

## EQUAL PAY BULLETIN

Autumn/Winter  
2007

**GMB** Organisers are working closely with **RCT** Officers to evaluate the full extent of equal pay claims being sought by our members against their employer.

Equal pay registration forms are available for **GMB members and non members** at the Pontypridd office; identified **non trade union employees** who may be eligible for an equal pay claim will have been contacted too encouraging them to take up membership of a recognised trade union of their choice by the **RCT HR Unit**, in a joint attempt to correct this ongoing injustice in pays. So if you know a colleague who is not in

a union encourage them to take up membership with us.

Once the full extent of the claim is known negotiation can take place with regard to the level of compensation the authority is prepared to offer if and when agreement is reached pending consultation and acceptance by our members. **RCT** will then know the full value of their liability and should be in a position to apply for capitalisation (a loan) from the Welsh Assembly government



to meet reimbursement costs.

Further information can be obtained by telephoning the Pontypridd office (**01443 491959**) and if requested seminars can be arranged, to speak to groups of employees who are still unsure of this issue.

If you believe that you are eligible for an equal pay claim please contact the Pontypridd office, as soon as possible, for a registration form before you lose out.

## STOPPRESS....LATE NEWS...STOPPRESS

**GMB MEMBERS ACCEPT LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY OFFER 2007:** The GMB ballot on the 2007 pay offer for Local Government workers shows a 7 to 1 majority

to accept, on a 25% turnout. The offer was for a 2.475% increase backdated to 1st April 2007 and establishes a new minimum rate of £6 an hour which will make a difference for

the 300,000 council workers currently paid less than that. There are no strings or other changes to conditions. *Brian Strutton, GMB National Secretary.*

## CHANGE OF BRANCH PRESIDENT

Last year saw the happy retirement of Christine Phillips from her post in meals on wheels; she also took the same opportunity to stand down from her roll as president so that she can truly enjoy her retirement and have the pleasure of helping with her granddaughter. The branch truly wishes

Chris ever happiness in her new era of life and will always be grateful for the part she played in setting the foundations for the newly formed RCT branch back 12 years ago.

The branch unanimously elected Mark Bowler into this

office in recognition for his faithfulness and commitment that he has given to the branch through all the other posts he previously held, we have every confidence that he will make an excellent president and wish him well and assure him of our continued support.

### Inside this issue:

	Page No
From the Branch Sec	2
A Trade Union Success	2
Full Time officers Change	3
Nominations for Branch Sec	3
Something for Managers	3
Equal Rights	4
Pay Offer Why Balloting	4
RCT Homes Update	5
Health and Safety	5
Membership Form	6
Membership Benefits	7
Branch Contacts	7
Remploy	8

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## From the Branch Secretary

It's been another long hard and exhausting year with all the changes that have either occurred or are in the process of happening within **RCT**. I.e. Job Evaluation, Equal Pay, Housing Stock Transfer, and the list just goes on. Or is it I'm just getting a wearying old man, having given a record 8 years in this post fighting many battles on a day to day never ending cycle, many that I was able to win some I've lost but always being the middle man. I've endeavoured to respect our managers and let them manage, however I tried to be quick in taking every opportunity



to push for improved working conditions and job security never letting the authority forget they have a welfare responsibility to its 14,000 employees, which surely is a great responsibility.

However there comes a time to move aside for new blood and fresh vision therefore I want to take this opportunity to thank the branch for the opportunity given me in representing you as the secretary, a job I found rewarding and enjoyable on the whole but jolly hard work, and I wish to announce my decision to stand down from office.

The branch has been growing steadily this last year, and I'm truly thankful for all those who have played their part in promoting the **GMB** both in the workplace and representing us at conference. It is good to know that the branch has a few capable members who are willing to come forward and take on this job. As I have done my best to inspire each one of them it would be wrong for me to show any favouritism but rather let you the branch members have your choice by election in accordance with the GMB rule book. However I wish each candidate well and hope to be around for a little while yet to assist the newly elected candidate settle into office.

