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Please inform us of change of address or email

We encourage retired members to use your **home** email address for when you give up your work email address. We send out a quarterly newsletter by email but only an annual newsletter by post.

3. On-line campaigning

How can you campaign for what you believe in when you are not able, for whatever reason, to march, demonstrate, lobby? How can you do more to add your voice to campaigns across a whole range of issues? How can you start your own campaign that might have a nationwide, or even worldwide effect? One answer to these questions is to get involved with, and make use of, social media. As long as you have a computer or a smart phone, you can take part in, or even initiate campaigns.

There are a number of organisations, with web sites, which are dedicated to this. Some such as 38 Degrees (which is UK based and UK focussed) and Avaaz are becoming very well known in the traditional media and the wider political world. The common feature of these organisations is that they provide a mechanism for creating and disseminating petitions, together with associated letter writing and lobbying. They use facebook, twitter and e-mail to spread their message. You can take part to the level that you wish. If you are a user of facebook or twitter, you can use these to spread the word to friends, families and colleagues, if you want. You will sometimes be asked for donations, which is reasonable as online services such as these do cost and some of the organisations employ people to run them. However, such donations are optional.

If you want to find out more, have a look at:
38degrees.org.uk
avaaz.org
sumofus.org
ipetitions.com
change.org

Rob Kirkwood

1. March branch meeting

11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Tuesday 6th May 2014

at Gothic Warehouse (ground floor room)

Cromford, Derbys

(Speaker at 12.00 noon)

Speaker: Brian Herbertson on “Campaigns of NPC (National Pensioners Convention)”

Join other members afterwards for lunch at a local hostelry.

Future meeting: Tuesday 21st October 2014

Loughborough, Swan in the Rushes Inn

Speaker: Professor Andreas Bieler

on “Austerity and trade unions”

2. Pension increases

USS and TPS pensions go up by 2.7% in April, the CPI (Consumer Price Index). If this government had not changed the indexing and still used the RPI (Retail Price Index) it would have been somewhat higher. Hence there a cumulative loss every year on your pension.

4. Impact of state pension changes

The single tier pension will affect only those who reach [state pension age \(SPA\)](#) on or after April 2016. It will, however, impact on those receiving an occupational pension. The normal pension age for an occupational pension is the same as [SPA](#) and will rise as the [SPA](#) rises. The single tier pension will cause an end to what is termed “contracting out” – more on that later- and will increase the costs to those still paying into the TPS or USS.

The first issue has been covered by the [Pensions Policy Institute \(PPI\)](#) in its publication “Changes to State Pension Age [PPI](#)” (Feb 2014). Both men and women will see their [SPA](#) increase to 66 by 2020. The Government now proposes to bring forward the increase of SPA to reach age 67 by the mid- 2020s and to 69 by the late 2040s. The principle informing future changes to the [SPA](#) is that on average an individual should spend ‘up to a third of their adult life in retirement’ (HM Treasury 2013 Autumn Statement). The Pensions Bill specifies that, as part of the review process of [SPA](#), both the Government Actuary’s Department and an independent committee must submit reports before the end of a period of 6 years, with the first reports being published before 7th May 2017.

This estimate of one third poses all sorts of problems. These figures mask differences between the sexes; for instance, for women the trigger year in which the [SPA](#) would need to increase to 67 to avoid more than a third of adult life being spent in retirement is 2010, while the equivalent year for men would be 2032! The figures mask the huge differences in mortality between differing socio-economic groups. The nearest the [PPI](#) gets to quantifying these impacts is to relate average mortality to geography which partially reflect socio-economic factors. While for England, 2032 is the year in which the [SPA](#) would need to increase to 68 to avoid more than a third of adult life being spent in retirement, in Wales it is 2036, in Northern Ireland 2037 and Scotland 2045.

The picture is further complicated if healthy life expectancy is considered. [Office of National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) figures calculate healthy life expectancy at birth to be 63.2 for males and 64.2 for females born in England in 2009-2011. ([ONS, Life Expectancy and Healthy Life Expectancy for males and females at birth in England 2009-11](#)). The Marmot Review made it clear the extent of the social gradient masked by such averages with a mean disability free life varying from 53 years in the poorest areas and 68 in the richest. But if the expectation that a manual labourer could work until 69 is impossible, the hope that a lecturer could soldier on to that age before getting either state pension or occupational pension beggars belief.

