

UNISON

London Ambulance Service



UNISON

London Ambulance Service

KEEPING MEMBERS INFORMED, SUPPORTED AND PROTECTED IN THE LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE

LAS UNISON NEWSLETTER

Spring Edition 2016

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WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER

London Ambulance UNISON Branch takes communicating with members very seriously. We know it is important for you to see what your representatives are doing on your behalf. We are only strong in our negotiations with management because we know we have you behind us. We have our Website www.lasunison.com which I recommend that you view regularly as that will update you on current local and national issues. If you are on Twitter then follow us on @lasunison and of course visit our Facebook page.

All these ways of communicating are there so we spread our news around as best as possible to as many members as possible. But I know that sometimes there is nothing like having a Newsletter in your hand, in front of you, to read whenever, and wherever you want.

I hope that you enjoy it. Your comments on the design and contents would be welcome.

Eric Roberts

Branch Secretary



WWW.LASUNISON.COM



UNISON provides quality legal services for employment-related and non-work issues at no extra cost to members and their family. In fact, UNISON provides the broadest range of legal help to union members in the UK.

What do UNISON legal services cover?

- **Employment advice**
- **Personal injury** service – covers any accident which happens either outside or in the workplace, including assaults at work and industrial disease claims as well as road traffic accidents and accidents on holiday.
- **Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) claims** for work-related injury due to a violent crime
- **Work-related criminal offences**
- **Wills** – free wills service for members, with reduced rates for family members;
- **Conveyancing** – discounted for members and their family members;
- **Clinical negligence** – free screening service to assess a potential legal claim for members affected by clinical negligence for members and their family members.
- **Free legal advice on any non-employment issue** from UNISON's lawyers. This service entitles you to receive a 30-minute telephone interview.



Recovering from an injury at work or simply want to spend some time with family and friends, UNISON Croyde Bay Holiday Resort is an ideal setting to relax and unwind.

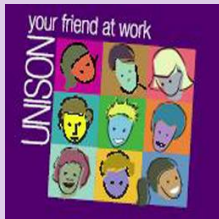
Overlooking the Bristol Channel, this unassuming hotel is a 10-minute walk from Croyde Beach, 2.2 miles from Saunton Golf Club and 12 miles from Chambercombe Manor. The simple rooms feature free Wi-Fi, flat-screen TVs, and tea and coffee making facilities. Some rooms have patios.

A restaurant offers a breakfast buffet and carvery dinners, and there are 3 bars. Other amenities include a spa, an indoor pool and a hot tub, plus an exercise room.

Address: Croyde Bay, Braunton, Devon EX33 1QB

Phone: 01271 890890

www.croydeunison.co.uk



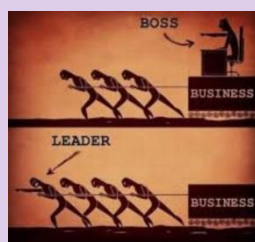
SENIOR SECTOR REPS REPORT

As we all know, the last few years have proved to be an extremely difficult time for all of us, across all departments, as we have all been placed under immense pressure and stress as a consequence of poor management practices and decisions, both inside and outside the organisation in the previous few years. These practices led to morale sinking to all-time lows and record numbers leaving the service or off sick with stress related illnesses and ultimately resulted in a CQC Report finding our service as 'inadequate'. For many colleagues perhaps, the CQC report could not have come soon enough as it confirmed the longstanding view that 'senior managers and executives and board members were remote and lacking an understanding of the issues that staff were experiencing' (CQC).

It is acknowledged that the problems the service has experienced has been against a backdrop of a conservative government waging its ideological war on the NHS and other public services, with its so called 'efficiency savings' and drive to increase 'productivity' resulting in the 'call now waiting for us' instead of 'us waiting for the call'. This led to appalling accounts on a regular basis of seriously injured patients waiting by the side of the road or elderly fallers left on the floor for hours, that only put further stress and anxiety on colleagues who join the service to give the best care they can to patients in their hour of need.

However, political mis-management and chronic underfunding of the NHS must not absolve our own senior management group of any blame, who oversaw a culture of distance and distrust between staff and senior managers. For several years there has been a wealth of evidence to support the notion that staff who feel actively engaged with their management are more motivated and perform better, and indeed our own HR department published a Workforce Strategy document in 2008, stressing its intention to move LAS leadership into a more 'transformational' style.

However, instead, we saw an



Colleagues will recognise the following as just a few of the examples of poor management practices and decisions that led to the drop in staff morale, motivation and performance;

- Delay in introducing protected 10 minutes at the start of the shift to conduct statutory checks, with staff feeling bullied or intimidated into responding to calls before they had completed their statutory vehicle checks.
- Obstructing staff who need to report or highlight risk or incident through LA52's, with managers offering no clear or consistent guidance on when and where to complete the 52's, and staff frustrated at the lack of feedback.
- Withdrawing statutory and other mandatory training for several years, explaining that the service had no spare capacity. However, all this did was push the problem further down the road, whilst increasing tension and giving the impression that management cared little for their staffs training and professional development.
- Failing to give clear guidance to local managers when dealing with staff who experienced a serious traumatic incident or had been assaulted, leading to an inconsistent approach with too many cases of staff not being stood down or felt 'bullied' into continuing work.
- And of course, the introduction of the dreaded B-Relief Rota. Argued by senior managers as a necessity but ultimately proving counter-productive, treating new staff with appalling lack of care and understanding and sucking the very life and enthusiasm out of staff who had so much to offer.

increase in a command and control, transactional, directive style, with little or no dialogue with its staff or their representatives and which ultimately led to a breakdown in trust and respect.

