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GENERAL

113

Two-day Organising Courses

The Communication Workers Union have organised the following Two-day Organising courses:

Tuesday 22nd – Wednesday 23rd April

– Birmingham

Thursday 1st – Friday 2nd May

– CWU HQ

Wednesday 7th – Thursday 8th May

– Bristol

Wednesday 14th – Thursday 15th May

– CWU HQ

Tuesday 20th – Wednesday 21st May

– Stockport

Wednesday 28th – Thursday 29th May

– Newport

This course attracts unpaid special leave. Nominations should be made on the form for education courses, and returned to Alvescot Lodge as soon as possible. Application forms should be addressed to **Trish Lavelle**, Head of Education & Training, CWU Education & Training Centre, Alvescot Lodge, Alvescot, Bampton, Oxon OX18 2PY. Telephone: **01993 843373**; Fax: **01993 840960**; email: **mtodd@cwu.org**

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

114

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 representatives 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 representatives 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 representatives 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 Head Office, 150 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London SW19 1RX.

115

Mandatory Equality & Diversity Training

Branch secretaries are requested to ensure that any person in their branch who has CWU rep responsibilities and has not yet completed their mandatory equality & diversity training are enrolled in the courses that are planned throughout the regions in the forthcoming months. All reps must do the training – this includes divisional reps, area reps, unit reps and branch officers.

For clarification on dates please contact your regional secretary. The training has been running now for over three years and there are still a substantial number of reps who have not completed the training.

Your co-operation in this matter is greatly appreciated. Equal Opportunities Department.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

116

Pulmonary Hypertension (PH) – NICE Petition & Early Day Motion (EDM) 1173 in the Name of Nick Ainger MP

The wife of a member Mr Sydney Hobson died of Pulmonary Hypertension (PH) and he has requested our support for a petition which aims to get the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) not to withdraw current effective drug therapies and similarly support for the House of Commons Early Day Motion EDM 1173 put down by Labour MP Nick Ainger MP. We are requesting branch's assistance with support for both via the petition and asking local MPs to support the EDM.

Pulmonary Hypertension is a very rare blood vessel disorder of the lung in which the blood pressure in the arteries in the lungs (pulmonary artery – the blood vessel that leads from the heart to the lungs) rises far above normal levels putting pressure on the heart and reducing the amount of oxygen that is able to reach the tissues of the body and may become life threatening. There is no cure, but there are effective treatments that can help sufferers if they are diagnosed early in the disease progression. Untreated, PH has a worse prognosis than many forms of cancer. The symptoms are chronic fatigue, shortness of breath, chest pain, fainting, swollen ankles and legs. Although there is no accurate record of the incidence of PH there are approximately

4,000 PH sufferers in the UK and it is estimated that there are an additional 4,000 undiagnosed sufferers.

There are currently some concerns over the recent publication of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) recommendations to withdraw certain Pulmonary Hypertension drug therapies which some patients currently receive without an alternative, on the grounds of cost-effectiveness. Labour MP Nick Ainger and a panel of MP's are working and campaigning with the patient support charity "PHA-UK" on how patient survival can be improved. There is now a House of Commons Early Day Motion (EDM 1173) in the name of Nick Ainger entitled: "National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence Appraisal of Treatment for Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension." This calls on NICE to reconsider its recommendations and allow the continued prescribing of effective drug therapies by expert clinicians in the seven designated specialist treatment centres in the UK. I have requested that CWU supported MPs sign the EDM and I hope members will consider signing the petition and that local MPs can be approached to sign the EDM. Thanks for your support.

Any further enquiries should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, CWU National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting **reference No. P8**.

117

IOSH Annual Conference 2009 – BT Convention Centre, Liverpool on 17-18 March 2008

At the close of their 2008 annual conference and exhibition, The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) have announced that next year's 2009 annual conference and exhibition will be moving to a brand new location – the BT Convention Centre, Liverpool.

The move north west to Liverpool comes after the organisation has held their conference in Telford over the last few years. A number of CWU safety representatives are IOSH members and several attend the IOSH annual conference. IOSH state that their 2008 event was a great success, welcoming more visitors than ever before to an extensive exhibition, free educational content and practical demonstrations. The conference agenda was timely and relevant to the needs of the safety profession said IOSH with additions to the programme that gave delegates even more learning and networking opportunities. The line-up of speakers, included key figures from the HSE, New York's DuPont, Marks & Spencer, Emirates National Oil Company, Schlumberger Oilfield Services, Royal Mail Group and RoSPA. Dave Joyce, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

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Business Health and Safety Burden Claims Blasted by IOSH

Opening the IOSH annual conference in Telford

International Centre on 17 March the president of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), Ray Hurst blasted the claims commonly pedalled by the Tory Party, the CBI and right-wing press that health and safety is a burden on business.

