



AMICUS GRAPHICAL, PAPER & MEDIA SECTOR

E-BULLETIN NO. 13

AMICUS/BPIF SICK PAY AGREEMENT SURVEY

Following discussions between Amicus and the BPIF, as part of the Partnership At Work Agreement, a joint statement on the implementation of the National Sick Pay Scheme has been agreed.

Text of the statement reads: *Implementation of national sick pay scheme goes hand in hand with control of sickness absence says the BPIF/Amicus Joint Partnership Committee. At its meeting on 29 November 2006 the BPIF/Amicus Joint Partnership Committee agreed to support the full implementation of the minimum terms national sick pay scheme contained in the National Partnership Agreement and Code of Practice approved and launched at the end of 2004.*

The Committee emphasised that in order to ensure that costs resulting from sickness absence do not rise as a consequence, it is essential to monitor and control overall levels of sickness absence. The National Partnership Agreement provides for the Bradford Points system as the approved method of monitoring and controlling sickness absence.

The Committee recognises that the clauses and best practice guidance set out in the BPIF/Amicus National Partnership Agreement and Code of Practice are an integrated package of provisions designed to improve the profitability and performance of companies and the employment conditions of employees through mutual co-operation and joint action. In supporting the implementation of the national sick pay clauses, the BPIF and Amicus reiterate their support for the implementation of the National Partnership Agreement and Code of Practice as a whole. The Committee encourage employers and employees to discuss freely and openly any aspects of concern to members of either organisation with a view to resolving these amicably through joint partnership and mutual collaboration.

In order to implement the minimum sick pay agreement set out in the Partnership @ Agreement, a survey of chapel reps working under the Amicus - BPIF National Agreement is being prepared and will be sent out in the next few weeks.

A copy of the national sick scheme will accompany the survey and can be found in the Partnership @ Work Agreement. If you don't have a copy, please ask your full time branch officer for a copy.

Once the survey of chapels is completed, full time officers will be available to assist chapels to ensure members get as a minimum, the terms of the new scheme. Where better sick pay provisions apply, these will remain unaffected.

DISPUTES

Chesapeake, Alcan and Paragon

As we go to press, talks are taking place with the Chesapeake Group (Fields) over the two disputes at Newcastle and Bradford. Ten members were sacked at Bradford by the company for refusing to sign individual contracts. At Newcastle industrial action is taking place in support of a pay increase. Meetings have also taken place in regard to the disputes with ACAS. Local MPs have also condemned the company for its' actions their voice to the dispute, including the three Bradford MPs, Gerry Sutcliffe, Terry Rooney and Marsha Singh.

Industrial action has been taking place at Paragon, Sunderland. Amicus members began industrial action to fight for an annual pay rise. It has involved 69 Amicus members. The Sunderland site produces long-run work including business documents and security print.

At Alcan in Salterbeck, Cumbria the threat of a strike was lifted when Amicus secured our members a better deal. Workers in the print department of the factory at Salterbeck had voted to take industrial action over job cuts. Staff in the gravure department had been told redundancies were necessary for the restructuring of the company and for it to remain competitive. Amicus said the cuts were not workable and the sick pay arrangements would be detrimental to staff. Alcan Packaging supplies some of the world's major brands such as Kellogg's, Nestle and Walkers.

Members who wish to register to receive a copy of the e-bulletin, please send an email to ashraf.choudhury@amicustheunion.org and it will be sent to you once published.

PUBLISHING

Organising campaign launched at publishing giant Reed

Amicus has launched a major recruitment and organisational initiative at the publishing giant Reed Business Information which is part of the Reed Elsevier Group Plc. This will form part of an ongoing campaign by the Amicus to recruit and organise staff in the publishing, media and on-line information industries.

Tony Burke, Amicus Assistant General Secretary, said the campaign is to recruit and organise workers and to win back collective bargaining rights for employees after the company de-recognised the union in 1993. Amicus has teamed up with the National Union of Journalists which has already regained the right to negotiate terms and conditions for journalists at the company. **"There are growing numbers of publishing and media staff joining Amicus. They have told us in a recent survey that employees should be treated fairly and with respect."**

Jamie Major, Senior Amicus Organiser, who is leading the campaign for non-journalist staff at the Company is planning activities and events throughout the coming year in partnership with the NUJ.

