At the recent Joint Negotiating Consultative Forum (JNCF) on 8 July 2015 Leeds Community Healthcare confirmed that they will implement the Living Wage from 1 July. Affected staff will now receive the Living Wage, which is currently £7.85 compared to the minimum wage of £6.50. This is a successful outcome for UNISON who have been negotiating, through Staffside, for some time to get this commitment from the Trust.
We convened in a rather grey and chilly Glasgow for our annual conference which began on Tuesday 16 June. The keynote speaker of the day was our General Secretary, Dave Prentis, who spoke about the difficult future we face in the light of the general election result, and the expectation of further attacks on public services. What followed were days of discussion of motions, many of which followed this theme.

There were a number of debates on compositied motions — these are “big” motions that are put together when a number of different motions saying much the same thing have been submitted — the motions are combined in a form of words that incorporates the sense of all the motions, so that we don’t have to have the same debate four or five times.

Among the themes of these were:

Attacks on Public Service Funding (including a Yorkshire and Humberside Regional motion on the North-South divide in public services).

Housing — included in this one were themes such as extension of the Right to Buy, shortage of social housing, fair rents.

Trade Union Activity – including attacks on facility time, and particularly the Tory proposals to curtail trade union rights.

The mood of this conference was very different from National Conferences that I have attended in the past, where there was quite a lot of political infighting. People were very much more united in the concerns about the future, and while all was not harmony, things were relatively subdued.

As well as the big composites, we debated motions about how the union should work, topics of concern to various groups of members (motions were submitted on LGBT issues, young members, retired members and several other groups), international issues, and also a number of rule changes. One of the more controversial suggestions was that branches should have the option to not have a traditional AGM but have elections for Branch Officers and Committees every two years. There were many excellent arguments on both sides, however the decision was made (after a card vote), to maintain the present system of AGMs.

There were a number of emergency motions discussed, particularly around the general election result, as this happened after the deadlines for regular motions.

Another controversial topic was right on our doorstep however. The conference was held at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre, which is managed by an Arm’s Length Company, most of which is owned by Glasgow City Council. The management don’t recognise unions, and this was a hot topic of debate, with delegates voting to express their concern about the attitude of the council, and the disregard of the management for its workforce.
Trade Union Bill proves the government is not on the side of working people, says UNISON

Commenting on the publication of the Trade Union Bill, UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis said:

“The Bill proves that the government is not on the side of working people. These unfair changes will make it much harder for nurses, teaching assistants, midwives and other public sector workers to ever strike for a pay rise or challenge the behaviour of bad employers.

“These spiteful proposals will deny millions of ordinary workers a voice at work. Strikes are rare and the decision to lose a day’s pay is never an easy one – especially for public sector workers who have suffered many years of pay restraint.

“When unions win a pay rise or safer working conditions for their members everyone in the workplace gets to benefit.

The proposals contained in the Trade Union Bill include:

- Strikes would be unlawful unless 50 per cent of those being asked to take action vote in the ballot
- in key public services (education, health, fire, transport, border security and energy), there must be a 50 per cent turnout, and 40 per cent of all those eligible to vote must back the strike
- unions would have to renew any strike mandate within four months of the first ballot
- the rules banning employers from hiring strike-breaking agency staff would be repealed
- new limits on the amount of time any public sector workers can spend on trade union activities
- union members would have to opt-in to paying a union’s political fund.

Anne Cherry

There was also a delegation from the Homelessness Caseworkers in Glasgow, who are facing their service being closed down, and are on strike about it. Given that Glasgow appeared to have quite as many homeless people as any other big city, their work was clearly needed, and the conference gave them a rousing ovation.

There were fringe meetings, talks and exhibitions in the conference centre – the UNIZONE was there, our conference meeting point, education space, and exhibition stall, which provided question and answer sessions from national officers, quizzes, games, information booklets and resources, plus all the usual stalls from UNISON partner organisations like UIA insurance (the people who provide discounts and benefits to union members). Local branches of campaigning organisations such as Water Aid, Amnesty, and Cuba Solidarity had stalls, as well as the local radical bookshop.

It wasn’t all work, though. We had plenty of opportunity to catch up with friends old and new from other branches and other parts of the country, there was excellent coffee available in the conference centre, and we were able to go out for a meal in the evening together, and we had a lot of laughs and worked very hard as a branch team.

Thanks to David Syms for organizing all our travel, hotels, etc, and for finding possibly the best coffee in Glasgow, and to Karen Smales, who was stuck in a room as part of the Standing Orders Committee, who make all the decisions about how the conference runs, advise the Chair on procedures, and make sure the motions we discuss make sense, can be acted upon by the union, and don’t get the staff or members into any sort of legal trouble.

Anne Cherry
1. Why is the NMC introducing revalidation?
The idea behind revalidation—keeping nurses practice up-to-date—is nothing new. However, there were concerns that the previous system, PREP, was not effectively monitored. The new system includes an additional level of monitoring as every nurse, midwife, or health visitor will need to be signed off by their manager or someone in a similar position.