The second paper “The Impact of the Abolition of Contracting out” ([PPI](#) Feb 2014) also has relevance to our working colleagues. The new single-tier state pension will replace the [State Second Pension \(S2P\)](#). Previously those paying into the TPS or USS contracted out of paying into [S2P](#), consequently, both employees and their employers paid lower [National Insurance \(NI\)](#) contributions. 5.1 million public sector workers who are active members of contracted-out [Defined Benefit \(DB\)](#) pension schemes will pay [NI](#) contributions at a rate not of 10.6% but of 12%, while employers will pay not 10.4% but 13.8%. The Government estimates that it will collect around £5 billion a

year in extra revenues from 2016 onwards due to the abolition of contracting-out.

The burden on employees will not be spread proportionately. Above around £40,000 per year employees pay [NI](#) contributions at a rate of 2% regardless of whether they are contracted-out or not. So someone earning £20K p.a. would have their [NI](#) contributions increase from £101 to £142 a 41% increase. At £40K it is 36% and at £80K it is 13%. The very highest echelons of our profession are unlikely to notice the difference.

The Pensions Bill gives employers the power to amend their [DB](#) schemes rules subsequent to the abolition of contracting-out, without obtaining trustee consent. However, employers must not increase employee contributions, or reduce employees’ benefits, by a greater value than the amount of their lost National Insurance rebate. For the present this will not apply to public service pension schemes. This is because the Government gave a commitment to Parliament that these “reforms” should endure for 25 years. But after that? Further changes to public sector pensions after the 25 years could include the end of the requirement for [DB](#) schemes to provide spouse’s benefits. The Government is consulting on removing the requirement to index-link pensions in payment. The Defined Ambition paper also proposes making it easier for schemes to change their normal pension age in line with changes in life expectancy.

These changes presently will not affect pensioners. And if you believe in the goodwill and trust the word of the present government and its successors over the next 25 years, then all is well in the best of all possible worlds. But if you are awake, then you must be prepared to campaign against a series of attempts to worsen our pensions as well as the welfare state.

Julian Atkinson

5. Cleansing the stables

Finally, ATOS has bowed out of supervising the work competence assessments that are the portal to disabled and chronically ill people being allowed to remain on disability benefits. Disability minister Mike Penning told MPs the scale of appeals - around 600,000 since its introduction - meant there was “real concern” about the work being carried out. This is particularly concerning given that new rules mean anyone wanting to appeal a decision that they are fit to work first has to have all their paperwork looked at again, while receiving no sickness benefits. The Citizens Advice Bureau believes this will result in thousands of people being wrongly forced to survive on no income at all. A Freedom of Information request revealed that as many as 158,300 people were wrongly found fit for work by ATOS, decisions that were overturned before appeal by the [Department for Work and Pensions \(DWP\)](#). A further 100,000 won their appeals.

Before we rejoice prematurely, the likely replacement for ATOS will come from G4S, SERCO, A4E or the Capita Group. The [National Audit Office \(NAO\)](#) has looked at four of the larger providers: ATOS, G4S, SERCO and Capita (*The role of major contractors in the delivery of public services*, 8th November 2013). The scale of public money going to the four is staggering. In the financial year 2012-13 ATOS pocketed £0.7bn, Capita £1.1bn, G4S £0.7bn and Serco £1.8bn. The spread of involvement is amazing and

covers the NHS and both local and central government. Some of the larger contracts in central government include; Ministry of Justice, Department of Education, Department of Health, the Cabinet office, the Ministry of Defence and HM Revenue and Customs. We will see how ironic this last remit is later.

The [NAO](#) has looked at the profit levels of these big four private providers. "Low margins are often established during the bidding process, but can increase during the contract lifetime". There is a considerable lack of transparency. "Contractors are often wary about putting information on costs and profits into the public domain. They believe that such information is commercially sensitive and would harm their economic interests, as competitors could use it against them."

The failure of accountability of these private providers has been widely reported. ATOS, G4S, SERCO and Capita are all being accused of tax avoidance. ATOS and G4S paid no corporation tax at all in the UK in 2012, according to the Daily Telegraph. Capita only paid £50-£56 million, while Serco paid £25 million in tax. They learnt a few dodges whilst within the HMRC. G4S is currently being investigated by the Serious Fraud Office over its over-billing the taxpayer by £24m for electronic tagging and prison escort services. Other problems involve G4S over the Olympics, A4E over the Work Programme and Serco over medical services in Cornwall. Part of the answer to getting the public services we need is to sweep the whole bunch out.

