

Unite the Union Offshore Newsletter



For all offshore workers

March / April 2012

Unite offshore survey results

Firstly can we thank everyone who took the time to complete and return the recent survey, **also those who engaged with and provided feedback to our organisers and reps at the heliports** Unite will be following up on the points raised in greater detail in the coming weeks and months. The main results of this survey were as follows:

33% of respondents had concerns over the recent Working Time Directive Judgment and holidays. These concerns weren't only from workers that do not receive paid time off from an equal time rotation, but also workers who do receive 4 weeks, or more as part of an enhanced rota.

13% are concerned about lack of overtime payments if working extra hours on the day they were due ashore and also the standby rate for some was felt to be inadequate.

12% are concerned about the inequality on installations due to 2/2 rotas and 2/3 rotas working side by side, causing a genuine "them and us" feeling.

10% have concerns about cabin sharing, sometimes 4 to a cabin. Workers want private space to unwind after a 12 hour shift. Also the general standard of accommodation can be very poor.

7% have concerns about the travel allowance. Many workers have to travel long distances and have early check in times so cannot use a 2nd class off peak rail ticket where provided. Many workers feel that the allowance does not cover the full cost of traveling.

6% of respondents are concerned by the lack of night shift allowance.

3% of respondents and also a few workers who spoke to our reps at the heliports have concerns about NRBs (not required back).

Stronger Together in Unite

Unite is already the biggest union offshore but we need to get stronger. The higher our membership offshore - the more strength and collective power we will have to address the issues that matter to you. If you are not already a member, join Unite today by completing the form on the back of this newsletter.

Uniteyou free text service: Text Cuts to 86888

Our Social Network:  Unite the Union

Follow us on Twitter @UniteScotland

www.uniteunion.org

Unite regional meetings

In February Unite conducted 5 regional meetings in Aberdeen, Inverness, Glasgow, Newcastle and Liverpool. The purpose of these meetings was to engage with the members on a range of subjects. The following are a sample of the issues raised and the discussions that followed.

Paid leave and how the judgment that an employer could tell an offshore worker to take their paid leave during their field break could affect what our members already receive and what is Unite prepared to do now.

It was explained that as far as the legal fight through the courts is concerned the Supreme Court Judgment is final and that there is no entitlement to appeal this decision to the European Court of Justice. However for those who have had their contracts changed to incorporate a better than equal time on and off rotation (OCA & COTA) Unite will fight any attempts to reduce such entitlement. Remember that there needs to be full consultation prior to any attempted changes to your terms and conditions and that means you our members being fully involved. It was also noted that to date **no employer has intimated to the recognised trade unions that existing terms and conditions would be altered due to the Supreme Court Judgment.** Unite are continuing to look at every avenue to ensure that **all** offshore employees have paid time off from an equal time rotation, however one of the reoccurring concerns brought up at the meetings by our own members was the number of employees, including fellow union members, who are currently volunteering to work their paid leave instead of taking the time off. Such behaviour does not help Unite's argument that paid leave under the working time regulations is a safety issue and its intent is to reduce the number of working hours in the name of safety.

So called sweetheart agreements.

It was explained once again to those who raised the subject, that there are **no, no strike clauses** contained within any of the agreements which Unite are signatories to within the offshore oil and gas sector

100% Campaign

The continuing offshore recruitment drive was universally welcomed and a lot of positive feedback was received. It was confirmed that membership has increased since the recruitment drive started and this was as a result of both the heliport visits and also the information being sent to members home addresses and offshore to reps.

Your industry, your issues.

Unite Offshore Shop Stewards

The following Unite shop stewards are available to assist and represent members within their respective employer, but if you have a specific query and don't have a shop steward on your unit please contact the Aberdeen office below and you will be directed to the appropriate full time officer who deals with your agreement. **(Aramark)**

Robert Black, Donald Campbell, Philip J Ferguson, Neil Hamilton, Ronnie Head, John Howatson, Stephen Howe, Gerald Lynch, Austen Mair, Stanley McIntosh, John McQueen, David Mitchell, Ian Spence, John Todd, **(Entier)** Victor Fraser, Graeme Henderson,

(ESS) Terry Bailey, Derek J Brown, Katrina Buist, Murdo Calder-MacPhee, Samuel Creton, Paula Deans, Raymond Duffy, Nicky Elphinstone, Mark Elrick, Jackie Etchels, William Forbes, Daniel Keogh, Simon Kirkwood, Angus Liddell, Gordon Love, Neil McLaren, Michael G McRae, Kyle Michie, Brian Milne, William Mitchell, Ian Mundie, Michael Murphy, Graeme S Neish, Andrew S Nunnen, Stuart Slater, James Stanbury, Lynne Stormonth, James Sutherland, Richard Sutherland, Isabella Troup, Alexander Whyte, David G Whyte,

(Sodexo) John P Browne, Martin Christie, Eric Conolly, Gerald Dickson, Derek Duffy, Ray Flowerday, David MacRae, David Morrison, Armand Sangbarani, Karl Schjolberg, Angus Simpson, David Strawhorn, Chris J Wheatley,

(Trinity) Barry Brooks, Corina Davie,

(Woodgroup / PSN) Kenny Ward, Phil Turner, Peter Toomey, Alex Patrick, Graham Newman, Rab Cunningham

(KCA Deutag) Donald Lafferty.

