

The latest news and announcements from Derbyshire UNISON

Workforce retention in adult social care

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Council apologises to UNISON for non-consultation over homecare payments

Derbyshire UNISON secretary Jeanette Lloyd and UNISON regional organiser Emma Roberts met with Derbyshire County Council senior management representatives last night over the issue of the £500 allocated to non-council homecare workers.

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The council profusely apologised on several occasions for their failure to both consult the trade unions and inform its own staff of their plans. Indeed, the director of adult care said he had 'signed off' a communication to council staff and was under the impression it had gone out. They have now promised to send that out, including an apology to staff, before the weekend.

Obviously, UNISON is unhappy at the lack of consultation and we emphasised that apologies after the event weren't good enough. We had been contacting the council for several weeks - without proper response - about the allocation of any grants and view this as more important than just an 'oversight'. We were informed the money referred to in the media was not

actually from the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund, which is a larger amount, but a one-off grant via the NHS to be used, say the council, solely on supporting timely and safe discharge from hospital where ongoing care and support is needed. This is also one of the stipulated uses of the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund, so creating the confusion.

The council also said they had taken legal advice on whether any of the monies could be used for payments to staff directly employed by the county council and the advice said it would break 'pay policy'. This is conflicting advice to that initially received by UNISON and we will seek further advice when we get a fuller picture of any grants and the reasons they are being used for locally.

Obviously, we will be updating all social care members in councils and private care employers when we get further information and when consultation commences as the council has now promised. This will include details on how the council is to check non-council providers use the money for the specific reason it has been allocated rather than it being 'diverted' to other budget streams.