

GMB@ Cumbria County Council

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Workplace News

Happy New Year- Welcome to your January addition of Workplace news. Over the previous year C11 branch has worked hard supporting individual members through consultation, negotiation and bargaining with CCC. C11 branch donated £2000 to the Cumbria Community Foundation Flood appeal to help support individuals and communities affected by the Cumbria floods and we are offering support to members directly affected by the flooding. In the coming year we look forward to continuing to support existing members and welcoming new members. If you have a workplace issue you wish to discuss please do not hesitate to contact us or see our website for useful information.

Industrial Issues

HR1 Notice (Advanced notice of redundancies) –

GMB continue to meet CCC about the HR1 notice. In the most recent meeting GMB raised issues around assimilation processes, contracts of employment, Business support review, exit payment cap- impact on members and the council's current external private workforce staffing levels. If you want to know about any of these issues please contact your convenor.

Members committed to working hard to help with the Cumbria flooding

GMB C11 branch would like to acknowledge the effort and commitment of members who have been working hard to support Cumbria County Council during and following the devastating Cumbria floods. In the most recent Corporate JCG Cllr Leader Stewart Young asked the TU's to thank all staff on his behalf for all their hard work and commitment to Cumbria.

Highways-

Negotiations are still ongoing for adverse weather/ winter maintenance rotas for highways staff. The negotiations are very complex and changes have the potential to impact on other staff groups. Any highways members who wish to make any comments or want more information about the negotiations should contact their local workplace reps in the first instance. The workplace reps are James Comeford, John Watling and Ricky Sill.

Children's Services-

GMB attends a regular TU only meeting with John Macilwraith (CS Corporate Director) to discuss TU matters within CS. GMB attends the Children's Services Joint consultative group meeting chaired by Sue Butcher (CS Acting Assistant Director) and the Education Joint consultative group meeting chaired by Alan Lindsay (Senior manager- Learning Improvement). These meetings are important for communicating and formally informing CS of member's workplace issues/concerns, consulting on the issues that affect members and negotiating a resolution to the issues.

Government threat to end 'Check Off'- Brian Strutton GMB National Secretary for Public Services say's "The government might as well cut the crap".

Currently, under the check off process, many workers who are GMB members have their subscriptions taken directly from their salary, administered by CCC. The government intends to abolish this practice.

Brian Strutton, GMB National Secretary for Public Services say's-

"This latest attack on trade unions begs the question is this government hell bent on destroying trade unions?"

Is it really such an onerous burden on public finances and administration to deduct union subscriptions from salary when it's done for hundreds of other organisations, charities, sports clubs, and professional bodies, so why only ban it for unions? The administrative cost is very small and we already pay local authorities for the facility many areas and are quite willing to agree a fee for the service elsewhere. The government might as well cut the crap - it wants to cripple unions and ban strikes. Its whole approach is an unjustified onslaught on democratic associations of working people that are an intrinsic and essential part of our industrial make up which I believe most people will think is going too far."

To ensure you remain a member of GMB we will contact you in the next few weeks with a view to moving all GMB members from 'Check-Off to 'Direct Debit'.

Building the GMB in Cumbria County Council

In the GMB we believe that workers themselves, through their union, working together, should have a far greater influence over workplace issues – whether this be hours of work, rates of pay, health and safety or training.

You can help build the GMB in CCC why not become a:

Workplace rep? John tells us why he became a GMB rep-

“I have been a workforce rep for 13 years, at the time the county council were going through TUPE transfer of our department to a privately owned company and there was a lot of uncertainty within the workplace. We didn't have a workforce rep in our depot so I decided to put my name forward and 13 years later I'm glad that I did. It is gratifying to be the person that members turn to when they have issues in the workplace and being able to liaise with management to solve these issues i.e. Health & Safety, grievances, disciplinary. Definitely become an active member in your branch as the training support and help you will receive is second to none as it widens your knowledge in the different parts of the workplace to help you deal with a variety of issues you have”

Union Learning Rep? Jen tells us why she became a GMB ULR -

“I chose to become a union learning representative to promote adult educational opportunities within the workplace. Apart from mandatory training requirements specific to job role, I felt there was a lack of any type of education or further training to enable people to further their personal or professional development and life opportunities.

There is often a misconception that education is like being back at school yet this is not the case in adult education. Adult educational courses of any type enable people to think about their own potential in developing a new skill, a new hobby, personal interests or developing the skills and knowledge needed for a career change.

My ULR training involved developing the skills needed to become aware of what educational opportunities were available in the wider community and how people could access them. This also included assessing demand and speaking to staff by asking them what kind of courses would they like to access. My role often involves chatting to staff to establish personal choice, concerns that they have about their own learning needs as most of the time a lack of self confidence stops people from becoming involved in something different to their usual routine. Often the role of the ULR involves providing advice and support to people by making them aware of what opportunities are available to their specific request or need.

The role of the ULR is diverse and I believe continually evolving around the needs of the staff within their given working environment as this not only helps those to further their own potential but it upskills the workforce. Which is a valuable asset to the employer.”

Public sector exit payment cap

The government proposes to establish a £95,000 cap on the total value of exit payments made to an individual in relation to their exit from public sector employment, and intends to introduce clauses in the Enterprise Bill to give effect to such a cap.

How will it work?

- cap the total cost of all forms of exit payments available to individuals leaving employment to £95,000.
- apply the cap to all types of arrangement for determining exit payments.

Which payments for recovery?

The proposal is the cap will cover payments made in relation to leaving employment, including:

- voluntary and compulsory exits
- other voluntary exits with compensation packages
- ex gratia payments and special severance payments
- monetary value of any extra leave, allowances or other benefits granted as part of the exit process which are not payments in relation to employment
- payments or compensation in lieu of notice and payments relating to the cashing up of outstanding entitlements (such as outstanding leave or allowances that are cashed up and added to the value of the sum)

The government portrays the cap as something only highly paid staff in public services should be concerned about however long serving lower paid staff such as social workers, highways workers and teachers could be caught out by the cap.

GMB C11 Branch believes this policy has the potential to penalise a wide range of staff as local government payouts are not just determined by salary but also by length of service. Public services has already endured significant budget cuts with further cuts proposed many staff will face the potential termination of their employment as a result of the government's austerity agenda and this cap will limit the exit payments for those who have long service and a relatively low paid compared to the high earners.

Contact us-

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