

## **Report of NEC Meeting 7<sup>th</sup> September 2005**

*This is not an official or comprehensive report, but picks out issues that may be of particular interest to members in Health.*

*This report is written under guidelines for all NEC members on collective responsibility. Like other NEC members, I am now allowed to outline my own position in debates or votes only if I am specifically asked about my personal position.*

*I welcome questions on my personal position from members. Please feel free to contact me by phone: 020 7502 6905 (home) or by e-mail: [gill@ghg.me.uk](mailto:gill@ghg.me.uk)*

### **Rolls Royce**

Jerry Hicks, NEC member and convenor sacked by Rolls Royce, asked if the meeting could adjourn for five minutes to allow a delegation of strikers from the Rolls Royce Test Plant to meet the General Secretary. This was agreed, although the meeting subsequently agreed this should not set a precedent and should not happen again. The meeting agreed a message of support to go to mass meetings taking place the following day, and made a substantial donation to the strikers.

### **Minutes - CPHVA**

The minutes of the previous meeting recorded, *'The General Secretary reported that Mark Jones, National Officer for the CPHVA had tendered his resignation and that he would assign these duties to Karen Reay as Lead Officer'*. An NEC member suggested that this should read, *'...Karen Reay as Lead Professional Officer on a temporary basis'* in order to more accurately reflect the report to the previous NEC and the discussions that had taken place with the CPHVA. The amendment was first agreed, but this decision was reversed when the General Secretary re-entered the meeting. His view was that this raised wider issues, and that officers were in a post until he decided someone else should take it. The NEC endorsed this view.

### **Childcare Expenses**

An NEC member raised the outstanding issue of childcare expenses, highlighting that the issue had now been ongoing for many months. It was reported that the GPFC had discussed the issue, and an interim report was nearing completion. The interim report was in fact distributed later in the meeting. The report identified a desire to prevent members being out of pocket for child care expenses incurred through attendance at Amicus meetings, but noted that this could be costly. A more detailed report is due to be provided to the next NEC meeting.

### **Finance Report**

This was distributed during the meeting. The continuing strategy of cutting costs through reducing the head count and reducing property costs was endorsed. The voluntary redundancy programme is costly but reduces ongoing costs. If the head count is reduced, there is expected to be a small surplus next year (excluding VR costs).

The written report stated that 'Amicus Health World' would be discontinued. After questioning, it appears that production of this publication will move in house, but it will not be discontinued.

Spending by Regional Councils is significantly below budget to date. Regional Secretaries have a report of spending against budget for their own Region.

There was considerable discussion about the presentation of financial information to NEC members, with some feeling that information was inadequate. It was agreed that the next NEC meeting will be a two day meeting, allowing for a more detailed look at the union's finances. The ATOS consultancy looking at a range of internal procedures – to streamline processes and reduce costs - will also be asked to look at the presentation of financial information.

The NEC agreed that subscriptions will rise to £9.75 a month next year.

### **Election of Full Time Officers**

The General Secretary reported on recommendations from the GPFC. The recommendation was for implementation of all rules amendments from the May 2005 Rules Conference to be delayed until January 2006, including the proposal for the election of Full Time Officers. On the election of FTOs, the further recommendation was that gaps in cover created by voluntary redundancy should be covered by existing employees where possible, that it was for the NEC to decide when new officers are required, and only at such time would the rule on election of officers apply. Regional organisers would receive additional payments where they were required to take on the duties of regional officers following voluntary redundancies, but would not be designated as regional officers.

There was some lively debate around this. One NEC member said that it stuck in their throat to agree something at the Rules Conference but leave implementation to January.

Another said that the job of the NEC was to implement rules amendments. There had to be a very high level of concern that what we were doing, and what we would be perceived by members as doing, was engaging in a series of manoeuvres to avoid implementing rules changes. With the merger coming up, there was a real risk that important rules amendments would not get implemented at all.

Another NEC member said that members would be astonished to find that we hadn't changed the rules until January, and that this was a delay well beyond what members would find reasonable. Members would see this as the NEC circumventing rules changes.

Others disagreed. One said he was amazed that colleagues wanted to have yesterday's debate, and we had no alternative but to endorse the report. Another said that he supported the election of FTOs but it was not conducive at this moment in time. Members would understand if they were given an explanation of why the NEC had taken this decision.

Others raised points relating to the redeployment of Linda McCulloch to cover Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals, and the GPFC proposal to re-designate Siobhan Endean as Head of Equalities. One NEC member felt that this could be a breach of rule. Another was concerned that we were not applying a transparent procedure by re-designating Siobhan without opening the position to a wider layer of people. Another NEC member extended thanks to Linda McCulloch for the work she had done around equalities.

The General Secretary responded very forcefully to some of the points raised in the debate, expressing the view that it was not realistic at all to expect the election of FTOs at this time, that this wasn't important to members, and only a few political activists were interested.

