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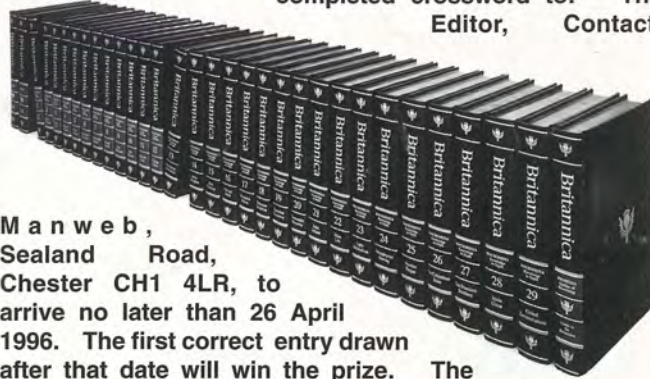
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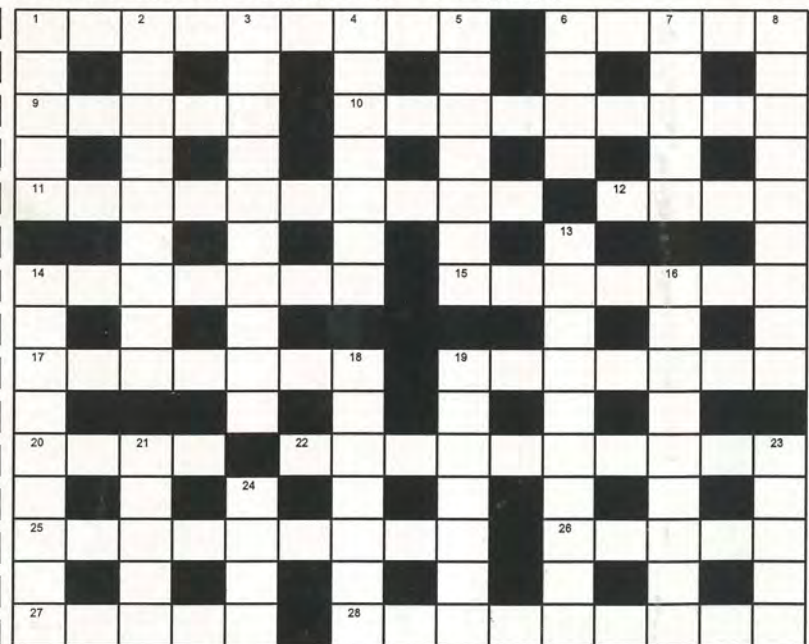
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Manweb, Sealand Road, Chester CH1 4LR, to arrive no later than 26 April 1996. The first correct entry drawn after that date will win the prize. The competition is open to Manweb employees and retired staff, and the Editor's decision is final.

PRIZE CROSSWORD

ACROSS: 1 Law Officer (9); 6 Tribal emblem (5); 9 Wireless (5); 10 Untidy beard (9); 11 Needlework (10); 12 Male pig (4); 14 Decorative hanging (7); 17 Breakfast bacon (7); 19 Shopping bag (7); 20 Explosive device (4); 22 Where movies are made (4,6); 25 Outdoor painting (9); 26 Reading matter (5); 27 Object of worship (5); 28 They serve in the air (9).
DOWN: 1 Used for carrying cash (5); 2 Aphid eaters (9); 3 They can be plain or milk (10); 4 Formed into shapes (7); 5 Not artificial (7); 6 Slim or skinny (4); 7 Musical time (5); 8 Go-between in dispute (9); 13 Best place for tablecloth (4,1,5); 14 Italian takes the biscuit (9); 16 They fall from the sky (9); 18 Popeye's diet (7); 19 Butlin's residents (7); 21 Food in the wilderness (5); 23 Fertile spot in the desert (5); 24 Could be of Man or Wight (4).



NAME

ADDRESS

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TEL

Help for hard of hearing

Manweb has given a boost to services for deaf and hard-of-hearing people in the region by sponsoring a community information programme.

The company has donated £1,200 to the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) to enable the charity to produce a range of leaflets in English and Welsh, covering such topics as benefits and services for people with hearing loss, questions about Tinnitus, and information about hearing aids.

The leaflets are available free of charge from audiology clinics throughout the Manweb region.

Concerns

Audiology clinics are often the first port of call for those with concerns about their hearing.

