



Branch Secretary's Message

Welcome to this issue of Bulletin. I'm afraid I'm feeling a little Bah Humbug mainly owing to

the complete absence of Christmas spirit in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. As we approach the festive season, you'd have thought George might have been able to sprinkle a smidgen of goodwill to all mankind in his Autumnal missive. But, alas, no. I'm afraid the Chancellor has given us nothing to promote good cheer this Christmas. In fact, he makes Dicken's grumpy old curmudgeon, Scrooge, look like a sweet philanthropist! There's nothing in Osborne's statement to help the million public sector workers who have seen the value of their pay fall by at least 10% since the coalition came to power. An increasing number of our members have to borrow money every month and rely on second jobs to survive. More members work part-time because they can't find full-time jobs, and more are on precarious zero-hour contracts. Indeed, the recovery the government has been boasting about is still not being felt by public service workers. Instead it's a recovery that only benefits the privileged few, namely George, David and co.

So let's deliver the Tory gang a belated Xmas present in May 2015, and make sure they pay the price at the next election!

Yours in solidarity
Steve Ryles

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UNISON's welfare charity there for you this Xmas



As Christmas draws closer, more and more people are having to rely on food banks.

UNISON is campaigning to change the government's welfare reforms so that vulnerable and low-paid families are lifted out of poverty and the reliance on food banks.

Statistics from the Trussell Trust

show that 913,138 people were given three days emergency food and support in 2013-14: 330,205 of these were children.

On average, 2,502 people were fed every day and 8,318 tonnes of food was donated by the public.

Between 2011 and 2013, UNISON's welfare charity There for You saw a 75% increase in payments to members in crisis, many of whom could not afford to pay for food, bus fares or other daily essentials. In 2013, it paid out a total of £12,300. Individual payments started from £20.

So, if a recent incident has left members struggling this Christmas, please can stewards advise that There for You may be able to help. Call on 020 7121 5620 or click [here](#) to visit the web pages.

Honiton TAs enjoy cuppa for Stars in Our Schools



Many thanks to Honiton Primary School which took part in UNISON's 'Stars in Our Schools' day on 28 November. The teachers at Honiton covered playground duty so the teaching assistants could have a proper tea break. Nice one, Honiton! Nothing beats a well earned cuppa! Stars in Our Schools' is designed to celebrate the thousands of fantastic school

support staff across the country who are often tucked away behind the scenes: the unsung heroes of our children's education.

We appreciate it's tricky finding the time in a busy school day to organise additional activities but if school stewards know of any events that took place to mark the day, please let us know.

Tell us about your second job!



Photo: Microsoft

To help make ends meet many UNISON members have a second job.

If this applies to any members in your workplace, please advise them to inform Branch Office as soon as possible otherwise we cannot support them in their second job. Finally, please advise members that if they have two jobs with different employers they have to pay their UNISON subscription by direct debit. Thank you!

Beware of social media at office Xmas party!



Photo: Fotolia

It's December, which means the office Christmas party season is officially upon us.

Stewards are urged to remind members in their workplace NOT to start posting unsuitable comments on Facebook and Twitter or accessing inappropriate websites, after one too many drinks at the office party!

It might sound like common sense, but every year, despite highlighting the potential pitfalls of social media in the run up to Christmas, we still get cases of members facing disciplinary hearings after posting inappropriate comments on social media sites.

The golden rule? Enjoy yourself but act responsibly!

Spare emergency inhalers okay in school says law



Photo: Microsoft

The law changed on 1 October to allow schools to hold spare emergency inhalers for children with asthma. The Department of Health has issued guidance for schools which can be accessed via the link below. It sets out how schools should safely keep and administer spare emergency inhalers. [Click here](#) to read more.

LGA report on moving from school to work



Photo: Microsoft

The Local Government Association (LGA) has launched its Youth Transitions report which sets out a new approach for supporting young peoples' transition from school into the world of work.

The report draws on the good practice of what works locally and recommends a more decentralised approach that enables partners to work together

around the long-term outcomes of young people.

UNISON will discuss this report with partners and, over the coming months, the union will publish further findings of separate investigations into apprenticeships, careers advice, and long-term unemployment. [Click here](#) to read more.

CDI seeks your input into new careers manual

The Career Development Institute is considering creating a new booklet in its popular Better Practice series, first published in 2000 and revised in 2008. The CDI has produced a short online survey to help decide if there is a demand for the booklet. If you work in the careers service, please can you help the CDI by completing their short survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VMM9M55>

Exam results linked to careers advice says report



The Advancing Ambitions report finally provides conclusive, quantitative evidence linking gains in achievement and engagement with quality Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG). The report, published this month by The Sutton Trust, cites evidence of gains in A level grades and improved levels of engagement where a robust careers programme is present in schools and colleges. Evidence showed that schools that had received a formal award for CEIAG held a 2% advantage in the proportion of pupils with five good GCSEs, including English and maths
[More...](#)

Employers outdated attitude towards pregnancy



Photo: Fotolia

Forty years ago the law was changed to protect pregnant women from ill-treatment at work, but a report published in December by the TUC suggests that the attitudes of many employers are still stuck in the 1970s – with the sacking, bullying and sidelining of expectant mothers commonplace.

