

**Community and Non Profit Sector**

**Industrial Report 2006**

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## **Introduction**

The Community and Non Profit Sector of Amicus has continued to gather momentum over the last 2 years in terms of membership growth, new recognition agreements, research, political and campaigning influence, new communications, as well as to consolidate the daily organising, industrial collective bargaining and individual representation work which representatives, together with Regional Officers and Organisers, have been concentrating on.

## **Representatives**

It has to be recognised that the role that representatives have played within the Community and Non Profit Sector over the last 2 years has been pivotal in the success of the Sector. We have around 1000 representatives and contacts throughout the UK and Ireland who have given themselves without question to service, and support our nearly 30,000 members at times of greatest need in their working lives, as well as resisting moves on behalf of employers to erode terms and conditions of service, and have, in many instances, made progress on the terms that colleagues work under. We also recognise the crucial work that representatives have been involved with in building Amicus through innovative and persistent recruitment drives and organising projects, a matter to be explored in greater detail later.

It is at this point that I want to thank all representatives for their commitment to their trade union in constructing a Sector that is strong on the ground, in the workplaces up and down the country, and responsive to the needs of members today.

## **Amicus Officials**

Since the Regional Sector Conferences last met there have been many changes in the personnel that work within Amicus. Chris Ball, as the National Officer who brought the Sector into existence within the union and who, without question, creatively spearheaded its work for many years, moved from the sector part-way through 2004 to focus on the Union's important Health and Safety agenda. He has since moved on from Amicus, and I know all the members will want to wish him well. At the same time, I transferred from National Officer for Equality and Diversity to the Sector, and have thoroughly enjoyed taking on the challenges, with the representatives, that this Sector presents.

Janet Golds has been the Research Officer for the Sector, although she has other industrial and organisational research commitments added to her portfolio in the newly structured Research Department, so we now work with other colleagues from this Department too.

Anna Burton transferred to work in the Sector as the Organiser for the Sector in January 2005. This was a newly expanded organising post to support the necessary work of the Sector, and replaced Sheryl Hobbs who was based in

the London Region. Over the course of the last 2 years we have also worked closely with other Organisers from the National Organising Team.

Members and representatives in the London Region will also know Eileen Francis who, as a Learning Organiser focusing on the Skills for Life programme, has also worked on some interesting initiatives to embed the learning agenda wider across the Sector.

The Sector is obviously enormously grateful to all the Regional Officers and other support staff who have also underpinned the day to day work of supporting members working for non profit organisations.

### **Communications**

At the first Amicus National Conference, in the National Officer Report, I set out a vision for re-structuring the communications in the Sector. With the Conference's endorsement, we commenced a monthly electronic news bulletin for all representatives and activists in the Sector, and gathered as many e-mails as we could. The bulletin contains a combination of industrial news, information about the Sector's developments, and stories from representatives and Officials. It is designed to be forwarded by representatives to their members, so that every union member can receive a copy, perhaps with the addition of internal union news specific to their organisation added. It is hoped that this work will have greater input from representatives in the future.

Secondly, we created new website pages for the sector at [www.amicustheunion/nonprofit](http://www.amicustheunion/nonprofit). This website continues to be developed, and is dependent again on representatives feeding through their information to Amicus. I would ask that representatives would provide Amicus with more information to add to these pages, which will be of greater use for all our members and representatives.

As well as updating the Amicus literature, including specific application forms for sub-sectors and organisations, the Sector Charter, and the overview recruitment document explaining the Sector, we have also been able to publish specific newsletters and recruitment material to a high standard through our internal publications department. This department has greatly developed its service over the past two years and has been a major resource to the Sector. All resources are available from the Sector, or can be obtained by filling out an order form.

Finally we have started building networks of representatives in specific areas to enable direct communications between representatives on industrial and organising issues. These fall outside the formal structures of Amicus and enable representatives to approach others working in their field on work related issues.

### **Research**

Requests for research come from a number of sources. Over the past two years we have tried to meet that need over a range of issues, all of which have been advertised through the electronic news bulletin.

