

UNISON IN THE CITY

Newsletter of Nottingham City UNISON

*The
Public
Service
Union*

Nottingham City

Fighting To Defend
Jobs & Services

UPDATE ON SINGLE STATUS

When the Job Evaluation project began in earnest in 2004, we asked the City Council to publish, then send the job reports to individual staff as part of the process. Agreement was reached and the job reports were then sent out to staff that had been interviewed in order that they could check for accuracy and then 'sign off' the report. For a variety of reasons, none of which are particularly defensible, the Job Evaluation team stopped sending out such reports due to alleged 'capacity issues' and so very few staff interviewed from 2005 onwards have received their job report. Not only is this crucial now, in terms of determining the accuracy of the content, it was also crucial many months ago, as potentially a great deal of anxiety could have been avoided had the Council had the courtesy of checking the job reports with the job holders who had been interviewed, as had been agreed.

It is therefore fair to say that we have little sympathy with the 'capacity issues' argument as the problem is almost entirely of their own making. Had they followed their own agreed procedure in the first instance this would not have been an issue. It has also been apparent for many months that the Job Evaluation/Single Status team was not going to be able to 'deliver' by April 2007, yet numerous individuals have been released from their contracts, resulting in the subsequent appointment of certain temps and consultants, many of whom have little interest or ownership in terms of what had previously been agreed.

It was very clear that our members would want sight of their job report, hence our requests some time ago.

Continued on page 3

TIMES ARE TOUGH

"Times are tough ..." said the article by Carol Mills-Evans, Corporate Director of Resources, in the November issue of the City Council employee magazine IMPACT. That message had already been delivered by Ben Browne, HR Director, who in October advised senior managers that "... given the current financial climate, ... a freeze on recruiting to all non-essential vacancies should be implemented ...". This includes a complete freeze on admin posts up to scale 4 (excluding those released for redeployment).

Yet in the Evening Post on 13 November, staff will have read about a "£200,000 pay off – but back in weeks ..." for Tim Render, ex-Director of Finance. Mr Render was recently made

redundant in a restructuring and, according to the Post, received a £100,000 pay off plus pension contributions of up to £110,000. Within weeks, and in the middle of a "vacancy freeze" he has come back as a consultant! Unsurprisingly the City Council refused to confirm to the Evening Post his rate of pay.

Whilst vital administrative posts supporting front line staff are frozen, money seems to be available to employ highly-paid consultants. How fair is that? Answers on a postcard to Jean Thorpe, Branch Office! Prizes given for the three best answers.

Jean Thorpe
Branch Chair

BRANCH OFFICERS

Branch Secretary

Gary Ward - Tel: 9156938

Assistant Branch Secretary

Clive Norris - Tel: 9155567

Service Conditions Officer

Christina Sanna - Tel: 9155879

Chair

Jean Thorpe - Tel: 9156879

Central Panel Officer

Mark Towle - Tel: 9156887

Treasurer

Steve Hales - Tel: 9155292

CONVENORS

Performance & Strategy

Clive Norris
9154467

Resources

Clive Norris
9154467

Env & Regeneration

Jim O'Dwyer
91541789
Michele Thackray
9156801

Children's Services

Jean Thorpe
9156879
Chris Hill
9156886
David Wand
(Education)
9156880

Community & Culture

Michele Thackray
9156801
Sandra Brothwell
9156890

ASHH

Adrian Picton
9156884
Jean Thorpe
9156879

Nottm City Homes

Carol Brodrick
9150325
Nathan Graham
9150326

Community & Voluntary Sector

Mick Moreton
9156892

OPENING HOURS

Mon - Thurs
9.00am - 4.30pm
Fri - 9.00am - 4.00pm
Tel: 9156883

MESSAGE FROM MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

Could all members please check their payslip to ensure that UNISON subscriptions are being deducted. It is important that you notify me as soon as possible, if you change your home address, your name, job, or transfer departments.

