

# Grapevine

The Official Newsletter of *Angus Council Branch*

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## Nursery Nurses Dispute Update

# LOCAL OFFER REJECTED strike action to intensify

On the 21 November, Angus Council made a local offer in settlement of the current Scottish Nursery Nurses dispute in relation to the pay and grading claim.

The offer consisted of increases ranging from £748 per annum at the bottom of the grade to £500 at the top of the grade. In addition to these laughable increases the Nursery Nurses would have their job descriptions and conditions changed to include:

- Compulsory attendance at parent evenings and cluster network meetings
- Participation in whole school planning activities
- Purchasing of snacks out-with school hours.
- Preparation of resources.

Due to the compassionate and caring nature of the nursery nurse post the majority of these tasks have previously been carried out by Nursery Nurses in their own time - on a VOLUNTARY basis, not COMPULSORY. The working week would also still remain at 32½ hours.

### Offer unanimously rejected

In Forfar, on the 24 November, a meeting of Nursery Nurses were informed of the offer. After the initial laughter at this joke of an offer, it was rejected **unanimously**.

This offer has hardened the resolve of the Nursery Nurses resulting in the next wave of

industrial action which is to take place in Angus between the 8th – 12th December, to coincide with national industrial action from the 1 - 12 December.

In Angus this will take the form of an all-out day of action across the county on the 11 December. There shall also be selective action of 5 consecutive days at nurseries in Aberlemno, Carlogie, Langlands, Southmuir, Cortachy, Arbirlot, Colliston, Liff and Southmuir from the 8 - 12 December inclusive. In addition, Family Support Assistants in Broomfield Resource Centre shall also undertake action. This action is planned so to cause as much disruption to the Council with the least number of members being on strike.

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Remember to use the FREEPOST address for any written correspondence

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

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It is hoped that all UNISON members shall fully support their colleagues who have been forced to take further industrial action due to the intransigence of COSLA to discuss the National Nursery Nurse grade.

There is a rally planned in Dundee on 11 December, which

# NURSERY NURSES ACTION

will be well attended by Angus Nursery Nurses, and any colleagues, parents, friends are more than welcome to join in.

Nursery Nurses are not taking this action lightly as they are only too well aware of the impact this has on young children and their

families, and to date, the public have shown wonderful support for which the Nursery Nurses are very grateful. It is hoped that this sympathetic response from the public continues until the Scottish Councils' realise that this is a justifiable claim and settle this dispute.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### The use of mobile phones while driving

The new regulations came into force on 1 December 2003 and make it a specific offence to use a hand-held phone, or similar device, when driving. The penalty is a £30 fixed penalty or up to £1,000 on conviction in court (£2,500 for drivers of goods vehicles, buses or coaches). Below are some of the frequently asked questions about the new legislation.

#### Q1. What does the regulation say about hand-held phones?

The use of a hand-held phone or similar hand-held device while driving will be prohibited. A hand-held device is something that "is or must be held at some point during the course of making or receiving a call or performing any other interactive communication function". A device is "similar" to a mobile phone if it transmits or receives data. Examples of interactive communication functions are sending and receiving spoken or written messages, sending or receiving still or moving images and providing access to the Internet. 2-way radios are subject to special treatment under the regulations.

#### Q2. Is hands-free phone equipment allowed?

Provided that a phone can be operated without holding it, then hands-free equipment is not prohibited by the new regulation. And pushing buttons on a phone while it is in a cradle or on the steering wheel or

handlebars of a motorbike for example is not covered by the new offence, provided you don't hold the phone. However, hands-free phones are also distracting and you still risk prosecution for failing to have proper control of a vehicle under Regulation 104 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 if you use a hands-free phone when driving. If there is an incident, the use of any phone or similar device might justify charges of careless or dangerous driving.

#### Q3. What about texting / internet access/video phones?

The use of a mobile phone or similar device for any of these activities while driving is also prohibited if the phone (or other device) has to be held in order to operate it.

#### Q4. Will mobile phones have to be switched off in vehicles?

No. Passengers may want to use them. And drivers can use them when they are safely parked.

#### Q5. Who do the new regulations apply to?

The new regulations apply to the drivers of all motor vehicles on the road, including cars, motorcycles, goods vehicles, buses, coaches and taxis. They also apply to anyone supervising a learner driver, while the learner driver is driving.