The major piece of research that the Sector undertook was based on our survey on funding: "Short Term Funding, Short Term Thinking". This survey report was published in September 2005 and all representatives should have received a copy. As well as drawing out the problems associated with short term funding, representatives also highlighted the solutions that they believed should be brought to enable funding to be more sustainable and less bureaucratic, and how this would benefit the organisations and employees, whether in job security, meeting professional objectives, or enabling personal development, as well as seeing more resources reaching front line services.

On the back of the survey, we have been able to meet with the Treasury Minister, Ivan Lewis MP, to discuss our concerns about procurement and continue a dialogue here as the Treasury look to embed 3-year funding cycles into their contracts and the contracts of those funded by them. We have also used this survey to meet with the Home Office Minister, Paul Goggins MP, which I will report on later, and to open dialogue with professional organisations in the Sector.

We trust that representatives will also use the results of "Short Term Funding, Short Term Thinking" as a tool in negotiations with management over their own work in bidding for contracts, to enable them to consider vital things that our members have asked for, as well as working with them in their own representations on funding and related issues.

Finally we believe that this piece of work is an excellent recruitment tool, since it not only demonstrates the work of the union and the benefit of being part of it, but also that we work on the issues that employees are most concerned about, have their input into this and have real influence in campaigning around these issues.

At the start of 2006 we have also launched a new survey on the implications of rolling out the learning agenda across the Sector. We know from our members that development opportunities are often scarce and yet as vital for workers here as anywhere else. This survey also enables members to propose solutions to the current situation. A report will be produced later in the year.

Other research work has included responding to requests made by the National Industrial Committee, like researching information on the DTI Home Computing Initiative; responding to motions from the National Sector Conference, for example about London and Regional Allowances; and researching requests from representatives, in particular on information to support bargaining. The Research Department has also developed many sources of on-line support for representatives and Officers, including generic information, available on the Amicus website. Obviously much work has been

carried out to support the campaigning work of the sector. We have also undertaken a project around environmental issues.

In addition to this, we have focused on providing tools for representatives to use to carry out their work, and are in the process of producing a Representatives' Handbook for all representatives in the Sector, which will not only provide ready tools for representatives, but also signpost them to the appropriate area..

### **Campaigning and Political Work**

By far, some of the most consuming work of the Sector over the last two years has been the setting of our campaigning agenda. The initial phase of this has been to build a research base in order to evidence the anecdotal facts about the key issues of the Sector. From surveys that we ran on-line and through other campaigns, it was overwhelmingly obvious that the concerns that representatives and the members had included were funding, learning and development, violence at work, bullying, family friendly/flexible working, pensions and the consequences of the future interface with the public and private sectors, and the agenda driven by government.

The second building block in planning the campaigns has been to create appropriate resources to support the work. Our repository of resources continues to grow. We have focused on creating contacts with key people across the Sector in order to work on our campaign areas. In each instance, we have met with Government Ministers, together with representatives, as well as with key stakeholders in the Sector. As a result of this we now have gained respect among unions and other stakeholders that Amicus has a significant voice and different perspective on issues. We are seen to be progressive, and have been invited to have an on-going dialogue with the Treasury and Home Office over these issues.

Key in this has been the recognition that trade unions have a specific role in the dialogue about the future of the Sector and we should have input into the Sector Compact and the Change Up Hubs. I continue to work with the authorities to ensure that our input is significant.

In this year of progress on each campaign, it is our intention to increase the involvement of members in the campaigning work.

From the start of 2006, we have also been provided with a list of MPs who have expressed a specific interest in working with the Sector, and this will be followed up as there is much to be done.

