



Main pic – AXA Bristol Unite reps (l-r) Owen Webber, Karen Wild, Domenico Hill. Insets – scenes from the event

Agents of change

Unite AXA reps making a difference

YOUNG UNITE MEMBERS WORKING FOR AXA have been invited to act as agents of change to make their workplace and the world a better place as part of AXA's Youth Week, held in August.

The campaign, organised by Unite reps in AXA, has built on the success of Unite's involvement at recent events including Glastonbury and Love Music Hate Racism as it continues to raise its profile among young workers.

As part of AXA's Youth Week young workers were encouraged to complete a survey asking for their opinions on a whole range of areas, from living costs and job satisfaction to career prospects and pensions.

The views of all respondents will be collated and used to better represent the views of young workers within AXA and throughout Unite.

AXA rep **Steve Blease** said the Youth Week was scheduled to coincide with UN International Youth Day.

"We try to look at national and international campaigns and dates that will be promoting topics we can take a union slant on or tie into what we are doing in AXA as trade unionists," he told *Unite the Activist*.

During the campaign a set of locally designed posters based around the union's

Generation Anxiety report were produced, along with two newsletters.

These centred on promoting the benefits of £10 membership for members under 21 and of trade union membership in general for young workers.

"Our youth campaigns are designed to show younger workers that we are interested in their issues and not just things like pensions, a long running issue within AXA," Steve said.

"Within AXA we develop an annual localised campaigns plan for the forthcoming year based on a variety of areas which will interest various groups of members and non-members, and this campaign was a broad brush affair and a mix of national and local initiatives."

At a local level, Unite site reps in Ipswich responded to the suggestions of young workers.

A two-for-one deal was secured for Ipswich's popular retro club night, Planet Earth, along with a 20 per cent discount on driving lessons with Apollo Driving School for all Unite members in the Ipswich and Colchester area.

"We were told that nightclub entry and deals on driving lessons would be appreciated, and we delivered," said Unite

rep **Martin Hynes**.

"AXA in Ipswich has a workforce of approximately 1300 people. Increasing numbers of young workers are joining the company and this is both a challenge and an opportunity for the representatives here, particularly from a recruitment perspective."

Reps at AXA in Ipswich have communicated with all staff via e-mail, notice board and desk drops on issues affecting young workers including equal opportunity and respect.

"Young people are forced to tolerate a lot of prejudice in society, which should be entirely unacceptable to any trade unionist," Martin said.

"Our efforts to recruit and effectively represent young Unite members will continue and we intend to make sure that all young workers here are fully aware of the benefits of union membership."

Following the launch of the Unite student recruitment campaign in 2005 and its work in Glastonbury, Unite has a high profile among young workers. Unite is maintaining its campaign for an increase to the minimum wage and for the removal of the lower minimum wage rates for 16 to 22 year old workers.