



LGPS PENSION Don't give up now!

On Wednesday 22 November a mass lobby of Parliament took place and this gave UNISON members the opportunity to let MPs know what they want in terms of protection and the new scheme from 2008.

Thirty-six stewards and members from the Lancashire Branch travelled down to London to add their voices to the hundred of members who gathered to put pressure on the Government. And what a success it was.

Local Government Minister and LGPS

Regulator Phil Woolas has agreed to hold back draft Regulations, and this decision is seen as a direct result of lobbying by UNISON.

Minister Phil Woolas had made hostile interventions which spiked talks between the unions and the employers. Real progress was being made over proposals for the 'new look' LGPS. Without warning, minutes before the employers were due to consider proposals from the trade unions, Woolas made a Statement in Parliament announcing a new local government

pension scheme for England and Wales.

It is now understood that the Minister will be writing to UNISON setting out his views on the need for negotiations to continue and that the outcome of further talks can be reflected in the new Regulations.

Those of you who attended the lobby on 22 November, members who have lobbied or written to your own MP, can give yourselves a very large pat on the back for the political pressure you have created.

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Left to right

Tony Gregson, (environment)
Paul Falcone, (environment)
Richard Moore (environment),
John Gregson (pay services)

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of Lancashire UNISON will be held on Thursday 7 March 2007 at 1600 hours in Committee Room A at County Hall.

This is the most important meeting the Branch holds during the year and we hope as many members attend as possible.

For those members attending who use the flexi-time scheme, you are entitled to 'clock out' at 1600 hours to attend the meeting (providing cover is available) and be credited with one

hour, and it is hoped that members will take advantage of this concession.

The Branch will be inviting a Guest Speaker along with UNISON Service Providers (Frizzell, Britannia etc) there will be competitions and a raffle. Reminders will be sent with details of the agenda closer to the time.

update

LGPS PENSION continued from page 1

What happens now?

The draft Regulations, which will be subject to a 12-week formal consultation period, will be released shortly. In the meantime, we quickly hope to have talks with the Local Government Association and Local Government Employers – much progress is being made on this.

Negotiations will prove more difficult this time around, following the Government's announcement. However, we want the opportunity to take them as far as we can and get a fair deal for existing and future LGPS members.

Don't give up now!

It is important that we keep up the political pressure on MPs while talks take place. If you haven't written to your MP or visited his/her surgery, please do it now. This is equally important if you have an MP who is not Labour. Tell him/her that UNISON – and other trade union members – expect a fair deal and equal treatment with other public sector pension members. This means better protection for existing members, a fair ill health retirement scheme, improved benefits – such as the 1/60 accumulation rate – for existing members and no increase in the employee contribution rate to pay for a worse scheme, with lower employer contributions.

Please let the Branch know their response by ringing 01772 533072.

JOB EVALUATION Training for Stewards

15 Stewards attended the last UNISON JE Training event held at Lancashire College. Some important issues were raised and discussed by delegates and these have contributed immensely to steward development within the Branch.

The training enables stewards to develop their understanding of the JE process, how it is applied and what they need to do when accompanying members to their interview.

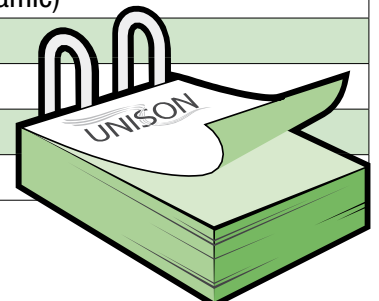
Stewards are also kept up to date with current developments in JE in Lancashire and the impact

this could have on UNISON members within the authority.

If you would be interested in attending a future JE steward's course or would just like to know further details of the course then please let Carolyn Johnson know of your interest on 01772 533072.

