

Winter 2021

SOLIDARITY

The quarterly newsletter of One Fund For All

THE CUT TO UNIVERSAL CREDIT IS A CUT TO OUR COMMUNITIES



The Unite Community Xmas Choir visited Shirebrook and Worksop on Friday 10th December to take the message to our communities. The MPs for N E Derbyshire, Bolsover and Bassetlaw did not speak out about the £20 per week cut to Universal Credit. This cut not only will plunge many people into further poverty this Xmas but will suck money out of our communities harming business and recovery. Members of Unite Community and supporters came together in Shirebrook to draw attention to the decision of the Government to ignore the evidence of the effect of this withdrawal of financial support to some of the lowest paid workers and claimants.

Contact us via our new website

www.duwc.org.uk

Or facebook message us [@DerbyshireUWC](https://www.facebook.com/DerbyshireUWC)

Email info@duwc.org.uk

Universal Dis-credit

Universal Credit Xmas Carol Concert comes to Shirebrook Market

Unite Community activists sang a collection of Christmas Carols calling on the Government to restore the £1040 per year cut to Universal Credit and extend it to all claimants. Many of those affected are some of the lowest paid workers.

Unite activists drew to the attention of Christmas shoppers the plight faced by many this festive season who will be plunged into debt when faced with the problem of higher bills and a reduced income.

Branch Members have changed the words to the traditional Christmas Carols and songs to reflect the situation of those having to claim Universal Credit and their determination to fight back.

Research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation highlights that the Chancellor snatching back this £20 per week has pushed 500,000 families including 200,000 children further into poverty. Foodbanks across the country are struggling to meet demand following the cut and end of the furlough scheme.

No Support From Bolsover's MP

'Bolsover's MP Mark Fletcher supported the Government's Universal Credit cut in the knowledge that it would have a catastrophic effect on a large number of his constituents' said Colin Hampton of North Derbyshire Unite Community

'He listened to his constituents, at his office surgery, outline the difficulties they were going to be confronted with, but then told them he would not be giving his support and that the Chancellor was right to cut their money.'

Unite the Union is touring 25 so called 'Red Wall' seats in the run up to Christmas asking the MPs to pressure the Government to reverse the cut.

Jeannie Robinson, Community Branch member who will be attending in Shirebrook this Friday said 'The decision of local Tory MPs to plunge some of their constituents into misery will not be forgotten by them or by a wider, more caring, society watching on. Everyone should remember that we are all only one visit to the doctors away from a diagnosis that could mean we are unable to be employed.'

The Government says work is the way out of poverty but Unite Community say the evidence does not back this up.

Colin Hampton added 'Insulting the poorest in society by shouting about the pennies extra working claimants can keep as a result of the miserable changes to the Universal Credit taper rate will not put food on the table or keep homes warm. The extra £20 per week helped to feed and clothe children. Its removal shames the nation. Our Christmas Crisis Carol Concert is designed to draw people to reflect on what is happening to many in our community.'

From Shirebrook the campaign moved on to Worksop in the afternoon.

Universal Dis-credit

Hark the Unite Angels Sing

Hark the Unite angels sing
Tory cut a ghastly sting
Off your knees and do not hide
Come and join us side by side

Joyful all ye people rise
Work together seize the prize
Hardships here for years not seen
Foodbanks used and numbers soar
Poverty is no life choice
Stand with us and here our voice

Good King Wenceslas

Tory government brought in,
Universal Credit
Then they stole our twenty quid
The poor all took a big hit

Freezing cold they are tonight
There's no cash for heating
And for all this winter time
The food bank's where they're meeting

Oh Come All ye Faithful

Oh come all ye people
Rise up in defiance
Oh come ye, Oh come ye to make your stand
Never to bow down
Strong when we're united
Raise Universal Credit
Raise Universal Credit
Raise Universal Credit
By twe-en-ty quid!

Deck the Halls

They've cut our money – what a folly
Fa lalalala lala la la
Come and join our Unite Rally
Fa lalalalalala la la la

Raise the Universal Credit
Fa lala lalalala la la la
Twenty quid and all should get it
Fa lalalala lala la la



Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team

Victims Groups call for more funding for the HSE

The Asbestos Support Groups' Forum argues that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) must have more resources to prevent future deaths due to Asbestos Related Diseases.