If you are leaving the Authority, please let know so that your name can be deleted from our database. However if you are:

- Retiring and have at least 2 years continuous membership, you can become a retired member for a one off fee of £15.
- Made redundant or dismissed, you can become an unemployed member for 2 years providing you remain unemployed, for a fee of £4 per year.

If you have any amendments or are unsure about your UNISON subscription deduction please contact me on 9156893 (Tues-Thurs 7.30am - 3.30pm) or email me dawn.jackson@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Dawn Jackson
Nottingham City UNISON Membership Officer

UPDATE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY CLAIM

The outstanding pay claim (due April 2008) has gone to arbitration to be resolved. However, local government workers will receive an interim pay rise in their November / December pay. Staff will be paid 2.45% pay rise with an extra £100 for the lowest paid (spinal column points 4,5,6) backdated to April.

UNISON's Head of Local Government Heather Wakefield welcomed the employers' decision to pay the uplift backdated to April.

"With Christmas just around the corner, 2.45% will bring some comfort to local government workers struggling to cope with the rising cost of everyday essentials" she said. She added "UNISON believes we have a strong case for a fairer deal for local government staff, which we are taking to ACAS for arbitration, and we are hopeful for an early decision".

The claim UNISON has submitted for the Pay Award due April 2009 is:-

"To improve real pay levels, the trade union side seeks a one-year, across the board pay increase of at least the level of retail price inflation with additional increases for the lower paid".



The Branch would like to wish all their members a very Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year

The Branch Office will close for the Christmas period at Lunchtime on Tuesday 23 December and will re-open on Monday 5th January 2009. If you need to contact a UNISON representative during this time, please call UNISON Direct on 0845 355 0845.

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As the council have failed to deliver this despite the agreement to the contrary, we have encouraged our members to utilise the Freedom of Information Act in order that such reports are made available.

The response from the council to this has been either to ignore the requests altogether (many members have contacted us to say that they have had no response), whilst others have had a letter claiming that an exemption within the Act means that they do not need to publish the reports, as they plan to do so in the future. Unsurprisingly, the actual date in the future when this will allegedly happen is unknown.

As a result of the volume of calls we have had I then wrote to the head of Information and Governance, the content of which is as follows:

"I am writing on behalf of UNISON members, in relation to the letters they have received concerning requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In the letter's it states that if they are not satisfied with the response provided or any exemptions applied, they should in the first instance write to you, stating the reasons for their dissatisfaction.

UNISON members have requested information on their job report and score, in respect of the single status proposals under the Freedom of Information Act and the response they have received states:-

"The information you requested is exempt from disclosure at this time under section 22 of this act as it is scheduled to be published in the future".

"As we have relied on Section 22 of this act to exempt information we are also required to carry out a Public Interest Test as defined in section 2 of this act. This is a test of whether the public interest in withholding the information is greater than in releasing it. In this case we feel it is in the best interests of the public that the information you have requested is withheld as the scores, grades and reports for every job will be published before implementation and will be made available to employees at a point in time when we have an appeals process in place and are able to deal with appeals. Therefore the delay in publication is not disadvantaging individuals in any way." Unfortunately I do not agree with your position on this matter and having been involved in the Job Evaluation process/Single Status group from the

outset I feel that the delay in publication of this information is nothing to do with 'public interest', and everything to do with the City Council's inability to follow its own agreed procedure.

The decision you have taken disadvantages individuals significantly as without the detail contained in the job report and their subsequent job score, some of our members will be unable to establish whether they have been placed in the correct job group. It is clearly not in the Council's interest for our members to be balloted on a matter without having had full access to all the data.

Whilst I accept that this information will be made available prior to implementation, though exactly when remains unclear, this is creating significant anxiety for many individuals, particularly those who are losing pay under the proposals, and the fact that job reports have already been issued to some staff, is clearly disadvantaging those staff to the contrary.

The feedback we have received from hundreds of members during our consultation is that few members of staff took part in the evaluation interviews and those that did, rarely had subsequent access to what had been written in relation to their post. In many cases evaluations were carried out based on out of date job descriptions. However, by contrast, some members who were interviewed received a copy of their job report which they commented on and returned. Some of these were then sent an updated job report, placing them in a more informed and thereby favourable position than those staff who continue to be denied access to such information.