2007 CALENDAR

1 January	New Year's Day
18 February	Chinese New Year (Confucian/Taoist/Buddhist)
2 April	April Eve of Passover (Jewish)
3 April	Eve of Passover (Jewish)
6 April	Good Friday
8 April	Easter Monday
13 April	Vaisakhi (Sikh)
7 May	May Day Holiday
28 May	Spring Bank Holiday
27 August	August Bank Holiday
4 September	Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu)
12 September	New Years Eve (Jewish)
13 September	New Year 1 (Jewish)
14 September	New Year 2 (Jewish)
13 September	Beginning of Ramadan (Islamic)
21 September	Eve of Day of Atonement (Jewish)
22 September	Day of Atonement (Jewish)
13 October	End of Ramadan (Islamic)
9 November	Diwali (Hindu)
20 December	Eid ul Adha (Islamic)
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Boxing Day



BRANCH THANKS THORNTON

The Branch wishes to thank all the staff of the Fylde and Wyre Team based at the Thornton Office who organised a sale of delicious home-made cakes, together with raffles and other competitions. Judith Parker bought her extensive teddy-bear collection in for all to admire. The event raised over £300!

The staff had been made aware of the plight of women in Zimbabwe following the very moving speech by Thabitha Khumalo from Zimbabwe at UNISON's National Conference. Thabitha told the conference, "Ordinary women cannot afford sanitary wear. We are

inserting old pieces of cloth or newspapers, but the ink from the newspaper is causing infections, and there is no medication to cure this. Its immoral for the leadership (Robert Mugabe's) to deny us our biological rights".

This moving speech was highlighted in one of Sue Holmes' (Social Worker and UNISON Steward) e-mails to her colleagues back at the office. We also feature it in the August 2006 edition of Loud and Clear. The plight of these women who are being denied such basic human dignity touched the hearts

of the Thornton staff who decided they would do something. Both UNISON and non-UNISON staff worked on this very successful event. Thanks to everyone who contributed financially or in kind. All the cakes were A1!

UNISON is involved in many humanitarian projects. If you would like to make a donation please send a cheque or postal order to

Action For Southern Africa (ACTSA)
28 Penton Street
London
N1 9SA

To find out more details of this campaign, or to become a member of ACTSA please email: campaigns@actsa.org.uk or ring 0207 833 3133.



AGE DISCRIMINATION

From 1 October 2006 the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations made it unlawful to discriminate against workers, employees, job seekers and trainees because of their age.

Fairness at work and good job performance go hand in hand. Tackling discrimination helps to attract, motivate and retain staff. Eliminating discrimination helps everyone to have an equal opportunity to work and to develop their skills.

Employees who are subjected to discrimination, harassment or victimisation may:

- ▶ Be unhappy, less productive and less motivated
- ▶ Resign

- ▶ Make a complaint to an employment tribunal

In addition employers may find that:

- ▶ Their reputation as a business and as an employer may be damaged
- ▶ The cost of recruitment and training will increase because of higher employee turnover
- ▶ They may be liable to pay compensation following a claim to an employment tribunal – there is no

upper limit to the amount of this compensation.

There is already legislation in place to protect against discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

UNISON believes that these new regulations should pose few difficulties in organisations where people are treated fairly and with consideration.

AGE EQUALITY AFFECTS YOUNG MEMBERS TOO!

From 1 October 2006 the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations make it unlawful to discriminate against people at work because of their age.

Legislation will outlaw age discrimination in employment and vocational training in 2006. It will include every member of the workforce, young and old and means employers will no longer be able to recruit, train, promote or retire people on the basis of age, unless it can be objectively justified.

Your union, UNISON, takes a lead in supporting equality in the workplace and throughout wider society, including discrimination on grounds of age.

Young workers are often belittled, because they are believed to lack knowledge and experience and are often made to feel like an outsider. They are often denied the chance to further their career as employers deem them too young to take on and cope with extra responsibility.

A report published by Royal & Sun Alliance (R&SA) states that 1 in 7 young workers feel their progression has been hindered because of their age, compared to 1 in 10

people over 45.

