

AGENDA FOR CHANGE EARLY IMPLEMENTERS NEWSLETTER

Issue no 1

May 2003

This is the first newsletter for UNISON stewards and members in Early Implementer Trusts.

Conference Decision

On 8 April UNISON's Special Health Conference agreed to recommend a two stage approach to Agenda for Change.

Conference agreed that there should be two membership ballots

1. The first to be held in May 2003 based on a recommendation to proceed with Early Implementer sites linked to acceptance of the 3 year pay offer
2. If the outcome of the ballot is to go ahead with the Early Implementer (EI) phase the process of assimilation will begin in EI sites. A second ballot will then take place in 2004 on a recommendation from the Health Group Executive following the outcome of further negotiations in the light of the outcome of the Early Implementer sites.

Any recommendation to the membership at the time of the second ballot will be based on the decision of a further Special Conference on Agenda for Change.

What does this mean for Early Implementer Sites?

We need to ensure that there is a real commitment by UNISON at every level to address and remedy those areas of Agenda for Change which are causing real concerns for members.

This two stage approach means proceeding with the introduction of the new pay system in the 12 Early Implementer sites, undertaking a full review of its impact in those sites, and negotiating further to resolve problems.

This Conference decision followed a letter from Ben Dyson, who leads the management side in the negotiations, making it clear that

- i. Further discussions were indeed possible
- ii. Early Implementers will have a key role in determining whether more work is needed on issues such as unsocial hours or job profiles

UNISON views Early Implementers (EIs) as development sites. During Early Implementation the proposals will be under constant review and evidence will be sought for improvements against criteria including better and fair pay. UNISON has sought and received written assurances from the Department of Health that issues and problems identified through Early Implementation can be raised and addressed at national level.

Early Implementers



What is happening in the sites currently?

It is recognised that until the membership ballot has been completed no decision has been taken. However Early Implementer Branches obviously need to be prepared for all eventualities. Consequently some preparatory work has begun.

UNISON has held two national meetings of Branch representatives

Early feedback from UNISON activists in the sites suggests that the core principles of Agenda for Change provide the basis for a fairer and more equitable pay system. However there is an expectation that some areas of the package will highlight areas that will need addressing.

All the EI Branches are looking for a constructive relationship with management.

In South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust a full time Staff Side Officer has been appointed. James Paget's Branch Secretary has achieved full time release.

At Aintree UNISON has staff side leads on job-evaluation and communications groups and had influential positions on both the Project and Steering Groups. The branch has been holding briefing meetings for members. The Staff-Side Agenda has concentrated on obtaining the maximum benefits for low paid members, including members employed by contractors. Early work has been

concentrating on identifying problems and finding solutions. An Agenda for Change Project Director has been appointed. UNISON Staff-Side was involved in the selection process.

At Central Cheshire Primary Care Trust UNISON has been fully involved in the development of Agenda for Change since their Early Implementer Status was announced. A project steering group and 8 working sub-groups (in which UNISON is well represented) have been set up. Time off for staff side reps and, where necessary, the back filling of their posts to enable them to play a full role in AFC, has been agreed.

UNISON Hereford PCT Branch has run a Branch Development Workshop.

North East Ambulance NHS Trusts have set up an Operational Implications Group with representatives from A&E, PTS (Patient Transport Services) and NHS Direct. UNISON has also achieved full-time release for a Lead to work on Agenda for Change.

At City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Trust the Staff-Side lead is UNISON's Branch Secretary and UNISON is well represented on matching panels and all committees.

At West Kent Community the Invicta Branch has asked their Human Resource Department to provide up-to-date-job descriptions to ensure that the matching and job-evaluation process reflect current duties and responsibilities.

UNISON Branches have been active in communicating to its members. Invicta Branch has also set up its own information line. Sunderland and Wearside are starting it's own branch newsletter dedicated to Agenda for Change.

At Avon & Wiltshire a Project Manager has been appointed. UNISON was involved in the interviews on behalf of staff-side. Staff side has representatives in all the sub-groups of the project including Job Evaluation, Knowledge and Skills Framework, Communications and Terms & Conditions. UNISON is also well represented on job evaluation matching panels. UNISON has requested on behalf of staff-side a meeting with Human Resources to ensure that Staff-Side reps be given sufficient time off to meet the demands of Agenda for Change.

UNISON needs to ensure that staff side and members are fully involved in the implementation process over all 12 sites. It is important that UNISON and other unions receive their share of the £80,000 that has been provided to each Early Implementer sites to aid implementation of AFC. Representatives also feel that it is important that the various sites learn from each other's examples of best practice.

Job Evaluation:

The National Job Evaluation Working Party (JEWP), of which UNISON is a part, will continue to provide support to Early Implementer Sites. Support will include:

Extended Awareness Job Evaluation Training: Two training sessions of the Extended Awareness Job Evaluation Training Package are being delivered to management and Staff Side representatives at every Early Implementer site.

Job Matching Training: This training will be delivered by the JEWP to those people participating in job matching panels. The course lasts three days, and is being delivered at a number of locations across the country during April and May. Early Implementer sites will be running between 4-6 matching panels that must be evenly balanced between management and Trade Union representatives. No Early Implementer Site should start the job matching process whilst the trade unions are conducting their balloting process.

Local Evaluator Training: This training will be delivered by the JEWP to those people participating on local evaluation panels. Courses will last four days, and are being delivered at a number of locations across the country during May and June. Those local Evaluators trained in matching will not have to complete the first day of the course.

Early Implementers



Before starting the matching process, each EI site will have to conduct a mapping exercise of its organisation to identify all current posts, grades, existing protection arrangements where applicable, as well as an audit of terms and conditions. Once all posts within the organisation have been matched against the national profiles, the remaining posts will be subject to the local evaluation process.

All matching and local evaluation will be conducted using the national computerised job evaluation package. This package has been set up to allow equalities monitoring on the impact on gender and race.

UNISON nationally would like feedback on the training you are getting. Is it too short, or is it too long? Are there enough places on the training courses? Are they providing you with the knowledge and skills that you need? Please let us know your views via your Branch Secretary.

Organising in the workplace:

As well as measuring the success of the EI process UNISON needs to strengthen branch organisation, by recruiting and training more stewards. The matching and local evaluation processes mean that it will be in members' interests to ensure that we have stewards in all departments to advise on completing Job Analysis Questionnaires and assimilation issues. More stewards means a stronger more representative union. It also means more people who can support each other and share the workload. UNISON's National and Regional Branch Development Teams will be working with Early Implementers to help with this process. UNISON has also identified designated Regional and National Officer time for specific work on EIs.

If you would like to be a steward contact your local UNISON Branch Secretary, your Regional Office or UNISONdirect on 0845 355 0845

If you are not a UNISON member join us today. You will only be consulted on the proposals and supported through the process if you are a union member. Make your voice heard by joining UNISON and get a vote in the national ballots. Applications forms are available from local stewards, from UNISONdirect on 0845 355 0845 or the web www.unison.org.uk