

Assessing the impact of austerity cuts

November 2017

This briefing is a reminder for UNISON branches of the importance of cuts impact assessments. Branches and Regional Organisers should ensure CIA Forms are completed/updated regularly, recording initial savings proposals then actual cuts agreed. This helps in our campaigning, locally and nationally. ([2018/19 Form here](#))

Austerity policies have been hugely damaging to the economy, as well as having a devastating impact for too many, particularly the most vulnerable. Yet further public [spending cuts are coming](#), piling financial pressures on already hard-hit public services. By 2020 the Scottish budget will have been cut by £2.9 billion in real terms. The Scottish Government knows that it needs to increase revenue from income tax and is [looking at options](#). It protects around half of budget spending (health, police, school attainment and childcare) which means other services, mostly [local government](#), are set to see cuts of 9-14%. UNISON's [Pay up Now campaign](#) focuses on winning overdue decent pay rises for public service workers, something that will also help the economy. And we continue to stand up strongly for quality public services and the people who deliver them, warning about the impact of cuts on services and staff in our [Damage series](#), for example in this report on the impact on [school support staff](#). We have been [urging](#) public bodies, particularly health boards and councils, to take up our proposals to [Combat Austerity](#).

As part of all this campaigning, including media work and submitting [evidence and responses](#) to Scottish Parliament Committees and Government consultations, it is vital to have an overview of the scale and types of cuts being made around the country and across health and local government, Non Departmental Public Bodies, police and fire etc. Each have different budgetary processes and timescales. The Cuts Impact Assessment form asks branches for proposed details (and then actual details, once finalised) of:

- headline budget cuts – the financial details of the cuts, with timescales
- numbers of job losses
- one or more examples of the main cuts where services are being hit, e.g. hospital/ward closures; library closures; increased burial charges; closures of day care centres and local sports centres; roads & winter maintenance cuts; schools crossing patrols reduced, etc.

Having this information to hand is essential for branch work opposing the cuts, such as in Edinburgh, where the council is facing £140m in cuts in the next five years. Our [City of Edinburgh branch](#) welcomed the success of a campaign to save the music school. But the branch called for all communities to have access to music schools and for those who fought to keep it open to oppose austerity cuts altogether, including potential threats in early years and health and social care. Branches use cuts impact assessments information expertly all the time. Please share yours with the Bargaining & Campaigns team to help compile a national overview. If we don't have the information, we can't use it on your behalf to help make your case against the cuts.

Send completed CIA forms to Fiona Montgomery in the Bargaining & Campaigns team.

f.montgomery@unison.co.uk CIA 2018/19 Form <http://www.unison-scotland.org/library/CIA-Form-2018.docx>

For more information please contact UNISON's Bargaining and Campaigns team on 0141 342 2811, or email d.watson@unison.co.uk

bargaining &
campaigns
team

Follow us on

