and our colleagues who provide them.



**UNISON**  
*the public service union*

## MOVING ON TO MONTHLY PAY

**Unison has reached agreement with the County Council for all employees to move from weekly or fortnightly pay onto monthly pay.**

This was agreed as part of the cost saving exercise to prevent services in the Council being privatised. It was also part of the National Single Status agreement, which brought together the working arrangements for ex-manual and white-collar workers. Staff will also now be paid direct into a bank/building society/savings account.

### When will it take place?

£

The last weekly/fortnightly pay dates will be 14<sup>th</sup> February for Social Services staff and 7<sup>th</sup> February for everyone else. The next monthly pay date will then be Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February for school-based staff and Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February for all other staff

### Will I get any financial help to move onto monthly pay?

Unison has negotiated that in the last weekly pay packet staff will receive 3 extra weeks pay or 2 extra weeks if they are Social Services staff paid 2 weeks in arrears. The Employers will take this back in 3 equal amounts out of the next three monthly pay packets (March/April/May).

£

### What if the repayments cause me serious financial hardship?

£

Staff will be sent details of their Personnel section contact who will consider whether to extend the repayment period if there are serious financial hardships being caused. Staff will also be given details of where to find debt counsellors and the local credit union contact.

### What if I do not have a Bank/Building Society/Savings account?

All staff who are currently paid by cheque will be individually written to and informed that this form of payment will cease and that they will need to provide details of an appropriate account that the money can be paid directly into.

£

Whilst these changes may cause some concerns for a few staff they must be seen as a small price to pay to prevent our services being handed over to a private contractor.

*Chris Tansley*  
Branch Secretary

## NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL A PAY RISE!

Arlene Bull, a longstanding member in the Fire Service, is even more enthusiastic about UNISON than usual at the moment, as she plans how to spend a pay rise of over £6,000 a year!

Having been successfully interviewed for an internal secondment post, she was staggered to be told that she would receive a vastly reduced rate of pay compared to a uniformed fire fighter doing the same job. Unable to get the matter resolved, or even a satisfactory explanation, she turned to UNISON for help.



Mike Scott, the Branch Organiser, took up the case with enthusiasm, "I didn't see how this decision could be justified. It seemed a clear case of sex discrimination to me and after talking it over with Jill Day, the Regional Women's Officer, we agreed a plan of action. Arlene put in a formal Grievance to the Fire Service and also submitted a claim to the Employment Tribunal as a back up. We lost at the initial hearing, but won on Appeal, in front of the Councillors."

The result was an instant pay rise of over £6,000 and a very happy member, but there are wider implications as well. The outcome of this case will have to be taken on by the Fire Service in looking at the right rate for the job for all UNISON members. It's a blow to the "unwritten law" that uniformed staff on non-operational duties will always be paid more than non-uniformed support staff with a similar level of responsibilities.

With job Evaluation coming along soon and this victory in the bag, it may not just be Arlene who gets a pay rise...

## CAMPAIGNING FOR A LIVING MINIMUM WAGE

The minimum wage rate needs to rise if it is to help eliminate poverty. Many employers continue to evade minimum wage regulations or claw back increases from low-paid workers.

UNISON presented oral evidence to the Low Pay Commission in October, recommending a £6 an hour national minimum wage (NMW) by October 2004, and also calling for an automatic formula introduced to increase the NMW each year, abolition of the youth rate and protection extended to 16 and 17 year olds.

The NMW is currently £4.20 an hour and £3.70 an hour for under-22s.

UNISON Assistant General Secretary Bob Abberley, said: "The minimum wage is at a critical point. Unless it is increased regularly and substantially, it will lose its value and more and more workers will have to rely on state benefits to make ends meet. We need to have a proper living wage which would save the Government and the taxpayer billions subsidising low-paying employers."

Amongst other things, UNISON is calling for the Government to:

=> adopt a policy to ensure that workers achieve a living wage through work without reliance on state benefits

=> commission research to discover the minimum income standards needed by adults and children to live without experiencing poverty.



## CRAFT WORKERS PAY DEAL

Agreement has now been reached on the 2002-04 pay award for craft workers in England and Wales. The settlement gives craft workers:

=> 3% increase from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002

=> An additional 1% from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2002 (calculated on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2002 rates) and

=> 3.5% from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003

In addition, tool insurance and allowance rates have been up-rated in line with the pay increases.