Hurst stated that those businesses that see health and safety as a burden either don't understand enough about it or they're not doing it right. He went on to add that some employers still expect that health and safety will 'just happen' and when they recognise it won't, some of them then think it's all just an unnecessary burden. They need to understand that the actual requirements aren't that onerous or as portrayed in the press stories they may read, and that the benefits are more than worth the effort.

Competent health and safety advice provides the appropriate answers and most of the time, the answers aren't that complicated or difficult he said. Hurst went on to say that those companies complaining about the regulatory burden of health and safety have probably never talked to a qualified health and safety professional and because of all the crazy press stories and 'myths of the month', the health and safety profession needed to continue its fight for a better public perception.

IOSH is going to continue to counter and debunk these distorted stories with the true health and safety message about balanced solutions to real risks and hit back at the snipers and the nay-sayers – because health and safety is too important to be dismissed in this way.

Dave Joyce,

National Health, Safety & Environment Officer.

119

CCA Report – Health and Safety Fines are Less than 1/700th of Company Turn-Over following Work-Related Deaths Convictions

The Centre for Corporate Accountability have this month published their research findings in a report that currently the majority of large companies convicted of health and safety offences involving the death of a worker or member of the public are fined at a level which is less than a 700th of their annual turnover

To put this into perspective and demonstrate how low these fines currently are – if individuals earning an average annual income of £25K were sentenced at this level, they would be fined just £35.

The research also shows that the fines imposed on most of these companies were only 1% of their gross profits.

The research looked at the companies convicted for 'death-related' health and safety offences since 1 January 2006 – and compared the fines imposed with the convicted companies' turnover and gross profits.

The report is being published at the same time as the Sentencing Advisory Panel (SAP) is drafting new guidance for courts on sentencing companies and other organisations convicted

of health and safety offences and offences under the new Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007.

The CCA is urging the SAP to provide guidance that will allow the courts to fine companies convicted of 'death-related' health and safety offences between 2.5 and 10% of the company's turnover and for the new corporate manslaughter offence of between 15 and 40% of the company's turnover.

The Centre for Corporate Accountability say that the fines that the courts currently impose upon companies for the most serious health and safety offences are so low as to be almost irrelevant to the companies. The key purpose of these prosecutions is deterrence – yet fines which are the equivalent of £35 for the average person simply have no impact upon a company's wealth.

Companies can be fined up to 10% of their turnover for breaching competition law – and this is when the company has not even been convicted of a criminal offence, and no personal injury let alone death is involved. Courts which have convicted companies of manslaughter, the most serious offence that companies can commit, must be able to fine them a much more significant amount.

Punishment appropriate to the seriousness of the offence is the only thing that will create a real deterrent effect against companies needlessly placing the lives of workers and members of the public at risk concludes the report.

The Communication Workers Union' submission and response to the Sentencing Advisory Panel (SAP) consultation on the new guidance for courts on sentencing companies and other organisations convicted of health and safety offences and offences under the new Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 can be read attached to: LTB 214/08 CWU Response to the SAP Consultation Paper on Sentencing Penalties Corporate Manslaughter & Corporate Homicide.

Any enquiries should be addressed to **Dave Joyce**, National Health, Safety & Environment Officer quoting **reference No. EX13**.

POSTAL

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Uniform Care (Royal Mail) – Income Tax Allowance

Following an approach that the union made to Royal Mail earlier this year, it has now been confirmed that the tax allowance for Royal Mail employees for uniform care has been increased with effect from **6th April** from £90 to £120 per year.

This should be reflected in every individuals 08/09 tax code notice but if branches receive reports that this has not been carried through, please let us know.

Any enquiries to this paragraph should be addressed to **Bob Gibson's Department**, **Reference 500**.

