

UNISON Health & Safety Team, working for you

Integrated Health & Social Care

Unfortunately, Integrated Health & Social Care (H&SC) has it all, low pay, under investment, low staff morale, poor communication and IT, high workloads, work related stress absence and if you believe recent news articles, a 'one in one out policy' clearly staff are feeling the strain.

Yet we still have politicians and senior managers looking through rose tinted glasses, believing that progress is being made. One year on from the UNISON H&SC survey we asked our members if improvements have been made. This is what some of them said.

There have been many challenges in Health and Social Care, Integration with Health, increasing workloads, cuts to grade 5 and 7 posts. Work related Stress in H&SC is compounded by slow IT. Much of the day spent watching the spinning circle of a computer monitor. There are at least five systems to access in the course of a working day and it's a case of ITC roulette as to which operating system opens what.

Training on IT systems isn't up to standard, ask any Home Care Organiser what training they received before they became proficient. Some will say none, those lucky enough to receive basic training will tell you it was a waste of time.

The system used to allocate social care workers to service users is a hugely important cog in

the wheel regards service users receiving their care. Allocation of work to social care workers is delivered via an even more archaic manner.

Assessment and Review processes, once done on a single shared assessment, this was the way forward. With the promise of H&SC Integration we're suddenly completing a different assessment to our colleagues in Health. The teams were splintered and fragmented in such a way that all of a sudden, we were all working and recording in a different manner leading to more duplication of work and lack of ownership.

Stress is very much a part of modern life. Some of us need assistance, counselling and support. At work our employers have a legal duty to support us, we shouldn't have to sit hunched up at desks waiting for the spinning circle'.

There are no excuses for making workers life's more difficult, we work in H&SC for a reason, we want to help, we care, we want to provide high quality services and at the same time we want to support our colleagues. At the moment we can't do these things as we are being put in positions of having to make excuses for our poor and inefficient systems. It's time to stop acknowledging that things are broken and do something about it.

In the 20 plus years I have worked in Health and Social Care the workload has increased year after year. This we know and

accept there's nothing we can do about it demographically, it's how things are, it's part of modern life, like technology – or so you would think.

Pupil Support Assistant and Nursery Nurse survey on Violence at Work

In our July newsletter we highlighted our intention to survey PSA and Nursery Nurse members on violence in the workplace. The survey will be circulated via e-mail, internal-post and visits to schools. We would encourage all PSA members and Nursery Nurses to take part and return the completed survey to the branch via e-mail: branchoffice@unison-edinburgh.org.uk internal-post or contact your nearest steward. The survey will be held between 3 September to 12 October. Our colleagues in the EIS teachers' union have indicated their intention to carry out a similar survey.

Latest pay claim update – send in your postcard



This is now being extended to the whole of the local government membership. A new postcard has been posted in bulk to branches. We are asking members to return the postcard to the branch office or send directly to the President of COSLA before the next meeting of COSLA leaders on 31 August.

Low Incident Reporting at the Advice Shop & HUB

UNISON members at the Advice Shop and HUB continue to face daily verbal and physical threats.

Figures obtained from Corporate Health & Safety confirmed poor reporting of incidents, accidents and near misses with only three near misses reported this year.

With increased numbers of service users entering the HUB daily, it is increasingly important that all staff report these occurrences on the Council's SHE Portal, this can be found on the council Orb. UNISON would recommend that members retain a copy of the report. Ian Mullen, Health & Safety Convener said: "We are working with Corporate Health & Safety to try and reduce assaults on staff, it is really important that we have a record of how many incidents are taking place."

Concerns have been expressed as to whether the HUB is the right environment to have vulnerable young people entering the Through Care/After Care service given the number of services using this area.

If reports are correct some or all Advice Shop staff may be moving into the HUB after it was decided to lease the Advice Shop to VisitScotland. A decision that was taken without consultation with the trade unions or staff members.

The Access Point

Access Point management and UNISON continue to work together to reduce incidents of violence against staff. A Health & Safety Inspection and Risk Assessment was jointly carried out in a guest house used for

temporary accommodation following assaults on two members of staff.

A number of recommendations have been submitted by UNISON and improvements continue to be made, however concerns remain around staff being recognised going to and from work being verbally abused in public. This is totally unacceptable and should be reported to Police Scotland.

Health & Safety Inspection, Inch Nursery/Greenspace

UNISON carried out a health and safety inspection at the Inch Nursery and Greenspace depot on the 17 August. A number of concerns have been identified and a report with recommendations for improvements was sent to the management teams, due to the size of this site a second inspection will be required.

In our last newsletter we reported that a monitoring and reviewing system has been put in place for non-compliance of works. Management's failure to respond or act following our inspections is no longer acceptable.

UNISON will take action by way of notifying the respective regulatory body including SEPA and the HSE. In April this year we contacted the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service which resulted in an external fire audit of Leith Community Centre. A second incident in August has led to further contact with the Fire Service.

Corporate Health & Safety Team.

The council's health & safety team have confirmed the

appointments of two new members of staff. UNISON welcome this news having highlighted our concerns that workplace health & safety audits were being reduced due to staff shortages.

A reduction of one member of staff, approved by committee in March 2017, was putting increased pressure on the remaining staff. Unfortunately, Sam Jennings, senior health & safety advisor has since announced that she will be leaving the council at the end of August.

Thank you, Stewart Dickson



After 38 years in the council, Stewart Dickson, Resource Convener and Health & Safety representative has decided to take early retirement. UNISON would like to thank Stewart for his years of hard work and dedication to the trade union movement.

Marie Walker

The branch was shocked to hear the sad news of the sudden death of Marie Walker who was part of the UNISON family. All our thoughts and condolences are with Marie's family and friends at this time

Feedback to the branch

If you have any health & safety queries please contact your local health & safety representative or contact Ian Mullen, health & safety convener at the branch office on 0131 558 7488 or branch office@unison-edinburgh.org.uk