One in six people in the area - and a total 8.4 million people nationwide - are affected by some form of hearing loss.

Kath Wilson, RNID's North Regional Director said: "So many deaf and hard of hearing people do not know where to go for help or what services are available to alleviate the very real problems caused by deafness.

"This community based initiative brings desperately needed advice to those members of the community who are most in need."

CONTACT

NEWSLETTER FOR MANWEB PEOPLE

MARCH 1996

SERVICE CHARGES FROZEN With overall price rises below inflation

For the fifth year in succession, Manweb's annual price adjustment for domestic customers is below inflation.

Service charges have been frozen in a package which will see the company's prices overall rising by just over one per cent, despite a forecast three per cent rise in energy purchasing costs.

In the domestic market, all unit rates on current published tariffs will increase by 1.75 per cent, but fixed service charges and card meter prepayment charges remain the same.

For the average domestic customer this represents an increase of just under 9p a week.

Prices are frozen for most of Manweb's 100,000 small business customers.

The only exception is the specialised tariff for small business customers who consume most of their electricity at night. This rate, already lower than the standard rate, is to increase by 1.75 per cent.

Discounts for customers opting to pay their bills by monthly direct debit, standing order or through prepayment meters will remain at the same level of 1.5 per cent off the unit price. All price adjustments apply from 1 April 1996.

"This is the first tariff revision under ScottishPower ownership and we are pleased to continue the trend of real reductions in electricity prices," said Manweb's Chief Executive Mike Kinski.

"In real terms, there has been a fall of 13.2 per cent since 1991/92, the first full year after privatisation.



Healthy start for Wellscreen

Manweb's new, voluntary health care programme got off to a flying start with more than a quarter of staff signing up to participate.

The Wellscreen programme was launched on 4 March, offering all employees the opportunity to have their health checked and to receive professional medical advice.

Manweb's Medical Adviser Dr Peter Burke is pictured (2nd from left) during a visit to Prenton in ScottishPower's Wellscreen vehicle to promote the new scheme. Learning more about the programme are (l-r) Derek Howells, Graham Leeming and Albert Butler. **Full story, page 7.**

"We will continue our drive to cut distribution costs and to share those benefits with customers in the future. At the same time as driving our costs down, we are also striving to improve service to our customers by bringing key distribution staff closer to the areas they serve, so making them more accountable to the local communities."

See next month's issue for a full report on the transition progress

PEOPLE IN PROFILE

HAPPY TO BE HERE

One of the first things to strike Stewart Saunders on his arrival at Manweb was the warmth of the welcome he was given by his new colleagues in Distribution Operations.

Stewart, General Manager, Regional Operations, is delighted to be part of the team and is spending time meeting as many staff as possible.

He said: "The staff at Manweb have gone through a lot, and despite everything, they have all been very welcoming and have helped me to settle in easily."

Stewart, 52, joined ScottishPower's predecessor, the South of Scotland Electricity Board (SSEB) straight from school in 1960, as a student apprentice distribution engineer.

Persuaded

"I was persuaded by SSEB's Fife Area Engineer, who played on the same village cricket team as myself, that I could have a great career in the electricity supply industry," he said.

The training was excellent grounding, covering such things as jointing, filling, overhead line and statutory work.



Stewart Saunders outside one of Liverpool's most famous landmarks, the Royal Liver Building.

However, just one year into his training Stewart applied for and won a scholarship for an electrical engineering degree at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh.

He continued to train at SSEB during vacations and, after gaining his degree, did an extra year of graduate training.

Stewart has held a variety of posts, from General Assistant Distribution Engineer to General Manager of ScottishPower's Forth Region, the position he held before joining Manweb.

He said: "As General Manager, I was responsible for the largest of four regions, with 670,000 customers. This included responsibility for up to 400kV transmission.

"Having worked all over the company, I ended up in Fife, where I was born and bred, and where I started my career, and I fully expected to end up there. But now I'm in the Manweb region and I'm delighted to be here."

Married with three grown-up children - a son and two daughters, one of whom has just made him a grandfather - Stewart said: "I see my role as being to focus regional attention on performance improvement and cost management. I'm planning to have the best three regions in the ScottishPower group!"

"At ScottishPower we do things very differently from Manweb - but it doesn't mean we do things better.

"There are processes here which are evidently better than at ScottishPower, and vice versa.

