

We Are One: A Message from Neville Richardson

The Co-operative Financial Services celebrated the first anniversary of its merger with Britannia on 1 August. Together, we've achieved so much over the last 12 months.



Neville Richardson

We've made great strides towards our vision of being the UK's most admired financial services business.

We defined a new strategy – our purpose, givens, values and vision – and introduced a balanced scorecard to measure our success. Against a background of continued market turmoil, we maintained our financial strength – our first results showed a business with strong capital, buoyant liquidity and resilient profits.

We've completed our organisation design, which will help us feel and operate as one business. Colleagues have clear roles and reporting lines. I understand the organisation design has been unsettling for some colleagues and I know that managers, HR teams and trade unions have played a big part in supporting colleagues through this.

We're the world's most sustainable bank, winning the prestigious Financial Times accolade ahead of rivals like HSBC and Santander. And we've won loads of awards for our products and service.

During a merger, it could be so easy to forget about the activities that make our business continue to

run as it should and we've never taken our eye off our customers. We've delivered so much for our customers, offering award-winning, best-selling mortgages, a best-buy cash ISA range, current accounts in Britannia branches and a new business online banking service, the first delivery from our banking transformation programme.

We've worked well with our trade unions and they too have played a key role in helping us get to where we are today. I'm looking forward to further strengthening these relationships as we continue to transform our business and work towards achieving our vision.

When we merged, I said we should seize the opportunity and I couldn't have asked for a better start for our business. We're in good shape. We've a loyal and strong customer base and we've maintained our industry-best customer advocacy scores, colleague engagement remains high and our people are proud to work for this business. The delivery of the first phase of the banking transformation programme shows that we can make system changes work and I know that when we get the right systems and processes in place, we really will be a force to be reckoned with.

There's been a tremendous amount of effort across the business over the last 12 months and I would personally like to say a big thank you to everyone. I'm excited about this business and just how much more we can achieve together in the future.

**Neville Richardson, Chief Executive,
The Co-operative Financial Services**

New President Helps Spread the Word about NACO

"I was inquisitive and thought it might be interesting," says Ann Breen about her decision to put herself up for election to General Council. Now, three years on, Ann is President of the Association. "I've never held elected office for a union before, but it's exciting and rewarding."

Ann says she was a member of a trade union many years ago when she worked for the civil service and her father was a trade union shop steward, but her involvement with NACO is the first time she

has actively participated in the running of a trade union.

With experience on various NACO committees, such as the Diversity Committee and the General Purposes Committee, as well as General Council, Ann was well placed to stand for election as President, and four months into the job she loves every minute of it.

Continued on page 3.



Neil Buist, General Secretary

Welcome

This edition is one of hellos and goodbyes. We're delighted of course to welcome Ann Breen as our new President, and the article opposite gives an insight into Ann's experience and background, as well as setting out her aspirations for the coming year. However, it is with regret that we said goodbye to Senior Assistant Secretary Alastair McGregor.

Alastair spent seven years with NACO and during that time brought an enthusiasm and commitment to his role. He demonstrated a determination and thoroughness in both collective bargaining and individual representation. He has also worked very well with the various committees of the Association and I know that he will be missed by his work colleagues and members alike. We wish him well for the future. See page 4.

In July, we also said goodbye to Celia Alvarez Martinez, a Spanish exchange student who spent six happy months working in our marketing team. Celia sets out her thoughts about her time at NACO on page 11.

Our article on page 9 attempts to discover where the new Government stands on employment law and trade unions. Whilst there are few details yet about the Coalition's plans, their overarching agenda of deregulation is likely to put the brakes on more progressive employment policies for some time to come. However, it is generally good news for NACO members that the Government is reinstating the link between the state pension and earnings and that, from next autumn, it will no longer be possible for companies to force people to retire at 65. Of course the downside is that the state pension age is likely to rise sooner than the Labour Government planned.

