

# BRANCH LINES

UNISON West Sussex Branch newsletter • [www.unisonwestsussex.org.uk](http://www.unisonwestsussex.org.uk)

## Going for Gold!

Grace Eyre Foundation  
achieves top Investor  
in People award



### SEE INSIDE

Contact Centre pay 2 • Public Service Users' Bill 3 • Capita Contract  
Reset 4 • Aspire pay claim 5 • Reasonable adjustments 9 • Essex Cares contract 11



# Introduction

This second edition of **Branch Lines** aimed at our members in **outsourced services**, features both **local issues directly affecting workers** and **national research analysing the long-term impact of outsourcing on workforces**.

Following-up our recent research on the Capita/ West Sussex County Council contract, we outline the council's drive to outsource services in spite of evidence suggesting this does not deliver.

We do have some good news to share. We're delighted to learn that Grace Eyre (now running some council services

for people with learning difficulties) has been awarded Investor in People (IiP) 'gold' accreditation. We're planning to expand our recently successful 'lunch and learn' courses based on evidence you tell us through our survey and we feature a profile of one of our newest workplace reps Andy Carr, based at the Disabilities Trust near Haywards Heath.

2016 will prove to be very challenging for trade unions. We hope the work we're doing shown in this newsletter - to support members based in outsourced services - will encourage you to ask others to join us. Strong unions need members.

A very Happy New Year.

*Dan Sartin, Branch Secretary*

**"I just wanted to thank you for your support today, superb outcome! I certainly couldn't have done it without you! Thanks again. Will keep you updated. Best wishes."**

(UNISON West Sussex member to workplace representative)

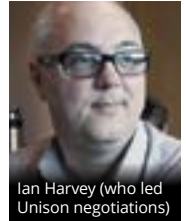
## Contact Centre pay settlement

**Negotiations took place last autumn to agree a pay settlement for Capita's Contact Centre employees.**

Our members voted to accept an offer that significantly, included a cost of living (COL) increase. Such an increase is not normally awarded by Capita, where any improvement is usually based on performance-related pay (PRP) only.

UNISON was determined to retain a COL element to pay, as the union believes PRP to be divisive, subjective and can be unfairly applied. PRP is notoriously difficult to operate in a public service environment, where jobs are rarely routine or repetitive and outputs often consist of the quality of care or customer satisfaction. Subjective assessments of such outputs can produce great variations between assessors and are unreliable measures of 'performance'. It is not the same as manufacturing widgets in a factory where outputs can be more easily quantified.

The compromise accepted by members was to retain COL but also accept a PRP element to pay. Whether performance is assessed as high, low or median, bills still go up for everyone. It's vital to retain cost of living increases to maintain families' standards of livings.



Ian Harvey (who led Unison negotiations)



## Campaign for a Public Service Users Bill

**Local libraries, schools, day care centres and fire stations are all public services. But all can be privatised or outsourced: run by companies that don't have to tell you anything.**

Campaign group 'We Own It' is lobbying for a 'Public Service Users Bill' to give you a say. It is supported by 102 MPs. Here are six reasons to support their campaign:

- 1 Consultation:** you would be consulted before any public service is privatised or outsourced (79% public support) and about the services you receive through public service contracts.
- 2 In-house bids:** when services are tendered, there would always be a realistic in-house public sector bid (80% public support).
- 3 Needs not profit:** organisations (such as public sector, cooperatives, genuine mutuals, charities, social enterprises) focused on meeting your needs rather than making a profit would be more likely to win contracts (57% public support).
- 4 Data:** you would be able to see performance and financial data from private companies running your public services. They would be as transparent as the public sector (88% public support).
- 5 Fol:** You would be able to make Freedom of Information requests to private companies running public services (48% of the public mistakenly believe this is already the case).
- 6 Right to recall:** you would have the 'right to recall' private companies doing a bad job (88% public support).

**WE OWN IT**

**Branch Secretary Dan Sartin was invited to speak at the launch of the 'We Own It' campaign in November.**

The launch took place outside the National Outsourcing Awards at one of London's most prestigious hotels. Inside, Capita was up for an award, so Dan was invited to speak about the findings of the West Sussex research into the performance of the WSCC/ Capita contract.

The campaign calls for more accountability in how outsourced public services are run and was attended by MPs. See [www.weownit.org.uk/public-service-users-bill](http://www.weownit.org.uk/public-service-users-bill)

# Capita members – negotiating for you

**The branch was busy during 2015 supporting members working on the Capita contract at West Sussex County Council (WSSC). 600 council staff transferred to Capita in 2012.**

There was a lot of concern from members that work became less enjoyable, and that approaches to sickness and disability had become tougher and sometimes unreasonable. This led us to survey our Capita members about their experiences as part of an independent research project.

