

# Grapevine



The Official Newsletter of *Angus Council Branch*

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## Branch AGM

**Monday 23rd February**  
**Forfar Academy**

**Buffet 5:30pm - APF Meeting 5:45pm**  
**AGM Begins 6:00pm**

The Branch Annual General Meeting shall be at 6:00pm on Monday 23rd February 2004 at Forfar Academy, Taylor Street, Forfar and is expected to last approximately 1 hour.

There shall be a finger buffet and soft drinks provided from 5:30pm. The Affiliated Political Fund Meeting shall be at 5:45pm.

This year's guest speaker is the full-time official and Scottish organiser for Local Government, Joe Di Paola. He is to reveal the mysteries behind Job Evaluation and its effect it may have on your job.

For the AGM to carry out its

duties we require around 80 members to attend. Last year was the first time since the AGM in 2000 which the meeting was in quorate.

**If you do nothing else for YOUR union this year, then come along to the AGM....and bring along a fellow member.**

If you do not mean to attend the AGM then please send in your apologise to the branch office by FREEPost, phone or email:

[agm@unison-angus.org.uk](mailto:agm@unison-angus.org.uk)

You should have received a full agenda and AGM Papers, including the Annual Report, with this newsletter.

## Nursery Nurses Dispute

## UPDATE

There has been no progress in the Scottish dispute and COSLA are making "statements" that further Industrial Action by UNISON means that the union is using parents and children as "pawns" in the dispute.

It is rather COSLA who are refusing to discuss a National settlement and insisting that the matter is for local negotiation. This is despite the fact that the grade for Nursery Nurses is a matter for the Scottish Joint Council as the grade is a National Agreement and not a local one.

### Members balloted for further strike action

Nursery Nurses have been left with no alternative than to ballot for all out action and this is likely to begin in March 2004. In addition a further 2 days of action are planned on 4 and 10 February prior to the ballot.

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Remember to use the FREEPOST address for any written correspondence

Unison - Angus Council Branch, FREEPOST SC07380, FORFAR, DD8 1ZR

# Health & Safety

## Frequently Asked Questions

Being pregnant or a new mother does not prevent you from working and developing your career. Many women work while they are pregnant and return to work while they are breastfeeding.

In many workplaces there are risks that may affect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers and that of their child. Working conditions generally considered acceptable may no longer be so during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. There are specific laws that require employers to protect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers.

### **What are the specific regulations that protect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers?**

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSW) include regulations that protect the health and safety of

new and expectant mothers who work. Under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, if an employer fails to protect the health and safety of their pregnant workers, it is automatically considered sex discrimination.

### **Who do the regulations cover?**

The regulations cover female employees who are, or in the future could be, a new or expectant mother. In other words, women of childbearing age who are or in the future could be pregnant, have given birth within the previous six months, or are breastfeeding.

### **Do I have to be pregnant before my employer takes action to protect my health and safety?**

No. Your employer is required to conduct a risk assessment for his/her employees, which should also include any specific risks to females of childbearing age who could become pregnant and any

risks to new and expectant mothers.

### **What involvement do I have in this risk assessment process?**

If any risks are identified, your employer must inform you and your colleagues directly or through your safety representative. This should include involvement in what is being proposed to reduce, remove or control the risks.

### **Do I have to tell my employer that I am pregnant or that I am a new mother?**

While you do not have to inform your employer that you are pregnant or breastfeeding, it is important (for you and your child's health and safety protection) that you provide them with written notification as early as possible.

Until your employer has received written notification from you, they are not obliged to take any action

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## Nursery Nurses Dispute

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Nursery Nurses in Angus do not want to disrupt services to parents and children but it is up to the Local Authorities to bring pressure to bear on COSLA to get round the table with the Trade Union with a serious intention to settle this long running dispute.

Joe di Paola, UNISON's Scottish Organiser for Local Government, has written to each Local Authority in Scotland asking that they take the opportunity to bring pressure to bear on COSLA prior to the ballot for all out action.

Nursery Nurses in Angus Council are sincerely grateful to parents and children for their support and these parents seem to understand better that the National Employer the valuable service provided to children in both the Education and Social Work Departments of Angus Council.

