



Arundel Gate Court
175 Arundel Gate
Sheffield
S1 2LQ

Tel: 0114 2736307
Email: lgbranch@sheffunison.org.uk

City of Sheffield Branch

May 2020

Whilst our office is closed, we are very much still working remotely on your behalf and are in daily contact with Senior Officers across Sheffield City Council and other employers where our Branch has members.

The hope is to send out a regular bulletin to members to update them on current situations and where you can get further help and information from.

We would like to include some stories from members of what is happening where you work. Success stories and things to make everyone smile would be nice, as well as us communicating the vital information you need.

Our Twitter page is being updated frequently so why not follow us @UNISONSheffiel1, as is UNISON's National website where you will find the latest advice on the Coronavirus situation, to access this please visit unison.org.uk

Stay safe and keep up the amazing work!

Camilla

Camilla Sherwin
Branch Communications Officer

Keeping In Touch With Members

It is important that as a Branch we keep in touch with our members and the most effective way to do this is via email, not only is it quicker but it will also cut down on postage costs.

To do this we need to make sure that we hold up to date email addresses for everyone. If you have received this bulletin but your colleagues, who are UNISON members have not, then ask them to either email lgbranch@sheffunison.org.uk with their preferred email address and permission for us to use it, or go to unison.org.uk and click on 'My UNISON' where they will be able to log in and update their membership record.

South Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company

In these exceptional times your UNISON reps continue to work at all levels, trying to keep our members in Probation safe and well.

Members in SYCRC have recently voted to accept a pay award that sees drastic pay reform.

Pay Bands in our CRC were extremely long, and under Austerity measures would have taken members 22 years to progress from bottom to top. We have now shortened these pay Bands to 7 pay points. This shortening of pay Bands leaves a welcome legacy for our members that are set to transfer in to Private sector providers in the Summer of 2021. Our Members that will transfer to the NPS in the Summer of 2021 will see a significant boost through the NPS pay Band, when they transfer, due to our continued deletion of bottom pay points in the CRC. Whilst the pay award was not what we would have hoped for, due to the Covid 19 situation and uncertain economy, we took a pragmatic approach and got the best offer that we thought we could, and, put it to members before anyone could change their position.

Our members in SYCRC are in the majority working from home, with just a few exceptions. Volunteers have been sought in Unpaid work to help out with deliveries to and from Food Banks as well as other vital tasks. We also have staff who have volunteered to work in the Prisons from our Enhanced Through The Gate Team. There is no face to face work going on with service users but we needed to interface with Prison IT systems.

We are currently engaged with SYCRC to formulate a back to work plan, we believe that social distancing will be with us for some time after Lockdown is lifted.

We are looking at all our premises in South Yorkshire to work out both staff and service user revised occupancy levels.

We are looking at measures we can take in all our buildings to reduce the levels of risk to our staff. We have assurances that buildings will not open until we have safe ways of working in place for all our premises.

At a National level, work continues via a sub Committee of the Probation Committee Consultation Forum, to negotiate staff transfer and protection schemes. These negotiations are quite intense and have been going on since September of last year, most recently via Skype. Members will have the chance to vote on the outcomes of these negotiations as and when they are concluded.

Our regular face to face meetings with the Probation Minister Lucy Frazer, have also been replaced with Skype, the next one is planned for 07/05/2020 where your reps ensure that the Minister is fully apprised of our position in the respective meetings and can have an input when the level needs raising.

If you have any issues locally or nationally contact:

Neil Richardson - 07341508266
neil.richardson@probation.sodexogov.co.uk

Helen Cottam - 07341508275
helen.cottam@probation.sodexogov.co.uk

Sheffield City Council

It has been brought to our attention that Managers in Sheffield City Council have been informing employees that certain changes to working conditions have been agreed with the joint trade unions, i.e. more than one person in a vehicle, this is incorrect.

If you are unsure about any changes to terms and conditions, working conditions or places of work, please contact your Convenor – a list of names and contact details is included in this bulletin and can also be found on the Branch website <https://sheffieldlg.unison.site/>

As we have previously stated the Council will be looking for volunteers for some of the critical services they provide, if you can help please speak with your manager.

If you have any concerns over your safety and wellbeing at work, please do not hesitate to contact us.

These are very difficult times but as the lockdown is lifted and people return to their place of work remember UNISON will be there to assist with any concerns you may have.

NJC Pay

UNISON's NJC Committee do not consider the employers 2.75% pay offer to be the end of the negotiations and are continuing with the campaign to get more money for local government workers. Please follow the link below for further information.



[Read update on the NJC pay campaign](#)

Schools Update

UNISON nationally is raising concern at Government level that the advice to school staff regarding social distancing is inadequate and unachievable.

Locally, Education Convenors Lisa Smith and Rod Padley have been in almost daily contact with the local authority to challenge their assertion that "most (school) staff" fall into the category of being able to socially distance.

Approximately 2 weeks ago schools were issued with a risk assessment that relies heavily on social distancing to keep staff and pupils safe. In response, the Joint Trade Unions (including UNISON) support staff, teaching and school leader unions immediately raised their concerns with the Local Authority, asking to meet with them as a matter of urgency.

That meeting took place this week. The local authority is in no doubt that ALL the support staff and teaching trade unions agree the current schools risk assessment is inadequate.

We have since outlined our concerns in a detailed response to the LA, with a view to a much improved risk assessment being available for scrutiny at our next meeting.

