

Inside this issue:

- RBH Workers Balloted over Pay Strike- Vote Yes
- AFG Care Workers Continue Their Strike Action For Fair Pay At Night
- School Uniform Grant

RBH Workers Balloted over Pay Strike- Vote Yes

UNISON and Unite members in Rochdale Boroughwide Housing are currently being balloted for strike action.

RBH have imposed a real-terms pay cut on staff. The imposed pay award of 2% falls short of inflation which is currently 2.5%. This means **your wages are continuing to fall behind the rising cost of living**. It's unacceptable that you are struggling to make ends meet whilst the company makes profits.

RBH are ignoring its staff. Members of UNISON and UNITE voted to reject the pay offer, but RBH ignored this and imposed the pay award without further negotiation. You are the company's greatest asset, but RBH are taking your hard-work for granted.

In 2017/18, RBH made a profit of £16.3m (an increase of 3.2%)

Profit before pension adjustment of £19.4m (a whopping £6m improvement on the original budget)

Reserves up 27% to £88.7m and income up 48% to £19.1m

Profit per employee of £28,496 (this represents an increase of 6% on the previous year)

RBH operating budgets assume a salary increase of 3.2% (so why are you only getting 2%?)

Highest paid director received £143,000—including a whopping £22k in pensions contributions

Last year, RBH spent over £480k on agency workers

Ballot Papers Must be returned by 29th May

RBH CAN AFFORD IT

YOU DESERVE IT

VOTE EARLY

VOTE YES

Two simple ways to join UNISON today:

www.joinunison.org

Call UNISON
0800 171 2193

AFG Care Workers Continue Their Strike Action For Fair Pay At Night

UNISON members working for Alternative Futures Group plan to strike for another 7 days on 28th May.

AFG have cut back care support workers' pay for sleep-in top-up payments. This is costing some staff as much as £2,000 per year. The care support workers are only paid at the level of the minimum wage for their regular hours and many are struggling to stay in the care sector due to not being paid adequately at night. Staff have received great support for their strike action, with a public petition amassing some 13,000 signatures.

AFG receive funding from 15 public authority commissioners across the North West. The amounts the commissioners pay toward the cost of employing staff to work sleep-in shifts vary, but all but two (Rochdale and Warrington) pay more than the £73.89 per shift that would cover the minimum wage rate for staff. **However, AFG do not pay this money on to staff.** Instead they take a **29% cut for themselves** before paying staff what is left.

AFG's company accounts give an indication as to how the organisation is choosing to spend public money. The organisation has high and rising overhead costs, that are forecast to go up by 20% over a two year period. The accounts also show that AFG pays a higher percentage of its income to top managers than all of its competitors. AFG's executive pay policy cost it £221,000 more this year than if it had matched the industry average, and £547,000 more than if it had chosen to match Mencap's practice on senior management pay.

Other care providers, with similar commissioning arrangements, do pay the minimum wage for sleep-ins, and this is the expected practice of both local and central government. Paula Barker, UNISON North West Regional Convenor said: "AFG are taking an enormous cut out of the public money that is intended for the pay packets of low-wage care staff. They are spending a growing amount on company overheads and they choose to pay their executives more than their competitors do. AFG can't have it both ways – they can't raid this money for executive pay and overheads and then say that they can't pay care workers the minimum wage because other income is ring-fenced. There are councils in the North West who should be paying more to ensure that staff receive at least the minimum wage for working sleep-ins". UNISON has written to Rochdale and Warrington councils to express our concern that they are paying too little. But overall we reject AFG's assertion that they cannot afford fair pay in the North West.

To make a donation to the AFG staff hardship fund, please send cheques payable to Unison Bridgewater Community Healthcare Branch Hindley Health Centre 17 Liverpool Road, Hindley, Wigan, WN2 3H email messages of support to Unison Bridgewater unison@bridgewater.nhs.uk <https://www.gofundme.com/care-at-night-pay-us-right>

Get help with the cost of school uniforms

Families living on low incomes with children struggle constantly to make ends meet – and this can be particularly acute before the new school year begins when the extra costs hit hard.

The union's welfare charity There for You has once more set up a limited fund to help members on low incomes towards the costs of school uniform through a one-off payment of £40.

The process is very similar to previous years and an amount of money has been ring-fenced to support this initiative.

So don't miss out. Apply early and send your form and supporting paperwork in as soon as possible. Contact the branch on 01706 925951/52, UNISON Direct on 0800 0857 857 for a form to be sent to you or complete one online: <https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/unison-school-uniform-grants-2019/>

Just one more thing please don't keep details of this grant a secret. Help us to help even more members and let your work colleagues know that help is at hand. There will be many, like you, worrying about how they will be able to afford uniforms to send their children back to school in the Autumn. Completed applications need to be sent to There for You, UNISON Centre, 130 Euston Road, London, NW1 2AY by Friday 19 July 2019 at the latest.