MOTION

Organising in the Care Sector

This AGM recognises that an increasing number of public services are outsourced to the private and voluntary sector. We do not support privatisation or outsourcing in any form, as we believe that it often leads to a lower level of service to our communities, and lower pay and poor conditions for staff employed in these services. Unison remains committed to and will continue to fight for public services delivered by workers directly employed on terms and conditions that have been collectively bargained for, by democratically accountable public bodies.

However it is clear that this Branch has a significant and growing proportion of our membership working outside the public sector, but working in public services. These members provide valuable services but are often working in environments where employment rights are precarious and union membership at low levels. We face a challenge in organising and representing these members, spread across a number of employers, a challenge that we must meet.

One of the main areas, where the private and voluntary sector predominates, and where working conditions can be significantly improved is Adult Social Care. Currently Wirral Council has contracts with well over 100 different organisations to provide adult social care services on their behalf. Although Wirral Council has accepted the Living Wage and Unison’s Ethical Care Charter, there is no obligation upon the contracted organisations to meet these standards.

Wirral Unison has consistently recruited in this area for some time; however not necessarily always in an organised directed manner. We have recruited 51 members from over 30 organisations in the past year. Unison has provided and will continue to provide skilled representation to individuals in disciplinaries etc, providing real protection to our members. We have also agreed a recognition deal with Autism Together, a major provider, and successfully set up a union structure.

On a national level Unison has undertaken a number of high profile initiatives to raise the profile of workers in the independent care sector; this has led to improvements in working conditions across the care sector nationally. There remains much however that we can do to improve our representation and organisation of care workers

This AGM therefore agrees the following strategy to develop our organisation in this area:

1. To agree a Branch Officer lead campaign on organising in the private and voluntary sector Adult Social Care, with regular updates to the Branch Committee, and a report to next year’s AGM
2. To map out all Adult Social Care Providers, their size, and our current membership density
3. To increase substantially our membership levels in this sector
4. To prioritise the development of new activists working within this sector
5. To negotiate recognition deals and improvements to terms and conditions
6. To highlight the precarious nature of much employment in this area and campaign for improvement
7. To allocate appropriate resources to achieve success in this area.

Success in this area will build Wirral Unison, improve working conditions for workers in the care sector, and increase the number of union activists. It will lead to a stronger Branch with increased negotiating and campaigning power that will benefit all our members.

Proposed David Jones

Seconded Steve Bennett