The agreement also covers:

=> Setting up an independent panel of advisers will review tool allowances and the insurance level and report back before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003

=> Setting up a Joint Working group will look at apprentice arrangements (reviewing the recruitment and training of apprentices and other trainees under the scope of the agreement, and making appropriate recommendations on pay and conditions for apprentices and trainees)

=> Details about normal pay during sickness

=> The use of agency labour,

=> Continuing support for the final salary pension scheme, and

=> Going to arbitration over the wording of advice on Job Evaluation

Details have been sent out to those workplaces where we have craft worker stewards and/or members. Additional copies are available on request from your local craft worker steward or the branch office.

# WORLD AIDS DAY

World AIDS Day is commemorated around the globe on 1st December with news and events to highlight progress made in the battle against the epidemic - but at the same time reminding people how much still needs to be done.



By the end of 2001 an estimated 40 million people were living with HIV. A further 5 million new infections are predicted by the end of 2002. Figures like these make it seem like AIDS is winning. But all over the world, people like you are making a difference. So wear the Red Ribbon, volunteer your time or make a donation, however small, however large, to your local HIV/AIDS organisation because lives depend on it. In the UK, World AIDS Day is coordinated by NAT (National AIDS Trust) and funded by the Department of Health.

Our thanks go to NAT for allowing us to use extracts from their website and leaflets for this article.

## Global statistics

Worldwide, and in 2000 alone, AIDS claimed 3 million people last year. That's over 8,000 people every day. But the story does not end there: just under 14,000 new cases of HIV infections occur every single day.

95% of all AIDS cases occur in the world's poorest countries. In several southern African countries, at least one in five adults is HIV positive. In 2000, the HIV prevalence rate among pregnant women in South Africa rose to its highest level ever: 24.5% bringing to 4.7 million the estimated total number of South Africans living with the virus.

That's a terrifying thought. And it's the reality that millions of people in developing countries are living with HIV and AIDS as you read this: communities devastated, teachers and doctors dying every day, people's futures shattered, because they can't afford the drug treatments that are helping people living with HIV and AIDS in richer countries like ours.

## Worldwide Statistics

People newly infected with HIV in 2001: 5 million  
AIDS deaths in 2001: 3 million...that's over 8,000 deaths per day  
Estimated number of people living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2001: 40 million  
Total of AIDS deaths at the end of 2000: 21.8 million  
Total number of AIDS orphans: 13.2 million

Source: UNAIDS

## HIV and AIDS in the UK

At the end of 2000, 33,500 people in the UK were estimated to be living with HIV, just under a third of whom are undiagnosed. 4,164 new cases were diagnosed in 2001.

### United Kingdom Statistics

Estimated people living with HIV/AIDS at end 2000: 33,500, just under a third of whom are undiagnosed  
HIV diagnoses in 2001: 4,164  
AIDS diagnoses in 2001: 430

Source: Quarterly PHLS/SCIEH Surveillance Tables, 31st December 2001

And there's still no cure. AIDS has not gone away. We have to make a difference by our own actions. Because doing nothing will only make it worse. Because it's not just about gay men, or drug users, or black African communities. It's about making sure young people know enough about protecting themselves from infection - using condoms - before they start having sex.

Combination therapy has made a massive difference to people living with HIV. But it does have side effects and it does mean having to take the drugs at fixed times every day to obtain the maximum benefit from them. It may mean making changes to your lifestyle. But we've come too far to even think about letting AIDS win. Last year saw the lowest number of AIDS deaths in the UK in over a decade.

### For more information ...

If you want to know more about absolutely anything to do with HIV, AIDS, other sexually transmitted infections and sexual health, just call **the National AIDS Helpline 0800 567 123**. It's completely confidential, 24-hours a day, and it's available in a number of languages, as well as having a minicom service. And on top of all that, it's completely free.

Or, if you want to find out about Health Promotion Units where you live, check your local phone directory. Whatever your concerns, help is waiting at the end of your phone. So go on. All you have to do is ask.

