

# NOTTS UNISON NEWS

Web Site: <http://www.nottsunison.org.uk>

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## Pay Claim 2004

The National Local Government Committee met recently to agree the draft claim for consultation for pay from 1st April 2004. It was agreed to consult branches on the following claim:

=> A 4% and £200 increase on all pay points, with the deletion of the bottom three pay points (This would achieve the UNISON £6 minimum wage target)

=> Completion of equal pay audits and pay and grading reviews within a 2-year time limit, with additional ring-fenced funding to facilitate implementation

=> An increase in basic annual leave entitlement of 5 days to provide a minimum entitlement of 25 days for all employees

=> An increase in paid maternity leave to 8 weeks full pay and 14 weeks half pay

=> 2 weeks paid paternity/maternity support leave

The claim would be for one year, but the National Local Government Committee gave a clear indication that a longer term offer along the lines suggested would be given consideration.

There were a number of key considerations taken into account in the discussions:

=> The tight financial situation within local government and the problems surrounding council tax and threatened 'capping'

=> Settlements elsewhere in the public sector - generally over two years or more, with additions for pay restructuring/equal pay

=> Member expectations that next year's settlement would deliver something for the majority of our members, not just the lowest paid

Nottinghamshire UNISON will be consulting members over the proposal in time for the deadline for responses of 7th January 2004.

### 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, a Local Government Pay Commission was established by the National Joint Council Employers and Trade Unions. The Commission has now released its report, following a year of deliberations. There is much in it to welcome from a UNISON point of view.

**Details can be found on page 2 >>>>**



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# 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, a Local Government Pay Commission was established by the National Joint Council Employers and Trade Unions.

The Commission has now released its report, following a year of deliberations. There is much in it to welcome from a UNISON point of view. The Commission supports continued national bargaining, sees JE and Single Status implementation as the way forward for dealing with pay discrimination and has called for equal pay audits in every council. Overall, the tone and basic arguments underpinning the report are those put forward in the UNISON and trade union side evidence. The Commission agrees that local government workers have become the 'poor relations' of the public sector. They call for a more strategic approach to workforce matters and investment in single status implementation and training.

## THE COMMISSION'S KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report broadly concurs with the following key points demonstrated in the UNISON and TU Side evidence, though significantly underestimates the overall gender pay gap by not 'weighting' for part-time staff. The Commission's report concludes that:

- => NJC earnings fell below the whole economy between 1988 and 2002
- => NJC pay increases were lower than for police, teachers, the fire service and nurses between 1993 and 2002
- => CCT and Best Value "have placed a downward pressure on the pay and conditions of the lowest paid and most vulnerable workers in local government"
- => Holidays "are less generous than for the great majority of employee groups in both the public and private sectors"
- => Premium payments are a higher proportion of gross pay for part-time workers than full-time

### Pay

- => Above inflation increases could be justified on equality grounds
- => Every local authority should undertake a pay audit as part of a longer term strategy plan for addressing the gender pay gap
- => There should be a review of part-time workers' terms and conditions
- => "...the importance of premium payments in the composition of pay of certain female dominated groups... should be borne in mind"
- => The NJC should investigate issues of pay and rewards for particular groups such as term-time workers

### Staffing

- => Use of different forms of work and employment "should be driven both by service user needs and the well being and concerns of the employees"
- => Work life balance policies and practice are not targeted or linked to service delivery needs.
- => Flexible working is "strongly endorsed" but "...there is a difference between "flexibility by employees" and "flexibility for employees"
- => 'Flexibility' is restricted to some groups of workers – manual workers lose out heavily on access to flexi-time and job sharing
- => Higher graded jobs should be opened up to part-time workers
- => The use of agency staff and the implications of worse terms and conditions should be investigated

### Equal pay and equality

- => The Commission says that "Equality in local government is a necessity, not an option" and "...is part of improving local services"... "we have noted some lack of awareness and of understanding of equality issues and requirements"
- => Trade unions should be "as representative of all employees as possible"
- => Government is funding equality initiatives in other parts of the public sector and "above inflation increases could be justified on equality grounds"
- => There should be equality of access to training and 'skills ladders'
- => Steps should be taken to "increase awareness of the importance of equality for elected members and managers"
- => Central and local government should look at ways in which "progressive equality developments" can be spread to private contractors providing council services

