

Self preservation society

Harrow Council has now entered a period of significant change and financial uncertainty. UNISON had been given assurances that all members of staff are to be treated equally in respect to the envisaged changes about to descend on every council employee.

Yet it seems that those assurances were short lived; which is clearly evident in certain situations. Our low paid members in SNT (Special Needs Transport) have seen their terms and conditions of employment slashed by up to 20% yet those at the top end of the scale in this directorate have had their titles enhanced from Head of Service to Divisional Director Status, therefore making themselves possibly more attractive in the fragile employment market.

UNISON raised the issue of this council providing a situation of a 'self preservation society' to those more senior, when we were assured that this would not be the case. It seems that this enhancement of status for some, reflects the immortal words of Michael Caine (Italian Job) of "Hey lads I've Got a Brilliant Idea" has rung true for those at the top level.

As Branch Secretary of Harrow's Largest Trade Union, I will undoubtedly be chastised again for publishing our concerns. This is par for the course in speaking out against oppression and unfairness for those that deliver excellent services to those vulnerable residents of Harrow Council. This further elevation in status for our senior staff, without notifying UNISON fails to meet the basic requirements of consultation. This situation seriously lacks sensitivity towards those hard working and committed front line staff, many of whom are at the lowest end of the pay scales.

Main Stories

Inside this issue:

Housing Ambition Plan

Unison was invited to attend the Lean presentation 'Improving Services to Leaseholders'. It was encouraging to hear how enthusiastically the team has taken up the lean challenge. Debi Sainsbury the Lean Champion for this project has been able to demonstrate the improvements to processes and the substantial savings that have been realised through the team's hard work. This is an exceptional achievement and one that Unison applauds especially as we have received assurances the employees Terms or Conditions have not been changed and there will be no staff reductions.

Unison was also invited to the launch of the Housing Services Ambition Plan earlier this year. The traffic light 'RAG' monitoring of the plan illustrates the status of individual elements of the projects. It is heartening to see the number of objectives that have been successfully delivered. This success can be attributed to the leadership of Lynne Pennington her management team and all the staff. Unison has experienced a positive culture change of the Housing Department to a staff and customer based focus.

Joint Working

Unison would like to congratulate the housing management team in reference to the resident housing wardens. We went into consultation to assist the GMB members, who were in limbo, to reach a resolution to an on-going situation that had reached an impasse. Unison senior officers and housing management team took control of this unacceptable situation and agreed to a possible two week time scale for resolution in this time the GMB retreated due to staffing problems. Due to the legal requirements that surrounded this matter it extended to approximately six month, but the stumbling blocks were both legal teams.

Unison is proud to announce that the resident warden's (now Unison members) issues are virtually resolved therefore this is an excellent example of joint partnership working between Unison and the housing department.

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Charlie's Chuckles



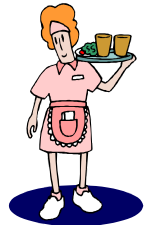
Refuse collector will now be known as Director of waste collection

Cleaner will now be known as Divisional Sanitation Executive



SNT Driver to King of the Road

Dinner Lady will now be know as Chief of Catering Distribution



Growing opposition to the Academies Bill

The number of MP's signing the EDM has reached 68, with many Labour MP's demanding consultation before schools can become Academies. The Children's Service Network and Local Government Information Unit have produced a useful briefing. The Anti Alliance public meeting in London saw 250 people pack the room. Alongside the excellent platform speakers from the floor included a Head teacher, Chair of Governors and teachers organising against Academy proposals in their schools. There have been meetings around the country, with many more to follow. www.antiacademies.org

Harrow Union has written to all Head teachers and Chairs of Governors expressing our concern about the New Governments intention to invite all outstanding schools to become academies.

There is no evidence that being an academy school raises standards. Academy schools have no better record of educational achievement than any other type of school. Some have a far worse record. In fact it has been reported that academy schools have a poor record of GCSE results in academic subjects and there has been little or no improvement.

The Government is setting no requirement at all for consultation with either parents or staff before this step is taken. However, there is nothing to preclude staff being consulted prior to an application being made for academy school conversion. Unison would expect that the employer would consult with the recognised trade union, but the fact it is not required to do so by the Government is of deep concern. Even though staff transferring should be protected by TUPE law our experience has shown that an attempt is often made by the incoming employer to dilute or radically change the terms and conditions of staff.

All the main teacher unions (ATL, NASUWT, NUT) and support staff unions (UNISON, UNITE, GMB) are opposed to the academy schools policy and are working together to oppose it. By working together, you can help to persuade governors at your school not to go down this route. You can also talk to other staff colleagues in your school about the threat that academies propose and discuss your views with the Head teacher. You can also get further information from your UNISON branch.



