



Yorkshire Ambulance Branch

August 2016

Newsletter

Branch Secretary's update

Union membership within Yorkshire Ambulance Service has always been strong, and I am pleased to say that union membership is still increasing, with UNISON having over 3000 members, and still growing, with new members joining every day, making UNISON by far the biggest union at Yorkshire Ambulance Service.

This I believe is not only because of the fantastic benefits being a member of UNISON offers, such as quality legal services for employment-related and non-work issues, personal and career development courses

free wills and support for members experiencing financial and emotional difficulties through our welfare charity, There for You, amongst many other benefits, but because of the superb work and support at local level that our network of stewards/ reps and convenors provide, leading the way in fighting causes that matter to you.

UNISON Yorkshire Ambulance Branch is and will always be a member led union

and with your support we can keep building and go from strength to strength. If you have friends or colleagues that aren't part of a union, then encourage them on board to join Yorkshire Ambulance Service's biggest union, and if you want to get more involved in your union and train to be a steward, health and safety rep or station contact then please do not hesitate to get in touch, email unison@yas.nhs.uk for more information.

New website

Our new website is now up and running, due to the changeover members who are subscribed to our feed burner section may briefly receive duplicate emails when 'latest news' is posted. This will be rectified after a short time, apologies for any inconvenience in the interim period.

To subscribe to our website please go to www.uyab.co.uk and enter your chosen email details into the 'subscribe' section, an email verification will be forwarded to your email address to then receive email alerts as they are posted.

You can also follow us on Facebook by 'liking' our page Unison Yorkshire Ambulance Branch or by following us on Twitter [@unisonYAB](https://twitter.com/unisonYAB)

Links to both can be found on our website

PTS

PTS overtime

Members have recently been informed that a code will be required to be submitted on timesheets for any overtime worked. This has caused some angst amongst members as the inference would be that end of shift overtime would not be paid without the code. UNISON have sought some clarity on this situation as there appears to be no written guidance published from the Trust to explain this procedure to members.

UNISON are informed that the recent increase in end of shift overtime has given rise to a need for the Trust to monitor overtime hours. This in part has been instigated by UNISON members by raising Datix and complaints at the enforced level of end of shift overtime incurred, mainly since the introduction of auto planning. The Trust's response is below.

Pre- Day Overtime

When resourcing we identify the need for pre-starts the day before. The staff members contact the drivers to seek availability. If the driver agrees to a pre-start they will be given a code for their overtime.

On Day Overtime

If a member of staff is asked on day by a controller to stay on and the staff member agrees, the driver commences the run and upon completion is given a code, we are then able to track the duration of overtime granted. The controller can only give the driver a code if the overtime is authorised by the manager in the room. The codes are tracked so we are aware of authorised overtime and controllers cannot grant overtime without further conversations.

Overtime that is incurred due to daily factors i.e. traffic etc will be looked into as usual and authorised accordingly.

Whilst there is no suggestion that incidental end of shift overtime would not be paid members please be aware that under Agenda for Change contracts, any member up to Band 7 who incurs overtime planned or unplanned is entitled to payment or time back at the relevant rate. If this is not occurring or the payment of overtime is being disputed please email unison@yas.nhs.uk with details. This could potentially lead to claims for unlawful deductions of wages.

A new PTS Joint Steering Group is in the process of being set up, this will run on a monthly basis and will provide a more structured approach for dealing with PTS issues. An issues which cannot be resolved locally will be escalated to JSG with regular updates to be disseminated to members. Any PTS stewards (or members who wish to become PTS stewards) who would like to be involved please contact us at unison@yas.nhs.uk

Transportation of double amputee patients

Over the past few months some incidents have been raised with regards to the safe transportation of double amputees' patients in their own wheelchairs. H&S have recommended that all double amputees patients traveling in own chair should have a safety belt over both shoulders to ensure the patient is correctly secured and does not slide forward during transportation. This is to be discussed further with the Training department, further information will follow.

Dementia patients

Concerns have also been raised where members have been asked to transport dementia patient single handedly and with out an escort. Members report they are being asked to assess each patient individually whilst on scene, this is leading the member to feel pressured into transporting the patient potentially in an unsafe manner.

The Trust have confirmed that patients with a clinical diagnosis of Dementia should always be a double crewed vehicle, whilst unconfirmed dementia is at the discretion of the crew member,

Unison therefore recommends that diagnosed dementia patients should have an escort or a double handed crew for the safety of patients and members.

