Phoenix

A Sandwell UNISON Newsletter – Nov/Dec 26

Is the Council about to introduce…

A Sackers' Charter?

Do you think it would be fair or the sign of a good employer if you could get sacked for taking just 9 individual days of sickness?

Well proposals presented to Sandwell's trade unions would make that possible. The proposals would end the current trigger points of 6 days or 3 occasions over a 6-month period, to replace them with triggers of 3 occasions or 10 days over a 12-month period on a rolling 12-month basis – then issue an automatic Stage 1 Attendance Improvement Notice from Oracle. If another trigger is hit within a new rolling 12-months, then the proposal is to issue a Stage 2 Attendance Improvement Warning which would be live for a further 12 months. If triggers are breached again then there will be a Stage 3 meeting that could end in dismissal!

When asked how this would help reduce sickness levels the answer was more staff would be sacked for repeated short amounts of sickness.

This proposal ignores the fact that 70% of all sick days are for those on long term absence and the recent increase has mainly occurred because of an increase in long term sickness. The highest increases have occurred for those aged over 60, with neck and back + muscular reasons seeing the biggest increases. The increase in long term sickness is mainly across Adults and Housing amongst bands A to D.

Sacking more staff for short periods of absence will not address the real reasons for an increase in sickness outlined above, which in part can be attributed to an ageing workforce. However, they will create fear and make our employment more precarious.

UNISON representatives will continue to argue against such proposals.

Do you think we all need to oppose such proposals that would create a sackers' charter?

NJC Pay Claim for 2027/28

Thanks to those that voted on the Alchemer Survey. The results from Sandwell were 63% voting for a 10% claim and 60% voting for a 2-year claim. Nationally, 78% of UNISON branches voted for a 10% claim and 75% for a 2-year claim.

Discussions then took place with our sister unions to agree a Joint Union claim for 2027/28. The agreement for the claim was:

Year 1: 8% or £3,000, whichever is the greater
Year 2: RPI + 3.6% or £3,000, whichever is the greater.

In addition, the claim includes:

- £15 minimum hourly rate.
- Asking the employers to campaign with the unions on local government funding.
- An additional one day of annual leave.
- A reduction in the working week of two hours, with no loss of pay.

Our regional employers are meeting to discuss an offer before Xmas, so there is the expectation that we may receive an offer to vote on early next year.

To receive a vote on whatever the offer is you need to be a member. If you are not in UNISON and want better pay, then join today.

Make sure you and your colleagues are members of Sandwell's biggest trade union

UNISON

To join click https://join.unison.org.uk/

Join UNISON

This Newsletter has been produced by Sandwell General UNISON Branch, Town Hall, West Bromwich. The views expressed may not necessarily be those of the Branch or Branch Committee.