

## Joint Union Newsflash

### Action for Children Union Update – September 2011

#### Pay

As you will be aware following extensive pay negotiations, Action for Children management are still proposing an unsatisfactory pay offer for 2011-12. Having initially proposed a pay freeze, Action for Children are now proposing a small flat rate increase of £100 which *might* be paid, depending on the organisation's performance. So no definite pay offer has been made.

Both UNISON and Unite recently carried out an indicative ballot in which we asked the Action for Children union members whether they were prepared to take industrial action over pay. The combined result was that 79 per cent of both Unite and Unison members said they were prepared to take action if Action for Children did not improve this offer.

The unions met the employer at ACAS on the 1<sup>st</sup> August and again on 22<sup>nd</sup> August. Management's position remains unchanged. We are therefore in the process of preparing for an industrial action ballot. This is a complex process and is very time-consuming due to the high level of union members in Action for Children.

You should soon be receiving ballot papers (mid September, date to be confirmed) and we are urging you to vote in favour of taking industrial action. If we do not get a strong mandate for industrial action we will have to concede on this issue to the employer.

If you have changed your name, address or workplace since joining UNISON, could you please contact Mike Short on 020 7121 5324, or e-mail [cvsector@unison.co.uk](mailto:cvsector@unison.co.uk).

#### Redundancy policy

As we informed you in our last newsletter, pay is not the only thing Action for Children are attacking. They are also proposing to attack your terms and conditions. Currently a consultation is underway with the unions on the organisation's redundancy policy.

Initially Action for Children proposed reducing the redundancy payment to the statutory minimum, reducing the pay protection period if you are redeployed and reducing the time period you have to see if a redeployed job is in fact suitable.

During the course of our negotiations they have removed the proposal to move to statutory minimum redundancy payments and have indeed offered to change the ex gratia payment from a discretionary to a definite one.

But what Action for Children are proposing is still much worse than what is currently in existence, particularly with regards to the period of pay protection following redeployment. The union will continue to oppose any detrimental changes especially

in the current climate where redundancies are more likely due to government cuts, thus making the safety net of protected pay even more valuable.

### **Weekend working**

The Unions have been successful in maintaining weekend working allowances for all existing employees. All current employees will now continue to receive the weekend allowance if they change their role within the organisation.

### **Mileage rate**

The Action for Children mileage rate allowance continues to be an issue that Action for Children trade union members feel very strongly about.

This has again been raised with Action for Children this week and they have agreed to go away to look at the costs of implementing the new Inland Revenue rates. We will keep you updated on the situation when we have heard back from Action for Children on this issue.

### **Next Steps**

**As stated earlier you should be receiving a formal industrial action ballot paper in September. Only by voting in favour of industrial action do we stand a chance of winning a pay increase and preserving your redundancy terms. Make sure you vote! Make sure your colleagues who are in the union vote and encourage those that are not in the union to join in order that they can have a vote.**

**For more information contact:**

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