



## **FOUNDATION TRUST UPDATE**

**From Ian Hopkins, Branch Secretary, Unison South Western Ambulance Branch**

I am pleased to be able to inform you that we have now had a reply from Chief Executive Ken Wenman answering, very concisely, our questions regarding his intentions for if and when the Trust achieve Foundation Trust (FT) status. A copy of this reply will be issued with this statement and can also be viewed on our branch website at [www.swamb.com](http://www.swamb.com).

Ken Wenman has made it clear that he has no intentions of moving away from Agenda For Change terms and conditions (A4C). But he also states that he believes the Trust will be in a position to make improvements on these terms and conditions through local agreement. This is a big step forward as we have until now not had such assurances. It has always been our position that we would negotiate above and beyond A4C where this was in the interest of our members.

UNISON, as the only recognised trade union in the South Western Ambulance Service, has been instrumental in securing these assurances, and we will continue to ensure that the local agreements described in the letter are working in all our members' interests.

The letter also states that there is no intention to move away from national bargaining in regard to pay. This is also a crucial statement and should give us confidence that even though the A4C arrangements and pay bargaining are not perfect by any means, we will at least be treated equitably in relation to the wider NHS.

The next stage of the FT application will see UNISON working closely with the Trust to ensure that you are represented on all the issues. This in itself is not easy as the Trust reviews all its operations and procedures to ensure that it will be ready for the scrutiny that the application process puts it under.

Our role is to challenge the Trust where we believe that its workforce or patients will be adversely affected by the changes. We know that Ken and the Trust understand this and are listening to our views. Working parties have been running for some time with UNISON involvement and the outcomes of these groups are to be reviewed very soon with further work to follow.

UNISON will be able to keep you informed about the important milestones and outcomes of these internal discussions. We agree that the Trust has shown its commitment to working with us. It's now up to us to ensure that we use these opportunities on your behalf and in your interest.

- Ian Hopkins