ASU LIES

Faced with relegation to the negotiating sidelines in the North West Ambulance Service and possible derecognition, the ASU, struggling to survive in the one corner of the region where it had any influence, has become increasingly desperate in its efforts to attack the reputation and integrity of UNISON, by far the largest union in the new set-up. It has resorted once more to its traditional tactics of lies and misinformation. The ASU propaganda surrounding the issue of the Technician Banding in Mersey is a classic example of its attempts to mislead ambulance staff across the North West.

LIES There was no deal struck on 3rd July between UNISON and the new Chief Executive, John Burnside, to place all Ambulance Technicians in NWAS into Band 4 in return for derecognising the ASU.

LIES UNISON did NOT agree secretly with management to reduce the grade of Technicians in Mersey from Band 5 to Band 4. For the TRUTH see Page 2 for the UNISON National Ambulance Sector Committee statement on the actual position in Mersey. If UNISON were so keen to bash Techs into Band 4 how is it that UNISON’s team in West Yorkshire led by Branch Secretary Jackie Bell, in partnership with the other recognised TUC affiliated unions, has achieved Band 5 for Technicians through the AfC process?

LIES All Technicians will NOT receive a new contract for Band 4 in the next few weeks. In Cumbria, the Technician banding has been referred to the SHA and UNISON is following the agreed AfC procedures - procedures which the ASU, as a non recognised body is excluded from and doesn’t properly understand. In Greater Manchester, the Technician banding has also been referred through the agreed AfC process to a national panel, with a result expected by the end of August. In Lancashire, the local process is not yet resolved, but it looks likely that the AfC national protocol used in other North West localities will be applied to solve the problem.

LIES UNISON has not let down all ambulance technicians in the North West and across the rest of the country. The TRUTH is that the ASU are not recognised or industrially involved in any of the other localities in the North West let alone the rest of the country. Compare UNISON with its 23000 members recognised in every one of the previous trusts and in all of the new merged services, with ASU with less than a tenth of this number of members, recognised in only one locality of one of the new merged services and with no guarantee that even this will continue.

We could go through the ASU open letter to North west ambulance staff point by point, but if they have lied to you on all the above, why should you believe anything else they tell you? In fact, if you are an ASU member reading this we ask you to turn to page 4 and subscribe like the vast majority of your ambulance colleagues to the union that offers you the TRUTH

LIES AND HYPOCRISY The ASU, like APAP, is a regional organisation advocating that Ambulance workers should be separated from and treated differently to other NHS staff. However, it would seem that, like APAP, the ASU has willingly entered into Agenda for Change (AfC) locally. The ASU does not understand let alone appreciate that AfC enshrines the concept that all NHS staff, whatever their employing trust, are colleagues, to whom the same system of pay and conditions of service must apply.

Why has the ASU not advised its members to reject AfC and retain their MRAS Trust contracts as they are entitled to do? It can only be that AfC, negotiated and fought for by all UNISON’s NHS members, including those in MRAS, is better than anything the ASU has ever managed to achieve. With the ASU, lies is mixed with hypocrisy – it takes advantage of collectively won NHS pay benefits at the same time as insisting that Ambulance should stand apart.

LIES AND RECKLESSNESS Despite years of attack and empty anti-UNISON rhetoric from the ASU, UNISON has previously chosen to ignore their attacks and focus instead on the task in hand but we have come to a decision that you should in fact know the TRUTH about what and how UNISON have been achieving for staff. By contrast ASU seemingly has put more (if not all) of its time, effort and subscription resources into criticising and trying to undermine UNISON than into anything positive for ambulance staff. Let’s take the current ASU strike - an overreaction, as usual, blaming UNISON for its own failings, going straight out on strike regardless of the cost or chances of success. Whether through ignorance or incompetence the ASU has once again shown why it is unfit to represent any Ambulance staff. The Ambulance Service is moving into the 21st century, becoming ever more integrated with the rest of the NHS, taking on a national perspective in England to match that existing in the other countries, learning from and with staff through joint partnership with UNISON as the lead organisation and is irretrievably tied into Agenda for Change.

You will find a UNISON Membership Application Form on the back page of this Newsletter.
Across the North West

- UNISON supplied 135 additional microwave ovens, paid for by the North West Region, to every ambulance station and other main workplace in all four of the ambulance trusts which now make up the North West Ambulance Service (the response of the ASU to a UNISON initiative linked to the key issue of meal breaks was to vandalise some of the ovens by removing our union logo from them).
- UNISON jointly sponsored, in partnership with the four localities in the new North West Service, a major publicity campaign, promoting zero tolerance of violence and aggression towards ambulance staff. Bearing our UNISON logo, thousands of posters have been printed and placed in every front-line vehicle and in prominent public places across the Region, including hospitals.

Cumbria

- Fighting for members through Tribunal and Small Claims Court for meal break overtime, worth around £450, provided by members from December 2004 to July 2005.
- Recovery of meal break money deducted from PTS staff.
- Recovery of the pay difference for PTS staff working a 39 hour week excluding a meal break.
- Achievement of double assimilation for trainee paramedics, potentially saving them £4000.

Greater Manchester

- Negotiated probably the best Meal Break agreement in the country.

Lancashire

- PTS staff assimilated to AfC contracts using the first assimilation point have been uplifted by two pay points, backdated to October 2004.
- A&E staff who wanted to change from a Whitley to a Trust contract before assimilation have been allowed to do so, again backdated to October 2004.
- PTS Supervisors and WBTAs have achieved Band 4.

