

**Happy festive season to all our members ...especially to those delivering services over the holiday**

**Celebrate learning**  
New course programme for 2016 out now - p2



**Council cuts**  
Campaign mounts as we face 'worst cuts in living memory' p2-3



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December 2015 No.117

# Scotland in UNISON

scottish council activists bulletin ..... Use these stories in your branch newsletter or circulate the pdf version to members

## THE LAW THAT AIMS TO 'CLOSE UNIONS DOWN'

# Beat the anti-union bill

by John Stevenson  
SiU editor

**We should call the Trade Union Bill exactly what it is, an anti-union bill, Scottish UNISON branches were told in a campaign briefing at the union's Scottish Council.**

Peter Hunter, regional manager, told delegates: "A Trade Union Bill would set out measures empowering workers to organise for their mutual benefit.

"This bill aims to stop us in our tracks. It aims to close unions down. As with the Poll Tax we give



**Defeating the bill is a responsibility that rests with us - we must lead from the front'** Peter Hunter

the legislation the name it deserves.

"This bill is the anti-union bill. There can be no other name."



**SANTA RECRUITS FOR UNISON:** UNISON's Mrs Santa and elves brought festive cheer to Kilmarnock's Crosshouse hospital last week and UH Ayr the week before, and recruited 22 new members into the bargain!

He welcomed pledges from employers in Scotland who say they will not comply with the law but warned that only the trade union campaign would beat the bill.

"The government and employers won't 'willingly' implement the bill but they're not that keen

on their austerity cuts either. "If we shelter behind their rhetoric we'll soon find that's no shelter at all. Defeating the bill is a responsibility that rests with us. A campaign we must lead from the front.

"Employers and Government support is welcome, but the victory

will be fought and won by the union."

Peter outlined a three stage campaign now that the bill is going through the Lords.

The union will oppose, resist and if necessary mitigate through grass roots organisation.

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## Communications Awards 2015

**Don't be too modest! Enter the 2015 UNISON Scotland Communications Awards.**

Not only is this competition a good opportunity to give you and your branch some well-deserved recognition for the excellent work you do, but it will also help us build a stronger union by sharing best practice, your innovative ideas and your enthusiasm.



The categories are:

- Best Printed Publication
- Best Campaign
- Best online presence
- Special Recruitment Prize

As usual, the UNISON 'family' is sponsoring the awards with cash prizes of £150 for first, then £100 and £50.

Branches and self organised groups can enter at [www.unison-scotland.org.uk/comms](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/comms) by **Friday 15 January 2016.**

The awards will be presented at the February Scottish Council meeting.

## St Andrew's day Refugees welcome



Marchers braved the weather in Glasgow and Aberdeen (above) on 28 November for the STUC St Andrew's day rally against racism. This year's theme was 'Refugees Welcome Here' as the first Syrian refugees arrived in Scotland.

## Corbyn and Sturgeon say the bill must go

**A rousing STUC rally in Glasgow on 10 December brought a united front against the anti-union bill.**

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn pledged to repeal the bill if it becomes law and to introduce a positive charter for workers' rights.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said Holyrood would continue to argue that the bill should not apply to Scotland but "that



Jeremy Corbyn

would be second best to it not applying anywhere." In an inspirational

**We only realise our power, when we stand together as one'** Jeremy Corbyn

speech to 2,000 people in the Royal Concert Hall, Jeremy Corbyn pointed out that we already have the most restrictive labour laws in Europe but now the Tories are moving further: "They are trying to take away your voice for good."



Nicola Sturgeon

He said democracy means the people have the power: "Not the Tories in

Westminster, not the suits in the boardrooms, not the billionaires ensconced in their tax havens. You, the people.

"But we only realise our power, when we stand together as one", he said.

"We will defeat this government, we will defeat austerity, we will repeal this bill and, together, we can and we will build a better society."

Nicola Sturgeon promised the Scottish

government would: "Never ever employ agency workers to undermine strike action.

"If this bill is passed we are going to do everything in our power to make sure it will not succeed. We will not stand by and let this bill undermine the relationship we have with trade unions."

The rally also heard from Mike Kirby, UNISON Scottish Secretary, and Chris Stephens, a long time UNISON activist and now MP who leads for the SNP on the bill at Westminster.

## College staff to vote on new pay offer

**UNISON Scotland's Further Education Committee is to recommend acceptance of a new pay offer won after members in colleges threatened industrial action.**

Members will have the final say on in a ballot from 7 to 21 January 2016.

In November staff resoundingly rejected the 'final' offer from the first ever round of Scottish pay negotiations and called for an action ballot. That moved the employers' to a significantly improved the offer which now includes:

**The Living Wage** from 1 April 2015 (moving to full accreditation for all 26 colleges by December 2016).

**Pay:** A £300 consolidated flat rate rise from 1 April 2015 for all those earning under £31k. This improves the offer for those earning £21 to £29k; 1% for the minority of support staff who earn over £30k; an unconsolidated 2015 rise of the same value to those on local pay protection.

**Leave and hours:** Two days additional 'unconsolidated' leave for all for 2015 only and a minimum of 27 days annual leave from 1 April 2015. Standardisation of a 35 hour week by 1 April 2016.