### **Examples of Major Campaigns**

#### **1. Supporting People funding in Housing Associations**

We held meetings of representatives in several regions to discuss Supporting People, its challenges, and issues related to these. We then compiled a paper and re-circulated it to our activists. We called for a meeting with the Housing Minister dealing with Supporting People, Lord

Rooker, and representatives presented their paper and issues to the Minister. The Minister was moved by our presentation, and started to implement some of our recommendations, especially around the issues of structural re-organisation of the funds. As our members wanted to see further progress on this issue, we met again with the Minister, this time Phil Woolas MP, who again has taken interest in the work of Amicus, and we have been invited to respond to the review of Supporting People. In the mean time we have produced material about Supporting People for our members in Housing, and commenced an organising campaign across the Housing Sector.

## **2. Employment Rights for Ministers of Religion**

Amicus has organised Ministers of Religion for over a decade now, however, as yet they are not able to exercise the same employment rights as other employees. In a little under two years ago, as a delegation of Amicus representatives, we were invited to a working group of the DTI to try and establish the appetite for Section 23 of the Employment Relations Act 1999 employment rights as well as the application of employment issues as it affects the clergy. Also at the Working Group was a selection of representatives from the different denominations and faiths.

Whilst Amicus, at successive meetings, wrote papers and made well substantiated arguments for the case for employment rights, others strongly opposed the concept. The DTI has been incredibly slow at responding, and is still consulting on a way forward which is likely to review the status quo of a voluntary approach to employment rights, and to ensure that certain areas of employment policy are drafted.

Amicus has had much criticism of the process, as well as the consultation proposal, and has had meetings with Gerry Sutcliffe MP to outline the Amicus case. We believe that there is a way forward, and so we are working on these proposals.

In the interim we have also met with the European Commissioner for Employment, Commissioner Spidla, together with Glynn Ford MEP, and have made the case for an equalising of Employment Rights across Europe. In a green paper to be published later this year on the extension of labour law, we believe some of the aspects will be picked up.

We have also written articles for the press, and had a presence in the media over these issues.

Finally we have been working with a union in Canada (CAW) who are also trying to organise clergy for their own employment protection.

## **3. Sector Funding**

Amicus has mainly focused on its campaigning work on Funding. As well as working with other trade unions organising in the Sector, we have raised the trade union interest in funding issues across government, and as outlined earlier, our research has greatly contributed to this. In the

coming year we will continue our work nationally and also focus on Local Authorities, since they are major funders of many of our members' jobs.

#### **4. Involvement with the Sector**

The future of the Sector is dependent on the many issues that Amicus is calling to be addressed. Amicus has therefore made the case to be involved with the work of the Home Office to Paul Goggins MP and the Minister for the Sector, as well as meeting with the NCVO, ACEVO, ACAS and other unions to set out our agenda and share information. These relationships are beginning to grow and we continue to look at ways of increasing our collective influence on the procurement, policy and directional strategies of the Sector.

#### **5. Smaller projects**

Amicus has been involved in a number of smaller projects appertaining to the Sector, as well as in larger, union-wide initiatives, like the pensions rally, and the Amicus input into the G8 demonstration in Edinburgh in July 2005. We have campaigned on behalf of our interpreters and the undermining of their profession with the advent of agencies contracting work with public bodies, at far reduced rates. We have taken the campaign of our members working for asylum and immigration organisations to the Department of Constitutional Affairs, in particular about the examination process that our members have to undertake. We have raised issues with the Minister at the MOD regarding the outsourcing of jobs in NAAFI to private contractors; and we have raised the issue of environment representatives with the Minister at DEFRA.

#### **6. General Election**

From across Amicus we knew the importance of returning a Labour Government in May 2005. Whilst we as trade unionists often see the need to approach issues differently, to go further in some areas and to hold back in others, the alternative of a Conservative Government is frightening to contemplate for working people in our country. Amicus fought hard for Labour to be returned to power, and with the Warwick Agreement, we were able to do this with a programme for ordinary working people to be implemented.

