



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY BRANCH NEWSLETTER September 2010

Pay and Grading

The 2010 pay negotiations have stalled with the Employer refusing to increase the 0.4% offer. Unite negotiators have registered a failure to agree and we are currently undertaking a consultative ballot of members. Members are being asked whether or not to accept the 0.4% offer.

Current records show that some university vice chancellors and other senior members of staff have enjoyed significant pay rises during this 'period of austerity'. Our negotiators recommend that we reject the offer.

Ballot papers were distributed late last week (Friday 3 September). If you have not received one please contact Will asap. Please return your ballot paper by **12.00 noon on Monday 20 September**. Negotiators were also seeking a means to protect the lowest paid workers and recognition of a national scheme for redundancy avoidance.

Local Trades Council

The Branch is affiliated to the local Trade Council and anyone who is interested may go along to meetings. If you are keen and would like to attend meetings please find out more from Robbie or Will.

Pensions

There is nothing new to report but pensions will be on the agenda at the PWG early in October.

Pensions jargon explained: see next page

Branch Meeting for Reps

Monday 20 September 12.00-14.00 at USC
This will provide an update on current issues so please try and attend

Against education cuts

The National Union of Students is organising a protest against cuts in education to take place on Wednesday 10 November. UCU are organising coaches for anyone who would like to attend. Details to follow

Unite Black History Month

This year the Black and Ethnic Minority Committee is to celebrate the contribution that black workers have made to the public sector and are producing a leaflet looking at when BAEM workers came over to work in the NHS, passenger and other public sector industries and their experiences then and since.

Black History Month is held every October. There is still much to do to achieve equality for Black and minority ethnic people. Many still face persistent disadvantage, discrimination, bullying and harassment at work. More information on Black History Month is available at:
<http://www.black-history-month.co.uk/>

Election for Unite General Secretary

The timetable for the election is as follows:

Nomination period: now closed. The Branch nomination was Gail Cartmail.

To be a candidate in the election a member must have ten years continuous membership of the union and have received at least 50 nominations of which a minimum of 10 must be from either category of branch and workplace, subject to the total including nominations from more than one region.

Ballot period: 25 October – 19 November 2010

Count: 20 – 21 November 2010

Declaration: 24 November 2010

Proposed removal of Default Retirement Age

The government is currently seeking views over its proposed removal of the default retirement age (DRA). What this means is that from October 2011 it would be illegal to force workers to retire when they reached the age of 65. In fact from April 2011 no forced retirement notices can be issued under the government's transitional arrangements.

Some employers, including B & Q, Nationwide, M & S, BT, the Co-operative group and J D Wetherspoon, have already scrapped the compulsory retirement age, which they find to be to their benefit. Age UK which has campaigned for the removal of DRA, see this as giving people over 65 full employment rights.

Some workers will welcome the right to work after 65; those who do not can give notice to leave at any time. One problem, however, apart from whether you might want to continue working after 65 or not, is with pensions, and in particular over pensionable age as it relates to both occupational pension schemes and the state pension.

Currently the state pension age is 65 for men which is not due to rise to 66 until 2016 at the earliest (though this may change) Following from the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations of 2006, most occupational pension schemes took 65 as the pensionable age. With the removal of the DRA a number of issues potentially arise:

- will employees be able to draw their pension and continue working?
- will employees be allowed to contribute to their occupational scheme beyond normal pension age?
- how will this effect any early retirement provisions in the scheme?
- what about 'late retirement' terms including death in service after normal retirement age?

Redundancy agreements may also be affected if they are linked to age and normal retirement age.

The removal of DRA may impact detrimentally on the employment of young people and apprentices: currently one in five of 16 – 24-year olds are unemployed. For employers it presents problems in terms of resource planning i.e how to recruit and retain staff where prospects for career development and promotion are less clear. For older workers there is the prospect of rigorous tests to prove their ability to perform adequately after the age of 65.