The failure of senior managers to involve staff and improve engagement cannot be understated, and the drive to monopolise power and decision-making despite the evidence firmly against this practice, has ultimately proved



disastrous. As clinicians, we are taught from the very beginning of our careers the value of evidence-based practice, and it is hugely disappointing that many of our senior managers in the recent past did not adopt this same principle with respect to their own practice.

COLLECTIVE SPIRIT & STRENGTH

Despite the lack of dialogue and the breakdown in the relationship between senior managers, staff and their staffside representatives, UNISON has continued to defend our colleagues from attacks on our pay and conditions and improve as best we can our working environment. We cannot hope to win every battle and at times we do have to accept changes but the interventions of UNISON in recent past have had a significant impact and achieved success that is of real benefit to us all. Indeed thanks to the continuing support of our members providing a strong collective voice, UNISON has protected unsocial sick pay saving ALL of our colleagues **£hundreds** if unfortunately sick during unsocial hours, ensured a pay rise worth **£thousands** for our A&E support colleagues, and prevented downgrading for our EMT colleagues that would have seen them lose **£thousands** in lost earnings.

MOVING FORWARD

Whilst these have been extremely difficult times, there has been a noticeable change in attitude recently from our Senior and Executive management team, perhaps partly due to a change in personnel, and there appears much greater willingness to engage with staffside representatives. It is early days to assess the impact of CQC Report and the service being placed into 'special measures', but we hope that the recent thawing in relations between staffside and management will continue. The recent re-introduction of Staff Councils and Operational Partnership Forums that involve Senior Staffside Reps are a positive move, but all too often these are still being cancelled and it is this inconsistent approach that is causing further frustration and hindering effective progress and the long list of broken promises will make it hard for our colleagues to regain any faith or trust. There are many challenges ahead not least the issues of 'rotas' and 'late jobs' that prove to be exhausting and demoralising but we hope to make some progress in this more engaging environment over these particular issues over the coming months.

Whilst there are still huge pressures on the service for 'efficiency' savings, only by working together in a truly engaged and consultative environment can we achieve our shared goals of improving patient care and performance whilst ensuring that colleagues are valued and fully supported.

SIGNIFICANT UNISON ACHIEVEMENTS

Successfully prevented the introduction of the Paramedic/Band 3 skill mix

Successfully challenged any attempts to downgrade or de-skill our existing EMT's

Negotiated the development of the new EAC role with appropriate pay and training, which has seen our A&E support colleagues receive a pay rise into Band 4, with appropriate training and increase in skills

These 3 points alone must never be undervalued. The Paramedic/Band 3 skill mix would have placed immense stress and pressure on both members of the crew, seriously deteriorated our working conditions and been a very real risk to our patients

Protected our unsocial hours sick pay, with the proposal from UNISON for industrial action during unsocial hours before Christmas 2013 bringing the employers to the negotiating table.

And by strongly supporting industrial action late last year with our own LAS UNISON Branch organising more picket lines than any other union branch in the country, LAS UNISON members have contributed in forcing the government to honour the independent pay body, whilst also securing a commitment to help reduce our pension age and further commitments not to change our unsocial hours sick pay under Annex E of Agenda for Change.

**Steve Johnson - SW Sector Senior Rep
Tim Stephens – Central Sector Senior Rep
Pete Hannell – NW Sector Senior Rep
Gary Edwards – W Sector Senior Rep
Brian Robinson – EC Sector Senior Rep
Dave Smith – NE Sector Senior Rep**



UNISON SECURES FUTURE FOR OUR EMT'S



Three years ago the Service proposed 'Time for Change' which included proposals for a Paramedic/Band 3 skill mix, part of which would have seen our existing EMT's downgraded and de-skilled.

UNISON rejected these proposals stressing this would lead to increased risk to our patients and have a serious impact on morale to colleagues who have been loyal and committed to our service and the people of London for many years.

Following successful negotiations that saw our A&E Support colleagues receive a pay rise and the introduction of the Band 4 EAC role, UNISON are now pleased to confirm that the future of our existing EMT's has been secured with Fionna Moore (CEO) confirming to UNISON the following;

'I am pleased to be able to confirm that we will take no action to redefine or change the existing role of our Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's). They have been the backbone of our service for many years and with the 300 or so we have remaining in the service we shall retain them going forward on their existing terms and conditions (our local band 5 agreement) and continue to utilise them fully on frontline duties as we have done for many years'

This is another clear example that we must stick together and support our colleagues during difficult times. This would not have been achieved without the continuing support of UNISON members and a strong collective voice. If you are not already a member and care about the future of your colleagues and your profession, then please consider joining. We are stronger together.

MESSAGE FOR ALL UNISON MEMBERS – TAX RELIEF

DON'T FORGET TO CLAIM TAX RELIEF ON YOUR SUBS.

UNISON IS THE **ONLY** LAS UNION THAT CAN CLAIM TAX RELIEF FOR SUBS

Will reduce your subs by up to a third.

