

Branch Meeting

**Wednesday
29th
September
6.30 p.m.**

STUC
333 Woodlands Road
Glasgow
G3 6NG



Whitehall College, the Amicus educational facility located at Bishop's Stortford, has been closed until further notice.

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- **Agenda for Change ballot**
- **Whitehall College mothballed**
- **Fat-cat salaries**
- **Pregnant workers**

Report Criticises AfC Pilot Sites in Scotland

A confidential report on the job matching and job evaluation process at the four Scottish pilot sites (W. Lothian, Golden Jubilee, Highland and the CSA) for Agenda for Change (AfC) reveals serious weaknesses in the way these tasks were carried out.

In particular, the report highlights decisions being made without appropriate information being available from the job descriptions. Instead of then obtaining further information, the panels simply made assumptions and carried on with the

process, generally undervaluing the jobs concerned

Perhaps the main problem was revealed by a comment from one site that "if this were not a pilot, the panel would seek further info". Quite simply, the pilot sites did not do their job properly. They acted as if it were a theoretical exercise that had no real world value. The only possible conclusion is that the results from the pilot sites are fatally flawed and should be ignored by all concerned—they do not represent anything significant or worthwhile.

Health Sector Conference

Report by David Houlston

The first health sector conference since the two parts of the union (MSF and AEEU) fully merged to become Amicus was held in Harrogate. The conference spent considerable time debating Agenda for Change and the Amicus view on this. In addition, the conference agreed motions on the following:

- Partnership. The Scottish model is a very good example of the advantages of partnership working and Conference agreed to work pro-actively towards adopting a similar model for

England, with provision for adequate time for union reps.

- NHS pensions. Amicus to mount a campaign against any erosion in benefits to members.
- Amicus organisation. A motion to facilitate the reintroduction of regional and national NHS Occupational Advisory Committees was agreed.
- Foundation Trusts and PFI. A motion was agreed asking for a report on the long term consequences of PFI and Foundation Hospitals.

Contacts

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Agenda for Change Ballot

Earlier this year, in July, it appeared likely that the Amicus ballot on Agenda for Change (AfC) would be postponed until January 2005. However, during August, the Department of Health agreed to amendments to the proposed AfC agreement which remove the controversial unsocial hours proposals and extend the local agreement four year moratorium to Whitley Council based on-call systems. These amendments will allow further negotiations on the vexed questions of unsocial hours and on-call. A special meeting of the Amicus Health Committee will meet later this month and it is expected that it will decide to hold a membership ballot on AfC before December.

Whitehall College mothballed

Many of the Branch's representatives will be saddened to hear that the union's educational establishment at Bishop Stortford, Whitehall College, is to close for an indeterminate period of time due to health and safety concerns. The Amicus executive heard that an independent review had revealed a lack of smoke alarms, one building without an external fire escape and inadequate fire doors. In addition, as the union provides crèche facilities for reps attending courses, the swimming pool needs to be fenced in.

Fat-cat Salaries

According to personneltoday.com (not exactly the most left-wing of organisations), company directors are still awarding themselves fat-cat salaries with an average pay increase of nearly 13% last year. According to the Guardian newspaper's annual pay survey, this was around three times higher than the average employee's pay rise. For your information, in the UK average pay is now £24,600 including last year's increase of a mere 3.7%

Pregnant workers suffer discrimination

Research from the Equal Opportunities Commission shows the level of discrimination suffered by some pregnant women in the UK. Almost unbelievably, nearly a quarter of women who made formal claims of pregnancy discrimination had been dismissed within hours of informing their employers that they were pregnant. Other problems included redundancy, forced resignation and being denied training. Fewer than one in three women had their work made the subject of a health and safety risk assessment and one in five return to work after having a baby to a lower grade than they held before. The research found that pregnant women were less likely to make claims because of the stress involved and the three month limit in making such claims.

Branch Meeting Wednesday 29th September

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of previous meeting and arising.
3. Correspondence.
4. Reports.
5. Motions.
6. A.O.C.B.

The next meeting of the Branch will be held on Thursday 28th October at 6.30 p.m. All meetings are held in the Scottish Trade Union Congress, 333 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6NG.
(Tea, coffee & biscuits 6.15 p.m.)