It is with pleasure that we report the success of the UK's first ever Co-operatives Fortnight. On page 7, Secretary General of Co-operatives UK Ed Mayo outlines the achievements of the inaugural event. I'm sure I'm not the only one who hopes to see this become a regular fixture, along the lines of Fairtrade Fortnight, where once a year we all make a determined effort to promote the benefits of co-operation.

I would also like to draw your attention to the NACO Benevolent Fund. This is a registered charity which helps to relieve hardship among members, former members and their dependants. The fund stands at over £130,000, but many of those who would be eligible for support either do not know of its existence or are reluctant to make an application. As explained on page 5, we would welcome your assistance in getting the message out.

Finally, I would just like to highlight the success that NACO has had in securing extra payments for members affected by the collapse of Vergo Retail, as reported on page 4. Plymouth & South West Co-operative Society (now The Co-operative Group) and East of England Co-operative Society sold department stores to Vergo Retail in 2009. However, when the company went into administration earlier this year, its employees received only statutory redundancy payments at a much lower level than their contractual entitlements under NACO negotiated terms. As a result, NACO appealed to both Societies to help those affected and we were delighted when they agreed to make good the shortfall. This demonstrates, yet again, the value of NACO representation and the benefit of remaining a member following a TUPE transfer.

Happy reading!

New President Helps Spread the Word about NACO (continued from front page)



Ann Breen

Ann Breen works for Midlands Co-operative Society as HR Development Manager. She has spent all her working life in human resources and learning & development roles, in a number of organisations including the tax office, a recruitment agency, Bass (pubs and brewing), Britannia Building Society and T&S Stores (now part of Tesco).

Ann came into the co-operative movement by chance. A couple of her colleagues at T&S Stores had worked at Midlands Co-op and said how good it was. When a job opportunity came up Ann decided to apply. "I actually applied for my boss's job," says Ann, "but ended up getting a different one!"

Coming from Birmingham and living in Lichfield, working for Midlands Co-op was a great opportunity for Ann and opened her eyes to a different way of working – the co-operative way – which she values highly. Soon after joining Midlands Co-op, Ann became a member of NACO.

"I think NACO is important," explains Ann, "because they are in effect a partner for you, looking after your best employment interests. Many people don't realise the true value of the Association until they have a grievance or employment issue. However, to have a dedicated team

of professionals working day in and day out for your interests is invaluable."

Obviously, adds Ann, the hope is that most members won't have the need for individual support from the Association, "but there are also the collective negotiations NACO undertakes each year on behalf of all its members to secure the best salaries and terms and conditions from our employers."

As a result, Ann believes it is in members' best interests to engage with their union, not just by paying their annual subscription fees, but in a more active way. "I think it's important that people ask themselves what they can do to help support their union and to get involved in whatever way they can – if not for their own interests, then for altruistic reasons in helping others.

"I think many people are put off because they may have an old fashioned view about what a trade union is about or are worried that they won't know anything, but I have to say NACO is a really interesting organisation. It's a chance to meet people from different co-operatives, an opportunity to discuss issues that affect members and come up with solutions that can really make a difference to our members' working lives. The support and camaraderie from the team are second to none.

"I'd urge anyone who is interested to get in touch with NACO or to drop me an email – we're always keen to welcome enthusiastic newcomers! Besides, you also learn some useful skills and a lot about the co-operative movement, which can stand you in good stead for your working life."

Ann's priorities as President include helping to get the communications with the membership right, which

includes looking at new forms of communications using electronic means – whether email, blogs or forums, for example.

"I think it is especially important," says Ann, "to develop two way channels of communication with members, to get their views and feedback on a regular basis, not just through surveys from time to time."

Ann's other main focus for her year in office is recruitment and supporting NACO in its major recruitment campaign, which is currently taking place. "I often say to people, if you're a member and you know someone who isn't, then help us spread the word by telling them about NACO. We really need to get the message out as to why people should join."