[Julian Atkinson](#)

6. NHS, education and Civil Service employers face higher contributions

Employers participating in the NHS, Teachers and Civil Service pension schemes will face higher contributions from 2015, chief secretary to the Treasury Danny Alexander has confirmed. It comes as HM Treasury published directions and regulations for valuations in reformed public service schemes, including the [Local Government Pension Scheme \(LGPS\)](#), and details of the cost cap mechanism under the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.

In a written ministerial statement, Alexander said the government is taking "corrective action" in unfunded public sector schemes in order to avoid a £1bn annual shortfall for the NHS, teachers and Civil Service. Contribution rates will be set following the conclusion of the current valuation process, which Alexander said is "the first time schemes have been valued simultaneously and according to the same rigorous principles and transparent approach".

The Liberal Democrat MP continued: "It is already clear that these will show the level of contributions paid by employers have not been sufficient to meet the full long-term costs of the scheme. The government is therefore taking corrective action, and will introduce new higher employer contribution rates for these schemes from 2015. This will ensure that the contributions paid by public service employers reflect the full costs of the schemes, including the costs of the deficits that have arisen since previous valuations." Alexander added that existing pensions, member benefits and employee contributions will not be affected by the plans.

[Professional Pensions 14 Mar 2014](#)

7. Pay dispute in universities - marking boycott to go ahead

In HE the national campaign for an improved offer over 1% continues. Two hour strikes have been held with mass walkabouts, teach-ins, coffee drinking and picketing.

UCU and its sister trade unions met with the Universities and Colleges' Employers Association (UCEA) on 26 March in a formal meeting to discuss the pay claim for 2014-15. The employers again failed to make an offer but did agree to bring forward the next meeting to 15 April.

UCU Head of Bargaining, Michael MacNeil, said: 'Since we last sat down with the employers to formally discuss pay there have been six strikes by university staff -three full day ones and three two hour stoppages – and we have announced plans for a marking boycott. It is clear that students want a fair and speedy resolution to this dispute, and UCU is continuing to work hard to achieve this before our marking boycott begins on 28 April.

'The employers did at least recognise that the falling value of staff pay is a real issue, but they did not make an offer at the meeting. We welcome the fact that UCEA have agreed to bring forward the next meeting to 15 April, as this gives them one more chance to make a fair offer before the marking boycott begins.'

Since 2009, pay in further and higher education has been cut every year. Every year, the employers in colleges and universities have made offers that are far lower than the rising cost of living. As a result, staff in further and higher education have seen their pay cut by between 13 and 15% over four years. Also, pay is falling as job cuts create heavier workloads and higher stress levels. So staff have to work harder while earning less.

Pay cuts are bad for education in the UK: If the problem of falling pay is not addressed, colleges and universities simply won't be able to recruit and retain the brightest people to work for them and the quality of education as well as research in the UK will fall. Politicians talk about the importance of a skilled, trained, highly educated population to our economy, yet they will do nothing to invest properly in this education.

[Russ Bowman](#)

8. FE pay dispute Principals' Pay – Doing Very Nicely

Over ten years, College Principals' pay has grown by 50.7%. This is almost double the rate of growth for the entire education sector and 2.7 times the rate of growth for FE staff subjected to national pay recommendations. FE College Principals' pay has grown at a rate 56.5% higher than UK average earnings in the ten year period 2002/03 – 2011/12; and has substantially exceeded both inflation measures and has risen at more than twice the rate of CPI over the last decade.

In the meantime, FE teachers along with school teachers have had a risible offer from their employers of 1%. This would mean another year of not keeping up with inflation. UCU continues to remain in dispute with the employers over its 2013/14 claim and has rolled over that claim together with the new claim. This year's claim is for:

- * £1,040 consolidated or 3% on all points, whichever is the greater
- * A recommendation to colleges to become accredited Living Wage employers
- * A commitment to safeguard wages for a minimum of three years.

A special conference of English FE UCU delegates met on 5th April and agreed that there would be no immediate industrial action but that we would retain a live ballot to carry the threat of further action into the 2014/15 pay talks.

