

# UNISON

## *Influencers 2026*

### MEDIA BRIEFING

[The Sunday Herald](#) ran a [front page story](#) with UNISON Scottish secretary Lilian Macer warning that Scottish government plans to cut between 11,000 and 20,000 jobs from public services were ‘dangerous’ and ‘unworkable’. She warned that ‘Industrial action was not off the table’ and ‘Pretending there will be no impact on the quality of service delivery is wrong and delusional and that needs to stop. We are sleepwalking into a crisis.’ (Sunday 12 April)

The paper gave a summary of our [manifesto](#) and Lilian's key points were:

- Scottish Government plans could cut between 11,000 and 20,000 public service jobs over the next parliament.
- Services are already under pressure. Fewer staff means longer waits, less care, and more strain on workers.
- No credible plan set out to meet rising demand with fewer staff

[The Scotsman](#) ran an exclusive interview with Scotland head of health Matt McLaughlin on its front page on Tuesday (14 April) with further coverage inside. He said Scottish politicians had “failed to be brave” regarding the health service, which needed a “fundamental reboot.” Matt also emphasised the urgency for the next Holyrood government to make significant changes to the NHS.

Matt was [again on the paper's front page](#) the following day (Wednesday 15 April) with a warning that inadequate staffing was putting patient safety at risk. The paper reported that the “survey reveals ‘shocking’ concerns over health and care staffing with Matt saying efforts to address the issue had ‘fallen far short’”. Matt emphasised the urgency for the new government to make significant changes within their first 100 days to avoid accountability.

Matt said: “Covid cannot keep being used as the excuse for NHS failures.” He also said: “fundamentally, the NHS is not working as it could or as it should. We have had two decades of politicians who have failed to be brave on the NHS, and who are too scared of the electoral cycle to make big, bold positive decisions on the NHS, and I think that's the problem

He called for a “fair deal” for social care workers saying that “We have to professionalise social care in the same way that we would professionalise other forms of personal, nursing-type care.”

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