Band 4 subs down to as low as £10 and will be the cheapest Union Subs in LAS.

Contact HM Revenue and Customs on 0300 200 3300.

It's a 10minute phone call and at the same time why not claim Tax Relief for 'Uniform Cleaning' and 'HCPC Registration'. Can be backdated for up to 4years!!



UNISON POLICY REVIEW

UNISON MEMBERS GUIDANCE FOR OUT OF SERVICE (OOS)

This guidance is to support our colleagues and help reduce inconsistent application of policies by management when it comes to booking 'off the road'.

Whilst, it is recognised that unavailability of resources has an impact on the Trust's ability to provide adequate cover and response to our patients, a balance needs to be struck between availability in the short term and ensuring clinicians are able to deliver optimum care to their patients in a safe and supportive environment.

The following is a breakdown of..... Out of Service Policy (TP/091), Serious Incident Policy (TP/006), Incident Reporting Procedure (HS/011), Stress Management Policy (HS/018).

1) A Resource is Immediately Unavailable for the following;

a) If a resource does not have as a minimum the following equipment;

- Bag-valve mask (Adult and Paediatric)
- Oxygen
- Defibrillator with Pads
- Suction (Handheld or Mechanical)
- Airway Adjuncts (OP and NP)



b) If there is a need to report a Serious Incident - described as *'an incident out of the ordinary or unexpected, with the potential to cause serious harm, and/or likely to attract public and media interest'*.

The Incident Reporting Procedure (HS011) states that every member of staff has a responsibility to report any incident that may be a cause of concern. Staff should 'immediately bring to the attention of their line manager, or any manager if the line manager is not available, any incident that they have observed or been involved in if it has given cause for concern (Serious Incident Policy, TP006).

It is acknowledged that the seriousness of an incident can sometimes be subjective, but if colleagues feel that their concerns are not being treated reasonably and feel unsupported, then discuss the issue with a CTL/GSM and your local UNISON H&S Rep. Incident reporting was highlighted as a key area of poor practice in the recent CQC Report and that **'addressing under reporting of incidents including the perceived pressure in some departments not to report incident'** is a priority. We hope that greater awareness of the relevant policies will generate discussion and create a more supportive environment.

c) Following Staff Assault or a Traumatic Incident which overwhelms the normal coping mechanism.

Staff/Managers are advised that returning to station or work base is often particularly valuable and a chance to 'decompress' with colleagues and reduce their immediate stress levels and managers to 'consider 'standing down' the member of staff if they are unable to continue with their duties (Stress Management Policy (HS/018)



However, since the introduction of the Stress Management Policy (HS/018), managers have been directed to place staff on sick if they feel unable to continue. Whilst Staffside understand the reasons behind this, as this flags up to line managers that a member of staff has been involved in an incident and can alert managers if a member of staff has been involved in a number over a short period, until we receive guarantees that these incidents/absences will not go towards the MAP, then staffside cannot support this advice.

d) Defective or missing Airwave set.

A resource will be a category 1 OOS, unless a vehicle has a working mainset and at least one* working handset (***Under review at request of UNISON. We currently advise our members to complete a LA52 if TWO working handsets are not available**)



e) **Infectious Vehicle or Uniform.**

When the vehicle or uniform are contaminated with body fluids. This can be extended to include exceptionally soiled uniform or vehicle e.g. following incidents on a rugby pitch or building site.

f) **Vehicle Defect.**

Legal requirements are that the following are in good condition or working order;

Tyres, Washer Bottle, Engine Oil, Windscreen, Wiper Blades, Lights, Indicators, Blue Lights, Horns and Sirens

Other vehicle defects that require immediate OOS include Tail Lift and Heater if outside temperatures are below 5* degrees (*UNISON are disputing this figure)

Please also be reminded that TP/068 allows 'protected' time for **checks**. If any defects are identified, members are advised to contact EOC immediately to book OOS or a delay depending on the severity of the defect.

2) **A Resource is available until a resolution is arranged for a maximum of 2 hours**

If a resource does not have any of the following then it is **only available for a maximum of 2 hours. If no resolution is found within the 2 hours then the resource is upgraded to Category 1 OOS;**

- Trolley Bed and strap
- Carry Chair and strap
- 12-lead ECG capability
- Cervical Collar (adult and paediatric)
- Paramedic/General drug packs
- Orthopaedic Stretcher
- Maternity Pack
- Station-based drugs
- Gloves
- Assorted dressings
- Access to appropriate decontamination facilities (i.e sluice and cleaning materials)
- PALS Kit (*To be confirmed)



UNISON Welcomes Government Change of Heart Over Check-off

Whilst other unions caved in and were asking their members to change payments by direct debit, UNISON stood strong and took the fight to parliament and protested to MP's and Lords. The Government backed down and has announced it is withdrawing its plan to ban union subs being deducted from wages. For more information on this and other issues please go to our website at lasunison.com

3) **Stand Down within 48 hours of an incident other than Serious**

As per Incident Reporting Policy (HS/011) there is a requirement to report a non-serious incident within 48hrs. If colleagues have not had the opportunity to complete the form during 'downtime' or 'overtime' then please discuss with your local management team to arrange a mutually agreed time to complete the LA52 (For reference - A manager can complete the form on behalf of the member of staff if the colleague is unable to complete the form due to ill health or injury).

