



BLUE LIGHT CARD

The Retired Members Committee, along with the POA NEC, has been campaigning and arguing with the management of Blue Light for more than 12 months about the issue of retired members still being refused access to a Blue Light discount card.

In a nutshell, all members of the emergency services and their retired members are entitled to receive a Blue Light Card. However, Blue Light decided that retired prison officers were not entitled to the card.

I/We took this up with the organisation which said it could not give all retired key worker members access to the card. We argued that prison officers are not key workers but emergency workers and included a copy of the government legislation that listed who were emergency workers. Prison officers are clearly defined as such and that, in line with other retired emergency worker members, we should have parity with other retirees.

It continues to refuse, even though we have accused it of direct discrimination.

It refuses to budge on the issue despite direct intervention from our National Chair, committee and the NEC.

I have been on a few Prison Service social media sites with an explanation of this problem and we are urging retired and serving staff to lobby their local MP about the issue, as Blue Light will not budge.

We have also started a campaign to email the Blue Light CEO directly to try to force a change. If you know any retired members, please ask them to join the Retired Members Section and try to pass on this information on. Encourage serving staff to get involved too. It will assist greatly to change Blue Light's current attitude. ●

The Blue Light CEO is Tom Dalby and his email address is tomdalby@bluelightcard.co.uk.



NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION (NPC)

The report back from the NPC special Delegates Conference held on 27th June 2023 can be found on the POA website under Our Union, Retired Members. We are affiliated to this organisation and any useful information or available help for retired members will be highlighted in the next edition of Gatelodge.

DURHAM MINERS' GALA

Iattended the Durham Miners' Gala on 8th July 2023, representing the Retired Members Committee.

The Durham Miners' Gala is the world's greatest celebration of community, solidarity and working-class culture and is certainly an inspiring spectacle of trade unionism; it is now in its 137th year.

Even though the Durham miners and others were decimated by the cruel and unjust mine closures of the Tory government in the 1970s, the miners committee has preserved this tradition. It brings together trade unionists from all over the UK to parade their banners through the streets of their members.

Durham to the old racecourse where they hear speeches made by trade union leaders on behalf

The parade starts at 8.30am and marches with bands through the streets of Durham to the old racecourse and to hear speeches where by union leaders. The event concludes with a service at Durham Cathedral.

- Zarah Sultana MP
- Fran Heathcote, President, PCS
- Sarah Woolley, General Secretary, BFAWU
- Sara Bryson, Tyne & Wear Citizens
- Alan Mardghum, General Secretary, DMA

They all spoke to an appreciative and supportive crowd about solidarity, protecting worker rights, fair pay, and so on.

On a personal note, the General Secretary of the TUC spoke passionately about solidarity but it's in his hands to create that solidarity by bringing all unions together to protect and improve trade union rights.

It was a proud day for me to see so many trade unions and members in attendance. It was estimated that up to 200,000 people were at the event, among them a good contingent from the North East prisons, and members with their banners to represent the POA.

I hope this tradition carries on for many years and helps, by generating cooperation between unions and associations, to improve the conditions and standings of trade unions in the UK. **Steve Whitfield, Chair Retired Members Committee**

- This year, the speakers were:
- Paul Nowak, General Secretary, TUC

STUDY OF CRIMINALITY

We are receiving many requests from various organisations/TV companies and people studying criminality, asking if any retired members are willing to be interviewed on their views and experience of the service.

If anyone is interested, please contact membership@poauk.org.uk or me on steve_whitfield4@hotmail.com and we can arrange contact with the relevant people.

STEVE WHITFIELD
CHAIR, RETIRED MEMBERS COMMITTEE.

