



STUC Dundee

Reports on the main UNISON speakers at the Scottish Trades Union Congress



Scottish Government could create fairer local government funding now, UNISON tells STUC congress p3



PUBLIC WORKS:

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Scotland in UNISON

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REFERENDUM: UNISON TACKLES BOTH CAMPS ON A FAIRER SCOTLAND

Putting our public services at centre of indy debate

by John Stevenson
SiU editor

A special UNISON Scotland debate has challenged the referendum Yes and No camps on how their plans would create a fairer Scotland.

Delegates from branches across Scotland heard SNP deputy leader Nicola Sturgeon and Scottish Labour deputy leader Anas Sarwar field questions on public services, trade union rights, privatisation and welfare.

Lilian Macer, fresh from being re-elected as UNISON Scottish Convener, said we wanted to hear the detail of how the two campaigns would create the fairer and more just Scotland that UNISON wants to see.

Introducing the speakers, she said: "When I am asked what side UNISON is on, we say we are on the side of public services and public service workers."

Anas Sarwar opened the debate with a call for people to read the new Scottish Labour 'Red Paper', billed as the party's 'radical alternative to independence'.

'Together we can', was the theme of the paper and Anas reminded delegates that the referendum was "the biggest decision in our political lives."

Echoing UNISON's Fairer Scotland publications, he said the debate should be about: "not where the power lies but what politicians do with that power."

"The real divide is not between Scotland and England, it is between the haves and have-nots", said Anas.

The Labour movement delivered the



The SNP's Nicola Sturgeon, UNISON's Lilian Macer and Labour's Anas Sarwar at UNISON Scotland's special debate on 5 April.

When asked what side is UNISON on, we say: 'We are on the side of public services and public service workers.' Lilian Macer

NHS for everyone and it "came together to build the welfare state for everyone not just in Scotland", he said. Labour would deliver "not an illusion of hope but a realisation of hope."

For Nicola Sturgeon it was only independence that would "give us the power to protect public services."

An independent Scotland would be the

14th wealthiest country in the world. "Why should the Scottish people not share in that wealth?" she asked.

The Scottish Government had protected the NHS from "being fragmented and privatised... Why not give us the power to create a welfare state that we would want?"

Questions and Answers Page 2

Workers' Memorial Day 28 April

Workers Memorial Day takes place all over the world on 28 April each year.

The message of 'Remember the Dead, Fight for the Living' will be spread through a range of events across Scotland.

See www.stuc.org for a list of events in your area and check out the www.unison.org.uk for UNISON materials you can order for the day.

NHS England pay action

While Scottish health workers will get the Pay Review Body (PRB) recommended 1% rise agreed by the Scottish Government, delegates to UNISON's UK Health Conference last week reacted to Westminster's failure to implement the recommendations in England by calling for a campaign for action starting with a protest day on 5 June.

From 1 April, NHS staff in Scotland got a 1% pay uplift, while staff earning under £21,000 will also receive an additional sum to increase their pay by £300 in total.

The changes came in after the Scottish Government accepted recommendations from the NHS Pay Review Body (PRB).

In England 1% is being applied only to staff at the top of their grade and even then it is 'non-consolidated'.

Tam Waterson, UNISON Scotland Health chair, said: "We are delighted the Scottish Government has decided to implement the recommendations of the Pay Review Body in full."

"We would urge the UK Government to also commit to paying health service staff the recommendations in full."

While welcoming the Scotland settlement, Scottish branches have been concerned for some time that the PRB is not delivering on fair pay. However their call to return to collective bargaining was not supported by the conference.

Mayday events

Mayday events will be held across the country around 3/4 May, so why not check out details on the STUC site and get along to local marches and entertainment.

Glasgow Friend of Mayday have another bumper series of events with Mark Thomas, Marxist magician, Ian Saville, superb harmonica player, Fraser Speirs and the doyenne of political song, Arthur Johnstone. The show is again produced by FairPlay.

Events spread to Dumfries and Blantyre with Rab Noakes, Eleanor Morton, Dave Anderson, Bruce Morton and Susan Morrison. Details at may1st.org.uk.

Residential strike wins concessions

by Brian Smith
Glasgow City Branch

Nearly 400 UNISON members in Glasgow City Council's homes for older people have secured important concessions and forced back an anti-trade union and anti-collective bargaining approach from the Labour controlled council.