Discrimination against young workers is often ingrained as on many occasions there may be a 20 + year age gap between themselves and their colleagues and the respect that all workers are entitled is not reaching as far as it should, therefore young members need to be encouraged to speak out.

One of the main disadvantages for a young worker is that of low pay. The minimum wage, although welcome, still expects younger workers to do the same job and under the same working conditions and terms of employment than that of someone 5 or 50 years older than them but for a much lower rate of pay. Even though they could have the same or more outgoings than their colleagues who are paid more money, young workers are expected to work for less but to continue paying tax and national insurance at the same percentage rate as their colleagues.

UNISON led the successful campaign for the introduction of the national minimum wage and in 2004 was successful in getting 16 and 17 year olds covered by the legislation. Although on a lower rate your union continues to campaign for the abolition of the age

differentials. At present the minimum wage rates are as follows:

- **22 years old and over** ('adult rate')
£5.05 per hour
- **18-21 year olds** ('development' rate)
£4.25 per hour
- **16-17 year olds**
£3.00 per hour

UNISON sent a submission to the Low Pay Commission in October 2005 providing evidence in support of its campaign to abolish the age differentials and increase the minimum wage rates to its present target of reaching £6.50 by October 2006. Unfortunately, this target has not been reached and the rates increased in October 2006 as follows:

- **22 years and over**
£5.35 per hour
- **18-21 years of age**
£4.45 per hour
- **16-17 years of age**
£3.30 per hour

With 16 and 17 years olds still being expected to work for a minimum wage over 38% less than that of someone 5 years older.

UNISON has also been at the forefront of the campaign on student tuition fees and in the past we have been a key sponsor of the National Union of Students

campaign against student hardship. We continue to campaign with the NUS and support Coalition 2010 which campaigns to oppose the creation of markets in education, variable tuition fees, and the removal of the £3000 cap on fees. We believe that the serious levels of debt students face acts as a massive deterrent to students from less well off backgrounds wishing to go on to higher education.

Your union, UNISON, boasts 75,000 young members and the figure is rising, making one of the fastest increasing young memberships in a UK trade union.

Where young people are part of a workforce represented by a trade union they get a better deal, including improved pay and career opportunities, and are less at risk from exploitation, accidents and injury compared to young workers in non-unionised workplaces. That's why our priority is to recruit and support more young members.

So, what can you as a young member do to help?

Encourage non UNISON members to join us; there is increased strength in increased numbers.

Become a representative;

You'll be contributing something, even if you can only spare a little time. Or you could be a workplace contact - making sure members receive information, acting as a link, between members and the union.

Provide a link

You will participate in the democratic structures of the union - lots of opportunities for all kinds of people. As well as local branches, there are regional and national levels to the union that need people like you to get involved. As well as young members there are also groups for members, to allow them equal access to and an equal voice in the union - for women, black members, lesbian, gay, retired, bisexual and transgender members.

Speak in UNISON

You'll be part of the biggest union in the country - contributing towards our influential voice on a huge range of issues. Ensure that your members are heard!

Work as a team

You can get together with work friends and colleagues and meet new people. If you decide to take on an elected position in your UNISON branch you could consider doing it as a job share with someone else.

Have more of a say!

You can have more of a say on what UNISON does in your workplace - bring up issues that you really know are of importance to you and your colleagues. Maybe you're unhappy with the lighting in the car park, or think you should have different working hours. Whatever the issue, the only way you can change it, is to bring it up in the first place.

Ban Bullying at Work Day

Tuesday 7th November

This event supported nationally by UNISON was held for the first time this year within the branch. A stall was set up outside Reflections and information was given to employees as they came into work. Over a hundred individual surveys were handed out during the morning and we had 27 returns which will be used to inform the Branch's position on Bullying at Work. A report will be produced once the surveys have been analysed. As part of the Day, two seminars were presented and attended by approximately 15 people. The Branch will be running training for Stewards on Bullying in the Workplace in the New Year. If you are interested in this please contact the branch office. Further information on Bullying at Work can be obtained from John Fletcher on 01772 530914.

