
BAWU Branch Secretary Network meeting January 2024

Issues round the branches

Incorrect Pay – due to Apps

Those using the ADP app system for pay/ pay slips have experienced issues with being underpaid and paid wrongly.

In the meeting there were branch secretaries from two separate businesses who use the ADP app, and both expressed frustrations about mistakes leading to incorrect pay and other issues. An example was given of an individual being underpaid by 30 minutes for a prolonged period of time, his employer reimbursed the monies but they should not have been underpaid in the first place, when following all the correct procedures, there was a discussion around the accuracy of other, similar apps and it was agreed that ADP in particular but others should be looked into.

There were issues with drivers being paid incorrectly at one site and though the other site seemed to be sorted now, people were and still are struggling with accessing information, especially when they don't have internet at home, employers are printing paper copies out, which defeats the object of having the app in the first place.

The ADP app was likened to horizon the program used in the post office as it just didn't get things right

Representing bullies

There was a discussion around whether it is right to represent people who bully and threaten others, even when both parties are members, where does it stop if it is deemed acceptable by the union, i.e. if there is racism or assault what would branches do?

The union is clear about not accepting racism, homophobia, transphobia or any other type of discrimination nationally, but it needs to be put into practice in sites too.

Experience in different areas of a branch

Concerns were raised around how branch secretaries are sometimes treated by members when they are from a different department or section of the workplace. Especially after covid when restrictions were put in place to stop people moving about, these have obviously been lifted now pretty much everywhere, but staffing levels being short has then presented other issues too.

It was felt that it can sometimes feel as though members are hostile in these situations which is disappointing, company policies tend to be the same regardless of department, some of the day-to-day problems may differ but branch secretaries and other reps in the branch go above and beyond to support members and it's a shame when members are hostile in return for no apparent reason.

There was a discussion about how to get members back on side and that it is important to keep going in, talking to them and be a persistent face. Members are often quick to say the union is crap, how do we get them to put grievances in and get them to understand that they are the union.

Update on district branches and retired members

Emails have gone out to all district branch members we have email addresses for, with a link to join the relevant WhatsApp group and a short 2-minute survey to fill in to identify issues and what support they need in their workplace/from the union. Written letters to all other members will be posted out in the next few weeks. We have already seen over 20 people join the WhatsApp groups and fill out the surveys which is a great start and shows there are activists out there wanting to be more involved.

We will be contacting free card and retired members too, to check in say hello and make sure we still have the correct details for them.

Communication was discussed at length, how we reach members who aren't in bakery branches all together, utilising technology helps but we need email addresses to be able to do that effectively.



Training

A branch secretary fringe at annual conference was felt to be a good idea, with a session on quarterly reports and other paperwork that need completing as well as building up the support networks and relationships between branch secretaries, sharing best practice and working through issues.

Resources

District branch secretaries don't receive expenses like workplace branch secretaries can if they have fulfilled the quarterly returns sufficiently, but they may still incur expenses if attending meetings or events on behalf of the BFAWU, the generic expenses document can be used for all expenses incurred and should be. It was agreed that it would be put on the website so that reps can download it and fill it in when needed.

Conference

Branch secretaries were reminded about the deadline for sending in motions and where to send them as well as preparing for nominating delegates.

Workplace agreements

Wage claims were discussed, and the impact of the rise in National Minimum wage over taking multiple grades in some workplaces was a concern for a few attendees, the importance of maintaining differentials for the roles worked and extra responsibility was stressed as a priority, but without allowing the employer to strip back terms and conditions in order to do that.

Concerns were also raised about employers using a second year of a significant rise as an excuse to cut back terms and conditions, one employer has already started attacking workplace pensions.

AOB

A reminder about holding branch elections at the appropriate time was given as well as holding branch meetings. There was a discussion about posts calling out poor employers on social media or commenting about joining the union on employer accounts can often lead to being banned due to being reported, but that it is important to continue to call out poor employers and get the message out about joining the trade union.