Members took seven days of strike action in January and February in what became an increasingly bitter dispute.

In early 2014, the council moved ahead with the implementation of cuts in shift payments, changes to job roles and a move to twelve and a half hour shifts. The changes included 122 full time workers losing £1495 per year and 60 part timers losing

of £794 per year.

The Council also sought to alter the job roles of the lowest paid workers to include the administration of medicines.

Finally, UNISON members viewed the new staff to resident ratio on the new twelve and a half hour night shift as inadequate and a risk to the care of the 600 residents.

During late 2013, the Council had tried to bully workers into agreeing to the changes on an individual basis through the issuing of five individual letters, ignoring the normal collective bargaining arrangements (a similar approach was tried and also failed in October 2013 in a dispute with over 1,000 pupil support assistants).

Turn to Page 3

Elderly care needs valued staff

A UNISON amendment to the STUC underlined the need for a well paid, well trained and secure workforce to achieve high standards of care.



It was time to end zero hour contracts, pay the living wage and provide proper training.

UNISON's Sam Macartney said: "We in this hall know that the most effective way of giving staff a voice and insisting on both decent working conditions and maintaining standards, is to join a union and make sure your workplace is organised.

"We know that Congress, but it's the task of all of us to get out and make sure that everyone knows it. Because maintaining and improving standards depends on it. And if we are lucky enough to get old, so will we."

Help from UNISON Winter Fuel Grants

Fuel poverty across the UK is increasing as gas and electricity bills go up and wages remain the same.

The winter period is particularly difficult for many UNISON members but they're not alone.

UNISON's Welfare's Winter Fuel Grants have helped many members through this difficult period.

One member wrote to us recently and said: "I received a cheque for £40.00 on Friday from the Winter Fuel Grant. It is great that a charity considers people who work full time but still sit with heating off and wrapped in quilts during the harsh winter months. Please pass on my gratitude and appreciation it will help".

For more information on UNISON Welfare check out our website.

UNISON urges MSPs to back face to face careers guidance

by David Stark
Skills Development Scotland

UNISON has presented MSPs with research confirming the importance of pupils having access to professionally qualified face to face careers guidance.

Following the UNISON commissioned research by Sheila Semple and Cathy Howieson (University of Edinburgh), Skills Development Scotland Branch was invited to attend the Education and

Culture Committee at the Scottish Parliament in March.

The research looked at the impact of changes in the services offered to school pupils by Skills Development Scotland.

In particular it examined the greater reliance on web services and reduction in face to face careers guidance for many pupils.

UNISON members in Skills Development Scotland welcomed the research findings which concluded that web

services while having their place, the SDS website My World of Work had limited impact on pupils' career management skills compared with other sources of careers support.

It would also be wrong to assume because younger people are perceived to be computer savvy that they would prefer this method of support.

Indeed pupils very much valued the opportunity to discuss their career plans with a Careers adviser.



James Corry, SDS UNISON, told the STUC: "Attainment for all can be achieved by ensuring one to one face to face advice and guidance is also available for all."

Collective bargaining is essential for social justice

Collective bargaining is now essential for our economy, Jane Carolan told the STUC congress in a 'back to basics' speech calling for a new manifesto for negotiating rights.

"These rights must be enforced and we should not accept half measures or other attempts to distract us", she said.

She was backing a motion from the General Council backed by Unite, PCS, RMT and the STUC youth conference which called for legislation that:-

- promotes collective bargaining in accordance with international law;
- bans the use of union busting firms;
- makes collective bargaining a pre-condition in awarding public contracts;

Jane laid out the basic trade union rights we must campaign for. She called for: "The right to collective bargaining to be underpinned by other fundamental labour rights.

"The right to organise unimpeded by the blacklist



Keith Ewing



Jane Carolan

organisers or the union busters.

"And the right to strike, the fundamental right to withdraw labour.

"Collective Bargaining challenges inequality and is a force for social justice", said Jane.

Bargaining and workers' rights was the theme of Professor Keith Ewing, Professor of Public Law at King's College London at a fringe meeting run by the Morning Star and the People's Assembly Scotland.

He laid down a challenge for

Labour to give back "real rights to organise and to bargain and to strike."