"I aim to identify these and see that they are implemented. It's a two-way process."

He added: "I've had a number of meetings with groups of staff at Manweb and it's amazing that the issues both companies face are very similar. Staff seem to have the same hopes and concerns on both sides of the border."



Local boy comes home!

Returning to his 'roots', Alastair Millar (pictured above) has joined Manweb as Transition Team Manager, on secondment from ScottishPower.

Although born and bred in Glasgow, Alastair's father was a Liverpoolian and his grandparents lived in Chester, "which makes me a local boy come home", he said.

At ScottishPower, Alastair was a Senior Project Manager in Power Systems - Network Development, with responsibility for large projects and for establishing the recent Power Systems/Energy Supply Business Change Programme.

Alastair joined ScottishPower in 1973 and has held posts in Generation Wholesale, Technology Division, before joining the Distribution and Supply Division as Resource Manager in Glasgow District. He later became District General Manager in Central District.

Married with two teenage sons aged 16 and 14, Alastair has, during his career with ScottishPower, received two part-time scholarships and holds B.Sc. and M.Phil. degrees in Electrical Engineering.

He is also a Member of the Institution of Electrical Engineers.

Manweb leader for Prince's volunteers

Manweb Business Marketing Officer Julie McGovern (pictured right) is to lead a team of young people on a Prince's Trust Volunteer programme in Rhyl.

The Prince's Trust Volunteers has Prince Charles as its President and works to encourage young people from all walks of life to make a contribution to their local community.

Julie, 26, is currently recruiting a 15-strong team to undertake a wide range of projects in and around Rhyl. She will lead the project over its 12-week duration.

Julie, who works at Head Office and holds a degree in Management Science

from the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology.

She said: "After I've recruited my team we'll be working on a range of projects that will develop our skills and help Manweb put something back into the community in Rhyl. From a personal point of view, I'm looking forward to working with people from a wide range of backgrounds and gaining experience of leading a team."

Other Prince's Trust Volunteer projects have included building a skateboard park, constructing a garden for use by disabled people and taking groups of children on day trips, as well as various charity fund-raising activities.



Before the team starts its work with the community, each member goes through a challenging but enjoyable training programme, including outdoor pursuits and problem solving exercises.

Safety 1st Liverpool aims for safety shield

Liverpool Depot is to represent Manweb and compete against other business units within the ScottishPower Group for the Chief Executive's Shield for safety performance. The award is made by the ScottishPower Chief Executive to the business unit with the best safety performance in the year 1995/96.

A team of judges will visit Liverpool in May to find out more about the safety measures taken there. They will be given a presentation and will then tour the depot, worksites and offices to see for themselves the practical effects of these measures.

During the tour the judges will meet staff for a free and open exchange of views. The judges will be finding out about the Depot's safety plans for the year and how well these have been achieved. They will also want to know what emergency plans are in place to control major hazards, and what is the level of understanding amongst staff of the safety procedures. The process is similar to the International Safety Rating System audits which have been carried out within the Distribution business.

A formal panel of enquiry was convened on 20 March to investigate an accident at Caernarfon in which Fitter's Mate John Edwards was injured. Manweb staff are also fully supporting a separate enquiry by Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive. John, whose condition has improved significantly, is likely to remain in hospital for several weeks. All in Manweb wish him a very speedy recovery.

Any make...as long as it's a Ford!

A new 'single badge' company car policy is to be introduced at Manweb as soon as practicable after 1 April 1996.

"Dealing solely with Ford will give us the best range of vehicles with the maximum discount," said Ian Basford, Manweb's Transport Manager.

Further information about the new scheme, including replacement arrangements, can be obtained from the Transport Department. Authorised users will be sent full details in due course.

Learning centres on course to expand

Three more Open Learning Centres are to be opened by the end of April - at Queensferry, Rhyl and Hoylake. This will bring the total to 12, giving even more staff the opportunity to participate in a range of courses.

To date, 439 staff (14 per cent of employees) have enrolled on courses and the number is expected to increase as new centres open and new courses are introduced.

For further details, contact your local co-ordinator: Aberystwyth - Gloria Griffith (799 2235); Caernarfon - Menna Rowlands 780 2158); Chester - Pat Lewis (700 2052); Crewe - Audrey Wilkin (760 2252); Liverpool - Margaret Davies (720 2174); Oswestry - Suzanne Brown (790 2174); Prenton - Janet Shute (750 2075); Rhostyllen - Roger Birks (84 560); Warrington - Richard Denman (83 544).