Revalidation was a key recommendation of the Francis enquiry into failures of care at Mid Staffordshire Foundation Trust. It aims to prevent future scandals by improving patient safety and ensuring nurses, midwives, and health visitors are all providing care that meets the acceptable standards.

It will mean that nurses and midwives need to do more to remain on the nursing and midwifery register. The number of continuing professional development hours is increasing from the current 35 hours over 3 years to 40 hours.

Nurses and midwives will need to obtain 5 pieces practice related feedback stop this can be for more informal written or verbal and you will need to complete 5 written pieces reflections linking them to the NMC code of conduct and discuss this with another registrant.

Whereas in the past nurses and midwives were asked to confirm that they had undertaken CPD in order to reregister, this was only checked if they were subject to a spot check or under fitness to practise proceedings. Every nurse and midwife will need to provide evidence that they have met the standards to their manager.

2. What is revalidation?
Revalidation is the means by which a nurse or midwife renews the professional registration with the NMC. They are required to do this every 3 years.

They will be required to provide evidence that they have undertaken 450 hours of practice over the previous 3 year period. In addition to this they will have to evidence 40 hours of CPD, 5 pieces of practice feedback from others and 5 pieces of reflection correlated with the new professional code of conduct. Finally they have to demonstrate that they are of good health and character. All of this has to be affirmed by another person, normally the line manager this role is called the confirmer.

3. What was wrong with PREP?
It was outdated and required the NMC to audit 10% of registrants I when they tested this recently, the cost per portfolio was approximately £350. If this were an average cost across 10% of registrants it would lead to a significant increase in registration fees. UNISON have been absolutely clear with the NMC that any revalidation system should be risk-based and proportionate and should not as a result these to increase in registration fees.

4. When do I have to do it?
The NMC is currently piloting across the UK this new system of revalidation; they are expected to take a decision regarding it at their October council meeting. If it is approved registrants whose renewal dates are from April 2016 onwards will be the first to go onto the new system. Registrants are encouraged now, to identify their renewal date, which is unique to them and detailed as part of their PIN number.

5. How do I do it?
If the NMC approves the new revalidation system you will receive notification from them giving you specific information of how you access and submit your evidence. You may wish to review your current PREP portfolio and identify evidence from it, which helps you to evidence the following:

- practice hours
- reflection
- continuous professional development
- any evidence of feedback

6. We will revalidation be the same for nurses and midwives?
All nurses and midwives will need to comply as will students once they have graduated.

7. I am a student nurse, does this affect me?
Revalidation will affect you from the point you graduate, for example if you graduate in August 2015 your first revalidation would be August 2018. You should seek during that three-year period to maintain your professional portfolio and collect evidence, which meet the new requirements.

8. I no longer work clinically; will I be able to maintain my registration?
You have to demonstrate 450 hours of practice. These hours are whatever your scope practice is, for example if you’re working full-time in academia then they are your practice hours. If you are released currently on trade union activities within your organisation, then they are your practice hours. You will be able to use evidence of your role to still meet the revalidation requirements. However if you also are required to work clinically as part of this role or wish to do so in the future then both components need to be clarified and accounted for in your practice hours. For example if you work clinically once a week, or a few times a month you can evidence this with a copy of your clinical rota this combined with your other role will be sufficient to meet practice hours.

9. What sort of activities count towards continuing professional development?
Revalidation will require you to demonstrate that you have undertaken 40 hours of CPD within the past three years to reregister with the NMC.

The NMC has stated that there is no such thing as approved activity to count towards this CPD requirement, however it is important to remember that it should be relevant to your scope of practice or it may not be counted.

10. Who will approve my revalidation?
Approval of revalidation will be called confirmation; it is undertaken by someone well placed to comment on your practice. This will normally be your line manager, they do not have to be a nurse or midwife. It should however be somebody who is familiar with you, your role and standards in the code of conduct, which nurses and midwives have to abide by as they are confirming that you meet these. They will be confirming to the NMC that they have discussed your revalidation portfolio with you and in their opinion you meet the required standard.

11. What happens if I do not revalidate?
If you do not submit when requested to do so all of your evidence to meet new revalidation requirements you may find that your registration with the NMC lapsed. If this happens you would not be able to practice as a nurse, midwife or health visitor until such times as you have met the requirements and are re-entered onto the register. There is a charge for re-entry onto the register, it is therefore in your best interest should you wish to maintain your registration to do so within the time period set by the NMC.

12. How can I find out when my renewal is due?
If you register with the NMC’s online system you will be able to find out this information. You will have to provide your revalidation evidence 30 days before your renewal date. For example if your renewal dates is 20 April 2016 you will need to provide the NMC with information by 20 March 2016. You can find out how to access the NMC’s online system from www.nmc.org.uk/registration/nmc-online/

13. How can I find out more information about this?
More detailed information about revalidation can be accessed on the NMC website, it is important to remember the NMC has not yet taken final decision all of this information therefore remains provisional until such time. www.nmc.org.uk/standards/revalidation/
Say Something: Workplace Discrimination

In the first of a two-part report, Milton Allen looks at the history and effectiveness of equality at work legislation.