He asked why in the 21st century employers were free to victimise stewards and why they could tear up collective agreements and contracts of employment "as if they were toilet paper."

He called for rights recognised by the International Labour Organisation and the European Court of Human Rights to be honoured in the UK and for that we needed to make demands of Ed Miliband.

HE talks hit critical phase

As we went to print, negotiations after three strike days by higher education members were at a critical stage.

UNISON higher education negotiators will be considering a report on 23 April and will then mount a consultation with members via branches.

Other trade unions are reported to be doing the same.

It is understood that the report will address issues in the current dispute and the 2014/2015 pay round.

The HE Service Group Executive will be contacting members in the coming days.

£300k personal injury wins in just one month

UNISON has won £333,334.30 for members in compensation cases in Scotland in the month of March.

The settlements range from £10,000 to £1,300 and cover members from 22 branches.

Another 300,000 reasons for being a UNISON member!

Putting public services at centre of referendum debate

From Page 1

Stephen Smellie, UNISON Scotland Deputy Convener, challenged the politicians on the INEOS scandal where the boss held the unions - shackled by anti-trade union laws - and the country to ransom. Would they fight back and take companies like that into public ownership?

"Public ownership should always be an option", said Nicola Sturgeon and she pointed to the taking over of Prestwick airport and that fact the SNP had protected the NHS from privatisation.

Anas Sarwar said Stephen's question had gone to "the heart of it - the excesses of big business. Public ownership was an option and should have been considered at the time."

He slammed SNP plans to cut corporation tax as giving big

companies like INEOS a tax cut, although Nicola Sturgeon retorted that Labour at UK level had cut corporation tax in the past.

Anas Sarwar made a specific pledge that "there will be no privatisation of the NHS under a Labour Government."

He insisted the NHS was not being protected in Scotland. 4,000 jobs had ben lost and "bad things are happening right now" under SNP control.

Trade union rights

On trade union laws Nicola Sturgeon promised a convention on employment and labour relations.

"The NHS partnership model is how I see the future", she said.

Anas Sarwar replied that unions needed more than just "warm words and a convention."

Equality

Rising inequality was the big concern for Kate Ramsden, Aberdeenshire Branch, "as the richest 1,000 in the UK increase their wealth by £190 billion whilst more and more children grow up in poverty."

And Retired Members' Secretary, Sue Chalmers, asked how pensioners could be "assured a retirement and old age free from poverty."

Both Anas Sarwar and Nicola Sturgeon condemned the growing inequality in our society.

Nicola Sturgeon said, "I feel passionate about having a more equal society. It's why I came into politics." She pointed to the increases in child care to help more women into work as a way out of poverty and to the payment of the Living Wage across the public sector in Scotland.

She also criticised Labour for "tripping through the lobbies to impose a welfare cap."

But Anas Sarwar said that a UK Labour Government would tackle inequality through fairer taxation, as he slammed 'in-work poverty'.

They would re-instate the 50% tax rate for the wealthiest. He also promised a citizens' income for those on benefits.

"The last Labour Government cut child poverty and that is a record I am proud of," he said.

Trident

Responding to a question from Jim Main, Glasgow City Branch, Nicola Sturgeon said Trident was an "abomination."

With all UK parties signed up to it: "It is now or never. The only way to stop Trident is independence."

Anas Sarwar took a multi-lateralist view and said he wanted to get rid of nuclear weapons everywhere, not just in Scotland.

... and finally

The key for Anas Sarwar was how best to deliver social justice.

He cautioned against thinking there was social justice in Scotland. "Bad things are happening in Scotland from the decisions of both governments."

The whole UK faced the same challenges and the best way to bring social justice was to do it together. "Together we can succeed", he said.

Nicola Sturgeon said she and Anas agree on more than they disagreed about on social justice.

It was about, "what gives us the best chance to deliver the kind of Scotland we want to see." For her that was independence.

Create fairer council funding now

The Council Tax freeze is benefiting the richest by £1,500 while disabled people can be £3,000 worse off.

“That needs fixed and it can be done in Scotland now - we have all the powers we need”, UNISON’s Stephen Smellie told the STUC congress.

The UNISON Scotland motion called for politicians of all parties to ‘stop hiding from difficult decisions and sort out fair tax for local services’.