### Single Status Agreement (SSA)

- => The SSA provides a good basis for moving forward on equal pay and modernisation of pay and rewards"
- => There is continued support for job evaluation to ensure "proper evaluation and ranking of jobs"... "the use of an equality proofed JE scheme is the way forward."
- => "Some real commitment of funds is required"
- => The "NJC scheme had a negative reputation among some employers which did not reflect the reality"

### The national agreement and future bargaining arrangements

- => "No support for regional wage bargaining or determination was expressed to the Commission from any quarter in local government, employers or unions"
- => "...the national agreement provides sufficient flexibility within which the individual local government employers can develop different approaches to pay and reward."
- => "The Commission considers that the reasons for introducing a national pay spine in 1997 are still valid and argue against its removal."
- => The position of school based staff is "anomalous in that local authorities are the legal employer but have little say over most of the matters relating to their employment. We feel this should be addressed"

### Training and Workforce Development

- => The Commission was surprised at the "relative lack" of employer evidence
- => There should be "greater investment by national and local government"
- => The Commission recommends "a broadening of the training aspects of Part 2 and the consequent removal of the current Part 3 provision. Joint agreed guidance under Part 4 should be issued."
- => "...the Commission recommends that local training and workforce development plans be developed in conjunction with local unions on a partnership basis."
- => Union Learning Reps should be "encouraged and supported by employers and unions"

## 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: **branch.office@nottsunison.org.uk**



## Mansfield Recruitment week

Between 13th and 17th October representatives from the Branch and Region visited many workplaces around Mansfield. Our aim was to meet as many members as possible and to recruit a few more. We started off on the Saturday with a market stall in Mansfield where we gave out balloons and information about UNISON. We met many members from many Branches.

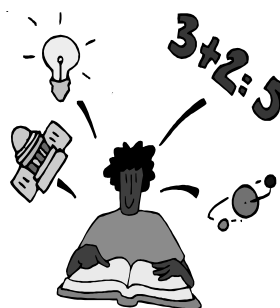
From Monday we went into workplaces, and as part of European Health and Safety week, talked about the many health and safety issues faced by all of us. It was great to meet so many different members; we all learnt a lot about the problems you face. I also hope we will start to build stronger UNISON structures to ensure that all our members receive the full support of Britain's largest union.

Because of the delay between writing this article and printing I do not know the winner of our prize draw, but we will write to everyone who filled in a card letting them know the winner.

If you would like a visit to your workplace then please contact the Branch and we will arrange it. Thanks to all the stewards to came out to help - we all really enjoyed taking some time out to talk to members and non-members.

*Jill Turner*  
Branch Chair

## UNISON AND LIFELONG LEARNING



UNISON has decided to take a unique approach to the issue of Life Long Learning. Our approach is to ensure that as many of our members as possible have opportunities for learning to provide them with the skills and confidence to progress and participate fully in all spheres of their lives. We are looking for people, known as "UNISON Learning Representatives", to play a key role in delivering this service to our members.

As a UNISON Learning Representative, you will be:

- => Identifying members learning needs
- => Developing awareness and knowledge of learning opportunities available
- => Working with employers to plan learning and skills programmes
- => Providing initial advice and accurate information
- => Giving guidance, support and advice to members
- => Advocating or speaking up on behalf of members
- => Representing members on learning with employers
- => Gathering, recording and organising information
- => Working with other UNISON representatives
- => Working with education providers and other partners
- => Developing awareness of government policies and priorities

If you are interested in becoming a UNISON Learning Representative, full training will be given to carry out the post. Please contact Tina Camachan (Branch Education Officer) for further information at the Branch Office on: **0115 981 0405**

## UNISON Welfare Debtline

Many people fall into debt at some point in their lives. Sometimes all it takes is a small change in circumstances to tip the balance and turn a manageable situation into a debt problem.

UNISON Welfare is used to helping members who are struggling to cope with the stress and worry of debt. Through our partners at FCL (Federated Credit Limited) we can provide you with free and confidential advice to help clear your debts. With FCL's Payplan you get:

- => Reduction of multiple debts to a single payment
- => Choice of payment methods including PayPoint cash option
- => An assigned case officer to call for advice throughout the repayment programme
- => Supported self-help if you prefer
- => A completely free service with no hidden charges

FCL's Payplan is paid for by the credit industry so every penny of your repayments goes towards your debts unlike some debt management companies who charge a fee. This is just one of the ways they can help and you will be offered a solution that best meets your individual circumstances.

