



Care home scandal Privatisation wrecks vital services

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Cuts in jobs and services

WE ARE FIGHTING BACK!



photo Paul Mattsson

Workers across the country are facing cuts. In Birmingham, (see page four) not only are 7,000 council jobs under threat but the Con-Dem council wants to offshore the IT department to super-exploit workers in India.

Four sections of Southampton city council workers, refuse workers, street cleaners, toll workers and parking wardens, will march through the city on Monday 13 June against pay and job cuts. They will be marching with hundreds of striking cleaners from Southampton general hospital.

Unite member and parking warden Mark Humphries explained why he is on strike: "Parking wardens stand to lose £1,000 a year, for a supervisor it's £1,300. With an attack on our pensions, rent up 6%, electricity and gas up 9% it adds up to £2,000.

"That's 10% of my money. To say it's better to take a pay cut and keep your job, you'd be mad. Company directors are doing well. There's lots of money around. We're a scape-goat."

Refuse workers showed their feelings when Tory council leader Royston Smith turned up at the depot - the place has never emptied so fast!

Ian Woodland, Unite officer, spoke at a mass meeting: "You have the full backing of Unite, we will not be starved back to work." Ian also reported that everywhere bin workers have been leafletting around the city, the support from local people has been overwhelming.

At the hospital NHS cleaners employed by Compass/Medirest are on strike for seven days, the latest in a series of strikes. Unison steward Jo Spear explains why: "Our members are angry over unpaid wages and sick pay. But our dispute is also with Medirest over a lack of equipment and unfair treatment. Members are currently supporting an official 'work to rule' which just shows

NICK CHAFFEY explains here how council workers in Southampton are setting an important example by fighting back against the council cuts and building united action with striking hospital workers.

how much that goes on is wrong. Compass is now searching catering staff and cleaners at work, accusing our members of stealing food and equipment. I'd like to know how you hide a broom handle in your hand bag!

"No one's interested in patient care or workers, it's all about profits. Recently Medirest has taken on staff with zero hour contracts. Many have joined the union and will be out on strike next week."

There is a growing mood of determination and confidence that workers have to take action to fight the employers. Support is growing for a full council strike on 30 June, alongside the national pension strike by the NUT, PCS, UCU and ATL public sector unions, if the council has not backed down by then.

Hundreds will join the demon-

stration on Monday, be there if you can. Send a message of support and donation if you can't.

Messages to: Unison Southampton district branch, Civic Centre Southampton SO14 7NB. Mike Tucker: branchsecretary@soton-unison-office.org.uk and Unite, 15 The Avenue, Southampton SO17 1XF and Ian Woodland, regional officer 07770704480 woodland_ian@hotmail.com. Donations to TGWU 2/8 Strike Fund, Unity Trust Bank, Ac No: 20185358 Sort Code 08-60-01.

Fight the Cuts Demo Southampton

Monday 13 June, assemble 12.30pm in Hoglands Park, by the Debenhams roundabout, Southampton.

NSSN conference: A vital meeting for all trade unionists.

The National Shop Stewards Network conference has as its themes:

- Strike to defend jobs and pensions
- Fight the anti-trade union laws
- Defend our NHS

In addition a Greek bus workers' union leader will be speaking

Saturday 11 June, 11.30am-4pm, registration opens at 10.30am.

South Camden Community School, Charrington Street, London NW1 1RG. Close to Kings Cross and Euston stations.

For more details see shopstewards.net