

London Ambulance Service

UNISON Branch

Retired Members Section

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Dear Colleagues

A BRIEF REPORT ON THIS YEAR'S RETIRED MEMBERS' CONFERENCE

It does not seem possible that a year has gone by since I wrote my last Retired Members Conference Report.

First of all I would like to say that if anyone wants to have a copy of the Retired Members Annual Report which includes an update on the progress of the Motions carried at last year's Conference, please let me know and I will send a copy out.

There are many campaigns affecting retired members and older people that are supported by UNISON. I include three items of the Annual Report that may be of interest to you.

On Pensions we have got the Government to both acknowledge that there are problems and to propose changes to deal with the problems. These measures are set out in the Pensions Bill currently being considered by Parliament. The problem is that the proposals do not deal with the difficulties being experienced by existing pensioners and there will be new anomalies created in the future particularly in relation to Women Pensioners.

We have the most enormous job to do to get the Government to change its policy and to provide a decent basic state pension now to all pensioners. The best means to do this is to put pressure on the Government by a groundswell of public opinion. The NPC is ideally placed to lead such a campaign. All of our members, especially our working members, must join in this campaign.

Secondly, we must do something on Care of the Elderly and get restoration of Dignity in Old Age. At least on this we have the support of some sections of the media. It surely cannot be right that Councils are sacking Home Care workers and that the most vulnerable in our society are limited to just 15 minutes of care a day. We must join in the Campaign to halt and then reverse this process.

Lastly, there is the National Travel Pass. Progress indeed in that with the introduction of the new Buss Pass in England from 1st April 2008, all parts of the United Kingdom will have a Travel Pass. There is, however, still a lot more that is needed. The concept of a National Travel Pass demands that such a Pass be used throughout the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland. Furthermore, it is and remains the Policy that the Pass should apply to all forms of transport including rail, tram and local ferries.

This year's Annual Conference was held at Plymouth on Tuesday 9th and Wednesday 10th October at Plymouth Pavilions. The UNISON stands were disappointing but all the other facilities were first class. UNISON laid on a social evening at a nearby hotel which commenced at 8.30pm. All the delegates and visitors were welcomed to attend and enjoy the first class entertainment provided by UNISON Membership Services which included a group and an hour of cabaret.

The Conference laid on various workshops on the Tuesday. Our visitors and I attended the Transport Workshop which was mainly about the introduction by the Government of the free bus pass. It was virtually a repeat workshop of the one I attended last year.

On Conference Day, Wednesday 10th following a good breakfast and a short stroll to the Conference, as in previous years the morning session began at 9.30am. We were welcomed to the Conference by the Deputy Mayor of Plymouth.

The Conference began with the Standing Orders Committee giving their Annual Report giving details of the progress of the Motions that were carried at last year's Conference. The Conference accepted the Report.

There were 28 Motions, some of which include amendments on the Agenda, to be debated at this year's Conference plus one Emergency Motion. The following Motions include any amendments.

There was one Composite.

Composite A

National Concessionary Travel Scheme replaces Motions 7, 8, and 9.	CARRIED
Emergency Motion 1 – Care in the Community	CARRIED
Motion 1 - Standing Order 3 – Speaking	CARRIED
Motion 2 - Increase in the Basic State Pension and Restoration of the Link	CARRIED
Motion 3 - Utilities versus Pensions	CARRIED
Motion 4 - Pensions Not Poverty	LOST
Motion 5 - Council Tax	REMIT
Motion 6 - Pensioners Holiday Insurance	CARRIED

Motion 10 - Transport Public Hospital Bus Passes	CARRIED
Motion 11 - Clinical Assessment, Treatment and Support Services (CATS)	CARRIED
Motion 12 - Entitlements to Health and Social Care	CARRIED
Motion 13 - Elder Abuse: Human Rights in Private Rest Homes	CARRIED
Motion 14 - Home Care Services	CARRIED
Motion 15 - Cold Weather Deaths	CARRIED
Motion 16 - Fuel Poverty	CARRIED
Motion 17 - Toilets	CARRIED
Motion 18 - Adult Learning	CARRIED
Motion 19 - Providers and Consumers working together	CARRIED
Motion 20 - Contrast Printing	CARRIED
Motion 21 - The Rise of Fascism	CARRIED
Motion 22 - International Links	CARRIED
Motion 23 - Recruitment of Retired Members	CARRIED
Motion 24 - Communications to Retired Members	REMIT
Motion 25 - Annual Report	REMIT
Motion 26 - Role of Retired Members in UNISON	CARRIED
Motion 27 - Equalities and Diversity	CARRIED
Motion 28 - Insurance Cover for Retired Members on UNISON Business	CARRIED

Don't forget our Branch has its own website which is www.lasunison.com that includes a page appertaining to Retired Members and also gives information regarding UNISON's Retired Members which is www.unison.org.uk

Once again I would like to offer everyone the opportunity to discuss Retired Members' issues. I suggest we have a meeting, as last year, prior to the AGM which is usually held in March. I will give you the date in the New Year. It is important that we meet to discuss issues and collect views that affect Retired Members so that we can put forward our own motions to the Retired Members Conference in future years so that UNISON can continue their Campaign on behalf of pensioners.

UNISON works very closely with Pensioners' Organisations and in particular, the National Pensioners' Convention which our Branch is affiliated to. The NPC is a very small charity which does a huge amount for pensioners. UNISON's Retired Members say it is a really worthwhile organisation to be a member of and I strongly recommend you being a member. The membership fee is negligible and you receive all the latest information on issues affecting pensioners and their campaigns. For those who would like to join, their address is: NPC Head Office, 19/23 Ironmonger Row, London, EC1V 3QP, - tel.no. 0207 553 6510 - fax: 0207 553 6511 - email: admin@natpencon.org.uk - web: www.natpencon.org.uk It is not always possible for me to get important information out in time.

The annual election for Branch Officers takes place between January and March 08 and I will be putting my name forward to continue as Retired Members Officer. Anyone wishing to stand as Retired Members Officer please contact the Branch Secretary, Eric Roberts, LAS HQ.

The Retired Members Section of the LAS Branch has consistently grown each year since we formed in 1999 and the Branch now has over 100 members on the mail-out, having started with just 24. If anyone knows of a retired member of UNISON's LAS Branch, who is not receiving info from me, or knows of any UNISON members due to retire in the near future, please ask them to contact me so that I can send them an application form to join the Retired Members Section of our Branch.

Has anyone got any preferences or suggestions where we can get together for future meetings (i.e. Union Jack Club which is central) bearing in mind our members are spread far and wide. Also any suggestions for social activities for next year, i.e. Christmas meal, a Christmas trip to France on the ferry to buy our Xmas goodies, days out, theatre or absolutely anything at all! All suggestions would be most welcome, please let me know if anyone is interested. Also, if anyone would like to organise an event of any kind suitable to our members, or produce our own, much needed newsletter, I will be happy to meet them and discuss it.

Regards

Michael Apps
Retired Members Officer

Encls: GLR Retired Members Newsletter Issue 3
NPC's Campaign Bulletin – Issue 15
UNISON's Holiday Village at Croyde Bay