October 2007 – June 2008: The London Socialist Film Co-op. There will be a number of films showing the second Sunday of every month. Film(s) includes La Última Cena/The Last Supper all showing Sunday 14 October 2007. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea is best known for his Memories of Underdevelopment. The Last Supper is unfairly neglected, made during the height of 'the cold war', showing a Cuba that was unknown and a history that was of little interest to audiences of that time. Discussion led by Michael Chanan, Professor of Film and Video at Roehampton University, London, Jacqui McKenzie, Caribbean Labour Solidarity, Dionne Walker and many more. For all enquiries and the full programme contact **020 7278 5764**.

Friday 4 April 2008: Amnesty International Trade Union Conference. To be held in Nottingham. 10am – 16.30pm. Speakers include: Kate Allen, Amnesty International; Janek Kuckiewicz, International Trade Union Federation; Kay Carberry, Trade Union Congress. The campaign action is defending Iranian trade unionists with various workshops. For full details and online registration at www.amnesty.org/tradeunions click on news and events buttons.

Monday 7th April 2008: Retired Members' Eastern Region Meeting. To be held at Swinton House, 324 Grays Inn Road London at 11am. For further information contact **Nobby Clark** on **07713 155575**.

Sunday 13 April 2008: Day for Darfur Demonstration. 12.30pm at the Sudanese Embassy, 3 Cleveland Row, St James's, London SW1A 1DD. UK organisers of the Day for Darfur are planning a major demonstration outside the Sudanese Embassy. Jonathan Freedland (The Guardian) will be compering the rally and he will be joined by speakers including politicians, activists and faith leaders. Musicians from a range of backgrounds will also contribute to the rally. For more information including details of coaches visit www.globefordarfur.org

Thursday 17 April 2008 – Friday 18 April inclusive: Introduction to International Development. 10:00 to 17:00 daily. To be held at Congress Centre, London. A broad introduction to international development from a trade union perspective, this two-day course gives tutors and officers the skills, knowledge and confidence to train others. Covering issues of poverty, globalisation and the trade union role, North/South perspectives, race and migration will be tackled, as will techniques and methods to organise and train in this area. For more information contact **Aisha Latif**, SFPA Project Assistant, on **020 7467 1239** or by email: alatif@tuc.org.uk

Friday 18 April 2008: TUC PES Manifesto Conference: Mapping a Future for Social Europe. The TUC is holding a conference for union officers in Congress House, to respond to a consultation from the PES over their manifesto for the 2009 European Parliament elections as well as into TUC/trade union campaigns and the ETUC; to switch trade union approaches to Europe from defensive campaigns to a positive agenda; to engage a wider audience of trade union officials in TUC debates about Europe, and to engage MEPs with a trade union audience. Kay Carberry – TUC Assistant General Secretary; Billy Hayes – CWU General Secretary and TUC European Spokesperson; John Monks – TUC General Secretary; and Poul Nyrup Rasmussen MEP, Leader of the Party of European Socialists. For more information visit www.tuc.org.uk/extras/socialeuroperegistration.doc

Monday 21 April 2008: Agency Workers: Social Justice Long Overdue. 1:30-4:15pm at the UCU Conference Centre, Britannia Street, London WC1. Organised by The Institute of Employment Rights. IER subscribers and members £45.00, trade unions £60.00 and commercial £120.00. When Andrew Miller's Temporary and Agency Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) passed its second reading in the House of Commons on 22nd February the long promised and much needed statutory protection for agency workers came a step closer. To reserve your place contact **IER**, to Institute of Employment Rights, The People's Centre, 50-54 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5SD on tel **0151 702 6925** or office@ier.org.uk

Wednesday 23 April 2008: TUC Social Policy Forum. To be held at Congress House. Participation in the forum is free, but please note that the TUC cannot meet delegates' other expenses. An opportunity to discuss four social policy issues that are likely to be important over the coming months: maternity rights, child poverty, direct payments in social care and contracting-out public services to religious organisations. The Social Policy Forum is an opportunity for participants to discuss workplace and industrial issues in the context of the relevant social policy debates, and the speakers for each item will therefore include a trade union expert and an expert from another organisation. A number of highly-regarded speakers have agreed to participate, and we expect the demand for places to exceed supply. Places are limited, so to register please email **Emma Richards** on erichards@tuc.org.uk