Neighbourhood Champions

This Union had reservations about this project at its conception and we wrote to the Better Deal for Residents Forum with our concerns. The first stage of the project has been recognised by this union as a valuable community engagement device likened to the neighbourhood watch scheme, which could prove to be helpful to our front line workers in the execution of their service.

The major issue regarding this project was in respect to the proposed phase 2 and 3, in which it was intended to provide each neighbourhood champion with equipment to clean up graffiti and litter pick. This intention was felt by this union to be wholly inappropriate, putting residents at risk and front line jobs at risk.

Unison asked for reassurances that this project would not be a way of covertly monitoring the council workforce; and Mr Edwards did state that it was not intended to be used in this way.

We also challenged the cost of this initiative which has been intimated as being of £100,000 for the first year; the on costs of this project are yet to be revealed.

The Divisional Director for Environmental Services Mr John Edwards assured us in his response to our letter that 'the neighbourhood champions are a supplement to the Councils work, and similarly community involvement in local environment clean ups is a tried and trusted method for people to make a positive impact on their locality'. He did however state that it is not possible to provide job protection reassurances that this union had asked for.

Jerry Hickman said 'I'm very pleased with the progress we have made with the Neighbourhood Champion scheme which really shows how well our front line services have worked in Partnership with Harrow Police to jointly deliver this initiative .To date we have almost 800 residents registered to be Neighbourhood Champions 300 trained 500 waiting to be trained .Residents are starting to use the online reporting facility reporting issues of abandon vehicles fly tips and noise nuisance 90% of these reports have been responded to within the designated service standards .The ability to report and track progress on reported issues will start to ensure our residents continue to acknowledge the excellent services provided to them by Harrow '.

Dealing with employees complaints

Unison has been working with HR and management for the past year in an attempt to make the new Dignity at Work policy, (this replaced the old grievance procedure), work to achieve fair and meaningful outcomes. Sadly, after many months, our experience is that some areas of management still do not take this policy seriously. Incidences have been highlighted at the highest forum in the council Unison has access to, where members of staff have still not had an outcome response after submitting a complaint regarding a serious allegation 4 months previously. This potentially placed these individuals and others at further risk. This office is still awaiting an explanation from senior officers as to the reasons for this failure but we are not holding our breath.

The removal last year of the contractual status of this policy appeared to remove any constraints by certain areas of management to adhere to the guidelines with regards to time-scales. This, Unison feels, has rendered the process virtually impotent and meaningless as management appear to be able to stall or suppress the process without being held accountable. Unison challenged this decision continually throughout last year to the point of a legal submission and the decision was recently reversed by the new administration. Sadly though, they would not agree to include the toolkit given to management, preferring to keep it as guidance only which means these poor practices will probably continue. This does not seem to align with the council ethos of 'Employer of Choice'.



Education Cuts

The recent plans by the new Government to cancel this year's budget for training higher level teaching assistants (HLTA's); means that TA's will only be able to get HLTA assessments if schools pay and other TA training will only continue if it is directly funded by local authorities or schools. This action has illustrated how little regard the government holds the large body of professional support staff, who have been recognised for their contribution to the improved quality of education in this country.

Local authorities have lost £311 million from their education budgets this year and training is a likely casualty of these cuts.

UNISON's head of education Christina McAnea said the government was "playing fast and loose with children's educational needs". (Learning support news July). Ms McAnea went on to say that she believed the intention to remove all central governments funding for support staff training was a sign of the disdain this government has for teaching assistants.

This is in addition to the warnings that teaching assistants are being expected to cover classes for teachers and thus breaking the law by using TA's to cover classes instead of hiring supply teachers. Last month UNISON published a survey showing that TA's were being asked to cover lessons without lesson plans, or appropriate training.

Another proposal, from the centre-right think tank Reform, is to save £1.7 billion by phasing out all teaching assistant jobs.

The budget cuts will coincide with the coalition's other education plans - the growth of academies, and development of new "free schools" set up by parents, teachers or other organisations.

These are difficult times for public sector workers who are to feel the brunt of the government cuts. There has never been a more important time to be a member of UNISON the leading school staff union and I would urge you to encourage your colleagues to join.



Website: WWW.HARROW-UNISON.ORG.UK

Vetting and Baring Scheme Self Organised Groups

This scheme which would affect all our members working with vulnerable adults and children is to be halted. Theresa May MP Secretary of State for the Home Department, has in a statement to the House of Commons that there will be a review of the scheme and a scale back to what she recommends as 'common sense levels'

The scheme was due to start on the 26th July (limited to new employees).

The existing safeguards regulations will remain in force and should be adhered to.

Go to www.isa.gov.org.uk for more information.

Harrow UNISON Branch is planning to set up two Self Organised Groups (SOG); one for Black Workers and one for Lesbian, Gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. I would be grateful if you could contact the branch office if you would be interested in attending one of both of these groups. I hope to be able to organise the meetings and invite guest speakers to talk about equality issues. More information will be available on our web page and on our notice boards.
Equalities Officer Alex



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Join Britain's biggest and fastest growing union. Together we can improve your working life.