FCL's advisers are aware of the types of grant that UNISON Welfare can offer and will refer you to us if they think we can help to ease your situation.



8am to 9pm Monday to Friday  
9am to 1pm Saturdays

## Use of mobile phones in vehicles

From 1<sup>st</sup> December 2003 driving whilst using a handheld mobile phone will be an offence which will be subject to a £30 fixed penalty fine or a fine of up to £1000 (£2500 for drivers of goods vehicles, buses or coaches) if the matter is referred to a court. The offence includes using a mobile phone whilst the vehicle is stationary in traffic or waiting at traffic lights etc. The offence is also likely to include 3 penalty points on the driver's licence. It will also be an offence for an employer to cause or permit the use of a phone whilst using a vehicle.

Hands-free kits may be used but the phone **must not** be handled or held in any way. This includes the use of any apparatus that requires handling of the phone at any time to operate it. Pushing buttons on a phone whilst it is in a cradle is not covered by the new regulation provided the driver **does not have to hold the phone**.

However, drivers still risk prosecution under existing legislation (for failure to have proper control of a vehicle) even if they use hands-free phones whilst driving.

The use of **handheld** mobile phones whilst driving is **banned by the County Council** and failure to comply could invoke disciplinary proceedings. Other employers may be taking similar action. The individual is responsible for payment of any fine incurred.

Mobile phones, even with a hands free facility should only be used in accordance with the following safety precautions:

- => You must not initiate a call whilst driving.
- => You must not acknowledge or receive a call if you do not have a hands free facility.
- => When using a hands-free phone, only acknowledge incoming calls with a short response indicating that you will call back when it is safe to do so.
- => You must not send or read text messages whilst driving.
- => Never look up numbers or attempt to make notes whilst driving.
- => Keep hand held phones switched off whilst the vehicle is in transit.
- => Activate the answering/message service, allow the caller to leave a message and reply when it is safe to do so.
- => Managers must not call staff, or encourage them to call back, when they know staff are on the road.
- => Do not stop on the hard shoulder of a motorway (which is illegal) or other unsafe area to make or receive calls.
- => Switch off the phone whilst on a filling station forecourt. Mobile phones may initiate an intrinsic spark that could ignite petrol vapours or fumes.







## **HELLO FROM MAGGIE...**

Hi to all women members out there, my name is Maggie Pilmore and I am the newly elected Women's Officer for the Notts County Unison Branch.

I have been a Unison steward since 1990 and have been a Senior Steward from 1999 – 2000. I have been involved in past Local Government Reviews, regrading claims, and disciplinary meetings.

I am now doing Job Evaluation full time and approximately 2 days a week on the Data Moderating Panel.

My post as Women's Officer is to look at any issues that affect **all** women whether they are in full time work or part time workers.

I would like to get a good attendance for these meetings, which are held every 3 months out of the year, (this amounts to 4 meetings a year only).

The first meeting will be held sometime in January 2004, so please look out for the date, time and venue in the near future. I haven't suggested any times or venue yet as I would like feedback from women to see what would suit them best, to ensure a good attendance.

One of my main concerns is the lack of crèche facilities or childcare vouchers for women who work for Nottinghamshire County Council. Women are the predominate workforce in Nottinghamshire County Council, and something should be in place now to assist their work/life balance situation.

I look forward to meeting old and new members of the Womens Self Organised Group.

Please contact me at the Branch Office on:

**0115 981 0405**

if you have any ideas we could put on the agenda for our first meeting and I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

*Maggie Pilmore*  
Women's Officer

## **Hay Job Evaluation**

Many of you will be aware of the way the Council has dealt with those employees covered by the Hay job evaluation scheme (employed on PO and above grades).

As a result of UNISON (following consultation with our members) refusing to jointly agree the Hay Scheme, the Council has issued dismissal notices taking effect on 1st Jan '04 and offered re-engagement on new contracts as of 2nd Jan '04 which will impose the salary and grade outcome of the Hay job evaluation exercise.

One of the major reasons that UNISON did not accept the Hay Scheme in the first place was because of the benefits in adopting a jointly approved National scheme and the complete lack of transparency in the Hay scheme. It is hardly surprising that the new pay scales have also been rejected by members when it is impossible to know how the original job evaluation exercise came to its outcomes.

