

# BRANCH OFFICIALS BULLETIN

COMMUNICATION  
WORKERS UNION

Weekly information from the Communication Workers Union

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## GENERAL

### 41

#### **Liaison Meetings With CWU Group MPs**

Meetings up to the Summer Recess have now been arranged with CWU supported MPs and, for your information, I list below the dates of the meetings and those nominated to attend:

#### **14 March**

Peter Donaghy, Graham Colk, Andy Kerr and 1 representative from Scotland

#### **9 May**

Steve Fishwick, Graham Colk, John Holmes and 1 representative from Wales

#### **11 July**

PFMC members to be nominated and 1 representative from the North East Region.

Billy Hayes

General Secretary

### 42

#### **Be A Candidate At The Next General Election And European Elections**

Labour has a long track record on equality issues. We have the highest number of women and ethnic minority members in the UK Parliament than all the other political parties put together. Labour first introduced positive action back in 1997, and since that time has continued to use positive action in selection procedures at a parliamentary, devolved and local government level. We are very proud of what we have achieved so far – but we know there is more to do to ensure the country's governance structures truly represent the communities they serve, not only in terms of women and ethnic minorities but in terms of age, class, sexuality, disability and religion.

From January 2006, therefore, any member who has been a party member for at least a year, can apply to the Labour Party's National Parliamentary Panel (NPP) to stand as a candidate for Westminster and European Parliamentary seats. As an existing member you are automatically on the panel upon return of your completed application form.

New application packs will be issued to you in the New Year to the address supplied with your previous application, please contact David Wood with any amendments to your contact details. For inclusion on the panel completed application forms must be returned to: David Wood, The Labour Party, Eldon House, Regent Centre, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE3 3PW

Application packs will also be available from January from the members' area of the website [www.labour.org.uk](http://www.labour.org.uk) or upon request from David Wood, who is contactable on the following: Email [David\\_Wood@new.labour.org.uk](mailto:David_Wood@new.labour.org.uk) Telephone 0191 246 5219 Fax: 0191 246 5136

If you were a trade union panellist for the general election 2005, please note you will be a Labour Party panel member until we are advised otherwise by your trade union.

Any enquiries in respect of this paragraph should be addressed to the General Secretary's Office.

Billy Hayes

General Secretary

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

### 43

#### **Harassment Complaints Database – Union Policy**

Branches are again reminded of the need to fill in the Harassment Complaints Database (HCD) Forms, as illustrated in LTB 450/04.

Please ensure that all reps have a copy of LTB 450/04 as it contains useful guidance as well as the form itself. Branches may also find LTB 289/04 useful which contains information on the Harassment Helpline and the Harassment Advice Network as well as the HCD. The completion of the HCD forms is part of our agreement with the Equal Opportunities Commission and is, therefore, CWU policy. (The full agreement can be found in LTB 292/04) The Equal Opportunities Commission has raised concerns with us regarding the completion rate, which we need to address, otherwise we will fall foul of the agreement. Therefore, please ensure that any complaint raised with branch reps by members that involves possible Harassment should be notified to HQ via these forms.

We appreciate that this will add to an already busy work schedule for those reps that have the responsibility for completing them, but there is no scope for non-compliance. We must accept that this will become an accepted culture in terms of harassment reporting. The data that will come through to HQ will be vital in enabling us to analyse and identify any obvious patterns where problems exist. We extend our appreciation to all those branches already complying with the policy and look forward to the co-operation of all Branches in this matter. Any enquiries regarding this paragraph please contact Michèle Emerson at CWU HQ.