It is possible too to envisage a rise in the number tribunal claims from older workers dismissed for underperformance on capability grounds.

Retirement varies across Europe although, even where there is no DRA, figures from 2006 showed that people did not on average work beyond 65.

The government consultation period ends on 21 October 2010.

Some facts: 274,000 people could continue in their jobs under the new rules. In 2012 there will be 772,000 people aged 64 45% of 60 – 64 year olds are currently employed

(Source: The Age and Employment Network)

Pensions info - general

RPI to CPI: from April 2011 the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) will replace the Retail Prices Index (RPI) as the measure of inflation applying to all private sector defined benefit (DB) pension schemes.

CPI is considered more appropriate as a measure of inflation for pensioners because RPI excludes pensioners from its monthly household spending survey and includes housing costs, largely irrelevant to those pensioners owning their own homes. The change is expected to take between 5 – 10% from the value of DB scheme liabilities and reduce member benefits by around 15%. Whether this will actually benefit schemes remains to be seen: it is estimated that many DB schemes are required by their existing rules to increase pensions already in payment in line with RPI, which also applies to deferred pensions. The new rules would require an amendment to the Pensions Act of 1995.

USS changes: the USS is the UK's second largest DB pension scheme after BT. It is to move from a final salary scheme to career average earnings scheme, raise its normal retirement age to 65 and increase employee contributions from 6.35% of salary to 7.5%. Consultations are taking place now until December but there has been much opposition voiced by the UCU.

Types of pension schemes: a simple guide

DB = defined benefit schemes. Final-salary schemes are sometimes called DB schemes because the benefits are set out (defined) by the employer before a member joins the scheme.

DC = defined contribution scheme, an investment fund, determined by contributions and investment returns, used to buy an annual pension; also called a money purchase scheme.

Around 9 million people are still members of UK final salary schemes but increasing numbers of firms are closing them to new entrants. This is because stock market falls have meant that the total assets held by many companies have shrunk considerably. If assets fall below liabilities employers are duty bound to prop up ailing final salary schemes to ensure that members are paid their benefits in full. Another problem for employers is the 10% tax on any dividends earned by pension schemes. Dividends play an important part in the long-term health of pensions schemes, therefore any tax on them will increase the possibility that the scheme will not have sufficient assets to meet its liabilities.

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment means any unwanted behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated or degraded or humiliated or offended. Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect at work.

How common is it?

The 2003 Ipsos MORI survey, *Diversity Matters*, shows nearly a quarter (23%) of British employees claim to have fallen victim to discrimination, bullying or harassment at work.

University of Cambridge: Dignity@Work

The University of Cambridge has its own code of conduct in the *Dignity@Work* policy. In essence the policy states: "The University of Cambridge is committed to protecting the dignity of staff, students, visitors to the University, and all members of the University community in their work and their interactions with others.

The University expects all members of the University community to treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration at all times. All members of the University community have the right to expect professional behaviour from others, and a corresponding responsibility to behave professionally towards others."

What to do if I feel harassed/bullied?

The Dignity@Work outlines the procedure to be followed in dealing with such matters. The policy/procedure can be viewed online at:

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/policy/dignity/sources.html> or requested from the Personnel Division/Equality & Diversity section tel. 332286, email equality@admin.cam.ac.uk

Your local Unite Branch recognises the detrimental effects of harassment and bullying, and the often insidious way in which it is carried out. If you require help or support, please don't fail to contact us (details on back page).

Health & Safety Reps

The Branch is always on the look-out for those interested in becoming health and safety reps. Training available. Please contact Robbie or Will.

Branch Training

The course "*Dealing with Redundancy*" was held on Friday 27 August and 10 reps attended.

A follow-up course, "*Compromise Agreements*" will be held on Thursday 30 September and those who attended the previous course, plus anyone else interested, are welcome to attend: please contact Will if you are interested. Sandwich lunch provided. Venue: Room TP4, Computing Service

Cambridge University Press

CUP held a general meeting in August which mostly considered ongoing internal matters.

