

**PRESS RELEASE**

**£175,000 IN COMPENSATION PAID TO  
DAVID WALKER BY THE NORTHUMBERLAND NHS CARE TRUST**

Mr. Walker was employed by the Northumberland Care Trust between 1995 and November 2004. During the latter period of his employment he was working as a Team Manager for the Younger Persons Physical Disability Team (YPD).

The YPD was set up to care for and assist people of working age with physical disabilities but the Department was heavily under-resourced with an acute lack of staff, as well as training and experience.

Mr. Walker's caseload was very demanding and he regularly worked twelve hour days and most of the weekend but even working those extended hours he was unable to cope with the workload.

As a result of the excessive workload and lack of support and assistance Mr. Walker suffered severe stress and anxiety which culminated in him suffering a heart attack in November 2004.

Mr. Walker was described by his own Manager as a committed and conscientious professional who had to cope with a significant personal caseload of the most difficult and complex cases and the pressure of work was relentless.

Thankfully Mr. Walker survived his heart attack but he remained seriously depressed as a consequence of the stress. He was not able to return to work and had to take early retirement at the age of 60.

Fortunately, Mr. Walker was a member of the Transport & General Workers Union sector of the Union Unite and he was able to turn to them for support. They referred him

to the Union Solicitors, Beecham Peacock in Newcastle upon Tyne and they took up his claim for compensation.

He had lost out on five years worth of earnings and he would not have retired until he was 65 had it not been for his stress related illness. He also suffered a pension loss because of retiring early.

Court proceedings were commenced on Mr. Walker's behalf by his Solicitors in February 2006. The Northumberland NHS Care Trust admitted that they had been negligent in exposing Mr. Walker to working conditions that put him under intolerable stress. However, they were not initially prepared to admit that the heart attack and depression suffered by Mr. Walker were caused by their negligence.

The case was listed to be heard by a Judge at Newcastle County Court on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2008. However, shortly before the trial the NHS Trust came forward with a settlement which was acceptable to Mr. Walker. A compensation payment of £175,000.

His Solicitor, David Lamb of Beecham Peacock was delighted that with the support of the Union Unite who funded the case that it was brought to this successful conclusion.

Mr. Walker commented I and my family feel that this is a just settlement. It clearly shows that having support of the Unite Union and expertise of its solicitors especially in the less negotiated areas of middle management provides a dependable measure of protection against employer abuse.

Davey Hall Unite Regional Secretary for the North East said that he was extremely pleased for Mr. Walker now that the lengthy case had eventually been resolved that gives Mr. Walker and indeed his family peace of mind.

Had the case been advanced by a private firm of Solicitors it would have cost Mr. Walker thousands of pounds in costs. However being a member of Unite Mr. Walker incurred no legal costs and he has justly received full compensation.