

MANCUNION

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**MANCHESTER
AGREEMENT
UNVEILED**



**MAY '08
ISSUE**

In the first instance, if you have a work problem or query then get in touch with your local UNISON steward or workplace representative. Otherwise, telephone the Branch Office directly on the number below.

UNISON Manchester, 3-5 St John Street, Manchester M3 4DN
Tel: 0161 254 7500
Fax: 0161 254 7515
Web: www.unisonmanchester.org

If you have a membership query, please contact the Branch on the number above or you can email at this address:
branch@unisonmanchester.org

UNISON Manchester is organised by the Branch Executive Committee and is supported by skilled staff – locally, regionally and nationally. The UNISON Manchester Branch Officers are listed below.

Branch Chair: Noel Bayley

Vice Branch Chairs: Hartley Hanley & Kate Russell

Vice Presidents: Rodney Lund & Jane Slater

Branch Secretary: Tony Caffery

Assistant Branch Secretaries: Wendy Allison, Pete Banks, Cath Donellan, Jim Mackrell, Pat McDonagh, Jane Slater, Brian Stangoe, & Rena Wood.

Branch Treasurer: Bob Oram

Communications Officer: Rod Fawcett

Mancunion Editor: Noel Bayley

Education Officer: Peter Wilkinson

Equalities Officer: Wendy Allison

Health & Safety Officer: Geoff Archibald

International Officer: Isobel McVicar

UNISON/TUC Learner Representative's Lead Officer: Peter Wilkinson

Women's Officer & Welfare Officer: Gwen Colgan

The Branch Executive Committee, the Branch's decision-making body, comprises of stewards from across all the workplaces represented by the branch, plus elected Officers.

All members of UNISON Manchester are encouraged to attend meetings, vote in Branch elections and get involved in our campaigns and activities.

We are always looking for people who feel they can contribute to the work of the Branch and help other members. This could be a regular commitment or you could be a 'mail-box' steward and help pass on UNISON information to members in your workplace.

The Branch provides training courses, advice and support for all our stewards and Officers.

A Message from the Branch Secretary

It has been an eventful couple of months since the last issue of *Mancunion* and the coming months look like being just as busy.

The issue of Pay will understandably loom large over the coming weeks following the decision of UNISON members nationally to reject the employers' final offer of just 2.45% and seek a ballot for strike action.

In Manchester, members voted to reject the offer by a narrow margin. However, the turn-out in the consultative ballot was lower than we would have wanted and it is *crucial*, therefore, that more members use their vote in the forthcoming strike ballot. If we are to take sustained strike action to force the employers to fund a fair pay increase for our members then we need to show them that UNISON members are united.

I would therefore urge all members to cast their vote in the industrial action ballot - please have your say on pay.

On to more local matters, and the Branch was delighted to sign the

AGM view (l-r): Tony Caffery, Pat McDonagh, Wendy Allison, Bob Oram.



'Manchester Agreement' with the Council. The Agreement is explained in more detail on pages 4 and 5, but it is a major step forward in terms of the big issues facing our members.

The Agreement commits the Council to working with the Trade Unions on a number of issues: it will provide for better access to training for all employees, work will be carried out to examine the possibility of introducing a 'Manchester Minimum Wage' to help the lowest paid, and the use of consultants and agency staff

will be fully examined with a view to reducing the enormous amounts of money spent on consultants.

Perhaps the most important feature of the Agreement is a review of the implementation of Job Evaluation. The trade unions have had major

concerns for a while regarding the impact of job evaluation on our members, and we now have the opportunity for a thorough review of implementation.

Members will be kept up to date with progress on these issues.



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City Council and Trade Unions Sign Historic Deal

The Branch has had concerns for some time about how certain aspects of the Job Evaluation Scheme have been implemented.

Branch Officers therefore made representations to Councillors that there needs to be a review of JE implementation so that our concerns can be properly addressed.

Following lengthy discussions with senior Labour Group councillors, this review has now been agreed. Moreover, during these discussions Branch Officers also highlighted a number of other areas of concern.

These talks have gone extremely well, to the extent that we have been able to secure an agreement, known as the Manchester Agreement, which covers a wide number of topics where Officers will work to make progress over the coming few months. As well as including a review of JE, the Manchester Agreement also covers areas such as outsourcing, training, the use of consultants, a



Sir Richard Leese and Tony Caffery with the newly signed Manchester Agreement.

commitment to examine the feasibility of introducing a 'Manchester Minimum Wage' to raise pay levels for the lowest paid, and the drawing up of consultation procedures to ensure that the Trade Unions are fully consulted on all workforce matters.