We have been using the results of that work since July 2015 (see our website). UNISON has held regular meetings since the summer with the Leader of the Council, Chief Operating Officer of WSSC and Capita Head of Contract. Meetings have continued with the officers within the council who are leading on the contract 'Reset'. But what does it mean for you?

## 1. Sickness and disability

If you're sick or have a disability which affects your work, you want to be treated fairly and with discretion. There is an acceptance now that the way Capita applied its sickness policy had veered towards a 'one size fits all' approach.

There has been a high level review of a number of cases to see what has been happening. This will continue to ensure good practice. Training and coaching for Capita staff who have to apply sickness policies will be done early in 2016. UNISON is confident things will improve for our members. Don't forget, UNISON members are entitled to advice and support during any periods of sickness. Please let your UNISON Rep know how things are going.

## 2. Measuring success

What does 'success' mean? How the client defines success and then measures it will impact on the whole contract and the staff who work on it. UNISON has been keen to ensure that the 'staff experience' forms a part of that success measure. Papers presented at a council Select Committee make it seem likely that staff turnover will become a measure of success. This could be a strong influencer in securing the right behaviours so staff feel valued and want to commit to the company and job. Capita will also measure staff morale and discuss the

results with UNISON at its regular negotiation meetings, along with high-level exit interview data.

## 3. Training and career pathways

You told us in the UNISON survey that you did not always get the training opportunities you would like or needed for the job. We will be working with Capita to evaluate the training on offer in 2016. We are in discussion with Capita about career pathways and how staff can advance their aspirations at work. Sometimes difficulties can arise for TUPE-transferred staff who feel 'stuck' and are reluctant to give up their council contract. We will also look at best practice within the company to see how it can be brought to West Sussex. Watch this space.

## 4. Contract governance

Following a review, this should be more transparent in future with more information being publicly available. Membership of the Partnership Board will open up, with an opposition councillor being able to attend. UNISON will have a regular meeting scheduled with Capita and WSSC we can use if we need to escalate serious issues.

## Working for you

The above are a few of the changes we'll see in 2016. They reflect the high level commitment of Capita, WSCC and UNISON to put things right. Though you may not be aware of it all the time, UNISON Officers and Workplace Reps are hard at work for you, representing your interests in meetings throughout the year, as well as supporting individual members.

## What you can do to help

**1** We have seven UNISON reps across five workplaces in West Sussex. Find out who they are from our website and stay in touch with them during 2016. Reps are able to better represent you in negotiations if you let them know about the issues you face at work, and how things can improve.

**2** Help us to recruit staff who are not yet in the union. Anyone can join us – whether you were TUPE-transferred or are a direct recruit to Capita. UNISON's negotiating work benefits all staff equally; and all staff, no matter what contract they are on, receive UNISON support and services. With more members, we can achieve more for you.

# Aspire pay claim latest

**Last April, UNISON lodged a pay claim with Aspire for a significant increase on all pay points.**

After discussions within the Chief Exec's team they offered 0.75%. This was quickly rejected by our members. After further pressure from UNISON, a revised offer of 1% was made, with a commitment to continue discussions on non-pay issues such as annual leave.

There are issues at Aspire (common to many outsourced services) resulting from a two-tier workforce. Staff who were TUPE transferred from WSCC continue on their previous terms and conditions, while staff more recently directly appointed to Aspire have different and in some cases, inferior terms and conditions. There is no difference in the work done by the two groups of staff so UNISON is working hard to lessen the differentials between them.

Branch Negotiations Officer Brian Walter said, "Despite the difficult pay discussions this year, industrial relations have improved with the appointment of new Aspire CEO Robyn Kohler. Discussions are conducted in a more constructive manner, which can only be good for both UNISON members and the organisation itself."

A joint consultative committee (JCC) between UNISON and the employers will take place in January. We will report back on any outcomes as soon as they are known. We will also be consulting in Spring on the 2016 pay claim. If you want your views considered and you're not already a member of Unison, now is the time to join. See the application form in the centre pages.

**"Thank you for your email. I'm no longer in a UNISON work environment and don't need membership. However, I would like to take this opportunity to thank UNISON for all the support it has given myself and colleagues."**

(UNISON West Sussex member to branch officer on leaving to start a new job).