Resource

Several issues have been raised by members recently with regards to the rostering of shifts. UNISON have raised these issues with the Trust are assured that:

- Members should not be contacted by Resource and be asked to use TOIL or annual leave to balance their hours
- If members hours are slightly in deficit toward the end of the reference period they cannot be forced to work a full shift back. E.g owe 2 hours and are rostered a full 10 or 12 hour shift. This would be considered enforced overtime.
- Only one shift is to be worked back at the end of the reference period regardless of the number of hours owed, as per policy.
- Members on 10 hour rota's should not be rostered 12 hour shifts (unless the member agrees to this in advance)
- The rostering of core rota relief and permanent relief should be completed before shifts are given out as overtime. (In some areas overtime has been allocated before rostering is complete.)
- Core rota shifts should be filled before extra shifts are added.
- Some flexible working patterns are not always being adhered to.

Whilst many of these issues are resolved by informal discussion with Resource, if any member requires advice or assistance please contact your local representative or email unison@yas.nhs.uk for further advice.

A&E Rota change

Rota discussions are still taking place with the Trust and Staff-side rota proposals are currently in the process of being circulated for debate.

The staff-side rotas have been designed to reduce as much as possible any negative impact from the ORH demand keys such as unsocial hour payment reduction, mass staff movement and changes to shift lengths. UNISON acknowledges that there is still a lot of work to be done especially around rural cover, overcrowded stations and the process to populating the rotas.

UNISON is aware members have started work on individual station rota proposals and fully support this but members need to be aware that staffing levels at certain stations still might change due to the above,

New Rotas and Part Time Workers

During recent negotiations with the trade unions on transformation and changes to rotas, the Trust has raised the issue of part time workers.

The Trust has only just broached the subject of part time workers and how they see them fitting into rotas with the unions, which given the important role part time staff play in service delivery to do so at such a late stage after rota figures have gone out we as a branch find this extremely disappointing.

As such UNISON has made it clear that part time workers should be treated in exactly the same way as other staff and current flexible working arrangements should be honoured.

Any proposal to force part time workers onto float will be challenged by UNISON through a legal route and will force UNISON to recommend rejection of the current transformation and rota package.

UNISON recognises the importance of flexible working for many of our members in achieving work life balance, managing caring responsibilities and in making step down plans towards the end of their career. We also understand the issues the Trust faces in managing this. UNISON is prepared to enter discussions with the Trust on long term plans for incorporating flexible working patterns, but urge the Trust to have a reasonable discussion with trade unions and staff about this instead of rushing in ill-thought out plans causing unnecessary stress and anxiety to members who already feel vulnerable.

Paramedic banding dispute,

the joint evaluation group met last month to discuss the proposed new national paramedic job profile. This profile will now be discussed at both the national ambulance partnership forum and the joint staff council group in mid-September in order to gain agreement.

If the national ambulance employers agree the job profile with staff-side the local matching process can commence, if agreement cannot be reached then UNISON will instigate an national campaign which may include Industrial action.

UNISON will keep members informed of further developments.

Disability discrimination

Equality Act 2010

The question we are asked time and time again is:-

CAN I BE DISMISSED DUE TO SICKNESS ABSENCE THROUGH MY DISABILITY?

Your employer can sometimes dismiss you because of your ill health if you're no longer capable of doing the job you're contracted to do. But if your condition is a disability under the **Equality Act 2010**, it may be disability discrimination if you're dismissed because of it.

If you're disabled you may be disadvantaged by something at work - for example, a physical feature of the workplace, the lack of adapted equipment or accessible materials, not granting disability leave, not adjusting trigger points and giving more tolerance, or a policy or procedure followed by your employer. If your employer knows, or should know, that you're disabled and that you're being placed at a disadvantage they have a duty under the Equality Act to make **reasonable adjustments** to remove the disadvantage and to help you to stay in employment.

Not following the medical opinion and not carrying out the advice on reasonable adjustment of the Occupational Health Practitioner, could also mean you have been disadvantaged.

If you're dismissed because your employer's failed to make reasonable adjustments, it's disability discrimination.

If your employer dismisses you because of something which is **connected** to your disability, this could be discrimination **arising from disability**. Discrimination arising from disability is unlawful under the Equality Act.

The dismissal will not be unlawful discrimination if your employer can justify it by showing they have a good enough business reason for dismissing you. If there were reasonable adjustments that your employer should have made that would have prevented the dismissal, your employer will find it hard to justify dismissing you.

The dismissal will not be unlawful discrimination unless your employer knows, or could reasonably be expected to know, that you're disabled.

If you're dismissed because of sickness absence which is because of your disability, your dismissal may be discrimination arising from disability. However it won't be discrimination if your employer can justify the dismissal. But your employer must always consider if there are any reasonable adjustments that would enable you to return to work - for example, lighter duties, a different role, flexible working, making adaptations to the workplace or providing specialised equipment. Also has your employer considered looking at options other than dismissal.

If you're disabled and you've been dismissed, you may also be able to claim **unfair** dismissal. Always contact one of your Unison representatives at the earliest stage, we will offer support and advice.

Your case will always be forwarded to the Regional Officer, who will discuss it with our solicitors.



