



SECamb Branch 20111



Courtesy of South East Coast Ambulance

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2019

(updated version of Dec '18 newsletter with updates in red)

Technicians' pay journey through Band 5

The success in lifting SECamb Technicians into Band 5 pay reflected excellent joint union working with our Branch Secretary's determination to make sure the Trust followed the direction of most of the Ambulance Trusts in the UK. It has taken a long time to get there but a great result. Additionally, with all 360 SECamb technicians **who were at the top of Band 4 in March 2018** now unified on the same pay point 20 backdated from April 2018, it will mean those technicians will reach the top of Band 5 by April 2020 – less than 15 months away.

The following 2 pay increases can be expected –

From April 2019 increased to £27,260 +USH

From April 2020 increased to £30,615 +USH (top of Band 5)

Additionally, we are working to ensure that all NQPs who were previously standard SECamb technicians before their registration will have their pay increased in line with the technician Band lift. (previously, they were put on paypoint 18 in Band 5 and only 'Advanced technicians' were lifted to paypoint 20 in Band 5 when starting as a NQP)

Also, our success in getting the Operating Unit Administrators all into Band 4 was another good news story to address historic unfairness. The job evaluation work continues with our efforts to make sure the AAPs have a properly evaluated role with the appropriate Band and recognition, and then on to continue to support ECSWs and all the many other non-registered operation roles. (ever heard of an NQAAP? - you will!)

The work continues on getting both CCPs and PPs properly job evaluated and a business case is underway. It's expected the Trust Board will support this. The Trust is embarking on the greatest recruitment drive ever seen and there appear to be more career opportunities as well as a clear career path.

The system of local recruitment, local training and local employment is not rocket will hopefully go a long way in helping the Trust to keep the caring, loyal and capable staff it needs.

The Pay Review & Agenda for Change restructure

The 2018 NHS pay review led to the end of the era of 1% pay rises and although not seen as a great victory it appears to have been the best likely to be on offer. The progression has been simplified and occurs over a shorter period of time so there are financial benefits for many by reaching the top of the pay Band more quickly

However the requirement for all new staff to be on the NHS section 2 unsocial hours which is in line with the nurses, means a more complicated calculation and the responsibility of all affected to make sure they highlight their unsocial hours on the Time Sheets.

Our colleagues especially on the lower bands may consider transferring to Section 2 if it is to their financial advantage and this could be the case for those specifically working unsocial hours only, such as some in NHS111.

NHS111

The great news that SECAMB has secured a further year's contract from April 2019 is a relief for many and the opportunity to secure a long term contract for Kent and Sussex from 2020 depends on investment in staff and telephony as well as a new and smarter way of working with other patient facing colleagues.

This will mean closer ties with GPs, Mental Health, Social Services and of course 999 as we find the most appropriate resource for ever growing patient demand. The expansion of Clinical support in the EOCs is a clear example of the more futuristic and realistic approach where Hear and Treat and rapid Clinical support can be given to those taking the calls, through to the patients themselves. This shows where 111 and 999 can work in unison to ensure that the patient is guaranteed optimum care from the moment the call is answered.

New ambulances

It was confirmed that by mid 2019, the last of the new Mercedes box back ambulances will have arrived which will enable the oldest ambulances to be removed from the road. Initially there will clearly be a need for more ambulances to match the numbers of new staff joining the Trust. From then on it is expected that van conversions will become the new standard ambulance as they are seen to be a more economical choice and match the general trend across the country as laid out in the Carter report published this year. Branch reps are monitoring the impact on staff of the pilot new Fiat van conversion ambulances as they have considerable issues around reliability, and staff comfort and welfare.

The 30 NET ambulances that are currently being rolled out are designed to take the pressure off the emergency crews and allow a more appropriately qualified crew to transfer patients to hospital who are both stable and who have been clinically assessed prior to transportation. We have insisted that these crews are not dragged into the normal emergency response world but are used for the specific purpose they are designed for.

The push for less SRVs and more DCAs continues as this matches the Ambulance Response Programme more appropriately according to the Trust. It is clear however that until there are enough ambulances and staff, the cars will continue to be in demand in some areas and the issues over who can work on them still needs some resolution.

IMPORTANT – if you want to have your say in what new ambulances will be like, then please complete this survey before the end of January...

<https://engage.improvement.nhs.uk/operational-productivity-comms/english-nhs-ambulance-vehicle-spec/>

Make Ready Structure

It has been reassuring that Make Ready Managers have at last been recognised for the very important role they play. Alongside our fellow unions, we have supported our members through discussions to clarify the responsibilities of the job and for the Trust to recognise the demands on them. By taking on line management responsibility for the Clinical Scheduling team that will be placed in each OU, the logical conclusion will be the right staff on the right vehicle with the right resources.

Progress is still being made in developing our Make Ready structure as confirmed with the planned new Medway base as well as the Banstead one, for example. Work continues across the whole Trust and will no doubt be a topic of interest for some time with new funding becoming available.

Brexit fallout and non UK EU staff

Proactive work from a Branch member has enabled our Branch to push the national UNISON campaign for 'Settled Status' for EU nationals who are not British citizens to be funded by SECamb. The cost of this new post-Brexit status to be covered by the Trust in line with other leading Trusts across the UK. This not only sends a clear message of support to those individuals having to comply with Brexit bureaucracy just to keep working for our NHS, but it will also help show that our Trust is a welcoming and inclusive place to work.