#### Q6. Can I use a hand-held mobile phone when stopped in a traffic jam?

The prohibition applies when driving. Driving includes times when stopped

at traffic lights or during other hold-ups that may occur during a typical journey when a vehicle can be expected to move off after a short while.

**Q7. Are there any exemptions?**  
Yes. There is an exemption for calls to 999 (or 112) in genuine emergencies where it is unsafe or impractical to stop. There is also an exemption for the use of 2-way radios (see **Q9** below).

#### Q8. Are employers guilty of an offence if their employees use a hand-held phone while driving?

The new regulations apply to "anyone who causes or permits any other person" to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. The Department of Transport considers that employers would not be liable just because they supplied a telephone or because they phoned an employee who was driving. However, employers would probably be liable if they required their employees to use a hand-held phone while driving and might also be liable if they failed to forbid employees to use such phones on company business.

#### Q9. Will 2-way radios be included in the new offence?

The use of 2-way radio equipment (unless the device can also be used as a phone) when driving is not included in the new offence but remember there is still a risk of distraction and prosecution under other powers.

The legislation is available at <http://www.legislation.hms.gov.uk/si/si2003/20032695.htm>

You can Telephone or Fax the Office

01307 468950

# SELF ORGANISATION IN UNISON

Self organisation is a key element of the UNISON strategy for achieving equality. It has a vital role to play in enabling members who face discrimination to participate in the wider union. Successful implementation of the union's policies depends on the fullest possible involvement of women, black members, disabled members and lesbian and gay members who have traditionally been under represented at all levels of the union.

The aims of self organised groups are to bring together members of these groups to:

- Build confidence, encourage participation and provide opportunities for the fuller involvement of disadvantaged members in all UNISON activities.
- Develop UNISON policy on equality issues at a branch level.

- Identify service conditions and work place issues specifically affecting self organised groups.
- Elect representatives to other levels of the union's organisation.

The need to promote self organised groups was raised at the recent stewards training event.

We would be grateful if you could help us to help you by contacting the Branch Office on phone: 01307 468950 or email: [office@unison-angus.org.uk](mailto:office@unison-angus.org.uk)

Alternatively you can speak to:

Alan Cowan, Branch Education Officer, on either

Phone: 01307 473778

Email: [self.organise@unison-angus.org.uk](mailto:self.organise@unison-angus.org.uk)

## APF Corner

You may have noticed that the GRAPEVINE sometimes makes reference to the APF or the UNISON Labour Link, as it is now called. If you are currently a member of the Unison Labour Link you will already receive the UNISON Labour Link news magazine, keeping you up to date with the latest issues and events for the APF, but if not you may wish to consider becoming a member.

The UNISON Labour Link is the popular name of the Affiliated Political Fund which works for UNISON members through our relationship with the Labour Party. The APF Section of UNISON is affiliated to the Labour Party and has, over the years, worked hard to ensure that our aims and objectives as Union members are considered and reflected in the political decision making process both nationally and locally. We represent 700,000 UNISON

members who pay the affiliated fund contribution as part of their membership subscription (it does not cost you any more, just tick the APF option rather than the General Political Fund option on your membership application or contact me if you wish to change from the General Political Fund to the APF).

Any APF member can take part in branch APF activities and make their contribution in developing policy. As an APF member you are able to vote in Labour Party ballots such as those for the leadership team and on the manifesto. An ever increasing number of people feel disillusioned with politics and think that they cannot make a difference. Through the APF we can raise issues in the Labour structure and ensure that politics is not detached from our reality.

The Labour Party is the only party where trade unions can take part in policy making and are represented at all levels of the organisation as a valued stakeholder. The UNISON Labour

Link keeps the party in touch with the views of working people and the needs of public services in particular.

The 2003 Labour Link Forum has recently elected me, the Angus Council UNISON branch APF officer, as one of the UNISON APF delegates to the Scottish Labour Party Conference in Inverness next spring. I will be able to represent UNISON policy at this important event. I also attend APF events throughout the year representing Angus Council UNISON APF and usually there is an opportunity to bring along interested APF members as observers or delegates. So if you would like to know more about the APF, would like to join or would like to become more active as an existing APF member please contact your branch APF officer through the UNISON branch. I look forward to meeting you soon – maybe at the short APF AGM at 17.45 in the Forfar Academy at the UNISON AGM event on 23 February 2004.