(Transocean) George Holmes.

(Salamis) Mike Cowie.

Proposed new EU offshore safety regs

On 31.1.12 the main stake holders involved in offshore safety, (Trade Unions, Employers Groups and Safety Regulators) within Europe and Norway were invited to Brussels to participate in the consultation process to introduce new European Offshore Safety Regulations. John Taylor (Unite Regional Officer) gave one of the key note speeches which was well received by all sectors represented, not only from the UK which included the HSE and Oil & Gas UK, but also other international regulatory bodies, employers groups and fellow trade unions. Although the meeting was initially to discuss whether the proposals should be implemented as a Regulation or a European Directive John quickly took the debate back to basics and explained that for the UK unions the choice of regulation or directive was secondary to whether the proposals would actually improve the health and safety of the offshore workforce and if it did not, then it was a waste of time introducing a new European statute whatever it was called.

John Taylor recounted a number of major disasters within the oil and gas industry including the Piper Alpha and most recently the Deepwater Horizon incident; he also explained how over the years the oil and gas industry has been reluctant to listen the employee's safety concerns and those raised by their trade unions. John noted that there were only two very minor references to workforce involvement within the proposed new regulations and that all the good work being carried out in the UK sector encouraging workforce involvement should be **increased not decreased**. He then expressed his concern that the proposed regulations would use up the limited resources of safety regulators such as the HSE in the UK, who would have to audit over 300 new safety cases. He explained that from a trade union point of view HSE inspectors should be offshore inspecting safety not stuck onshore auditing new safety cases that would need to replace those that already exist. This concern was echoed by Steve Walker head of HSE division Aberdeen.

John's final point was quite poignant, but very apt he said that "if the intention of the regulation was to help protect the environment from another major incident then we first and foremost must protect the health and safety of the workers on these units, listen to what they have to say and by doing this we not only protect them but also the unit and the environment, the industry has no greater responsibility than to ensure that every single worker returns home from their work safely".

Unite Asbestos Register

Unite has for some time maintained a register of members who believe they have been exposed to asbestos at work. It is held by Thompsons solicitors. The database contains over 10,000 Unite members' details. It has a facility to run reports to identify members who were employed by the same company, or at the same site, at the same time to trace witnesses who may be able to support personal injury claims for other members who have developed asbestos related disease. The Unite Asbestos Register is open to all members who wish to record their exposure on the register. Members can join the register by completing a questionnaire which can be down loaded from the internet by typing into a search engine (Unite the union asbestos) which will take you to a Unite webpage which deals with a range of asbestos related topics then simply click the following link [The Unite Asbestos Register](#) or if you are viewing this newsletter on line simply click on the links provided.

OCA, UKDCA, UKFPOA, BESNA UPDATE

OCA Wage Negotiations 2012 - 13

An initial meeting has taken place regarding the 2012/13 wage and conditions review with the recognised trade unions (**Unite and the GMB**) presenting the OCA with a seven point claim based around the feedback from the membership.

The claim was as follows:

1. A substantial wage increase.
2. Introduction of 15th day payment.
3. Improvement on standby pay.
4. Improvement on sick pay
5. Improved field break payments.
6. Paid travel time to mobilisation and courses.
7. Improved overtime payments.

The OCA is now considering the claim and will respond at our next meeting on the 15th of March. Please remember as in each previous year that only members of a **recognised trade union (Unite or GMB)** are eligible to vote during a ballot affecting your terms and conditions. Separately from the wage negotiations, Unite have met with the OCA to address the continuing concerns our members have regarding the interpretation of rail travel fares under the existing agreement, and we will keep our members informed of any developments in due course. If you're not a member Join today Have your Say

Members win on travel time issue

As a result of Unite making members more aware that they should have been getting paid travel time from rigs in a previous newsletter, an OCA member company has had to pay out a considerable amount of back money as they had not been applying the payment.

Check that you are getting your entitlement!

If you have any concerns please contact your Unite rep or the Aberdeen office.