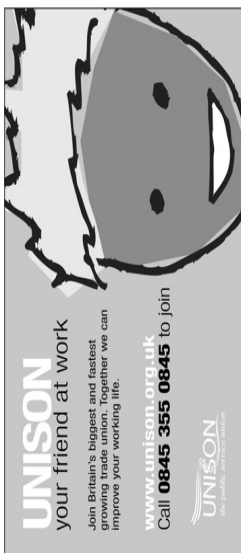
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Call 0845 355 0845 to join

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“ Staff who are not members of a trade union are vulnerable to exploitation ”



Update on developments in the new School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB).

The SSSNB continues to undertake work through its Core Contract and Working Year Working Group and Role Profile and Job Measurement Working Group. This involves the development of contractual terms and conditions of employment, the design of national job role profiles, the development of a bespoke job evaluation scheme and a strategy to implement a national pay and conditions framework in all schools.

While considerable progress has been made within the SSSNB and its working groups it has not been able to finalise agreements by the deadline of 28 May 2010 which had been set by the former Secretary of State in his Referral Letter to the Body last year. As a result a revised timetable for the Body was agreed by the former Secretary of State and is as follows:

- To complete negotiations on the pay and conditions framework by 14 December 2010;
- Formal consultation on the agreement between December 2010 and February 2011;
- Submission of SSSNB agreements to the Secretary of State by 1 April 2011;
- Ratification by the Secretary of State in June 2011;
- Full implementation by April 2012.

UPDATE FROM THE ASSISTANT BRANCH SECRETARY

The last few months have been pretty busy with the branch being involved in various consultations and negotiations within all directorates. Some of these, where we have major issues, have been referred to the Employee's Consultative Forum on the 30th June for challenge and a decision by Council Members. Hopefully, by the time you read this, the decisions will be available and printed in this issue.

The branch is still achieving outstanding results with regards to representing individual member issues and attaining positive and beneficial outcomes. With regards to conduct issues, even in the most serious cases our representatives, with their professional approach have managed to avoid the ultimate sanction of dismissal in all but one case of serious fraud, thus retaining members in employment and avoiding the need for lengthily appeals. The effect of this, is that membership continues to climb in all areas of the council.

With the news of Public Sector cutbacks promised by the new coalition government, there will inevitably be attempts to reduce or outsource some services, some services are already being reviewed. As always happens in these scenarios, it is not the highly paid, over resourced individuals that have to suffer, it is the lowest paid, overworked frontline workers who will bear the brunt of any attacks and Unison will be ready to challenge any proposals that impact on our members.

At times like these, membership of a union is essential as unrepresented individuals or groups are seen by management as easy targets.

Now is the time to join Unison as we are the only union currently committed to fighting professionally for our members in all services in this authority.

Steve Compton.





Benefits Fair



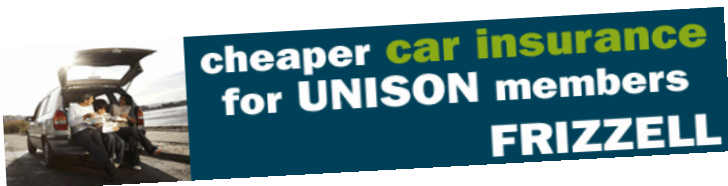
You are invited to attend a **UNISON Benefits Fair** in **Committee Rooms 1 & 2 (Civic Centre)** from **12.00 o'clock to 2.00 o'clock** on **15th Sept 2010** There will be stands provided by **UNISON** plus partners including, **Thompsons, Britannia, Croyde Bay & Vision Express**. Come and find out more about what benefits they provide you the member, and of course grab yourself some goodies!!

Refreshments will be provided, come along and see the stalls and meet your Harrow Unison Stewards and Branch Officers.

If you require more information please contact the office on **Tele no. 0208-424-1795** or **info@harrow-unison.org.uk** or visit the website **www.harrow-unison.org.uk/Discounts-and-other-benefits**



Members and non members are welcome





UNISON Branch Officers 2010

Branch Secretary:	Gary Martin
Asst Branch Secretary:	Steve Compton
Asst Branch Secretary:	Darren Butterfield
Health & Safety Officer:	Bob Thomas
Asst Health & Safety Officer:	John Lee
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Vice Chair :	Lynne Ahmad
Treasurer:	Deborah Hattam
Education Officer:	Ken McDonald
Equalities Officer:	Alex Shola-Gbade
Social Secretary:	Mary Cawley
and	Caroline Godfrey
Children's Services Convenor:	Neil Millington
Welfare Officer:	Norman Thompson
Communications Officer:	Charlie Sumner
Youth Officer:	Vacant

The UNISON Office

The **UNISON** Office is Staffed by:-

Office administrator: Varsha Patel (Full time)
Admin assistant: Teresa Stanley (Part time)

Please remember to contact your workplace representative in the first instance and let them deal with any issues at the grass roots level.