Find out more from -

<https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2018/11/brexit-fees/>

UNISON campaign to unify emergency staff retirement ages

The national UNISON campaign to make ambulance staff normal retirement age 60 is progressing with a 200,000 signature petition being presented to the Secretary of State for Health Matt Hancock. Presently both fire and police services retire at 60, whereas the youngest ambulance staff will retire at 68 or more as the normal retirement age for the latest NHS pension (2015) moves with the state pension age.

Locally, we've been tweeting and drawing attention to the petition and the national campaign. Details here -

<https://www.unison.org.uk/news/press-release/2018/12/government-lower-retirement-age-ambulance-staff-says-unison/>

Becoming a Steward

I'd been missing the opportunities to support my colleagues that acting up as an OTL had given me. A random conversation about this with Nigel Sweet led me into union activity, firstly by attending the New Steward course back in February. Early on this they told me, "UNISON is an organising union, not a servicing union" – and I've since gradually realised the importance of this key difference.

Some unions are solely based on ‘doing things for their members’ – members pay (usually a lot more!) to receive a service from their union, a bit like a breakdown service: things go wrong, you call them, they sort it. In contrast, the emphasis in an ‘organising’ union is on the members being the union, and the union facilitating the infrastructure and direction of the community which emerges from it. This year has given me plenty of opportunity to see this in practice.

Right from the start I’ve been warmly invited to join in and get involved. It was a little unnerving at first to be given a voice in such things as weekly conference calls, branch executive meetings, and most recently as the sole delegate for our branch at the national LGBT conference. I’m only just beginning to realise how important finding this voice has been.

There’s a stark contrast between the culture of co-operation within UNISON and those in which I have spent most of my working life. I have found it truly amazing how the opportunity and support I’ve been given has expanded my horizons, and contributed to me ‘growing as a person’ over the last year. I’m really grateful for this, and am looking forward to encouraging and enabling others on their own journeys. There’s so much more to “being stronger together” than I realised just one short year ago. Here’s to more growth, more strength and more togetherness in 2019!

Tony Faraway
SECamb Branch Equality & Diversity Co-ordinator (West) | UNISON

HIGH ANXIETY AND 111

I’m not sure I realised, before I came to 111. I avoid crowds, I’m terrified of dogs, permanently scared of falling down stairs. Working as a HA, where the next call can be a patient who can’t be woken, or a suicidal patient – is not exactly the obvious choice of job for someone with anxiety and depression.

My first live shift was 18 December 2017. The volume of calls was terrifying, some potentially life threatening. I asked for help so often, I drove experienced colleagues mad at times. I tried hard not to clutch at people and seek reassurance all the time. I was in a permanent state of panic every shift for 3 months. Anxiety makes it hard to retain information and a job with a lot to remember, makes that a challenge.

Managers at 111 helped massively. They made some reasonable adjustments – an extra unpaid break in my shift, regular supervision sessions with our Quality team. They were there to talk to, always positive and reassuring. Being part of Unison helped greatly too. I knew that people had my back, and that put me on solid ground. Going forward, I feel hopeful.

Stella Quentin
Joint Diversity & Equality Coordinator, Secamb Unison Branch

SECamb Benevolent Fund

Our Branch continues to support the great work done by the Benevolent Fund and recommends to all of our fellow members and colleagues to join so they can help their fellow workers as well as have a little bit more protection for themselves. Just go on the website to join or complete one of the application forms . www.secambbenevolentfund.org.uk.

The Future

We are all now aware that Daren Mochrie, our CEO, will be leaving us by the spring, so the hunt is on for an ambitious, forward looking and union-friendly replacement. Although reactions have been mixed across the Trust to his departure, it is true that he leaves the Trust still in special measures and still with an uphill journey. The reality has to be that he needs to consider his family and career first and we respect him for that and wish him all the very best in his new role.

Recruit a Friend

Don't forget that you can earn yourself a £10 shopping voucher when you help recruit a friend or colleague to UNISON. Just ensure your name is given when the recruitment form is completed and you'll get your £10 asap.

National Ambulance Seminar

From 10 to 12 May at Warwick University the UNISON National Ambulance Seminar is taking place to network, exchange views and ideas, and update on the latest news in ambulance Trusts nationwide. AND you can be part of it – contact Ann Sephton for details (below)

Branch Contacts

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Branch Administration
Ann Sephton 01273 575337
Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.00 am – 1.00 pm

Wed 9.00 am – 5.00 pm

Website address:

<https://www.secamb-unison.org.uk/latest-news>

For the very latest news – twitter @SECAMBunison and @sweeterNigel

Facebook SECamb Unison page – join us !



Training Courses are available to anyone wishing to become a Representative. Just contact Ann on secamb.unison20111@gmail.com and she will send you all the necessary paperwork.



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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

VENUE

EAST COURT MANSION

EAST COURT

COLLEGE LANE

EAST GRINSTEAD

RH19 3LT

MONDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2019

6.00 pm – 8.00 pm

BUSINESS: 6.00 pm – 7.00 pm

**SPEAKER: COLM PORTER, NATIONAL
OFFICER AMULANCE SECTOR**

Refreshments will be provided.