

### Mitcham Team Grievance

The Mitcham Collection Team has taken out a grievance against the management proposals to lengthen the session times by moving the last appointment to 19.45 from 19.30 and advertise the sessions as closing at 20.00 instead of 19.45. The Mitcham Team is already one of the busiest teams in the country and this change will lengthen the already long session times. Mitcham already has later finishing times than the vast majority of teams throughout the country and the team is 15% busier than the national average.

It only took management one month to completely ignore the new Collective Grievance policy by refusing to hear the Mitcham Team grievance. We have been forced to re-submit the grievance so that it can be heard properly.

### OTP Review

This item is still in the newsletter as we have not had a full response from management to the many concerns that were raised by staff. In what started as a positive initiative in line with partnership working has been buried by management who do not wish to deal with the legitimate concerns staff still have about the OTP project.

Partly as a result of clinical changes that were not envisaged in OTP, the pressure on staff has increased and with it, donor waiting times. OTP does not seem compatible with proper donor care. There has actually been an increase in donor faints despite the measures that have been put in place to prevent this. This increase in donor reactions was recorded in the minutes of the Blood Donation Clinical Group. Staff are not able to observe donors properly, especially new donors due to the pressure put on them to get the donors through the system.

### Government Cuts

Measures are being put in place to save money from the NHSBT budget in advance of the emergency budget being announced by the government on 22nd June 2010. A letter from Lynda Hamlyn has been sent which has such measures as a freeze on external recruitment except for front-line posts, no more money for consultants, freeze all new spending on marketing and advertising, review the expenses policy and other measures. The full letter is available on the Intranet.

Management have also announced a 3% cut in the

funding for the Cord Blood Bank and the Bone Marrow Registry. This could have an effect on the collection of cord blood and bone marrow samples from black and minority ethnic donors who are still under-represented on these registries.

This certainly raises the question (or questions) that if all of this expenditure was needed in the past to enable us to collect enough blood, how will we collect enough blood in the future when the donor base is still falling and hospital demand is still rising. Either the spending was unnecessary in the first place, which calls into question the judgement of those who authorised it, or we will see patients suffer due to a lack of life-saving products.

As the government has said repeatedly throughout the campaign and since taking power that the NHS budget was protected, where is the pressure coming from for cuts?

### Occupational Health Provider

Management has commissioned a report by the Robens Institute to look into the problems of our occupational health service. This report will be shared with the staff when it is released.

### Cycle to Work Scheme

The 'Cycle to Work' scheme has is now under way and the next opportunity to join will be in September 2010. The main advantage of the scheme is that you get up to £1000 to spend on a bicycle and accessories through a salary sacrifice scheme. This means that the money is taken before tax, pension and national insurance are paid, which gives you something like a 40% discount if you are a standard rate taxpayer. The money is paid back over one year. At the end of the scheme you have the opportunity to buy the bicycle at fair market value.

This is a positive first step in encouraging staff to give up their cars and also get some exercise. The NHSBT should follow this up with improved changing facilities and better, secure bicycle parking at all NHSBT sites.

### Bank Staff

Management is proposing to set up a staff bank. They have even advertised a post paying around £45,000 for the manager of the staff bank. This money has been

spent even though management have not properly discussed this with staff. Bank staff are usually employed as a way to stop overtime payments for full-time staff who work extra days. There are examples from other NHS sites where staff have refused to work on the bank and in a matter of weeks their overtime was restored. Unite takes the view that we should also oppose the use of bank staff as a way to get around our Agenda for Change contracts.

### Gift Vouchers

The branch issued £5.00 M&S gift vouchers just before Christmas 2009. There are still some members that have not received them either through problems in the records or no response from the local steward. If you are in this position, contact your local steward, the Branch Secretary or the Branch Chair to get your voucher. The contact details are on the last page of this newsletter.

### Pensions

Most of you will be aware that the pension system for all NHS staff is changing. For staff who started after 1st April 2008, you have no choice but to join the new scheme. For most other staff you can elect to stay with the old scheme or move to the new scheme. There are many differences between the two schemes so whatever choice you make will be determined by what fits your individual circumstances.

One main point to note is that the retirement age for the new scheme is 65 while the retirement age for the old scheme is 60 (or 55 for those who have special class status, which includes most collection staff).

The new scheme pays you 1/60 of your pensionable income (this does not include overtime or Away From Base Allowance) while the old scheme pays 1/80 of your income for every year of membership.

There are many more subtle differences between the two schemes and it is best to read all you can about it. There is a large amount of information available on the following website:

<http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Pensions/2572.aspx>

The best person to go to for pension estimates is Tom Sewell ([tom.sewell@nhsbt.nhs.uk](mailto:tom.sewell@nhsbt.nhs.uk)).

Note that the union cannot tell you what choice to make but we can help you interpret the provisions of both schemes.

### Green Issues

The 'Cycle to Work' scheme has been mentioned in an earlier article.

The May 2010 issue of Connect had a theme about environmental issues in the NHSBT. It seemed to be all about good intentions with very little in the way of practical implementation. Certainly at the session level, there has been no change in the way we are using resources. If anything, we are using more paper than ever and we still have no way to recycle all of the plastic cups we use. Some forms are revised as often as once a fortnight and we are then asked to dispose of the older versions even if there has been no significant change. You may notice some of them on the back of this newsletter.

There is little or no staff involvement in the Sustainable Development Group. While there are some measures to reduce energy consumption such as the replacement of old computer monitors, there has also been an increase in the mileage payments for lease cars. It also appears that that we will be trading carbon within the organisation by treating the Bio-Products Laboratory as a separate organisation. There has been no move at all to try to reduce the millions of business miles that are claimed every year.

This newsletter is being printed with a new font that reduces ink usage by 20% and is called 'Spranq eco sans'. It is available for download at [www.ecofont.eu](http://www.ecofont.eu).

The following are some websites covering green issues

[www.nhsbikes.co.uk](http://www.nhsbikes.co.uk)  
[www.envirowise.gov.uk](http://www.envirowise.gov.uk)  
[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)  
[www.corporatecitizen.nhs.uk](http://www.corporatecitizen.nhs.uk)  
[www.foe.co.uk](http://www.foe.co.uk)  
[www.thecarbontrust.org.uk](http://www.thecarbontrust.org.uk)  
[www.ecofont.eu](http://www.ecofont.eu)  
[www.sdu.nhs.uk](http://www.sdu.nhs.uk)

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

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

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/UniteNHSBT>

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 is completed.