## TELECOMS

### 44

#### **Accenture Hr Services – Equal Pay Audit Completed**

The Union has completed its discussions with Accenture HR Services and Accenture Learning following the final detailed investigation into the nine outstanding cases. This now closes the files on Equal Pay in these companies, and which is now a business as usual monitoring process. Attached for the information of Branches is a spreadsheet identifying the functions in question, the number of posts affected and the split by gender. Where there is a difference between numbers in the columns headed 'Affected' and 'Further Investigation', this is due to material factors and they were removed from 'Investigation'. This was exclusively due to higher contractual conditions which were afforded by the protection of TUPE and is accepted by Employment Tribunals. Brian Healy, Assistant Secretary

### 45

#### **Telewest: Job Move – Home To Work Allowance**

Branches may wish to be made aware of the attached allowance which may be claimed when there are increased costs to a new work location as required by the company, and where home relocation is not appropriate. This policy was determined in 2004 and whereas increased costs by public transport are those that are originally incurred at time of relocation, the car mileage rates are fixed and have been for nearly two years. The company has been asked to considering reviewing the rates in the light of increasing costs of private vehicle usage. Brian Healy, Assistant Secretary

### 46

#### **One IT – Movement Of People Into ICT**

As the movement of staff onto future and higher revenue work has stalled with regard to the overall targets cleared with the BT Board, One IT management has tasked line managers to review and enter into discussions with One IT personnel currently not on ICT programmes. There is a shortfall of approximately 550 people and, in the main, the personnel affected will be Connect represented grades. Attached for the information of Branches is a copy of the internal briefing that has been released. Brian Healy, Assistant Secretary

### 47

#### **Telewest – Employee Handbook**

Attached for the information of Branches is a revised Telewest

Employee Handbook, which is an updated version to that previously circulated to Branches.

Most of the changes are presentational but there is at least one element of change which is an adverse discretionary term and condition of employment. The following is a brief report on the main changes.

1. Eligibility to work in the UK: Whilst deleting the examples of sources of evidence of the eligibility to work in the UK, it still requires the prospective employee to produce documented evidence.
2. Disturbance Allowance: This has been renamed as the Job Move Home to Work Allowance. There are no material changes to the policy, however the Union has made representations for a review of the reimbursement of private vehicle rates, as the level of compensation was set two years ago.
3. Annual Bonus Scheme: The scheme rules have been tightened up and to secure bonus, an employee would have to be engaged by that company at the opening up of the annual year period and still be in employment at the time that the bonus was due to be paid.
4. Short Term Disability Allowance: This has been renamed as the Extended Company Sick Pay, however it is discretionary and in the revised handbook would appear to have been reduced from 15 to 13 weeks. This has also been taken up with the company, as it would be expected that at least some consultation would take place through the TIME forum or separately and independently with the union; neither would appear to have taken place.

Brian Healy, Assistant Secretary

#### **48**

### **Telewest – Changes To Last Drop And Access Leave Allocation**

Management has given notice that they intend to introduce a requirement to book or use leave by quarters. This will be introduced at the start of the New Year with a rolling 13 month annual leave book. The new policy is contained within the attachment. Management have not presented any evidence to demonstrate that there has been a problem with taking leave. There has however been a problem with obtaining permission to take leave. Nationally, the Union's initial representation has been to seek evidence of the nature of the problem, as well as making comments on where the policy can be improved.

In particular the exemptions such as where there is a special known family event, additional leave around births or adoptions, weddings, special events which are in other parts of the world or in the event of bereavements.

The Union has asked questions around the outcomes when the leave books close because of high volumes, then there must be cognisance of this and clear guidance issued so that all employees are treated in a transparent and consistent manner. Employees should not then be penalised if they find the slots closed. The company has agreed to discuss this in January. Brian Healy, Assistant Secretary

#### **49**

### **BT Wholesale: INM – Attendance Patterns**

A number of Branches raised queries as to whether the Union nationally, as part of the discussions on INM attendance patterns or separately, had agreed or indicated acceptance to the removal of scheduled overtime, as being briefed by local site managers. This, together with reports of inflexibility by local line management in discussing changes, was raised with national management.

Attached for the information of Branches is the national management response and an acceptance that not only was it not the case the Union had agreed such a position but further confusion was created by line management's interpretation of a briefing that was issued. It was agreed that a further attempt would be made by management to clarify and remove any uncertainties and they have since issued a further briefing which is attached. It is an attempt to explain further to line management and the workforce where national management stand with regard to the need to discuss attendance pattern changes and where overtime can be utilised. Brian Healy, Assistant Secretary

#### **50**

### **BT Wholesale – 21CN Resource Issues For Pathfinder In South Wales**

Discussions have taken place over the approach to be taken for the 21CN trials and Pathfinder and in particular the field teams responsible for operating the new network in South Wales.