*Petra McFatridge - APF Officer*

You can Email the Office

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

# Snippets



## 2004 Pay Claim

In early 2004, negotiators from UNISON Scotland and COSLA are to sit down at the table to thrash out a deal for the pay claim, payable from April 2004. There is very little information about the claim however another 3 year deal is being mentioned. Any information shall be passed down by your local workplace rep. If you do not have a rep then why not become one and get the info first hand.

## Industrial Accidents

If you have an accident at work, you should report it to your employer at the earliest opportunity. In addition, you should complete form BI95 from the Department of Work and Pensions. The Department will then decide whether your accident qualifies as an industrial accident in case you ever have to claim benefit as a result of an industrial accident. You can find a downloadable version of the form by going to the Department of Work and Pensions website at [www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk) and then typing BI95 in the search box. The search will also show an interactive version of the form that can be completed online.

## Return To Learn

Unison, Angus Council and WEA are pleased to announce further courses in 2004

### Want to boost your confidence?

### Want to get back into learning?

Return to learn can start you in a new direction. It is a ten-week course, starting in February 2004, designed for people returning to study. It is easy to join, it is informal and friendly with no required tests and exams. It develops your existing skills and gives you new ones in the areas of studying, writing, investigating and dealing with figures.

### Want to know more?

Come along for an informal chat with those who have done the course and course advisors:

- 12 December 2003, The Meffan, Forfar: 2 - 3pm
- 16 December 2003, Montrose Sports Centre: 2 - 3pm

Alternatively for information, or how to apply, contact:

- Workforce Development Team, Bruce House, Arbroath 01241 435076
- Alan Cowan, Unison Education and Learning Advisor 01307 473778

**CLOSING DATE DECEMBER 31 2003**

## Life Long Learning: 25 -- 27 Feb 2004

A 3 day course has been arranged for anybody who wishes to become a Lifelong learning adviser. Registration for attending the training course is required by Friday 30th January 2004. Time off arrangements and details of the venue etc will be confirmed after the registration date. Please contact Alan Cowan on

01307 473778 or email

[life.long.learning@unison-angus.org.uk](mailto:life.long.learning@unison-angus.org.uk)

## AGM 2004 Details

Make a note in your diary: The Branch AGM shall be at the following date/venue:

**MONDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2004**

**FORFAR ACADEMY  
Taylor Street, Forfar**

Substantial buffet available from 5:30pm

AGM to commence at 6:00pm

# How Safe is Contract Services?

Contract Services is one of the largest departments within Angus Council and has the largest number of accidents per department, yet at the moment we lack safety reps in this department. At the moment, we do not have a safety rep available to attend the departmental safety committee, which means that there is no UNISON representative available to raise your safety concerns.

Contract Services covers a variety of posts in diverse areas, from gardeners to swimming pool attendants to refuse collectors. We desperately need UNISON members who are willing to become safety reps to come forward as soon as possible.

You know your work better than anyone and you are the best people to tackle the problems you face as you already have the knowledge of the job and the issues surrounding it.

Training is provided by attending a ten day course (1 day per week) at Dundee College. Safety reps are entitled to paid time off for training and the Branch pays expenses for attending the course. The next course starts on Tuesday 20 January 2004.

I am therefore asking for anyone who is interested in becoming a safety rep to contact me as soon as possible. Please e-mail me on [healthandsafety@unison-angus.org.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@unison-angus.org.uk) for more details on becoming a

rep. Alternatively, a nomination form can be downloaded at:

[www.unison-angus.org.uk/resources.htm](http://www.unison-angus.org.uk/resources.htm) - simply hit the return key when it asks for a network password and the form can be accessed.

Please note that you have to be a UNISON member to represent UNISON in any capacity.

Please contact me, as Contract Services is really too big a department to be without UNISON representation. I look forward to hearing from you.

*Louise Trayner*

*Branch Health and Safety Officer*

You can visit the branch website

[www.unison-angus.org.uk](http://www.unison-angus.org.uk)

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