## A Trade Union Success

One of the 1<sup>st</sup> policy introductions that Labour enacted when getting back into power 10 years ago was the contentious phasing in of the 'National Minimum Wage'. This was the result of much continuous lobbyist's pressure from our trade union activists that put up a good fight for many years for such legislation. We were all very pleased to see Labour quickly honouring its pre-election pledge in this area. Despite all the anti business hype that the government had too endured, and the scaremongering that the capitalist element of society was propagating falsely prophesying that many low paid jobs will go to the wall. It is acclaimed as one of the greatest successful legislation introductions in modern times.

We never did see those vast amounts of job losses or those essential small businesses such as Cafés and corner shops that serve our community well, going bankrupted overnight as a result of its introduction back in 1999, but rather we gradually witnessed an end to 'sweatshop' labour for a pittance of reward. I knew many

that were loyal and hardworking for pay of just around £2.00 per hour, they could hardly believe there new found wealth when their employer was forced to virtually double the pay and introduce the new rate which was a humble £3.60. Grumble I'm sure many an employer did as it must have had a significant negative impact on gross profits having to give your employees an 80% pay rise, but we never saw the overnight closure of business as many predicted. Indeed research has shown many small businesses to have thrived as a result of the extra spending power of those low paid workers, and although gross profits might be lower turnover is significantly higher which means those staff employed in such areas work even harder for that little bit extra.

Since that 1<sup>st</sup> introduced rate of £3.60 back in April 1999, we have continued to push for and have seen the rate rise year on year with the current rate set at £5.35 with everyone keenly awaiting October and what as

become the usual forced increase where this year the rise is up at £5.55. Regular annual increases in pay were unheard of for many until this legislation was introduced.

An excellent example of what the **GMB** spends your contributions on, so never let it be said it's a pointless waste of money joining a union for they don't do anything for you!

Many passionate members give much of there time voluntarily fighting for improvements and to keep hold of many things we too readily take for granted.

If the GMB isn't working for you it's because you are not helping the GMB to work with you. Get more involved with branch activities and you could be surprised how much you have to thank us for.

Why not make every effort to come along to the monthly branch meetings? Every paid-up member will have a warm welcome.

## A Members appreciation Of the RCT Sickness scheme

Having been employed by the Local Authority for 22 years I was always proud of my impeccable sickness record, as from a young man I knew the importance of such safety nets and it was one area of employment liberties I was always sad to see abused. We each are on that road to older age when the body begins to wane, never did I imagine that there would come a day that I would require the support of the long term sickness benefit as in our conditions of employment, and am truly

thankful that I never did abuse such a privilege in younger days so that it was still in place when I really did require it.

Thanks to my employer for such a privilege and a very big thanks to the Occupational Health Unit for the very caring and genuine support given to me so as to ensure my return to work will be as stress and trouble free as possible. Though overzealous or inappropriate manager intervention has probably prolonged the absence period unnecessarily, perhaps it could be

an opportunity to look at speeding up the stringent protocols that are in place when an employee feels ready to return to work.

I trust my union always to fight against any plan that an employer has to erode any of our contractual benefits but we also must acknowledge our responsibility in such by ensuring that we do not abuse such privilege and give the employer a valid excuse to withdraw from such commitments.

## Full Time officer Support

At the time of this news letter going to print Kelly Andrews our full time organiser for the female sector has embarked on a period of maternity leave. Kelly is expecting her first child in November and as



a branch we wish her well for the birth and look forward to her return some time in 2008.

Kelly's duties within Rhondda Cynon Taff will transfer to the capable hands of Mr Gareth

Morgans our other full time officer support.

Please be advised that before we involve our full time officer it is imperative that issues are initially taken up by following the agreed procedures of representation by the local branch shop stewards. Your shop stewards will then contact Gareth for advice and support should the need arise.

