



Lewisham

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# Hospital Worker

A Workers' Liberty healthworkers' bulletin

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## Prepare for More Belt Tightening

Unison members have voted to accept the government's 1% pay offer for NHS workers for 2015-16.

In Unison, 67% of members voted to accept the offer, with 32% rejecting it. Unite voted to reject by a slim majority. GMB, Society of Radiographers and the Royal College of Midwives members have already accepted the deal.

This is essentially an offer of 1% over two years for most health workers and a slightly bigger increase for those on the lowest pay. We will all be worse off next year than we were this year, continuing a trend of below inflation pay deals since 2009.

But most alarmingly, in Unison only 17% of members returned a ballot paper. Meaning that 83% of Unison members did not any opinion whatsoever about their pay. Other unions fared no better. The Tories have already signalled an attack on unsociable hours payments and they plan to put further restrictions on our right to strike. If your bothered about this unending downward spiral of attacks, then join the effort to reorganise the unions so that they are capable of taking effective industrial action.

*LHW* provides a forum for staff at the hospital to tell their stories and air their views. If you have a story to tell or an opinion to share then get in touch. The bulletin is edited by healthcare professionals. All articles are published anonymously and we will ensure confidentiality is upheld. Email: [hospitalworkerbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:hospitalworkerbulletin@gmail.com)

## QEH dispute – offer made.

The GMB has suspended a planned 5 day strike by ISS workers at QEH to ballot members on a new offer from management. There have been several strike days since October in a campaign for ISS workers to get the same pay, terms and conditions as directly employed NHS workers.

The new offer gives workers £7.72 an hour, which is an 8.7% pay rise, and brings workers in line with the minimum wage under Agenda for Change. This is not the same as parity, as the national agreement includes a raft of other terms and conditions.

Unlike the national pay dispute, the ISS dispute was solid strike action, and had a big impact on the portering and cleaning services in QEH. The strike was the culmination of a union campaign, which involved mass recruitment and active participation of workers in the union. So far, the dispute has not achieved its aims, but it has resulted in an increase in pay for workers. The campaign has also resulted in a workforce who are more organised and engaged with their union.

If the decision is made to end the dispute for this offer this may be disappointing for some workers. But the union will be in a better position to fight for further improvements in terms and conditions in the future. The longer term aim for all contracted workers in the Trust must be to get services taken back in house. In the wake of the merger between Lewisham and QEH the Trust will want to rationalise the contracts that they have between sites. Contracted workers on both sites TUPE and non-TUPE alike must organise together to apply pressure to the Trust to get the best possible terms and conditions when the contracts are up for renewal.

# Campaign against cuts to Lewisham & Southwark College

Lewisham and Southwark College management have announced a 25% cut to the college's staffing budget. This could mean up to 175 job losses, which would in effect demolish the Further Education of the two boroughs. On top of this the government is trying to cut 24% of Adult Education nationally.

## Lewisham teachers and students strike to stop academies

The struggle against the plans to turn four secondary schools in Lewisham into academies is escalating.

On 4 March there was a students' strike at Hilly Fields school. A day later, on 5 March, the school was closed and the other schools severely disrupted as members of the NUT, NASUWT and GMB struck together to stop the academisation. After the picket lines a large and noisy delegation handed in a letter to the Leathersellers' Company who run the Prendergast Federation, which contains three of the four schools with are pushing for conversion. Outrageously, Leathersellers' have indicated, that they are moving the consultation period to before the Election — leaving just 6 weeks (instead of 6 months).

Unions are discussing escalating to a two-day strike. The students have responded and organised, not just on social media — a sit in at Vale school on Monday 9 March led to 11 students being internally excluded. Ladywell school has threatened 5-day exclusions for student organising.

### What's wrong with academies?

Academies are publically funded schools that are owned and governed by a "sponsor". They have selective admissions policies that often carve out pupils from poorer backgrounds, leading to social segregation. They tend to exclude more students. They have been criticised for discriminatory employment practices. They have high staff turnover. They are not covered by education law so parents and students have fewer rights. The National Audit office found that academies have been siphoning off money to the private businesses of directors, trustees and their relatives. They are not accountable to the local community and (as in Lewisham) schools are converted to academies without any democratic process.

## Socialist Campaign for Labour Victory

Another Tory government – ruling by themselves, with the Lib Dems or, worst of all, in coalition with UKIP – would be a disaster for the working class. As socialists, we want a Labour victory, not because we support Labour's current position – a softer version of austerity and anti-migrant politics – but to throw out the Coalition, and because Labour is linked to workers' basic organisations, trade unions. If the unions choose to fight, they can change Labour's direction.

We don't want to "hold our noses" and vote Labour as a lesser evil. We want to combine campaigning for a Labour government with making clear working-class demands, to boost working-class confidence, and strengthen and transform our labour movement so it is fit to fight. Join the campaign: <https://socialistcampaignforlabourvictory.wordpress.com>

### 4:1 ACTIVIST TRAINING DAY

The 4:1 campaign for mandatory minimum staffing ratios is holding a training day aimed at nursing staff who want to campaign for mandatory minimums in their workplace and the wider NHS.

Saturday 28th March, 12-4, Student Central, Malet St, WC1E 7HY [www.4to1.org.uk](http://www.4to1.org.uk)

## What's going on in Greece?

On 25 January the radical left wing party Syriza won the Greek general election on a promise to end austerity. Visit [www.workersliberty.org](http://www.workersliberty.org) for up to date news and analysis of recent developments.

### TAKE ACTION!

DEMONSTRATE AGAINST  
ACADEMIES IN  
LEWISHAM

Saturday 21st March,  
12 noon at the Clock Tower,  
Lewisham High Street  
[www.stopacademiesin-lewisham.org](http://www.stopacademiesin-lewisham.org)

### ORGANISE AGAINST FURTHER

EDUCATION CUTS  
Campaign Planning  
Meeting everyone  
welcome

Friday 20th March,  
6-7pm,  
Amersham Arms,  
New Cross Road.  
(organised by UCU)

### PUBLIC MEETING: THE GENERAL ELECTION

Debate on how the left and labour movement should do in the general election with speakers from AWL, TUSC, Greens and more.

Thursday 30 April, 6:30pm,  
Goldsmiths University, New Cross,