Additional school specific information is accessed via the local website at <https://sheffieldlg.unison.site/> and national UNISON website [unison.org.uk](https://www.unison.org.uk)

We will also keep you updated via Branch bulletins.

COVID-19 Response Fund

There for You has set up a special response fund to help UNISON members in immediate financial difficulty due to coronavirus. We can provide a **one-off grant of £250** to help with essential expenses such as food and bills. For further information and to apply for the grant, please click the below link <https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/financial-assistance/>

Demand Action from the Government

Our members in care, the NHS and other vital public services have risen to the challenge of dealing with this pandemic. Many of our members cannot work from home due to their critical roles in the UK's public services.

If it is absolutely necessary that you go to work, it is vital your employer considers all measures to keep you safe. Where measures such as social distancing and workplace adjustments have failed or are insufficient, your employer will need to consider other measures. These include providing you with the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to do your job safely.

Unfortunately, many feel they are forced to put themselves in harm's way every time they go to work because this government is not keeping its promises on personal protective equipment (PPE).

[Sign our petition and demand proper protection](#)

Further useful links regarding PPE advice from UNISON –

[▶ PPE advice for care workers](#)

[▶ PPE advice for health workers](#)

[▶ See our general PPE advice](#)

UNISON and the Ethical Care Charter

In October 2017 Sheffield City Council signed UNISON's Ethical Care Charter. This means that private care companies who provide services on behalf of Sheffield Council must apply certain terms and conditions to their employees. One of those terms and conditions is payment of the Foundation (Real) Living Wage, which is currently £9.30 per hour.

Unfortunately, despite it being two and a half years since Sheffield Council signed the Charter, care companies in Sheffield are still not required to pay the Living Wage.

UNISON have written to the Leader of Sheffield Council to ask her to put this right and we are awaiting a reply.

We have set up an online petition and we are asking all our members to sign and share it so that we can put pressure on the Council to enforce the Foundation Living Wage.

The link to the petition is here: -

<https://www.change.org/SheffieldCareWorkersPay>

Please support our campaign for improved pay for care workers.

Moving Home

Moving or moved home?? Then don't forget to update your details with UNISON, either by emailing Branch Office lgbranch@sheffunison.org.uk with your details or go to unison.org.uk and click on My Unison.

Taylor Shaw

UNISON have been in contact with members who are employed by Taylor Shaw as we were informed that the majority of staff in Sheffield have been furloughed, which means that affected workers will receive 80% of their normal pay.

Taylor Shaw have informed us that they are applying to the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) for funding to pay staff 80%.

UNISON does not believe it is appropriate for an employer to apply to the CJRS if they are continuing to receive public funding. We understand that Taylor Shaw are currently continuing to receive funding for the Sheffield contracts during the Coronavirus lockdown. We therefore believe that they should continue to pay all employees 100% of their normal pay until at least the end of June.

Robin Symonds, UNISON Regional Organiser, has written to Sheffield City Council to establish if they are supporting Taylor Shaw's decision to furlough staff but to date has not received a response. We will keep members updated on this issue.

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) England and Wales

UNISON has welcomed the recent decision by the Supreme Court to overturn the UK Government's instruction to LGPS funds that they had to follow UK central government foreign policy when making investments. The judgement makes clear that decisions on ethical investment of disinvestment are the responsibility of LGPS funds. For more information please follow the link below.

▶ [Read the press release](#)

Contacting UNISON

Whilst the Branch Office remains closed we are unable to take telephone calls, however staff are working from home so if you need advice please email

lgbranch@sheffunison.org.uk

Alternatively members can contact the following people directly:

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

PEOPLE Portfolio

David Padley

d.padley@sheffunison.org.uk

0779 276 0815

Carol Ring

c.ring@sheffunison.org.uk

0740 776 0594

Camilla Sherwin (Tues-Thurs)

camilla.sherwin@sheffield.gov.uk

0753 000 6441

PLACE, Resources and Policy, Performance and Communications

Angela Hall

a.hall@sheffunison.org.uk

Joanne Crooks

j.crooks@sheffunison.org.uk

0788 184 6280

Schools (including Academies)

Rod Padley – (Tues-Thurs)

r.padley@sheffunison.org.uk

0771 073 7885

Lisa Smith

l.smith@sheffunison.org.uk

0788 184 7044

PRIVATE & VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Diane Mitchell (Mon-Thurs)

d.mitchell@sheffunison.org.uk

0790 803 7531

Sources of Support During the Coronavirus Pandemic

Mental Health

Mind

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#collapse4ff9b>

Listening Ear

<https://sheffieldmentalhealth.org.uk/support/listening-ear/>

Every Mind Matters

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

Mental Health Foundation

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/talking-to-your-children-scary-world-news>

Mental Health First Aid

<https://mhfaengland.org/https://mhfaengland.org/>

Bereavement Support

AMPRO - Support following suicide

Cruse - A national charity supporting people who have been bereaved

Listening Ear - A new listening service for people who have lost loved ones during the coronavirus pandemic.

Sheffield City Council Employees

Working from home

HR Development Hub - learning modules, guidance documents, links to external sites and to the webinars

- Managing your health and well being
- Setting up your work station at home
- Using Zoom and methods of communication
- Day Planner

Employee Assistance Programme (PAM)

- Confidential employee assistance is available for employees and family members
- This includes counselling services
- 30 min bookable webinars, workshops include:
 - Maintaining a positive mind-set
 - Working at home and being active.