There are now 113 courses now available, and new programmes include Wordperfect 5.2 (Windows), Introducing Pensions, Management Accounting and Keyboard Skills (Mavis Beacon 2.1 Windows).

WORKING TOGETHER

The year 1996/97 is set to be one of consolidation for Manweb's recently restructured Customer Service operation. Jackie Unsworth takes a look at the revamped regions as they prepare for the challenges ahead. Pictures by Mike Hall.

Even before the successful acquisition of Manweb by ScottishPower, a major reorganisation of the company's Customer Service function was on the cards.

The plan was to create a centralised call centre at Rhostyllen and a Credit Management Centre at Prenton.

Instead, two geographical regions have been established at Warrington and Rhostyllen. Customer Service staff previously based at Prenton have now relocated to the two 'new' regions, enabling their old base to become a regional centre for Distribution Operations.

The two regions carry out the same functions; the only difference is that Warrington is more urbanised and Rhostyllen more rural.

It follows then, that while Regional Customer Service Manager Kevin Mawdsley and his team at Warrington are more often called on to handle account enquiries, the team at Rhostyllen, led by Ray Hall, deal more with supply calls, whilst both centres deal with customers' general enquiries.

In addition, Rhostyllen provides Manweb's out-of-hours service - 5pm to 8pm weekdays, plus Saturday cover.

"The Rhostyllen centre is also in the process of providing 24-hour telephone cover for customers with supply problems," said Ray Hall.

"This will involve the employment of staff to cover various time bands from 5pm through to 8am the following morning, including weekends and bank holidays.

"Initially, customers in the Liverpool, St Helens, Warrington and Widnes areas will see the notification in their new telephone directory due



Bob Campbell (right) and Bob Shaw (2nd from left), of Property Services, discuss the new layout at Warrington, with Regional Customer Service Manager Kevin Mawdsley (left) and Customer Service Manager (Credit Management) John Lawes.

for publication in mid-April. A full page advertising 0345 112211 as the 24-hour emergency contact number will demonstrate our commitment to improving the level of service we provide to our customers."

Warrington region covers the old districts 1,2,3 and 6, and has 675,000 customers. It has 135 staff, plus a further 55 based on the high street, and 16 credit control technicians working from Lister Drive, Liverpool, on debt issues.

Rhostyllen, which takes in all the other former districts, has 563,000 customers and 120 staff, plus 45 on the high street and five credit control technicians based at various north Wales locations.

"Unlike before, each regional centre is now responsible for the high street customer service

operation in its area," said Kevin Mawdsley.

"They used to be a separate entity, but we are now in the process of integrating the high street staff with those based at the regional centres, which means they will be trained up to the level of their colleagues."

The two regions give each other back-up during emergency situations. Back in February when there was severe weather, a 24-hour customer service operation was put in place, and Warrington and Rhostyllen took turns to man the telephones overnight.

The centres provide a service standard of answering 80 per cent of all calls within 20 seconds. A monumental task when you consider they each currently receive between 20,000 and 25,000 calls every week!

Service Quality Calls have been carried out in the regions for some time, underlining Manweb's commitment to customer service. Under the scheme, customers are telephoned and asked how satisfied they are with the way Manweb dealt with them. The number of calls are now being increased and the scheme is also being introduced in the high street centres.

"Customers are often taken aback when we ring. They are amazed that we are interested in the quality of service we provide," said Kevin.

"It's not about a witch hunt to find errors. We get positive feedback from these calls, helping us to introduce best practice into other areas.

"Feedback is good for the staff and they appreciate it. It helps them to do their jobs even better."

Training is key to the success of Manweb's Customer Service operation. Each centre has

achieved Investors in People (IIP) status and both Kevin and Ray have set their sights on their regions gaining the international quality award ISO 9002 this year. This includes the high street centres and the credit control operations.

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in customer service also figure highly, with both regions gaining their first success at Level 3 last December in the shape of Amanda Quarrie at Warrington and Rachael Crowe in Rhostyllen.

Rachael is currently working for Manweb Gas, but Roger Birks, the Team Leader in Training and Projects at Rhostyllen said: "The benefits of NVQs have been particularly obvious in Rachael's case with a number of innovations that she has been responsible for being taken forward and used by other members of staff."

