



# NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL

## WORKPLACE NEWS

### 2010 BULLETIN No. 3

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### NEW REDUNDANCY PROCEDURES

The Joint Trades Unions have continued to consult with Senior Management regarding the numerous restructures and potential staffing reductions as part of the £3.5M cost savings imposed by the new coalition Government.

North Tyneside Council have proposed a new method of selection for people who are potentially “at risk” of redundancy which moves away from a process linked to scoring individuals against a set of selection criteria, to a process linked into going through an interview and being scored against how you perform in that forum. This has previously been used when new jobs have been created to replace old redundant ones, but never as a general way of selection for redundancies.

The GMB believes that even though the Council amended their proposals following our concerns, the final process that has been implemented is too subjective, does now allow for Trade Union representation in the critical stage, potentially causes difficulties should you wish to appeal and NTC have decided to implement it, against the wishes of the Joint Unions. We believe that the new procedures are fundamentally unfair and will disadvantage a large proportion of employees who will be unfamiliar and apprehensive about having to go through a stressful interview process.

We therefore are recommending to our members that it is essential that you contact your local representative should you find yourself subject to this new redundancy process and we will give you advice and representation on your particular circumstances, which may include legal representation, if necessary.

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## **COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW**

Chancellor George Osborne has outlined in the Con-Dem's Comprehensive Spending Review some of the biggest cuts in public spending for decades, with half a million Public Sector jobs expected to be axed. In percentage terms, the department hit the most is Communities and Local Government (-51%).

The funding of local government in England will be cut by 27% on top of which the chancellor passed the buck to councils giving them responsibility for funding a range of services, meaning they can also take the blame for any cuts in front line services, not gorgeous George.

Overall, Chancellor Osborne said that around 490,000 Public Sector jobs will be lost over the four year period. Add in a similar number lost from Private Sector firms that rely heavily on public procurement and the count nears one million over four years.

Trades Unions have been united in their condemnation of the Spending Review and belief that the Governments view that the Private Sector can supply jobs for those facing redundancy is laughable.

In a survey of more than 1,300 small companies by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) 10.4% said that they expect to cut employment over the next 3 months as business confidence in future prospects and revenue growth weakened.

More than one third (38.1%) of respondents also reported a decline in revenues in the three months to September, suggesting that economic recovery is far from robust. John Walker, FSB National Chairman, said: "The Government is looking to the Private Sector to create jobs and take on the people that will be made redundant as a result of the cuts. Evidence from this report shows that small firms do not have the confidence to do that yet and we so urge the Government to ensure that the right measures for firms to grow are laid out."

And John Philipott, Chief Economic Advisor to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development has said that up to 2.5 million jobs will have to be created if the Governments forecast is to be met. He believes that this is extremely unlikely – with total unemployment in 2015-16 "around 100,000 higher than in 2010, but far less than the 1.3 million extra jobs the coalition government is hoping for."

Updates on this matter will be in future newsletters and contained on the Branches Facebook page.

## **NORTHERN REGION PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE**

Trade Unionists from across the North East and Cumbria have formed an alliance to decide how to respond to the Governments planned spending cuts. The alliance, which is being coordinated through the Northern Region TUC have set up various sub-groups including one based in Wallsend. The alliance aims to demonstrate in order to defend public services and campaign for alternatives to the savage spending cuts and it is important that as many public sector workers get involved in some shape or form.

Various meetings are organised periodically to coordinate ongoing activity, if you are interested please contact your local Branch Office, alternatively you can contact the TUC direct by emailing [mlowden@tuc.org.uk](mailto:mlowden@tuc.org.uk).

You can also follow the campaigns progress on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/northernpsa](http://www.facebook.com/northernpsa)

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## 2011 PAY CLAIM LODGED

At a meeting of the full National Joint Council for Local Government Services on the 13<sup>th</sup> October, the Joint Trade Unions Side presented the pay and conditions claim for 2011 (following the pay freeze in 2010).

The new claim is for at least £250 and a review of outstanding terms and conditions improvements previously lodged by the TU side. An electronic copy of the claim is available and you can email the Branch on the contact email below if you want one. The employers will carry out their consultations over several weeks before responding.

The GMB also took the opportunity yesterday of raising an issue that is becoming a serious problem : that is local authorities imposing detrimental changes to pay and conditions by issuing dismissal and re-engagement notices, effectively sacking people and re-employing them on worse terms. The GMB said that this was totally unacceptable and we would be challenging it wherever it occurred. The employer's spokesperson responded "we are not encouraging employers to use dismissal and re-engagement techniques to manage change. They should negotiate". So any local authority that tries to claim they are dismissing and re-engaging because of National Employers advice can be told that actually their national advice is to get back round the negotiating table. It must be clear that North Tyneside Council have not used this threat in any of the negotiations that the Unions have been party to so far.

Once the Branch receives any updates we will be feeding this information through the normal channels such as your local representative and also on our Facebook page.

## RESTRUCTURE CONSULTATION

As you will be aware the GMB has, and continues to be, consulted regarding the new proposed structures that are being produced following the recent budget cut. The branch has produced a consultation sheet that we have distributed to our members to get feedback on the Councils proposals which we will use as a basis to make our formal responses by the end of the consultation periods. If you have not received this information and wish to make comment on the proposals for your area please contact the branch as soon as possible and we will provide you with the relevant information, we can either email you the information or provide a hard copy if necessary.

## GMB BRANCH ON FACEBOOK

In order for the Branch to ensure all of our information, updates and bulletins are circulated as widely as possible we have set up a page on the social networking site Facebook. We realise that not all of our members will have access to this but it is another way we can distribute information that may be more accessible to some of our members. Please search for **GMB @ NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL** in the **GROUPS** section to find us and click on like button to get the regular updates which are being added on a frequent basis. Other normal methods of distributing our information will continue. If you wish to be added to our email list please contact the Branch.

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ARCH is the web-based system that North Tyneside now uses for managing racist and homophobic hate incidents. It is managed and monitored by North Tyneside Council but many external agencies are involved in helping make the system work for victims by offering further support and improving action taken against perpetrators

ARCH was launched publicly at the end of July and is being promoted out in the community at every opportunity. The success of the system relies on residents of the borough knowing about it and how it works and so, this is a good opportunity to remind everyone of the benefits that ARCH will bring, not only to the borough's communities but to our workforce too.

There may be some occasions when you are either out in the community or speaking with members of the public and are told about, are the victim of, hear or witness for yourself a racist or homophobic incident.

The relatively 'low level' actions of perpetrators can mean that some racist and homophobic incidents go completely unreported, this means that we are unable to address the issue, therefore we would encourage you to report incidents to ARCH where ever they occur and no matter how small you perceive them to be.

There are even some cases where this occurs in the workplace. One in eight victims of homophobic hate incidents say the perpetrator was a work colleague (stonewall 2008) and one in four of the population say they have come across racism in the workplace (bbc.co.uk).

ARCH is a confidential, or anonymous, way of reporting any concerns that you may have with regard to workplace incidents too.

Your nearest reporting centre is Quadrant East reception, but there are many other centres outside of the workplace and a free-phone number available 24 hours per day (08000 32 32 88).

For more information on ARCH or the location of the reporting centres click on 'report it' on the North Tyneside Council's website or email [arch@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:arch@northtyneside.gov.uk)

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