Mersey

- The unresolved Mersey Tech JAQ was referred to a national panel under the terms of the unblocking protocol agreed through the NHS Staff Council. It was this external independent panel which met on the 3rd July 2006 to consider the Merseyside JAQ panel findings from February 2006 which had not been subject to consistency check. However the progress with resolving the issue of the Techs’ JAQ in Merseyside is likely to be delayed further because UNISON has requested at national level that before the banding outcome from the national panel is implemented there should be an investigation into alleged communications which took place outside the terms of the AfC procedure between the SHA and those responsible for the submission of the JAQ in Mersey.

- The UNISON National Ambulance Sector issued the following statement on the 21st July 2006 - “UNISON's MRAS branch and North West Region has raised concerns over the Job Evaluation and National Panel (Consistency Checking) processes as applied to the MRAS Technician job. The issues raised are in respect of the content of the job analysis questionnaire (JAQ) and the terms of reference of the national consistency checking panel [which met in Warrington in the week commencing 3rd July 2006]. The processes by which the post was originally evaluated and a consistency check of the outcome undertaken are in accordance with the job evaluation scheme and related protocols and guidance agreed by the NHS Staff council and applicable to all NHS Trusts. UNISON's branches, and Ambulance branches in particular have been instrumental in shaping such protocols. However it is alleged that some integral aspects of these processes have not been properly applied locally. We are therefore requesting that the lead officers of the NHS Staff Council make appropriate enquiries and that in the meantime the National Consistency checking panel outcome is not implemented. We will report back through UNISON’s structures to UNISON members on the outcome.”
The shape of the new UNISON Branch to represent ambulance staff across the North West is virtually agreed. This follows numerous meetings of representatives from the four existing branches, Cumbria, GMAS, Lancashire and MRAS, and discussions with the lay leadership in the Region. At the latest meeting for Stewards, held in Worsley on 27th July, delegates agreed to support a new structure that includes four Section Committees to organise and represent members in Cheshire & Merseyside, Cumbria, Greater Manchester and Lancashire. Each Section Committee, led by a local Convenor, will deal with issues affecting members at local level and can send six representatives to the Branch Committee. The main Officer positions on the Branch Committee, such as Branch Secretary and Treasurer, will be elected directly on a democratic basis by all members in the new Branch. There will also be seats for representatives of Self-Organised members. The Branch Committee will elect twelve representatives to sit on a negotiating team to bargain with the employer on all service conditions issues affecting members across the Trust.

Latest figures show that UNISON North West Ambulance Service Branch will have well over 2000 members. It is envisaged the new Branch will come into existence on 1st September.

Diane Kelly, North West Regional Convenor, who attended the Stewards meeting, pledged Regional support to the new Branch for the resources necessary to develop and grow, particularly to add to our membership across all four North West localities. She gave a commitment from the Regional lay leadership to work in partnership with the Branch and the full-time staff to build a structure which would both work for the activists and provide the best possible service to the members.

COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS IS PRIORITY FOR NEW BRANCH

Stewards at the meeting in Worsley had a preview of a brand new UNISON NWAS Website. This will help to keep members informed on all the latest news, provide contact details for Branch activists and include useful information such as the 24 hour legal helpline for Thompsons Solicitors.

Members will also have exclusive access to a Branch Chat Forum, to facilitate discussion on issues of concern. There are plans also for regular newsletters and workplace meetings to ensure UNISON remains aware of members’ views, needs and aspirations in what will be a very large branch, both in membership numbers and geography.

JOIN UNISON NOW
## 1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Please tick or fill in the boxes below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mrs</th>
<th>Ms</th>
<th>Miss</th>
<th>Mr</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **First name**
- **Surname/Family name**
- **Date of birth**
- **Home address**
- **Postcode**

National Insurance number (from your payslip):

- [ ]

- Please tick this box if you require materials in a different format (eg 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 PAY – CURRENT RATES (SET OCTOBER 2003)

### Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEKLY PAY</th>
<th>ANNUAL PAY</th>
<th>PER WEEK ON MONTH BAND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to £38.47</td>
<td>Up to £2,000</td>
<td>£0.30 £1.30 A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£38.48–£96.16</td>
<td>£2,001–£5,000</td>
<td>£0.81 £3.50 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£96.17–£153.84</td>
<td>£5,001–£8,000</td>
<td>£1.22 £5.30 C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£153.85–£211.53</td>
<td>£8,001–£11,000</td>
<td>£1.52 £6.60 D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£211.54–£269.23</td>
<td>£11,001–£14,000</td>
<td>£1.81 £7.85 E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£269.24–£326.92</td>
<td>£14,001–£17,000</td>
<td>£2.24 £9.70 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£326.93–£384.61</td>
<td>£17,001–£20,000</td>
<td>£2.65 £11.50 G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£384.62–£480.76</td>
<td>£20,001–£25,000</td>
<td>£3.23 £14.00 H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£480.77–£576.92</td>
<td>£25,001–£30,000</td>
<td>£3.98 £17.25 I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£576.93–£673.08</td>
<td>£30,001–£35,000</td>
<td>£4.68 £20.30 J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£673.08+</td>
<td>over £35,000</td>
<td>£5.19 £22.50 K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Please tick this box if you are a student member in full-time education (including student nurses or Modern Apprentices). Your subscription is £10 per year.

### Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid

- [ ] Weekly
- [ ] Fortnightly
- [ ] Four Weekly
- [ ] 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.

UNISON’s General Political Fund (GPF) is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union and for research and lobbying in Parliament and Europe. It is independent of support for any political 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.

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

## 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 (please tick if appropriate)

- [ ] direct debit
- [ ] cheque

---

**UNISON NORTH WEST AMBULANCE SERVICE**

**APPLICATION FORM** 
Join UNISON altogether a better union

---

**UNISON**

**NORTH WEST AMBULANCE SERVICE**

**JOIN UNISON**

---

**UNISON, Arena Point**
1 Hunts Bank,
Manchester, M3 1UN

---

---