



Wake Up

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Making A Comeback

After a break of several months and some changes *Wake-Up* is back to deliver the news and views of local government workers that the Council would rather weren't shared. If you have stories and news that won't get shared any other way then get in touch: wakeup.bulletin@gmail.com before 31st October and we'll include it in the next issue.

FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO STRIKE: STOP THE TRADE UNION BILL!

The Tories hate strikes because they have impact. Now, the government plans new laws that threaten to weaken the power of unions in every workplace.

The law stipulates a 50% turnout in strike ballots, and insists that at least 40% of those eligible to vote must vote 'yes' for a strike to be legal in "essential" services like transport. This comes from a government elected by 24% of the electorate!

The law also limits our right to picket, makes it harder for unions' to fund political parties, and allows employers to use agency labour to break strikes. The government estimates 60% of recent strikes would not have taken place under the new laws, which will hit vulnerable workers hardest, as harder to organise workers will find it less easy to get high ballot returns. And if you're already fearing the sack, would you want to identify yourself to the police as a "picket captain"? The government faces strong opposition in Parliament from the newly invigorated Labour Party around Jeremy Corbyn. If we can stir popular opinion, we could persuade some MPs to vote against.

The grassroots Right to Strike campaign has organised direct action against the law, including on the day of its second Parliamentary reading, and a block on the TUC demo at the Tory Party Conference.

Building a strong, workplace-based campaign now will mean that we are in a position to defy the law if it passes. Visit the Right To Strike website for more details on what the law will mean for us, downloadable materials including a new leaflet to distribute at work, and details of upcoming events.

righttostrike.co.uk



JEREMY CORBYN WINS: CELEBRATE, AND ORGANISE!



Jeremy Corbyn's victory in the Labour leadership election is a political earthquake. It opens up immense new possibilities to refound a vehicle for genuine working-class political representation. The majority of trade unions backed Corbyn's election and Wake Up would hope their support for Corbyn will encourage some real fight against the Government. We now have a Labour leader and Chancellor who have and should continue to back our strikes, disputes and help us fight against austerity and the huge Government cuts. The pressure is now on to defend Corbyn against the attacks from the Tories, the establishment and those within his own party. We need our unions to make good on their support for Corbyn's campaign by helping him carry through his plans to democratise the party and hand power back to Labour members and affiliated unions. The time for us to act is now. We have an immense opportunity to transform Labour from what it has been a pale-pink Tory party-lite - into a force that genuinely fights for working-class interests in politics. **Labour MPs already showed stiffer resistance to the Tories' "Trade Union Bill" than they would've done if Corbyn hadn't won. Let's push them further. Don't wait for the dust to settle, let's stir it up!**

A LEISURELY APPROACH TO PAYMENT

Wake-Up contributors have always wanted to keep fit so take full advantage of our salary sacrifice to join the Apsire scheme at a reduced rate. reading!

We support all leisure services being free and it seems for once the Council agree, at least for us! For nearly a year lots of workers report that their monthly deductions have not been being deducted. The Council say they are in the process of resolving the issue. Given the huge cuts being made and the potential to outsource our leisure services would the Council not prefer to use the potential income? When those deductions start do the council expect us to pay for a years deductions in one lump sum?

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

The council seems to have gone quiet about the next steps in the potential outsourcing of 1500+ jobs. With different information flying around, *Wake-Up* understands a number of councillors are unhappy with the process. Neither Carillion, Interserve or Cofely should be awarded the contract, the whole process should end and the staff remain in house. If Councillors are unhappy they should go public and express their views outside of the closeted world of the labour group. Workers should continue to fight the proposals and build support for a campaign to keep all staff in house and protect our current terms and conditions.

MISSING A NEAR MISS

Confusion reigns over the reporting of near misses. Who is responsible for following them up and are they done on paper forms or electronically? With the number still being reported a lot lower than are feasibly occurring, senior management need to get a grip on where they are going and who is following them up. How many trips, drops and spills have been reported with no action taken or the department or health and safety providing no feedback? What will it take to sort this mess out?

CROCODILE TEARS

The annual pride awards witnessed a strange site at the Cedar Court Hotel. After a fleeting appearance by Cllr Box in time for his photo to be taken with various winners our Chief Executive made a closing speech. With what is fair to say a mixed reaction from those attending (and those of us whose jobs are under threat) we were treated to an 'emotional' and 'tearful' speech about the hard work that we all do throughout the year. Knowing that on £184K the CX cares so deeply for our work she is reduced to 'tears' did not convince us all. Knowing that Ms Roney is not adverse to reducing her own staff to tears, and pushing through the outsourcing and ending of services, we can only assume a raw onion salad could have been to blame.

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT

The review of council tax support and the potential rise in council tax is not something that is likely to improve the quality of service that a lot of staff are giving. The scheme will help to subsidise council tax for people on low incomes is currently administered by the council and creates a huge amount of work calculating claims and collecting payments and chasing debts. Cllr Stokes stating that; "Our aim is to provide a scheme which is fair to residents who are eligible for support but also fair to all Council Tax payers who depend on council services". Sounds like a justification to cut support raise council tax. With further cuts looming and a continued wage freeze and cuts to benefits this sounds like the exact opposite of what is needed!

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Did you know that Movember is apparently a 'religious or cultural event' included on the intranet to inform staff of major festivals and significant dates throughout the year. Given Movember's stance is that of promoting the idea of a 'real man' who can grow a moustache to raise awareness of male cancers Wake Up find this quite problematic. The campaign defines 'manliness' in terms of biological determinism. It is the same argument that tells us that men can't control their urges and brings "boys will be boys" and "calm down, dear" and "what was she expecting, dressed like that?" The Council should think again about what they are saying about Movember.

RESTRUCTURE AFTER RESTRUCTURE AFTER RESTRUCTURE

The saying goes that if you don't like a restructure in local government, don't worry because another one will come along very soon!

Over the summer the Wakefield Unison branch reported that they dealt with more restructures ongoing at one time than they had at any other point. Lots of us will now be familiar with a large scale restructure followed by a so called 'mini restructure' a few months later. What makes a mini restructure different? Well it seems they can be done with less consultation, less transparency and with less and less staff engagement. Why is that acceptable?

Restructures most often mean job losses and still seem to feature a lot of job creation in the more senior grades and the rest of us thrown on the potential scrap heap of 'redeployment.' The facts are, we all have jobs that need doing and we need our jobs to keep doing them. 'Business Change Managers' and other senior staff rarely understand what we actually do. So they restructure to save money and improve efficiency. Soon after realising they have cut jobs they needed and in some cases pay consultants to replace them they go through the whole thing again. Stress, worry, disruption of services? This shouldn't be the way we are made to do our jobs. The council need to listen to the people on the front line and not the organogram shufflers.

What is *Wake-Up*?

Wake Up is a rank-and-file socialist bulletin, published at least monthly, written by Council workers, for Council workers. It is published by the socialist group Workers' Liberty, but is produced with the help of submissions and stories from supporters.

For more information or to find out how you can help or submit a story email

wakeup.bulletin@gmail.com