



GMB @ Durham County Council

Welcome to your June 2011 Newsletter!

In this edition you will find:

GMB Congress 2011—Brighton	Page 1
Consultation on Salary Protection/Mileage	Page 2
Strike Advice	Page 3
188 Notices/Restructures in June 2011	Page 3
Public Sector Pension Negotiations	Page 4
Miners Gala	Page 4
Romania Appeal Raffle	Page 5
GMB Benefits	Page 5

GMB Congress 2011—Brighton

Jan Jepson long time delegate, and Davy Clegg first time delegate represented Durham County Council Local Authority Branch this year at GMB congress in Brighton. Both gave excellent speeches.



Congress decided that the following changes would be made to the benefits of GMB members:

- ◆ Funeral benefit—raised from £275 to £300
- ◆ Occupational Fatal Accident—Raised from £1,100 to £10,000
- ◆ Non-Occupational Fatal Accident—Raised from £1,100 to £5,000
- ◆ Total Disablement Grant—Raised from £4,000 to £10,000

Congress also agreed the following increases to member's contributions:

- ◆ Grade 1—An increase of 5p to £2.65 per week (£11.49 per month)
- ◆ Grade 2—An increase of 5p to £1.50 per week (£6.50 per month)
- ◆ Promotional Rate—An increase of 5p to 85p per week (£3.69 per month)

Consultation on Salary Protection/Mileage/Annual Leave

Following representation from our members over the removal of protection when a Section 188 redundancy notice is issued we raised these concerns at our meeting with the Leader of the County Council, the Deputy Leader and the Chief Executive.

As a result we were asked to meet with the employers to see if we could negotiate a solution. The employers in return would like the proposed changes to the existing car mileage Allowances.

Following lengthy discussions the proposed changes are:

Car mileage claims/allowances

- ◆ The removal of **Essential Car User Allowances**.
- ◆ **One fixed rate of car allowance per mile of 45 pence** for the first 10,000 miles dropping to 25 pence per mile for mileage incurred thereafter.

Salary Protection Policy

- A new and improved Salary Protection Policy which will apply to Redundancy Exercises as well as Restructures (The current policy excludes the payment of salary protection in redundancy exercises)

This is particularly relevant to employees subject to restructure, redundancy and/or redeployment exercises. For example, if such employees are appointed to a lower paid post, then the proposed new salary Protection Policy will apply for a **period of three years** and will be:

- ◆ A maximum of 8 increments (or less if the salary difference is a lesser monetary amount) for employees on PO14 and below
- ◆ A maximum cash amount of £8,000 (or less if the salary difference is a lesser monetary amount) for employees above PO14
- ◆ It is also proposed to backdate the salary protection proposals to 1st April 2011

Annual Leave

- Safeguard the current annual leave position of employees who have been involved in redundancy exercises since 1st April 2011
- ◆ The safeguarding of annual leave will be for one year only or on the implementation of Single Status (If Sooner) which will harmonise annual leave.

Representations can be made between the period of 10th and 30th June by email to [GMB Consultation.GMB@durham.gov.uk](mailto:GMB.Consultation.GMB@durham.gov.uk). Alternatively you may wish to send written representations to GMB Office, 4th Floor Room 38. County Hall. Durham DH15UY

It is important that you let us know your views by 30th June as following the consultation we will be meeting again with the employer.

GMB ADVICE TO MEMBERS REGARDING PROPOSED NUT/ATL/PCS STRIKE ON 30 JUNE 2011



GMB members have not been balloted and by law cannot be called upon to take part in industrial action on 30 June 2011. Members should work normally without undermining those who are on strike.

What does "work normally" mean?

It means you should work in accordance with your contract of employment and your usual duties.

What about picket lines?

The Code of Practice on Picketing says "Everyone has the right to decide for himself whether he will cross a picket line." If you decide not to cross a picket line because you feel at risk you should contact your manager to explain that you are not on strike but you were too intimidated to cross the picket line.

What if the workplace (eg school) is closed?

If your workplace is closed you should notify your employer that you are not on strike and you are available for work as usual, therefore you should be paid.

Section 188 Redundancy Notices and Restructures in June

Section 188 Redundancy Notices Issued:

Neighbourhood Services

- ◆ Painters
- ◆ Roofers
- ◆ Asbestos Removal Services
- ◆ Bricklayers

Adults, Wellbeing and Health

- ◆ Library Services
- ◆ Adult Learning

Restructures:

Adults, Wellbeing and Health

- ◆ Financial Services Team

If you receive a 188 notice please
contact the Branch on 0191 383 4417

Children and Young People's Services

- ◆ Quality and Review Services

PUBLIC SECTOR PENSION NEGOTIATIONS IN JEOPARDY

The negotiations involving GMB and other unions with government over the future of public sector pensions have been thrown into confusion following announcements on Friday by Danny Alexander, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, that government has already made up its mind to:

- ◆ Raise member contributions by 50%
- ◆ Raise scheme retirement ages, first to 66 then to 68
- ◆ Reduce scheme benefits by up to 30%

These are all matters that have been the subject of the joint negotiations and there has been no explanation from government as to why they should be making final decisions while negotiations are ongoing. Indeed there was further confusion as some government ministers over the weekend gave out a different message to say that no decisions had been taken and everything was still negotiable. It is, to say the least, a shambles.

GMB's position remains clear in that we are committed to genuine negotiations and to then put any proposals to our members for decision about acceptance or rejection and any consequent industrial action. But if government is not genuinely negotiating and has already decided to virtually destroy public sector pensions then we will not be able to stay in 'sham' negotiations and we will have to accelerate our preparations for an industrial action ballot.

So GMB deplores the pre-emptive statements made by Mr Alexander, deplores the confusion caused by mixed messages from different government ministers and calls on government to confirm unequivocally that negotiations are genuine, no decisions have been taken and they have an open mind on all issues covered by the negotiations.

The next meeting with government is due to be on 27 June. That meeting looks to be in serious jeopardy unless we are assured that we will be listened to. The TUs are representing 12 million people in the LGPS, NHS scheme, PCSPS and other public sector schemes and their views deserve to be treated with respect.

Article by Brian Strutton

National Secretary - Public Services Section

Miners Gala



The Miners Gala will be held on Saturday 9th July.

The GMB Branch Banner will be starting from the Market Place, Durham.

All members are invited to follow the banner.

Please meet at 8:30am outside the Town Hall.

GMB Romania Appeal Raffle

The Branch are holding a raffle to raise funds for aid to Romania. Terry Scarr, Senior Organiser will be taking aid to Romania in August.



Tickets are available from the GMB Office.

Contact Tracey Metcalfe on 0191 383 4417

Simpson and Millar—Monthly Solicitors Surgery

Simpson and Millar (GMB Solicitors) are holding a monthly surgery at County Hall.



Appointments can be made by contacting the Branch Office on 0191 383 4417.

GMB Services and Benefits

GMB Legal Services

Free legal services for accidents at work or on the road, and free initial advice for a wide range of other legal issues.

Free Basic Will Writing Service

Offered through the legal helpline, this service can save you up to £70

Remember — You're better off in the GMB

How can I join the GMB

Telephone the GMB office on 0191 383 4417 or see your Shop Steward or ULR for a membership form

GMB Bulletins

Please note: up-to-the minute information for members is posted onto the Durham County Council bulletin board