



UNISON Yorkshire Ambulance Branch



‘BACK TO BASICS’

Dear Member

As we once again fight our way through another extremely busy winter period UNISON is already seeing the beginnings of what is to come. More stress and more pressure being put on staff, an increase in anxiety, members being asked to work outside their own scope of practice and the inevitable attempt to circumnavigate agreed policies on the back of service demand. Our members need to be assured that their health and well-being will be the priority and everything that can be done will be done to support them through what is going to be an incredibly difficult time.

UNISON Yorkshire Ambulance Branch is launching a campaign to get ‘BACK TO BASICS’, this means the Ambulance Service getting back on track, doing what it does best, delivering first class patient care to the public of Yorkshire. In order to achieve this, things need to change, and that change must start with the health and wellbeing of our members, across all of our service lines in all workplaces.

When UNISON says get back to basics we mean just that, it is no revelation that if you treat your staff right, value their work, improve their working environment, give them the tools for success, support them when they need it and pay them what they deserve, the knock on effects are to see a decrease in sickness, decrease in complaints, improvements in performance, a greater willingness to go the extra mile when needed and a culture that promotes engagement and inclusiveness. All of which will inevitably mean a better experience for patients when they need us the most.

As part of this campaign UNISON will start its challenge to get band 2 abolished within YAS, still working within the Job Evaluation framework in order to pay members what they are worth. During this cost-of-living crisis it is incomprehensible that we still have members on a penny over the national minimum wage within the service, struggling to make ends meet whilst being a vital part of a process that gets vehicles to patients, in order to deliver patient care to the public of Yorkshire. Currently our band 2 members are earning £11.45 an hour, an extra 22p per hour or £433 per year would put those members into band 3, it certainly won't change their lives, but it is a step forward and would be a strong sign from the Trust that they understand the plight of our lowest paid members.

We know that funds are available, we have seen numerous restructures, fancy new logos and corporate messages that cost hundreds of thousands being developed, millions spent on private providers or consultants, new management tiers introduced and with new very well-paid roles developed. And despite years of underfunding, we also know that this year Yorkshire Ambulance Service will be handing money back as a 'surplus'.

Now we know that the way things within the Trust are funded is complex and far from straightforward, but it seems ludicrous that we are giving money back to the government when workplaces are falling apart, equipment and vehicles are run down, we desperately need more staff in order to deliver the basics of service throughout the Trust and the mental and physical wellbeing of our members is constantly being put at risk on a day to day basis.

This needs to stop and a new simpler strategy employed, to ensure current members receive a fair wage for their work and to launch a bottom-up recruitment program that fills outsourced roles and also provides a pathway for advancement for current YAS staff, a good working environment with decent pay and prospects to advance will always acts as an attractive proposition to encourage new staff on to the service. This is not reinventing the wheel, but a return to basics and a process that we know works.

UNISON is working hard for its members, and nationally is at the forefront of discussions concerning section 2, which adversely affects our members meaning they lose pay whilst training, it restricts band to band movement and impacts on progression, changes to this would support members rather than hinder them. UNISON locally are involved in pushing for banding reviews to be completed, improved welfare support,

roles that support work life balance, working environments that improve well-being, dispel a growing negative culture and improve moral.

Things need to change, 'BACK TO BASICS' is the right approach. UNISON is asking the Trust to change its current course, work with Staff side to develop a safe and fair way forward that puts staff health, safety and well-being front and center, ensures our members receive a fair wage and develops a bottom-up approach to recruitment and development. By investing money into staff, their health and well-being, recruitment and working environments as well as improving infrastructure that is falling down and overcrowded, the knock-on effects will be obvious, less sickness, improved morale and a productive, happy workforce that delivers the first-class patient care the public expects.

Please email yas.unison@nhs.net with your own experiences and suggestions for this 'BACK TO BASICS' campaign.