When she is not working or carrying out her Presidential duties, Ann spends a good deal of time with her extended family of three sisters and a brother. Ann is married and has her hands full at the moment training her new – and naughty – Jack Russell, a rescue dog she adopted recently.

In fact, Ann's family ties led to her choosing Help for Heroes as her President's Charity for the year. Her nephew is currently serving in Afghanistan and comes home with heart wrenching tales of what is happening out there – which we don't always hear on the news – about how soldiers are terribly injured, if not killed, on a daily basis.

"Help for Heroes is a new and brilliant charity," says Ann, "and I couldn't think of a better cause."

See the article on page 5 for more about the Charity Golf Day, which Ann organised recently. To contact Ann about NACO issues email ann.breen@midlandsco-op.com.

Highlights

- CHARITY GOLF DAY 2010
- CO-OPERATIVE HERITAGE MOVING FORWARD
- CO-OPERATIVES FORTNIGHT SUCCESS!
- NACO ELECTIONS ROUND UP
- COMPENSATION CULTURE MYTH EXPLODED

NACO Secures Extra Payments for Members

In 2009 Vergo Retail purchased department stores from Plymouth & South West Co-operative Society (now The Co-operative Group) and East of England Co-operative Society. However, when Vergo Retail went into administration in May this year, as the company had no funds, its employees received only statutory redundancy payments capped at the upper limits of their wages and service. This was much lower than their contractual entitlements under NACO negotiated terms.

As a result, NACO appealed to both Societies that, in the interests of co-operative values and principles, they make a magnanimous gesture to help those affected.

"We are delighted to say that the Societies have agreed to pay amounts which recognise the shortfall in redundancy payments," explains Neil Buist.

This has helped four NACO members – two from each society – who retained their membership of the Association because the sales of the department stores were TUPE transfers. USDAW were equally successful in their appeal for their members.

"It's great news for those impacted by the collapse of Vergo Retail that The Co-operative Group and East of England Co-op have lived up to their reputation as responsible and caring employers and have agreed to make up the shortfall in redundancy payments," says Neil Buist. "This is another example of the importance of NACO representation for members and demonstrates the value of remaining a member following a TUPE transfer."

Alastair McGregor Leaves NACO

Following a strategic review of NACO's representational requirements in light of the recent consolidation within the co-operative movement, it is with regret that Alastair McGregor left the Association on 25 June.



Alastair McGregor

Alastair joined NACO in February 2003 as Membership & Recruitment Officer, became Assistant Secretary in November 2004 and was promoted by the General Council to Senior Assistant Secretary in November 2006.

During his tenure with the Association, Alastair undertook detailed negotiations on a collective basis in respect of policies and procedures with Co-operative Financial Services and Dairy Farmers of Britain. He also oversaw the activity in the Co-operative College, Co-operatives UK and Co-operative Retail Logistics.

Alastair represented and helped a huge number of individual members and was a fine advocate on their behalf. He was also very involved with the educational aspects of the Association in administering residential conferences and seminars.

Alastair said: "I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the Association and it is with regret that I find myself subject to redundancy. In particular, I shall miss the members who were great to deal with and represent, and I have made many friends over the years. I wish NACO and its members every success in the future."

Charity Golf Day 2010



The winning team from Funeralcare (from left to right): Peter Green, Richard Shepherd, Michael Shepherd and Gavin Mulcahy

This year's President's Charity Golf Day in June was a tremendous success, raising over £4,000 for Help the Heroes.

President Ann Breen says: "I'd like to thank members and societies for their generosity and support. We had a wonderful day and raised lots of money for my chosen charity. I would particularly like to thank former President Jack Devers, the NACO team and Morley Hayes Golf Club for all their help with organising the event.

"The weather was beautiful, we had fun and I met some great people. The amount of goodwill was terrific, although, not being a golfer myself, I didn't realise quite how seriously golfers took the game! However, win or lose, I think everyone enjoyed the day."