4) **Stand Down to complete Coroner/Police Statement**

The service allows 1 hour to complete statements, however it must be acknowledged that some statements may be more complex and require more detail. Please discuss with local management teams to extend the time on the day or be stood down on another shift if you feel that the 1 hour time-frame is insufficient.

Please pass on any feedback to this review to your local UNISON Rep or steven.johnson/brian.robinson@lond-amb.nhs.uk

We welcome your views



UNISON Health and Safety Update

Staff - Personal Accident Cover

We understand a meeting took place between the Service and our Insurance Brokers (3/2/16) and Personal Accident Cover on Private Property was on the Agenda. Although, as far as I am aware no decision has been made yet. I am concerned at the length of time this is taking to resolve, we first approached the Service raising our concerns on the 5th of November 2015. We will keep you informed. (For full details on this issue please contact me at the email address below)

Datix – Roll Out

We look forward to the introduction of the new Incident Reporting System – Datix. We believe it will revolutionise the current out of date, antiquated procedure we currently use. Health and Safety will receive a copy of the completed form instantly – this will hopefully lead to the end of long delays in processing or completed forms being lost altogether.

FRU - Tiguan

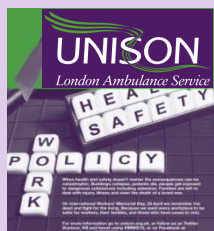
The introduction of this vehicle has been an extremely difficult one, for various reasons. However, I understand the vehicles are close to roll out although we (staff side) have yet to see the final product.



(spot the difference competition – win a weekend night on K501!!)

Bariatric

We (Unison Health and Safety) are extremely disappointed the Service has failed to make any progress regarding LAS Bariatric vehicles. This is totally unacceptable - what concerns me even more is we are unaware of any budget allocation for a Bariatric response for 2016/17. We will continue to campaign for the Service to provide this long overdue essential resource for front line staff. Update – A new Bariatric Group has been formed with the inaugural meeting taking place on the 04/05/16. I will keep you informed.



MDT Screens - Updates Whilst Driving

We will be asking the Service to look at alternative ways of updating FRU's en route to calls other than using the MDT. We believe it is both illegal and extremely dangerous for FRU operators and the public.

Handsets

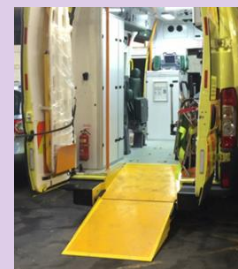
Despite emails from Senior Management stating there should be two handsets per ambulance the Service continues to supply only one in the vast majority of cases. The Health and Safety Executive has also made it clear Ambulance Crews should be issued with handsets in the same way as Police Officers. We believe the latest date given for the new Handset roll out is the 27th of June and will take approximately 15 weeks to complete.

Manual Handling Training

Yet again manual handling training has been non-existent this year; in fact the Improvement Notice of 2010 did nothing to improve Manual Handling Training for front line staff, despite requests from Unison Health and Safety. We are taking advice and will keep you informed.

Ramp And Winch

We believe the trial of the three front line ramp and winch ambulances will start shortly. Unison Health and Safety will not support the trial until someone from Management explains how a crew can get a two wheeled chair up the ramp and into the ambulance using a winch. We believe the vast majority of patients enter the vehicle on the chair and therefore it is not unreasonable to request this information. We have heard it said that we must do this trial because all the outer counties are using ramp vehicles - this is of course complete nonsense - the vast majority of ambulance services in this country use a tail lift and that is a fact. The cost of this trial is approximately £250,000 of tax payer's money. We will keep you informed. (Please note the location of the LP15)



Winter Tyres

It's not all doom and gloom though - after what can only be described as thorough and exhaustive testing at the Millbrook Proving Ground which took place at the end of October last year, I can finally report that the following results are both conclusive and unquestionably accurate when I state, without fear of contradiction, winter tyres perform better than all year round tyres - in winter!

Ian Lee 07719973199 Ian.Lee@lond-amb.nhs.uk



Operational Partnership Forum (OPF) is a forum for the Senior Management Group (DDO's, ADO's etc) to meet Senior Staffside Reps to discuss operational issues. Please note that of the 10 items on the agenda raised at the last meeting by Staffside, all 10 were raised by UNISON Reps.



Hot topics discussed at the OPF and other forums include —

London Package for all Staff up to and including Band 6. Unison have organised an indicative ballot to see if our members would be willing to take industrial action. ***Unison Ambulance occupational group met on 31st May 2016 to discuss the indicative ballot that was carried out during May 2016 and the next steps and actions to be taken. Results of the ballot will shared very soon and members should keep an eye on www.lasunison.co.uk**

EOC. There is an ongoing review into Control Services and UNISON are seeking agreement on several issues including H&S concerns with working space conditions. UNISON have also conducted a survey seeking views on overtime restrictions in EOC. The survey found that the majority of staff are unhappy with the current situation and are seeking a standardised policy in line with operational frontline colleagues. The survey also found that the majority of staff agreed that overtime restrictions should only apply to persistent offenders who regularly cancel overtime. UNISON will be taking the results of this survey forward to future discussions with management.