As part of the Department of Work and Pensions Inquiry into the risks posed by asbestos in the workplace and the actions taken by HSE to mitigate them, the Forum have made a number of key points. These key points include the changing demographic of workers diagnosed with asbestos related disease and called for more funding for the HSE to effectively inspect, monitor and prosecute breaches in legislation.

Still a current danger

Although the Forum recognise that many of the people they support have worked in building, construction and maintenance trades, they highlighted in their submission that all workers are potentially at risk from asbestos as any building built before 2000 may contain asbestos. Between 1950 and 1985 asbestos was used in millions of homes, workplaces and public buildings. It is estimated that as late as 1997 there were over 3,000 asbestos products on the market, ranging from paints and tiles to brake pads and resin toilet cisterns, but the main use was either as insulation or in the form of concrete cement, which was made into products such as corrugated roofing sheets and pipes. As a result, it can be found in factories, homes, schools, shops, hospitals, offices, restaurants, etc. Asbestos-containing materials can still be found in around 500,000 workplaces including factories, warehouses, offices, shops, hospitals, schools and universities. Asbestos is present in about 75% of our schools.

Over the years, Forum members have seen a change in supporting people with asbestos related diseases who have worked in what could be considered 'traditional industries to ones including teachers, nurses, school staff and office workers. There are also significantly more women diagnosed with mesothelioma. Every year approximately 5,000 people die prematurely as a result of asbestos exposure. In 2019 there were 2,369 deaths from mesothelioma, which is shocking. This number may be higher as some deaths may not be recorded due to complications or lack of Post Mortems etc.

The HSE estimates that 1.3 million tradespeople are at risk of exposure and they could come into contact with asbestos on average more than 100 times a year. An astounding figure.

DAST recently supported a female Polish National aged only 38 years of age, diagnosed with mesothelioma. Prior to coming to the UK she did not work but on arriving in the UK she took up employment in the agricultural sector, where asbestos was widely used for cladding and roofing materials for buildings.



Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team

More resources for the HSE

The presumption underpinning the current HSE position is that asbestos is safe providing it is in good condition and that it is undisturbed. The HSE simply haven't got the resources to ensure that asbestos is safe 'in situ'. HSE funding was slashed from £239 million in 2009/2010 to £136 million in 2017/2018. According to Prospect, since 2010 the HSE budget has been cut by 50% in real terms. Over the same period the number of HSE inspectors fell from 1,495 to just 978. To ensure effective compliance with the regulations there also needs to be a real risk of random inspections and enforcement, to do this the HSE needs to be properly resourced.

In previous years the HSE have undertaken public campaigns – the 'Hidden Killer' campaign aimed at maintenance workers was reported to have been seen by 85% of the target group and 76% said they would take or had planned to take precautions to prevent exposure when working. The campaign needed more resources, but was discontinued. A follow-up campaign saw the HSE working with 'Trade point' to raise awareness. There too there is little evidence now that the campaign is continuing.



Action Mesothelioma Day 2011 – showing posters from the Hidden Killer Campaign

Conclusions

The Forum wants to see more done to prevent mesothelioma and other asbestos related diseases. Victims' families too support this, not wanting families to go through the traumatic experience they have been through following a loved one's diagnosis of mesothelioma. More needs to be done in terms of prevention and awareness and giving the regulatory body more resources to provide the 'stick' for any breaches to asbestos regulations.

If you, a family member or Trade Union member have been diagnosed with an asbestos related disease

- Asbestosis
- Pleural Thickening
- Lung cancer
- Mesothelioma

**Please contact DAST on
01246 380415
mail@asbestossupport.co.uk**

We can help with benefits advice, government compensation and advice about making a civil compensation claim.

Tales from the Doleface

Desperately Seeking...

