

STAYING ACTIVE in UNISON

GREATER LONDON REGION RETIRED MEMBERS NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 18 May 2013

Reaction from UNISON and the NPC on the Queens Speech

QUEEN'S SPEECH – UNISON REACTION - General Secretary, Dave Prentis, said:

“There is little comfort in this programme for the young, the unemployed, the working poor, the sick, the vulnerable or the millions who have seen their living standards fall drastically since this coalition government came to power.

“It’s a typical Tory tactic to distract attention from the real problems we face by fostering a ‘blame immigrants’ culture, instead of tackling the huge divide between the rich and the poor.

“This government should face facts and accept that its policies are not working for the majority of people. What we need is a programme that will boost growth and create jobs not one that boosts insecurity and fear and creates division.”

ON CAPPING THE COST OF CARE, Dave Prentis said:

“Capping the cost of care at £72,000 would still mean that most people would have to sell their homes to find the money. The fairest way forward would be to fund social care through general taxation and provide a ‘national care service’, free at the point of need. Doing so would address the issues of underfunding.”

ON THE OFSTED-STYLE RATINGS FOR CARE HOMES AND HOSPITALS, COUPLED WITH MORE POWERS FOR THE NEW CHIEF INSPECTOR OF HOSPITALS, he said:

“Instead of gimmicks and stars, what patients and the NHS need is more staff to deliver care. The revolution in the Queen’s speech would have been the introduction of patient to nurse ratios – that is what the Francis report recommended and that is what nurses say is needed.”

ON COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR CARERS, he said:

“Giving carers for the elderly and disabled the right to receive support from local councils is all well in theory but the Government is screwing council budgets to the ground. Talk comes cheap, but already respite care is being cut across the country and day centres closing their doors for lack of funding.” >

Part of statement from the NPC

Queen’s Speech has a hollow ring on the issues of pensions and care

Britain’s biggest pensioners organisation, the National Pensioners Convention(NPC) has claimed the words in today’s Queen’s Speech don’t match what the government intends to do in the areas of pensions and care. The Queen announced that the government would “reward people who work hard” and “support people who have saved for their retirement”, yet the plans on both pensions and care do neither.

Existing pensioners will not gain any benefit from a new single-tier state pension despite having worked hard and those with savings will be faced with a care bill of over £70,000 before they get any financial Help.

For further information contact Neil Duncan-Jordan on 07432-575251 of the NPC

Rob Beeston—EDITORIAL



It was very pleasing to see at the ADM in February a good number of delegates. We have adopted a new policy for our ADM and Seminar, being that if you are not nominated by your branch and you turn up, you will be classed as a visitor. This means you cannot take part in any of the debates or vote on any issues, you can only observe the proceedings, and there may not be any lunch, as food numbers are sorted out before the meeting. This puts us in line with UNISON procedures nationally.

We are now in the process of re-launching our "Elder Abuse" campaign. We will be making use of social networking and setting up another e-petition as we were disappointed with the hits on the last one considering UNISON has over a million members.

The new e-petition is up and running.

We are also embarking on another campaign on saving the NHS which is so important to us as retired people.

Well, we gained nothing out of the budget in March. The government seems determined to hit the low paid and poorer sections of our society while pandering to the millionaires and bankers of this world, this cannot be right. We must support campaigns and demonstrations that are organised by the TUC and UNISON to change the direction of government policy.

I would like to welcome new members on to our committee, elected at the ADM. It is good to see new members come onto the committee and I am sure they will bring some energy and fresh ideas to the retired members section and make a real contribution to our committee.

One important issue to come into force in a few months time is that pension boards will be opened up and so many seats on these boards will be filled by Lay members. This will be a legal requirement so we must make sure we campaign to get our members on these boards. UNISON is already preparing for this, they are also finding out the position for retired members. It will be done by ballot. We will keep you informed as the campaign unfolds

NHS Direct staff retain their pay bandings

(03/05/13) A concerted UNISON campaign has forced NHS Direct to reverse its plans to down-band 700 nurses and health advisors.

The union's campaign resulted in detailed negotiations at ACAS and a comprehensive agreement. It is also believed that up to nine NHS Direct call centres earmarked for closure could be kept open - saving hundreds of jobs.

London regional officer Michael Walker said: "This is a victory for common sense and a vindication of the leadership of UNISON reps at NHS Direct."

NHS Direct had earlier planned to close 24 of its 30 call centres, and to reduce its wage bill by changing staff bandings - moving band 6 nurses to band 5, and band 3 call handlers to band 2. But the employer has since written to staff, informing them that everyone would retain their original banding "by right", so that NHS Direct could hold onto "the skills and expertise of our most experienced frontline health advisors and nurses".

At the Annual Delegates meeting this year , Croyde Bay gave a voucher for a 2 day stay as a prize, Claire Weiss was the winner of the voucher , and sent me this email about the stay.

Hi Maggie,
Many thanks for the vouchers that were the prize I won for a stay at Croyde Bay. Len and I went down there last week, and we enjoyed it immensely! We were accommodated in the hotel and had every service and facility available to us. The room was very comfortable, and even had a patio outside where we were able to enjoy a bit of afternoon sunshine sitting at the table and chairs provided.
We explored the beach and the bay, and were lucky enough to have a couple of days with good weather.