It appears highly likely that many members of staff will have been incorrectly or inaccurately evaluated and will therefore have been issued with the wrong grade. It is clearly unfair to further delay the issue of such job reports and scores, and I completely disagree that "the delay in publication is not disadvantaging individuals in any way." It is clearly not in "the best interests of the public" that this information is withheld and it is grossly unfair that some members of staff have been given access to their information, whilst others have not.

I am sure you are aware that one of the main causes of anxiety for individuals is the unknown. Whilst it continues to be unclear whether the evaluation has been carried out correctly on an individual's current job, and therefore whether the proposed grade is

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correct, the anxiety continues, and to a large degree the Council is responsible for perpetuating this problem. “

We have most recently raised this matter with Management on November 14th, at which point the response we received was, in a nutshell, that it was now our members fault that the job reports were not being shared, as, unsurprisingly, the Single Status team have been inundated with FOI requests.

So, in summary, the council are now blaming our members for the current and any future delays in relation to the issuing of Job Reports as a result of the volume of FOI requests.

As outlined earlier, this is something that the Council agreed to do.....but have failed to do.....and the fact that members are now asking them to do.....what they have previously agreed to do.....is now apparently the reason why it's going to take them even longer to do it! They really could not have made a bigger mess had they tried.

In terms of what happens next – we are still some way from a ballot as the council has still not sent us the 6 documents outlined at our meetings in October which are the -

- Collective Agreement,
 - Pay Policy
 - Pay and Grading model
 - Individual post holder data
 - Gender pay gap analysis
- Quality impact assessment

A ballot of Trade Union members will only take place when these documents have been received locally and then sent onto our National Office, and when our members have had sight of their job reports.

We hope to use the coming months to iron out some of the anomalies raised at our consultation meetings and ahead of the next Single Status 'results run'.

Gary Ward
Branch Secretary

ISSUES RAISED BY UNISON MEMBERS AT THE OCTOBER CONSULTATION MEETINGS

The points listed below were raised by members at our recent Single Status consultation meetings. We asked to meet with the management side to discuss these issues and agree a way forward. The meeting took place on 14 November and there is a summary of the outcome of those discussions under each point.

1. Publishing of rank order and job reports with scores

Approximately 800 Freedom of Information requests have been submitted to the council in an attempt to access individual job reports with scores. Although the council has said it will publish all job reports and the rank order of jobs within the council on the intranet, the only commitment they will give is to do this prior to the ballot, which could be several months away. This is clearly not acceptable as our members have a right to know now on what basis the decision was made to change their pay, in particular those whose pay has been cut. We will continue to put pressure on the council to get this work done because the level of anxiety and stress amongst members is increasing as a result of withholding this vital information.

2. Information requested by UNISON on behalf of members - yet to be provided

- Current detailed rank order and confirmation of cut-off date.
- Breakdown of losers in each grade by percentage and gender.
- Breakdown of jobs classed as staying the same that either gain or lose incremental progression.

We have been asking for this information since the council did the data refresh exercise which changed the outcomes we had previously been given. It is still not clear when this information will be provided as they are focussing on addressing the numerous queries they have received which may change the outcomes yet again.

3. Schools – Support Staff

- Level 1 qualified/level 2 unqualified/level 2 qualified on same grade.
- No evaluation for cover supervisors

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- Huge anomalies for admin staff.
- Differences in working patterns i.e. term time/all year round.

Management agreed that there were numerous problems with the single status outcomes for schools. They had already met with Headteachers who have agreed to put forward nominations for a working group on schools evaluations. UNISON believes that we should be part of the same working group and not meet separately. We will ensure that members are kept informed about the process and will arrange further consultation meetings when we get a clearer response from management on the way forward.

