

Five-Day Staff Victory

After a dispute lasting over three years, management has finally accepted the union position and will not be forcing the five-day staff to move to four-day contracts. This is totally down to the persistence of the staff involved, their local rep and the Unite full-time officers, Bryan Kent and Owen Granfield.

These staff are now in exactly the same position they were in three years ago and it is a pity that so much time, money and effort had to be wasted before it was accepted that these staff were providing a necessary service on short-staffed teams.

It is our hope that future disputes will not take so long to settle and that they can be resolved through informal discussions with the staff involved rather than recourse to the very lengthy disputes procedure.

Three-Year Pay Deal

Unison and the RCN members have accepted the three-year pay deal even though it will continue the pattern started last year for sub-inflation pay settlements. With the ink barely dry on the agreement, Unison and the RCN have now asked for the pay rise to be re-negotiated after the latest inflation figure of 5% for the year to July 2008. Unite is joining in on this but we never accepted the three-year deal in the first place. Most staff are now between £550 and £1100 worse off than if their pay had kept up with inflation. For those staff on the lower pay bands, inflation is actually worse than the government figures as those items which have gone up the most; fuel and food; make up a larger proportion of their spending.

We hope that this time, all of the unions will work together to get a fair deal for NHS staff.

Nurses to Remain on Sessions

In her letter dated 5th June 2008, Jane Pearson has clearly stated that all sessions will have a nurse physically present. This is a victory for common sense and donor and patient safety. She has also promised to make sure that there will be a donor care supervisor on every donor session, which should open up more promotion opportunities for donor carers.

It is not all good news. In the long list of nurses' duties, there is no mention of donor screening or venepuncture and she also states that only one nurse will be involved in the session whilst any other nurse will be engaged in the activities in the list. Anyone who has worked on sessions recently will realise that all staff are needed to have a hands-on role to avoid even longer queues and more donor complaints.

Tooting Action Group

This group has been set up to fight against the proposed 70 redundancies that will take place in Tooting if the plans to stop all processing and testing go ahead.

The Tooting Action Group was formed to put pressure on the NHSBT to withdraw the threat of redundancies by various means including contacting our local MPs and holding an indicative (non-binding) ballot to raise the possibility of some sort of action against the cuts.

There was a recent article in a local Leeds paper condemning the similar cuts taking place in the Leeds Centre.

Operational Transformation Programme

The Operational Improvement Programme has now evolved into the Operational Transformation Programme, a change which no doubt we paid many more thousands to McKinseys. Anyone who has been with the Blood Service a few years may remember the New Donation Process which cost many millions of pounds and still did nothing to stem the loss of donors or reduce donor complaints. The OTP just seems another effort to bleed more donors with fewer staff and like the previous effort, will probably do little to improve the donor or staff experience.

The main feature seems to be even larger pods with even fewer staff in them. Due to the unfortunate and precipitate introduction of the new post-donation procedure, most sessions are now slowing down to a crawl (if teams are following the post-donation procedure as stated in the revised guidelines). It clearly states that the donors must be closely observed for two minutes after the end of the donation. Closely observed means (according to Jane Pearson and Dr Sue

Barnes) being with the donor for the whole of the two minutes and not dealing with other donors in the pod (which would be the job of the pod runner or other pod member). This could be longer if the donor is not feeling well. Some teams are now finishing an hour or so later but looking after fewer donors. There has also been a large increase in the number of accidents and near misses involving donors and staff due to donors falling off beds. This is a category of accident that was almost unheard of before the change in the post-donation procedure.

There is also a threat to remove seating from the pods and from the welcomer post. This is clearly illegal under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 which state in section 11, paragraph 3: 'A suitable seat shall be provided for each person at work in the workplace whose work includes operations of a kind that the work (or a substantial part of it) can or must be done sitting.' In the HSE guidelines about work which must be done standing, there is a requirement for the workbench to be 1075 mm high. Our beds are 730 mm high so they would have to be raised which would be impracticable for the donors and create more of a risk if they were to fall off.