The report - Pregnancy Test: Ending Discrimination at Work for New Mothers - says that although the law is on the side of pregnant women, many feel shunned as soon as they share their impending baby news with colleagues.

During the recession, tribunal complaints involving pregnant women went up by a fifth, and in the five years from 2008 to 2013, more than 9,000 women took their employers to a tribunal. [Click here](#) to read more.

UNISON to launch careers service campaign

UNISON, the NUS and the TUC are launching a joint campaign on the future of the careers service.

The campaign which will be officially launched in Parliament on 7 January, will highlight the research on careers services and present a manifesto outlining the key components of a quality careers information, advice and guidance service.

The unions want the next government to invest in a truly national careers system that delivers high quality, impartial careers information, advice and guidance from school age to retirement, focusing on skills, not just careers.

UNISON is producing a campaign pack and will be encouraging members to contact MPs and prospective MPs and ask them to support the manifesto.

Second jobs the norm for school support staff



A survey by UNISON of more than 15,000 school support staff* from the across the UK has revealed a professional, committed, but demoralised workforce that harbours serious concerns for their ability to adequately support students, unless crucial issues such as workload, job security, overtime and pay are addressed.

The survey revealed 80% of school support staff are concerned about workload, with 81% admitting the only way they can keep on top of their work is by doing unpaid overtime and working out of hours.

Additionally, 16% are forced to take second jobs to supplement their income, including work in bars and restaurants, delivering free newspapers, sweeping roads and packing internet orders.

Almost 90% said they are concerned about low rates of pay. 17% admitted their pay is so low that they qualify for in-work benefits.

80% of respondents said they love their job, but less than half said they feel valued. 53% said they feel significant levels of stress in the job.

UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis said: "School support staff are the backbone of every school and play a vital role in educating our children.

They are being given more responsibilities and managerial titles but their pay and conditions do not reflect this. Many are being paid just above the minimum wage, which is simply not acceptable for the amount of work and responsibility they have.

"We desperately need school support workers to have their responsibilities recognised in their pay and conditions, with permanent contracts and decent conditions."
[Click here](#) to read the survey.

UNISON's response to Autumn Statement

Responding to the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 3 December, UNISON's General Secretary, Dave Prentis, said: "It is sickening that George Osborne is once again expecting public service workers to work more for less and pay the price of his failed plan to revive the economy.

"Austerity has not worked and despite this the government is going ahead with more cuts which will inevitably mean more pay freezes.

"There is nothing in his statement that will support workers and the lowest-paid. Nothing to help the million public sector workers who have seen the value of their pay fall by at least 10% since the coalition came to power.

"An increasing number of full time public sector workers have to borrow money every month and rely on second jobs to survive.

"The recovery the government has been boasting about is still not being felt by workers. A recovery that only benefits the privileged few in this country is no good for the economy and for workers. [More...](#)

Tressell's novel celebrates centenary

Robert Tressell's novel 'The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists' follows the fortunes of a group of painters and decorators in the early 20th century. Set in Edwardian England, its impoverished hero, Frank Owen battles against the ruthless exploitation of his employers and the civic and religious authorities.

The book is celebrating its 100th birthday with the launch of a new documentary by British film maker, Daniel Draper, entitled: 'Still Ragged: 100 Years of The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists'.

This epic novel, which is honoured by the Trade Union movement, is a classic of working-class literature.

A century on, its political message is still relevant today where working class people are battling zero-hour contracts and struggling to live on the minimum-wage.

The documentary is free to anyone who wants to host a screening of the film.

Contact: info@shutoutthelight.co.uk

Members vote to maintain political fund

Eighty seven percent of members voted to maintain UNISON's political fund in the recent ballot which ended on 30 November.

UNISON General Secretary, Dave Prentis, said: "Our members have spoken loud and clear that they want UNISON to continue to promote their interests at European, national and local levels. This is in spite of the government's cynical 'gagging act' that aims to reduce the lobbying power of trade unions while the Tories happily sit back and pocket millions from corporate and financial elites." [More...](#)

Membership benefits

Don't forget to remind colleagues in your workplace about UNISON Devon County Branch. Let them know that both in and outside the workplace, UNISON has a lot to offer its members. Membership starts from just £1.30 a month, depending on how much you earn, and gives you access to a whole range of benefits, from free legal and welfare advice to discounts on insurance and grants for workplace training visit: <http://www.unison.org.uk/benefits/>



Wishing all our members

*Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year*

UNISON

Devon County Branch