Branch Secretary Tony Caffery said, "The agreement provides us with a forum for dialogue with the Council on those issues that are important to our members. I've been particularly impressed with the personal commitment of the Leader of the Council, and the commitment of the Labour group, to opening a dialogue with the trade unions. It's important that we work together on issues affecting the Council's workforce.

For UNISON members it's important to know that we've got a Labour Council that will work with the trade unions and listens to the views of employees on matters that affect their working life."

The agreement includes a review of the implementation of JE in Manchester, which has been particularly problematic. There is also a commitment to look at introducing a Manchester Minimum Wage.

"Hopefully we can make some progress on raising wage levels for the lowest paid in Manchester City Council, which is particularly important when you consider that the lowest paid UNISON members earn just £11,500 per year."

THE MANCHESTER AGREEMENT 2008

This agreement is entered into by the Labour Party, the Labour Group and the Council Trade Unions in Manchester. It will be developed further through dialogue between the parties, and through the establishment of a joint liaison forum at which the Group will be represented by the Leader and the Executive Member for Human Resources, the Trade Unions by Branch Secretaries and the Party by an officer of the City Labour Party.

It is the intention of the parties to this agreement that it will be renewed annually from January 2009 onwards.

Priority issues for discussion in 2008 will include:

The use of consultants and agency staff: A joint review will be undertaken on the use of external consultants and agency staff to identify opportunities to reduce the numbers engaged by the Council.

Pay & Grading: The Council is currently implementing the National Agreement on pay and grading. Like any major programme of change this is an extremely challenging process and the need to deliver fair and

equitable outcomes is recognised by all parties. A joint review will be established to review both implementation to date and the work yet to be done. The review group will include Executive Members, Council Officers and Trade Union representatives, and will report back to the Council Trade Unions Liaison Group in June 2008.

Training: The parties believe that a well-trained workforce is essential to good service delivery. Current training and development provision will be jointly reviewed to identify opportunities to improve both effectiveness and equality of access, and in particular to explore options for the further development of the work of Union Learning Representatives.

Minimum Wage: The Labour Group will examine the feasibility of introducing a 'Manchester Minimum Wage' in line with those introduced by the Greater London Authority and some London Borough Councils.

In-House Service Provision: In determining how services can best be provided the Labour Administration in

Manchester will give full and equal consideration to in-house options. When other forms of service delivery are under consideration the Council will consult properly with Trade Unions on all employment related matters. Should a service be outsourced the Council will seek to ensure that the providers of service agree to full Trade Union recognition.

Local Strategic Partnership:

Increasingly Local Strategic Partnerships will play a key role in determining future service delivery models. Proposals will be developed to enable consultation with Trade Unions when these impact on services and the workforce.

School leaver Scheme:

The Labour Group will consider options to improve local recruitment into public sector employment, including a School Leaver Scheme, which would target leavers from Manchester Schools.

Good Employment Relations and Trade Union Consultation:

The Parties agree to develop new protocols for consultation with the Trade Unions on matters affecting the workforce.

Pay – Have Your Say!

Members have recently been consulted via a ballot on whether the national pay offer should be accepted or rejected, and various meetings were held across the City to explain the offer in more detail to members.

Back in January, the trade unions – led by UNISON – submitted a claim of 6% or 50p an hour, whichever is the greater. A pay rise of this proportion would simply allow us to catch up with the real cost of living and match up to other public service workers

and the rest of the workforce. However, the Employers' final offer of just 2.45% from scale point 7, and an additional increase of £100 on the very lowest scale points 4,5 and 6 comes nowhere near our claim.

Even worse, there are also some 'strings' attached to this offer – they want a review of Green Book terms and conditions and a commitment from the trade unions that we will agree the pay rises for 2009 and 2010 by the end of this year.

UNISON nationally recommending that members reject the offer during the recent consultation exercise. In doing so, however, it was made clear to members that significant

industrial action will be necessary if we are to force the employers back to the negotiating table. UNISON's NJC Committee stated that: "only substantial, all-out strike action, starting with a two-day strike and escalating to further action will bring the employers back to negotiate".

The issue of pay was recently considered by the Branch AGM and that meeting unanimously agreed a motion proposed by the Branch Officers to seek support for industrial action over pay unless employers come back with an acceptable offer.

Nationally, all branches were asked to consult with members on the Employers' offer and, in line with national advice, we did this in Manchester by a consultative ballot. Members in Manchester voted narrowly to reject the offer and seek an industrial action ballot. This position was mirrored across the country, with UNISON members voting to reject the employers offer.

What Happens Next?