National AIDS Trust Web site: [www.nat.org.uk](http://www.nat.org.uk)

## Find Out About HIV

Fantastic! You've read this far. By taking this simple step of finding out more about HIV, you're already making a huge difference. Really. And here's why. The best protection the world has got against HIV and AIDS are the actions of individuals like you. There's no cure for AIDS, there's no vaccine against HIV, but there are simple things that we all can do to stop the spread of HIV. The crucial thing is knowing what these simple, but very powerful, actions are in the first place. Because knowledge can change behaviour, and changing behaviour can stop the spread of HIV. That will save lives. So, how much do you know about HIV?

### What is HIV?

Let's start with the basics. HIV is not the same as AIDS. Having HIV does not mean that you have AIDS, but HIV is the cause of AIDS. Why? Well, HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. Basically, this damages your body's ability to fight off certain infections. But it's possible to have HIV for many years before it does enough damage to make a person ill.

### What is AIDS?

AIDS is the name for a group of unusual infections and cancers that people become more vulnerable to the longer they have HIV. AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

Although AIDS is an unusual group of diseases, everyone, with HIV or not, can come into contact with the organisms which cause them. But because HIV severely weakens the body's natural defences against infection, people with HIV are less able to stop the organisms developing into diseases. Someone with a stronger immune system - someone without HIV - might carry the same organisms but without the risk of becoming ill.

When someone with HIV begins to show signs of having one or more of these infections, that is when they are said to have AIDS. Because the immune system is so weak by this point, AIDS infections can cause really serious illness and death - but new drug treatments can help to prevent this and rebuild the body's defences.

### How does a person become infected with HIV?

We can all combat HIV by doing the most simple things. But to do that, it's crucial to understand the basics about HIV.

So let's set the record straight. You can't get HIV by kissing, shaking hands, touching, coughing or sneezing, you can't get it from insect or animal bites, and you can't get it by sharing food, or toilet seats, or from being in a swimming pool with an HIV infected person. If anyone tells you otherwise, they're wrong. And that's a fact. The thing to remember is this. There are four main ways of contracting HIV.

**SEX** - Whatever your sexuality, it doesn't matter. If you have vaginal or anal sex with someone who has HIV, and you don't use a condom, you can become infected with HIV. Oral sex without a condom also carries a risk of HIV and other infections.

**SHARING NEEDLES** - If you share needles or other drug injecting equipment that contains traces of HIV infected blood, you can become infected with HIV.

**MOTHER TO BABY** - If a pregnant woman has HIV, she can pass it on to her child in three ways: during pregnancy, during birth, or through breastfeeding. But there are proven steps mothers can take to reduce the possibility of their unborn child contracting HIV.

**INFECTED BLOOD** - You can become infected with HIV by receiving infected blood, blood products or donated organs as part of medical treatment. In the UK the chance of this happening is remote as all blood, blood products and donated organs are screened for HIV and infected materials destroyed.

### Can HIV be treated?

Put bluntly, it can be slowed down, but it can't be stopped altogether. The right combinations of drugs can slow down the damage that HIV does to the immune system, and delay the onset of AIDS. This is known as Combination therapy, and it has dramatically improved the quality of life for many people living with HIV.

On the downside, Combination therapy doesn't work for everyone, it can have side effects, and, as with any drugs, the more your body becomes accustomed to them, the less effective they can be. But let's not forget that Combination therapy is a big step forward.

### Are there medicines to prevent HIV?

No. There is no vaccine against HIV. The only protection we have is through our own actions: using condoms, not sharing needles, screening blood transfusions and, in the case of expectant mothers with HIV, reducing the risk to the foetus by taking anti-HIV drugs, choosing a caesarean birth, and by bottle feeding instead of breast feeding.

### What is an HIV Test?

An HIV test is really straightforward. It's a simple blood test that looks for the antibodies produced by the immune system in response to HIV that has entered the body.

Remember though that it can take up to 3 months for these antibodies to show up in the body, so to get a reliable result - and peace of mind - you need to wait 3 months from the time when you think you may have been exposed to HIV.

If antibodies to HIV are found, this is what's known as HIV positive; if there are no antibodies to HIV in your blood, and you've waited for 3 months between the risk and the test, the result is called HIV negative.

If you're thinking of having an HIV test, there is plenty of information, advice and support to help you go about it in the way that's most comfortable for you. Just pick up the phone and call **the National AIDS Helpline on 0800 567 123** for free confidential information about HIV and AIDS and sexual health 24-hours a day. It makes a world of difference.