Mentoring. The Service recently attempted to make mentoring compulsory citing HCPC expectations. UNISON Reps, and UNISON Reps alone, sought immediate discussions and stressed that HCPC refers only to 'Understanding the importance of mentoring' and NOT 'Undertaking'. Following further discussions a 10% uplift was offered to all colleagues who mentored students, which was duly accepted..

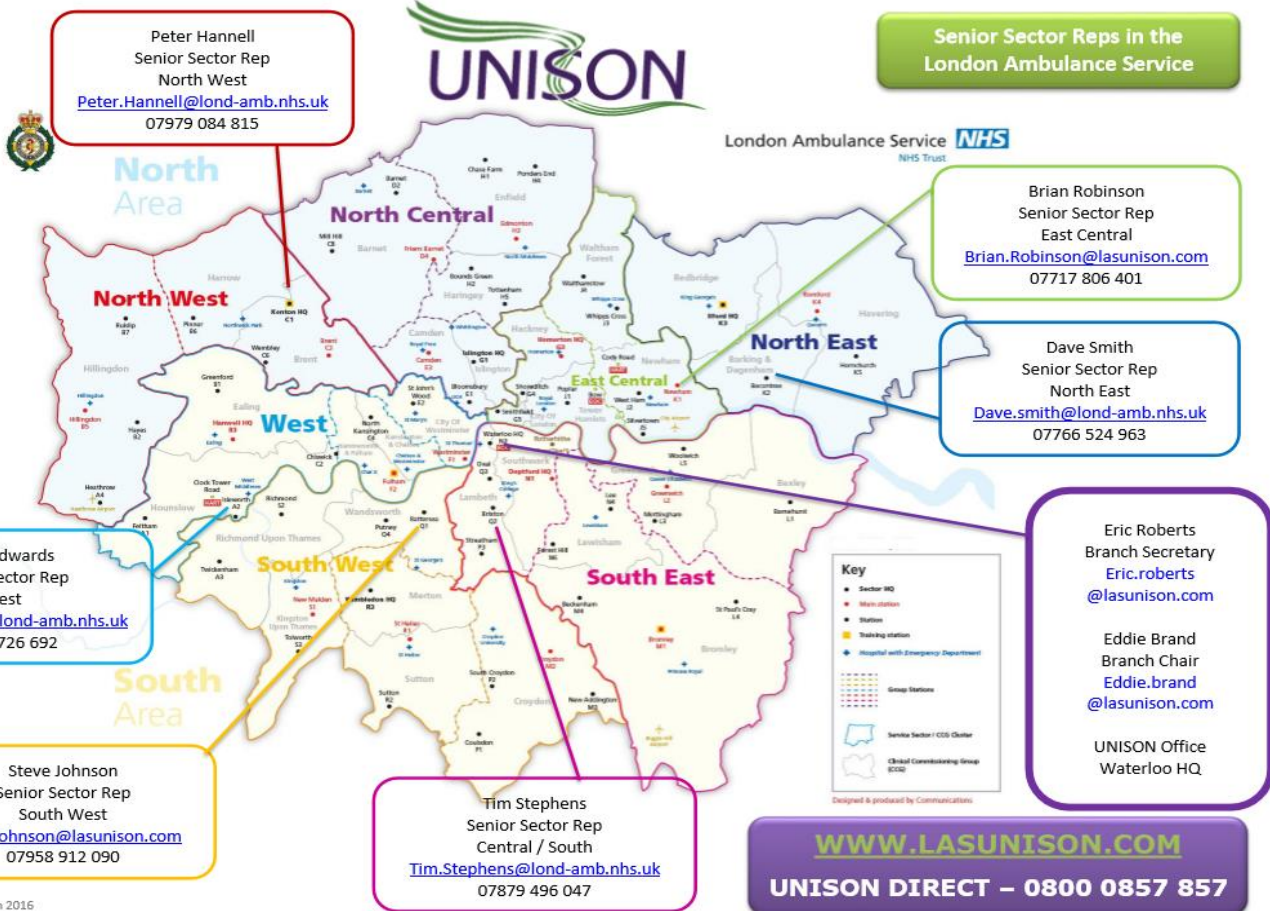
CSR Courses – Whilst staffside were never going to reject a proposal for 24hours training per year with staff given the choice when and where to attend, we have raised serious concerns at the number of courses being cancelled and the difficulties our colleagues face when trying to re-book. We have asked for improved access to course numbers and more flexibility for colleagues who have great difficulty rebooking courses due to commitments such as child-care.

Staff Resourcing and Movements Concern at the distances reliefs have to travel. UNISON have requested an urgent review of these policies and a review of the systems in Resources. Too often reliefs are crossing each other on their way into work. This is unacceptable.

In the meantime, UNISON remind all those concerned that 'overtime' and 'bank' staff should be moved before 'reliefs', and that any affected staff should consult with their local management teams prior to their duty day to identify any shifts that are closer to their base location. We trust that colleagues on 'overtime' or 'bank' will understand that 'reliefs' should be allowed to complete their contracted hours with as little disruption as possible and as close to their base station where possible.

Job Cycle Time - Management have highlighted increases in our job cycle times over the last couple of years suggesting if all crews helped to reduce their average by just a few minutes, then this would help create spare capacity and more downtime. However, UNISON have stressed that colleagues are exhausted and demoralised and have increased responsibility on scene and indeed have provided evidence that increased job cycle times may be a reflection of the rise in average age of patients and the complex nature of elderly care. (48yrs in 2010 up to 53years in 2015).

