

Sandwell Children's Trust Deal or No Deal?

For over a year UNISON had been asking for management to offer a better deal to staff regarding pay and terms in order to resolve the recruitment and retention crisis in the service.

Therefore, when UNISON found out about a paper going to a Cabinet meeting of the Council for approval a week before 12 July report, it was on the one hand welcomed. On the other hand, it was disappointing that the contents had not been discussed nor negotiated and agreed with the recognised staff trade unions.

The so called 'Sandwell Deal' includes continuing to pay a market supplement of £2,500 per annum to all permanent case holding social workers.

The approval of the Cabinet report also introduces a retention payment policy 'for all permanent case holding social workers and permanent team managers.' The retention payments are £2,000 for staying 12 months, a further £3,000 for staying 24 months and a further £5,000 for staying 36 months. For those that receive this 'Deal' the total reward over three years is up to £17,500.

The 'Deal' also includes an extra day's leave for birthdays. The additional birthday leave is the only part that has been formally agreed with the recognised trade unions (and why wouldn't we agree to that?)

The trade unions thought we would have meaningful consultation on who would receive these payments. Unfortunately, this has not happened, and management have implemented the 'Deal' without even sharing the slides of the briefings or the FAQ's with the trade unions.

Numerous staff have approached UNISON extremely angry and at the time of writing several collective grievances have been lodged in relation to the Sandwell Deal.

UNISON believes this situation could have been avoided with meaningful consultation.

However, we are where we are. The Joint Trade Unions will be launching a petition for Sandwell Children's Trust staff to sign and request that a new 'Deal' is negotiated with the trade unions that recognises the loyalty of all staff.

See your workplace rep to sign the petition if you wish.

Parking Charge Concession Won

After a UNISON petition was submitted to the Council Leader over proposals to increase parking charges to £1200 in West Brom and £600 elsewhere, negotiations were held with the Council to agree a deal for staff.

UNISON accepted a second revised offer which provides a concession for staff needing to purchase a 5-day pass. The charge for an annual 5-day pass, inside and outside West Bromwich, will now be £240 in the first year and £330 in the second year, for existing and new staff.

Parking passes can now be purchased for 1,2,3,4 and 5 days per week. The 2-day staff parking pass will be £100 this year. See [Parking Charge Concession Won – Sandwell General UNISON Branch \(sandwellunison.co.uk\)](http://sandwellunison.co.uk) for more detail.

Business Support Review

Outside consultants are currently undertaking a review of what is termed 'Business Support' across the Council. The trade unions have been given a briefing only on which jobs the review will look at and concern has already been expressed on who is included. If there are concerns from your area, please let us know.

Multi-Skill to get Market Supplement?

Multi-Skill operatives from Roway Lane have been promised a review of their pay due to difficulties recruiting and retaining staff.

While the review work takes place, Multi-Skill operatives have been promised a market supplement as an interim measure. However, at the time of writing this is yet to appear.