



NEWSLETTER 16

10 July 2008

For local government branches in England, Wales and Northern Ireland only

(Scotland – for information)

One last push for 16 and 17 July

We need to make sure the local government employers hear our message loud and clear during the strike action taking place on 16 and 17 July – fair pay now!

A huge turnout for the strike will create the maximum impact, putting pressure on the employers to return to the negotiating table with an improvement on their insulting 2.45% pay offer – the equivalent of a pay cut for workers already struggling to keep up price rises on essential goods.

In addition to pickets on the days of the strike, branches have been busy organising high profile events in their local areas to draw attention to the dispute and explain our reasons for taking this action. Just a few examples of local events being organised are:-

- Nottingham local government branch have organised a march and rally for 16 July, with speakers from UNISON and other trade unions.
- A major rally for local government members in Newcastle is being co-ordinated by Northern Region, with local Labour politicians sympathetic to the action attending as speakers.

- Large-scale pickets and rallies have been organised in all the main employee centres in Northern Ireland
- In Bristol a rally on day one of the strike will be followed by a “picnic in the park” for members on day two.
- In Torbay members are busy organising a beach party to attract attention to the strike.
- In York, a march and rally will be accompanied by live music, with local press and media also invited.

If your branch needs any support or assistance in organising events around the strike action, get in touch with your regional office.

How to plan your strike days

To get the maximum impact during the strike action branches need to plan their activities for 16 and 17 July. Here are a few tips for preparing your branch for the strike:

Make a list - A good starting point is to make a list of all the workplaces and all employers covered by the dispute in your branch.

Get people together - Stewards for each workplace/employer should hold a meeting with branch officers to discuss the arrangements for the day. You should discuss and decide rotas for the picket line and supplies of publicity materials such as armbands and placards.

Talk to your regional officer – To co-ordinate activity. It’s important your regional officer is told what your plans are. So get in touch!

Work with other unions - Members of Unite are also taking action on the same days as UNISON. It is important to work with them at local level to ensure the maximum impact of the strike. Branches are encouraged to set up joint trade union strike committees, to co-ordinate picketing arrangements and other activities so that each union can play to their maximum strength. Keep GMB members on board too.

Get the public on board - Branches will need to think through a publicity strategy aimed at getting the message across to service users and the public at large. Campaign materials aimed at the public are available for order. (Stock number 2704).

Prime the press - Consideration needs to be given to a press strategy for the strike days. It is likely that the local press will be very interested in this story and it represents an ideal opportunity to get our point of view across to the wider public. Your region will be able to help you make plans to deal with the press and should have a regional press strategy which your branch can use.

For more information on how to prepare for the strike day click on this link:
<http://www.unison.org.uk/paymatters/action.asp>

Send your message of support

You can add a message of support for the strike action from your part of the country to a special Google Map of the UK. To find out more, click here:
<http://www.unison.org.uk/paymatters/map.asp>

To find out more about how to show your support for UNISON's action online, go to the interactive webpage here: <http://www.unison.org.uk/paymatters/googleearth.asp>

Got a question about the strike action?

Do you have a question about the strike action on 16 and 17 July? If so, our dedicated strike team will be able to help. You can get in touch by phone or e-mail on 0207 551 1661 or njcpay2008@unison.co.uk

For enquiries specifically relating to your local area, you can also get in touch with your Regional Officer. If you do not have their contact details, ring the number above and we will get the details for you.

Recruit and organise!

This is a golden opportunity for branches to involve non-members and get them to join in our campaign on pay. A special strike recruitment leaflet is available as a stock item (stock no 2705) or you can download it here: <http://www.unison.org.uk/file/B4101.pdf>

Make sure you use the pay campaign as the basis for recruiting non-members.