



# Unite the Union

December 2011

# Newsletter

**TO ALL OFFSHORE WORKERS**

Welcome to the first edition of Unite the Union's "Offshore Newsletter" which is intended for all offshore workers, whatever section of the industry you work in. The purpose of the newsletter is not solely to inform our current members of issues that are affecting them directly, which we will continue to do through the normal internal channels. It is also to engage with workers who are not yet in a recognised trade Union so we can find out why they have not yet become a member and to explain the benefits of being in the UK's largest trade union. A union that has recognition within the Catering, Construction, Floating Production and Drilling sectors offshore.

You may have received a copy of this newsletter from representatives of Unite at the heliports, on your unit or it may have been posted to you. All of these avenues are being used to support Unite's current recruitment drive. The main aim of the recruitment drive is to organise all sectors where Unite has a presence offshore, and we can only do this with our members assistance.

We need to ensure every member's contact and employment details are as accurate as possible. We need to organise on every unit by increasing membership and getting Shop Stewards elected for each employer, on each shift. Once a Unite Shop Steward has been elected they will be given the necessary training, and be independently accredited to carry out their role representing their members.

Within this newsletter we have attached an application form to join Unite the Union, and a survey which is open to all offshore workers not just union members! Your participation in the survey is invaluable in helping Unite identify the issues you as an offshore worker feel strongly about. The survey which should be returned no later than 13th January 2012 can also be completed on line at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/UniteOffshoresurvey>.

Both the application form and the survey can be returned to our Aberdeen office free of charge by placing them in an envelope and address in it to: Free Post RLUE-YHBB-SBTY, Unite the Union, 42-44 King Street, Aberdeen, AB24 5TJ.

By returning the application form directly to the Aberdeen office we can ensure that every offshore member is placed in the appropriate workplace branch at the earliest opportunity. By doing this we can communicate with our members as efficiently as possible. It is vital that our existing membership database is accurate, so if you have moved company or home address recently please advise the Aberdeen office on 01224 645271 to enable us to amend our records.

By becoming a Union member and joining UNITE, (from £2.63 per week), you will be joining an organisation that champions fairness, a strong, vibrant union giving you protection at the workplace, and fighting for you. UNITE uses its influence to challenge injustice at work and in our communities. Together we will send a very clear message to any employer, or for that matter client, that they cannot take the Offshore Workforce for granted.

#### Contact Your Unite Organising Team:

**Steve Lewis, Unite Organiser 07980 083 027 [stephen.lewis@unitetheunion.org](mailto:stephen.lewis@unitetheunion.org)**

**Facebook: Steve Lewis Unite**

**John Taylor, Regional Industrial Organiser, 01224 645271 [Johnc.taylor@unitetheunion.org](mailto:Johnc.taylor@unitetheunion.org)**

**Wullie Wallace, Regional Industrial Organiser, 01224 645271 [Williamc.wallace@unitetheunion.org](mailto: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](http://www.uniteoffshore.com)**

## **COTA - YOUR FUTURE YOUR FIGHT: JOIN NOW!**

If you are an offshore caterer in Unite, you will already know that our members have overwhelmingly rejected the recent COTA pay offer. Our members demanded not only a reasonable pay rise, but also an improvement in their terms and conditions, especially given that inflation is currently at 5.2%. Travel, accommodation, fuel and everyday essentials have increased in cost, not to mention the record profits made by the oil companies and your own employer over the last year.

We have now been informed that "at this stage COTA does not intend to enter into further negotiations or to make an improved offer". That being the case, we are now running a consultative ballot to ascertain whether or not our members want the unions to ballot for strike action in the pursuance of an improved offer from COTA.

If you are not in the Union then the question is why not? Do you simply not care about a pay rise, improving your terms and conditions or are you just happy to let others decide what you get, or more importantly what you don't get?

We are urging all Offshore Catering Workers to join the Union so that UNITED we can improve your terms and conditions. It is an old saying but never truer, UNITED we stand, divided, we fall. Remember, if you are not a member of a REGONISED Trade Union then you are NOT legally protected during official industrial action.

## **OCA - WAGE NEGOTIATIONS 2012**

Following on from last year's wage settlement, which resulted in a 4.5% increase on the hourly rates, as well as an increase in the number of days you qualify for standby pay when stood down, prior to going offshore from 5 days per week to 7 days per week. Proforma's are in the process of being sent to members who work under the OCA agreement seeking their views on items they would wish to have included in the 2012 Wage and Conditions claim.