PENSIONS

Amicus pressures WH Smith on pensions



Amicus has put a new pension proposal to WH Smith, the retail arm and Smiths News, the newspaper distribution firm, that would allow their final salary schemes to remain open.

WH Smith has told its staff that it planned to close its final-salary pension scheme to existing employees and implement swingeing cuts to benefits. Smiths News, the newspaper distribution firm that was formerly a subsidiary of WH Smith, said it also planned to close its final-salary pension scheme to existing members.

On the day of WH Smith's AGM, Amicus announced that it has met with both WH Smith Retail and Smiths News and tabled proposals around changes to the existing schemes in an effort to persuade them to keep the final salary pension schemes open.

Amicus denounced the firms' plans to scrap the schemes last month as devastating for thousands of workers and attacked the companies for taking a ten year pensions holiday in the 1990s. WH Smith Retail announced a 14% rise in annual profits from high street stores.

Both companies said they would

consider the proposals and further meetings have been arranged to discuss the plan later this month.

Amicus' National Officer, Ann Field, said: **"The pensions proposal made by the companies would see their lowest paid staff worst affected and this would be devastating for people who are already very poorly paid. These employees would simply never be able to afford the amount of contributions which would be required to make up the loss of pension they will face if the companies' proposals go ahead."**

"We believe that we have a viable plan to keep the schemes afloat and one that our members and the companies can afford to sustain. We hope that they give it very careful consideration."

Initial calculations have revealed that some employees could lose over a third of their total pension if the companies go ahead with their plans.

Amicus, which represents over half of the approximately 2,500 employees affected has said it will do everything in its power to defend and improve its members' pensions.

COMMERCIAL PRINT

Amicus angered at proposed closure of print plant in Colchester

Benham Goodhead Print Ltd's (BGP) has announced that it is to close its site in Colchester with the loss of 97 jobs.

BGP, who used to print the BT directory, failed to win further contracts which has ultimately led to the downfall of this plant. The company have said that they will be stripping the plant of its machinery which will be transferred to other BGP sites in the UK.

Amicus Officer, Geoff Usher, said: **"The 30-day consultation period has begun and our first concern is for our members and their families, for whom this will have come as a major body blow. We are angry that the company hasn't done enough to secure future contracts and are currently in discussions with management to ensure our members get the best possible redundancy package, get help trying to find another job and where necessary they get the appropriate training."**

PACKAGING

Amicus packaging members accept 3% deal

Members working in the Corrugated Packaging sector of the Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI) have voted to accept a 3% pay award for 2006/7. The ballot followed two days of negotiations with industry representatives, who advised the union's negotiating panel that the industry was in its ninth consecutive year of negative growth, showing a loss of £8.6m across its member companies.

Peter Ellis, Amicus National Officer and Lead Negotiator of the 3-union panel including GMB and TGWU, said:

"The negotiations took place against a backcloth of increased costs of raw materials and spiralling energy prices - at the same time as the market which is strongly resisting price rises. We have experienced closures this year and restructuring brought about by mergers has had its effect on jobs. Nevertheless, our members need at least to keep pace with inflation and this deal just about makes the grade. The CPI member companies encouraged workplace meetings during the balloting procedure and a 67% return was evidence of the benefits of full engagement with our members."



PAPERMAKING

UPM to invest £60m in biomass plant at Irvine

UK paper manufacturing has received a boost after Finnish multi-national UPM spending almost £60m to build a new "biomass" power plant at its Caledonian mill in Irvine, Scotland.

The combined heat and power (CHP) plant at the 360-staff paper mill will replace an existing coal-fired boiler, reducing UPM's annual carbon emissions from 90,000 tonnes to 15,000 tonnes. £10m of regional funding came from the Scottish

Executive has been secured for the project, which is due for completion in 2009.

Once up and running, the CHP plant will generate all the mill's process steam requirements and 55% of the electricity used by the mill. It will create more new jobs at the mill, which produces 280,000 tonnes of lightweight coated paper, and as many as 90 jobs in the biomass supply chain, in planting, harvesting, forestry management and haulage.