Sunday 27 April 2008: Love Music Hate Racism Carnival – 30th Anniversary of Rock Against Racism. Victoria Park, London. LMHR will be marking the 30th Anniversary of the iconic 1978 Rock Against Racism/Anti Nazi League carnival and procession with a similar event. The 2008 Carnival's aim is to inspire thousands today to join a mass

movement against racism. The Carnival will have three stages – two outdoor live music stages and a large DJ marquee. The line-up will be announced very soon, however, stars of the '78 event and the RAR era already confirmed to appear include Tom Robinson, The Specials, Jerry Dammers, and ace filmmaker and Clash collaborator Don Letts. For further information visit www.lmhrcarnival.com. There will be a carnival procession/march to show united opposition to racism immediately prior to the start of the main event in the park. Unite the union and the PCS have already committed as major sponsors of the event, which is also supported by the TUC, and many other trade unions have pledged support at a national level. Transport to LMHR Carnival 08 is being arranged from most areas of the country – contact us for details, or if you'd like to help organise transport from your area.

Tuesday 29 April 2008: Pay Bargaining 2008. 09:45 to 16:00. To be held at Congress House, Great Russell, Street, London. This is a conference for negotiating officers and researchers organised by the TUC and the IDS. The Chair will be Gail Cartmail (UNITE) and the speakers will include Sarah Veale (TUC), Heather Wakefield (UNISON) and Alastair Hatchett (IDS). The topics will include the pay and bargaining agenda for 2008, public sector pay, total reward and equal pay: where now? IDS pay conferences are highly regarded and this is an opportunity for unions to attend an event that would normally cost £200 per person at a specially reduced rate for TUC affiliates of just £75. To book a place at the conference visit the link <http://guest.event.com/i.aspx?5S,M3,2ef14ad2-94fa-4ff5-ae2-0b42005f3955>

Saturday 17 May 2008 – Friday 23 May inclusive: Adult Learners' Week 2008. Adult Learners' Week encourages thousands of adults, whatever their age and background, to give learning a go: whether it's learning for pleasure, catching up on skills missed out on at school or getting that new job or promotion. It also celebrates the learning achievements of those adults already learning and brings their inspirational stories to a wider audience. Thursday 22nd May, celebrates Learning in the Workplace. Contact for more information www.niace.org.uk/ALW/2008/workplace/contact.htm

Sunday 8th June – Friday 13th June 2008: CWU Annual Conference. Liverpool.

Monday 16 June 2008: TUC Climate Change Conference: A Just Transition – Trade Unions & Climate Change. 09:30 to 16:30 to be held at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3LS. The TUC has played a leading role to date in working with affiliates globally, through the ITUC, to support a new treaty. This event will provide

a timely opportunity for the TUC to engage in public debate with key affiliates in the trade union movement, and other key stakeholders in Government and business and NGOs, to develop and promote TUC policy, reputation and support for an effective climate change strategy. Keynote speakers amongst others will include Rt Hon Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for the Environment and Frances O'Grady, TUC General Secretary. To register for this free event, please complete the flyer www.tuc.org.uk/extras/climatechange08.pdf and return to **Emma Richards**, TUC, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS or email erichards@tuc.org.uk

Thursday 3 July 2008 – Friday 4 July inclusive: TUC LGBT Conference. Will be held at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS. The TUC LGBT Conference 2008 takes place at Congress House. It is one of the largest annual gatherings of LGBT activists and workers. Unions will be invited to submit motions for debate, and send delegations, early in 2008. The TUC welcomes visitors from relevant organisations to the event. For more information contact **Peter Purton**, **020 7467 1271**, ppurton@tuc.org.uk

Wednesday 16 July 2008 – Friday 18 July inclusive: Tolpuddle Green Camp 2008. 10:00 to 18:00 daily. To be held at Tolpuddle, Dorset, DT2 7EH. There will be a charge for food, from a subsidised organic cafe on site. Participants will bring their own tents to camp on site. For people interested in taking a wider view of their role as environmental champions, and taking forward the idea of Green Reps in the workplace. Based at the site of the Tolpuddle Festival, with the 2008 festival beginning as the Green Camp ends on Friday 18th July. Course participants will camp on site for a programme of presentations, discussion and activity and local visits. Successful completers will receive a Level 2 Award from the Open College Network. For more information contact **South West TUC**, tel: **0117 947 0521** email: southwest@tuc.org.uk or visit www.unionlearn.org.uk/extras/greencamp08.pdf to download information leaflet.

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If you have anything for the events bulletin page please send your contribution to:

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Email: 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.