The individual overall prize went to Gary Berns of Midlands Co-operative Society, who was presented with the NACO President's Trophy. The runner up was Richard Shepherd of Funeralcare, with Andy Buckley of Co-operative Retail Logistics in third. The best team prize went to Funeralcare; Sam Mason of Chelmsford Star Co-operative Society won "Nearest the Pin", while Michael Spencer of Midlands Co-operative Society won the longest drive competition.

Ann adds: "I would just like to confirm that, thanks to the huge success of the Charity Golf Day both this year and last, NACO has decided to make this an annual fixture, so all you golfers out there should start working on your handicaps now, ready for next year!"

Heard about Our Benevolent Fund?

The NACO Benevolent Fund is a registered charity which helps to relieve hardship among members, retired or unemployed former members, their surviving widows or widowers or dependant children. The fund now stands at over £130,000, but many of those who would be eligible for support either do not know of its existence, or are reluctant to make an application.

Demand for assistance from the fund has been falling off over the past few years and the General Council, who are the Trustees of the charity, are keen to tackle this issue and put the money to good use.

The main problem is that the people who are in most need of the help available are often not aware of the fund or might think twice about applying. As a result, NACO would welcome the assistance of its existing members in trying to identify those who are eligible and in need.

Neil Buist says: "One of the best ways we have found is for members who know of a former NACO colleague – who has been retired and living on a pension for quite some time, or their widow or widower – to find an opportunity to visit them and discover a bit about their circumstances."

A need for help can often arise where elderly people are struggling to stay in their own home and maintain their independence. The pension that seemed adequate when they first retired could have become eroded by inflation to the point where they are just getting by financially. In these circumstances the prospect of replacing major domestic items or carrying out property repairs can seem daunting and support from the Benevolent Fund could make all the difference.

"NACO is asking its members to help identify those people who could benefit from the fund, and any assistance you can give us would be welcome," adds Neil Buist. "In fact, sometimes it may be possible to obtain from the pension department of your Society a note of the names and addresses of former NACO members who have been retired for a number of years, if you clearly explain the reason for your request."



Increase in Subscription Rates

At our Annual General Meeting in May, there was a unanimous vote to increase subscriptions by 1.5% from 1 January 2011. The new subscription rates are detailed below.

Subscription Rates 2011		
	Annual	Monthly
Full Membership	£213.72	£17.81
Individual Representation Only	£142.68	£11.89
Unity Membership	£142.68	£11.89
Affiliate	£71.24	£5.94
Associate	£5.00	

Co-operative Heritage Moving Forward



The Co-operative Heritage Trust which was established in 2007 to safeguard the co-operative movement's heritage, has been awarded £1.5 million by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) towards its major development project.

The ROCHDALE project (Renewing Our Co-operative Heritage, Developing the Archive and Learning Experiences) aims to transform the facilities and services offered by the National Co-operative Archive and the Rochdale Pioneers Museum which are managed by the Co-operative College.

The project will enable the Museum to be transformed and updated, with new visitor facilities and learning spaces. New displays will incorporate items from the National Co-operative Archive and provide space for temporary exhibitions. A digitisation suite and website will enable parts of the collection, such as films, images and documents, to reach a wider audience. Conservation work will ensure that collections including the banners will be available for future generations.

The developments at the Rochdale Pioneers Museum will mean that the Museum will be closed from the beginning of September 2010 to the end of 2011. The Archive will remain open throughout this period, continuing to welcome enquiries and visits from anyone interested in researching any aspect of the co-operative movement.

Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West, said: "The development of the co-operative

movement is an important part of our social history – both for our local communities and for people across the world. By safeguarding the co-operative collection and redeveloping the Rochdale Pioneers building this project will mean that more people will have the opportunity to learn about and be inspired by the story of the co-operative movement."