# 2002 UNISON RETIRED MEMBERS' ANNUAL CONFERENCE, SOUTHPORT

On Wednesday 16 October, conference workshops were held and I attended the one held on Age Discrimination Legislation considering the effects of European Directives coming into force in 2006. On Thursday morning Conference was chaired by Nancy Coull, UNISON National President and she invited Councillor Anthony Hill, Vice Chair of Sefton Council, to open the proceedings. In a humorous and witty speech he referred to it being our first official visit and hoped we would return. He said that a new sea wall had been built and suggested we take a walk along it. "We wouldn't see the sea, but the breeze was marvellous" and to lots of laughter he wished us a good conference, reminding us that we were very important as the over 60's now outnumber the under 16's.

## STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT

As John Saunders Chairperson of this Committee had died in the week before Conference, Mike Boswell acting Chairperson gave the report. Tributes were paid to Mr Saunders and a silence was held in his memory.

## ANNUAL REPORT

Members were generally pleased with the report but a report on future structure had not been published when expected. Sylvia Green (Chairperson of the Retired Members' Committee) said that they would rather take more time and get things right than rush matters (See Emergency Motion later in report).

The Debating of Motions now took place

## PENSIONS

The conference wholeheartedly supported a Composite Motion, which was carried at the 2002 UNISON National Delegate Conference. The motion was over a page long but referred to the fact that only half the workplaces are covered by occupational pension schemes and over half of those are under threat from money purchase arrangements.

Therefore the Conference requested the NEC to promote the advantages of joining and remaining in good pension schemes, advantages of good final salary pension schemes and combating the arguments for closing them down and also to continue to campaign for the restoration of the earnings link.

Two Emergency Motions were then discussed. The first was the publication of a report by Alan Pickering in July 2002. Conference registered its disagreement with the following:

1. Change the pension accrual rate from 1/80th to 1/100th.
2. Change of definition of pensionable salary to career average earnings.
3. No requirement to provide a spouse's pension.
4. No requirement to index link in the future.

Conference in carrying this motion unanimously called upon UNISON to oppose these proposals in their infancy before they became government policy.



The second emergency motion referred to the Pickering Report, which was a government appointed Review producing the report A Simpler Way to Better Pensions. Conference requested the NEC to continue through appropriate channels to argue that it is essential to promote an environment to encourage good quality schemes and pensions build up. This was also carried unanimously.

## AGE DISCRIMINATION

There were three motions submitted and all were carried. The main points were Conference recognised the legal requirements of sex and race discrimination. It also recognises that age discrimination is used but is not illegal. Representations to get the law changed through the NEC Affiliated Political Fund and other appropriate organisations.

## SOCIAL POLICY

## RIGHT TO CARE CAMPAIGN

This campaign was launched in November 2001 along with other organisations and conference wishes to thank the NEC for the support it has given over the last year. The campaign makes the following specific demands:

=> The recommendations of the Royal Commission on Long Term Care should be implemented in full.

=> It is unacceptable to charge older or disabled people for essential personal care; means testing of personal care should be ended, as should the artificial distinction between nursing and personal care.

=> Good quality personal and nursing care should be provided on the basis of need, free at the point of use in all settings.

The awareness of this issue was highlighted by the fact that free long term care for the elderly reported by the BBC Your NHS Day phone-in poll with over 50 per cent of all the votes



recorded. The conference voted to continue the campaign and to use any influence to lobby the Government to fully fund long term care need.

## CARE HOMES

Two motions were carried on this matter.

Conference called upon the NEC to make representations to the Government to keep open local authority residential homes as care in the community is often inadequate. There should be sufficient funding for care at home that will alleviate bed blocking in the National Health Service during 2001. Too many long term care homes were closed in England and Wales due to repeated loss of Government funding. Must seek to reverse this trend.

An emergency motion on the National Minimum Standards for Care Homes that again related to underfunding requesting the NEC to apply pressure on the Government to reverse this trend was carried.

## PENSIONS SERVICE

The Government launched the new Pensions Service on 1st April 2002. The Conference was concerned that pensioners will be forced to make claims or raise financially sensitive queries through faceless call centres and a website, a reduction in staff to provide front line services. Conference therefore carried a motion to maintain face to face facilities and processing at local level.