If any Unite member covered by the OCA Agreement has not received a proforma by week ending 26th November, please contact our Aberdeen office 01224 645271. It is important, as it has been in previous years, that our members engage with the process so that the aspirations of our members are included in the upcoming wage claim.

It is hoped to present the claim for 2012/13 to the OCA before the Christmas break, with a view to having a new Agreement in place by April 1st 2012.

## **UKDCA - WAGE OFFER 2011**

The revised 2011 offer was put to a consultative ballot of Unite members, employed by member companies. The result of the ballot was that the members accepted the offer by 53.3% to 46.7% of votes cast with no spoiled papers having been returned. Unite have informed the UKDCA of the result and the new rates and backdated monies to 1st June 2011, will be paid as soon as practicable.

## **UKFPOA**

The revised UKFPOA offer was accepted by the membership in Teekay and Maersk, and is backdated to 1st July 2011.

## **SUPREME COURT - PAID LEAVE FOR OFFSHORE WORKERS**

As every offshore worker will be aware, there has been a long-running legal battle to secure all offshore workers the right to take their paid leave at a time when they would otherwise be scheduled to be offshore. Unite the union has been and continues to be at the forefront of that legal battle. The latest stage being held at the Supreme Court in London on 26 & 27th October. Although test cases being heard were in respect to Drilling and Catering members any ruling, whether from the Supreme Court, or the European Court of Justice, should it go to that, will apply to every single offshore worker. We have been fighting this issue since 2003 and UNITE will do all within its powers to secure the same holiday rights as those enjoyed by onshore workers.

Following the conclusion of the Appeal, Unite's legal team were "reasonably optimistic" that the Supreme Court would refer the case to the European Court, and if this happens it will take about another 18 months to be heard. The Supreme Court judgment will probably come out within 6 to 12 weeks, so it is likely to be late this year or early next year before we have the decision, but we will keep our members informed of any developments in due course.

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  
**box only**  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
  - Other/please specify  Asian or Asian British Indian  Black or Black British Caribbean  Mixed White & Asian
- Do you regard yourself as disabled? 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

Unite the Union has embarked on the largest ever organising campaign undertaken offshore by any trade union. We would ask you to assist us by completing the following survey, which can be returned to our Aberdeen office free of charge by placing it in an envelope and addressing it to: Free Post RLUE-YHBB-SBTY, Unite the Union, 42-44 King Street, Aberdeen, AB24 5TJ and returned no later than 13.1.12 or alternatively it can be completed on line at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/UniteOffshoresurvey>. With your assistance, we want to identify the most pressing issues you and your colleagues have offshore so that these can be addressed quickly and effectively.

Part of this organising campaign is to explain to both union and non-union members how Unite can help them get organised, and that, collectively, as part of a recognised trade union we can get real long-lasting improvements to your terms and conditions. This will not happen overnight, but Unite the union is committed to this campaign and we will use every resource at our disposal including, our network of Shop Stewards and offshore reps, to help our members achieve this. Remember United we stand divided we fall. That is what organising is really about.

Unite the union is here for the long-haul and we look forward to getting your feedback. If you want any further information or more application forms sent out to you, please contact our Aberdeen office 01224 645271 where one of our dedicated members of staff will be happy to assist.

**All responses will be treated in the strictest confidence and your answers will not be shared with your employer.**

**About You** (needed to assist in mapping the workplace and to allow feed back to the individual)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Offshore place of work \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details can be (House number and postcode), (e-mail address) or (mobile numer). \_\_\_\_\_

**Trade Union - Are you a member of a Trade Union?**

Unite the Union: Yes  No  Other (please specify which union) \_\_\_\_\_

Not a member \_\_\_\_\_ Are you aware of any Unite Shop Stewards on your unit ? Yes  No

If so who is it \_\_\_\_\_ and who do they work for \_\_\_\_\_

**Your Issues**

Please note below the three most important issues you currently face at your work. These issues can be discussed in more detail by requesting us to contact you directly.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

(Highlight your following opinions)

**What do you think about Unite's campaign to organise offshore workers and improve working conditions.**

Very good  Good  Indifferent  Not happy

**Would you like to get involved in supporting Unite's campaign?**

Yes I'd like to get active and assist  I support but am too busy to get active right now  No thanks

# Unite the Union

## OFFSHORE SURVEY

Dec 2011

