

Agenda for change

Early Implementers newsletter

HC/07/04

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This is the fifth issue of the Newsletter, providing feedback to UNISON members on the latest developments in the twelve Early Implementer sites.

UNISON has held its sixth meeting of Early Implementer Lead Activists and Officers. This newsletter gives a round-up of all the information UNISON has received from the EI sites. If you have any information you would like to share please email r.baughan@unison.co.uk

COMMUNICATIONS

The Agenda for Change Summary Booklet has been up-dated and re-issued (stock no. 2184). Also in production is a further booklet for use by UNISON activists and Agenda for Change contacts. This will give fuller briefings on the key features of the Agenda for Change proposals as well as providing organising and recruiting advice. An A3 poster "Get to grips with Agenda for Change" is now available for branches to order (stock no. 2286). It calls on staff to join UNISON and get involved in Agenda for Change preparations.

RECRUITMENT & ORGANISATION

Early Implementer Sites continue to participate in the pilot recruitment initiative. However issues over capacity

remain. There is concern at the impact local evaluations will have on both staff and management side capacity. All agree on the importance of advanced planning as branches continue in their efforts to recruit more members and activists.

While the Early Implementer process is ongoing there is important work that non- EI Branches can do now to ensure they are sufficiently organised to represent members' best interests whatever the outcome of the ballot. Further guidance on organising for Agenda for Change and building capacity is now available on the UNISON's website at www.unison.org/healthcare/a4c

UNISON TRAINING

UNISON has developed three courses to assist branches in the implementation of Agenda for Change should a second vote be in favour of its introduction.

The courses are:

1. **Advocates Course** - for those stewards advising members on applying for a re-match or re-evaluation.
2. **Negotiators Course** - The new negotiators two-day course is being piloted in EI sites during February. The course is aimed at

those stewards involved in local negotiations around the implementation of the new conditions of service.

- 3. Panel Members Course** – a course on how to conduct and chair meetings for those stewards on matching and evaluation panels.

UNISON and the TUC agreed in January to jointly roll out the three UNISON developed Agenda for Change courses. This will allow the TUC to assist regions in rolling out the training.

A two-day briefing for TUC tutors will take place around the end of March and they should be available from April onwards to assist with courses. A second course will be held towards late spring for those tutors not available in March.

The briefed TUC tutors will be able to cascade the tutor briefing to other tutors in the regions. Regions will then be in a position to run the courses in branches beginning June / July albeit initially as pilots for the national roll out.

All of these courses will be accredited by the TUC and as a result, students attending them will also be certified as competent.

TRAINING THROUGH STRATEGIC HEALTH AUTHORITIES

Strategic Health Authorities have been delegated responsibility for the national roll out of training for both Job Evaluation and KSF. Priority is to be given to “training the trainers.”

Each Authority has been asked to nominate

- 10 staff-side/management representatives to train to become Job Evaluation experts
- 6 staff-side/management representatives to train to become KSF experts

There is concern that some SHAs have not communicated the training information effectively to trust management and staff sides. UNISON is pursuing this at national level.

MATCHING & PROFILING

250 national job profiles have now been agreed and are available on the Department of Health website www.doh.gov.uk/agendaforchange

Progress on matching posts to national profiles varies between sites. In Central Cheshire, for example, this process is complete, with local evaluations due to be completed in February. However in other sites, although most report reasonable progress, the matching of posts to national profiles is still ongoing.

Local Profiles will be used to produce further national profiles. Aintree is assisting with the production of profiles for theatre practitioners and West Kent for counsellors. UNISON is also working with other unions on profiles for dental hygienists & therapists.

Discussions continue regarding profiles for Ambulance Technicians and Operating Department Practitioners. There are still major gaps in profiles for Administrative & Clerical and Senior Managers’ jobs, and UNISON’s negotiators are pushing for additional profiles for these and other staff.

KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS FRAMEWORK (KSF)

Progress in the implementation of KSF varies between sites. Significant progress has been made within both Guys & St. Thomas and James Paget & Great Yarmouth sites.

At Guys & St. Thomas, pilot areas for KSF include portering and transport, human resources, oncology and data management, physiotherapy senior II staff, nutrition and dietetics. Full staff briefings have been completed in all departments. All draft KSF outlines have now been formulated in pilot areas. Generic outlines have been formulated for HCA and nursing grades. Training is now complete in nutrition and dietetics, physiotherapy, oncology and data management.

Central Cheshire has developed a folder for all staff on KSF, which could be used by staff to demonstrate their level of training and expertise to future employers.

ASSIMILATION

Progress on assimilation of staff to Agenda for Change Terms & Conditions varies between sites. Central Cheshire reports that, as of 31 December, 500 staff (approximately half their employees) were on the new banding. In West Kent 787 staff had been assimilated.

Avon & Wiltshire reports that 1800 posts were assimilated simultaneously to the new pay bands. However this transfer caused a number of problems which UNISON raised at the January Joint Secretaries Group (JSG). As a result the JSG agreed that a report would be produced that will outline the problems

and provide a basis for ensuring they are not repeated in other trusts.

At Guys and St Thomas although there has been work on matching and evaluating, the assimilation of staff to the new pay bands and terms and conditions has not yet started.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Unsocial hours: Discussions are continuing at Avon & Wiltshire regarding agreements for those staff who work less than 5 unsocial hours per standard working week. Guys and St. Thomas has now reached an agreement that staff working more than _ but less than 2 unsocial hours will receive a 2% supplement, while those working between 2 and 5 unsocial hours per-week will receive a 5% supplement. As reported in the last issue, Herefordshire PCT has already reached a similar agreement. West Kent, Central Cheshire and North East Ambulance have all now agreed that staff working up to 5 unsocial hours per week, will receive a 5% supplement.

Anecdotal evidence and some statistical data is beginning to show that our fears about the effects of this aspect of the package are legitimate. There have been reports that staff are less willing to cover bank holidays and Sundays as they do not see the additional financial reward for doing so. This will inevitably increase agency staff costs. We do not have enough information on the overall effects on protection yet. The Department of Health has appointed a data analyst to work through the expected large amount of statistical data from the sites.

It has been agreed that at future JSG meetings 'big issues' such as unsocial

hours, on-call etc will be given a significant slice of the agenda. However if there were to be any changes they would not be agreed until the end of the review process.

Pensions: An agreement has been reached on further protections for staff whose pension could be affected by Agenda for Change. The details of these will be circulated to branches shortly.

London Weighting / High Cost Area Allowance: Discussions are taking place at South West London/St Georges around the High Cost Area Allowance. This trust crosses the inner/outer London Weighting boundary (under current proposals Inner London receive a higher allowance than Outer London staff.) It is hoped that discussions will lead to an agreed "Pan-London" joint employer/union position, that can be fed back into national discussions.

A REMINDER OF WHERE THE EARLY IMPLEMENTER SITES ARE:

James Paget Healthcare NHS Trust
Guy's & St Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust
City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Trust
Papworth Hospital NHS Trust
Aintree Hospitals NHS Trust
Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust
S West London & St George's Mental Health NHS Trust
West Kent NHS & Social Care Trust
Herefordshire NHS Primary Care Trust
Central Cheshire Primary Care Trust
North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust
East Anglian Ambulance NHS Trust

USEFUL WEBSITES:

See the UNISON Agenda for Change web pages for regular updates, advice, guidance and information [**www.unison.org.uk/a4c**](http://www.unison.org.uk/a4c)

It's also worth checking out the following sites which provide information and guidance for employers on the importance of adopting a Partnership approach to Agenda for Change:

www.doh.gov.uk/hrinthenhs/staffinvolvement

www.modern.nhs.uk/agendaforchange