Over the past few months, the Branch has worked tirelessly to attempt to resolve the many issues facing those members affected by the Hay scheme. By the time this is published we will have consulted on the proposed appeals procedure and we hope we will be a little further down the line in ensuring that our members are dealt with as fairly and effectively as possible.

We know that some members feel that the Branch has not been effective in protecting them, and that some feel that we have 'sold out' their interests to prevent the rest of the staff from being 'Hayed' as well.

Whilst we have a great deal of sympathy for the first view, it is true we have been on the back foot in trying to respond to the implementation of Hay. The truth of the matter is that the Council deliberately excluded UNISON from all discussions on the issues and refused to enter into negotiations.

We still have a lot of ground to make up but this Branch is fully committed to each and every member. This is why we cannot accept the second criticism. With hindsight it may be that we can see that different courses of action may have resulted in a different outcome. At the time we made each and every decision the interests of every member were considered.

We hope that by the time this article is published we will have more clarity about how to reverse the damage caused by the Authority's decision to use an externalised and non-transparent scheme. We will work, as we work for every member, until we have a fair and transparent pay and grading structure.

*Jill Turner*  
Branch Chair

**UNISON**  
the public service union

*Chris Tansley*  
Branch Secretary

# NJC JOB EVALUATION NEWS

## New sources of information on the Intranet

The Steering Group has set up an online document store, available to those of you with access to the County Council's Intranet.

When you log in to your personal portal, you usually get a grey screen with two lists. You should see the phrase "Document Stores" in the right hand list. If you click on the adjacent arrowhead, a hyperlink appears for "National Job Evaluation Document Store". Please click on this, and once you enter the document store, click on "all documents" to see a list. You then click on the title of the relevant document to read it.

The Document store includes various JE documents such as a sheet of Frequently Asked Questions, the Questionnaire for preparation meetings, the flow chart for dealing with vacant posts, and copies of the JE newsletters. If you have a query about the National JE scheme, you might find the answer you need in the Document Store, so please look there before contacting the JE Help Line.

## Progress Report

The Steering Group are pleased to report that, as of 27th October, 434 interviews have been carried out across all departments and a further 406 were booked. With your help and support, we are on track to meet the target dates set out in JE News 4.



## Re-evaluation Interviews

Some of you will have been through the process of preparation meeting, selecting someone to be interviewed, and received your job overview. That is not necessarily the end of the process because you might be asked to meet an analyst for a re-evaluation interview. This is part of the data verification process that we are using to ensure that NJC JE is fair, consistent and transparent. In JE News 3, we explained this Data Monitoring process, with your right to raise concerns about your Job Overview, and the role of the Data Monitoring Panels (DMPs).

So far, many re-evaluations have been partial re-evaluations of one or two factors with specific points about a particular question in the Gauge software where giving the relevant evidence could change the answer to the question, resulting in a change of level attained for that factor.

We have also dealt with several instances where factual matters have needed to be clarified such as identifying the particular budget (and/or its size) for which a post is responsible, or whether a particular post supervises others. In the first instance, the DMPs ask for evidence from departmental management. If this satisfactorily clarifies the position, it can save the need for a re-evaluation of that factor by interview.

If you have raised a concern that needs to be addressed, a member of your group has raised a concern, or a DMP is seeking clarification of a Job Overview, you will get a letter explaining what is to happen and what factors need to be re-evaluated. You will then be contacted to arrange an interview to deal with just the relevant factor(s). The same team that were at the original interview will need to attend: the interviewee, manager, trade union rep and analyst, to ensure consistency.

Although you might already have had a re-evaluation interview, or it is several months since your interview, you should be aware that there might be another round of re-evaluations when the Steering Group goes through the vertical and horizontal data verification process.

The Steering Group regrets that it is not possible to go into detail when replying to each concern raised by a post holder, or issue raised by a DMP. Given the numbers involved, we have to use standard letters that identify the factors that need to be addressed in the re-evaluation interview and the analysts are told which particular question(s) need to be revisited. So, although you will not get a personal reply addressing each point of your concern, you can be assured that each point will have been addressed by the Steering Group and that the system we have set up is robust enough to ensure fairness and consistency.