Contact Unison via:

**Unison Office
Central Depot
Forward Drive
Harrow, HA3 8NT
Telephone: 020 8424 1795**

OR

Via E-mail: info@harrow-unison.org.uk

This NETwork news letter was produced and edited by **Charlie Sumner** with contributions from **UNISON officers and members.**

Printed & Published by Harrow UNISON LG Branch, the views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the Harrow UNISON LG Branch Executive Committee.

“ UNISON wants
to hear from
you... ”

U_{nison} Say!



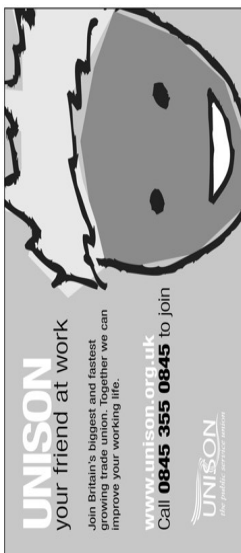
UNISON wants to hear from you.

Do you have any concerns or queries regarding local and national issues? We want your views. Do you have any articles that could be included in this news letter? Has UNISON helped you? If so please let us know the details so we can include your success stories.

Contact the UNISON office via email or a letter to the above address.

Email: c.sumner@harrow-unison.org.uk or info@harrow-unison.org.uk

(Please note that UNISON reserve the right not to publish some articles and edit others prior to publishing.)



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Please fill in this form in BLOCK CAPITALS using black ink and give it to your UNISON rep or steward or post to the address below

1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS Please tick or fill in the boxes below

Mrs Ms Miss Mr Other

First name _____ Other initial(s) _____

Surname/Family name _____ Date of birth _____ / /

Home address _____

Postcode _____

National Insurance number (from your payslip) _____

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

- Bangladeshi Asian other Chinese Indian Pakistani Asian UK Black other Black White UK African Irish Black White other Caribbean

Please tick this box if you require large print or Braille) – be sure to supply contact details below. Please give a telephone number/voice/text/email address for UNISON to contact you – indicate if work or home

Contact tel/voice/text/email _____

2. YOUR EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Employer's name _____

Your job title/occupation _____

Department/section _____

Workplace name and address _____

Postcode _____

Payroll number (from your payslip) _____

3. WHAT YOU WILL PAY – FROM 1 October 2003

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions.

YOUR SUBSCRIPTION—WHAT YOU PAY

Weekly pay	Annual pay	per week	per month	Band	Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid
Up to £38.47	Up to £2,000	£0.30	£1.30	A	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£38.48–£96.16	£2,001–£5,000	£0.81	£3.50	B	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£96.17–£153.84	£5,001–£8,000	£1.22	£5.30	C	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£153.85–£211.53	£8,001–£11,000	£1.52	£6.60	D	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£211.54–£269.23	£11,001–£14,000	£1.81	£7.85	E	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£269.24–£326.92	£14,001–£17,000	£2.24	£9.70	F	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£326.93–£384.61	£17,001–£20,000	£2.65	£11.50	G	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£384.62–£480.76	£20,001–£25,000	£3.23	£14.00	H	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£480.77–£576.92	£25,001–£30,000	£3.98	£17.25	I	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£576.93–£673.08	£30,001–£35,000	£4.68	£20.30	J	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£673.08+	over £35,000	£5.19	£22.50	K	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly

4. POLITICAL FUND

UNISON's Affiliated Political Fund (APF) is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliates to the Labour Party.

It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes below.

Your subscription shown above includes a political fund payment so you do not pay any more by being in one of the funds.

5. YOUR AUTHORISATION

I wish to join UNISON and accept its rules and constitution.

I authorise deduction of UNISON subscriptions from my salary/wages at the rate determined by UNISON in accordance with its rules to be paid over to them on my behalf and I authorise my employer to provide information to UNISON to keep my records up to date

I authorise deduction of the following Political Fund payment as part of my subscription. Tick one box only

Affiliated Political Fund General Political Fund

Now please sign and date below

Signature _____

Date _____

OTHER WAYS TO PAY

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London WC1H 9BR

If you have been a member of a trade union before, please state which one: _____

DATA PROTECTION

UNISON will process your membership information together with other information for administration, statistical analysis, conducting ballots and other statutory requirement purposes.

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If you do not want any mailings from UNISON besides those required by statute as shown in bold above, please tick this box.

We may share your information with organisations with whom we have a business relationship for your benefit. We, or they, may contact you by mail, telephone, SMS, fax or e-mail to let you know about goods, services or promotions which we think may be of interest to you.

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