Trade Union News **Skipton & Ripon Labour Party**

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● Airedale hospital workers win breakthrough deal

GMB members employed by AGH Solutions at Airedale Hospital Keighley, a wholly owned subsidiary of Airedale NHS Trust covering roles like portering, catering and cleaning, have won a significant step forward in their campaign for full NHS pay and conditions.

Photo Keep Our NHS Public

After sustained strike action and fresh negotiations in October, workers voted to accept a new deal that brings them closer to parity with their NHS colleagues. From 1 November 2025, AGH staff will see improvements including: Full alignment on weekend enhancements, annual leave, maternity/paternity leave, and death-in-service benefits and sick pay boost: increasing by 50% this year and a further 25% next year with discussions to reopen in 2027 on further improvements.

The deal means that a porter with 5 years' service will gain three extra days of annual leave, and Sunday pay will jump from time +41% to time +83%, and their sick pay will increase from 10 weeks full pay and 10 weeks half pay to 15 weeks full pay and 15 weeks half-pay.

While the above represents a big win for workers, the dispute between **GMB** members and AGH Solutions continues as workers are still campaigning for their pension to be fully aligned with the NHS scheme.

GMB Organiser, Joe Wheatley, who attended our CLP meeting on 21 October, said: "This is a fantastic win for Airedale workers and a crucial first step towards full NHS alignment, but the fight isn't over yet. The Trust and AGH Solutions must recognise the right of our members to a decent retirement that reflects their commitment to serving the community within our NHS.

"**GMB** remain positive about upcoming negotiations, but members will not settle for anything less than a proposal that ends with full alignment to the NHS pension."

These porters, caterers, and domestics have been outsourced and given worse pay and conditions than their NHS colleagues. They were striking for equality.

Joe told our CLP meeting that over £2,500 had been raised for the hardship fund which helped members with their bills during the strikes and a petition of support had been signed by over 1,900 people. It was a huge show of solidarity.

And there was another important gain. Following a meeting between **GMB** members and Wes Streeting during the TUC Congress held in Brighton on 7 - 10 September, the Health Secretary agreed he would limit health service outsourcing https://www.gmb.org.uk/news/health-secretary-limits-after-nhs-outsourcing. On 26 September the Government wrote to NHS bosses telling them it will 'change the national guidance to confirm that new subsidiaries involving the transfer of NHS staff will now only be approved in a limited number of circumstances and only where there is clear union support and protection of NHS terms and conditions.' https://www.healthcare-management.uk/government-limit-nhs-outsourcing

The decision was welcomed by the **GMB** and in response, **UNISON** general secretary Christina McAnea, said that "the announcement was a positive step in the right direction and shows ministers are listening to the union's warnings.

'The NHS relies on support staff to keep hospitals clean, safe and running efficiently. They deserve the same pay and conditions as other health workers."

● **Strike continues as members at mining museum reject latest pay offer**

Workers at the National Coal Mining Museum for England have rejected the latest pay offer in their ongoing dispute over wages, their union has said. At least 40 members of **UNISON** at the site in Wakefield have been on continuous strike since mid-August calling for higher pay.

UNISON said members had rejected a new pay offer which a spokesperson said would have left many staff worse off than a previous proposal which was rejected. The union said representatives had met the museum's chief executive Lynn Dunning and local Labour MP Jade Botterill earlier in October with the aim of finding a resolution.

During the meeting, museum managers had suggested a £1 an hour rise for fitters and electricians and a 5% pay rise for other staff, a union spokesperson said. For many workers that would work out lower than the 80p an hour increase previously suggested by museum management, the union said.

UNISON says the extension of the strike (into 2026) is down to the museum's unwillingness to pay workers what they deserve. Management has been pumping thousands of pounds into alternative visitor attractions such as a land train and half-term activities, rather than resolving the dispute. They add that the museum spent significantly more money on such things during the first four weeks of the strike than the sum needed to settle the dispute.

The union reports that management has also recently employed contractors to carry out repairs to the playground. This is work that striking staff would normally carry out for no extra money whilst on shift.

Putting the money into resolving the dispute would be a far better use of public cash than hiring external companies to complete work staff would ordinarily be happy to take on.