## Reminder

You can help reduce the likelihood of being invited to a re-evaluation interview by giving relevant examples to support your answers to questions in the interviews. In the interviews, the analyst will regularly ask for examples to put in the comments section that help the DMPs and Steering Group deal with any concerns raised or clarify why a particular answer has been chosen.

The best time to come up with examples is during the preparation meeting, when the group is together and everyone can contribute. Writing the examples down on the questionnaire means that the person chosen for interview will have them to hand in the interview. Time spent sorting this out in the preparation meeting has been seen to help the interview run smoother (and quicker).

## Frequently Asked Questions

Over the summer, many meetings were held to brief managers throughout the County Council about their role in NJC JE. At each of these briefings, the same questions usually came up. In order to ensure consistency, the Steering Group has collated the questions and answers.

### **Some of my staff took part in a benchmark interview, what happened to the outcomes? Can they have a copy of the Job Overview?**

The benchmark interviews were used to test our local conventions to ensure they are robust and appropriate to the Nottinghamshire context, prior to our embarking on the actual interviews. The benchmark Job Overviews will not be used to establish rankings for the jobs concerned. All rankings will be determined using the final Job Overviews for each job resulting from the actual JE interviews and the Data Monitoring process. Feedback from the benchmark interview process was also used to tailor the approach before the interviews proper. Given this, the benchmark Job Overview will not be relevant or of use to the post holders concerned.

### **How will workplace preparation sessions be managed for very large job groups such as Library Assistants, Cleaners and Community Care Assistants?**

Departmental managers have been advised to set up a series of pre-meetings, in appropriate locations across the county, where the job group is spread throughout the County. It is not essential to have a trade union representative at these initial meetings. Representatives from each of these meetings will then go forward to a formal preparation meeting, with a trade union representative and an appropriate manager present. The required number of group representatives will then go forward for evaluation interviews along with the trade union representative and manager.

### **How has the number of group representatives for each job type been determined?**

A formula had been agreed and applied consistently by the joint Steering Group:

- 1-29 jobholders = 1 interview
- 30-99 jobholders = 2 interviews
- 100-249 jobholders = 3 interviews
- 250 - 399 jobholders = 4 interviews
- 400 - 599 jobholders = 5 interviews
- 600 plus jobholders = 6 interviews.

### **How will posts on established career grades be evaluated?**

Where there is an agreed progression criteria from one stage of a career grade to another, there will need to be an evaluation of each level by interviewing an employee (or employees, depending on the size of the job group) who was working at the relevant level as at 1.4.2002. The linking of

any career grades into the new pay structure will be subject to ongoing corporate discussions.

### **What happened if a post is currently vacant, was vacant at 1.4.2002, or is currently occupied by an employee who started after 1.4.2002?**

There are a number of agreed alternative arrangements to ensure that all posts within the scope of the scheme are properly evaluated and the Steering Group has produced a flow chart. Your departmental personnel team can advise further.

### **What if an individual post holder in a unique job is off long term sick, on career break, or the job is being covered by a temporary employee?**

The substantive post holder might be willing and/or able to attend a preparation meeting and interview. Alternatively, a previous post holder or manager could be interviewed, as indicated on the flowchart.

### **What happens if a job is externally funded?**

Provided the employee(s) are contracted to Nottinghamshire County Council and are covered by NJC terms and conditions of service, their job will be evaluated.

### **When and how will posts that were established or have changed since 1.4.2002 be evaluated?**

Phase 1 of the NJC implementation project in this Authority is concerned with evaluating the job requirements of posts that were established as at 1.4.2002. There will be a second phase of evaluations for those posts that were established or changed (perhaps due to departmental restructuring). This will commence after the evaluation part of Phase 1 has been completed, probably after March 2004.

### **My staff's Job Overview doesn't include details that are in their job description, why not?**

The Job Overview describes your job in terms of the 13 Job Evaluation Factors rather than the duties of your post.

The answers to questions in an interview are used by the Gauge software to produce a Job Overview that reflects the job in terms of those factors. The answer to a particular question gives the same form of words to everyone who answers it in the same way. For example, in the Working Conditions factor, the first question is "Does the jobholder have to work outdoors?" Every jobholder who answers "no" in the

interview will have the phrase "*The jobholder does not have to work outdoors*" at the start of that section of the Job Overview and they will then be asked a question about exposure to disagreeable, unpleasant or hazardous situations. Again, the answer given will decide the wording of the Job Overview. Those who give the same answers to the same questions will have the same wording in their Job Overview. In this way, very different jobs in different departments can be evaluated fairly, all being measured against the same criteria.