Many people from all working backgrounds – whether under the umbrella of being black or whether white – are perhaps a little afraid to talk about or openly discuss the importance of the topic on Workplace Discrimination and the specifics of racial discrimination. The government has introduced legislation with the intention of challenging Workforce Discrimination and to change the culture in the workplace.

The two parts of this report will be looking at historical events leading up to the 1965 Race Relations Act and the struggles and events following the Act which led to much needed improvements and protection.

The report will then consider the effectiveness on the legislation. Despite many improvements the issue of Workforce Discrimination appears not to have gone away, and by some accounts may have gone underground. Therefore, the report will try to establish new approaches in trying to achieve a greater sense of equality in the workplace for all.

What is the Equality Act?

A new Equality Act came into force on 1 October 2010. The Equality Act brings together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act. Combined, they make up a new Act that provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all.

Having looked at what the 2010 Equality Act provides. In taking time to look back over the years to see just how far forward we as minority workers within the workforce have come. We will also be looking to see if unions across the board continue to provide a safe and supportive working environment and have provided more confidence in their work to increase awareness of fairness in the workplace.

When looking at the 1950s and 60s racial discrimination in various forms was a feature of everyday life for many Commonwealth immigrants who had been invited to Britain in the early 1950s and 1960s to fill labour shortages.

Race Relations Acts 1965-1976

By the 1950s ‘the colour bar’ had become an increasingly obvious injustice in British society, particularly in London where most migrant workers from the Caribbean had settled. Resentment of the new arrivals had spilled over into violence in the Notting Hill riots of 1958.

Before the 1960s, discrimination on the grounds of skin colour was not illegal. Casual ‘colour prejudice’ was part of daily life for many Londoners even though discrimination was not written into civil rights. In 1930, a Dr A M Shah had complained to the Home Office that he was Indian. The Home Office replied that, although it was sympathetic, there was nothing it could do.

In 1965, the first Race Relations Act outlawed racial discrimination and set up the Race Relations Board (RRB) to investigate complaints. The Act’s provisions were weak and, in 1968, a new act enlarged and extended the RRB’s powers and set up the Community Relations Commission (CRC) to help enforce the new laws.

1965: New UK race law ‘not tough enough’

The new Race Relations Act comes into force making racial discrimination unlawful in public places.

The new act forbids discrimination on the “grounds of colour, race, or ethnic or national origins” in public places and covers both British residents and overseas visitors.

But there have already been claims by anti-racist groups and Labour backbenchers that the new law does not go far enough, as it does not cover housing or employment.

The new law does not make racial discrimination a criminal offence – and only the very worst offenders will be referred by the Attorney General to county court.

‘River of blood’

Race has become a major issue following the speech on 20th April 1968 of the right-wing Conservative
MP, Enoch Powell, against immigration into Britain from Commonwealth countries. He spoke of a “river of blood” should immigration continue, and his remarks caused outrage among MPs.

Mr Powell was sacked from the shadow cabinet soon afterwards for his racist views, but the government was taken aback to find some sections of the media applauding the speech.

Thousands of workers staged strikes in protest and marched to Downing Street in support.

A turning point
The Race Relations Acts of the 1960s and 1970s did not eradicate racial discrimination. However, they did make an official statement about the values of British society, and as such marked a turning point in the evolution of a multi-cultural society.

The 1976 Act
In 1976, a far tougher Act was passed that made discrimination unlawful in employment, training, education, and the provision of goods and services. It extended discrimination to include victimisation, and replaced the RRB and the CRE with the Commission for Racial Equality, a stronger body with more powers to prosecute.

We will continue our journey in part two. Hopefully this has given an insight into the struggles thus far. I will also introduce an idea of starting a local branch SOG.

So continue to Say Something!
All comments welcome
Until then, One Love and Peace

Milton Allen
Were you a COHSE member

Are you aware that as an ex COHSE member and if you are about to retire, you are entitled to claim a retirement gift of £100.00. To apply contact UNISON Direct on 0800 0 857 857 to request an application form.

Return the completed form to the UNISON office at St Marys Hospital, Green Hill Road, Armley, Leeds. The Branch Secretary will approve the form and your cheque of £100.00 will be posted to you directly from UNISON HQ.

Get hold of your FREE diary for 2016!

We are already organising diaries for UNISON members who would like them, and this year you have a choice over which size you would prefer. You can choose between a slim line diary and an A5 desktop version. Just fill in the form attached and send it back to the branch and we’ll send them to you later in the year.

A big thank you!

Coast to coast ride supported by the branch

James Cross. My charity was Cerebra UK which is a charity that supports families with Autistic children. Four of us took part. My brother and sister and my sisters’ partner. We set of from St Bees and finished in Robin Hood’s Bay. 195 miles over 4 days. Gruelling but worth it!

Don’t miss out on your FREE £5,000 Accidental Death Cover

12 months of cover for UK residents aged 18-64.

APPLY ONLINE TODAY!

www.UNISONProtect.com/j

Terms & Conditions apply. UNISON is an introducer appointed representative of UNISONprotect. UNISONprotect is a trading name of Union Income Benefit Ltd (UIB) who arrange this insurance. The insurance is provided by ACE Europe Life Limited.