For more information see:

http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/n/7/ucu_fenews48_mar14.pdf

9. Tribunal rules scheme discrimination against civil partners is within EU law

The **Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT)** has ruled that schemes may restrict survivor benefits for civil partners to post-2005 accrual without falling foul of anti-discrimination law. An exemption in the Equality Act 2010 permits schemes to limit benefits for surviving partners of scheme members to accrual from 5 December 2005, the date at which civil partnerships became legal.

The exemption was challenged when human rights organisation Liberty took chemical manufacturer Innospec to an employment tribunal on behalf of Innospec scheme member John Walker. A member of the scheme since 1980 and in a civil partnership since 2006, contested that had he married a woman on the same date, his wife would be entitled to a survivor pension of £41,000 per year. As it stood, his civil partner was entitled to just £500 per year. The tribunal originally ruled that employers which used the exemption for civil partners were illegally discriminating against gay and lesbian members.

However, the **EAT** has overturned this decision, ruling that although using the exemption is a form of direct discrimination, the Equality Act exemption is compatible with EU law. Eversheds, which acted for Innospec, said the decision means scheme trustees may continue to restrict civil partners' survivor benefits, and that this exception will be extended to cover surviving same-sex spouses as well when same-sex marriage becomes legal next month. However, the law firm warned the government is due to report in July on its review of the different treatment of civil partners and same-sex married couples in occupational schemes and that this may lead to further change.

Julian Atkinson

10. UCU Retired Members Branch

The branch has been underway for four years with over 200 members. The aims are diverse, but include bringing together retired members of UCU in the East Midlands, giving advice to branches on pension and retired members' matters, campaigning on issues relating to retired members and representation to the UCU national congress, National Pensioners Convention, Local TUCs. If you previously worked outside the East Midlands, but lived or now live in the East Midlands please join our branch.

Meetings: We hold meetings three times a year, in places of interest to make part of a day and lunch out. The meetings centre round important issues for UCU pensioners and give a chance to chat to other retired members.

Newsletter: A termly newsletter with useful articles for retired UCU members is sent to all branch members for whom we have email addresses and to UCU branch secretaries in the East Midlands.

Email addresses: We encourage retired members to use your home email for when you give up your work email address. Please let us have your email address and also changes to your email address.

**For more information
please contact Julian Atkinson**
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East Midlands Branch officers and committee

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Brian Hambidge, Russ Bowman

Roles and functions for retired members branches

The branch committee has drawn up a list of roles and functions of the retired members branch. These were discussed at the next branch meeting in March.

1. To represent the interests of retired members within the union.
2. To represent the interests of retired union members within the wider union and pensioner movements.
3. To provide a forum within the union for retired members to come together to consider and debate matters of mutual interest.
4. To provide a resource of collective memory, advice and expertise in support of the union, in particular to those still in active employment.
5. To provide active support, where appropriate, by involving the broadest section of the branch in support of the wider interests of the union and its members, including support for those still in active employment.

11. What do we do all day or in what way are we a burden on the state?

To be constantly told that pensioners such as ourselves are a “burden on the state” is very frustrating. Many of us are involved in a wide variety of activities that would be costly to provide if paid for. Members of UCU East Midlands Retired Members Branch, friends and acquaintances among only those people I know of, contribute in many ways.

For example:

- ★ **By volunteering** in formal roles in Local Community and Residents groups, Hospital Volunteers (including as volunteer patients helping medical students to learn), Museum Volunteers, Neighbourhood Watch, School/Classroom support, Citizens Advice, counselling and medical support.
- ★ **In caring roles** for family, neighbours and friends by grand-parenting, including actual fostering and sometimes travelling long distances and staying over, looking after very elderly parents, shopping, odd jobbing and visiting and helping neighbours. No doubt this also happens in many other diverse and essential ways.
- ★ **Keeping ourselves healthy and active** by participation in a variety of social, cultural and physical activities surely also keep us from bothering the Health services more than absolutely necessary. Ways we do this can be in Choirs, Adult Learning such as WEA Classes, Art and Craft Groups, U3A, Book Groups, Fitness Classes/Groups (e.g. walking, yoga, cycling, zumba, football), Drama Groups, all these and more.
- ★ **Even back at ‘work’** by using our expertise and experience to help colleagues still at work, refereeing publications and research grants, helping researchers, carrying on with research, part-time teaching and a myriad of other such activities.