### **Why will some employees be called for re-evaluation?**

This can be because one of the job group or the interviewee has raised concerns, or that the Steering Group has approved a DMP recommendation to reconsider a factor (or factors) given the job description or the available evidence.

### **As a manager, I've been asked to sort out a workplace meeting, is there any central pot of money to pay for venues for meetings?**

In most cases, a no cost venue should be available. Your departmental Personnel team can advise you.

### **Who should attend the pre-meeting and interview from the management side?**

The manager who knows the duties of the job best.

N.B. If there is a large group, it doesn't have to be the individual representative's line manager but it is recognised that this may be more personally supportive.

### **What do we do if the post holder works beyond their job?**

It is important to reflect the duties of the post as required, not the abilities of the individual in the post. If the job description needs updating, this can be acknowledged at the interview on the pro forma for further action by the relevant manager.

### **What if I have a question that isn't covered here?**

There is a Help Line for individuals to register questions or queries:

## JE Help Line

Tel: 0115 977 3643

E-mail:

prjobevalhelp@  
nottsc.gov.uk

## UNISON RETIRED MEMBERS' ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2003

The Conference took place at the Plymouth Pavilions on Thursday 16 October 2003, and was chaired by Pauline Thorne, UNISON National Vice President, due to Dave Anderson, the President being away on other duties, but he sent good wishes and his wish was that relationships between retired and working members would become closer. Conference was opened by Councillor David Stark, Lord Mayor of Plymouth, who had been a member of the City Council since his election in 1959. At that time he was one of the youngest ever members. He spoke of a world of change since he first began Council work and wished us a successful conference. The Annual Report was the first item to be discussed and after a great deal of debate, the first twenty pages of the report were passed, but the remainder relating to the Retired Members' Organisation was referred back.

### PENSIONS

After this the first Emergency Motion was taken and passed, objecting to any compulsory extension of working life that would obviously affect pensionable age.

Conference remitted the next proposal so that the Retired Members' Committee could ascertain the effect of the Chancellor's proposal to index the state pension to the Harmonised Index of Consumer Practice (HICP) rather than the current retail price index, so they could ascertain the effect on Public Service Pensions.

The next motion condemned the introduction of the Pensioner Credit Scheme, noting that over one million pensioners had not made application. Conference requests the NEC to continue to campaign for the reintroduction of the earnings link. Carried.

Two emergency motions asking for the restoration of the earnings link were both carried. A further emergency motion referred to the possibility of taxing the pension lump sum. Conference agreed that this must be strongly opposed.

### COUNCIL TAX/PENSION INCREASES

Conference supported a motion urging the National Retired Members' Committee to use its best endeavours to obtain the support of the NEC in establishing a fair and equitable balance between annual pension increases and annual council tax increases.

### WIDOWS' PENSION RIGHTS

Also passed. The NEC to take every possible action, including under the Human Rights Act 1998 if appropriate, to remedy the injustices, inequalities and discrimination contained in the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations in relation to members' provision for widows and widowers of post retirement marriages.

### THE PENSIONS SERVICE

In 2003 access to benefits offices by pensioners was replaced with the new Pensions Service, part of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The Pension Service will be centralised, most business being conducted by phone and withdrawal of local drop in facilities and personal services.

Conference supported a motion requesting the NEC through the Affiliated Political Fund and other appropriate channels to lobby the Government to make some main changes and rethink its service delivery.

## SOCIAL POLICY

### NHS OMBUDSMAN REPORT ON LONG TERM CARE

The report published in February 2003 stated there is evidence that the Department of Health's guidance has been misinterpreted and misapplied by some health authorities and trusts.

Conference supported a motion asking the NEC request that appropriate action be taken to implement the recommendations of the Health Service Ombudsman report on NHS funding of Long Term Care.

### HOME CARE INSPECTIONS

The National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) a new independent public body to regulate social care and private and voluntary health care services.

The NCPC states that its strategy is to give priority to announced rather than unannounced visits on inspection of care homes.