HIV/AIDS Seminar

Monday 27th November

This Seminar was UNISON'S first national seminar on this issue. It has a number of implications for the Branch particularly in relation to new DDA legislation. As a branch we will be looking to raise awareness on this issue and we are encouraging stewards to:

- Promote this issue in the workplace
- Raise awareness of HIV and AIDS in the workplace
- Support colleagues affected directly or indirectly through issues relating to HIV and AIDS.

UNISON'S publication "Working with HIV and AIDS" (a guide for branches) will be available shortly and will provide an invaluable toolkit for stewards working with this issue. Further information is available by contacting the Branch Office.

“Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.” **Nelson Mandela**

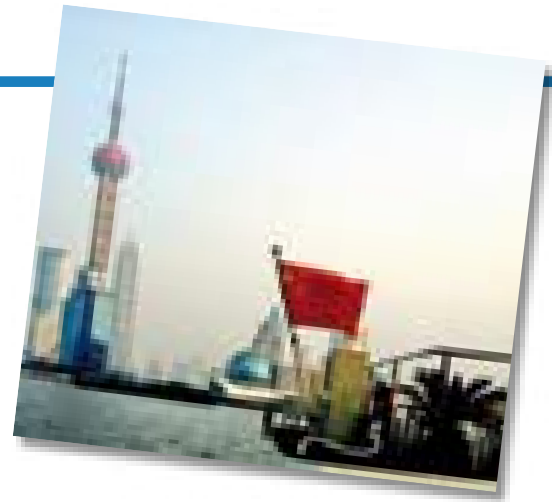
MAKE POVERTY HISTORY Keeping up the momentum

UNISON was the first trade union to join the MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY campaign. Over 25 unions were members, including the TUC, and over 540 UK-based civil society organisations were involved altogether. UNISON’s involvement in the MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY campaign has had an enormous and positive impact on the union’s international activity. It is imperative that we do not lose the momentum that has been generated. It is suggested that there are a number of areas where UNISON could build on the legacy of the MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY campaign:

- *Monitoring and campaigning on trade, aid and debt, including specific campaigns on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), core labour standards and quality public services.*
- *Engaging members in international work by providing accessible introductory information on the issues above, in a variety of formats including the web and in UNISON’s publications.*
- *Articulating and promoting UNISON’s particular focus and contribution to international work (as social justice not charity) in a variety of ways, including current communication materials.*
- *Building on the strengthened co-ordination between UK unions on international issues and related campaigns, possibly through a joint campaign on core labour standards.*
- *Collecting some of the many examples of how UNISON’s involvement in MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY attracted new members to the union and identifying strategies to develop the recruitment aspect to international work.*

If you would like to learn more about the Branch’s involvement in this campaign please contact Rosemary Cunningham (Convenor) on 01772 533072.

Developing a position on **CHINA**



At UNISON’s International Committee the decision was taken that work should begin on developing a position on China. Recognising the economic and political importance of China and the impact it is likely to have on the rest of the world, the Committee felt that the union should broaden its knowledge and understanding of the situation in China, especially as regards the position of public sector workers, with a view of deciding how best to engage with fellow workers in the country. The International Unit has begun some initial work on these issues and will, in due course, prepare a discussion paper for the committee. Among the topics to be considered will be the following:

- ★ The adoption of a policy of ‘critical’ engagement with China in line with TUC policy, while recognising and continuing to protest the abuse of workers’ rights in China, UNISON believes that only through dialogue can any change come about;
- ★ The role of the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) and the issue of free and independent trade unions in China;
- ★ China’s international obligations as a member of the ILO. It has ratified neither

conventions on freedom of association (No 87) and the right to organise and bargain collectively (No 98), and has entered reservations on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in breach of the international law on treaties;

- ★ The impact of the liberalisation of public services in China especially with regard to the loss of trade union membership in the old state-owned enterprises (SOEs);
- ★ Labour migration within and from China; and
- ★ The spread of HIV/AIDS

UNISON’s members have a crucial role in the union’s international work. Without their input and insight, without their activism and without their commitment it would not be possible for the union to pursue its international activities as effectively as it does.

