

LIVEWIRE

Issue 19 May 1999

UNISON Manweb Branch

Millenium Pay Deal Struck

Pay deals worth up to four times normal entitlements have been agreed between Scottish Power and the Trade Unions for staff who work over the Millennium weekend.

Although the precise calculations vary in each division, all staff who work either Friday or Saturday will as a minimum be paid at treble time and collect a £275 bonus for each shift worked. Staff on standby will be paid £275 standby on top of normal standby arrangements. For Sunday working the bonus is £200 with normal double time rates.

Call Centre staff will continue to receive their first hour payment and a minimum of 4 hours when called; in ISD a £100 IT supplement for Friday and Saturday shifts and 4 hours minimum on callout has also been agreed.

£1,000 for two shifts !

This means for example, for any 8 hours shifts on Friday and Saturday someone on £14,000 salary will see their pay boosted more than four times from £100 to £450.

Clearly there are a number of staff who will not be willing to work for any payment, however, as cover is entirely voluntary, except for staff already on agreed rota's, the choice of whether to work is yours.

If you want details of the agreed payments in your business please contact your local Unison steward.

Inside this issue

Unison Online
Agency Staff
Eye Tests Update

Pay 1999

Four months after putting in our 1999 pay claims grudging responses have begun to trickle in from the various HR functions.

None however have mentioned any figures on pay - instead they are filled with the usual shopping lists of demands on staff for improved productivity.

Given that Bill Landels recently praised all staff for their hard work in producing what look to be excellent financial figures in Manweb it would be a kick in the teeth if this was not reflected in a generous pay settlement.

With the mood of members beginning to shift to anger, stewards will not welcome any further stalling tactics from businesses who seem able to talk to our Scottish colleagues but not Manweb representatives.

Unison Manweb goes online

The Unison Manweb branch is now on the internet and can be contacted at **branchoffice@unison-manweb.freemove.co.uk@internet**

In addition Unison nationally has its own Web site which provides a wealth of information about the union, its activities and services to members. Visit the Web site at **www.unison.org.uk**

All stewards and branch officers are of course contactable through the normal internal e-mail system and should be the first point of contact for any problems or queries.

Eye Tests - Your rights

Unison Health and Safety reps have been making representations about Manweb's blatant flouting of Health and Safety legislation with regard to eye tests.

In order to assist the company in their apparent myopia the following are the key points of the law they would benefit from studying:

With effect from 1 January 1993 the Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 (Regulation 5) state:

1. Employers must provide, on request, an appropriate **eye**

and eyesight test for VDU users.

2. **Vision screening tests are NOT full eye and eyesight tests and do not fulfil the requirements of the legislations**
3. The tests must be carried out by an **optometrist or doctor with ophthalmic qualifications.**
4. The test must be carried out as soon as is reasonably practical after receipt of the request
5. The cost of the tests must be **paid by the employer.**
6. Employers must allow **paid time off** to attend eye or eyesight tests.
7. Employers must provide at their expense '**special corrective appliances**' where the tests show they are necessary to undertake VDU work.

As some staff still have not been compensated for tests they had to pay for themselves **over 4 months ago** we trust that the company will now accept their responsibility and avoid the need for the unwelcome publicity which a Unison sponsored court case might bring.

Agency Staff

Unison continues to pressure all the businesses to give full information on their use of agency staff.

This issue has never been dropped since the initial attempts in pre-takeover days with the previous Manweb management.

The business councils have been expected to produce information on the numbers of agency staff, where they are working, for which department, for how long and when they are expected to leave.

Energy Supply have offered to develop and present an exit plan for their agency staff. They have also moved to make some of these staff fixed term employees. This raises basic pay and provides access to sick pay and holiday entitlements.

This has also been true of the metering business whose management have honoured their pledge to remove all agency workers from their business.

All this as a result of Unison continuing its campaign to establish proper staffing levels for the work required to be done.

To ensure members who are VDU users are able to claim their entitlement to free eye tests and glasses where required for VDU work we recommend you use the attached proforma to formally request this. If your Human Resources department do not authorise this within a week then please contact your union representative.

To: Human Resources
(Insert Division)

As you are aware, I am a user of Display Screen Equipment within the meaning of the Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992.

I am writing to you to formally request an Eye and Eyesight test (Opticians Act 1989 refers) in accordance with Regulation 5 of the above DSE Regulations. I do **not** wish to avail myself of the vision screening test provided by the Company's Occupational Health Department, as this does not comply with Regulation 5.

I would prefer to use my own ophthalmic optician (insert the name and address of the optician)

I would appreciate you confirming my entitlement to this test and that the Company will reimburse me the cost of the test and any necessary corrective appliance required for Display Screen Working.

Yours sincerely

(Insert Name, Employee Number and Work Location)

Open All Hours ?

Our members may be aware of recent attempts by management to bring staff into Warrington and Wrexham offices to work up to 9pm at night (the so called twilight shift).

By their own admission management would prefer a 10pm finish and one manager has even said quite openly that he would like 24hour working.

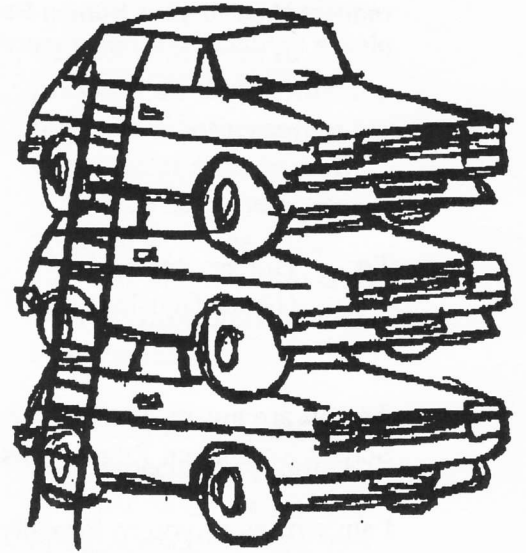
Working Lunch

It has been suggested, quite incorrectly, that agency staff have the right to forego a lunch break if working more than 5 hours. Is this a short step to suggesting that ANY member of staff can waive the right to a lunch break?

At present we have an agreement that provides staff with the secure knowledge that they will not be required to work outside the "working window" of 8am to 8pm unless they volunteer to provide emergency cover. In that instance they receive special payments for inconvenience caused. Our agreement also makes provision for a break of at least 30 minutes after a 5 hour work period. Neither of these appear unreasonable.

Victorian Values

Is the company becoming nostalgic for "the good old days" when employees worked for as long as employers required and at whatever times they dictated?



Multi-storey

When the Regions carparks are mentioned, I picture a scrapyard 'bursting at the seams' with cars piled high! This isn't stretching the imagination too far when you consider the lack of car parking spaces available for employees.

The Regions have recently expanded their workforce which has aggravated an already dangerous parking problem. If the number of cars requiring parking spaces increases further, the only option will be to park on top of other parked cars!

The volume of vehicles crammed into such a small area, with little regard for safety, is an accident waiting to happen.

Sign up for a tenner

Want to earn a tenner? Unison's National Recruitment scheme will pay you a tenner for the first new member and £5 for each subsequent new member you sign up to Unison. Forms are available from your local reps - so get recruiting. Just by way of an extra, the top recruiter in the country stands to win over £2,000 in holiday vouchers at the end of the 6 months campaign.