



Karen Reissmann Legal Defence Fund

Legal Defence Fund Patrons: Tony Benn, Alan Hartman & Paul Reed *Manchester User Network*,
John Leech MP, Robert Lizar *solicitor*, **John McDonnell MP, Graham Pink,**
Mark Steel *comedian* and **Hilary Wainwright.**

Dear Colleague,

We seek your financial support to enable nurse Karen Reissmann to continue her legal fight against her former employer, Manchester Mental Health Trust. As you may know, Karen was sacked for criticising the effects of semi-privatisation of Manchester mental health services. Her Trust has been consistently rated as poor in its delivery of services to some of the most vulnerable people in the community; it came 173 out of 175 in a national survey and, most recently, was the only Trust in the country to be rated weak. Incredibly, on the same day Karen was suspended, she was awarded a promotion by the same employer in recognition of her professionalism and skills in this challenging area of NHS nursing.

The issues involved in Karen's case concern not just the NHS but also the fundamental right of trade unions and their elected officials (Karen has been a UNISON steward for over 25 years) to blow the whistle when urgently-needed services are failing patients' needs.

Karen's campaign has already received a staggering level of support, revealing the deep sense of injustice that still flourishes in our midst. Karen is keen to not only clear her name but to defend trade unionists' right to tell unpleasant truths when necessary about failings in our public services. Karen's workmates were so persuaded of the justice of her case that they struck for 44 days, with all the sacrifice that entailed. Now, it's time for the rest of the movement to show their support.

For Karen to take this case further over £10,000 needs to be raised to pay the many legal costs involved, even though this figure has been limited by the selfless kindness of many who have given their services free. We are delighted that this Appeal has already attracted a wide range of cross-party support, with officers from Karen's own CLP together with leading members of different political parties among its supporters.

If you want further information, or a speaker, please write to us, or phone Karen herself on 07972 120451.

All donations to the fund should be made to:

Karen Reissmann Legal Defence Fund, Unity Trust Bank

Sort Code 08-60-01, Account Number 20215859

and sent to the Treasurer: Kathy Crotty, 181 St Mary's Road, Moston, Manchester M40 0BN.

Thank you.