UPM estimates the CHP plant will use around 400,000 tonnes per year of various types of wood, forest bales and other forest products. Amicus Assistant General Secretary Tony Burke said **"Paper making companies in the UK have been suffering from high energy prices, so this investment is particularly welcome and should protect employment at the site."**

BOOK PRINTING

Amicus signs recognition with Fulmar



Amicus has signed a series of recognition agreements with the Fulmar division of French-owned book printing group CPI.

The CPI Group is the largest book printing group in the UK. The new agreements covering Amicus members in the Fulmar companies bring recognition for collective bargaining and representation into line with the rest of the Group.

Amicus Officer, Bob Young, said:

"The efforts of the reps especially Colin Portch of Royle Print Ltd and Phil Roberts of Fulmar Colour working alongside Amicus officials who have ensured that a solid base of trade unionism has been created."

Amicus Organiser, Guy Langston, said:

"There is still work to do in recruiting across the site, but we now have the agreements to ensure union members and future members are protected."

Ten formal recognition agreements have been signed with the following companies:

1. Fulmar Colour Printing Ltd
2. Masterlith Ltd
3. Orion Print Finishers Ltd
4. Pegasus Colourprint Ltd
5. Quadracolour Ltd
6. Royle Financial Prin
7. Royle Print Ltd
8. White Quill Press Ltd
9. W.E. Baxter Ltd
10. Osier Graphics Printing Ltd: includes Surrey Proofing and Delta Colour Proofing.

LEARNING & SKILLS

Training and skills proposals - too little too late

Responding to the recently published Leitch Report on skills Amicus said the intention to only consider the introduction of employer training levies by 2010 and to rely on employers to deliver learning and skills as "a missed opportunity".

Tony Burke, Amicus Assistant General Secretary, said: **"Let's not forget why we are in this position in the first place. Many employers have failed to invest in the skills of their workforces. We now have to run just to stand still in terms of up-skilling. Without a legal requirement on employers to invest in the skills of their workforce we are in danger of blowing a golden opportunity."**

Amicus GPM Sector Head of Learning and Skills Bernie Rutter responded to the report by saying: **"In the UK print sector, Amicus and the British Printing Industries Federation, are working in partnership to eradicate skill gaps across the industry. We have a Learning and Skills Clause in the National Agreement which obliges companies to work in partnership with our Union Learning Reps. This demonstrates, very clearly, that the most sensible way to approach this issue is for employers to recognise that they cannot tackle this issue alone – they need the support and experience of trade unions."**

GLOBAL UNIONS

Amicus deals with German and US unions lead the way

Leading the way in forming global alliances with unions outside of the UK and Ireland, Amicus has signed solidarity agreements with the German union IG Metall and with two of the USA's largest unions, the Machinists Union and the United Steel Workers (now home for US papermaking and packaging workers).

General Secretary Derek Simpson said these moves are a precursor to the creation of a single global union within the next decade. Derek said: **"The world is changing and the new global realities involve transnational companies being able to trade off countries and workforces against each other. By establishing more positive links and working arrangements with trade unions abroad we can work together to prevent labour standards being eroded by ruthless global companies who show a ruthless disregard for their workers in the pursuit of even greater profits."**



"Our aim is to create a powerful single union that can transcend borders to challenge the global forces of capital and I envisage a functioning, if loosely federal, multinational trade union organisation within the next decade. As a single union we will be able to focus on delivering better pay and conditions for our members and have the organising strength to reach out to new trade union members in our existing work places, as well as in new industries."

Members who wish to register to receive a copy of the e-bulletin, please send an email to ashraf.choudhury@amicustheunion.org and it will be sent to you once published.

You can also subscribe to the Amicus GPM Sector Health & Safety E-bulletin by emailing bud.hudspith@amicustheunion.org.

Also planned! A Special Activists bulletin on the merger between Amicus and the TGWU. Copies will be sent to GPM Sector reps soon and will also be available to download from the Amicus website.

Plus, an Amicus GPM Sector Learning & Skills E-bulletin for union learner reps, chapel officers and activists will also be available soon.

Vote YES to the merger between Amicus and the TGWU!