Hospital Turn-around Times – Colleagues have expressed concerns that hospitals are over-riding the Pin before the patient has been 'handed over'. This is an unacceptable practice. Colleagues are advised to attempt to re-enter the Pin when the hand-over is complete as there is a facility for a 2nd over-ride and to ensure that this is noted on the PRF. Colleagues are also advised that the 15minutes '**Pin-to-Green Time**' is an average NOT a maximum. Please inform CH33 if this time is likely to exceed 29minutes and ensure that the relevant reason is noted on the PRF



Your Branch

Branch Secretary – Eric Roberts - HQ
 Branch Chair – Eddie Brand - HQ
 Treasurer – George Achilles – Edmonton
 Communications Officer – Rob Sydney – Romford
 Equality Officer – Peter Hannell – Kenton
 Health & Safety Officer – Ian Lee – Becontree
 Welfare Officer – Christine Tanner – Bow
 Membership Officer – Mark Lione – Homerton
 Education Officer – Mark Belkin – Friern Barnet
 Labour Link Officer – Jason Anderson – Cody Road
 Minute Secretary – Paul O’Neil – Edmonton
 Vice Chair – Sarah Hardy – St Helier
 Retired Members Officer – Michael Apps
 Regional Officer – Phil Thompson

LAS UNISON MEMBERSHIP

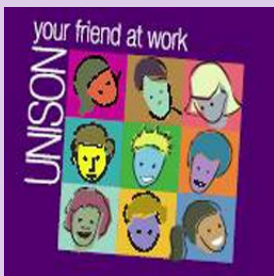
is the **ONLY UNION** membership with
 a **£50** per year

Book Grant.

Looking to Progress?

**Thinking of Further Education
 Courses?**

**Then please visit our LAS UNISON
 Website @ lasunison.com for further
 details on this and many other
 benefits.**



EQUALITIES UPDATE

The Equality Act of 2010 brought together, under one piece of legislation, all previous law covering people who are considered members of a 'protected characteristic'.

There are nine protected characteristics covered by the Act. They are as follows;- Sexual Orientation, Age, Religion and/or belief, Gender reassignment, Race, Disability, Maternity & Pregnancy, Sex and Marriage & Civil partnership.

Under the Act, people are not allowed to discriminate, harass or victimise another person because they have any of the protected characteristics. Protection from discrimination is afforded to people who are perceived to have a protected characteristic or where they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

In effect, right now, the act is applicable to you as you fit into at least three protected characteristics. We all have an age and a sex and a race.

At other times in your life, you may fit into other protected characteristics so essentially the Equality Act protects us all.

However, when you are being victimised, harassed and bullied it is sometimes extremely hard to protect yourself with legislation. Most people feel isolated and unable to fight back. That is where our branch of UNISON are so useful. It is down to our experience of fighting inequality at work and getting results that satisfy our members.

Take our success over Insulin treated Diabetics driving on frontline ambulances for example. The service attempted

to dismiss our members with the 'disability' but our branch fought back and won a landmark national case.

But our union attempts to be proactive more than reactive because we know that unfortunately when we react, the damage to the individual has already begun.

With this in mind we have an important place at the forefront of the Equality and Inclusion strategy in the LAS. Last month the service was placed in the top 50 of the Stonewall Equality Index of all employers nationally. We were the top Ambulance trust and the third best NHS trust in the country.

The index is just one benchmark but more importantly it is our members that are increasingly feeling more confident at work to challenge inequality for themselves and their work colleagues. This is just the same being confident in standing up for our patients.

The work of the joint Equality and Inclusion steering group, of which I am a proud representative also addresses recruitment. We have been working with Communities Into Training and Education (CITE) to better enable members of the public who are unemployed to find work with our service. We are assisted by the Business Disability Forum (BDF) to better enable disabled members of the public to find work with our service.

You may have seen the trust using Black and Asian staff in recruitment campaigns on the London transport network so that we can attract a workforce that reflects the communities we serve. All of these initiatives are supported and promoted by your Union so that our service can continue to be one that we are proud to work for.

My task as your Equalities officer is to listen to your experiences, share good practice and challenge poor practice so that we can all feel happier and express ourselves with growing confidence in our workplace. Safe in the knowledge that we have a strong, member led Union behind us.

Pete Hannell

Equalities Officer, LAS UNISON

UNISON Equality Reps

making the workplace a fair place





Welfare from Christine Tanner

Unison welfare charity 'There for you' can help members with the following:

- Financial assistance
- Wellbeing breaks
- Debt support
- Winter fuel and school uniform grants for low paid members

Unison debtline 0800 389 3302

Last year was a busy year for me as branch welfare officer, sadly we lost a few well-loved colleagues and staff once again rallied round and supported each other, showing their respects in great numbers at the funerals. My role includes offering support and assistance to their relatives at this difficult time and making sure that Unison death benefit is paid promptly to help aid the financial burden of funeral costs.

There were some delays for staff that were long term sick receiving TIA (temporary injury allowance), working with HR and Payroll these were eventually resolved and one member was supported with a grant from Unison while he waited for back pay.