“Local government finance is knackered”, said Stephen. “Why should it not be when it has been



Stephen Smellie

nothing but a political football for years.”

All parties had failed to deal with local government with respect for local governance or

local services or local communities.

Political reactions from the 80s cancelled re-evaluation “when middle class ratepayers squealed”.

When the same people whined about rate rises to fund schools and roads, the Tories abolished the rates and gave us the poll tax.

“When business complained.. government took away councils’ powers to levy the rates.

“When we revolted against the poll tax and helped bring down Thatcher, the Tories rushed in the council tax”, said Stephen.

“First the Tories, then the SNP

and then Labour all promised to freeze the Council Tax.” That temporary freeze has become a ‘permafrost’.

The result is that: “Local government has no local powers and can’t govern as their ability to raise funds in response to local needs has been taken away.”

“We need a proper debate on the future of local government finance”, said Stephen, “through a progressive tax system.”

A progressive system should tax all income and wealth with taxes on income and profits levied nationally, along with a fair property tax at local level.

Services, housing and the living wage key to recovery

The STUC is calling on the UK and Scottish Governments to end austerity and instead invest in public services and pay a living wage to ensure a ‘better today and more prosperous tomorrow for Scotland’s people’.

And it urged the Scottish Government to ‘change its mind’ and use its procurement rules to insist that contractors pay the Living Wage.

In the first of two UNISON Scotland motions backed by the congress, UNISON’s Margaret Cook told delegates: “Over half of the 13 million people in poverty in the UK actually come from working families.

“Statistics like this should not exist – or be allowed to become even more grave. We must take action.

“We need to put people back to work and make sure the work they do pays enough to live on.

“One obvious way to start doing that is to adequately fund our public services, not attack



Margaret Cook

them through cuts as the Westminster government has, or leave them to wither on the vine by refusing to raise money for them, as the Scottish government has”, said Margaret.

“I am proud to come from a local authority who pay the living wage, ensuring that workers are rewarded for the efforts which they put in.

“People should not be working yet still be unable to get by.”

The motion said that properly



Lilian Macer

funded public services can provide a source of decently paid employment and training, boosting demand in local economies.

It called on governments to ensure that living wage provisions are at the heart of public procurement regimes.

“We need to give chances to our young people – we need to put people back to work and make sure that employment means a living wage. This

composite outlines some of the ways that can be done.”

This message was backed up later by UNISON Scottish convener Lilian Macer moving another UNISON motion on austerity, housing, welfare and young people.

“This is about exposing austerity for what it is - an attack on human decency”, said Lilian, “and it sets out some of the measures we’ll need to take on the road to recovery.”

“Scotland has a housing crisis. there are over 180,000 people on local authority waiting lists alone.”

“Building more social housing was the solution for the housing crisis after the second World War - and it is the obvious choice now”, said Lilian.

Building social housing creates employment and means people gain through improved housing choice.

“We all gain from the reduction in housing benefit bills and income from rents to local authorities can be reinvested.”

Glasgow dispute: Positive impact across city and beyond

From Page 1

Members voted by three to one to strike with the first days of action on 14 and 15 January.

A further five strike days took place over the next four weeks. The strikes had a huge impact on the residential service, secured very good media coverage, won widespread support from residents and their families and rattled the senior council managers and politicians.

The UNISON branch organised members’ meetings during the strikes to allow those taking the action to determine the next steps in their action, called two protests at the council chambers, co-ordinated public leafleting and ensured that generous strike hardship payments were made when required.

New stewards were elected and

as in most disputes a core group of members, many of whom had never taken strike action before or been involved in the trade union branch, became key local organisers and contributors to how the dispute was run.

The branch received hundreds of messages of support from across the UK and some magnificent donations to the strike hardship fund from other UNISON branches.

In late February, due to the increasing pressure on the council and the threat of a further nine days of strike action, leading council officials outwith social work services and politicians from the Labour administration offered to meet with the UNISON Branch. The council tabled a revised offer which included:

- An increase in the core

minimum staffing levels in all 15 homes. All nightshifts will have more workers by recruiting additional staff.