Contact your Unite Organising Team:

Steve Lewis, Unite Organiser 07980 083 027
stephen.lewis@unitetheunion.org
Facebook: Steve Lewis Unite

John Taylor, Regional Officer, 01224 645271
Johnc.taylor@unitetheunion.org

Wullie Wallace, Regional Officer, 01224 645271
Williamc.wallace@unitetheunion.org

For all the latest news affecting our Catering members or to simply access some offshore resources check out the Offshore Catering Branch web site at www.uniteoffshore.com

UKDCA & UKFPOA

The normal pro-forma will be sent out to our members covered by either of these agreements shortly to seek their views on items to be included into this year's negotiations. If you are covered by either of these agreements please ensure that your contact details are fully up to date so that you can participate in the consultations process as well as being eligible to vote in any offer received.

Victory as Unite busts BESNA seven.

The infamous BESNA (Building Engineering Services National Agreement) is no more. Unite is to start talks after the HVCA, (heating & ventilating contractors association) and all of the seven companies who were attempting to impose BESNA agreed to withdraw from the agreement and not enforce the new contracts. The proposed agreement would have meant Up to 35% pay cuts and De-Skilling of electricians

This is a remarkable result for Unite construction workers who have shown what can be achieved when workers stand shoulder to shoulder to defend their livelihoods.

BESNA could have had major ramifications on construction offshore if this had been implemented across the UK.

Concerted union pressure delivers

The pressure on Balfour Beatty and the other six companies by the weekly protests, coupled with two overwhelming votes for strike action at BBES, and the success in the high court to defend the ballot showed what can be achieved when workers stand together and fight for what they believe in.

For more information please follow the link below:

http://unitetheunion.org/sectors/construction/unite_f_or_me_workers.aspx

Direct Debit Guarantee

This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society. If the amounts to be paid or the payment dates change, Unite the Union will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If an error is made by Unite the Union or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid. You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

Data Protection Notice

By joining Unite the Union you are providing information which may be used for administrative purposes, the holding of elections and other statutory requirements. If you do not tick the box on page 4 you consent to Unite the Union passing on your information for the promotion of membership services (e.g. Insurance). We may disclose your information to our service providers and agents for these purposes. However if we do disclose your information, we will put a contract in place to ensure it is protected. We or they may contact you by post, telephone, (but not if you or the subscriber to a telephone line has registered with the Telephone Preference Service), e-mail, SMS Text or such other means as we may agree with you from time to time, to let you know about any goods, services or promotions that may be of interest to you. We may keep your information for a reasonable period to contact you about our services. You have the right to ask for a copy of your information (for which we charge a small fee) and to correct any inaccuracies. To make sure we follow your instructions correctly and to improve our service to you through training our staff, we may monitor or record communications.

No Stamp required, just place in an envelope and address to:
 Free Post RLUE-YHBB-SBTY, Unite the Union, 42-44 King Street, Aberdeen, AB24 5TJ.

Membership Form - GB About You

Surname Mr Miss
 Ms Miss
 Forename Dr Rev
 Male Female

NI No. Date of Birth / /

House No./Name

Street

City/Town

Postcode

Home Tel. Mobile

Email

About Your Job

Employer/Company Name

Department

Job Title

Work Address

Postcode Work Tel.

NM/C No.

Tick 1 21 or more hours per week (full time rate) I am an apprentice or on full time training scheme
 Less than 21 hours per week (part time rate) Self employed

Equal Opportunities

Unite the Union is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities for all and it is the Union's aim to provide services and support to members that is free of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability. What ethnic group do you belong to?

- White British Mixed White & Black Caribbean Asian or Asian British Pakistani Black or Black British African
- White Irish Mixed White & Black African Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi Black or Black British Other
- White Other Mixed Other Asian or Asian British Other Chinese
- Asian or Asian British Indian Black or Black British Caribbean Mixed White & Asian

Other/please specify

Do you regard yourself as disabled? Yes No

For office use only (Member No.)

Direct Debit Details Instructions to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit



Originators ID Number **9 7 1 4 6 7**

Name of bank/building society

Town of the Bank

Sort Code On the selected day of the month:

Account Number 7th 14th 21st 28th

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Unite the Union Direct Debit monthly from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Unite the Union and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank Building Society.

Authorisation of deduction of your trade union contribution from your pay (check-off)

Note: Not all employers operate check-off. I hereby authorise the deduction of Unite the Union subscriptions from my pay of such amounts as shall be notified to my employer on my behalf from time to time by Unite the Union. I also authorise my employer to inform Unite the Union of any changes of address.

Paid weekly or monthly? Weekly Monthly Payroll No.

Please read the Data Protection notice.

You have the right at any time to stop us using your details for third party marketing purposes. If you do not wish us to communicate with you or share your contact data for these purposes, please tick this box. Please note that this will preclude you from receiving our special offers or promotions.

I agree to abide by the union's rules. I authorise the payment above.

Are you or have you been a member of a trade union? (including Unite the Union) Yes No
 If yes, please give the name of the union and date of last payment

Signature(s) Date / /

Recruitment Code Branch Code Workplace Code Job Code