# Join UNISON – Membership Form

Please fill in the form and send to UNISON West Sussex,  
Central Attic, County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RQ

## 1 Tell us about you

Title	First name														
Surname/family name				Date of birth / /											
Home address															
Postcode															
email															
Phone number (please indicate if home, work or mobile)				National insurance number (from your payslip)											
				<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>											
Please give your ethnic origin: <i>(tick one box)</i>															
<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> Black African	<input type="checkbox"/> Black UK	<input type="checkbox"/> White UK											
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian UK	<input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> Black other	<input type="checkbox"/> Irish											
<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian other			<input type="checkbox"/> White other											

## 2 Tell us about your job

Employer's name
Your job title/occupation
Workplace name and address
Postcode
Payroll number (from your payslip)

### 3 What you will pay each month

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions.

Annual pay	▼	Your subscription
Up to £2,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£1.30
£2,001–£5,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£3.50
£5,001–£8,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£5.30
£8,001–£11,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£6.60
£11,001–£14,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£7.85
£14,001–£17,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£9.70
£17,001–£20,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£11.50
£20,001–£25,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£14.00
£25,001–£30,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£17.25
£30,001–£35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.30
over £35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	£22.50

### 4 Choose your political fund

One of the ways UNISON works on your behalf is through political campaigning. Your subscription includes a political fund payment so you won't pay any extra, but in UNISON you choose how you want that money to be used.

**Please tick one box only.**

- Our Affiliated Political Fund takes UNISON members' views directly into the Labour Party, working to promote UNISON policies.
- The General Political Fund is used to pay for branch, regional and national campaigns but is independent of any political party.

### 5 Choose how you wish to pay *Please tick ONE box only*

#### **EITHER** deduct from salary:

I wish to join UNISON and authorise deduction of subscriptions from my pay by my employer.

Signature

#### **OR** pay by direct debit:

*please complete the direct debit form below*

I wish to join UNISON and authorise deduction of subscriptions by direct debit

Date

Please go to [unison.org.uk/privacy-policy](http://unison.org.uk/privacy-policy) to see how we will protect and use your personal information

### Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the form and send to UNISON West Sussex



Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

To: The Manager	Bank/building society
Address	
Postcode	

Name(s) of Account holder(s)

Bank/building society account number

Branch sort code

Service User Number

Reference number (for office use only do not complete)

Please pay UNISON Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with UNISON and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account



## Grace Eyre goes Gold!

The local charity **Grace Eyre Foundation (GEF)**, which supports people with learning disabilities across Sussex and in London, achieved 'Investor in People' (IiP) 'gold' accreditation.

This achievement reflects a great deal of hard work by managers, staff and volunteers – including many who are UNISON members – across the organisation. Gold IiP has only ever been awarded to 7% of IiP accredited organisations and is the highest level of good workplace practice. The charity is rightly very proud of its achievement.

GEF's HR manager Alicia Goodchild said; "IiP assessors rigorously tested 10 standards including learning and development, leadership and management effectiveness. They interviewed over 40 staff and volunteers from every level, including UNISON members and workplace reps. Of the 196 indicators and evidence requirements tested, we met 172 of them: a really high level. For the few where we can do better, we have a recommended improvement plan from IiP. We're sharing this with all our managers, staff and volunteers so we make sure we address those issues. We've worked closely with UNISON and will continue to do so as we put our improvement plan into action. We've sent a letter to all our staff and volunteers announcing our IiP success, and thanking them for all the hard work they have put in."

UNISON West Sussex congratulates GEF on this achievement.

### WORKPLACE REP PROFILE

## Andy Carr

**New workplace rep Andy Carr leads a team of ten staff for the Disabilities Trust, promoting independence for Adults with Autism. Based at Hollyrood (Lindfield), the centre looks after 24 service users.**

Andy was prompted to become a workplace rep after witnessing a succession of funding cuts impacting directly on the vulnerable people he supports. Those cuts have been largely made by reducing staff numbers.

"Two years ago there was a service restructure where staff were not properly represented because we had no union members. I hope that by becoming a rep I can encourage others to join and be a channel to constructively put forward members' views to managers," said Andy.



"I've signed up five new members in the past couple of weeks, so already we're in a much stronger collective bargaining position. I've booked myself onto some UNISON training courses such as 'Developing Representational Skills' which I believe will help me become an effective rep.

"Unfortunately the Disabilities Trust does not formally recognise trade unions, so it's been more challenging for me to get facility time approved to do my union-based work. However, managers are discussing this and I hope to get a positive result soon.

