

INDEPENDENT CARE HOMES NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the UNISON Independent Care Homes Newsletter for October - December 2011.

Thanks to those of you who have contacted us with information regarding pay and conditions in their Care Home last June. Unfortunately, the information is still patchy and we need more feedback!

Since our last newsletter, the situation of Southern Cross homes has hit the headlines and people are now being taken over by new operators. Many people working in these homes have become UNISON members in the last 3 months. Other homes have also been threatened with closure, such as Galliagh House in Enniskillen. These are distressing times for residents and staff!

Please get in touch with your local rep if you are in a home that is being transferred or faces closure! You can ring us on **02890270190** (Belfast regional office) or on **08453550845** (UNISON Direct) for contact details of your branch representatives.

THE SOUTHERN CROSS CRISIS

After months of rumours and stress for both staff and residents all the Southern Cross homes have now been allocated to new providers.

UNISON had been in contact with its members in the 25 homes affected in Northern Ireland and demanded protection of residents and workers alike from the Health Service. UNISON has held a series of meeting with the department of Health, the Health and Social Care Board and with relevant MLAs in pursuit of this goal.

Early reassurances from management that staff in Northern Ireland would not be affected, and that the homes would simply be transferred to the owners did not seem particularly "reassuring" given that most owners were not health care providers. However, health care providers have now been identified and the transfers are agreed. While some are well known groups, others seem to have been created for the purpose of the takeover and future developments will have to be monitored closely.

Information about the transfers is available on the Health and Social Care Board website www.hscboard.hscni.net/ (under 'Southern Cross' on the right hand side);

9 of the homes are taken over by [Four Season Healthcare](#)

8 by [Orchard Care Home](#)

4 by [HC-One care homes](#) (Part of the Court Cavendish group)

3 by [Country Wide](#) (sister company of Maria Mallaband Care Group)

And 2 by Zest Care Homes.



In our Southern Cross bulletin this summer, we reminded our members not to agree to any change in their terms and conditions prior to any transfer. Under TUPE (The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) employees of the previous owner, including work permit holders, should become employees of the new employer on the same terms and conditions; continuity of service and any other rights should all be preserved. However, all our experience of transfers confirms that you need a strong union to deliver these rights!

Now that transfers are put in place it is important that you get in touch with your local representative if you haven't already done so, and make sure UNISON know what is happening in your home! (See contact details above)

Care Home e-Newsletter UNISON is trying to cut down on paper use and will be sending the newsletter electronically to all members with an email address from the next issue. If you would prefer to receive a hard copy or would like several copies to pass on to your colleagues, please email n.donnely@unison.co.uk. We are always looking for volunteers to distribute the newsletter and would be delighted to have a few more people on board!

YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK

We are organising a seminar on **Your Rights at Work for staff in the Private / Independent Care Sector** in November.

This workshop will explore the rights of staff in care homes including terms and conditions, employment rights, pensions, leave entitlement, training, protection against bullying and harassment. This session is open to members and non members. It will be delivered by Fidelma Carolan & Brian Ferguson, UNISON.

Saturday 26th November

UNISON, Belfast.

10.00 to 13.00

followed by lunch

To register contact Nathalie (n.donnely@unison.co.uk) or Fidelma (f.carolan@unison.co.uk)

Join UNISON

We need UNISON members to urge as many of their colleagues as possible who are not trade union members, to join UNISON. The more members in UNISON, the stronger you are in your workplace.

JOIN ONLINE on www.unison.org.uk or ring Membership on 02890270190.



Private care sector salary survey

Here are some provisional results for our survey on the Terms and Conditions in the Private Care Sector in Northern Ireland.

Average salary for **Care Assistants:**
£6.17 an hour

(Ranging from £5.93 to £7.03 In Mercy Care Homes in Newry / Warrenpoint – where UNISON have a recognition agreement)

Senior Care Assistant:

£6.96 an hour (From £5.93 to £8.43 in Faith House in South Belfast)

Nurses:

£10.79 (from £9.10 to 11.84 in Four Season homes)

This is based on a limited sample and to have significant results, we still need more people to send us this information! (It will be kept anonymous)

So, if you haven't already done so, please text Nathalie Donnelly on 07554433958/ email n.donnelly@unison.co.uk or send the slip below Freepost to, UNISON Freepost RRJU-UGBC-ZKSU, N Donnelly, Galway House, 165 York Street, Belfast BT15 1AL.

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS IN THE INDEPENDENT CARE SECTOR

Name of Care Home: _____

Town: _____

Job title: _____

Salary / Hourly Rate: _____

Overall do you feel your workplace is a good place to work?

5- Very good 4- Good 3- Average
2- Bad 1- Very bad.

Overall do you feel your workplace is a good home for residents?

5- Very good 4- Good 3- Average
2- Bad 1- Very bad.

Any other comment: _____

Immigration update – legal challenge on the income requirement for settlement applications

The new immigration rules that were introduced on the 6th April have affected some of our members who came in on work permits in 2006/2007 and have not yet obtained their residency. An income requirement of £7.02 an hour was introduced for settlement applications.

Senior Care Assistants in the Private Care Sector (usually paid under this rate) would be refused settlement on this basis. Some people have had to look for a new employer paying the required rate, therefore facing a gap in their 5 years qualifying period. These two scenarios have been successfully challenged in court by UNISON and JCWI in England. Kanlungan, the association of Filipino organisation in the UK are also taking a Judicial Review which, if successful, would bring resolution for anyone in this situation.

To date, there has been no case brought up locally. If anyone here is potentially affected by the new settlement rule **PLEASE CONTACT UNISON**

Contact: Nathalie n.donnelly@unison.co.uk, 07554433958.

Other courses coming up in UNISON

Advocacy for People with Dementia

Mon 5th Dec 10am – 4pm

The purpose of dementia advocacy is to assist and support older people with dementia and memory impairments to articulate, exercise and defend their rights and to fully participate in both the minor and major decisions affecting their lives. It will be delivered by Marian Cinnamon, Alzheimers Society

Healthier Food and Special Diets

Tues 8th Nov 9.30am – 4pm, Belfast

This offers a level 2 CIEH qualification for catering staff in schools, hospitals or residential settings.

It will cover an understanding of nutrition principles and terminology, the requirements of a balanced diet and its positive effect on health, Identify differing needs, allergies and food intolerances. It will delivered by Gail Dewar, LG Training.

To apply for courses or check out our programme visit www.ulearnni.org or contact Fidelma

f.carolan@unison.co.uk ; 028 90270190



UNISON NI Race Group

UNISON BME and Migrant Worker members meet regularly as part of the Race Group. Our next meeting is **Thursday 1st December** at 4.00PM, UNISON office.



Join us on **FACEBOOK:** UNISON NI Migrant Workers' page

Immigration advice – every first Friday of the month. Call 02890270190 / or email

n.donnelly@unison.co.uk appointments (short query) 9.45; (normal query)10.00; 10.45 and 11.30.

Free phone immigration helpline: UNISON Direct 0845355845