In the Sector, we highlighted to our members through our electronic bulletin, a series of issues that Labour have either delivered on in its previous administrations or promise to in its next, and sent representatives pledge cards and leaflets about the issues that members have raised with us, and that the Government have pledged to deliver in this term of office. We also had members and representatives working hard in constituencies throughout the country to get their Labour MP elected. It is because of representatives' efforts in this that we can continue to talk to the Government rather than stand out in the cold and oppose, which is what we would have had to have done had another party been successful on election night, to the detriment of our members and the most vulnerable in society.

## **Recruitment and Organising**

The organising work has been the main focus of the sector for the last two years. We were pleased to strengthen the organising support with an Organiser who has been dedicated to the Sector nationally from January 2005. The Sector recruited 3680 members in 2005, however with leavers we were still able to maintain a substantial net growth of members. We now have systems in place for monitoring the membership gains and losses in every region and organisation, as well as the Sector as a whole.

For 2006, and according to the motion that was passed at the Amicus National Sector Conference in 2004, we want to work with all representatives to see even greater growth in the Sector for 2006. With  $\frac{3}{4}$  million people now working in the Sector, and less than 100,000 organised by any union, there is no room for complacency in the task ahead. We know that  $\frac{2}{3}$ rds of those working for the Sector are now women.

Key to this strategy is the representatives. Each representative should have an organising plan of activities for building their network of representatives, as well as having their membership procedures in place. Included in this plan should be a means of contacting all new starters in each organisation in order to introduce new employees to the union and to recruit them. With the new recruitment material that Amicus has developed, this should be straightforward. There must also be a programme for representatives to meet with projects and departments to talk to staff generally about the values of belonging to a union.

Making sure there are representatives or contacts (people that will act as a post box for the union until a representative can be found) in each geographical location or department is also key for maintaining the profile of the union.

If there are specific issues, trying to involve the membership in surveys and discussions are other ways to increase activity in the workplace. I know that many representatives are already doing this, however if any support is needed, please call the Regional Officer on 0207 420 8978 and someone will be able to give advice on the next steps forward, including providing materials, display stands and freebies.

Amicus is always keen to make approaches to new organisations and therefore we are dependent on our members and representatives to make contacts through their professional work with employees elsewhere across the Sector, so we can explore with these people the possibilities for building a union in these workplaces; for example, people working for Childrens' Charities networking together, Housing Associations or Examination Bodies.

Amicus is proud of the new recognition agreements that have been signed in a number of organisations in the last couple of years. These have included ChildLine (which has now TUPE'd into NSPCC), the Samaritans, Contour Housing Association, Anchor Housing Trust, and a facilities agreement at Scope. It is important that this work is continued.

Using learning as an issue for organising has proved popular in the Sector, and Eileen Francis has organised two successful conferences for representatives in the Sector on this agenda.

Also in this report I want to highlight some of the organising campaigns we have been involved in.

### **1. Housing Associations**

In the autumn of 2005, we launched a campaign in Housing Associations on three levels – to focus on in-fill recruitment, to identify areas where we have members but no agreements, and to look at targeted greenfield sites. Anna Burton mapped the whole Sector by calling each Housing Association and investigating their industrial relations. This has opened some new doors to Amicus. It is now hoped that each region will develop a regional network of representatives in the Sector, and we will be staging a one-day conference in 2006 for all representatives in the Sector.

We want all representatives to join in this work and to liaise with their Regional Officers and Organisers about how they will step up the organising activity in their organisation.

We have been carrying out some specific projects in certain Housing Associations like Anchor Housing and Stonham Housing, and have made the West Midlands the pilot region for this project.

### **2. Scope**

Scope has signed a facilities agreement with Amicus and UNISON and provides us with the opportunity to organise throughout the organisation. Amicus is looking forward to developing its membership here, now that the industrial relations climate has changed within this organisation.

### **3. CABs**

As well as having recognition within Citizens Advice, the national organisation, Amicus has membership in CABs up and down the country. We believed that we should focus on consolidating our membership in the CABs.

### **4. Jewish Care**

Our work in Jewish Care has focused around the learning agenda, with the lead representative profiling the union through her work on developing the employees through a number of initiatives.