Richard Denman, Training and Quality Manager at Warrington, agrees the importance of customer service training. He said: "We are ultimately aiming for all our staff to obtain an NVQ level 3, starting with 10 more successful candidates this year. They have a similar goal at Rhostyllen."

So how are the former Prenton staff settling in at their new regions?

Said Kevin: "We've got a good mix of people and I think it is working well."

"We felt that the Prenton people were disappointed to lose their site-based Investors in People and ISO 9002 status when they relocated. Both Warrington and Rhostyllen have IIP status, so there's no change.

"As far as the quality award is concerned, we are looking forward to the Prenton people, who have already been through the process, helping their new colleagues to achieve ISO 9002 this year."

He added: "I think we all realise this is going to be a year of consolidation, but we have a good team and we will produce the goods."

Top: Settling in at Rhostyllen, Team Leader Liz Newman, formerly of Prenton, with Regional Customer Service Manager Ray Hall.

Centre: Ex-Prenton staff Meryl McGunigall and Paul Cormack (3rd from left), with their new colleagues at Rhostyllen, Customer Service Manager (Credit Management) Brian Carman (right) and Jason Neil.

Bottom: Working together - Diane Fields (right) from Prenton, with Jane Meyers at Rhostyllen.



Making the best use of office space

Staff at the Regional Customer Service Centre in Warrington have taken part in a study to see how Manweb compares with other major UK companies in making best use of office space.

A group of staff were randomly selected to participate in the benchmarking exercise, which took the form of a questionnaire. The results will be fed back to The Workplace Benchmark Group, which will compare Manweb with companies such as Microsoft, Rank Xerox and the RAC.

Bob Campbell, of Property Services, said: "We were keen to participate in this exercise because we realised we needed to make best use of the space available, particularly at this time of change, when many staff are moving to new locations. We want to ensure that the working environment is right for our staff."

Those taking part were asked their views on such things as lighting, furniture and office surroundings.

FITTING THE BILL

Manweb's Multi-Service Project promises to provide a flexible and effective solution to the complex billing demands of the competitive energy market. GRAEME COOPER takes a look at the new system, and how it was adopted as 'best practice' for the whole of the ScottishPower group.

As anyone who has worked in Manweb's or ScottishPower's Customer Service sections will tell you, the bill a customer receives is the visible tip of a very large and complicated operation.

With full competition due for the electricity market in 1998, this billing function promises to become even more complex, as utilities attempt to defend their markets and win extra business with tailor-made tariff and service packages.

One of the keys to delivering better, customer-centred services will be flexible billing systems.

Prior to ScottishPower's acquisition of Manweb last October, both companies had been looking for a billing system that gave the necessary flexibility to meet the needs of the evolving energy market. The coming together of the two companies gave an opportunity to look at the progress that had been made, and develop a group-wide system to serve the needs of both organisations.

In January 1996, the Manweb Multi-Service Project (MSP) was adopted as the 'best practice' solution for the whole of the ScottishPower group. Reflecting the group-wide objectives of the project, Manweb's John Griffith was appointed Project Director, reporting to ScottishPower's Energy Supply Division Managing Director, Bill Landels.

John said: "Both Manweb and ScottishPower had been looking for a system that would enhance existing billing operations, and be flexible enough to deal with future requirements. Neither company had found a satisfactory 'off-the-shelf' computer package that would do the job, but Manweb's work on MSP offered a foundation that was flexible enough to take other elements into it."

As new packages are devised, bills will need to cope with such things as multi-rate tariffs and variable billing periods. In addition, future regulatory requirements may mean that bills will need to show services such as metering separately from other charges.

Scale

The scale of the Multi Service Project can be gauged by looking at the number of customers the new billing system will serve - three million. All Manweb and ScottishPower customers will be on the multi service system, whether they are industrial, commercial or domestic.

With the removal of barriers to competition, the system may also need to accommodate many more customers after 1998, so it will also have to be capable of expansion.

But while the overall number of customers may well get larger, the specific groups of customers served are becoming more and more tightly defined. Within a large group, such as Domestic Standard tariff customers, it will be possible to identify very specific groups and design better priced, more attractive packages for them.

