

Health and Social Care Integration Proposed model will increase workloads and affect services

On 14 October UNISON lodged an Avoidance of Industrial Dispute with City of Edinburgh Council regarding serious concerns raised by our members as to the Health & Social Care/NHS Integration Process.

This situation came about because of the Council's failure to meaningfully consult and communicate with your union and colleagues. Our concerns were that:

- Our members in scope of Phase 2 were being provided with inaccurate or incomplete information as to the Integration Process, their posts and the future delivery of services.
- Line managers continually advised UNISON that they were as much in the dark about the proposals and mechanisms of the structure as their staff and that, when asked for, further advice and guidance from senior management was never made available.



UNISON's David Harrold updates on Integration talks after 'Avoidance of Dispute' is lodged

Recognition and consideration to the knowledge and expertise of staff in scope of the review was effectively ignored.

In accordance with above procedure the status quo must be

respected until the dispute is either resolved or procedures have been exhausted.

As a result of this procedure being invoked City of Edinburgh Council met with us and agreed to hold several meetings and visit key areas with the purpose of resolving issues as to the lack of communication and information.

As management are holding these meetings now and attempting to resolve these staff concerns we may be able to stand down the Avoidance of Industrial Dispute and restart the process in a manner more conducive to achieving a fit for purpose structure.

This is not to say that UNISON still doesn't have issues with the proposals being put forward.

Meaningful dialogue between the employer, UNISON and staff in scope of the review remains vital to securing essential jobs and services.

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Lack of confidence in how integration model will deliver

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Discussion must be had to address a range of serious concerns:

- The restructuring put forward by management removes key professional Social Work staff from the service in numbers that significantly undermine the ability of the Health & Social Care Department to achieve its statutory outcomes safely for staff and clients - and in such a way that it will undermine the intended outcomes of integration.
- The removal of CCA staff, SSW, OT and SOT staff where the work they currently undertake would be moved onto another worker already besieged by an excessive workload, time consuming processes, controlled spending, reduced choice and micro-managed outcomes and resources.
- Concerns as to staffing and supervision across all Health & Social Care Service points, particularly Homecare & Reablement, OPHs and Day Services.
- The many suggestions and professional practice points relating to supervision, day to day management and governance of the service that need to be appropriately

responded too.

- Inadequate stress testing and risk assessments as to what the services will look like if the proposals are implemented.

There is still a lack of confidence in how the integration process will successfully deliver across all service areas.

The significant reductions proposed for the Health & Social Care Department along

‘If negotiations are unsuccessful, UNISON may, as a last resort, seek your views on industrial action’

with the mismanagement of volunteers and paid Council carers, and the removal of crucial services will have a detrimental impact on service delivery throughout the city.

UNISON and our members remain committed to partnership working, the Integrated Joint Board and providing a successful and meaningful locality based service for the people of Edinburgh.

Regrettably, the model proposed will not deliver these services to the people of Edinburgh.

Whilst the opportunities to work closer with our NHS colleagues and other council services could deliver improvements; the substantial increase to the workload of a reduced workforce will cause a rise in waiting times and a decrease in the quality of said services.

The absence of proper governance and supervision within the proposed structure will further compound these issues making them a real concern not just for the staff in scope of this review and their service users but the generations who will require these services in the future.

UNISON believes that unless management review and address all concerns raised, including the undeliverable January 2017 implementation date, the potential for maximising Joint Board opportunities will be lost.

If negotiations are unsuccessful, UNISON may, as a last resort, seek your views on a campaign of possible industrial action, up to and including strike action.

We acknowledge that as caring professions this goes against your commitment to care for the elderly and infirm but if firm action is not taken then the services we take so much pride in will be lost forever.

David Harrold

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