4. Managers supervising staff on same grade

- Homecare Managers/Senior Homecare Workers
- Senior Engineer/Engineer
- Children's Residential Asst Unit Manager/Senior Residential Social Worker
- Daycentre Manager/Team Leader
- Welfare Rights Seniors/Team Leaders
- Learning Works for Young People Co-ordinators/Trainers

They accept there are issues but have not as yet agreed how this will be resolved.

5. Loss of differentials in grading

- Senior Practitioners/Social Workers
- Occupational Therapists

They acknowledged the problems relating to Occupational Therapists and are considering whether there needs to be separate job descriptions to differentiate between those staff with more experience who work on more complex cases.

6. Loss of incremental difference for experienced staff whose pay has increased under the proposals. This is because all posts that have an increase in pay will be placed at the bottom of the proposed new grade

UNISON has asked how much it would cost to reinstate the incremental differences, currently accrued by experienced staff, within the proposed pay structure. Management has estimated the cost of backdating of increments to 2006 to reinstate the differences as £2.8 million each year.

7. Admin Workers

There was an acknowledgement that there appears to be anomalies in the outcomes for admin staff across the council. UNISON is very concerned that admin workers appear to be the largest group facing pay cuts, some of whom are already on low pay, and will continue to press for a review of this situation.

8. Registration Service – These posts were all paper based evaluations because they were only recently transferred to the City Council. This has resulted in losses for almost all staff and UNISON believes the council should offer an opportunity for evaluation interviews to fully capture the job content.

They did not agree to our proposal and we will therefore have to wait for the publication of job reports to assess the level of inaccuracy in the information held about these jobs. This is another example of why the council should prioritise getting all job reports published.

9. Task and finish – this made up a lot of earnings which was pensionable, and members are concerned that this has not been protected.

We got a very negative response to this issue. Management confirmed that the current position on this issue would not change and those members would therefore see a detriment in their pension, depending on their current age and when they are likely to retire.

10. Job re-design – this would involve a process of identifying ways of enriching job content to improve evaluation outcomes resulting in the possibility of taking members out of pay protection, whilst ensuring that the process was non – discriminatory

Management has always rejected this proposal when we raised it in the negotiations earlier this year, however we have continued to table this proposal and they have now said they would give it consideration. We will in the meantime gather evidence of where this has been put in place in other local authorities and examine the outcomes for members.

Christina Sanna, Service Conditions Officer

CASUAL EMPLOYEES AND PENSION SCHEME

With the introduction of the new pension regulations in April this year came a significant change that affected Casual employees, in that, anyone who is not employed continuously for more than 3 months (which the Council is classing as Casual) is no longer entitled to contribute to the pension scheme.

Without our knowledge the Council wrote to all employees who were effected by this change telling them they were no longer entitled to pay contributions on their casual earnings. We received a number of complaints from employees who were felt this was unfair.

It transpires that there are a number of casual employees who have been working on a casual contract for a significant length of time (over 3 months). It could be argued that the contract is no longer casual, and therefore should have a different contract. This would allow these employees to contribute to the pension scheme, and of course, have employment rights beyond those of a casual employee.

The Trade Unions are currently in dispute with the Council over this matter and are looking to resolve the matter satisfactorily for our members. If you haven't been in touch with us and feel you have been unfairly effected by these

CAR PARKING PERMITS

Hundreds of employees were notified earlier this year that in the council's opinion they did not meet the criteria for issuing a car parking permit and were therefore given notice that the permit would be removed in April 09. UNISON urges all members in this position to write a letter objecting to the removal of the permit, addressed to the person who originally wrote to inform you of the decision. You can get a copy of a template letter by contacting either the UNISON office 9156883 or your UNISON Senior Rep.

PROPOSED NATIONAL PAY AND GRADING FOR ALL SCHOOL STAFF

Work has begun on developing a new national pay and grading structure for all support staff in schools. It will be the only way of standardising all jobs in school across the country. The rise in the number of trust schools and other self governing schools means, that unlike teachers, school support staff are not covered by any local or national pay and conditions. We need a national framework that will apply in all types of schools – community, foundation; voluntary aided and trusts across all local authorities. The alternative is the nightmare vision of pay and conditions negotiations taking place separately in 23,000 individual schools.