"Deregulation of the market for residential and small business customers will give us the freedom to move away from traditional tariff approaches, and towards tailored product and service offerings, which more closely meet the needs of different groups of customers," said John.



Katie Raftery, of the MSP team, working with new tariffs software.

"The customer should be able to 'pick and choose' from a menu of different payment methods, tariffs and frequencies of billing."

Equally important to being able to bill flexibly is the ability to do it cost effectively. For the proposed billing system to 'pass go', the MSP team had to put a detailed business case to the ScottishPower Chief Executive's Committee.

Close analysis of information systems by Software Delivery Project Manager Brian Sheppard, supported by ScottishPower Group Information Services Managing Director David Jones, was instrumental to making a convincing proposal.

John said: "The business case was very closely costed and we really went through every aspect of how the system would cope with future developments. Having input from Bill Landels and the rest of the ScottishPower people as well as Manweb's project team helped us come up with the best possible system."

Moving customers from the two companies' billing systems onto the MSP system is a project in itself.

Manweb customers are due to be transferred from January 1997, while the process for ScottishPower begins that April.

Implementation Project Managers will be Andy Pooley at Manweb, and Hugh Mitchell at ScottishPower.

Operating the same billing system across the group will in itself bring savings by eliminating duplication and replacing less efficient ways of operating. But one of the other, equally important aspects of the project has been to show very rapidly that there are real business and customer service benefits to be had from working as part of a powerful, broadly-based utility.

IN THE DRIVING SEAT



Doug Bridson

Manweb's Procurement activities have been adopted as 'best practice' by the ScottishPower group, with a Manweb manager at the helm.

And in Fleet Management and Garage Services there has been a two-way adoption of best practice, with another Manweb manager in charge of the new transport set-up.

The Procurement functions within ScottishPower Power Systems and Manweb Distribution Operations will be combined to form one group managed by Doug Bridson.

Doug, previously Manweb's Procurement Manager, will report to Alan Richardson, Managing Director of



Ian Basford

ScottishPower Power Systems, with effect from 1 April 1996.

He will continue to provide an overall purchasing service to all departments in Manweb.

Also reporting to Alan Richardson is Manweb's Transport Manager Ian Basford, who is now heading up a new look Transport operation for the whole group.

Under a 'lead business' arrangement, ScottishPower Power Systems will provide an integrated vehicle management service covering fleet management and garage activities for all the group's businesses, including Manweb.

Two thirds of the group's fleet operates within ScottishPower Power Systems and Manweb's Distribution businesses.

Overwhelming response from staff

The Occupational Health section at Head Office has been overwhelmed with applications from staff to take part in Manweb's new Wellscreen health care programme.

Manweb's Medical Adviser Dr Peter Burke said: "We had 700 responses - 22 per cent of staff - within the first 10 days after the scheme was launched. We're now up to 27 per cent and this number continues to rise."

"Inevitably it will take time to carry out all the health checks. The assessments are in depth, each lasting approximately one hour, so we are asking staff to be patient, we'll get to them as soon as possible."

The health checks, which are carried out in the workplace, include a blood test to detect cholesterol levels, liver disease and, for females only, anaemia. Blood pressure, height and weight measurements, lung function and urine analysis are also carried out. The aim is to detect health risks at an early stage and give staff professional advice on their lifestyle to help them live longer and healthier.

The results are treated in the strictest confidence, and if any medical problems are discovered, the employee will be referred to his or her own doctor for treatment.

Chief Executive Mike Kinski said: "The checks are entirely voluntary for everyone, but we hope staff will take advantage of a valuable opportunity to check their state of health."

"Manweb is concerned about the welfare of its employees because we know that a healthy and fit workforce is also an efficient one."

"Providing a free health check for each member of staff is just one way in which we are trying to improve the well being of all our employees."

Dr Burke added: "Staff are already seeing the benefits of the programme because, while carrying out tests on apparently fit people, we have discovered, for example, cholesterol problems. By detecting problems early on, we can prevent serious illness later."

"When a sufficient number of individuals have been screened, it will be possible to assess the overall 'fitness' of employees."



The Wellscreen programme has been welcomed by the full-time union officers. Nurse Elish Stuart (left) explains one of the tests to Manweb Joint Council Staff Side Vice Chairman David Bellamy (seated), watched by MJC Staff Side Secretary Steve Williams and Monique Clifton, Occupational Health section Administrator.