## NOMINATIONS FOR BRANCH SECRETARY

Nominations are now open for acceptance from any member of the branch; Nominees must be a member of our branch with 52 weeks full paid-up contributions, and a RCT employee. Each nominee must be submitted with a second porpoise's and will be

subject to a suitability interview with the branch executive council before going onto the ballot process.

The ballot will be held in Abercynon Rugby Club on 31st October 2007 at 7pm and will be held in accordance with rule book

condition that is by a show of hands at a specially convened AGM. Each member has until Friday 26th October to formally get their nomination of candidate to the Branch Secretary at the Pontypridd Office.

## SOMETHING FOR THE MANAGERS

**"The most successful organisations make the most effective use of its people!"**

*What does it mean?*

We believe it means that a satisfied employee, *that is*, one who can see fairness and equality in the workplace where there is a

good and honest career development opportunity, who can see that loyalty and service can gain its reward, is a more happy,



conscientious and trust worthy worker.

Is your department happy, conscientious, and trust worthy?

**If not, why not?**

# Equal Rights – Mark Bowler

The **GMB** is very proud of its record on encouraging and organising the minority groups of society to stand up and be recognised. Over the years I have found it an enjoyable experience playing my part in such activity both at a regional and national level.

One of my first lobby experiences was joining a TUC delegation some years back fighting for what is now the "Civil Partnership Bill", something I was not too sure I agreed with at the time because of my religious convictions, however having studied the drafts and debated with colleagues on the train as we made our way to Westminster I could see the importance of such legislation in bring a fairer playing field to many Lesbian & Gay couples. By the time we got to the houses of Parliament I was ready to send a 'green card' to my MP and get my chance to persuade him of its importance. We now see many

same sex couples taking opportunity of this bill, enabling them to have the same rights in life and death as other couples.

**GMB** is still very much pro-active and is trying to establish a larger Lesbian and Gay (LGBT) network nationwide and who knows if we have our way this legislation will be applicable to siblings living together also. That is but one small example of what your union contributions helped to achieve.

The position of branch equality officer came about as the union recognised that more and more women were taking up membership of the **GMB**, there is near a 50/50 gender balance in membership now, however we still recognise that women are not becoming involved as they should! Who best to fight for women's issues? WOMEN, and over the years **GMB** has put a lot of commitment and resources into encouraging women, with special confidence building

seminars and activities. However I am sadden to see that the female involvement in our branch has dropped significantly over the months. **Come on girls** get your voice heard and come back to the monthly meetings, otherwise the men might just come out on top yet again in 'Job Evaluation' if you dare let us forget your there.

Nothing would please me more than to be able to hand this roll onto a woman who has strong conviction of the trade union ethos and who would encourage other women into our branch activities. Give me a call if you have the slightest interest and talk about it, together we can develop our branch for the benefit of every member.

Telephone me, **Mark 07974 108723** for advice on any equality issue.

## PAY OFFER BULLETING

Many of our members are confused as to why we are consulting with members when other unions are not, this is a **GMB** decision as we believe it a more democratic approach. Although the latest offer is pitifully poor it is recognised as the absolute final that the employer side will give, unless we force their hand with industrial action. In taking such action we need to stop and consider that it will probably take a longer drawn out campaign with significant loss of earnings to our members and no guarantee of any substantial gain to offset the loss.



We in RCT should be more concerned with Job Evaluation and getting that right for that is where the significant impact on our near future pay is going to occur.

If the consultation ballot rejects the pay offer then we in the near future will be going towards a strike ballot as like other unions. This is not a back down exercise by the **GMB** but a more democratic approach by our national executive to ensure

the **GMB** membership in public services get the very best service from your union.

If the consultation exercise accepts the pay offer as it stands

then we might see ourselves in a conflicting situation with other trade union colleagues, if and when such event comes about we shall endeavour too keep our members fully informed of our recommendations.