It has been stated that as it is critical for the company from a commercial perspective, it cannot afford for the trials to fail due to the non-availability of trained resource. Therefore it has committed to training more staff than it is expected to be required as projected

against the vendor's specifications. With regard to the numbers required for:

- MASN
- Metro NODE
- I-Node/Core Node

It will shortly be presenting a formal statement on the training and selection requirements. In response to the Union's concerns it has stated that it is committed to getting members experienced on 21CN equipment as soon as possible after training in order to consolidate the skills learnt.

It is anticipated that the company will also seek agreement on interim arrangements for the Pathfinder trials which may well not be appropriate for roll-out. This will be based on the experience of Pathfinder and which the company is committed to jointly reviewing.

Brian Healy, Assistant Secretary

#### **51**

### **BT Wholesale: ZBB Information Sent To Those In Redeployee Pool**

Attached for the information of Branches are copies of communications sent to managers of those designated in the ZBB redeployment pool. The purpose of the workshops are to explain the role of the redeployee manager and to provide support for redeployees in being placed into suitable substantive posts. These are additional workshops to those that have already taken place and are available for those where the first workshops were not suitable or available.

Brian Healy, Assistant Secretary

#### **52**

### **Telewest – Gifts, Tips And Hospitality Policy**

Following Telewest's successful defence at an Employment Tribunal, the company drew up a clear policy on the issue of gifts and hospitality. In some cases, the policy was presented to staff to read and sign that they clearly understood the policy.

Attached for the information of members and those Branches with members in Telewest is the policy that was issued. In order that there are no further cases arising out of lack of awareness particularly by new recruits, Branches and site representatives may wish to brief members on the policy. Brian Healy, Assistant Secretary

## EVENTS BULLETIN

**Saturday 28 January 2006: CWU Women's Conference.** Will be held at the Library Theatre, Central Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ. Branches are entitled to send two delegates to the Conference. Details of the delegates should be included on the appropriate form which should be completed and returned to Carmel McCudden at Head Office no later than 30 December 2005. For more information contact Carmel McCudden either by post to head office or by email to [cmccudden@cwu.org](mailto:cmccudden@cwu.org)

**Saturday 28 January 2006 – Saturday 4 February inclusive: National Storytelling Week.** Location UK-wide. Over 700 nationwide storytelling events and performances were organised this year for National Storytelling Week in Schools, Arts Centres, Museums, Libraries, Theatres, Book Shops, Storytelling Clubs, Retirement Homes, Pubs, and a London shop window! For more information contact the Society for Storytelling, P.O. Box 344, Reading, RG6 7FG Tel: 0118 935 1381 email: [SfS@fairbruk.demon.co.uk](mailto:SfS@fairbruk.demon.co.uk) or visit [www.sfs.org.uk](http://www.sfs.org.uk)

**Tuesday 31 January 2006: Supporting Family Literacy.** To be held at Education Bradford, Future House, Bolling Road, Bradford BD4 7EB. Many parents and carers struggle to support their children's reading. Family literacy is increasingly recognised as a valuable tool for promoting both literacy skills and positive attitudes to books and reading. For more information contact National Centre for Language and Literacy, The University of Reading, Bulmershe Court, Reading RG6 1HY Tel: +44 (0)118 378 8820 Fax: +44 (0)118 378 6801 Email: [ncll@reading.ac.uk](mailto:ncll@reading.ac.uk)

**Tuesday 31 January 2006: Equality in Employment – Preventing discrimination based on religion or belief.** This one day seminar will be held at the NATFHE Centre, Britannia Street, London WC1. 1.30pm to 4.15pm. Organised by the Institute of Employment Rights. On the 2nd December 2003 the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations came into force. The Regulations are based on the European Framework Directive on Equal treatment in employment. Cost IER Subscriber and members £45.00, Trade Unions £60.00 and commercial £120.00. For more

information contact the IER on 020 7498 6919 or Email [office@ier.org.uk](mailto:office@ier.org.uk)