As a result of the employers offer being rejected, a national ballot for strike action will now take place. It is likely that this action will take the form of an initial two days of all-out strike action, with further strike action on an escalating basis until the employers come back with an acceptable offer.

The Branch believes that it is important that as many mem-

Manchester UNISON believes that the pay offer:

- **DOES NOT compensate for the increase in the cost of living**
- **DOES NOT deal with the gap between your pay and average earnings across the UK**
- **DOES NOT deal with the gap between your pay and the pay of other workers in the public sector**

It is now up to members to decide whether to accept or reject the offer. UNISON believes you deserve more than the miserly amount on offer. The pay consultation is your chance to have your say – it is important that all members use their vote so that any decision is as representative of the views of members as possible.

bers as possible use their vote in the forthcoming strike ballot so that any decision taken is as representative of the views of members as possible.

Further meetings will be held across the City, and further publicity material will be issued to keep members informed on this important issue.

Whilst the offer does improve on the Government's 2% public pay policy – it still falls well short of the real cost of living increases that members face

• The Consumer Price Index (not the Retail Price Index) has been used by the employers to measure inflation when making the offer - but the CPI excludes housing and council tax costs. RPI is more accurate and used to negotiate private sector pay

• The employers offer is even below the current CPI of 2.5%

• Workers on the lowest points in the NHS, the police, probation and higher education all get paid more

• The government says it wants 3-year deals consistent with 2% inflation, to “keep inflation low” - but it's high fuel prices and increased housing costs that cause rising inflation!

• In the private sector, pay rises averaged 3.7% in the year to October 2007 and are predicted to be between 3.5% and 4.5% in 2008 – and that's not even including the massive bonuses some companies pay out

• The cost of living continues to rise, with a rate of 4.3% RPI throughout 2007, and it's forecast to be at least 3% in 2008

Michael John Hall

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Mike Hall, Senior UNISON steward in Corporate Technology.

Mike was a member of the Branch Executive Committee, and he was a dedicated and hard-working steward who

always represented his members to the best of his ability. Mike was just 38. He leaves a wife and two young children.

Speaking after the news of Mike's death Tony Caffery, Branch Secretary, said: “We are all deeply saddened to hear of Mike's passing.

“Mike was an extremely good steward, who was committed to UNISON and its members. He worked tirelessly on behalf of the

members he represented in Corporate Technology and he will be sadly missed. Mike was one of the nicest, most genuine people you could ever wish to meet and all of his colleagues and friends at UNISON will remember him fondly. We have passed on our deepest condolences to Mike's family.”

**Michael John Hall ~
Socialist and Trade
Unionist**

Recruitment

It goes without saying that the more members we have the stronger we are at all levels, from workplaces right up to national bodies. However, many new employees in workplaces aren't aware of unions or the benefits of membership, such as the fact that union members are only half as likely to be sacked as non-members, or the fact that members are less likely to be injured at work and win more compensation if they are injured. In fact non-members cite the main reason for not joining as the fact that they were never asked. Because of the turnover of members, this branch needs to recruit around 500 people each year just to stand still. However nationally the union is seeking to

grow by 3% each year - meaning that we need to recruit 800 new members in total this year in order to meet this target.

The Branch has already implemented a 'Recruit a Friend' scheme, and recruitment has increased over the last two months as a result. You will already have received a copy of the 'Recruit a Friend' membership form. If you have a colleague or friend who is not in UNISON then please use the form - in fact you can recruit as many people as you like and you will get a £5 voucher for each recruit.

We are also starting a mapping exercise, looking at how many members and non-members there are in each workplace. This is to help us to build a

picture of where our strengths and weaknesses are so that we can target recruitment activities to the areas we need to reach the most. If you have a workplace steward they will be carrying out this work. If you don't then please consider doing this yourself - the Branch Officers will help you. And of course once you find out who the non-members are you can recruit them yourself and earn some money in the process.

If you are interested in becoming a workplace contact or helping us with workplace mapping please contact Wendy Allison at the Branch on 0161 254 7500 or by email on w.allison@manchester.gov.uk And of course you can contact the Branch for more membership forms.

YOUR RIGHT TO CLAIM EQUAL PAY...

Members will be aware that the City Council is rolling out its new pay structure as all posts in each department are evaluated.

One of the consequences of this change is that some staff who had previously received lower rates of pay than other staff are now paid within the same grade or a higher grade. This change in the hierarchy of staff pay could mean that you have a claim against the Council under the Equal Pay Act 1970. Under this law you could be entitled to a backdated claim of up to

six years of the difference in salary between you and your previously higher paid comparator, who must be of the opposite sex.