Therefore Conference supported a resolution asking the NEC through the appropriate channels highlight the importance of unannounced visits to ensure that minimum standards are maintained.

### COST OF NON-RESIDENTIAL CARE

Local Authorities across the country are raising the cost of non-residential care to those most vulnerable who rely on these important services.

Conference supported a motion asking the NEC to mount a campaign under the "Right to Care" to challenge this Government's stance on this important issue.

### CARERS' ALLOWANCES

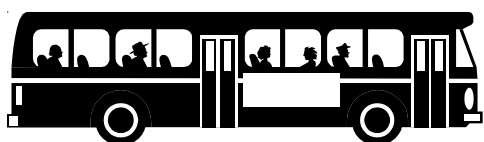
Another supported resolution was a request to the NEC to call for a review of the carer's allowance paid by the Government and the abolition of the rule that the allowance is abated or cancelled once the carer has retired and is in receipt of a pension of £43.15 or more per week.



## CAMPAIGNS

### PENSIONERS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT, FREE TRAVEL PASS

Two motions were taken as a grouped debate. Conference noted that pensioners in Wales, Greater London, the West Midlands and elsewhere have obtained free concessionary travel and now time is right to launch a campaign to obtain free transport throughout Great Britain and urges the National Retired Members' Committee and UNISON's National Executive Council to strongly support the National Pensioner's Convention in achieving a free travel pass and to make every effort to ensure that pressure is put on the Government to



achieve this objective. Conference agreed.

### SAFETY ON PAVEMENTS AND PEDESTRIAN AREAS

Conference supported a request to the NEC to seek all means to implement the present law relating to motorised vehicles and cycles and anything that obstructs the use of pavements, walkways, pedestrian areas and verges as this endangers the physical security of people.

### TENANTS IN COMMON AGREEMENT

This resolution was carried by Conference calling on the NEC to seek legal advice regarding the setting up by individual UNISON retired members of a tenants in common agreement which related to privately owned property.

## RETIRED MEMBERS' ORGANISATION

### MEMBERSHIP RECORDS

It is recognised that in establishing the Replacement Membership System (RMS) there was a need to prioritise the records of working members.

Now that the RMS is on line in all regions, steps should be taken to ensure that all members' records including retired members are accurate.

Where they are not they may not receive basic information, such as conference registration documents. Conference supported a motion for this matter to receive attention.

### UNISON CODE OF GOOD BRANCH PRACTICE

Conference carried a resolution that requests that appropriate action is taken by the union:

=> To highlight the fact that adherence to the principles of the Code of Branch Practice is a requirement on all branches

=> That an audit of best practice by branches with regard to retired members be undertaken

### TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF RETIRED MEMBERS

Conference called on the National Retired Members' Committee to provide for training and development for retired members to assist them to support UNISON's organising and recruitment agenda.



### CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE QUOTAS

A resolution instructing the National Retired Members' Committee to establish a fair quote system relating to Branch members attending National Retired Members' Conference. Proposal to be submitted to the 2004 conference was supported.

A final emergency motion, which was passed, called upon the Retired Members' Conference Administration members to allow retired members reasonable time to be able to submit motions.



Conference ended with the usual votes of thanks. On Tuesday 15 October workshops were held and I was delegated to attend "Activagers". Very well led and made one feel that life was worth living and many delegates said they were pleased to receive some useful information.

My thanks to the Branch for giving me the opportunity to attend, I shall be attending the next meeting to report and answer questions.

*Dennis Wilce*

CHAIR, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE UNISON RETIRED MEMBERS'

## Access high on the agenda in Hinckley

**Access to public appointments, transport, the rights of disabled parents, genetic testing and the criminal justice bill were just some of the issues covered by delegates at this year's national disabled members conference in Hinckley.**

UNISON president Dave Anderson opened the conference on the evening of 8 November, although networks and caucuses had been taking place throughout the afternoon. Despite the packed schedule, time was made on the Sunday for minister for disabled people Maria Eagle to address delegates and answer their questions.

"This conference and the profile of self-organisation is the latest example of how unions are ahead of the game and continually pushing advancement in society," she said.

The final stages of the disability discrimination act will be implemented in October next year when service providers will have to improve access for disabled clients and all employers and most professions will fall within its scope.

"It is important to raise awareness" she said. "These are delicate far-reaching changes that are not easily understood. We must make sure employers and service providers implement their obligations and disabled people understand their rights."