**Thursday 2 February 2006: Listening to Older Learners.** To be held at London Resource Centre. This conference will use the examples of recent initiatives whereby older learners have commissioned and led their own research into the learning needs of older people in their communities. For more information contact Gurjit Kaur, Gurjit Kaur, Conferences & Courses Office, NIACE, Renaissance House, 20 Princess Road West, Leicester LE1 6TP (email [gurjit.kaur@niace.org.uk](mailto:gurjit.kaur@niace.org.uk)).

**Monday 6 February 2006: Stamping Out Homophobia All Over The World.** 10:00 to 16:30. To be held at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS, UK. Registration costs £25 including documentation and working lunch. As part of LGBT History Month, the TUC is holding a conference to raise union awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans issues at international level. The conference is designed for union leaders, officials and activists. Speakers will include personal testimonies from around the world as well as Foreign Office Human Rights Minister Ian Pearson MP and Education International General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen. For more information contact Pat Brown - [pbrown@tuc.org.uk](mailto:pbrown@tuc.org.uk) or fax: 020 7436 2830 or visit [www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-10922-f0.cfm](http://www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-10922-f0.cfm)

**Wednesday 8 February 2006: Tenants, trade unions, councillors and MPs demand 'Fourth Option for Council Housing'.** Lobby of Parliament – Mass rally at Central Hall, Westminster, 12 noon. National speakers and workshops. Around the country tenants, trade unionists, councillors and MPs are opposing stock transfer, PFI and ALMOs. Along with councils pledged to keep their homes. Further information from Defend Council Housing write to PO Box 33519, London, E2 9WW, email [info@defendcouncilhousing.org.uk](mailto:info@defendcouncilhousing.org.uk) or visit [www.defendcouncilhousing.org.uk](http://www.defendcouncilhousing.org.uk)

**Thursday 9 February 2006: GMB Anti-Racist Party.** 9pm til late. Free entry to GMB members with collection on the night in aid of Tahir Bhatti Asian Earthquake victims. Live band: the Silvertones, DJs: KMT Badabing Disco, and live PAs: Cypha, Royal Priesthood. For more information contact Steve Kelly, [steve.kelly@gmb.org.uk](mailto:steve.kelly@gmb.org.uk)

**Friday 24 February 2006: Working Against Racism – The Role of Trade Unions in Britain.** 10:00 to 04:30. Cost: Free. To be held at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London. WC1B 3LS Despite mission statements, equal opportunities policies, the law, trade union policy and a variety of initiatives over the years racism is endemic in British society and an ever-present factor in the workplace. For more information contact Wilf Sullivan TUC Race Equality Officer [wsullivan@tuc.org.uk](mailto:wsullivan@tuc.org.uk) or Sukhwant Dhaliwal Workomg Lives Research Institute [S.Dhaliwal@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:S.Dhaliwal@londonmet.ac.uk)

**Friday 24 Feb 2006 – Sat, 25 February inclusive: European Trade Union Solidarity Conference with Cuba and Latin America.** To be held at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London (24th) – City Hall, London (25th). Cost £80 for UK delegates. Free places available for non-UK based European delegates. Delegates from across Europe will meet at the conference to share experiences of solidarity work, discuss ideas for solidarity projects on a European level and identify joint initiatives for lobbying. More information is available [www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/conference](http://www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/conference) or by contacting Campaigns Manager, Natasha Hickman on 020 7263 6452, email [campaigns@cuba](mailto:campaigns@cuba)

*If you have anything for the events bulletin page please send your contribution to Marcia Murray, CWU, Communication Department, 150 The Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19 1RX, Tel: 020 8971 7497, Email: [mmurray@cwu.org](mailto:mmurray@cwu.org) Details must arrive nine days before publication and must include a contact phone number, brief summary of the event, email and website address. Listings are free, but inclusion is not guaranteed.*