More at: https://yorks.unison.org.uk/2025/10/24/mining-museum-strike-extended-into-new-year-as-managers-fail-to-make-acceptable-pay-offer/

- **Strikes to hit University of Sheffield & Sheffield Hallam in November and December over job cuts**

A combined 28 days of strike action will hit the city of Sheffield over the next two months in rows over job cuts at Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam universities, the **University and College Union (UCU)** has announced.

The dispute at the University of Sheffield centres on management's plans to put staff in five academic areas at risk of redundancy, as well as a continued risk of redundancy to professional services staff across the university. The full details and number of job losses have yet to be confirmed by the university but are expected shortly.

The university previously announced reviews of academic staffing in chemistry; civil engineering; the management school; materials science and engineering; and the school of East Asian studies, with restructures expected.

Sheffield plans to cut at least £5m by slashing staff and has made clear it is also willing to pursue more cuts by changing the size and shape of departments.

At Sheffield Hallam, the dispute centres on management's refusal to rule out compulsory redundancies, despite already having slashed around 500 jobs in 2024 and a further 170 since May 2025. Even though 170 staff have left through a voluntary severance scheme, the university is refusing to rule out compulsory redundancies and wants to axe up to 80 more jobs.

For staff who remain at both institutions, the job cuts will mean spiralling workload pressures and worse working conditions.

Details of strike days at: https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/14239/Mass-strikes-to-hit-University-of-Sheffield--Sheffield-Hallam-in-November-and-December-over-job-cuts

- **Shelter workers balloting for strikes over pay and working conditions**

Workers at the housing charity Shelter are being balloted for industrial action in a dispute over pay and working conditions. It comes as around 550 workers, members of **Unite**, have been offered a below-inflation 1.5 %pay rise.

Shelter's management has refused to negotiate with the union on pay.

Set up in 1966, Shelter is a leading housing and homelessness charity. One of its core aims is reducing poverty. Its latest financial report from earlier this year showed income totalled £81.33m in 2023/24. This is £7.67m, or 10 per cent, higher than the previous year due to a significant increase in donations.

Shelter has 12 offices across the UK. As well as the Shelter Head Office in Old Street, London and the Shelter Scotland office in Edinburgh, other cities include Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne, Sheffield and it also has retail shops nationwide.

The ballot closes on 19 November. If successful, strike action could begin in early December to tie in with the run up to Christmas, a very busy time for the charity.

More industrial news from **Unite** at: https://myunite.unitetheunion.org/

- **Manchester travel disruption as bus and tram network workers strike**

More than 200 workers, who undertake a variety of roles including ticketing, passenger assistance and information services for the bus and tram network, have rejected a 3.2 per cent pay offer. The offer is a real terms pay cut as the current rate of RPI inflation stands at 4.6 per cent.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: "This offer is a pay cut disguised as a rise and is an insult to TfGM's hardworking staff. **Unite** never accepts attacks on our members' jobs, pay or conditions. These workers have their union's full support in taking strike action."

The dispute is also over issues around stand by, call out and four day working week policies.

The workers took strike action on 18, 20, 23, 24 and 25 October, with disruption caused across the bus and tram network. **Unite** says that industrial action will intensify if the dispute is not settled.

More at:
https://www.unitetheunion.org/news-events/news/2025/october/manchester-travel-disruption-as-bus-and-tram-network-workers-strike

- **RMT declares dispute with Network Rail**

The **RMT** has gone into dispute with Network Rail over pay, after years of falling real-terms wages despite major productivity improvements delivered by staff across the railway.

The union says that since 2021, cumulative RPI inflation has risen by around 27%, while Network Rail pay awards over the same period total just 17%. That means staff are, on average, 10% worse off in real terms than they were four years ago. Depending on grade, individual losses amount to between £3,500 and £9,600 compared with inflation.

At the same time, Network Rail's own figures show that workers in maintenance and operations have delivered more for less. In 2023/24, the company spent about £3.9 billion on renewals, and staff delivered 108% of the planned work in the first year of Control Period 7, completing more work than scheduled without an increase in headcount.

RMT says it remains open to genuine talks at any stage and that a fair deal would bring lasting stability to the rail industry and support the transition to Great British Railways.

More at: https://www.rmt.org.uk/news/rmt-declares-dispute-with-network-rail-over-falling-real-wages/

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