

BRANCH LINES

West Sussex County Branch of UNISON Newsletter

SPECIAL EDITION

CAPITA

Welcome

To this special edition of *Branch Lines* for UNISON members who work for Capita. We aim to bring you an occasional newsletter, setting out the news and issues in your workplace.

Don't forget to read the standard edition of *Branch Lines*. You'll see that in our November issue there is plenty of other news of what the union has been doing for Capita members in there.

But from time to time we can't fit it all in the standard edition, which is issued to all of our 6,000 members. If you would like to contribute articles, please get in touch with the Branch office.

Support for members

Errors made to payment of salary can cause financial hardship. Mervyn Sams, Capita Rep was asked by a member to try and sort out an issue with the wrong salary being paid. Capita management had passed her issue around three different managers, which delayed correcting the problem for many weeks. Within 24 hours of UNISON's involvement, a solution was found and payment made. The member was very pleased with the outcome.

If you have a disability, finding the right support in the workplace is important, both for the individual and the business. A member contacted UNISON to ask for help. Our Capita Rep looked at the Occupational Health report and agreed, with management, the support that was needed. Through negotiation, a happy balance was

UNISON/CAPITA Joint Consultative Committee

Like with most employers where UNISON is the recognised trade union, UNISON has a regular negotiating meeting with Capita, which we call a Joint Consultative Committee (JCC). UNISON Reps attend, along with Capita senior managers. The meetings are minuted and actions reviewed at subsequent meetings. If you would like something placed on the agenda for discussion please talk to your local Capita Rep. The following is a resume of the discussions held at our JCC meeting on October 23rd.

Car Parking County Hall North

The current overspill arrangements have come to an end. UNISON has suggested that Capita discuss with WSCC the possibility of co-funding an extension of similar arrangements whilst they attempt to find a resolution to the issue of insufficient parking spaces at County Hall North and the excessive cost of parking in the town. Areas being looked at are:

- priority for spaces to be given to those with the greatest need, regardless of rank, i.e. disabled staff or those who need to be able to come and go regularly;
- improvements to the Park and Ride facility;
- discussions with bus companies to see if additional services can be provided.

Capita has promised wider consultation with staff going forward.

Sickness While on Annual Leave

Capita has confirmed that staff who are sick while on annual leave may claim the time back on production of a sickness certificate. The Capita staff handbook is currently incorrect and this will be looked into. Although UNISON West Sussex members can be appraised of their rights in this regard, UNISON has concerns that if the staff handbook is incorrect, managers will implement the wrong thing!

Recruitment Events and UNISON Notice Boards

UNISON will shortly be arranging some recruitment events in The Grange, County Hall, Chichester. This is likely to be in the form of stands in the breakout areas on each floor and flyers will be distributed soon. Additional notice boards on the ground and 2nd floor in The Grange will also be arranged.

Consultation on Relocations, Redeployment and Redundancies

UNISON is working with Capita to improve the processes for Consultation Agreements. Progress has been made but we now need to ensure compliance with good practice. UNISON Workplace Reps have since met with Capita Service Leads to discuss expectations on both sides and improve future communication.

KPIs

UNISON reported that members had commented that some KPIs are inappropriate for the needs of the businesses. Areas are failing due to pressure from managers to prioritise KPI tasks above other business needs. Because of the financial impact of failing to meet targets, some members have been caused

unnecessary stress due to these pressures. Data recording can also add significantly to workloads. Capita has stated that a review with WSCC of all KPIs has started but that this is likely to take a year to complete. Once the K2 and MIBI systems have been rolled out, this should aid data recording and further information about these will follow in Capita's Team Talk.

Display Screen Equipment (DSEs)

Members have commented that working practices do not easily allow for adequate screen breaks, as a result of which they are experiencing increased eye and muscle strain. As the ways we work become increasingly more reliant on electronic workflow systems and self-service, the potential risks to health & safety are increasing. Capita will be alerting staff in *Team Talk* of the need to take adequate screen breaks. There is also some mandatory (online!) training coming up regarding this issue. Details can also be found under the Health and Safety sections on staff notice boards.

To see a copy of the Terms of Reference of the JCC, which include the principles for consultation with staff, please speak to your local Rep or contact the Branch office.

achieved between adjusting the member's work and meeting the needs of the service.

In a recent relocation of Office Services from Worthing to The Grange, a member raised concerns to their Rep about the impact the move would have on their family care responsibilities. With UNISON's involvement, a strong case was presented, a local job was identified and the member was selected for the role and remains in Centenary House, Worthing.

Being sick during your leave is disappointing. A member was concerned when he was told that he could not roll over the time when he was sick on holiday to another time in the year. UNISON flagged up to management a judicial ruling in the European Court of Justice, which allows you to carry over leave when you are sick to another point in the year. Without UNISON's intervention, the member's ruined holiday would have been made all the worse.

CAPITA Reps

Union Reps are the lifeblood of any trade union. Here, union rep Mervyn Sams explains a bit more about the role.

"The work that reps do in recruiting, organising and supporting members is key to the strength of UNISON. As the levels of involvement and participation are increased, this can be mirrored by increases in personal fulfillment and satisfaction with knowing the union is growing stronger and you are increasing your level of knowledge and skills.

On a practical level, volunteering and becoming a workplace rep gives you access to important rights and benefits, such as: training by UNISON which will develop your skills both at work and in your role as a Rep; advice and information from solicitors; knowledge of impending changes in the work place; and support from the UNISON office.

Reps working for Capita have rights to: paid time off for training, meetings with members and managers, and some other union work; use of the employer's telephones, email and internal mail; access to an office and lockable facilities at work.

What would you have to commit to? Reps engage in different levels of activity depending on their experience, skills and time they are able to commit. A UNISON rep should seek to: be the first point of contact with the union for members; recruit and organise new members; support and advise members on workplace issues, both individual and collective; act as a spokesperson for the members they represent and inform and involve members in branch activity; represent members with the employer, depending on Reps' experience, confidence and willingness to do this."

Who to contact?

For information on becoming a UNISON Rep talk to a fellow Rep, or call the UNISON office on 77636.
Mervyn Sams—Office Services, Chichester
Kim Unwin—Office Services, Horsham
Ian Harvey—Contact Centre, Bognor
Abi Holdsworth—Contact Centre, Bognor
Jamie Thomas—Health & Safety Rep

UNISON WEST SUSSEX — RECRUIT A NEW CAPITA MEMBER TO UNISON

If you recruit a new member to the branch, we will send you a £10 high street store voucher. Just make sure your name is marked clearly on the back of the form/s we send you, and when your friends/colleagues return their completed membership forms to our office we will send the voucher/s straight to you. There's no limit to how many you can claim!

Please send me ____ [insert number] UNISON Application Pack/s to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Workplace: _____

Please return to: UNISON West Sussex, Central Attic, County Hall, West Street, Chichester PO19 1RQ.

Published by

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