## WEALTH WARNING

### Home Care Restructuring Staff with Cash Conservation

Angus Council is proposing that all staff delivering home care services who had cash conservation in relation to the restructuring of the service will be offered the opportunity to have these hours consolidated in their permanent contract from 1 April 2004.

The Branch wishes to point out to members that should they not decide to accept this offer to consolidate their hours they should bear in mind that their current conservation period will lapse in May/June next year and their salary would be reduced accordingly. The conservation period cannot be continued beyond 2005 as part of National Conditions of Service would not allow for this.

You can Telephone or Fax the Office

01307 468950

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other than those resulting from the risk assessment for all their employees. Your employer can also ask for a certificate from your GP or your midwife showing that you are pregnant.

### What action should I expect my employer to take?

Your employer should take action to ensure that you are not exposed to any significant risk. Further details can be found in the HSE leaflet "New and Expectant Mothers Who Work"

### What sort of risks might I be exposed to?

You may be at risk from different physical, biological, and chemical agents, working conditions and processes. These risks will vary depending on your health, and at different stages of your pregnancy. Your employer will be doing a specific risk assessment. You will be asked to help with this and it is important that any advice

you have received from your doctor or midwife, that could impact on the assessment, is passed on to your employer. Some of the more common risks might be:

- lifting/carrying of heavy loads;
- standing or sitting for long lengths of time;
- exposure to infectious diseases;
- exposure to lead;
- work-related stress;
- workstations and posture;
- exposure to radioactive material;
- other people's smoke in the workplace;
- threat of violence in the workplace;
- long working hours;
- excessively noisy workplaces

### How much time can I take off to go to antenatal appointments?

There is no set limit to how much time you can take off. You are entitled to time off with pay to keep appointments for antenatal care made on the advice of your

GP, midwife or health visitor. Apart from your first appointment you must provide, if requested, an appointment card or some other document showing that an appointment has been made. More information on this can be found in DTI's guidance on maternity rights.

### I have pregnancy-related medical conditions (e.g. high blood pressure, history of miscarriages etc). How does this affect the risk assessment my employer has to carry out?

Your employer must take into account, during your specific risk assessment, any medical advice from your GP or midwife about your health and adjust your working conditions accordingly.

This information is not exhaustive and more details can be found on the HSE website at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/index.htm>

## Members Benefits

As a member of UNISON you can benefit from a number of services ranging from holidays to savings:

**UNISON Holiday Club:** Holiday and travel discounts. Fully ABTA bonded, offering discounts on nearly every ABTA brochure holiday, savings on flights worldwide and ferry travel. **Call 0990 50 50 00 or visit: [www.unison-holiday-club.co.uk](http://www.unison-holiday-club.co.uk)**

**Croyde Bay Holiday Village:** Our own holiday centre in lovely, unspoiled Devon. With comfortable chalets, nightly entertainment and friendly staff, it's a great way to get away.

**Call 01271 890890 [www.croydeunison.co.uk](http://www.croydeunison.co.uk)**

**Frizzell:** For motor insurance, personal loans, life and financial planning advice. **0800 272 355 or visit [www.frizzell.co.uk](http://www.frizzell.co.uk)**

**Britannia Building Society:** Exclusive mortgage rates for UNISON members - and as a UNISON member we can lend you more. Special savings rates too. **0800 77 88 88 or visit [www.britannia.co.uk/unison](http://www.britannia.co.uk/unison)**

**UIA Insurance:** exclusive rates for UNISON members, Home Contents and Buildings, Travel, WellWoman, MediPlus, Personal Accident, Life Assurance and Pet Insurance available:

**Call 0800 66 88 55 or visit: [www.unisoninsurance.co.uk](http://www.unisoninsurance.co.uk)**

**Roadside Assistance: Britannia Rescue:** You can save up to 20% discount on already competitive prices and can also claim £10 cashback (exclusive to UNISON members) if they don't arrive within the hour. For further details or to join, **call free on 0800 591563 quoting 'UNISON', or click on [www.britanniarescue.com/unison](http://www.britanniarescue.com/unison)**