The new national pay and grading structure is the outcome of years of negotiations between UNISON and the: Local Government employers, Foundation and Aided Schools Association and the DCSF. The new national negotiating body for school staff was set up in September 2008. This body will develop national pay conditions that will apply across all types of maintained schools in England (except academies). UNISON has the most members in schools. It was given 8 seats on this new body; GMB has 4 and Unite 3. These seats will enable us to get the best structure we can for our members.

National UNISON asked colleagues what they thought would be needed in a new structure. We felt we needed a fair and equal pay for all, as well as a coherent career and training structure. We were very concerned that this new structure would be a copy of the 2003 Remodelling of Support Staff and would not be enforceable and would lead to staff having their pay and conditions cut. We have been told that the Government has agreed to laws being passed which will give statutory underpinning of the new structure. UNISON has not agreed to anything so far and as soon as I have any draft information I will send it out for your comments. One thing that you may want to start thinking about What should one or more groups of support staff be called?

Please send your suggestions to David Wand at the UNISON office on 9156880, or e-mail david.wand@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is given that the Branch Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday 10 March 2009. There will be three meetings as follows:-

**12.30pm and 2.00pm
6.00pm**

**NCVS, Mansfield Rd, Nottm
UNISON Office, Perth Street**

During the meetings the Branch Annual Report and Financial Accounts will be received and Branch Officer and Steward Nominations ratified. The meetings consider motions and changes to the Branch Rules. We will also invite a speaker to the first two meetings, although the topic is yet to be decided, it is likely to be about single status.

Elections

All Branch Officer and Steward Posts are up for election. The period of office is 1/4/09 – 31/3/10. Branch Officer Nominations must be proposed and seconded by two members. Steward nominees must be supported by the majority of members within their section. For large sections, 10 members should nominate them.

EXISTING BRANCH OFFICERS AND STEWARDS WHO WISH TO CONTINUE IN POST MUST BE RE-NOMINATED. H & S REPS AND ULR's DO NO NEED TO BE RE-NOMINATED

Election Address

Where more than one nomination is received for one position, each nominee has the opportunity to give an election address of no more than 500 words.

Interested?

If you wish to be considered for a post, please contact the UNISON Office on 9156883 and ask for a nomination form. All forms must be returned to the Branch Office by Friday **13 February 2009**.

Motions / Agenda

Motions must be submitted in writing to the Branch Secretary, Nottingham City UNISON, 4-6 Perth Street, Nottingham, by **13 February 2009**. A full agenda will be distributed at the meeting and copies will also be available from Perth Street. Please contact the UNISON Office if you require a copy of the Agenda in another format, need a signer / lip speaker, assistance with childcare / travel costs to attend the meeting, or have any other facilitation needs.

GET ACTIVE - BECOME A UNION HEALTH AND SAFETY REP

Unison is looking for more members to become Health and Safety Representatives in their workplaces.

Unison believes that health and safety is one of the most important issues at work and active Health and Safety Representatives, working with members, can help to bring about improvements in the workplace.

Union Health and Safety Representatives are appointed by the members and can:

- investigate hazards
- take up health and safety issues with management
- represent members in consultations

Union health and safety reps have the right to paid time off to carry out their duties and undergo training.

If you would like to become a Unison Health and Safety Representative, or would like to know more about the role please get in touch with Clive Norris, on (91) 54467 or by e-mail at clive.norris@nottinghamcity.gov.uk.

UNISON NATIONAL DELEGATE / LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCES

Next Years Conferences will take place from 14 - 19 June 2009 in Brighton. The Local Government Conference (14-15 June) will precede the National Delegate Conference (16-19 June). We are entitled to send six delegates to the Conference who are representative of our branch membership. There is strict proportionality and fair representation criteria that we must adhere to.

All accommodation costs and travel are met by UNISON and if you have children to care for, you are able to take them with you as a crèche is provided. All first time delegates will be invited to attend a briefing session prior to the conference.