This latest consultation exercise again has highlighted that address records are not up to date with some members losing out on this opportunity to have their say, we can only remind our members it is your responsibility to inform us of any change of address and other relevant details as and when they occur. **IF YOU HAVE CHANGED ADDRESS IN THE LAST FEW YEARS AND NOT SURE WE HAVE YOUR NEW DETAILS THEN CONTACT US AT THE PONTYPRIDD OFFICE**



# RCT HOMES UPDATE

Everyone involved in housing I'm sure are well and truly up to date with the events that will shortly be introduced. It has been a long process that has involved significant council, staff, trade union, and tenant participation and much debate and many man-hours to



get things right. Shortly RCT County Borough Council will be losing all its housing stock, staff, and responsibility for provision of social housing, when it transfers all its responsibilities over to the newly formed RCT Homes

The GMB has been involved in every part of the process from the very beginning, even sending a delegation to Westminster in an attempt to get the government to put what was regarded as the 4<sup>th</sup> option on the table. Unfortunately the 4<sup>th</sup> option has not yet been adopted by Parliament and in order for RCT housing to obtain the Welsh Assembly funding it requires to bring its housing stock

up to modern standards we have had no choice but assist the authority in this transfer.

Many employed in the housing division have long recognised this to be the best way forward to secure the long term protection of their jobs, though I'm sure there are many apprehensions individuals will have in changing employer. Indeed I think it fair to say it will be a sad day to the authority when they have to give up such a large section of its responsibility.

GMB negotiators have remained firm to obtain the best possible transfer deal for our members and it is good to have a last minute assurance that RCT Job Evaluation recommendations will be implemented after TUPE.

Admitted body status into the Local Government Pension Scheme has been granted and we would encourage all our members to stay in this scheme in the hope

that it will give you more of a secure retirement.

Significant change is in long term sickness entitlement, however this amicable agreement is hoped to have advantages for most and a discouraging impact to deter malingering.

'RCT Homes' refuse to recognise the long service award currently available in the authority so we are still in negotiations and hopeful that RCT will do the honourable gesture of paying the award to all long serving employees with 20 years or more service upon the day of TUPE transfer. RCTCBC will grant its former housing employees a one year window where if anyone should secure a job back with the council there will be no break in continuity of service.

We are pleased to say that 'RCT Homes' have given recognised status to us as a union and that we have successfully negotiated facility time for our representatives and activists on par with the status quo we have with the council.

## Health and Safety Risk Assessments - Craig Jones

In accordance with H&S legislation all work situations should be risk assessed under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR) Section 3. We in RCT have an arrangement with the employer to assist in this process. There is no single way to design and carry out a risk assessment but it should include the following:

### Identify the hazards

### Decide who might be harmed and how

### Evaluate the risks and decide on precaution

### Record the findings and implement them

### Review the assessment and update if necessary

From this assessment all the risks would be give a rating of LOW, MEDIUM, HIGH. A low rating often means that there is a low risk and no further action is needed. A medium rating often means there is a risk and further action is needed to make it safe. High rating often means a stop of the job and the work redone to make it safe.

As a result of the assessment a safe system of Work would be created and issues to staff with appropriate instruction and

training on the new Systems

What can you do if the assessment is not complete or you disagree with it?



You can ask to see the risk assessment or the Safe Systems of Work which is created from the risk assessments. If there is anything that is wrong or missing you should bring this up with the competent

person with in your workplace and contact your local GMB Safety Representative who will help you do this.

If you need further advice contact Craig Jones on 07971 286 792

# JOIN US NOW

**1** Start by filling in details about yourself

**2** Then fill in details about your job

**3** Then choose how to pay: EITHER by deductions from your pay

**4** OR by Direct Debit from your bank or building society

**5** Hand the completed form to your GMB representative, or post it—you don't need a stamp—simply moisten the edges, fold, seal and post

MOISTEN HERE

FOR UNION USE ONLY Section

Branch No

Membership No

Date of joining

## GMB membership application form PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

### 1 TELL US ABOUT YOU

Surname  First name  Title  Mrs/Miss/Ms/Mr  Date of birth

Home address  Home Tel  Email

Postcode  Mobile

Date

I agree to abide by GMB rules Signature

We ask for your ethnic origins as part of our equal opportunities policy of improving services to all members  
 Bangladeshi  Black African  Black Caribbean  Black British  Chinese  Indian  Irish  Pakistani  White  Other:

### 2 TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOB

Employer  Your job

Address where you work  How many hours a week do you work?

