



Send reports and pictures for inclusion in this new regular bulletin.

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THE INSIDER

News for bus, coach and tram engineers and other inside staff in passenger transport

Are you keeping in touch?

The Unite Passenger Engineering and Inside Staff National Liaison Committee (NLC) is now meeting regularly and wants to make contact with all senior engineering and inside staff reps.

Currently, there are especially vacancies on the NLC for reps from West Midlands, Scotland and Wales - but applications from other regions might be considered.

Ring Donna Reeve, or the Transport Sector's office at Holborn to give your name. Preferably, send all your contact details to: DONNA.REEVE@UNITETHEUNION.ORG

Lennie Stout (NLC Chair)
Jim Hume (NLC Vice-Chair)
David Peel (NLC Secretary)

NATIONAL LIAISON COMMITTEE REPORT:

At the last NLC, the National Organiser explained that there had long been the aim of ensuring all minority trades and disciplines within passenger transport were properly represented.

A Bus Engineering National Liaison Committee had been set up by the Passenger Group jointly with the T&G's Vehicle Building & Automotive Group as long back as 1992. This had also focused on the bus manufacturing sub-sector, although experience showed that this was somewhat problematic. In the Noughties, the BE NLC had focused on trade training matters but this had run out of steam.

In the course of setting up Unite, an opportunity to recast the arrangements in Passenger, which was constituted on industry not trade lines. Thus, a single national seat for bus engineers was allocated in an enlarged national committee (NISC) in a similar fashion to taxi drivers and the tram and light rail sub-sector.

This necessitated the development of some structures designed to arrive at democratic accountability; hence the setting up of a revamped Inside Staff and Bus Engineering NLC, which may perhaps evolve into a NLC and a NDC in time. Given the semi constitutional nature of the group, there will be a need to build contacts and links across the sub-sector. The promotion of 'The Insider', the bulletin for the group would be an important part of that process.

The NLC heard that Arriva have decided to take on mechanical and electrical apprentices. Outsourced engineering is now being taken back in house.

First Bristol have decided to shut one of the depots with a loss of 23 engineers. The trade union is in consultation with the company over this.

The overalls at First Bristol changed specification to a better quality material. However the newest Engineering Director has decided to revert back to the cheaper alternative.

First Group has reduced its core safety team from 20 to 6 for the whole of the UK. First Group do not as yet consult with engineering on PPE supplied to its workforce.

First North Yorkshire is looking at outsourcing engineering again but this time with built in accident/vandalism cover.

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London General

The company has been recruiting engineers using local and national newspapers. The engineers are looking at a two year deal. There have been no CBC's or JCC's recently.

A trainee apprentice in his third year of study faced dismissal due to poor attendance.

Modernisation throughout the company is still going ahead .

Six new apprentices have been taken on by the company. These are to replace staff who are approaching retirement.

The second stage of the pay deal came into effect on the 1st July; a difference over the anniversary date arose.

Metroline

An engineer was refused company sick pay as the management did not believe that it was a genuine claim. An appeal was submitted and Unite is considered what additional action it could take to resolve the issue.

It would appear that the company has started to take a macho management approach to industrial relations. A letter has been written to HR as the local management has not

First in Yorkshire have not been awarded any tenders. Due to this they are considering setting up a new company called First Greyhound, a low cost alternative to First Yorkshire. Engineers still do not a sit on cab committees within First. Recent discussions at national level may create additional seats for engineering staff for all operating companies.

It was reported that due to a lack of interest in becoming a shop steward some companies do not have engineer representatives. Engineers are represented by driving staff.

Arriva have started to hold engineering excellence meetings, where all questions and concerns raised will be posted on the engineering information board until resolved.

Dave Peel NLC Secretary

honoured blue book agreements. The deputy shop steward has been refused stand-down to attend the union's Central Bus Committee meeting. This was been passed to the officer to discuss with the Engineering Director.

An engineer was dismissed for gross misconduct after he was caught drinking alcohol on duty. Another engineer was suspended as a manager claimed he could smell alcohol on his breath. The company failed to follow the agreed drugs and alcohol testing policy whilst dealing with a 'for cause' test.

Night staff at one depot had to accept a change to their contractual terms and conditions. They were given the choice of either accepting the changes, or the company would serve 90 days notice to terminate their contracts. The staff affected signed the document under protest. New shift patterns consist of 9 days on 5 days off and started on the 17th July 2010.

The management has attempted to stop engineering staff from eating in the workshops during designated break times. Engineers recently found that someone had cut the plugs off the fridges and microwave ovens.

The company tried to de-recognise the craft convenor. The issue was passed to the officer concerned.

Arriva

The July pay talks were cancelled but an offer was eventually put of a 2% increase with a built in RPI of 50% over 3.7%. Persons with over 15 years service would receive extra holiday entitlement. Those employed after 1996 would not have three waiting days for company sick pay. Plus, there would be a £400 holiday voucher for those who have over 25 years service.

Eventually, a pay award was accepted consisting of a £700 pound lump sum pro rata for part time staff, and a further 2% to all elements of pay with a built in protection of RPI at 50%.

Operators in South London were offered the same deal. Any driving staff with 25 years service will get a £400 Thomas Cook holiday voucher. Drivers with 15 years service will get 10 pence per hour on their hourly rates of pay.

Garage diversion payments increased from £2000 to £3000. This was accepted 1,345 for, 152 rejected.