## PROPOSED CHANGES IN BENEFIT PAYMENT SYSTEM 2003

Conference passed the proposal asking the National Retired Members' Committee to take their concerns to the Government, seeking to maintain the present payment options available.

## REGISTRATION FEE POWER OF ATTORNEY

This emergency motion condemning the decision of the Lord Chancellor to increase the fee to register from £50 to £220 called upon the NEC to pursue this case through the Trade Union Congress and other means to amending the fee to a more reasonable one to encourage people to register was carried.

## ENDING OF TAX PENALTY ON PENSIONERS

Conference carrying the next motion requested the NEC to raise this matter with the Government to increase tax allowances for all pensioners, best achieved by raising the amount of income at which the higher allowances are taken away.

## VIOLENT ATTACKS

Remittal was agreed by conference on a call for a statutory additional penalty on violent attacks on elderly and people with a disability.



## FUTURE STRUCTURE OF UNISON'S RETIRED MEMBERS ORGANISATION

Conference carried this emergency motion that called upon the production of a report by 1 March 2003. As the one which had been expected to be debated at this conference had not materialised.

## IMPROVEMENTS IN COMMUNICATION

Motion requiring immediate action to bring about better communication between national and branch level was carried.

Conference's final motion was an emergency motion calling for conference to be held as previously on Tuesday and Wednesday to help delegates in travelling. This was carried but it was announced from the platform that next year's conference dates had already been arranged.

Conference was then closed by the President and ended with several votes of thanks.

On a personal note I found the Conference venue excellent. No hearing problems, roomy and ideally situated.

Thanks are due to the Branch for giving me the opportunity to attend. I will report and answer questions at our next branch meeting.



**DEMMIS WALLACE**  
RETIRED MEMBERS' CHAIR

## Pensions Time Bomb?

The first week in November saw UNISON issuing a stark warning to the government that workers are facing a pensions time-bomb.

National Officers are seeking a meeting with Work and Pensions Secretary Andrew Smith, ahead of the publication of the Pensions Green Paper, calling for urgent action to stem the crisis.

When it comes to pensions what we need is a little less talk and a little more action.

There is really only one option that provides a decent pension and that is a final salary scheme.

We know that and the government knows that - which is why MPs have an excellent final salary scheme themselves - and what's good enough for them, is good enough for the rest of us.

The growing number of employers closing final salary schemes are placing workers, particularly the low paid, in an impossible situation where they will face poverty in retirement.

If employers are allowed to get away with defined contribution schemes, there should be a requirement for a minimum contribution rate of 10%.

Anything less will leave the UK sitting on a pensions time-bomb.

We will have growing numbers dependent on state benefits and it is the taxpayer who will have to pick up the bill.

Why not write to your MP? Why not write to Notts Pension Scheme saying that you want the scheme to stay a final salary scheme?



### CHIEF OFFICERS' PAY OFFER MADE

The Branch is in the process of consulting our members on the latest offer. The proposals are for a 21 month award based on the following increases:

=> **3% with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2002**

=> **4.5% with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003**

=> **Next settlement effective 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004**

In line with last year's agreement, joint research will be conducted into the issue of stress and working time. This survey will be extended to cover the impact of the new political structures on the role of chief officers.

### Notts UNISON News Deadlines

The deadlines for getting articles in to your newsletter is 12 noon on the following Fridays:

20th December (January/February edition)  
28th February (March/April edition)  
25th April (May/June edition)  
27th June (July/August edition)  
29th August (September/October edition)  
31st October (November/December edition)  
19th December (January/February 2004 edition)

Each newsletter takes about a week to typeset (providing everyone who promises an article actually gets it in on time) and then about 2 weeks to print and distribute. So please allow for this if, say, you want to put a notice of a meeting in your newsletter.

*Bob Watt*

Communications Officer

### ***Modernising support services, pay claims, pensions, the minimum wage, childcare...***

There's a lot going on. That's why you need to a strong voice standing up for you rights. You need to be in UNISON. Is someone in your workplace not a member of UNISON? Why not give them the application form? ==>==>==>==>