None of this may be undertaken by a sense of duty and almost all is enjoyable and interesting. As lively and concerned citizens are we therefore members of Mr Cameron’s “Big Society” propping up a failing regime? I certainly hope not. And we are definitely not a burden on the state, having made major contributions in our working lives before retirement and all this.

Rowena Dawson

More information

A lot more information and news can be obtained from these websites. We recommend that you have a browse.

UCU National Website: <http://www.ucu.org.uk>

AgeUK: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

68 is too late: www.68istoolate.org.uk

National Pensioners Convention (NPC): <http://npcuk.org>

East Midlands NPC: <http://leicesternpcgroup.btck.co.uk/>

12. Speaker at March branch meeting

Alan Barker, Regional Secretary of East Midlands UCU

Pay and Workload Disputes

HE pay has fallen 15% in real terms so members are clearly experiencing a pay cut, not a pay freeze. There is a greater gender pay gap in HE than in the rest of the public sector and more than half of HE institutions use zero hours contracts. This is despite HE institutions having a £2 billion surplus. FE members have seen a 15% real terms cut since 2009 and their pay is now £2,000 lower than school teachers. The 0.7% pay offer has been described by UCU as “antagonistic” and lecturers are very angry.

The HE dispute continues. NTU (Nottingham Trent University) has docked one day’s pay for 2 hours’ action and the union is going to court about this. The FE dispute has stalled because the UCU FE Committee is undecided as to how to proceed. This is unfortunate when people are so angry as it means there is currently no progress in prosecuting this dispute. The pensions dispute should be seen as part of the pay dispute since pensions are deferred pay. Contributions have risen by £200 p.a. and the move to CPI reduces benefits.

Excessive workload is now a very big issue. Surveys show that, on average, lecturers are putting in 10 hours of unpaid overtime with many people working 70 and 80 hour weeks. Teachers in FE, HE and also in schools have higher stress levels than other workers. In HE, 30% of lecturers are working more than 50 hours per week. There is some useful material about this issue on the UCU website and Alan believes we should be doing more to empower our members to say no to extra work.

Privatisation

Successive governments have pushed this but it’s getting worse under the present administration which seems to view education as a series of opportunities for capitalists to make money. Colleges are setting up partnerships to establish private training centres which then compete with them. Colleges and universities have spent much money on ventures abroad. For example, one college spent a lot of money setting up a college in India, sending out people to train their staff etc. but it attracted hardly any students. We are also now seeing the setting up of ‘for profit’ colleges.

Lesson Observations

This is especially a problem in FE but is now creeping into HE (FE is often used as a test bed). These are observations without notice and with gradings that are linked to disciplinary procedures. Unsurprisingly, they are creating much fear.

UCU Finance

The union is in deep financial trouble and this is due, at least in part, to people leaving the profession or being made redundant and then either not being replaced or being replaced with younger people who are being paid less and whose subs are therefore lower. Alan believes that taking action is the way to recruit. He suggests that taking on, and winning, an issue like lesson observations would be very good for recruitment and it should be possible to win that one because it wouldn’t cost the employers anything.

Helen Chester

May Day celebrations

Members will be attending rallies in Chesterfield, Nottingham and Leicester. We expect the branch banner to be at Chesterfield and Nottingham. Join us for an interesting day out and support the Trade Union movement.



Nottingham and Mansfield May Day rally

Meet outside the pavilion, Forest Recreation Ground from **10.30 a.m.** for a march to Speakers Corner (Cloughie statue), Nottingham. Rally with local trade union and campaign speakers.

A poster for the Chesterfield Trades Council May Day event. The top half features a large, stylized wheel graphic with the text 'CHESTERFIELD TRADES COUNCIL' in a curved banner across the top. The center of the wheel has a red square with 'MAY DAY' in white. Below the wheel, it says 'Monday 5th May 2014' and '37th People's Gala & Demonstration'. The bottom half is yellow and contains information about speakers, assembly, and rally. The text 'Street Entertainment' is written in a curved banner on the left, and 'Market Stalls' is written in a curved banner on the right. At the bottom, it says 'Further information: Chesterfield TUC, c/o 34 Glumangate, Chesterfield Tel: 01246 380415'. A small note at the bottom left says 'Free parking to Chesterfield Borough residents displaying the yellow RESIDENTS FREE PARKING disc on the DONUT Car Park.' and a small note on the right edge says 'Not to be repeated'.