"Hollyrood is about to be redeveloped and we could be moved anywhere in the county. There's potentially a real impact on staff and service users, not least because of increased travel times and costs. We could also see changes to shift patterns and working hours.

The branch welcomes new reps such as Andy. Working together, we hope to boost membership so that formal recognition of UNISON can be won. When this is achieved, the union can do a lot more for its members.



# Clarifying 'reasonable adjustments' for Capita staff

**West Sussex County Council (WSCC) has a very clear understanding about the definition of a 'reasonable adjustment'. These are measures to be introduced when a member of staff becomes disabled or when a disabled person is directly recruited.**

They include physical changes to a workplace, changes to working-time patterns and allowing time out of work to attend medical appointments related to a disability (these are recorded separately and not included in regular checks of sickness absence).

Capita's policy is not as clear as WSCC's in this matter. At a recent Capita Joint Consultative Committee, UNISON urged Capita to consider aligning itself with the good practice shown at WSCC. This would go some way to addressing some of the issues perceived by staff

in our recent survey of the WSCC/Capita contract, where many respondents accused Capita's sickness absence policy of being 'punitive'.

Capita managers listened to the union's requests and promised to fully consider them. We're working closely with Capita (as is WSCC), to improve practice in this important area. We hope members will notice the difference in 2016.

## Presenteeism 'costs economy £15bn a year'



**People going to work when they are ill costs the UK economy more than £15 billion a year, according to research.**

High job demands, understaffing, financial difficulties and insecurity are some of the main reasons why some struggle in even if they are sick, the study by the University of East Anglia (UEA) found. While the findings might sound like good news to employers, the behaviour, known as 'presenteeism', has been linked to errors, lower performance and exacerbating health problems leading to productivity loss.

The Centre for Mental Health estimates it costs the

UK economy £15.1 billion a year from mental ill health issues alone.

Dr Mariella Miraglia, who led the UEA research, said: "Working while ill can compound the effects of the initial illness and result in negative job attitudes and withdrawal from work. However, the possible negative consequences of being absent can prompt employees to show up ill or to return to work when not totally recovered.

Organisations may want to

review attendance policies for features which could decrease absence at the cost of increased presenteeism."

Findings echo our branch's own independent research on the WSCC/Capita contract, where Capita's sickness absence policy was perceived to force employees into work when they were too ill to do so, for fear of formal disciplinary measures being applied. The branch is working closely with Capita to improve its approach to sickness (see above and page 4).

# EG work manager looking at you!

**Late last year Capita introduced the monitoring and resource planning system 'EG Work Manager' into Office Services as part of project 'Vegas'.**

It monitors the amount of 'hands-on' time a task should take as opposed to the actual amount of time it does take. EG reports will inform Capita how well staff are performing, improve resource planning and identify appropriate tasks within the council's service level agreement. UNISON is sceptical of such systems

because we believe they can be used as a substitute for good management which, if delivered effectively, builds trust, gives greater flexibility, can help introduce rapid change and personalise resource planning. Micro-managing and time-keeping systems can demotivate staff. They can feel disempowered and

constrained in their ability to innovate at work. Trust can be eroded. UNISON has a series of regular meetings with Capita and will raise member concerns about EG directly to Capita West Sussex's most senior manager Dan de la Rosa. We will monitor EG very closely.

We would like your feedback so we can address concerns. Members are entitled to UNISON support.

Reasonable adjustments may be relevant for some disabled members. If you have concerns, please contact us.

# Branch invited to book launch

**UNISON West Sussex Branch Secretary Dan Sartin was invited to be on the panel at the national launch of a book focusing on the risks of outsourcing public services.**

It was produced by the research team at the Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRSCR) in Manchester. *'What a waste: outsourcing and how it goes wrong'* argues that the many service delivery fiascos such as G4S and the Olympics are

a result of poor contracts, individual incompetence, profiteering and bidding for contracts in areas beyond their competence.

Our branch has added to the national debate on outsourcing through its publication of independent

research into West Sussex County Council's contract with Capita, featured in our last edition. Barnet Branch Secretary John Burgess was also invited to represent UNISON at the event.

Dan explained the findings of the branch's research to an audience of researchers, academics, campaigners and journalists.



Branch Secretary Dan Sartin (3rd from left) at the launch with Andrew Holt (researcher, 1st left), Aditya Chakraborty (The Guardian, centre), John Burgess (Barnet Branch Secretary, 4th from right), Prof. Karel Williams (lead author, 3rd from right) and other contributors.