Len Wardle, Chair of The Co-operative Group, which has donated £3 million to the Co-operative Heritage Trust, said: "We are extremely proud of our heritage and it is very important that people can visit the actual place where the worldwide co-operative movement began.

"This award will ensure the original shop is preserved, the visitor experience is enhanced and conservation professionals can work with the valuable archive which has been assembled over many years."

Professor Stephen Yeo, Chair of the Co-operative Heritage Trust, added: "The Rochdale Pioneers and the Toad Lane premises are cherished by co-operators all over the world. The new project, made possible with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and The Co-operative Group, will ensure that Toad Lane will be ready to be a launch pad for 2012 as United Nations International Year of Co-operatives."

The architects practice that has been working on the project for several years is Manchester based Loop Systems. During 2010, the practice has become a co-operative itself, saying: "During the research and development of the project and through discussion with our friends at the Pioneers Museum and the Co-operative College, we were impressed by the enthusiasm shown for the co-operative approach to business, and the principles that closely resembled our own aspirations for our practice. Co-operatives UK then approached us with a proposal to formalise these aspirations, and have now completed the process to become a bona fide co-operative."

From the summer of 2010, the project will enable the Archive and Museum to collaborate with co-operators, community groups and schools on the use of the collections and will be seeking a growing band of volunteers who would be interested in furthering the work, particularly with the Archive in Manchester. Volunteers will be able to follow subjects that they find interesting, work on the description and identification of photographs and work with new audiences for the collections.

Anyone who would like more information can visit the website at www.co-operativeheritage.coop or email cht@co-op.ac.uk.

First Co-operatives Fortnight a Roaring Success!



Celebrating Co-operatives Fortnight at Aston Villa's football ground

Ed Mayo, Secretary General of Co-operatives UK, has declared the first ever Co-operatives Fortnight a triumph after tens of thousands of people got involved.

"We were delighted with the huge success of Co-operatives Fortnight," explains Ed. "It was a collaboration between thousands of people and made an incredible difference – it excited and united co-operatives everywhere and really helped us all to promote the sector."

A wide range of initiatives took place during the Fortnight, which ran from 19 June to 3 July. HF Holidays, for example, held open days and gave away free cream teas at seven of its country houses; Unicorn Grocery in Manchester created a dance video; Cycle Training UK took over a local park to show the fun of teamwork; nearly 1,000 people attended Midlands Co-operative's celebration of international co-operation at Aston Villa's football ground and the Co-operative Group brought hundreds of school pupils to the Stadium of Light in Sunderland to learn about co-operation.

To celebrate Co-operatives Fortnight, The Co-operative Membership organised its first ever Co-operatives LIVE interactive broadcast from the Rochdale Pioneers Museum. For the week before the show, two graduates from The Co-operative Group's Management Training Scheme, Becky Crossweller and Alicia Walker, took up the challenge to work in seven co-operatives in seven regions in seven days. On the way they met up with Peter Marks, Neville Richardson and Ed Mayo.

"It was rewarding to see so many of our member co-operatives taking part and using Co-operatives Fortnight as an opportunity to promote themselves and the wider co-operative movement," says Ed. "We're also delighted to have had the support of the founding sponsors – not just because they made Co-operatives Fortnight a reality, but because their enthusiasm and the events they held really raised the profile of the Fortnight."

The founding sponsors were The Co-operative Group, The Midlands Co-operative, Midlands Co-operative, Anglia Co-operative Society, The Southern Co-operative, Chelmsford Star Co-operative Society, Lincolnshire Co-operative and Channel Islands Co-operative Society.

Ed Mayo adds: "Research we commissioned as part of Co-operatives Fortnight showed that co-operatives are now associated with being fair by the majority of people in the UK (75%, compared to 18% who associate PLCs with fairness). We were also pleased to discover that over two thirds of people can now name more than one co-operative business."

