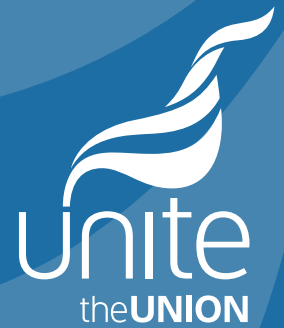


Behind The Firewall

Newsletter 2

May 2019



This month's edition covers a further range of topics and issues affecting ICT employees in the UK. As before please feel free to send us your views and experiences on these matters.

If you'd like to contribute to the newsletter please feel free to do so. Try not to make it about your own company unless it is part of an industry trend as this newsletter is more general in nature. If you'd like help creating a newsletter for your company let us know.

If you do email us about anything or everything we will email you back with a response.

TUPE – the law governing transfers of employment

Before TUPE was introduced it was possible for employers to simply sack one workforce and employ another. Similarly, the employer could just cut pay, terms and conditions as they wished. TUPE prevented that.

The employer was obliged to honour existing terms and conditions including wages and holidays.

But as TUPE became popular and IT service providers won more contracts so employees could find themselves being transferred from one company to another, repeatedly. More often than not there is no incentive for the service provider to train and upskill the workforce they take on.

And as long as the contract was not changing in delivery terms that was not a problem. But nowadays with digitalisation and automation it is often the case that when a contract changes hands there are changes to delivery meaning different skills can be required.

Ironic then that the legal case IT service providers use involves not hi-tech but hot and cold food. A group of workers argued they should follow their jobs but the prospective employer argued that the new service only required cold food pre-packaged and therefore TUPE did not apply.

The courts supported the company. Recently, a group of IT workers faced redundancy because the new service with another company involved Windows 10 which the workers did not have knowledge of.

The union was willing to take this case on but their current employer then chose to make significant enhanced redundancy payments and resolved the matter that way.

KEEP YOUR SOFTWARE SKILLS UP TO DATE

Go to Unite's elearning site <https://elearning.unitetheunion.org/>

where you will find Software training courses plus Project and Quality Management qualifications to ensure you remain employable in this fast moving Future World of Work.

So how does a union help me get a pay rise?

Unions negotiate with employers through collective agreements. It is called collective bargaining and it involves the workers directly in the process. Collective bargaining occurs where a union is recognised by the employer for that purpose.

Recognition involves signing an agreement with the union and then the union can operate openly and is entitled to a variety of rights and benefits. A union that has substantial number of members in a workplace can approach the employer for recognition.

If the employer agrees either voluntarily or because the union can apply to an employment court then bargaining can begin. Initially the union reps will seek the views of their members as to what is needed in a pay claim and after negotiations are concluded put it to a vote of their members.

So if you do not have a strong union you are likely to have Performance Related Pay or get whatever your manager tells you or maybe get nothing at all. If you are dissatisfied then contact UNITE and talk to us about how you can change your workplace.

MOBILE ENGINEERS

Is your employer seeking to introduce **TELEMATICS**?

Telematics is monitoring system that companies are nowadays seeking to introduce into their fleet vehicles. The information collected goes far beyond the standard where is the vehicle and how long has it been in a particular location. It is possible to monitor the drivers' ability and habits. And this is particularly intrusive if the vehicle is used privately by the employee.

If you are confronted by this or concerned at how much surveillance is occurring then contact UNITE GPM&IT Sector locally.

Artificial Intelligence, automation and Robotics there is no escape!

Your employer may or may not have a digital strategy right now. But they will do sooner than later. Will it replace you? Change your job? Reduce your hours or increase your hours? Stress you out? Make decisions about you that you cannot appeal or even understand?

UNITE ICT section can help you on this with practical solutions. The union is part of a European and International ICTS network as well as having access to all the latest developments that ensure researching the latest ways in which employers are seeking to reduce jobs and how unions have negotiated better agreements to protect themselves.

The Right to Disconnect

Workers in France and Belgium have already begun signing new collective agreements containing the right to disconnect their work mobiles, email systems and laptops once contractual time has been exhausted.

This is both a Health & Safety measure and a Job Security issue too.

UNITE is campaigning for the Right to Disconnect and for the Four Day Week.

Current evidence shows that when automation is introduced the remaining workers are working far longer.

We need to counter this otherwise stress at work and consequential mental health problems will grow even faster.

Behind the Firewall is created by the ICT Advisory Committee of the GPM&IT Sector of UNITE.
You can contact us by email to maxine.king@unitetheunion.org