Raffle Prize at ADM 2013 Croyde Bay

The catering was good, and there was no problem with the evening meal being part of the prize. We would recommend it to others, and one day hope to return.
I consider myself very lucky to have won this prize!
Best wishes,
Claire

ELDER ABUSE CAMPAGIAN—We have started a brand new petition, in conjunction with Action against Elder Abuse, a charity that has given us help and support with this campaign. The petition from last year has run out with a disappointing 496 signatures, due mainly from complaints I received about the spam word, the unreadable word, you have to copy, nobody could read it. This year they seem to have done away with the spam, making it very easy. So if you tried and could not sign the petition, please have a go this year. If you signed last year or even earlier this year please sign again.

We should be getting a web page up and running soon, this is in the process of being checked at the moment. Members of the GLRRM committee have been attending different conferences rolling out the campaign and collecting signatures, It all seems to be taking a while to get it rolling, but we have to keep on trying. We have a list of MP's in our sight that we will be writing too in the near future.

Annual Delegates Meeting and More

The meeting was again well attended, due to start at 11am most delegates arrived by 10.30 so there was a pleasant social feel to the meeting, members drinking tea and catching up with old friends .

Vicky Easton, Regional Manager for Local Government , opened the meeting and spoke about the Governments Welfare Reform Bill, the Bedroom Tax and Universal Credits replacing existing allowances. We had three guest speakers. Colin Meech of UNISON gave a presentation on the Power of Pensions , which included a lively and informative debate about how money and interest works. We also heard from David Kippest , Chair of the National RM Committee and Kym Silver from the NEC. We didn't have any Motions brought to this meeting. It was agreed at the first meeting of the 2013 GL Region RM Committee that Motions would be brought to the next meeting of 23rd May to be discussed, voted on and put forward to the RM Conference .

I will have retired before the next ADM, but members who perhaps have not attended before and would like to attend this meeting and get more involved with the Retired Members section, should look out for the paperwork to attend in early Jan 2014, your branch will have this. There are two forms 1} an invite to nominate to be a delegate to the ADM and 2} a form to nominate to sit on the Greater London Regional Retired Members Committee. Forms have to be signed by your branch.

Papers inviting members to the Seminar 19th September will be sent to the branches and members on the mailing list in August.

If you would like more information contact me ,Maggie
m.barr@unison.co.uk

Legislation for Elder Abuse

Brand new e petition

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/49944>

There are still places on the 2 day, IT Training courses. Held at the UNISON Centre in Euston Road. They start at 10am and finish at 1pm. Members who have attended , have found them very helpful. Contact me. **m.barr@unison.co.uk** **The course takes 10 members at a time.**

COMMITTEE 2013/2014

Chair, – Rob Beeston

V.Chair – Marjorie Roscoe

V.Chair Deputy

Gulnahr Khan– NPC Ex, LOPSG

Valerie Easmon-George

Lesley West

Welfare cmttee -John McAllister

Valerie Easmon-George

NHS Sub Cmmttee -Kay Lucey

Ann Jefferson—SERTUC

Marie Smith

NDC delegate -Parmodh Shrama

SOC- Fred Roberts

Phyl Eyers—NPC

Ross Wood– SERTUC

Ruth Appleton– SERTUC

Peter Howard –LOPSG

Joan Mc Sweeney

Richard Hewgill

Irene Hennessy

Michael Apps

Paul Duployen

Edward Peek

Mary Mills

Raymond Gnanapragasam

Richard Hewgill

Dr. Befekadu Tsehai

Tony Vass– co-opted

Regional Committee –RMC delegate, Labour Link Delegate

Rob Beeston

Regional Council -Ann Jefferson

Elder Abuse Sub Committee

Rob Beeston, Peter Howard, Tony Vass

**UNISON**
Greater London

Make up of the Committee– I am aware that there is probably a lot of new retired members and even some members who retired years ago , who do not know or understand how you get to sit on the committee. Proper title **Greater London Region Retired Members Committee** . The committee is made up of 12 general seats and 12 Woman's seats, so 24 members. We also occasionally have a co-opted member to work on the Elder Abuse Sub Committee. From this regional committee, members are nominated to sit on other UNISON committees and other committees of interest to retired members , shown in bold in the “Committee of 2013/14”. Invites to nominate for this committee are sent out in December to branches and to members on my mailing list. At the same time invitations go out for the Annual General Meeting , which is usually held in February. The **Elder Abuse sub committee** and the **NHS Sub Committee** are campaigns the committee is working on at the moment. The Committee meet 4 times a year.

Useful Contact Details

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UNISON There for you

020 7551 1620

UNISON Direct

0845 355 0845

(will answer all queries)

Maggie Barr [will answer some]

(w) 020 7535 6559

m.barr@unison.co.uk

The email tree is growing , I often send extra information out to members who have given me their email address, email me at m.barr@unison.co.uk and I will put you on the tree.



Dates for the diary

IT Training

**Wed 26th & Thurs 27th
June**

**Wed 4th & Thurs 5th
Sept.**

**Wed 6th & Thurs 7th
Nov.**

Contact Maggie if you would like to attend.

Seminar

Thurs 19th Sept.

**National Retired
Members Conference**
8th and 9th October

Brighton Centre

NPC Pensioners

Parliament

18th-20th June

Winter Gardens

Blackpool