Last year saw an increase in members seeking financial assistance either due to long term sickness or unforeseen circumstances, the majority were offered solutions to meet their individual circumstances including debt management

Communications update from Rob Sydney

This year 2 great publications have returned to the London Ambulance Service. LAS News and now the LAS UNISON Newsletter. It is a huge challenge to produce a newsletter and I would like to thank Steve Johnson for his efforts and hard work in producing this 1st edition.

Steve had already produced a local newsletter for his South West members and the branch was so impressed, we decided he should produce one for all LAS members. Hopefully we will be able to produce this on a regular basis again. We do welcome your feedback and if you have any ideas on what you would like to see included in future editions or perhaps you have a local story to tell, then please e-mail me or Steve.

I would also like to remind you of our other communication methods. We were the first union in the LAS to have a website at www.lasunison.com launched back in 2003. The site contains lots of information including the latest news from the branch and UNISON. You can update your details online and if you are not yet a member and reading this then go the website and join online. You can also subscribe to our e-mail newsletter from the website where you will get the latest breaking news delivered to your inbox.

We can also deliver news to you via text message. To sign up for this service, just text the word 'MEMBERS' Followed by Your Full Name to **07748 875 735**. Be sure to leave a space between your first and last name and the word members. We are also on twitter @lasunison and on facebook www.facebook.com/lasunison and Eric Roberts has his own blog at www.ericblog.lasunison.com



plans, IVA's, debt relief orders and grants. I will be attending a seminar in Birmingham later this year on Supporting members with debt and budgeting and am hoping to pick up some tips and useful contact so that I can pass these onto members in financial difficulty.

Following the success of last year's visit I am arranging for the London Mutual credit union to visit sites across London later this year. The credit union works in partnership with the LAS so savings are deducted direct from your pay, they offer a range of savings accounts at competitive rates and once you are a member you can also apply for loans with a typical APR of 13.68%. For more information go to www.creditunion.co.uk

As a newly elected member of the Regional welfare committee I am also looking forward to sharing experiences and ideas with fellow welfare officers from the area and using these to further support our members.



Eric's Blog

Eric Roberts LAS UNISON
Branch Secretary

Banging On About Band 6!

"Change the record" I hear people say "we get the message. LAS Paramedics should be in Band 6!"

It has sounded like a broken record at times but, believe me, that broken record has helped the message get through to a once 'fingers in the ears' Senior Management.

While we are not yet jointly singing from the same song sheet with management, we are, I am pleased to say, setting out writing the lyrics like Lennon and McCartney! Here's hoping it turns into 'We Can Work It Out' and not 'Hello Goodbye'!

It is important that our Paramedics are put into Band 6 of Agenda for Change (AfC). Not only because some other Ambulance Services have already done it. Not only for the financial benefit, and not only for the recruitment and retention problems we have within the LAS.

All those reasons are important of course, and all good reasons to act, but, the main reason is the recognition of the job our Paramedics do in London. The job they do in the Capital City day in and day out. The job they do for Londoners. It is shameful that the London Ambulance Service has lagged behind other Services in backing their staff and putting their money where their mouth is. The Service has never been short on praise.

Praise doesn't pay the rent and fine words butter no parsnips!

All that is changing. UNISON has met with Senior Management to plan ahead for the introduction of Band 6. Of course the level of funding for our Service by Commissioners is vital in all of this and nothing is certain, but, if we together, can't make the argument for Band 6 then we are all failing in our duty to staff. All staff. I believe that Senior Management are serious and sincere

in their willingness now to work with UNISON.

UNISON has also requested a 'recruitment and retention' payment (Annex J of Agenda for Change national agreement). This is to help in a transitional way. The recent recommendations made by the Pay Review Body (PRB) also supports our actions in this regard.

Let me be absolutely clear also on this important point: although we have banged on about Band 6 for Paramedics, it is not all about Paramedics!

It has always been UNISON's view that all staff within the LAS play their part in delivering patient care. All staff! We all work for the London Ambulance Service and we all could not do our job if other people were not doing theirs. We are like a Human Pyramid! It only stays up if everyone holds onto, and supports, everyone else!

The labels of 'Frontline' and 'Support Staff' are false labels. It is a matter of semantics. We are all frontline. Band 6 for Paramedics hold the key however. That key will unlock a long awaited review of other Bands within LAS.

A national Ambulance campaign will be launched at UNISON Health Conference in Brighton with an emergency motion. The campaign is called 'Keep Your Promise To Ambulance Staff'!

It is twelve months since the Secretary of State made an offer to ambulance staff to get us back to work following strike action over pay in 2014/15.

LAS UNISON members played a magnificent part in the two 4 hour strikes with over 30 hugely attended picket lines across London. It was because of that solidarity that ambulance staff got an additional offer within the settlement terms.

The offer included looking at recruitment and retention issues: looking at a 50-50 cost sharing provision to allow ambulance staff to take their pension up to three years early and to explore particular challenges arising from extending the Normal Pension Age.



UNISON has been proactive with these issues in trying to get agreement but to no avail. It is time to organise, campaign and ballot. In February 2016 UNISON National Ambulance Occupational Group agreed the strategy for this campaign. This includes an escalation to industrial action should the negotiations not deliver for our members.

Now that 12 months has passed and we are no further forward, it is time to consult our members on taking industrial action to get the government to listen.

Information about the campaign is being distributed now and more will be sent out in the next week or two.