We are, therefore, keen to develop and improve the information, training and opportunities for involvement for those interested in our international work at every level within UNISON – as well as ensuring that members have adequate opportunity to input their views into the international work of the union.

Rosemary Cunningham

On a wet weekend at the end of October I attended the UNISON Disabled Members Conference in Glasgow.

The disability group is just one of the four self-organised groups which have been set up by UNISON and they all work closely together. They are also made up from many different service groups not just local government but also from the transport, water, police staff, energy, healthcare and environment sectors.

The Conference brings together people who have a variety of disabilities and are able to discuss debate and vote on issues which are important from the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and the new Disability

Equality Duties (DED) upon public authorities which will be introduced in December 2006. It also brings other diagnoses of disability under the Act such as Cancer, HIV and Multiple Sclerosis as well as areas of mental health impairment.

Other topics debated were recognising British Sign Language (BSL), which is now recognised as the fourth indigenous language of the United Kingdom with over 250,000 using BSL also sickness absence policies, ASBO discrimination against Neurodiverse. (Tourette's Syndrome).

There is also time for workshops which are always of interest, this year you could choose from Disability Equality Duty, Pensions, Social Model of Disability and Developing Branch Disabled Members Groups.

During Conference meetings are also held for caucuses such as LGBT

(Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender), National Black Members, National Deaf Members (native British Sign Language users), also Women Members and the Disabled. This is so delegates can identify with other members and submit motions, amendments or emergency motions.

Maybe you are disabled or are not sure what is covered by the DDA see <http://www.drc-gb.org/> or visit the UNISON web site.

UNISON is here to help. It is your right to be out at work as a disabled person.

If you are interested in joining the regional disabled group, which meets in Manchester about four times a year; or if you identify with other caucuses, get in touch with the UNISON office or via the web site.

Will Higham
Directorate for Children and Young People

CONFERENCE REPORT

Equal Pay

EQUAL PAY

Why sticking with UNISON is best

Some firms of no-win, no-fee lawyers are approaching union members trying to sign them up to take legal cases for equal pay claims. If you are approached by a no-win, no-fee lawyer in this way, here's what you need to know:

■ Unlike these private firms, UNISON doesn't only take the easy cases. If your employer is not prepared to agree an acceptable settlement and we believe that your case has a

reasonable chance of success, we will take it up on your behalf.

■ We can arrange to lodge a grievance and tribunal application on your behalf – all as part of the benefits of UNISON membership.

■ No-win, no-fee lawyers charge between 10 and 25 per cent of any back pay you win – after all, they are in this to make money.

■ As a UNISON member, you can change your mind at any time and pull out of a case. We don't charge you if you change your mind. Some no-win, no-fee lawyers charge £160 an hour plus costs if you withdraw.

■ UNISON has a network of trained staff, committed to winning equal pay for our members. UNISON employs specialist legal advisors and work with the leading employment law firm, Thompsons, to make sure you have the best quality representation.

UNISON really is best placed to represent you if you need legal help, as well as to negotiate on your behalf with the employer.

If you are approached by a law firm about equal pay, please let your steward or Branch Secretary know as soon as possible. If you want to know more about equal pay or to join UNISON, call 01772 533072.

UNISON Sports & Social Events 2007

Details of all events are on the UNISON website

www.unisonlancs.org.uk/activities.asp

A Day at the Races

UNISON are planning another day at the races after a very successful trip to Carlisle Race Course in August. Once again the day will include a coach to the event and tickets to the stand. Further details regarding cost and venue will follow but if you are interested please contact unison.sports@unison.lancscc.gov.uk to add your name to the list.