**Coventry Assurance:** UNIBOND is a tax exempt with profits low risk savings plan. Starting from just £10 a month. **Call 0800 083 3080 or email: [Unibond@casfriendly.co.uk](mailto:Unibond@casfriendly.co.uk)**

**Personal Taxation Services:** Nearly 50% of UNISON members could be due a tax refund, Don't miss out. **Call UNISONdirect for more details and claim form on 0845 355 0845 or visit: [www.taxbuddies.com/pts/unison.htm](http://www.taxbuddies.com/pts/unison.htm)**

You can Email the Office

[office@unison-angus.org.uk](mailto:office@unison-angus.org.uk)

# Snippets

## Newsletter Articles

If you have any newsletter articles or any suggestions for items which you wish to be considered for inclusion in *The Grapevine* Newsletter then please contact Bob Bruce by email :

[communications@unison-angus.org.uk](mailto:communications@unison-angus.org.uk)

or phone 01307 473279.

The next newsletter shall be distributed in May 2004.

## Are You Due To Retire?

If you are about to retire then please contact the Branch Office as soon as possible. The branch have a policy of paying the one-off subscription for the retired members section for any member who is retiring, however **we need to know!**

## Lease Car Insurance

Since April 2002 all Angus Council car lease agreements have not included motor insurance. Many members initially had problems obtaining their own insurance as they were not the legal owner of the vehicle. Even Lloyds TSB wouldn't accept to insure the very vehicles they were supplying as the Lease Company. UNISON's motor insurance company FRIZZELL is one which will accept this arrangement, with very competitive rates. FRIZZELL can be contacted on **0800 272 355 (Quote ref:UUUA)** or buy online at [www.frizzell.co.uk/unison](http://www.frizzell.co.uk/unison).

Whilst on the subject of Lease Cars: please be aware that if your "write off" your Lease car then you can be liable for a considerable sum to pay to the lease company through the Council. The sum depends on the remaining time of your lease, however sums of in excess of £1500 are not unusual. Your insurance may pay for it however some of the lease companies can provide an insurance policy for as little as £4 per month. This will ensure that you wont have any more surprises after an accident.

## MORE CONTACTS WANTED

The network of workplace contacts is slowly starting to grow, however there are still a great number of workplaces that have no representation or contacts. I can only ask again for members to help themselves and their fellow colleagues by offering to be a contact.

The workplace contact only has to aid with the distribution of local Branch literature as and when they receive it. There are NO meetings to attend apart from the AGM and you would not be asked to carry out any other UNISON duties unless you wished to become a Workplace Rep or Health & Safety Rep, etc. If you are willing to help then please complete the slip and send it to the Branch Office using the FREEPOST address.

## NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

**Workplace Contact**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Workplace Address:**  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Phone No:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Recruit a friend and win a holiday

Why not ask your work colleagues to join UNISON?  
 We are Britain's biggest and fastest growing union—and together we can improve our working lives.  
 Just fill in the form below, ensuring your colleague signs their name authorising UNISON to contact them to offer membership of the union. Send it to the Branch Office using the FREEPOST address. We will forward them onto UNISON Headquarters who will enter you into a draw for a £600 voucher towards a holiday of your choice booked through UNISON Holiday Club. Closing date 1 June 2004. Contact the Branch Office for further details.

<p><b>You:</b></p> <p>Name ..... Occupation .....</p> <p>Workplace ..... Membership No* .....</p> <p>Home Address .....</p> <p>Postcode ..... Email .....</p> <p><small>*This will help processing, but is not essential</small></p> <p>We may contact you about other benefits we think are of interest to you.              If you prefer not to receive this information, please tick this box: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If your friend prefers not to receive this information, please tick this box: <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Your friend:</b></p> <p>I am interested in joining UNISON and would like the union to contact me.</p> <p>Name ..... Occupation .....</p> <p>Workplace .....</p> <p>Home Address .....</p> <p>Postcode ..... Tel no: .....</p> <p>Email .....</p> <p>Signature .....</p>
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**You can visit the branch website**