

INDEPENDENT CARE HOMES NEWSLETTER

**Welcome to the Spring newsletter for members in the independent care home sector...**

Once again we have been getting reports of people being told they cannot join a union. This is a lie. EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO JOIN A UNION. The union does not need to be recognised by your employer.

See [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) - Trade union membership; your employment rights :

**You have the right to:**

- choose to join or not join a union
- decide to leave or remain a member of a union
- belong to the union you choose, even if it's not the one your employer negotiates with on pay, terms and conditions
- belong to more than one union

**Your employer mustn't treat you unfavourably (for example refusing you promotion or training opportunities) if you:**

- join a union
- take part in its meetings
- leave a union

**An employer or employment agency isn't allowed to insist that you:**

- join or leave a trade union
- leave one union for another

**Your employer isn't allowed to dismiss you or choose you for redundancy because you:**

- are or want to be a union member
- aren't or don't want to be a union member
- took part or wanted to take part in union activities

**Your employer isn't allowed to:**

- offer you a benefit to leave a trade union
- threaten to treat you unfairly if you don't leave a union

Do remind your colleagues that they should be in a union.

Please also continue to send us information about pay terms and conditions on 07554433958 / [n.donnelly@unison.co.uk](mailto:n.donnelly@unison.co.uk) as well as any comments / question or contribution for the next newsletter.

**European Working Time Regulation**

**Do not put yourself and others at risk!!!**

UNISON representatives have reported several recent cases of members who got into trouble for breaking the European Working Time Directive requirement.



The Working Time Directive (WTD - [2003/88/EC](http://www.gov.uk)) limits the number of hours that anyone can work to protect people's health and safety. It gives EU workers the right to a minimum number of holidays each year, paid breaks, and rest of at least 11 hours in any 24 hours; restricts excessive night work; and provides for a **right to work no more than 48 hours per week.**

Many of our members would at time 'double job' to increase their wages. This could be for example, someone working for the Trust but adding extra hours with a private home care company; or someone working in a Private Nursing Home also banking through an agency. This is perfectly legal... as long as the hours you do work do not exceed the WTD limit.

Joe McCusker, UNISON Regional Organiser explained: "There is a legal duty on employers and an obligation on individual employees to ensure that their weekly hours of work are in compliance with the European Working Time Directive.

Some of our members have been disciplined (and dismissed!) by their employers for breaching the WTD and are now in a really difficult position."

There are limited opt out options and some exceptions to the 48 hours rule. Always check if they are unsure of what applies to their particular circumstances!

See <https://www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours> for more detail or contact your UNISON rep. (UNISON Northern Ireland - 02890270190 / UNISON Free helpline 0800 171 2193)

**Meeting with Portuguese Nurses and other Overseas Care Staff**

UNISON have been in contact with the Diaspora Enfermeiros network. As a result we are hosting an information / planning meeting with newly arrived Portuguese nurses to look at what support UNISON can provide for the group.

This will be an opportunity to meet UNISON representatives to

- discuss any work related / employment issues;
- look at what support is available from UNISON and most importantly
- meet with Trish Rockett (Curriculum Manager for Health & Social Care) and Tere McBurney (manager for Languages and ESOL) who will tease out **what the specific English language needs are for that group of staff and what courses could be put in place.**

This will be an informal session with refreshments and pizza provided. All welcome - *This event has been organised with Portuguese nurses in mind but will be relevant for anyone who is relatively newly arrived and needs further support with their English.*

Please RSVP Nathalie (email [n.donnelly@unison.co.uk](mailto:n.donnelly@unison.co.uk); text 07554433958; or Facebook UNISON NI Migrant Workers page) to give us an idea of numbers. Thanks!

**Nao fique sozinho. Se nao estiver sindicalizado, filie-se hoje no UNISON!**

**Afiliate a un sindicato- Afiliate a UNISON!**

<http://www.unison.org.uk/membership/>



**Code of Practice for Social Care workers – Safer Practice for you, your service & the service user**  
*Information provided by UNISON North and West Belfast branch*

The Code of Practice for Social Care Workers is a list of statements that describe the standards of professional conduct and practice required of social care workers as they go about their daily work. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) expects social care workers to meet this code and may take action if registered workers fail to do so.

In each newsletter we have been detailing information on various aspects of that code of conduct. See our website from previous newsletters / or consult the NISCC website [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info) to see full list of standards.

UNISON provides representation for our members at NISCC hearings.

**Social Care Standard 2: As a social care worker, you must strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of service users and carers.** This includes:

- 2.1 Being honest and trustworthy;
- 2.2 Communicating in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way;
- 2.3 Respecting confidential information and clearly explaining agency policies about confidentiality to service users and carers;
- 2.4 Being reliable and dependable;
- 2.5 Honouring work commitments, agreements and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explaining why to service users and carers;
- 2.6 Declaring issues that might create conflicts of interest and making sure that they do not influence your judgement or practice; and
- 2.7 Adhering to policies and procedures about accepting gifts and money from service users and carers.



**I want to live not just exist**  
 Campaigning for a Living Wage

**Living Wage Campaign**

Unions and campaigning organisations are calling on employers to start adopting a “living wage” rather than the “minimum wage”.

The idea behind a living wage is that people who work in our community should be able to live decently and raise their families here. This requires a wage that takes into account the area-specific cost of living, as well as the basic expenses involved in supporting a family.

The Minimum Income Standard (MIS) project provides a well-researched measure of how much a worker needs to earn to avoid the effects of poverty, such as ill health, poor levels of child development and social exclusion. **In the UK (outside of London) this figure has been calculated at £7.45 an hour for 2012/13.**

Low pay is not just an issue for those being underpaid, it also affects communities. Studies show that the bigger the difference between the lowest paid and the highest paid in a country, the worse that country fares on health, violence, social mobility and many other measures of well-being.

**UNISON courses coming up...**



**Learning Disability & Dementia**

- 10am – 4pm Wed 24<sup>th</sup> April, UNISON Belfast, UNISON Belfast \* This workshop will cover a range of aspects of dementia and how it relates to adults with a learning disability (delivered by Moira Scanlon, OT working with adults with a learning disability & dementia)

**Pressure Ulcer Prevention** - 1 – 4pm Thurs 18<sup>th</sup> April UNISON Belfast; 1 – 4pm Thurs 16<sup>th</sup> May UNISON Derry; 1 - 4pm Thurs 20<sup>th</sup> June

Lecture Theatre, Enniskillen Hospital \* Pressure sores are painful, debilitating and can be life threatening. This workshop is targeted at care assistants and home care workers, who can be at the forefront of early intervention for clients/patients on this issue. (delivered by the Tissue Viability Nurses Network)

See website for full list of courses available or contact Fidelma Carolan

[f.carolan@unison.co.uk](mailto:f.carolan@unison.co.uk)

**IELTS Preparation classes update –**

Classes to help people prepare for an IELTS exam have been running since January. The two classes are fully booked but we will start a new batch of classes in the Autumn. So... watch this space, and register your interest now and secure a space on the course.

[n.donnelly@unison.co.uk](mailto:n.donnelly@unison.co.uk)

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**"Paying the London Living Wage is not only morally right, but makes good business sense too."**  
 Boris Johnson - Mayor of London

**"The Living wage is a really important idea"**  
 Ed Miliband, leader of the opposition

Many employers have signed up to the living wage. We hope that many more will follow.

For a list of employers and further information, see the living wage foundation website: [www.livingwage.org.uk](http://www.livingwage.org.uk)