Golf – Hackers Days

This year we are planning 2 days golf for novice/non golfers. The venue is to be decided, either Garstang or Southport. The first day will be April/May, with the second scheduled to take place in August/September. The format will remain the same with 9 holes in the morning and 18 holes in the afternoon. Male and female entries are welcome. For information/booking please contact unison.sports@unison.lancscc.gov.uk

Golf – Easterby Cup

Entries are welcome from golfers with a valid handicap to enter the regional tournament. For information/booking please contact bernard.hargreaves@env.lancscc.gov.uk

Gater Cup Cricket

Entries are invited for the annual cricket competition. ↗

If you feel like you can enter a team of 11 cricketers then please contact unison.sports@unison.lancscc.gov.uk We are hoping to start the competition early to give us the best chance to catch the good weather.

Clay Pigeon Shoot

The Clay Pigeon Shoot is now establishing itself as a very popular yearly event. 2006 saw 40 members have a great night out. We plan to hold another event this year in June/July to be held once again at The Dolphin Shooting Ground in Longton. Entries are on a first come first served basis, with a maximum of 40 places available. For information/booking please contact unison.sports@unison.lancscc.gov.uk

Rifle Range

The rifle range was a new event in 2006. 2 events were held at the Leyland Motors Rifle Range in Leyland with great success. Entries are invited on a first come first served basis, for this event, which will take place in October/November 2007. For information/booking please contact unison.sports@unison.lancscc.gov.uk

Archery

New for 2007, we plan to hold an Archery event during the summer. Details of the event will be available early 2007. If you are interested please contact us to get your name on the list unison.sports@unison.lancscc.gov.uk.

Mixed Rounders Competition

After failing to find a venue for the competition this year, we hope to have better luck in 2007. Entries are invited for

teams of nine people (5 women and 4 men) to enter a mixed rounders competition. This event was very popular a few years ago and we're looking to get the competition up and running again this year. For information/booking please contact unison.sports@unison.lancscc.gov.uk

Football - 11 a Side

(The Dennis Pearson Trophy) After the huge success of the Pearson Trophy last year entries are once again invited for the 2007 competition. If you feel you can enter a team to challenge last years winners Policy Unit then please contact unison.sports@unison.lancscc.gov.uk

Football - 7 a Side

The 7 a side league season is currently being played. Unfortunately this year we have lost a team, so we now have space available for a new team to enter. If you think you have what it takes to manage a team to the top, get in touch with us unison.sports@unison.lancscc.gov.uk. There is also always room for extra squad members for our 16 strong teams.

Any Suggestions?

If you have any ideas for new events, which UNISON Sports could support, please get in touch with us unison.sports@unison.lancscc.gov.uk.

Details of all events are on the UNISON website <http://www.unisonlancs.org.uk/activities.asp>

HOUSE FOR SALE

Chorley (out of town centre)

Garden fronted mid-terrace, comprising of lounge with coal effect gas fire in attractive surround. Dining kitchen with slate tiled floor and part tiled elevations, fitted units with intergraded fridge, hob & oven. Large open landing leading to two good size bedrooms with laminate floors. Separate wc and bathroom with newly fitted suite and overhead shower with tiled elevations. GCH throughout. Outside is a good size York stone enclosure with a brick outbuilding including electricity and outside tap. Situated between Chorley centre and Heapey, it has nice views and is close to the canal, with easy access to motorways and railway station. **£109,950.**

Tel: 07904266442

CASA UVAS, Nerja, Costa del Sol

Set in a small quiet complex, Casa Uvas has views of the Sierra Nevada mountains, the sea and pool.

The apartment sleeps up to six with two twin bedrooms and a double sofa-bed in the living area. There is a fully fitted kitchen, dining table for six and a bathroom with bath and shower.

A large patio, with sun loungers, table and chairs, has steps leading to a walled garden and the pool area.

Low season from £180 to high season from £400 per week.

For more information, please email casa.uvas@tesco.net or call 01282 692729.

noticeboard