For motions put to Branch and news on Cambridgeshire Against the Cuts please see separate items.

Cambridgeshire against the Cuts

Cambridgeshire Against the Cuts are planning to take local action in support of the European Day of Action. The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is planning the *European Day of Action on Wednesday 29 September* in Brussels to coincide with the European finance ministers meeting and aims to prevent European governments moving collectively to slash public expenditure

For more information please see:
<http://www.cambridgeshireagainstthecuts.org.uk/>

Right to Work Campaign

The Campaign has initiated a national protest and demonstration at the Tory Party conference in Birmingham on Sunday 3 October. Two motions concerning the Campaign were forward at the last Branch meeting by Sara Bennett (CUP).

The first proposed that the Branch should affiliate to the Right to Work Campaign at an annual fee of £30. This was carried by a show of hands in favour .

The model motion in support of the demonstration on 3 October was also put to the meeting (details of which have been circulated to members) and again was carried.

Coaches will be going to Birmingham on 3 October leaving Cambridge at 09.30 am: details from Sara Bennett, CUP at sbennett@cambridge.org

The Campaign also plans a protest when the government announces details of the full budget cuts in October.

National Officer for Education Sector:
Mike Robinson

London & Eastern Regional

Regional Officer: Ian Maidlow
Transport House, 101 Madingley Road
Cambridge CB3 0EL
tel: 01223 353 048 fax: 01223 311 081

Regional Secretary: Steve Hart

“Woodberry”, 218 Green Lanes, London N4 2HB
tel: 020 8800 4281 fax: 020 8809 6501

**Unite Norfolk & Suffolk Area
Special Activists Meeting
Wednesday 6 October**

39 Thorpe Road, Norwich at 18.30

**“The Con-Dem Government Cuts:
The effect on public and private
sector workers”**

Guest speakers:

Steve Hart, Regional Secretary and
Jim Kelly, Regional Committee Chair

If you are able to attend please email:
val.haslam@unitetheunion.org

For national news and issues please visit the
Unite the Union website at:
<http://www.unitetheunion.com/>

UNITE Cambridge Website

The Unite / Amicus web pages are now on line at: <http://www.amicus.cam.ac.uk>
Website co-ordinator(s) : Steve Laurie and Cathy Salkield. Items for inclusion please contact: webmaster@amicus.cam.ac.uk

Use your website: copies of draft Minutes from monthly Branch meetings can be downloaded from the website and taken along to Branch meetings: this will help cut down on photocopying costs for the Branch.

Branch Newsletter

It is hoped that newsletters will appear monthly

Please display a copies of Newsletter in your workplace. If you need additional copies please contact Will who will also be arranging for those members without email to receive their copies of the Newsletter via UMS.

Branch Meetings

Branch meetings take place on the first Monday of the month (except when a Bank Holiday occurs) at 12.45 pm in the Bramwell Lounge, University Sports and Social Centre (USC)

Branch officials and organisation: contact details

Name	Email
John Baldwin <i>Lifelong Learning</i>	staff-dev@amicus.cam.ac.uk
Juliet Barrows <i>Newsletter</i>	newsletter@amicus.cam.ac.uk
Robbie Fountain <i>Branch Chair Individual cases</i>	chair@amicus.cam.ac.uk
Theresa Jones / Birgitte Bruun <i>Equal Opportunities Dignity at Work</i>	dignity-equality@amicus.cam.ac.uk
Steve Laurie <i>Webmaster</i>	webmaster@amicus.cam.ac.uk
Andrew Moss <i>Training Officer</i>	rep-training@amicus.cam.ac.uk
Paul Stokes <i>Branch Treasurer, Pensions</i>	treasurer@amicus.cam.ac.uk
Will Smith <i>Branch Secretary Health & Safety Recruitment & Organisation</i>	secretary@amicus.cam.ac.uk health-safety@amicus.cam.ac.uk
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