## OUTSOURCING

# Be careful what you ask for...

**Cornwall County Council wants to end its 'strategic IT partnership' with outsourcer BT after only 2 years of a 10-year contract.**

Cornwall CC states that BT has breached its contract because it did not create the jobs in year 1 and 2 that were clearly part of contractual obligations. Councillors and officers are unhappy about many other aspects of the deal, allegedly including BT's failure to achieve key performance indicators. If Cornwall CC loses the case, it will have to continue using BT as its IT provider (a company that will then have been its high court adversary) and it may also have to pay BT's legal costs.

Odds may be stacked against Cornwall winning because BT has long-standing experience in dealing with outsourcing legalities: its managers may have been gathering evidence of council shortcomings from day 1 of the contract in case things turned sour. During 2015, Cornwall CC conducted talks with BT executives but in August 2015, when an amicable contract termination could not be reached, BT instructed its lawyers to seek an injunction preventing the council from terminating the contract.

### TAXPAYER

When outsource contracts go bad one of the main losers is the council tax payer: such legal challenges waste public money, which could be focused better on service provision.



## 'Reablement' retender

**WSSC's 'reablement' contract has been up for retender. This is the service that provides resettlement into the home after a spell in hospital.**

It's very important as it helps prevent 'bed-blocking' in the NHS. Essex Cares has been running the service since it was outsourced.

The contract was split into three county areas (previously a single contract), and it has not proved possible to award any part of the contract to any provider. The council is now considering its options. Essex Cares has been asked to continue providing the service for at least a further year. If or when the service (and staff who deliver it) is transferred to one or more new providers, UNISON will continue to support staff through the TUPE process. UNISON is also pressing the council to consider all options, including insourcing.

In the meantime UNISON branch staff continue to pressurise Essex Cares to ensure there are enough staff to deliver the service and make sure no-one is forced to work long hours in breach of Working Time Regulations.

UNISON is meeting Essex Cares management and HR team in January for further discussions. Our officers have also discussed the contract with WSSC's Adults' Services management. We will update you as soon as we know more.

At the moment we have no local workplace rep involved. If you think your workplace experience would help, contact 01243 777636 or office.unison@westsussex.gov.uk



## ‘Lunch and Learns’ the next steps

Lifelong learning UNISON rep and Capita Office Services workplace rep Mervyn Sams is delivering on his promise to continue the excellent start made in the four Lunch and Learn sessions that took place last autumn.

Those taster events were universally well-received by staff from all partners: WSCC, Capita, Chichester District and Hyde Housing. Delegates requested more learning opportunities to be made available, so Mervyn has devised a follow-up survey to go out to all previous attendees asking them about the type of learning they would like to see provided in future. It would include personal and professional development and is free-of-charge to UNISON members.

Mervyn will also make the survey available to all UNISON members across each partner organisation. He said; “Through UNISON’s Training Programme we can design learning around individual needs wherever our members work, providing we have concrete evidence to justify our requests. This is why the survey is so important. I’d like as many people as possible to complete it so we can go back to UNISON with robust evidence.

“And of course, for Capita, it helps address some of those concerns highlighted in the UNISON research such as succession planning and retaining staff. Investing in training we believe will incentivise staff to stay and plan their career with Capita or WSCC. It also shows that UNISON is a serious and constructive investor in staff – an organisation’s main resource.”

## Do you work for these services?

**UNISON West Sussex represents members in over a 100 employers across the county.**

In most of them we have workplace reps. They are the first port-of-call for any employment-related individual or collective problems you may have. However, in some employers we currently have no reps. This can be for a wide variety of reasons such as:

- reps changing jobs and moving to new employers;
- a non-unionised new employer now providing council services and having to formulate new relationships with union members; and
- union members being unaware of the advantages of having a workplace rep and not nominating an individual.

We would strongly advocate having a UNISON rep in all our employers. It helps both employers and employees work more effectively together. If you’re based in one of the services below and would like to find out more about being a UNISON workplace rep, please let us know.

1. **Affinity Sutton Group Ltd.**
2. **Caring Homes Ltd.**
3. **Essex Cares Ltd.**
4. **Mencap**
5. **NVIRO**
6. **Outcomes First Group**
7. **Pathway Healthcare**
8. **RADIUS Trust**
9. **Scope**
10. **Shaw Healthcare**
11. **Sussex Oakleaf Housing Association**

Call us on 01243 777636. Email: office.unison@westsussex.gov.uk or write to us at UNISON West Sussex, Central Attic, County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RQ.