

Voice

$$E=mc^2$$

(Or why “more” means “less” if you are a Nursery Nurse)

Colleagues please bear with me on this one, don't stop reading! It goes something like this – I married a mathematician and this weekend we had one of my oldest friends and his family for dinner. This friend of mine is a leading mathematician, who is often paid to come to Europe to give talks at conferences on such things as 'string theory' and other such incomprehensible mathematical theorem. Having gone as far as he can with string theory (and yes you can buy his books about it), my friend decided to move on to more challenging work such as cryptography! You can probably understand that next to them, I feel about as intellectual as Trigger off Only Fools and Horses. However, a problem I am dealing on behalf of members has flummoxed them.

The problem is this; nursery nurses after three years of waiting have finally had their job re evaluated. Their roles and responsibilities have changed and accordingly the evaluation has gone up from Spinal Column Point (SCP) 17 – 20 / 21, to SCP 25 – 28. Fantastic and not a moment too soon!

However, having finally been recognised and rewarded accordingly, instead of being paid for 52 weeks a year, management has decided that they want to pay nursery nurses for term time only and, as the phrase goes, do the maths:

A nursery nurse working on the new spinal column point 25 @ 20 hours per week would earn;

$$22,977 \div 1728 \times 20 \text{ (hrs/ wk)} \times 40 = \mathbf{\pounds 10,637}$$

(1728 = 36hrs x 48 wks.)

Current band and salary at 52 weeks	New band and salary at 52 weeks	Offer but paid on term-time only
scp 17 £18345	scp 25 £22977	scp 25 £19147
scp 18 £18675	scp 26 £23664	scp 26 £19718
scp 19 £19311	scp 27 £24393	scp 27 £20327
scp 20 £19947	scp 28 £25128	scp 28 £20940
scp 21 £20610 (some of you are on scp 21)		

As you can see there is a £3,000-£4,000 difference between what your new salary would mean on your current 52 weeks contract (which is what we think you should have) compared with management's new proposed salary on term time contract.

The new offer means you will be paid the same as a level 2 teaching assistant who was employed in the borough before September 2003. We do not think this is a fair settlement and represents an erosion of your terms and conditions. When this is coupled with no offer of any back pay, we feel that we have no option, but to find out from you how strongly you feel about this. This is why we are consulting you on whether you would be prepared to take some form of industrial action to pursue your claim. Even though management are offering 3 weeks holiday pay, the maths still doesn't stack up!

Equal Pay

Everybody doing the same work deserves the same pay. Everybody doing work of equal value deserves equal pay. Nobody should be paid less because of their gender. That is a basic principle: one which UNISON is determined to win and defend.

"UNISON has a proud history of fighting to achieve equal pay for our members. Our record is second to none," says general secretary Dave Prentis. Major overhauls of pay and conditions packages across our public services have brought the issues of pay inequality to the fore. UNISON has developed an equal pay strategy to challenge pay discrimination through a combination of negotiation and legal challenge where necessary.

The union's overall goal has always been to negotiate fair and equal pay through fair and equal grading structures that are sustainable over time. We want to ensure that winning equal pay for members doesn't mean losing jobs and services further down the line.

But if negotiation doesn't work, UNISON has never been afraid to litigate on behalf of members. It was through litigation that we won equal pay for 1,500 women at North Cumbria Acute NHS Trust last year. We also went to the courts on behalf of school meals workers in North Yorkshire. Currently we are sending round Equal Pay Case forms to see if members in Barnet have an equal pay claim, all you have to do is fill it in the forms and return it to the Barnet UNISON office at NLBP, the rest of the work is done by UNISON's solicitors. So fill in those forms.

Is your job safe?

As many of you are aware the Council is considering large scale reorganisation. It is considering the privatisation and outsourcing of its services which would result in only a small minority of staff being directly employed by LB Barnet. We have grave concerns about this proposal when considering what is happening in Essex where a group of County Council Officers have put its services up for sale. All services have been included, and the Council is prepared to pay a private company £5.4 billion of Essex taxpayer's money to do so. The official notice advertising the contract asks private companies to provide "any and all council services", and is likely to start from August 2009. They have said that "these services will include, but are not limited to, corporate and back office functions, environmental services, social care and school related services. <http://www.unionessex.org.uk/outsourcing>

Our concerns are many as Barnet seems to be considering a similar route. These are: the impact on staff; the impact on services; the lack consultation with staff and residents; the lack of accountability and weakened scrutiny of the private sector. All this is happening at a time of global financial crisis where the private sector can't support itself, let alone add value to the Four Star services delivered by Barnet Council employees and it will be the local council tax payer who will pay for it all. We urge you to attend the Future Shape group meeting Wednesday 25.2.09 6pm in the Barnet UNISON office and attend the Barnet UNISON AGM 3.30pm Thursday 5.3.09, Conference room, building 2 NLBP.

Finally

It is with regret... that, sadly I have to announce that I will not longer be standing for office in the March elections. Much as I have enjoyed my time as your assistant branch officer I have to have a major operation and will be unwell for some time. As schools generate a huge workload, it is important that you are covered and the best way to achieve this is to have a new person in the post. So if you know anyone who believes passionately in the importance of the role of support staff in schools and wants to work towards a fairer deal for support staff, please nominate them.

CALLING ALL NURSERY NURSES!

UNISON meeting

Agenda: Your pay and terms and conditions

Venue: Training room 2, Building 2, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, N11 1NP

Date: 23 February 2009

Time: 4pm – 6pm

Barnet UNISON Contact details

If you have a work problem or query, get in touch with your UNISON workplace representative. Alternatively, you can ring:

UNISONdirect on 0845 355 0845

If you have a membership or any other query, please contact the Barnet UNISON office at:

Building 4, NLBP, Oakleigh Road South, London, N11 1NP

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