## 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

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	:	<b>ANNUAL PAY</b>	<b>Weekly/Monthly</b>		<b>SUBS</b>	<b>Tick box</b>
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		£5001-£7000	£1.23	£5.34	BAND B	[   ]
Department	:	£7001-£10000	£1.52	£6.59	BAND C	[   ]
Employer	:	£10001-£15000	£1.80	£7.78	BAND D	[   ]
Work address	:	£15001-£20000	£2.21	£9.57	BAND E	[   ]
	:	£20001-£25000	£3.13	£13.57	BAND F	[   ]
	:	£25000+	£3.88	£16.81	BAND G	[   ]
Work Post Code	:	Retired Members £15(Life) Students £10pa Unemployed £4pa				
Work Tel	:					
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Job Title	:					

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**

**\*CAR ALLOWANCE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **\*DISABILITY** \_\_\_\_\_

**Essential    Casual    None    Yes    No**

**\*ETHNIC ORIGIN:**

**Afro-carib    African    Indian    Pakistani    OtherAsian    White Euro    Other**

\* 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.

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

Delete where appropriate.

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**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**

## CHILD CARE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

A questionnaire was circulated by Notts Unison's Women's Group to gauge the real issues relating to childcare and the type of provision that would best provide the flexibility to enable parents or carers to work effectively and to encourage women to return with confidence to work following their child's birth. It is part of an overall concept of piloting childcare provision for the West Bridgford campus initially. In addition there are various sources of information and projects, which can help with childcare, that need making more accessible to employees such as websites and childcare schemes.

The outright figure of 70% of female parents requiring childcare to enable them to come to work is to be expected. This also shows the need of childcare provision to be taken seriously by the Employer. 49% of those responding to the survey have children under the age of 5.

50% have children aged 5-15

1% do not have children yet but are considering the options of childcare.

The need for a range of provision due to the spread of age groups is quite even. The need for after school and non-term schemes was illustrated by those with children attending school. 66% would use non-term provision.

Having provision near to work was preferred, 73% would make use of a day care nursery at West Bridgford and 63% would be prepared to pay the normal rate. When asked about the provision of childcare for emergency cover 70% indicated that this was a good idea. The overall opinion on whether visitors to county hall would make use of a crèche facility 63% thought it would get used by visitors. The receptionist also thought that visitors would use it. These facilities were seen as mostly use all day 52% and secondly hourly 31%. The least popular use being all morning.

The average monthly childcare costs are £387.87. The T.U.C. have undertaken a survey, which shows the average monthly cost for childcare in the East Midlands as £404-432.

The Regional Development Agencies are currently rewriting their regional economic strategies at the insistence of the Department of Trade and Industry. The TUC wants access to childcare to play a much greater role in the revised strategies. Nationally 47% of families say that there are not enough childcare places. This is 44% in the East Midlands.

The Work Foundation says that the typical cost of replacing a member of staff on a salary of £15,000 is £7,000. The HSBC bank has recognised this and has saved £18million a year with their childcare policies. The number of women returnees was just 35% now it is up to 85%. TUC General Secretary John Monks said.... *'Lack of affordable childcare remains a headache for many working parents, particularly women. As a result, many women are not given the choice of returning from work, which drains valuable skills and experience from our economy'*.

That's why the Branch Women's Self Organised Group, with full Branch support, is pushing for a joint working group with other trade unions and central personnel to address the needs of working parents within Nottinghamshire County Council for the provision of adequate childcare. This may be a combination of identifying private crèches, nurseries, after school clubs and non-term school childcare schemes and suggesting internal provision at large workplaces.

The communication to all employees of schemes being run within different Departments needs co-ordination and putting into the 'In Contact' paper and on the Intranet. The age ranges of children obviously affects the type of care required therefore a range of facilities may be required. The new Employment Act (amended 2002) becomes enacted in April 2003. Within this is the area of flexible working for parents of children under 6 years.

If the employer takes a wider view of the whole issue, the money saved on replacing employees who leave to take on childcare can be used to put towards a better provision and co-ordination of current and proposed services.

*Linda Krelle*  
Women's Officer



### Childcare Focus Group

**Wednesday December 11th @  
12.30pm  
Committee Room B  
County Hall, West Bridgford**

This will be an informal get together, light refreshments provided for working lunch

#### Agenda

- =>Progress on contacting Councillors and Personnel
- =>Individual views on the affects of not having childcare provision and not having access to the Busy Bee Scheme
- =>Feedback on users of other schemes
- =>Discussion on other information and action
- =>AOB
- =>Date of next meeting

To help with numbers can you confirm your attendance with Linda Krelle on 0115 977 4389.