Postcode  Work Tel  Pay No

Pay Date

### 3 CHOOSE EITHER AUTHORISATION OF DEDUCTION OF YOUR TRADE UNION CONTRIBUTIONS FROM YOUR PAY

Section 68, Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidated) Act 1992 as amended

- I authorise my employer to deduct from my pay each week/month the sum of £  or other amounts as may be fixed by the GMB from time to time.
- Please start the deductions immediately and pay the amounts to the GMB.
- I note that this agreement may be cancelled by one month's notice in writing.
- I give permission to my employer to notify the GMB of any future change of address.

Signed  Date

Cash

### 4 OR INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT

Please fill in the form and send to **GMB South Western Region**, Williamson House, 17 Newport Road, Cardiff CF24 0TB  
 Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society branch

To the Manager of

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Bank/Building Society Account Number

Bank/Building Society Sort Code

Reference number (Office use only)



Originator's Identification Number

9 7 4 3 3 0

For GMB official use only. This is not part of the instruction to your Bank/Building Society. If your A/C number is not available fill in your address below.

#### Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

Please pay GMB Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with GMB and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks or Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account.

MOISTEN HERE

DETACH FORM HERE

# Benefits Of GMB Membership

The GMB is one of Britain's largest national trade unions catering for all occupations and industries. Our network of 25,000 representatives supported by an extensive network of employment law specialists, health & safety professionals and expert negotiators provides:

**Advice, support & representation on any work-related matter.**

**Legal advice and support for you and your family,**

**Collective bargaining to maintain and improve your working**

As a GMB member you are also further protected by a range of insurance policies as well as entitled to access a range of competitive financial benefits.

**These include:**  
**National Accident Benefit**  
*(for being off work for over 14*

*days due to an accident at work)*

**I n d e m n i f i c a t i o n**  
*(All nursing & care staff have £5,000,000 legal cover\*)*

**F u n e r a l B e n e f i t**  
*(Premium for those final costs)*

**F a t a l A c c i d e n t B e n e f i t**  
*(Premium to dependants)*

**F a m i l y A c c i d e n t I n s u r a n c e**  
*(Cash Benefits of up to £1,000,000)*

**D i s c o u n t A A M e m b e r s h i p**  
*(GMB preferential rates)*

**F r e e W i l l s**  
*(Joint or single wills completely free with union solicitors)*

**D i s c o u n t C a r H i r e**  
*(Special 15% discount)*

**A n n u a l H o l i d a y I n s u r a n c e**  
*(Comprehensive worldwide cover)*

**Motor Insurance**

**Home Insurance**

**Personal Loans**

**Mortgage Arrangements**

**GMB Credit Card**

**Home Warranty & Pet Insurance**

**T a x S e r v i c e s**  
*(Help with your tax Return with Unity)*

**Transport Hardship Assistance**  
*(£5.20 a Year)*

**Road Traffic Accident Scheme**  
*(If injured on the road as a driver, passenger, cyclist or pedestrian you could be entitled to free legal advice)*