The company has recently taken on six new apprentices

Thirty-two new Hybrid buses are being brought into the company - Volvos will be maintaining this particular fleet. The old articulated buses are being shipped to Malta.



It has been reported that the company are about to be taken over by a German company.

The Final Salary Scheme has been audited and it was found that we still have a considerable black hole in funding. In order for the company to be able to keep the final salary benefits the same, all participating employees will have to pay an extra 1% contribution bringing the contribution rate per employee to 9%. The contributions will increase by 1% per year until 2013 when the scheme will have to be reassessed again. The company is presently contributing at a rate of 14%.

The new Engineering Director is disturbed that we don't have engineers who are willing to take on the role of garage representative.

All engineering staff are due to be assessed and specified training will be provided to those who require it. The engineering excellence scheme has now been rolled out to all our depots and local issues are now resolved rapidly. If issues are not resolved promptly the Engineering Director gets involved.

Contractors who show promise are normally employed after 6 months to avoid any finders fee.

The engineering convenor was introduced to the new Engineering Director who has stated that he wants to have a good working relationship with the TU. He also expressed aspirations to improve engineering standards with in house training.

Tottenham depot has been named as the new garage of excellence.

First London

The Engineering Convenor has been in discussions with the Engineering Director over the contract issues appertaining to VE2 - SVE work and its distribution at garage level. They agreed SVE manning levels are not being maintained and paperwork on agreed levels have been given to the Engineering Director.

Two engineers have been dismissed for clocking irregularities.

An engineer had agreed to be transferred to driving duties rather than face disciplinary action for an administration error. He later changed his

mind so the company has forwarded him for disciplinary action.

We are due to meet with the company to discuss pay on the 3rd August.

Westbourne Park managed to retain all there tendered routes.

An Engineer with over 30 years service has not been allowed to work past his retirement date and. An appeal has been submitted.

The Managing Director has been visiting all depots to try to keep all lost time injuries to a minimum and encouraging more use of the IP system to make employees aware of the potential dangers within the workplace.

Westbourne Park depot is having an engineering review which consists of looking at functions of the business. Once this is completed a report will be given making recommendations on how to make the business more efficient.

An Engineer based at Greenford Bus Garage has lost his fight with lung cancer. David Mayor was only diagnosed with the illness a matter of weeks before the disease overwhelmed him. Some members of the engineering staff at Greenford attended his funeral to pay their lasts respects.

The Officer has submitted the pay claim for 2010/2011 and we are waiting for dates to discuss pay. The Managerial grades received 4.9% increase in all elements of pay as part of a 2 year pay deal .5% plus RPI. This consisted of .5% plus RPI which was running at 4.5% at their anniversary date.

An engineer with over 20 years of service has failed a random drugs test, and decided to resign. The National Committee is still in consultation with the company over the cut-off levels for cannabis. The Grampian system has been underpaying some engineering staff who have been working Friday night on overtime to early Saturday morning. Head office is aware and adjustments are being made to the system.

An Engineer with more than 20 years service from East London has lost his appeal against dismissal for misreading the rolling road printout. This error allowed a bus to enter service with an underperforming OSR hand brake [by 2%] after rear brake shoe change. When the bus was put back on the rolling road when it was returned to the depot it passed. Even though he held his hands up to the mistake the company decided that they would not excuse this one off isolated incident which we argued was probably brought on by fatigue, as he was required to work in excess of the European working time directive for night workers.

Metroline

A grievance has been submitted to protect the earnings of the Team Leader position. This has been rejected by the company and the grievance has now been submitted to the Engineering Director.

The grievance for travel payments payable due to the closure of the North Wembley depot is still ongoing.

The trade union is consulting the company over the reduction in death in service benefits without the formal agreement with the recognised trade union to make changes to our terms and conditions.

Night staff have received a letter asking them to accept the changes to their contract of employment or they will be given notice. The trade union will be balloting the membership on this issue

An engineer was given permission for time off work to look after his child. When he returned to work he was issued a DPI for his attendance. An appeal has been submitted.

Occupational Stress

Stress is an inherent factor in any type of vocation or career. At its best, the presence of stress can be a motivator that urges the individual to strive for excellence. However, excess amounts of stress can lead to a lack of productivity, a loss of confidence, and the inability to perform routine tasks. As a result, quality employees lose their enthusiasm for their work and eventually withdraw from the company.

When left unchecked, occupational stress can lead to emotional and physical disorders that begin to impact on personal as well as professional lives. The individual may develop a level of tension that interferes with sleep, making relaxing outside the workplace impossible. Over time, the stress can trigger emotional disorders such as anxiety, depression and in some cases various phobias that further inhibit the ability to enjoy any aspect of living.

During the middle of the 20th century, employers began to initiate programs to help reshape corporate cultures in an effort to minimize the amount of productive stress found in the workplace. For many companies, this meant developing an occupational stress definition relevant to the individual business and the working environment as it was currently constituted. With the working definition in place, employers began to utilize resources such as confidential reporting methods, professional counselling and employee committees to identify areas where the corporate climate could be enhanced and reduce stress levels at the same time.

Stress Reduction Kit



Directions:
1. Place kit on KRM machine.
2. Follow directions in circle of kit.
3. Repeat step 2 as necessary, or until unconscious.
4. If unconscious, remove stress reduction activity.