

**REPORT OF PETER STEVENTON
BRANCH SECRETARY / SENIOR REP
FEB 2017 TO FEB 2018**

As Branch Secretary, I have been kept extremely busy throughout the past year representing members at sickness absence review meetings, through to gross misconduct, appeal against terminations, ill health pension applications along with collective negotiations / bargaining on changes to policies, terms and conditions and working groups to move forward with the 'must do's', requirement from the CQC report.

With regards to representation, overall our reps have seen an increase in members requiring support, guidance and representation with disciplinary hearings, long and short-term sickness consultations and reviews, along with supporting members with mental health related illnesses which is increasing at a worrying level and the terms of the protected characteristics of the 2010 equality act is heard more often so.

Recruitment and retention of members has always remained high on my priority list, throughout the year we have ensured all SECAMB induction events are attended by our reps to recruit new members to unison. Along with recruitment, it is also of the utmost importance that we as a branch support our members, professionally and efficiently in times of need, whether that is direct representation, welfare or legal opinions via our solicitors.

The HQ's move to Crawley seems like a distant memory now and the majority of staff appear to have settled in well. Although, leading up to the move some members felt the distance from the existing work location to the new site in Crawley was just too far to travel on a daily basis, due to the increased travel time. Members had therefore contacted our branch reps for advice. In the first instance, we held a legal surgery for members to discuss their cases with Thompson's solicitors, who gave advice around grounds for redundancy due to relocation. As a result, our branch reps were successfully able to support / negotiate 11 out of 12 cases. It was decided that relocation redundancy was the most appropriate way to resolve the individual concerns raised.

Our branch voice is membership led and I will ensure our collective voice and united front stands up for our members, remembering we / you are part of the largest NHS union in Europe with over 1.4 million members across the NHS and is the lead union across the country in the recent campaign for paramedics to be paid correctly moving from band 5 to 6.

Following the CQC report and the grave concerns highlighted with reference to bullying and harassment within our Trust, we are now seeing the Trust taking action at long last and are putting in procedures to support the members who are directly affected by these issues. We welcome the introduction of the well-being hub that will support staff in their health and well-being.

Our branch has supported members via Thompson's personal injuries claims, whilst accidents have occurred within the workplace and have seen compensation payouts, collectively exceeding £100,000 in the past year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my team of senior and station based local reps who have represented our members professionally, sometimes facing a member's hostile opinion. I also give a warm welcome to our new reps, who have recently completed their ERA training.

Our nursing home member are represented by Alex Knutson, Roger Laxton and Mark Drayton who represent our members autonomously and professionally, as branch secretary I would like to thank them all for supporting our members and also Ann Sephton who holds our branch together, ensuring membership queries are responded to in timely fashion, thank you.

Due to a restructure within Unison branch allocation, Stephanie Cesena, our full-time regional officer is no longer connected to SECamb Unison, and is now covering branches in the Surrey area. So, we say thank you for her support and guidance over the years with a number of difficult cases and situations that some members have faced.

We now have a new regional officer supporting our branch and welcome the expertise and knowledge of Simon Bolton, who has many years of experience in the Health sector and the wider NHS.

In the coming year, the pressure on the union will continue and there will no doubt be many challenges ahead within the Trust, I will continue to fight for member's rights and protection of your terms and conditions.

Kind Regards

Pete

Peter Steventon.
Branch Secretary, UNISON