

## Councillors Back Unions over Sickness Policy

At the quarterly meeting between Councillors and trade unions (called the Joint Consultative Panel), UNISON raised concerns about management not being allowed to apply any discretion on whether to begin the formal sickness procedures or not – despite this ability for managers to use discretion being in the Council's own policy.

UNISON asked that Councillors ensure the Council's policy is applied properly.

It is pleasing to report that Councillors, including the Council Leader Steve Trow, agreed with the trade unions.

Therefore, if you have an excellent attendance record and are unfortunate enough to need some sick leave, say for an operation which requires a recovery period, if formal procedures are begun – challenge why. Make sure you get UNISON's help.

If you are a manager and are being told that you must start formal sickness procedures (i.e. you are not being allowed to apply discretion) please let us know.

## Mental Health Matters

UNISON will be part of the mental health stalls taking place in various Council workplaces during the week beginning 13 May. Come along and check out our stall. If you need advice, or simply have a query, then come and visit us. If you can't visit a stall and want advice, please contact your Branch on 0121 569 5996.

**Did you know that in a survey by UNISON 60% reported that their mental health was suffering as a result of their work.**

## Chill Out at Croyde Bay

UNISON's holiday resort in North Devon is available to everyone, but being a UNISON member you get a discount of at least 15%.

The award-winning resort has a stunning coastal location, with direct access to the beach and everything you need for a great holiday or short break. Perfect for family holidays, short breaks and surfing. Check it out at [www.croydeunison.co.uk](http://www.croydeunison.co.uk)

## Council Signs Up to Apprentice Charter

Sandwell Council has agreed to a charter for Apprentices that was initiated by UNISON. The Charter brings improvements to the treatment of Apprentices, which includes ringfencing for vacant jobs at the end of the apprenticeship and access to parental/maternity leave.

Tony Barnsley, who signed the charter on behalf of the joint trade unions at the full Council meeting 9 April added, "We welcome this charter as a step in the right direction. However, we are disappointed that the Council has not yet committed to improving the pay rate for apprentices. This is something we will continue to campaign for."

Sandwell UNISON also has an Officer dedicated to supporting Apprentices. Former Apprentice himself, Chris Bagley can be contacted on 0121 569 6924 for advice and guidance.

## Get help with school uniform costs this summer

- Struggling to make ends meet?
- Worried about back to school costs?

### Help is on hand

We have set up a limited fund to help UNISON members on low income with school uniform costs by way of a one-off payment of up to £120.

To apply, download the application form from [unison.org.uk/thereforyou](http://unison.org.uk/thereforyou)

or contact UNISON Direct on 0800 0 857 857.

Closing date for receipt of applications is Friday 19 July 2019.

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trade union

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Or call the branch on

**0121 569 5996**

