



AXA UNION NEWSLETTER

October 2007



# AXA out of focus

European health & safety week



Many eye diseases, if detected early, are curable or can be treated. Regular routine eye tests allow for the early detection of eye problems and help determine the cause of vision changes. A variety of eye and medical problems can be found by a routine eye test including glaucoma, cataracts, high blood pressure, macular degeneration and diabetes.

Display Screen Users (and in AXA that means everyone) are entitled, by law, to have a routine eye test every two years at the employer's expense. However, **Unite** are concerned, based on the limited information supplied by **AXA**, that only a small minority of employees are ensuring that they have a regular eye test.

When **Unite** asked **AXA** to provide data on the number of staff claiming the cost of their eye tests back from the company, **AXA** could only produce recent data for **AXA Insurance** and none for either **AXA Life** or **AXA Shared Services**. The reason for this was that both **Life** and **Shared Services** operate a claim back system and apparently did not record the number of claims being made. **Insurance** historically operated a voucher system and in the last two years handed out 911 vouchers to approximately 3,250 employees (a take up rate of below 30%).

**Unite** are concerned that given the fact that the claim back system is, for the employee at the very least, more complicated than just requesting a voucher from a manager to give to the optician, that the overall number of **AXA** staff having their eye test is very low.

**AXA** has now abolished the voucher scheme and all companies now utilise the claim back system. Whilst **AXA** is not doing anything illegal, **Unite** believes this 'legal minimum approach' by **AXA** to its employees health and safety is not in keeping with its aim to be a "Preferred Employer", a focal part of *Ambition 2012*.

Consequently **Unite** has requested **AXA** review the process, look at alternatives operated successfully in other companies and also ensure it puts some mechanism in to place to record how many staff are actually taking their DSE eye tests in all companies.

## Unite shows vision...

**Unite** members can obtain substantial savings for themselves and their family as part of their membership benefits package.

**Unite** have joined forces with **Vision Express** to provide members and their families with a unique optical benefit package including reduced (or free) eye tests as well as savings on spectacles and contact lenses.

More details can be found here, along with downloadable discount vouchers:

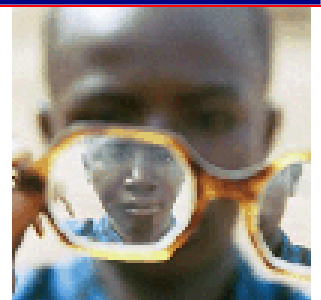
[www.unitewithus.org.uk/health/visionexpress.htm](http://www.unitewithus.org.uk/health/visionexpress.htm)

## Donate your specs - change a life...

**Vision Aid Overseas** is **Unite's** chosen charity and works to help people in the third world whose lives are blighted by poor eyesight. Spectacles dispensed by **Vision Aid Overseas** are all recycled from second-hand spectacles donated in the UK.

This week a number of **Unite** reps will be collecting old specs for **Vision Aid Overseas**, so if you have an old pair stuck in a drawer at home, please bring them in.

More information on **Vision Aid Overseas** can be found here: [www.vao.org.uk](http://www.vao.org.uk)



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