A recent comment from the staff forum implied that they were negotiating on certain issues on staffs behalf, UNISON would like to clarify that the forum has no negotiating rights for UNISON members.

Trust Procurement Group (TPG) meeting update.

UNISON have pushed for improvements in equipment in many departments. We can expect Mangar Elk lifting cushions on all 109 new ambulances. New stretchers will be on most of the 109 new vehicles along with a number hopefully having fully bariatric capable stretchers. Further updates will follow from the TPG. UNISON members can both suggest ideas and raise issues via the union. Please contact Ian Lawrence ian.lawrence@yas.nhs.uk or Bryan Bell bryan.bell@yas.nhs.uk

New Recliner chairs should soon be arriving on stations across YAS, there has been a big push from the Health and Safety committee over this and at last new chairs are imminent. The delivery of the chairs is planned but we do not have the full schedule as to when they will arrive on stations.

Bariatric Incident Support

An improved procedure has been developed along with more staff being trained and CAD updated to enable identification of trained staff on shift. Along with the 109 new vehicles that will have bariatric capabilities, it will hopefully reduce the risk staff currently faced by staff and improve the patient experience. It is important that staff when faced by incidents involving bariatric patients call for appropriate support at these incidents. If equipment is not readily available it is vital that these incidents are reported on DATIX to ensure they are monitored and captured. Without this Unison has no evidence to pursue issues and push for improvements and also support members with claims.

The current Mercedes Van conversion is expected to have a number of changes to improve and reduce the risk of injury. It is to have a significant alteration to the tail lift to create a solid platform. This will see modification to the rear doors. It will also hopefully see one of the seats removed in the rear to increase working space. These modifications will hopefully reduce the number of reported injuries to members of staff until the vehicles are removed from service.

Senior Unison Health and Safety Reps have been instrumental in this push with concerns raised at every opportunity to ensure something was done with regard issues identified. This vehicle will be going round YAS as a proof of concept and it is important that staff feed back on this. We recognise that it will not remove all the issues but certainly be a significant help.

Lone Workers

In issue raised by staff in a department who works often in isolation and with equipment that could result in significant injury has been discussed with the Trust. The Trust is producing a procedure to introduce a safe system of work that will ensure that these staff can be monitored remotely. How this will take place is to be discussed but could be something like contacting a call centre at set times to show that they are safe. It is hoped that this will be an automated system such as a APP which is currently used by a number of major organisations. We would like to reassure staff this is not to monitor working but to simply ensure that staff safety is monitored and a procedure is in place to safeguard lone workers.

Branch Officials will hopefully be meeting with the CQC when they visit, any issues members feel that require discussion on their behalf please feel free to contact the branch and we will discuss them.

Staff should ensure incidents are added to DATIX either via the portal or the 24 hour reporting line. Should staff wish for Unison to carry out investigations into incidents please report them to safetyconcerns-unison@yas.nhs.uk ensuring the incident number is included along with brief details. We will need to confirm the reporter is happy for investigators to be given access to any data that they have submitted online.

Essential Cover

Every one of our members has their own reason for joining the union, but they all receive all the benefits, help and support we can offer. The union is here for its members, whether it's a problem at work, help with family problems, legal advice or careers and learning.

ESSENTIAL COVER AT WORK

One of the most reassuring things about being a member of UNISON is knowing that there are people out there who can help you if you find yourself facing a problem.

You never know when you might encounter a problem at work, what you do know is that you don't have to face it alone.

If you are having problems, our network of **trained workplace representatives** are there to help. They will give you advice, help you write letters, represent you if you need it and refer your case to the regional office to make sure you get the most appropriate help and advice. All UNISON members belong to a local branch of the union and can get help and advice from branch officials.

We help members by negotiating, making sure that employers are not breaking the law on things like health and safety, equal pay, discrimination and employment rights.

In addition to the individual support we offer to members, the union also negotiates with employers on issues like pay, holiday pay and other terms and conditions and on pension schemes on offer to employees. Finally, our teams of advisers, **legal experts**, trained representatives and experienced negotiators will provide you with help at work when you need it most.

UNISON'S FREE WILLS SERVICE

UNISON offers a free standard wills service for members and their partners (for a mirror will). We also offer reduced rates for members' complex wills and wills for other family members.

The simplest way to obtain your will is to use our bespoke on line wills service.

[Access UNISON's free will service](#)

UNISON's online wills service is very straightforward to use, just complete the online questionnaire. The questionnaire with its online guidance will carefully take you through the process. Please also find attached our standards of service quality for this online wills service.

In addition, UNISON has negotiated a low-cost wills service for members' families and a low-cost conveyancing service for members and their families.

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There for you (UNISON Welfare) is UNISON's own registered charity offering a unique confidential service supplying advice and support just for UNISON members and their families offering,

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UNISON debt line

For more information - <https://www.unison.org.uk/>

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