On a vote, the GPFC recommendation was overwhelmingly carried. A small number (around six) voted against the GPFC recommendation. Around four NEC members asked for their votes to be recorded.

### **Implementation of Other Policy and Rules Conference Decisions**

A brief discussion took place on policy implementation. The NEC approved a detailed paper outlining the implementation of policy decisions. I am happy to answer questions on this if colleagues wish to contact me.

The GPFC recommended that the planned census on equalities should be deferred pending discussions on the new Union project. Two NEC members spoke against this, pointing out that rules amendments on equalities had been opposed by the NEC in favour of a census, and it was wrong to now delay taking equalities work forward. Another NEC member said that Conference had voted for a rule change, they should accept what they'd got and they should move on. The General Secretary reported that this was not reneging but deferring. Membership data was in a mess and there was nothing to stop discussions taking place on cleaning up data.

An NEC member noted that the delay in implementing rules amendments would have a particular impact on members aged over 65, as age restrictions would continue to apply.

The GPFC position was that, 'Many of the rules changes required consideration, research work and decisions by the NEC before they can be implemented, even with the keenest intentions'. The rule book was silent on timescales for implementation, and a date of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006 would allow for necessary research etc.

The GPFC recommendation was overwhelmingly endorsed, with a handful of NEC members voting against.

### **Les Bayliss**

The General Secretary gave a report on allegations of financial misconduct and bullying that had been made against Assistant General Secretary Les Bayliss. He reported that Les Bayliss had been exonerated of wrongdoing following an investigation in 2003, and again in 2005 following an investigation by Tony Dubbins and Ed Sweeney. The General Secretary's view was that politically motivated individuals were seeking to discredit the leadership of the Union. Two NEC members expressed some concern. A larger number of NEC members spoke to endorse the General Secretary's point of view. The investigation and report were overwhelmingly endorsed, with a very small number of NEC members abstaining.

Three employees of Amicus were suspended the following day.

### **Health Issues**

An NEC member had asked for the proposed reorganisation of primary care – with its wholesale outsourcing and privatisation of NHS jobs - to be placed on the agenda. She argued that this was an issue for every Amicus member, as all members use the NHS. It was not just an issue for our members in Health, although they would need support.

Although the discussion around primary care was brief, some important commitments were given. The NEC agreed to oppose government plans, to ensure that resources will be made available for a campaign, and to approach Unison to agree an emergency motion to go to the TUC. Deputy General Secretary Tony Dubbins was asked to attend the next Health Sector National Committee, so that he will be well-placed to take members' concerns back to the Labour Party (in his role as Chair of TULO).

*[The TUC approved an emergency resolution (attached) on 13<sup>th</sup> September, and Amicus will also be working with Unison to put an emergency resolution to the Labour Party Conference.]*

### **Stop the War Coalition Demonstration**

The NEC agreed to support the Stop the War Coalition demonstration taking place in central London on 24<sup>th</sup> September.

### **Gate Gourmet Dispute**

Many colleagues will know about these low paid catering workers (mostly Asian women) outsourced by BA to American venture capitalists, and now sacked for attending a union meeting. The NEC agreed to send a message of support, to publicise the dispute and the activities of the TGWU-backed support group, and to make a donation of £1000 to the hardship fund.

### **Correspondence**

A great deal of correspondence was not dealt with, as the NEC came to this part of the agenda a few minutes before the end of the meeting. I am happy to answer questions about individual items.

**Gill George**  
**17<sup>th</sup> September 2005**

## Congress 2005

Emergency motion

### **E3 Patient-led NHS**

Congress notes a survey by the Health Service Journal published on the 25 August showing the expected scale of the re-organisation of England's 303 Primary Care Trusts, leading to the loss of 150 Trusts.

Congress also notes with extreme concern a recent letter, dated 26 August 2005, from John Bacon, Director of DOH, regarding the Government's recent document 'Commissioning a Patient-led NHS'. Bacon describes 'rushing headlong into the design of new delivery units'.

Congress is particularly concerned about the large number of staff, including those working on the frontline, who are extremely anxious about their future and are fearful of the uncontrolled nature of these reforms and the damaging effects of marketisation on patient care.

Congress calls on the General Council to:

- i) lobby urgently for the reintroduction of control mechanisms to ensure the directive authority of the Department of Health;
- ii) press for the NHS Employers' Organisation to enter into urgent discussions with the trade unions with a view to agreeing a national framework for managing the staffing implications of the proposed changes;
- iii) campaign, in coalition with patient groups and other interested organisations, against outsourcing of PCT-provided services and for a reversal of the Government's policy that the role of PCTs in direct service provision should be reduced to a minimum; and
- iv) campaign against marketisation of the NHS.

Congress therefore calls upon the Government to reconsider proposals that would lead to the privatisation of primary care services and take action to address cuts to frontline community staff.

Mover: UNISON

Seconder: Amicus