Co-operatives UK is now carrying out a detailed evaluation of Co-operatives Fortnight to determine exactly how many co-operatives took part and how many of their members, customers and the local community got involved.

"I would like to thank all those co-operatives, their members and employees who participated and helped to make the first Co-operatives Fortnight such a success," says Ed. "Our combined efforts really paid off in helping to raise the profile of co-operatives."

Highlights

Over 150 events in every region and devolved nation in the UK

Over 3,000 stores promoting the Fortnight nationwide

Over 4,000 people watching the Co-operatives Fortnight film

Thousands getting involved through online social networks

13 co-operative schools being established

Two parliamentary motions being passed: one in Westminster, one in Edinburgh

The first formula for co-operation being revealed

Co-operatives UK announcing that the co-operative economy has grown to £33.5 billion.

NACO Elections Round Up

Here are the results of this year's elections to General Council and the Co-operative Group Council.

Table 1: General Council election results

Name & Position	Society	Name & Position	Society
Ann Breen <i>President 2010/11</i>	Midlands Co-operative Society	Maria McGettigan	East of England Society
Jack Devers <i>Vice President</i>	Co-op Group – CRL	Roger Myddelton	Chelmsford Star Society
Karen Froggatt <i>President Designate 2011/12</i>	Co-op Group – Membership	Alan Tattler	Co-operative Financial Services
Jayne Webb	Co-op Group – Travel	Chris Morgan	Robert Owen Society
Darren Leverington	Co-op Group – Food	Paul Winstanley <i>New Member</i>	Co-op Group – Loss Prevention
Andrew North	Co-op Group – Membership	Phil Barr <i>New Member</i>	Co-op Group – Funeralcare
Jas Sandhu	Co-op Group – CRL	Gary Chappell <i>New Member</i>	Co-op Group – Food
Mark Alexander*	Co-op Group – Funeralcare	Colin Downes <i>New Member</i>	Midlands Co-operative Society

* In accordance with Rule 9(g) of the Association, Mark Alexander of Funeralcare has replaced Adrian Price of Co-operative Pharmacy as Adrian has left the business and has stood down from General Council.

Table 2: Co-operative Group Council election results (those elected serve a two year term)

Name	Constituency	Name	Constituency
Alastair Cook	Central & Eastern	Phil Spencer	Scottish & NI
David Blackburn	Manchester & District	Vacancy**	South East
Vernon Rhodes	Manchester & District	Vacancy**	South Wales & South West
Neil Williams	Manchester & District	Christine Foster	Co-operative Retail Logistics
Brad Hill*	Manchester & District		

* Brad Hill (incumbent member) was unable to complete his application as he was delayed overseas by the volcanic ash. However, he has confirmed a desire to be co-opted onto the Co-operative Group Council. **There remain vacancies for the Council in the South East and South Wales & South West constituencies.

"As there are still vacancies on the Co-operative Group Council, we would urge members from The Co-operative Group to consider putting themselves forward, as they can be co-opted onto the Council by other members for any constituency," explains Neil Buist.

The Co-operative Group Council plays an important role in relation to negotiations with The Co-operative Group and meets four times a year. Please contact NACO if you are interested in becoming a member or would like more information.

Election for General Secretary

The post of General Secretary of NACO is now open for nominations.

The law states that General Secretaries of registered trade unions must be elected to office and, having been elected, must not continue in office for more than five years without re-election. Current General Secretary Neil Buist was elected in November 2005 and, in line with the law, NACO rules dictate that an election now needs to take place.

Nominations are open to anyone who is a Full or Individual Representation Only member, whose contributions are not in arrears and who has three years' or more continuous membership of the Association. Their candidature must be supported by no less than 20 Full members or Individual Representation Only members of NACO.

Nominations close on 4 October and any subsequent election will be conducted by Electoral Reform Ballot Services in the form of a secret postal ballot. Nomination forms can be obtained from NACO's registered office. Neil Buist has confirmed that he intends to stand for re-election.

