

The Update

20 Jan 2022

The latest news and announcements from Derbyshire UNISON

Social care staffing crisis

Derbyshire UNISON is ensuring members who may be temporarily asked to redeploy into care homes are fully protected and properly paid



Derbyshire care homes staffing crisis / temporary closure of day services

Derbyshire UNISON members will be aware from emails, the BBC and other media news reports that Derbyshire County Council was seeking volunteers to help out in council care homes, due to an acute staffing shortage caused by Covid-19 related absences.

Contacting Derbyshire UNISON

01629 582266

branch@unisondc.co.uk

derbyshireunison.com



Derbyshire UNISON was very concerned that the council had 'gone public' about this without discussing it with us, not only because we expect proper consultation but also because we could have alerted them to some potential pitfalls with their approach.

Belatedly, the council did formally talk to us and UNISON was able to impress on them concerns and

problems concerning training, disclosure and barring and the thorny issue of vaccinations.

Volunteers

It is worth stressing that the council was/is looking for volunteers to work in their own time in care homes where they will be paid at the normal rate for the job in question. No member of staff is expected to do this work instead of their current post

unless the following news about day services concerns you.

Isolation

As an aside, the council have informed us that for safeguarding and wellbeing reasons, they intend to continue with ten-day isolation periods despite government guidelines being 'eased'.

Day services' closures

During further discussions with the council they announced a temporary closure of some learning disability day services and redeployment of those staff members as they try to alleviate the care home staffing crisis. We have been told the closures will initially be for six weeks but UNISON will monitor this closely.

[The Outlook (Long Eaton), Parkwood (Alfreton) and No Limits (Chesterfield) services are not affected and will remain open].

The council have also confirmed they are considering closing some elderly day services but there are no further details on these yet. We have been warned the situation is likely to be 'a moving feast', depending on sickness levels and any further government announcements/restrictions. Please look out for Derbyshire UNISON updates at our website derbyshireunison.com

Agreement

UNISON has discussed with the council a raft of issues concerning members temporary redeployed into care homes from day services and has reached agreement on many:

- Members should initially be asked to complete a questionnaire asking them what they can offer but UNISON emphasises we do not expect members to be forced to do anything outside of their normal work pattern and that training is paramount.
- UNISON has ensured there will be no obligation for any members to work shifts or weekends; these will be covered by volunteers with the appropriate remuneration.
- Members temporarily redeployed into a care home will be paid at their current

rate of pay unless they are asked to do work of a higher grade when they should be paid at that rate.

- Members should not be out of pocket if they have to be redeployed to a home further away than their normal place of work. Additional mileage will be paid.
- Members' individual circumstances will be taken into consideration. This may be relevant if you have caring responsibilities or there are any issues with vaccination. Obviously you will need to discuss such circumstances as early as possible with your line manager, or the manager of the service you are being redeployed into.

If in doubt, talk to UNISON!

Derbyshire UNISON will continue to meet the council regularly and air members' concerns or problems - individual or collective - to them. Of course, for that to work properly, we need you to share any issues with us. If you are in any doubt as to what UNISON has agreed with the council, please contact us first - don't just accept hearsay or any instructions you think sound wrong!

Our contact details are overleaf or you can leave a message via the website at derbyshireunison.com/contact.html

Finally, make sure your work colleagues are in UNISON so we can protect them in these strange and sometimes difficult times. They can join online in a few minutes from their mobiles. Just visit joinunison.org

Danny Treacy

Service Conditions Officer
Adult Care Convenor