

An update on Electronic Monitoring for UNISON City of Edinburgh Home Care Members

After almost 20 months (since November 2012) we have won the argument and campaign against Electronic Monitoring.

The chronology of the issue to date is as follows:

- **November 2012;** Home Care Management first reveal their proposal to implement Electronic Monitoring
- Discussions at a local level took place in early 2013. These resulted in confirmation that management intended to proceed despite UNISON clearly articulating the reasons why the proposal would be unacceptable
- **February 2013** A motion was passed at the UNISON AGM supporting Home Care Workers in their campaign to resist the implementation / imposition of Electronic Monitoring
- **March/April 2013** a questionnaire was sent out to UNISON members in Home Care Services to determine their opinion and the level of resistance to Electronic Monitoring
- **June/July 2013** Management start the process of beginning a Pilot implementation of Electronic Monitoring in the NW2 sector of Home Care Services
- UNISON requested a meeting with the Director of Health Social Care, Peter Gabittas; to inform him of our concerns
- The central outcome of that meeting was our agreement to take place in a Working Group to consider the Electronic Monitoring proposal.

- **11 July 2013** At this point UNISON advised members in that sector that they could resist 'volunteering' to take part in the Pilot

- Following 'threats' of disciplinary action to NW2 staff it was decided to take part in the Pilot

- **2nd July & 26th July 2013** mass meetings held – to accommodate the different shifts – at the City Chambers. Unanimously both meetings indicated that the instruction was to resist introduction and hopefully initiate a non-cooperation strategy

- In pursuit of that, and following a meeting with Dougie Black, Regional Organiser it was decided to conduct an Industrial Action Ballot. As part of that process the Branch was obliged – legally – to submit an Avoidance of Industrial Dispute complaint with the Council. This was lodged with the Council on **12th September 2013**

- **2nd October 2013.** first meeting with Monica Boyle; Head of Service, to discuss the dispute and outline the concerns that staff have about Electronic Monitoring. The meeting led to an agreement that the Council would not implement the proposal in any other homecare sectors whilst talks with UNISON and home-care staff/ reps took place regarding the progress of the Pilot scheme in NW2

The Pilot continued as a result of the Status Quo clause being invoked. At the conclusion of that meeting it was further agreed that both sides; Homecare management and UNISON, would submit a report to Monica Boyle, Head of Service; who would then decide whether or not to implement further or withdraw the Electronic Monitoring proposal

- **15th October** - the ballot of all members on a strategy of non-cooperation comes back with the majority of those who voted indicating they would take part in that industrial action
- Over the following months several of these pilot review meetings took place. The data released to us did nothing to convince UNISON or homecare staff that Electronic Monitoring was a good idea or worked at all
- Over the same period meetings with NW2 staff took place and a questionnaire was issued to them to determine their thoughts on the pilot
- **14th April 2014** UNISON submit their report on Electronic Monitoring to Monica Boyle, Head of Service
- **11th June 2014** UNISON meets with Monica Boyle for her decision on Electronic Monitoring implementation or withdrawal. The decision is to withdraw the proposal to implement Electronic Monitoring service wide. However the pilot is proposed to continue as "it is a requirement of the Care Inspectorate to evidence quality assurance"
- **27th June 2014** UNISON write to Monica Boyle indicating that whilst we understand that some form of measuring service delivery may be required by the Care Inspectorate there is nothing to indicate that the NW2 pilot does that. So we urge them to stop the Pilot and to do so as soon as possible
- **7th July 2014** above message resent as no response had been received
- On the same day a response was forthcoming. This indicated that Homecare management were awaiting a response from the Care Inspectorate who they were "checking the position"

As of the 17th July we are still waiting

What happens next?

We wait for the response that contains whatever the Care Inspectorate requirements are and then have a discussion about that.

We will continue to urge the Homecare management to discontinue the pilot in NW2 as soon as possible.

There have been questions from some of our members about reballoting on Industrial Action but as the implementation of Electronic Monitoring is no longer going ahead that ballot can no longer take place.

If we do not receive a response on the discontinuation of the pilot in NW2 soon then we should consider advising our members in that sector to stop engaging in what has been a pointless waste of time for staff and clients alike.

Thank you all for your support and patience in what has been a lengthy but ultimately successful campaign.

Tam McKirdy

*Service Conditions Co-Ordinator
UNISON City of Edinburgh*

17 July 2014

Become a Rep

It is important that we have Shop Stewards to give a voice to our members working in Home Care. If you are interested in becoming a Rep. there is plenty of training available and guidance from the branch office every step of the way. If you would like further information please contact the branch office:

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