Last week I had my first JSA interview. Unfortunately I can't recommend the experience! First of all, the DWP called two minutes early. That may sound picky but if you miss the appointment your claim is closed. So that two minutes could mean that you lose the right to the benefit. Secondly, I warned her that my reception wasn't great so we might get cut off. She promised me that she would call back. Three minutes in, we were cut off. Did she call back? No. Could I call her back? No. I was met with an automatic message saying they had been 'unable to contact me' and that there was no need to call back. By this time, I was worried that my claim would be closed. I then received a text stating that 'We could not contact you... We will call again'. Both of those statements were untrue; they had been able to contact me, and they didn't call again. And can you reply to this text? You cannot. Feeling fed up with waiting around, I logged a complaint on the DWP site (sometimes attack is the best form of defence!)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/about/complaints-procedure>)

Now I do need to admit that the text included a number to call back – but surely it would be more logical to allow claimants to call back on the number they were called on, or reply to the DWP's text. By the time I realised my mistake, the office was closed for the weekend. On getting through on Monday morning I was informed that they had tried to call me back repeatedly. I simply don't believe that, as no one else had had any difficulty contacting me. I was also told that my interview had been rescheduled for Thursday (another whole week to wait) but as they didn't send me notice of this new interview I might well have lost the claim if I hadn't called them. I'm left wondering how much of this is incompetence, and how much deliberate policy to reduce claims. Either way, it's far from ideal. Oh, and I'm still waiting to hear about my complaint... watch this space!

Help is Here -

A very distressed Shirebrook woman enlisted the help of our **Pomoc jest tutaj** (Help is here) team at our Shirebrook office. English is not her first language and she could not understand why she had been issued with an overpayment demand of Housing Benefit for £13,605.00 which had to be repaid by the end of the month. She had been persuaded by the Council that she had to pay this back.

Joanna Zon our **Pomoc jest tutaj** team coordinator investigated the demand. She found that the sum arose for a period of time when the woman had separated from her partner but the Local Authority still had them living together. To complicate matters, the woman and her partner had reconciled and now were cohabiting again.

Joanna contacted the local authority on the woman's behalf, and explained the problem to the Housing Benefit office. They checked the details of the claim and agreed an error had been made. She was told that due to a computation error they had not factored in the fact that the claimant had been living separate from her partner for the time period in question. They agreed no money was owed and stated that they would withdraw the demand much to the relief of the woman and her family.

Where to get advice

ALFRETON Alfreton House High Street Tues, Weds 9.00am—12.00pm 1.00pm-4.00pm Thurs 1.00pm-4.00pm 01773 832237	BELPER Belper Library Derwent St Not open at Present Ring 01773 832237	BOLSOVER Library Church St Tuesdays 1.00—3.30 Ring 01623 748161	BRIMINGTON Community Centre High Street Mondays 9.00am-12.00pm Ring 01246 231441
CLAY CROSS Adult Education Centre Market Street Not open at present Ring 01246 231441	CLOWNE Community Centre Recreation Close Wednesdays 1.0pm—3.30pm Ring 01623748161	CRESWELL Limestone House Elmton Road Thursdays 1.0pm -3.30pm Ring 01623748161	Clay cross Eckington Grassmoor North Wingfield Closed at present due to NEDDC Cuts
GRASSMOOR Community Centre New Street Not open at Present Ring 01246 231441	HASLAND Hasland Working Mens Club Wednesdays 1.00pm—3.30pm Ring 01246 231441	HEANOR Buxton Room Heanor Town Hall Thursdays 9.0 –11.30am Ring 01773 832237	New Houghton Community Hub Rotherham Rd Thursday 10.00—12 noon Ring 01623 748161
PINXTON Church Hall Kirkstead Road Mondays 9.30— 12.0pm Ring 01773 832237	SHIREBROOK 54 Patchwork Row Mon, Tues, Weds 9.0-11.30 and 1.0—4.0 Thurs, Friday 9.0—11.30 01623 748161	SOMERCOTES Parish Hall Nottingham Road Mondays 1.30pm—4.0pm Ring 01773 832237	STAVELEY Library Monday and Thursday 9.30—12 noon Ring 01246 231441

CHESTERFIELD
1 Rose Hill East

Callers
Mon—Fri
9.30am—1.00pm

or

01246 231441
Mon-Fri
8.0 am—4.0pm

Don't Forget...

To remember Derbyshire
 One Fund For All in your
 will, or to ask for donations
 in lieu of flowers at your
 funeral.

Let our future be your
 legacy.

Donate through our
 website:
www.duwc.org.uk

If you should need the advice and representation services of DUWCs**Welfare Rights Team:**

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Not forgetting our wonderful team of volunteers

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