**Union Law Scheme** *(Free legal advice on problems NOT CONNECTED with work)*

**Common Law Assistance For Occupational Injury or Diseases**

**Dispute, Lock-Out & Vitimisation Benefit**

## Branch Executive Contacts

Name	Office Held	Telephone Number	E-Mail
Richy Dally	Branch Secretary	01443 490891 07967 707535	Richard.J.Dally@rhonddacynon-taff.gov.uk
Craig Jones	Assistant Branch Secretary Health and Safety Officer	01443 490891 07971 286792	Craig.Jones@rhonddacynon-taff.gov.uk
Mark Bowler	Branch President Equality Officer	07799 131854	
Phil Shelton	Branch Vice President	01443 494850	Philip.G.Shelton@rhonddacynon-taff.gov.uk
Lyn Evans	Rhondda Convener	07899 924984	Lyn.Evans@rhonddacynon-taff.gov.uk
Jeff Evans (Pav)	Cynon Convener	07786 523782	
Julie Bartley	Branch Auditor	01443 472461	Julie.A.Bartley@rhonddacynon-taff.gov.uk
Haden Meadow	Branch Treasurer		
Paul Williams-Burnett	Education Officer	07977 205796	paubunett.gmb@hotmail.co.uk
<b>Pontypridd Office</b>	<b>28e Taff Street, Pontypridd, CF37 4TR</b>	<b>01443 490891 01443 491959</b>	<b>Fax: 01443 405844</b>



## ASSISTING NEW PARENTS BACK TO WORK WITH CHILDCARE VOUCHERS

The childcare voucher schemes are a government led initiative designed to support working parents with their childcare costs. The Childcare voucher scheme was originally launched in 1989 and introduced in Wales in early 2005 and has proved to be the most popular form of childcare assistance that an employer can provide.

*Childcare vouchers are a proven, flexible solution and are universally accepted for all forms of registered or approved childcare across the UK, including all the leading nursery groups, childminders, out-of-school clubs, nannies and au pairs.*

### **How does the voucher scheme work?**

The voucher scheme works by an employee purchasing childcare vouchers from the employer who in turn reduces the amount of employee wages or salary to reflect the

amount of vouchers received. The total value an individual receives will remain the same, as the vouchers supplement the reduced salary, therefore the overall package is equivalent to the original salary.

Employees with children up to the age of 15 years are eligible for the scheme, or 16 years if a child is disabled. Childcare must be registered or approved and details of the registration number must be submitted to the childcare voucher provider.

Those employees that are eligible are entitled to a maximum of £55 (£243 per month) a week of employer provided childcare vouchers and these are exempt from tax and NI contributions.

### **Childcare Voucher Provider**

**Busy Bees Childcare Vouchers Ltd** - Busy Bees is a private company set up over 21 years ago and has been introducing the benefits of Childcare Vouchers for over four years to a wide range of authorities and private sector

companies.

They are a nationally recognised childcare company that provides vouchers to over 4,000 companies nationwide making them the largest provider in the UK.

Busy Bees check that those providing childcare are registered appropriately. They also calculate the amount of vouchers a person is entitled to in line with minimum wage and tax credits.

Busy Bees operate a free phone number for all parents who use the scheme, which provides up to date information about the scheme.

## Contact

Further information and various forms to download can be found on the Council's Intranet Site, however if further advice is needed or you wish to sign up to the voucher scheme, please contact **Busy Bees on 0800 0430 860**.

## Branch Support For The Remploy Campaign

In May, Remploy said that 43 of its factories were to be closed nationwide. The plants scheduled to close in Wales were Aberdare, Abertillery, Bridgend, Treforest and Wrexham. Two others, at Brynamman and Ystradgynlais, had been due to merge with one in the Neath Port Talbot area. The factories which manufacture goods like wheelchair parts, Car parts and furniture, were running at a loss.

The GMB and other unions launched a national campaign to stop the closers. This included demonstration march through Cardiff, a month-long mobile

trade union campaign which began in Aberdeen and ended in Bournemouth at the Labour Party's annual conference last month and motions were put forward to stop the factories from closing. There have been numerous of other activities through out the



Nation.

Some of the results that have taken place since the May is the Bridgend site has been saved and will stay open with all 89 jobs intact and Mr Peter Hain MP said an agreement had been reached with unions and management which meant

there would be no closures without ministerial approval.

The branch fully supports the fight to keep all the factories including the two within the branches geographical area namely Aberdare and Treforest. We will offer support in anyway that we can to help the fight and keep these important jobs in our communities. We have only one thing to say in closing

# SAVE OUR REMPLOY FACTURES