



**Housing**  
BRANCH LE 1111  
**Workers**  
JOBS AND HOMES FOR ALL

## St Mungo's Unite Members News

November 2016

Please send information to: [smbunite@gmail.com](mailto:smbunite@gmail.com)



### Hey Howard, Leave our Leave Alone!

Unite Reps intervened at the staff conference in London on the 31<sup>st</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> November, handing out leaflets, badges and a letter of protest for every delegate to sign about the way that the recording of annual leave has been altered. Each day of staff contractual annual leave has been converted into a block of 7.5 hours. This means that any worker who regularly works over 7.5 hours loses annual leave every time they book holiday.

This issue has ben ongoing for over a year now. To be clear, Unite is not opposed to negotiating. But the way that this change has been imposed, without any consultation at all, is not acceptable.

Early on in the process, Unite raised a collective grievance and an appeal about the unfairness of this approach, stating that we believed that this was a breach of contract. Neither was upheld.

Next, Unite attempted to negotiate via ACAS (The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service). ACAS is a Crown non-departmental public body. It is an independent and impartial organisation that does not side with a particular party, but rather will help the parties to reach suitable resolutions in a dispute. Senior management did not participate meaningfully in this process of discussion but rather sent back questions via the service asking Unite what legal recourse we intended to take.

We didn't know at the time, but Unite would not be able to take the case to Industrial Tribunal due to the fact that no staff had 'suffered any material detriment' - no actual money had been deducted from the wages of any staff. However, we now realise that senior management had taken legal advice and they knew that was the case at the time. They would not enter into discussion via ACAS as they thought that there was nothing that Unite could do if they didn't.

A drawn out process of taking legal advice from Unites own legal team then began. But we are now in a position where we have a clear indication that Unite can take this case to Civil Court despite the costs of mounting a case being high. Unite does not normally pursue cases in Civil Court precisely because of that reason. However, the legal advice that we have received indicates that we have a very good chance of winning the case and therefore the union intends to claim costs from St Mungo's.

***We will be sending out the letter of protest in a separate email. We are asking everyone who is affected by this decision to sign and return the letter to your local rep, hand it in at the union office at Rushworth Street or email it back to [smbunite@gmail.com](mailto:smbunite@gmail.com).***

***Please do respond to this request. This letter will assist the legal case as it demonstrates that members have not accepted the change by default.***

## **Unite survey – a summary.**

Thank you to the 96 people who took part in the recent union survey looking to understand what the top issues of concern are for members. Of the seven issues we enquired about over 50% of respondents expressed concern about four things: the environment at Thomas More Square (68.8%), the influence of HR (65.6%), the use of volunteers (56.3%) and safety related to staffing levels (54.2%). The other topics all came in with a majority of people saying they are not concerned, although the question about the number of suspensions and their duration was very close with 49% concerned and 51% not. St Mungo's commitment to Client Involvement returned 44.8% concerned and 55.2% not and the question about levels of bullying and harassment saw only 34.4% concerned with 65.6% not.

In a supplementary question members raised concerns about numerous other issues, of which the following were mentioned by more than one member: restructures; pay gaps, disparities and reductions; change in culture and approach within St. Mungo's; lack of real harmonisation in both pay and atmosphere; lack of genuine consultation with staff; the number of ex-St. Mungo's staff leaving; lack of policies and strategy regarding migrants and over cooperation with enforcement agencies and the lack of vital training for frontline staff. These are just some of the issues members raised – there were at least another 16 concerns members felt passionately about.

Full results and actions following from the survey to follow. **Thank you to Lindsey Mace** who has worked hard collating survey results and the summary.

## Call out for Health and Safety reps

We urgently need health and safety reps to step up and join the reps team. We have agreed with senior management that H&S reps will mirror the regional organisational structure.

Health and safety includes looking at workplace stress which can be caused by things like lone working. H&S reps have the authority to call for remedies to work situations that potentially cause harm to employees.

Health and safety reps are entitled to paid time off for extensive training and to carry out their duties. Please contact [smbunite@gmail.com](mailto:smbunite@gmail.com)

## Anti Tory Demo in Birmingham

There was a good turnout to the anti austerity demonstration in Birmingham on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

Unite put on a train to Birmingham on the day of the event and sent a big contingent down. The London and Eastern Region marched together along with a broad range of unions from all over the UK.



## **Update: Unite have to fight to remain part of the staff induction**

We are pleased to say that Unite have successfully defended our position in the staff induction. The vast majority of staff in St Mungo's are members of Unite. It would not be a fair or realistic induction into the organisation without a slot for Unite.

## **Update: Full time staff not volunteers!**

David Devoy agreed that he would share his ongoing work around a policy for lone working with volunteers with Unite and invite input from members. Unite has been invited to join a working group headed up by Kate Tebbit and David Devoy looking at ways to make the service offer 'innovative'. We are committed to making sure that staff terms and conditions are not adversely affected by the harsh funding environment and a perceived need to cut costs.

## **Organisational finance**

Reps will be asking questions about the statement of financial accounts at the JNC meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> November. They are up on the Mungos website and forecast a deficit of £4m.

## **The Unite Housing Workers Branch is looking for a second Treasurer to share the workload with our existing Treasurer.**

The Unite Housing Workers Branch is a growing branch which already covers 2,700 members, mainly working in housing associations. We are proactive and dynamic, organising strong workplace reps committees and broader housing campaigns.

We are seeking a second treasurer to share the burden of the work and ensure that there is cover for the existing Treasurer. Ideally we would like someone with existing experience as a Treasurer or in finance and who can hit the ground running. The ability to attend occasional branch and/or branch committee meetings in central London would also be helpful (both take place once per month but the Treasurers do not have to attend all).

The Branch Committee has agreed to pay Honorarium of £200 each per year to each Treasurer.

If you are interested in this role please email: [sembunite@gmail.com](mailto:sembunite@gmail.com)



## **New Reps and new areas**

Repeating this information from last newsletter for info.

Reps have been elected and taken on responsibility for the following areas. Please contact your local rep with any workplace issues. As always you can contact the reps team on [smbunitereps@gmail.com](mailto:smbunitereps@gmail.com) or [smbunite@gmail.com](mailto:smbunite@gmail.com)

East London & South East London- **John Minah & Maurice Walsh**

South West London, Hammersmith & Fulham, Hillingdon, Kensington & Chelsea- **David Oladele & Denise Hunt**

Haringey & Enfield- **Joe Batty & Lorna Smith**

Camden, Islington & Barnet- **Lindesay Mace & Nick Wing**

Westminster, Ealing, Hounslow & Harrow – **Sarah Edwards & Aftaar Malik**

Bristol – **Natasha Williams & Sophie Robinson**

Gloucestershire – **Jacob Saunders**

Somerset, Dorset & Wiltshire – **Jon Hughes**

Oxfordshire & Berkshire – **Andrea Ayuso-Morillo**

Health & Safety Reps- **Rhiannon Barrow**

Equality & Diversity Rep- **Vacant**