Green Issues

The NHSBT management has refused to sign up to the Cycle to Work scheme despite this being approved for NHS staff from the Department of Health. They have some spurious objections about our national spread and financial control issues. This scheme is one of the few in which the term 'win-win' can be used without laughing. Staff get a bicycle for up to 50% off the retail price, the NHSBT also saves money as they don't have to pay National Insurance or Pension contributions on the money and studies have shown that staff who take more exercise usually have less sickness and absence. The scheme also is cost-free to administer.

With all of these positive aspects, it is anyone's guess why it is not being promoted by the NHSBT. Instead, they are offering an interest-free loan up to either £300 or £500 (payroll doesn't know yet). This carries none of the advantages of the Cycle to Work scheme and depending on how soon the loan has to be repaid, may only be worth around £15 to £25. Under the Cycle to Work scheme, savings could be anything up to £500.

Millions of road miles will be added when the new Filton centre is fully operational. All blood collected by the Tooting centre will have to do a return trip to Filton every night. This will be repeated for all of the areas that are losing their processing and testing facilities if the management plans are fully realised.

It is not clear what group in the NHSBT is taking responsibility for environmental issues. There is an Environmental Policy Group but this meets very infrequently. Some of the issues are covered by the Improving Working Lives group and others come under health and safety.

It would make much more sense for there to be single group dealing with environmental issues. There is now union training for environmental reps and pressure is being put on the government for legislation to make this a statutory position on an equal footing with health and safety reps.

The following websites contain more information about environmental issues, some specifically related to the NHS.

www.nhsbikes.co.uk
www.envirowise.gov.uk
www.sustrans.org.uk
www.corporatecitizen.nhs.uk
www.foe.co.uk
www.thecarbontrust.org.uk



Branch Contacts

Paul Selby
Branch Secretary:
Mobile: 07764 280033
FN: 377 0033
paulselby01@btinternet.com

Mike Brown
Steward
Southampton

Derek Carpenter
Steward and Health & Safety Rep
Transport - Cambridge
Email: derek.carpenter@nbs.nhs.uk

Val Debenham
Steward
Transport - Tooting
Email: val.debenham@nbs.nhs.uk

Lauren Goff
Branch Equalities Officer and Union Learning Rep
Mitcham Team
Email: lauren.goff@nhs.net

Roberta Greed
Union Learning Rep
Brighton Team

Richard Kemble
Steward
Transport - Bristol

David Linsey
Branch Chair and Health & Safety Rep
Mitcham Team
Email: david.linsey@nhs.net
Mobile: 07974 176031

Karen Lodge
Steward
Bristol Bloodmobile
FN: 377 7509

Mel Lynas
Steward
Southampton Team
FN: 377 7621

Ray Marks
Steward
Bath Team
FN: 377 7572

Marie Moffatt
Steward
North London

Keith Neaves
Steward
Transport – Tooting

Anne O'Malley
Health & Safety Rep
North London
Email: avomalley2@aol.com

Lynn Pope
Health & Safety Rep
PA Bristol Regus Site
FN 1423
Email: lynn.pope@nbs.nhs.uk

Maria Carman Puga
Steward
Edgware Clinic

Gary Sherrard
Health & Safety Rep
Brentwood
Email: gary.sherrard@nhsbt.nhs.uk

Tina Smith
Steward
Bristol Apheresis
FN: 2040 or 2041

Alan Ursell
Steward
Transport – Brentwood
Email: alan.ursell@nbs.nhs.uk
FN: 377 3211

Pauline Watson
Branch Vice-Chair and Steward
Brighton Team
Email: watsonpauline@hotmail.co.uk

Mark White
Steward

If you need help and your team is not listed, contact any other representative on the above list.

The branch website is located at:
www.tgwu-nhsbt-branch.org.uk and there is a blog
(web log) located at:
www.tgwu-nhsbt-branch.org.uk/blog

Please retain this page as a reference. It will only be updated when there is a change in union officers. Amicus officers will be listed after the full merger in November 2008.