If a ballot is required then ballot papers will be issued on 18 October together with statements on behalf of candidates. The ballot will close on 5 November 2010. The person elected will become General Secretary of NACO on 8 November and will hold office for a maximum term of five years, when they will need to stand for re-election.

Ann Breen, NACO President, is Electoral Officer for this nomination/election process. If you have any questions or would like more information, please email Ann at ann.breen@midlandscop.com.

Where Does the New Government Stand on Employment Law?

To date, the new Coalition Government has made few clear policy statements around employment law and trade union rights, but the Chancellor announced an immediate review of employment law in the emergency Budget in June, with future changes to be made on a "one in, one out" basis.

The Government is re-evaluating all regulations scheduled for introduction over the coming year, with new regulations not being implemented until they have been agreed by a Reducing Regulation Committee. It is also proposing to introduce sunset clauses on regulations, so that regulations will cease to be law after seven years unless Parliament confirms they are still necessary, or they were explicitly set with a longer timeframe.

"...the Chancellor announced an immediate review of employment law in the emergency Budget in June."

The Conservative Party largely avoided revealing its position towards trade unions before the election and, while there have been suggestions of strike bans on the London Underground and minimum turnout thresholds for industrial action ballots, there is no evidence that the Coalition Government is looking to pick a fight. However, as the unions prepare to oppose public sector cuts and pay freezes, the Government's attitude towards restricting union and workers' rights will inevitably become clearer.

What the Conservatives said about Europe and regulatory burdens before the election gives an indication of the approach the new Government might take on employment law, and the policy of deregulation which the Coalition is now implementing is likely to impact on employment rights.

Conservative business policy includes simplifying employment law to make it easier to hire people, but this could of course also mean making it easier to fire people. However, any attempt to amend or discard discrimination and unfair dismissal laws is likely to put the UK in breach of its obligations under EU law.

The Conservative Party manifesto commitment to "restore national control over those parts of social and employment legislation which have proved most damaging to the British economy" may have been replaced by the Coalition's "we will examine the balance of the EU's existing competences". However,

it is unlikely that the Conservatives will be any less determined to achieve their vision of a future in which the Charter of Fundamental Rights "which for instance would interfere with our trade union legislation, cannot be made to apply in Britain".

Although the Conservatives have, for example, long been determined to review the application of the Working Time Directive in the public services, in particular the fire service and the NHS, the Coalition's policy programme has reduced this to a commitment to "work to limit" the application of the Working Time Directive.

However, the Coalition Government has already moved quickly to amend the Civil Service Compensation Scheme, by finding a relatively obscure Parliamentary procedure with which to lay the Superannuation Bill, which demonstrates their willingness to push through legislation that adversely affects the employment rights of public service workers.

With reference to health and safety laws, Lord Young, Margaret Thatcher's former adviser, has been appointed to review these (see page 10). He has already suggested that emergency service workers should be excluded from health and safety laws because they are "paid for doing a job that involved risk".

This review is a fundamental part of the Coalition's deregulation agenda as there is a view that health and safety regulations are somehow at odds with individual freedoms. Yet thousands of working people continue to be maimed and killed every year in the course of their work. Many would argue that it is unacceptable to put workers' lives at risk through the watering down of health and safety legislation, which is there to protect us.



Compensation Culture Myth Exploded

By Philip Liptrot, Partner, Thompsons Solicitors

Lord Young, Margaret Thatcher's former adviser, has been entrusted by David Cameron to review health and safety laws. His brief is to "investigate and report back to the Prime Minister on the rise of the compensation culture over the last decade coupled with the current low standing that health and safety legislation now enjoys and to suggest solutions."

Thompsons has sent Lord Young evidence showing that all the reports and statistics prove there is no compensation culture. There may be a tabloid driven perception of compensation culture, but removing protection for firefighters, paramedics and other emergency service workers, as Lord Young has suggested, is a dangerous sledgehammer to crack tabloid myths.