### **Industrial Activity**

Representatives will be all too aware of the industrial issues faced in their organisation. In this section of the report, I will highlight some trends that have been emerging in the Sector.

### **Pay Systems**

In undertaking job evaluation exercises a number of organisations have been in discussion with Amicus about their proposals to base their system on a market rate system. However in using national schemes to support this, there has been little market material available to map out the market rates for the Sector. It is important that appropriate comparators are used. On a more positive note, a number of organisations have been progressing the issue of equal pay, and have committed to undertake an equal pay audit. This is something we would like all organisations to do, looking at gender, race and disability inequalities and addressing these.

### **Mergers**

Mergers within the Housing Association Sector continue to be a major issue, and through our organising project we will be reviewing the impact of this. When a Housing Association transfers into a new Group, many Groups have set up their own consultative forum, thus slowly undermining the collective agreement of the union. Because of this, it is important to organise from the Housing Association across the whole Group as quickly as possible to maintain or even increase a bargaining position.

We have also seen a number of mergers among different charities. A number of issues are driving these mergers, but it would appear that financial pressures are among the major motivations.

### **Working Time**

The long hours culture is truly embedded into the Sector. It is estimated that due to the quantity of unpaid overtime that UK workers undertake, they would not have to start work until February 24<sup>th</sup> in the year, which is “Work your proper hours day”, where we are encouraging members to do as the day says. However, on a more serious front Amicus is opposing the UK Government’s opt out of the Working Time Directive, since we believe this constitutes a major health and safety issue. We are therefore pleased that the Harrow Judgement, a case taken by GMB residential workers, has made a ruling on those that have sleep-in duties to count this as working time.

### **Bullying at Work**

Amicus most commonly deals with cases around bullying in the sector, and therefore urges organisations to sign up to the Amicus Dignity at Work Project. This project is not about researching bullying, but in looking at innovative ways of combating bullying in the workplace. Many organisations are reviewing their Dignity at Work policies, but there is still much to be achieved.

### **Pensions**

A number of organisations have been reviewing their pension schemes in the last couple of years. It is important that current evaluations are undertaken before organisations review the future of their schemes. The issues that representatives will be familiar with will be issues around the current deficit in schemes, issues around the future cost of schemes, and issues about the balance of risk between the employer and employee within a scheme.

## **Social Enterprises**

We have been informed that one organisation where we are recognised wants to move from its charitable status to become a social enterprise. This essentially transfers it into a private company which has several caveats around its modus operandi. It is important to inform us if your organisation is making a similar decision about its future direction, as this is of massive concern to the Sector and its members.

If representatives want more information about these or any other issue, they should contact the Research Department.

## **Sector Conferences 2004**

The following were elected onto the National Sector Committee. The Committee has met twice, with a further meeting now due. (It can only meet once a year according to the Rule Book.)

Mike Thompson	East Midlands	British Psychological Society
John Barr	London	City & Guilds
Seth Harman*	London	Habinteg Housing Association
Sue Jones	London	New Islington and Hackney Housing
Margaret Sharkey	London	London Hazards Centre
Vicki Swain	London	National Foster Care Association
Jennie Twydell	London	OKCOSA
Peter Bury	North West	TUC
Brian Egan	North West	Riverside
Louise Kennedy	North West	Arena
Helen Kelly	North West	Arch Initiatives
Jaqui Joseph	Wales	CAB

\* Seth Harman resigned as he changed employer and was no longer a representative.

## **Motions**

Below is a list of the motions passed by the 2004 conference and the action taken on each.

### ***Motion 1 – London Weighting***

This Conference agrees to support the campaign for a London Weighting of £4000 for Non Profit Sector organisations.

It calls on the National Sector Committee to support and resource the campaign and to liaise with other trade unions in the Not for Profit Sector in support of the demand.

*Action*

Amicus carried out research into London and Regional Allowances across the Sector and other sectors. It has also spoken to other unions about working on this issue together.

