

It is noted by Branch that, for residential workers, it is no longer the intention that **“All working arrangements will be compliant with Working Time Regulations (WTR) and it is the Council’s policy not to use ‘opt-outs’.**” as stated in the single status agreement.

UNISON Newcastle City Branch believes that

- Those members affected by the consequences of any proposed changes should be fully consulted, or, as the single status agreement itself puts it, **“In determining working arrangements to suit the service needs of the Council it will take into account the circumstances of individuals and groups of individuals.”**
- The consultation should ensure, as stated in the single status agreement, that **“Wherever practical, employees will have full access to the Council’s Work/Life Balance policies”** and that both the council and the unions confirm **“their commitment to reinforce existing good practice and develop new initiatives for a wider workforce agenda”** including, amongst others, Health and Well-being and Family friendly/work life balance policies.

It is important that members have the opportunity to influence rota design and ensure that existing council policies have been applied to any resulting rotas; we believe that, above all, shiftworkers are most in need of the benefits of those policies outlined above.

This Branch calls upon the Branch officers to seek facility time and provide expert advice in order for the following to take place

- A steering group be established that examines the effects of any changes to the single status agreement; this group to be comprised of members of all directorates affected by the proposed “opt out” of the single status agreement, as well as interested members from outside these directorates
- The steering group to consult with members to ascertain common difficulties that may arise from shift work and consider solutions that will ensure the successful implementation of council policies
- The steering group to seek guidance from health and safety reps and be provided with legal advice on matters of health and safety
- The steering group to up a set of parameters for rota design that ensures that affected employees have access to council policies i.e. work/life balance, family friendly, health and well being and flexibility.

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