

UNISON Branch News Letter April 08

The **North Devon Health Branch** has been actively involved in supporting members both individually and collectively. There have been several successes and many are ongoing.

We are currently involved in attempting to prevent the privatisation of our **Sterile Services Department**. In April, we sent a representative to the **National Health Conference**, where she spoke out against the outsourcing of CSSD and also against the down-grading of staff under the banner of **Restructuring the Service**.

The Physical Therapy Review, which is on-going in the community, has seen the involvement of the union representing the OT's

We have also supported members who have been interviewed over their absence in relation to the **Absence Monitoring Policy**.

The Pay Offer has been sent out to branches and will be voted on. The intention is to hold meetings or contact members to discuss the offer and any options. **IT IS VITAL that YOU use your VOTE.**

Recruitment – We held another successful branch awareness day in the main concourse at the North Devon District Hospital in January, where we recruited several new members and spent valuable time talking with existing members.

Currently, we are hoping that more members will come forward and consider becoming **UNISON representatives**. We realise that for many members finding time to be a steward is often difficult. However, we have a **Facilities Agreement** with our employers, which allows for **stewards** and **health and safety reps** to take time off from the workplace to attend to union duties.

Roles include:-

Stewards – these are the main point of contact in the workplace for members and are also with the branch office and branch committee. Our stewards support and advise members on workplace issues, both individual and collective. Stewards, once fully trained, also represent members with the employer and within the branch committee. Some stewards are actively involved with Staffside and liaise with other unions and management on issues affecting all of us.

Health and Safety reps raise issues which affect the health and safety of members and our reps are already making an impact on working conditions within areas of the hospital. **We would like more!!**

If you decide to become a **Steward or Health and Safety Representative** you will receive full and comprehensive training. All training expenses are met by Unison including travel and subsistence.

The more representatives we have, actively involved around work issues, the stronger our membership organisation becomes with a louder voice in the workplace and in negotiations with our employers.

Finally if you feel you are not ready to take on a steward's or health and safety reps role, why not consider becoming a **Workplace Representative** instead. For more information on what this entails, we have enclosed an article written by workplace representative, Doug Lowe, about his experience in the role.

Please think seriously about how you can become more active in your union and talk to us to find out more!

Your branch needs you, now!