### ***Motion 2 – Employment Conditions in Non-Profit Sector***

This Conference calls on Amicus to campaign for a National Pay and Grading system based on a job evaluation scheme designed for the Non Profit Sector and to ensure that where organisations at local and national government receive three year funding from the public purse, they should employ people on the same basis. And, that we generally lobby the public sector on the issue of employment conditions for non-profit sector staff doing public sector work.

#### *Action*

As members will be aware, the Warwick Agreement endorsed the principle of Sector Forums and dialogue on this continues. However, as a Sector, we have also talked to the TUC and other bodies about the setting up of a body as a place where we can start to discuss Sector wide issues that impact on the employment agenda. We have held meetings with the Home Office and NCVO to continue the dialogue on this, as well as meeting with other bodies.

Representatives will also be aware of the earlier detail in the report of work we are doing on funding cycles.

With regards to lobbying the public sector on employment conditions for the non profit sector, we have raised this with Ministers and their departments. It is clear to us that many models of best practice have developed in the public sector that we want to either imitate in this Sector or reinvent according to the needs of the Sector. Some models that Amicus have raised include the Public Sector strategy of dealing with violence at work, the NHS programme of continuing professional development together with the skills escalator, and, of course, greater security in employment through long term contractual arrangements.

### ***Motion 3 – Organising***

The Conference notes that only 15% of the Non Profit Sector are members of trade unions. Conference, therefore, agrees to launch a major organising campaign in the non-profit sector, with other unions who have Non Profit Sector membership, principally T&G and Unison, with the aim of raising union density by 2010.

Conference calls on the National Industrial Committee to make regular reports to and to co-ordinate recruitment campaigning initiatives with the Non Profit Sector lay membership, both industrially and geographically in the running of this campaign.

#### *Action*

As the Recruitment and Organising section of this report will demonstrate, Amicus has committed resources to this, and is seeing net growth in membership. However, the Sector is not complacent and recognises the task ahead.

#### ***Motion 4 – Organising and Recruitment***

This Conference recognises the rich recruitment opportunities for Amicus in the Non Profit Sector. Conference believes that Amicus should aim to have 100,000 members in this sector by the year 2014. In order to achieve this ambitious goal, conference believes that the NEC will need to fund employment of organising staff and Officers, with time and commitment to develop membership in the Sector.

Conference therefore requests the NEC to place this goal at the forefront of its organising agenda for the future.

#### *Action*

As for motion 4

#### ***Composite Motion 1 – Common Ground***

This Conference believes that the mission for Amicus in the Voluntary and Not for Profit Sector is to extend recognition, organise the unorganised and recruit those workers not covered by collective bargaining.

As traditional manufacturing membership reduced due to the decline of those industries, it will become more important to increase our membership in other sectors. We call upon the NEC to institute a major recruitment campaign in this Sector.

This Conference believes that Common Ground is a first rate publication, a means of communication, an effective production supporting current members, a powerful recruiting tool and an essential element in the achievement of the above mission.

Conference also believes that Common Ground is a vital component in creating a sense of identity both within the Sector and the wider Amicus “family” and as such plays an important role in the recruitment of potential members.

Conference, therefore, calls upon the NEC to give a clear and unambiguous commitment to the continued publication of Common Ground as the magazine for Amicus members in the Voluntary and Not for Profit Sector.

#### *Action*

The NEC decided against Sector Publications, however the Sector is in the middle of producing a new organising publication. This will not be a regular publication, but will be updated if it proves successful at recruiting members.

#### **2006 - 2008**

Amicus plans to continue building on the foundations that it has laid down over the last couple of years and to work with the members in developing the agenda and influence of the Sector. In particular we will be producing a Sector organising publication and a representatives’ tool kit; and will be creating a

code of practice for the employment standards we expect for Ministers of Religion, and another about Local Authority Procurement. It is hoped that all representatives will play their full role in the campaigning, organising and industrial work of the Sector over the next stage of Amicus, and in particular as we look to merge with other unions also organising in the Sector.