- A one off payment equal to the value of one year’s loss of pay for dayshift workers who lost due to a cut in shift payment.
- The consolidation of 47 workers in temporary promoted posts for three years or more. Some with less than three years will keep their temporary grade for a period of time based on the criteria of “first in, last out”.
- Administration of most medicines by social care assistants in the five new 120 bedded homes due to open over the next three years (but not in the current 15 homes) with a restatement of a previous commitment made five years

ago that the number of social care workers will never be less than the number of social care assistants in the new homes.

The council said that their revised offer would cost them just under a £1million.

The council only made the revised offer due to the pressure exerted on them by UNISON members taking strike action. Compared to where we were in January, the revised offer had more positive than negative aspects. In a ballot of the members, 69% voted to accept the revised offer.

The strikers also pushed back the anti-trade union, anti-collective bargaining approach adopted by the council at the beginning of the dispute. In that respect, the dispute has had a positive impact across the trade union movement in the city and beyond.

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Stories by John Stevenson, Kate Ramsden and Jane Aitchison.

For full stories see www.unison-scotland.org.uk

Police and fire £30m VAT burden

The FBU and UNISON told the STUC that the creation of a centralised Police and Fire Service has meant the Scottish



taxpayer footing a bill of about £30 million pounds through the loss of VAT exemption.

This burden is unnecessary and unfair and impacts dramatically on both community and emergency worker safety.

George McIrvine, of the UNISON Police Staff Scotland Branch, told congress that UNISON had raised this issue with the Scottish Government some two years ago and it refused to divulge whether they had been aware of the issue.

Due to that lack of transparency, “The Scottish taxpayer, and indeed police and fire support staff, are now paying the hefty price”, said George.

Affordable and flexible childcare

The Scottish Government should deliver on its post referendum plans for more affordable childcare now, upskill staff and improve their pay; and recognise that accessibility and flexibility are just as important as affordability to working women.

Backing a Community motion at the STUC, UNISON’s Carol Ball laid out the benefits of providing high quality, flexible and affordable childcare to children, families and the economy.

“We want services provided by the public sector, properly funded and not for profit. This is what families want and deserve.”

Give us resources for Children Act

The STUC will urge the government to provide the resources to fund the ‘named person’ role in the new Children and Young People Act.

UNISON’s John Stevenson told delegates: “A law that has great intentions to improve the wellbeing of our children in Scotland needs to be backed up with the resources to actually deliver on those promises. Otherwise it will be no more than intentions - and worse still, our members will be left carrying the can.”

University review on diversity must be implemented

The STUC slammed the new Code of Governance from university chairs as a missed opportunity making very limited change, failing to address issues on senior managers' pay, and failing to ensure representation on the governing bodies reflects the diversity of Scotland's population.

This failure is due to a lack

of proper consultation with staff, students and trade unions.

Congress also re-iterated its opposition to undergraduate tuition fees, and rejected the rest of the UK tuition fees for students.

UNISON's Davena Rankin called for the original Von Prondzynski review recommendations on the reform of University Governance to be implemented



Davena Rankin

in full, including reserved seats for trade unions.

"Until we have governors

and senior management teams of universities that fully represent the diversity of their workforce and student body we will continue to see building projects prioritised over decent pay and equitable terms and conditions for all staff and for Black and female staff.

"The glass ceiling will not only continue to exist but will be reinforced and double glazed."

Pat wins iPad for recruiting a friend



A delighted Pat Bevens is presented with her prize of an iPad by Highland Branch Chair Liz MacKay after winning UNISON Scotland's "recruit a friend" competition.

The initiative was launched at the end of last year and members were invited to recruit a friend and submit their names to the prize draw by November. UNISON Scotland would like to thank all those who entered and a big welcome to all our new members.

Young Members take up 'Gie's a Hoose' campaign

by Katrina Rankin
Chair UNISON Scotland Young Members Committee

Following our successful Young Members Development Weekend and AGM, which was held 21-23 March 2014 in Stirling, we are delighted to introduce our new Scottish Young Members Committee.

The committee is working hard on their 'Gies A Hoose' housing campaign which will run over two years.

We have produced a young workers pack which includes a housing guide for young people, information on the housing crisis in the form of our 'Gies A Hoose' leaflet, as well as recruitment materials and an application form.

The pack was launched at our stall at Scottish Council on 5 April 2014. Our stall was a success and we thank all our colleagues who took their share



New Young Members' Committee. See the website for details

of packs to use in branch recruitment - Thank you.