Delegates were not impressed with all recent government legislation and Ms Eagle was forced to defend the creation of the single equality commission.

"There are lots of worries that disabled people will lose control of the agenda," she admitted, but the government has set up a task force "to see how a single equality body will operate and to ensure that all expertise is preserved".

Nicholas Russell of the national disabled members committee asked why access rights were not recommended for disabled people on school governing bodies.

Ms Eagle admitted that the government has a mixed record on



public appointments, but she anticipated improvements when education came under the provisions of the act.

This question followed on from the previous day's motion on disabled members having the right to a fair and equal opportunity to apply for and sit on public bodies, tribunals and public boards. It was widely acknowledged that the political system is still failing to attract a broad range of people onto public bodies, with one member referring to them as largely "male, pale and stale".

Turning to workplace matters, conference unanimously called for a ban on genetic testing by employers.

The motion was prompted by survey results from Genewatch UK which showed gene testing is viewed by many employers as an acceptable indicator in the selection process, even though it has a poor predictive value.

Delegates also called for a single disabled person's travel card. "We've had real problems with high bus fares," said one delegate. "In Leeds, disabled people pay full fare in the rush hour whereas in other towns it is free."

And there were also strong words for branches deemed to be discriminating against self-organised groups by preventing them from participating fully in branch activities.

"The rules tell us that the union promotes self-organised groups, but some branches are not giving full rights to disabled people to be represented on regional committees," said Peter Safford, from Watford.

A motion calling for various changes to the criminal justice bill, including the full recognition of disability hate crime, was successfully carried.

"Racial crime is being recognised for what it is, so we must ensure that hate crimes against disabled people are also recognised," said Susan Jewell from the voluntary organisations branch.

Socialising, as always, was also a key element of the conference and delegates tested their knowledge of random phobias, great sporting events and classic literature in the popular conference quiz. This proved to be the ideal warm-up for an accessible karaoke where members sang along until the early hours.

Many regulars were present at the 10th year of this event -but, encouragingly, so were delegates attending their first ever UNISON conference.

"This is much more than I'd expected," said first-time attendee Nick Smith from Oxford city council branch. "It has really inspired me to set up a self-organised group."



### Nottinghamshire UNISON Disabled Members' SOG

If you are interested in joining the branch Disabled Members' SOG, please contact Mick Worrall at the Branch Office on:

**0115 981 0405**

## Application for Membership – Nottinghamshire 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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Home Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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Work Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Subscription rates

Annual Income	Weekly Subscription	Monthly	Subs Band	(tick box)
Up to £2000	£0.30	£1.30	A	<input type="checkbox"/>
£2001 - £5000	£0.81	£3.54	B	<input type="checkbox"/>
£5001 - £8000	£1.22	£5.30	C	<input type="checkbox"/>
£8001 - £11000	£1.52	£6.60	D	<input type="checkbox"/>
£11001 - £14000	£1.81	£7.85	E	<input type="checkbox"/>
£14001 - £17000	£2.24	£9.70	F	<input type="checkbox"/>
£17001 - £20000	£2.65	£11.50	G	<input type="checkbox"/>
£20001 - £25000	£3.23	£14.00	H	<input type="checkbox"/>
£25001 - £30000	£3.98	£17.25	I	<input type="checkbox"/>
£30001 - £35000	£4.68	£20.30	J	<input type="checkbox"/>
over £35001	£5.19	£22.50	K	<input type="checkbox"/>

Retired members £15 (for life) Students £10 pa Unemployed £4 pa

#### Conditions of Service

(tick all those boxes appropriate to you and your post)

Full Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>DISABILITY*</b>	
Part Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Term Time only	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Job Share	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>ETHNIC ORIGIN*</b>	
Permanent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Afro-carib	<input type="checkbox"/>
Temporary	<input type="checkbox"/>	African	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>CAR ALLOWANCE*</b>		Other Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Essential	<input type="checkbox"/>	White Euro	<input type="checkbox"/>
Casual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>		

\* 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 additional information provided will be completely confidential.

#### POLITICAL FUND

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

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 Fund** (your subscription includes 5p per week or 22p per month contribution to this fund) is independent of support for any Political Party but liaises 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 not completed

#### 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

# 2004

## January

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**Nottinghamshire County**  
**UNISON**