Lord Young has been widely quoted pointing out the absurdity of the stories that abound – from toothpicks being banned in restaurants to pancake racers having to walk in wet weather. We have taken Lord Young at face value and assume that, rather than seeking to perpetuate the myths, he is highlighting what are, in anyone's eyes, clearly misinterpretations of the law.

'Elf and safety' hasn't "gone mad". Myths are being exploited or, on occasions, fabricated by the media to maintain a favourite theme. In the process they attribute to health and safety rules and powers that are completely false. It is a monster of their own making.

The Your Freedom website which invites the public to nominate laws to be repealed further encourages the hysteria about health and safety. People are hijacking it to nominate laws for repeal that simply don't exist.

In 2008 the Conservative Shadow Work and Pensions Minister Andrew Selous said that health and safety was "the bottom line" and "traditionally had cross party support". The Health and Safety (Offences) Bill 2007 got that support in order to become law.

We have asked Lord Young what has changed. Why does the Coalition think that health and safety laws

are in "low standing" when they weren't in 2007 and 2008?

Between April 2009 and March 2010, 151 workers were killed. Thousands were injured in work-related accidents. That is the reality for working people and statistics show that most don't make a claim.

The key is adequate enforcement of health and safety legislation. We have too few inspectors and insufficient prosecutions of employers, which leads to thousands of people continuing to be injured and killed at work.

We have told Lord Young that if his review intends to look at real personal injury claims – ones that result in formal claims for compensation recorded by the Government's Compensation Recovery Unit (as all claims must be) rather than the tabloid myths – then he will see that compensation claims for people injured in and out of work are falling consistently. The CRU's figures show that workplace accident and disease claims have dropped by 64% since 2000.

It isn't acceptable to put emergency and other workers' lives at risk by diluting health and safety legislation simply to deal with a false perception about the law. Rather than dancing to a tabloid tune and reducing the protection that health and safety legislation provides, the Government should initiate a public information campaign using the Health and Safety Executive's "myth of the month" at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/myth/index.htm>. It should reassure the public that there is no compensation culture and no need to fear health and safety regulations.



NACO has made every effort to ensure that the information in this magazine is correct, but we cannot accept responsibility for any omissions or errors. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of NACO.
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Home Time for Celia...

Celia Alvarez Martinez, a Spanish exchange student, spent six months working with NACO's marketing team. Celia finished at the end of July, but before she left she set out her thoughts on her time at NACO.

"After 24 weeks working for NACO, I am really sad that my internship has finished," says Celia. "During these six months I have really enjoyed every aspect of my stay in the UK."

Celia, who has a degree in business administration and management and a diploma in business science, says she experienced a great deal in her time with NACO.

"I was given the chance to travel to marvellous places like Oxford, Chipping Norton, Derby and Chesterfield to recruit new members to the Association and to attend a conference dedicated to the important issues of NACO.

"I got to understand how trade unions work in the UK and I have gained new administrative knowledge and improved my computer skills, which certainly will be very helpful and relevant in my future professional career."

Celia also helped with organising the General Council elections and with vote counting as an independent scrutineer.



Celia Alvarez Martinez receives her Certificate of Achievement from Mervyn Wilson, Principal of the Co-operative College

From a personal point of view, Celia says she has strengthened her understanding of the English language. "I have developed my listening, speaking and writing abilities in an effective way," she explains.

Neil Buist says that NACO was delighted with Celia's input while she was with the Association and everyone was pleased to get to know her. "Celia was friendly, hardworking and enthusiastic and we all enjoyed working with her."

"To sum up," adds Celia, "I would like to highlight once again that I have had a really great time at NACO and to say THANK YOU to all my friends there."

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Tel: 0161 351 7900
Fax: 0161 366 6800
Email: info@nacoco-op.org

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