



GENERAL

23 December 2009

FOUNDATION TRUST

'UNISON understands the concerns and worries of members regarding Foundation Trust Status. Our opposition to Foundation Trust Status is on record. We replied to the consultation paper within the LAS again stating our concerns but also insisting that Unison and its members are central to the decision making should Foundation Trust Status be granted. We fought it nationally as the bill went through parliament and only lost because a handful of non-English MPs voted in favour, even though Foundation Trust Status is England only and does not affect their constituency.

Nevertheless, the Bill became law, and because of that our approach had to change. Every Ambulance Service in England will at some stage apply to be an FT. Our job now is to protect staff's terms & conditions etc if, and when, the London Ambulance Service is granted Foundation Trust Status. The Service has yet to apply (this will happen in March 2010) and the earliest it could be granted FT Status, if successful, is the latter part of 2010.

As a union we have to look after the interest of all members and we can only do that by being involved internally and not sitting on the outside. We can only change things if we have a strong enough voice inside and not be on the margins.

We are also negotiating to get a dedicated Trade Union voice on the Council of Governors (as well as making sure the right kind of staff take up the designated staff seats) if Foundation Trust Status is granted so that decisions regarding our future are not taken by other people outside the Service. I believe that is the way to change things and to protect Unison members' interests. Non – participation is a luxury the union can not afford, particularly at this time of uncertainty.

Although every member of staff has the individual right to 'opt out' of membership of a Foundation Trust we would advise UNISON members not to do so at this time. There are still a lot of negotiations to be had between the unions and the management regarding what a LAS Foundation Trust will look like and, more specifically, what are the benefits for staff. These are uncharted waters for Ambulance Services and a lot can happen in the next year. Staff 'opting out' may very well find themselves still working for a Foundation Trust, but without a say in how it is run, while a member of the public, not working for the LAS, will have a say! That can't be right, particularly for a trade union member.'

Eric Roberts
Branch Secretary
LAS UNISON

Expiry Date: Until Further Notice

Information