There is a strict statutory time limit to lodge a grievance against your employer. It is within six months, less one day, of the date when your contract was varied. Unlike some other claims the Employment Tribunal is unable to grant an extension of time if your claim is lodged outside the strict time limits.

If you feel you have a claim and you want UNISON to

act on your behalf please return the Enquiry Form, either electronically to nwequalpayunit@unison.co.uk or in paper format to:

Equal Pay Unit
UNISON Regional Office
Arena Point
1 Hunts Bank
Manchester M3 1UN
(Tel: 0161 661 6740)

If you believe that you have a potential claim and that the deadline of six months less one day for making a claim is running out of time, please contact the UNISON Equal Pay Unit as a matter of urgency.

EQUAL PAY CLAIM MEMBER DETAILS

To further your Equal Pay Claim, we need to know the following information.
We would be obliged if you would fill in the details where possible.
Please return your completed form(s) to UNISON at the address on previous page.

1. UNISON Membership No.

2. Title: Mr / Mrs / Miss/ Ms (please circle)

3. Surname

4. Forenames

5. Address and Postcode

.....

.....

6. Telephone Number: Home

Mobile

7. Job Title

8. Workplace

9. Date of change of contract

10. Grade before contract changed

11. Grade after contract changed

Signed

Date

HOPE - NOT HATE EVENT



Hope Not Hate is an anti-British National Party campaign supported by UNISON, the *Daily Mirror* and a wide range of other trade unions and organisations. It campaigns against the BNP by exposing it as a racist and extremist political grouping. The BNP is becoming a household name. In the process it is trying to appear more moderate and respectable. But it is not. Scratch the surface and you find the same old racist organisation it always was. It is run by hardline nazis who believe that the Holocaust did not happen. Its rule book remains firmly entrenched in the principles of racial superiority and the banning of racial integration. The Hope Not Hate tourbus visited Albert Square at the end of April; members of the public were treated to a truly cosmopolitan food festival, something the BNP would probably ban on the basis it was 'unBritish.'

Schools' Job Evaluation

Because of developments on equal pay, the Council is required to introduce a fair and equitable system of determining grades for all staff in schools. All posts must then be subject to Job Evaluation.

New Job Descriptions and Job Evaluation has been completed for kitchen staff, lunchtime organisers, cleaners and now Teaching Assistants. Other categories of staff including bursars and administrative staff, technicians and caretakers will be completed next.

Teaching Assistants: Any Teaching Assistant who believes they have been assimilated into the wrong level of post should inform the branch office. UNISON has agreed that individual cases will be examined jointly with the Council's Management Support Advisors. Following this process members still have the option of appealing to their governing body and will be represented by UNISON.

Where you believe you have a case you need to provide the following information:-

- * your name
- * the name of your school

* details of which grade you have been assimilated to
* details on your case and why you believe you are on the wrong grade.

Please forward this information to the Branch Office, by post or email to i.short@manchester.gov.uk or by fax on 0161 - 254 7515.

Caretakers: The next group of staff to be assimilated on to new grades will be the Caretakers. It is expected that this will be done in the coming weeks. If you are not satisfied with the grade you are assimilated into the advice is the same as for Teaching Assistants.

Technicians & Administrative Staff:

There has been no discussion on new standardised job descriptions. When we have new proposals UNISON will hold meetings across the city to consult all members affected.

In conclusion this is an extremely difficult time for many of our members in schools. We are trying to respond to all queries as quickly as possible. We will continue to keep members informed. If you are not receiving UNISON information in your school we would be grateful if you could let us know so that we can seek to rectify the situation. **Brian Stangoe**

Ofsted members strike over pay

Manchester UNISON members employed by Ofsted walked out on Friday 16 May, as part of a national dispute over pay.

The strike action was in protest against the imposition of a divisive new pay structure, which will mean cuts for many workers, and a below-inflation pay offer – pushed through by Ofsted despite being overwhelmingly rejected by members of UNISON and PCS.

"This small but significant group of staff works hard to protect the safety of some of the most vulnerable children in our society," said UNISON Assistant Branch Secretary Jim Mackrell, describing the treatment meted out by Ofsted as "appalling".

"They are piling on the work but forcing three-year pay freezes onto some staff." This when inflation is running at more than 4% and even the government's preferred measure jumped to 3% this week. "Our members are demanding a fair deal to cope with the spiralling costs of essentials such as fuel, food and housing," he said.

"This strike sends a clear message to Ofsted that we are prepared to take action in our fight for fair pay. What we need now are some serious proposals to avert further action."

Following the strike action, a wave of action short of strike will follow. Members will work their contracted hours only from Monday until the end of the month, along with a ban on overtime.