LAS UNISON is fully behind this campaign and we know that our members will be fully behind us. Let's get prepared to stand together!

Finally, a personal note. Thank you to all those that sent me good wishes when I was recently taken ill. I saw the best of the NHS when I was at my worst. I am proud of my Union and proud of our Service. But they are not just cold organisations. They are made up of people who care. When that care is given unconditionally, and so willingly, it is a humbling experience. Enough said. Thank you.

Support Your Union

Information on all issues can be found elsewhere on our website.

If you are reading this, work for the London Ambulance Service or are eligible to join, and are not yet a member of UNISON Join Today!

We are stronger together. We are all Frontline.

Eric Roberts
BRANCH SECRETARY

UNISON was formed in 1993 when the National Union of Public Employees (Nupe), Confederation of Health Service Employees (Cohse) and the National and Local Government Officers (Nalgo) merged creating the largest public sector union in Europe. LAS UNISON came into being in 1995 when eleven separate LAS UNISON branches united to make one service-wide branch.

Our strength comes from that unity between all parts of the London Ambulance Service. Our branch is for all staff within the Service, no matter what job, what grade, what rank or what staff group. We are a Union and branch that cares for the Public Sector. We defend the Public Sector and work in the interests of Public Sector employees.

We believe in the London Ambulance Service and work in partnership to improve the terms and conditions of our members while also striving to improve the Service we give to the people of London.

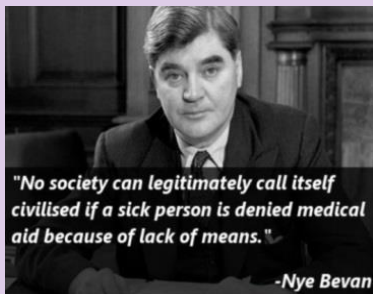
A successful Service is in all our interests.

LAS UNISON believes in the professionalism of our members. Members just like you. While you are doing your job, LAS UNISON Representatives, Branch Officers and Health & Safety officers will be doing theirs: looking after you!

We do that by negotiating at all levels within the Service - from the Staff Council to stations and workplaces - with senior managers and local managers. Being the largest union within the London Ambulance Service means that our voice is heard: in every corner, of every part, of every station, of every workplace, over the whole of the Service.

We are your friend at work.

www.lasunison.com



Great Leaders who have shaped our history:

No. 1 - Nye Bevan

As part of a regular feature, we take a look at the men and women who have been inspirational leaders of our social justice movement and have made such a positive impact on our lives today. In this issue, we take a look at the man who spearheaded the establishment of the National Health Service, Aneurin Bevan (1897 – 1960) otherwise known as **Nye Bevan**.

Aneurin Bevan was one of the most important ministers of the post-war Labour government and the chief architect of the National Health Service. He was born in 1897 in Tredegar in Wales. His father was a miner and the poor working class family in which Bevan grew up gave him first-hand experience of the problems of poverty and disease.

Bevan left school at 13 and began working in a local colliery. He became a trade union activist and won a scholarship to study in London. It was during this period that he became convinced by the ideas of socialism. During the 1926 General Strike Bevan emerged as one of the leaders of the South Wales miners. In 1929 Bevan was elected as the Labour MP for Ebbw Vale. In 1934 he married another Labour MP, Jennie Lee.

During World War Two, Bevan was one of the leaders of the left in the House of Commons. At the end of the War, soldiers returning from the battlefield along with their families who had endured so much sacrifice voted overwhelmingly in their millions for a Labour Government they knew they could trust with introducing the policies that would lead to a fairer and more compassionate society. Before the war, only the privileged and well-off had access to decent health and education, but the post-war labour government not only introduced free

‘comprehensive’ education for all children up to 16, they also introduced the National Health Service which provided medical care free at point-of-need to all Britons.

At first, the concept of a National Health Service, free at the point of use, met considerable opposition. When the British Medical Association questioned doctors in early 1948, 88% were opposed to the idea, concerned that they would lose their independence. However, Bevan was able to win them round. By July 1948, 90% of doctors had joined up, and the NHS took over hospitals throughout the country. Family doctors were also provided across the nation.

Universal access was a tremendous step forward – in particular for women, and the removal of fear of illness cannot be underestimated and, as a result, the NHS was popular at its inception and its ideal has remained so. Despite attempts to break it up and change the way it's funded, the NHS continues to score higher than other more expensive health services across the world for quality, access and efficiency and the NHS principles of ‘care based on need, not ability to pay’ are still much cherished amongst the British population.

Bevan eventually resigned when the Attlee government decided to transfer funds from the National Insurance fund to pay for rearmament. He subsequently became the leader of the left wing group within the party, which came to be known as "Bevanite".

In 1959, Bevan was elected deputy leader of the Labour Party, although he was already suffering from terminal cancer. He died on 6 July 1960.

Bevan remains one of the country's most revered politicians and in 2004, over 40 years after his death, he was voted first in a list of 100 Welsh Heroes having been credited for his contribution to the Welfare State





London Ambulance UNISON Branch

IS THE LARGEST UNION IN THE LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE

With our expertise and experience, it is no surprise that UNISON is the No1 union to go to for support and protection. If you wish to join then please see your local UNISON Rep, or go to the UNISON Website



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UNISON – SUPPORT & PROTECTION FOR OUR COLLEAGUES