If you are interested and wish to be considered to attend one of the conferences please e-mail Susan Chettle, by 13 February 2009 to register your interest. If more members are interested than places are available, an election will take place at the Annual General Meeting on 10 March 2009 - susan.chettle@nottinghamcity.gov.uk



1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Please tick or fill in boxes below

Mrs Ms Miss Mr Other

First name

Surname/Family name Date of birth / /

Home address

Postcode

National Insurance number (from your payslip)

Please tick this box if you require materials in a different format (eg large print or Braille) – be sure to supply contact details below.

Please give a telephone number/voice/text/email address for UNISON to contact you – indicate if work or home

Contact tel/voice/text/email

2. YOUR EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Employer's name

Your job title/occupation

Department/section

Workplace name and address

Postcode

Payroll number (from your payslip)

PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO:
Nottingham City UNISON
4-6 Perth Street,
Nottingham, NG1 3LU

3. WHAT YOU PAY – CURRENT RATES (SET OCTOBER 2003)

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions.

WEEKLY PAY	ANNUAL PAY	YOUR SUBSCRIPTION—WHAT YOU PAY		
		PER WEEK	PER MONTH	BAND
Up to £38.47	<input type="checkbox"/> Up to £2,000	£0.30	£1.30	A
£38.48–£96.16	<input type="checkbox"/> £2,001–£5,000p	£0.81	£3.50	B
£96.17–£153.84	<input type="checkbox"/> £5,001–£8,000p	£1.22	£5.30	C
£153.85–£211.53	<input type="checkbox"/> £8,001–£11,000	£1.52	£6.60	D
£211.54–£269.23	<input type="checkbox"/> £11,001–£14,000	£1.81	£7.85	E
£269.24–£326.92	<input type="checkbox"/> £14,001–£17,000	£2.24	£9.70	F
£326.93–£384.61	<input type="checkbox"/> £17,001–£20,000	£2.65	£11.50	G
£384.62–£480.76	<input type="checkbox"/> £20,001–£25,000	£3.23	£14.00	H
£480.77–£576.92	<input type="checkbox"/> £25,001–£30,000	£3.98	£17.25	I
£576.93–£673.08	<input type="checkbox"/> £30,001–£35,000	£4.68	£20.30	J
£673.08+	<input type="checkbox"/> over £35,000	£5.19	£22.50	K

Please tick this box if you are a student member in full-time education (including student nurses or Modern Apprentices). Your subscription is £10 per year.

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid
Weekly Fortnightly Four Weekly Monthly

4. POLITICAL FUND

UNISON's **Affiliated Political Fund (APF)** is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliates to the Labour Party.

UNISON's **General Political Fund (GPF)** is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union and for research and lobbying in Parliament and Europe. It is independent of support for any political party.

It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes below. Your subscription shown above includes a political fund payment so you do not pay any more by being in one of the funds.

If you have been a member of a trade union before, please state which one:

The information provided by you shall be recorded by UNISON for statistical purposes and used for sending you UNISON publications, ballot forms and otherwise communicating with you. If you do NOT want any mailings from UNISON, besides those required by statute, please tick this box

To keep you fully informed of the services we arrange for members we want you to receive details of benefits offered by or in conjunction with UNISON's affinity partners. The affinity partners are organisations with close links to UNISON that share our ambition to provide you with the best possible range of benefits. Under the Data Protection legislation we can only disclose your details to our affinity partners with your explicit consent. Therefore if you WANT to receive details of the full range of benefits you MUST tick this box

5. YOUR AUTHORISATION

- I wish to join UNISON and accept its rules and constitution.
- I authorise deduction of UNISON subscriptions from my salary/wages at the rate determined by UNISON in accordance with its rules to be paid over to them on my behalf and
- I authorise my employer to provide information to UNISON to keep my records up to date
- I authorise deduction of the following Political Fund payment as part of my subscription: *Tick one box only*

Affiliated Political Fund **General Political Fund**

Now please sign and date below.

Signature

Date

OTHER WAYS TO PAY (please tick if appropriate) direct debit cheque