



*The Royal College of*  
**Midwives**

# **Defending AfC the view from the South East**

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# A Trust in the South East...

- DGH
- FT since 2009
- 3000+ staff
- New-ish HR Director (from Banking....)
- Staff side/Trust Council historically not too well attended but getting better, much more cohesive and confident

# Trust context

- Not in significant financial difficulty
- Claiming 2011 income flat at best
- £5M Endoscopy new-build needed
- Competitive local context, opportunities to expand
- Briefly explored taking over part of failing Trust in neighbouring region
- Aggressive CIP programme of 8% (double regional average)



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# “Pay Cost Challenge”

- First mooted at Trust Council end December '10/early Jan '11
- EITHER
  - lose 103 posts OR
  - Change Ts and Cs to save ££s and posts
- Trust management philosophically committed to moving away from AfC as per own Monitor strategy plan
- Introduced to staff in team meetings then in wider staff briefings

# Telling the staff

- Initial briefings from management, ideas requested from staff about possible routes to savings other than pay
- Gauge reaction to choice between losing posts and saving money on Ts and Cs
- One third of staff (Trust estimate) are not affiliated to any TU; Trust pressing for representation of these staff (TUs opposed to this)

# TU actions

- UNISON and RCM ROs regularly attend Trust Council, other ROs attend periodically
- Local TU reps attend -more of them and more often
- ROs communicate, working together
- Off-line dialogue with Director of HR, written statement of opposition to proposals
- All staff information newsletter co-authored UNISON & RCM, distributed by all TU reps
- Meeting with Director of HR and 5 ROs
- RCM press release in local media

# Management action

- Survey developed asking staff to accept/reject and rank pay-cost cutting proposals in order of acceptability
- Most described as permanent changes
- Presented to Trust Council > TUs opposed
- Management: “survey will happen anyway” – and it did
- Suggested TUs causing delay which will result in job loses....

# TU response

- Letter to all members co-authored by UNISON and RCM and adopted by various TUs to distribute to staff
- Asks staff to respond to survey but NOT rank national Ts and Cs in order of acceptability for removal/change
- RCM Stewards ensured all members informed and aware



# The proposals...

- Remove enhancements for unsocial hours
- Reduce annual leave
- Extend plain-time hours
- No pay for first week of sickness
- Basic pay only for sickness
- Full sick pay cut to 3 months, half pay to 6
- One unpaid day's work per year
- Removal of preceptorship pay uplift at 6 months



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# Proposals around local Ts & Cs

- Bank rate move to bottom of Band (from middle)
- Longer notice period
- New on-call structure (under negotiation anyway)
- Also, would restricting changes to new joiners make them any more acceptable?

# Survey results

- Survey achieved over 50% response rate (about 1700 staff)
- Results analysed by “independent” academic consultant
- 39% response rate in Nursing and Midwifery
- Clear rejection of changes to national Ts & Cs = no mandate for change from Trust staff

# Where we are now....

- Management recommendation to board agreed in partnership after analysis and discussion of survey findings
- TUs do not endorse changes to national Ts & Cs
- What next? New contracts for all 3000 staff imposing change? Loss of posts?

# In the future

- Spread to other Trusts? Neighbouring Trust already exploring identical staff survey, focus groups etc...
- Others may follow
- Temporary reprieve at the Trust, need for vigilance

# What can you do?

- Attend your local staff side & Trust Council - vital early warning system
- Work with fellow TUs locally
- Communicate with and mobilise RCM members, recruit more members, strength in numbers
- Don't be railroaded into anything
- Keep your RCM Regional Officer informed!