We will also distribute to local organisers in Scotland so they can also use them in recruitment activity.

The next step of our campaign will be our paper and video survey of young members' housing situations; this will include street campaigning and we are also

glad to be receiving help from our young members at National Young Members Weekend.

We will then collate our survey information for the next step of our campaign which will be a petition to the Scottish Government.

This is a huge campaign and we will continue to put in our efforts to ensure it is a success.

The Scottish Young Members

Committee meets four times a year and we encourage anyone who wishes to attend, or to find out more about the Scottish Young Members, to contact us.

Our details are on the UNISON Scotland website. We also use social media, Facebook and Twitter, as well as the UNISON Scotland website to keep our members up to date on activity of the committee.

Welcome guide to doing radical social work

by John Stevenson
SiU editor

We have waited since the 1970s for an accessible book that not only sets out the theory and politics of radical social work, but also gives practical strategies for putting them into practice.

The wait is over with the publication of 'Doing Radical Social Work' by Colin Turbett, a children and families team manager in North Ayrshire and a member of UNISON Scotland's Social Work Issues Group.

'Doing' is the key word in the title because this is not a distant theoretical treatise but a real practical guide to how social workers can strive to make a difference.

Taking stock of social work today, with a journey through radical approaches over the years, Colin shows - with case studies and helpful bullet point summaries - how workers on the



ground can avoid oppressive practice and begin to influence the policies that create inequality at a range of levels.

"Radical social work practice will not, in itself change the world", writes Colin, but within all the structures that restrain social workers, they can still make things better for some of the most oppressed in society.

Tellingly, the book stresses that recognising the real roots of social issues, defending rights, being respectful and inclusive are, after all, just elements of good practice.

More than that, they help when the hard decisions have to be made in areas like child protection.

For many in the job, there is a fear that the profession is becoming separated - or being forced to separate - from its roots as a human rights and social justice profession.

Neo-liberal policies mean that welcome increased accountability and more evidenced practice are too often delivered by a managerialism that focuses more on numbers than people.

Radical social work seeks to empower and has at its root an understanding of the politics that create social and personal 'problems'.

Practising without that understanding risks compounding the oppression of the people we purport to serve.

In examining practical ways that we can avoid that and take measures to achieve real change, the book argues that collectivism

and acting together in a trade union is essential.

There is nothing wrong with 'small scale resistance' as Colin puts it, but without a collective voice, individuals can be easily picked off.

The book, as itself admits, is optimistic. Optimistic that social work is still worthwhile.

By not only listing the problems but also looking at the solutions, that optimism is welcome at a time when so many in the profession feel de-skilled and obstructed from delivering on real social work values.

'Doing Radical Social Work' should be essential reading for everyone in social work to remind them about the values the job claims to aspire to.

Better than that, it outlines practical things you can go out and do tomorrow.

'Doing Radical Social Work' is available in bookshops and online.

Members accept new SCRA deal

by Diane Harvey
UNISON SCRA Branch

Scottish Children's Reporter (SCRA) members have accepted a new three year pay deal in a close run ballot.

SCRA's initial pay offer had been a one year deal from April 2013 for a flat rate across the board increase of £345 with no incremental progression.

On a turnout of 70%, a massive 92% voted to reject the pay offer. As a result, SCRA withdrew the one year offer and proposed a three year offer.

This means in year one, all staff will receive a 1% increase and all eligible staff will receive full pay progression with payments backdated to April 2013.

In years two and three there is pay progression for all eligible staff and an increase for those still moving up the scale.

Staff at the top of their pay scale receive a 1% increase in 2013/14 and a non-consolidated payment of £300 in the following two years.

UNISON welcomed the improvement on the original offer but overall, the offer does nothing to address the year on year pay cuts our members have suffered and UNISON recommended rejection.

Members were clear that rejecting the offer would mean a fight with Scottish Government over the public sector pay cap. 69% of members voted in the consultative ballot with a small majority (53.7%) voting to accept the offer.

But 46.3% were prepared to fight and voted to reject the offer. This should send a clear message to SCRA, and to the Scottish Government, that the fight for fair pay goes on.

We want to hear your news

SiU is your paper, we want to hear your stories. John Stevenson (Editor) 0131 558 7488, webmanager@unison-edinburgh.org.uk