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### Agency Workers' Directive

New legislation has come into operation on 5 December 2011 giving agency workers new rights.

If you are an agency worker you are now entitled to the same pay and basic working conditions as if you had been recruited directly. Some rights apply automatically from your first day of work; others only apply after 12 weeks of continuous service.

Make sure that you know your rights and that the new legislation is applied to you... Contact UNISON!

### **Immigration Update Workshop**

There have been many changes introduced by the Home Office in the last year that have affected people who don't have permanent residency.

We have mentioned the issue of the £7.02 salary requirement for settlement in previous newsletters. UNISON are still involved in legal challenges over this rule. More recently, nurses are being asked to show that their salary is above £ 20 710 a year. Several nurses due to settle in the next few months have contacted our immigration advice clinic because their annual salary is below that figure. More detailed documents are also now required from employers; job descriptions must be included; rates are due to increase again...

Given the serious concerns that recent changes have brought, we would like to invite you to an

**Immigration Update Workshop**  
**Thursday 01st March**  
**6.00 to 8.00PM**  
 UNISON, Galway House, 165 York Street, Belfast BT15 1AH

The seminar will give you an update on immigration changes introduced in the last year. It will allow you to get further information if there are discrepancies between your salary and the figure set by the Home Office.

There will also be an opportunity to access one to one advice; meet other migrant workers affected by the same immigration issues, and look at possible campaigns.

**Patrick Yu (Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities)** – overview of recent immigration changes and legal challenges;

**Nathalie Donnelly (UNISON)** – information for nurses working in Four Season healthcare who are about to apply for settlement

**Lumturi Podrimaj (Belfast Migrant Centre)** - immigration advice

Please come along to the seminar and pass the word around. Anyone who is not a UNISON member is welcome to come along and join on the day. (RSVP [n.donnelly@unison.co.uk](mailto:n.donnelly@unison.co.uk))

### **UNISON BLACK MEMBERS CONFERENCE**

10 delegates from Northern Ireland made their way to Brighton for the Black Members Conference 2012. Our group had submitted a motion asking for access to legal representation for members whose cases present an immigration dimension. Unfortunately our motion was rejected by the standing orders committee (SOC). We therefore went to Brighton eager to link with other groups and make some progress towards putting that motion back on the agenda. There were many links made and Flora Alfante from Armagh – Dungannon and Stephen Asibey (South and East) were able to meet with the SOC as well as with UNISON president, Eleanor Smyth to discuss the issue.

Debates and contribution during the conference centred on racism and discrimination. Stephen Lawrence's father came to address the conference on the recent conviction of some of his son's killers. It took 19 years of campaigning for the family to see some form of justice for the racist murder of their son. This was an emotional time for everyone at conference.

Stop and Search, youth unemployment and poverty were all discussed as they affect black members disproportionately throughout the UK. Our delegates contributed to debates on racist attacks, English language and the recognition of qualifications, anti racist training for branches, pensions, etc.

A full report from our delegates will follow shortly and will be sent electronically and put on

[www.unison.co.uk/northernireland](http://www.unison.co.uk/northernireland)



## RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

Fidelma Carolan from UNISON addressed the BME regional group meeting in January to talk about the recognition of qualifications.

The group discussed the difficulties faced by people having to pass the English **IELTS exam**. The NMC has imposed a minimum of 7 (out of 9) on all parts of the IELTS exam to practice as a nurse. Although the required standard can be lower in other counties, it is very unlikely that any amount of campaigning could lead the NMC to lower such requirement. A better way of supporting our members would be to be to facilitate access to a preparation course for the IELTS exam. This however has been tried in the past and very few people took up the opportunity.

If you would be interesting in attending an English class preparing you for the IELTS exam, please email [n.donnelly@unison.co.uk](mailto:n.donnelly@unison.co.uk), subject IELTS before 28<sup>th</sup> March.

Since November it is possible to access the NARIC information from the Department of Employment and Learning. **NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centre)** provides an "International Comparisons" searchable database for migrant workers to have their qualifications compared against the UK equivalent. The information is recognised by all employers in the UK and can be accessed in any of the Department for Employment and Learning's Employment Service offices.

The **UNISON CPD programme** is a tool for those who wants to further their education. It also allows you to build up 90 hours of study for the purpose of registration with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC). If you require specific courses, do not hesitate to get in touch with Fidelma Carolan [f.carolan@unison.co.uk](mailto:f.carolan@unison.co.uk); you can also log on to [www.ulearnni.org](http://www.ulearnni.org) for regular updates on courses and training opportunities available.

## UNISON NI recruitment leaflets for migrant workers

are available from the UNISON office

– please contact 02890270190 if you would like to receive some to pass on to friends and colleagues who are not in a union.

**UNISON - Twój przyjaciel w pracy**



"Nag- join oko ng UNISON para malaman ong aking karapatan bilang mangagawa. My ex-employer wanted to send me back home. If it wasn't for UNISON I would not be here today.

"Wiele osób nie zapisuje się do UNISON ponieważ boją się, że ich pracodawca nie popiera związków zawodowych i że przystąpienie do związków przysporzy im problemów w pracy.

Tak naprawdę, pracodawca nie musi wiedzieć, że jesteś członkiem związków. Poza tym, UNISON zapewni ci wsparcie prawne i bezpieczeństwo jeśli pojawią się jakieś problemy."

**Trade unions empower working people by giving them a voice and offering essential support in the workplace. Everyone has a right to join a union. It is illegal for your employer to dismiss you or intimidate you for being a member of a trade union!**

## REMINDER: Registration with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) deadline for Care Assistants coming up...

All Social care workers in adult residential or nursing homes settings need to have submitted their application for registration with the NISCC by the 31st March 2012.

For more information or to download an application see: <http://niscc.info/home-1.aspx>

## NEXT RACE / BME Regional Group MEETING

THURSDAY  
29<sup>th</sup> MARCH  
@ 4PM

UNISON GALWAY  
HOUSE  
165 YORK STREET

## Followed by a Film Night @ 6.30, Screening:



and Libya about the control of immigration from Africa.

"Come un uomo sulla terra" (Like a man on earth) a film on the violence suffered by asylum seekers caught in the agreements between Italy



Our Immigration Advice Clinic is still operating every first Friday of the month. Get face-to-face advice with an Immigration Solicitor who can look through your papers, check your application before you submit it, or point you in the right direction..

Email Nathalie [n.donnelly@unison.co.uk](mailto:n.donnelly@unison.co.uk), text 07554433958 or phone 02890270190 to book an appointment. Over 20 families who visited the clinic last year obtained settlement.

USEFUL CONTACTS: UNISON Direct 08453550845 (incl. access to free Immigration advice phone line) UNISON Office -02890 270190 (Belfast); 02871 365600 (Derry); Contact the office for contact details of your local UNISON branch and representatives.

UNISON [www.unison.org.uk/northernireland](http://www.unison.org.uk/northernireland); Facebook: UNISON NI Migrant workers page