A spokesperson for UNISON Scotland's FE committee said: "On balance the FE Committee see the 2015 offer as a good platform to commence national bargaining.

"We will build on this in 2016 to achieve a flat rate settlement for all staff across FE and to establish a fair pay and grading model and a set of common term and conditions in FE across Scotland."

John Gallacher, Scottish Organiser and lead officer for the Sector, added: "2015 is the first step towards fairer pay across further education in Scotland. UNISON Scotland will be at the vanguard of taking this forward and arguing for fair funding for the poor relation of Scottish tertiary education."

## David Ng Hop

UNISON's Scottish Council was saddened to hear of the death of David Hop earlier this month.

David held various roles in the City of Edinburgh branch and at Scottish level including being secretary of the Scottish Black

Members Committee and the Scottish Disabled Members Committee.

He was on the STUC Black Members Committee at one time and also served on UNISON's Learning and Organising and International Committees.

He was also active in the Labour and Cooperative Parties and the UNISON Scotland Labour Link Committee. Sarah Boyack MSP led the tributes at his funeral on 14 December.

David had been suffering from cancer and colleagues Ravi Nathan and Hamid Rasheed had visited him shortly before his death.

Hamid said of David: "He was a trade unionist for the same reason we should all be, that is to try to make things better for our fellow workers and citizens. The thoughts of us all are with David's family and friends."

## Respond to SSSC codes of practice consultation

**UNISON Scotland's Social Work Issues Group (SWG) will call for social service employers to face sanctions if they breach their codes of practice in the same way as social work staff are held accountable through their regulator, the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).**

The SSSC are currently reviewing their codes of practice for workers and employers and SWIG member Kate Ramsden sits on the Strategic Review Group on behalf of UNISON.

The amended codes of practice are now out for consultation, along with proposals from the SSSC to move away from a conduct based model of regulation to a fitness to practise model which can take into account of issues such as ill-health which may temporarily impact on workers' ability to do their jobs.

Kate said, "UNISON is urging our members to respond to the consultation which has a closing date of 15 Jan 2016 and can be found at: [www.sssc.uk.com](http://www.sssc.uk.com) by clicking on 'consultations'.

"As a trade union we know at

first hand how the regulator responds to our members when they are alleged to have breached their Codes of Practice.

"We have supported many members, some of whom have ended up at conduct hearings facing deregistration and the ending of their career.

"In some of these cases, the employer has also breached their codes of practice, and although we can refer to that in our defence of our members, there seem to be no mechanisms to investigate and to hold them properly to account.

"The Care Inspectorate is supposed to have that role but

they have no sanctions at their disposal where breaches occur.

"We think this needs to change and the Strategic Review Group has been looking closely at this."

Kate also urged members in social work to come to their UNISON rep right away if they are being investigated by the SSSC.

"Before members reply to any allegations of misconduct it is essential that they seek advice from their steward or branch officer immediately."

She also called on members to encourage their colleagues to join UNISON if they are not already members.

## Celebrate learning as new course programme launched

by Nancy Kelly  
Regional Organiser

**Delegates from UNISON branches across Scotland came to the union's annual Celebrate Learning Day in Edinburgh on 1 December.**

They were welcomed by the chair and vice-chair of the Learning and Organising Committee, Lawrence Hunter and Maggie Cook.

The guest speaker was Teresa Donegan, UNISON's new national head of learning and organising services who set out the challenges facing us in delivering opportunities for members and activists.

The 2016 Activists Programme for Scotland was launched and welcomed by all.

The programme is available on the UNISON Scotland website at [www.unison-scotland.org.uk/education/](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/education/)

Delegates then had the opportunity to attend two very interesting workshops - one on the anti-trade union bill and one on learning resources available online.



Delegates hard at work at the launch - and the new course programme

These were warmly received and everyone signed up to the learning UNISON website at [learning.unison.org.uk/](http://learning.unison.org.uk/)



## North Lanark fight for services jobs and conditions

**UNISON's North Lanarkshire branch is fighting council cuts which if passed would mean the loss of 1,100 full time equivalent posts, the privatisation of services, and a reduction in take home pay for some workers.**

The proposals also include funding cuts of 15% to its arms-length organisations, North Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture NL which will impact on UNISON members.

In response to the council's proposals the branch has once again geared up for a massive campaign which will not only include UNISON members, but also community groups and residents who will see local



services destroyed.

Branch Secretary Marie Quigley said: "It is vital that we get our messages across to all UNISON members and the wider community in general.

"We have built up campaigning skills and resources over the years and we

intend to build momentum involving the community using clear messages, a consistent approach to materials, mobilisation of members at street stalls, lobbying councillors at surgeries, and signing petition letters.

"We are also working with

our sister unions for big set piece events like rallies and marches. Crucially we have been talking to local press and using social media to make sure that we are responding to council spin on what their plans are."

Marie continued "We have been ready and prepared to act on behalf of our members for months by planning the message and being ready to respond once the detail had been announced.

"We're determined to make the council think again over these cuts and to meet our red line positions of no compulsory redundancies, no cuts to terms and conditions, no privatisation of services and no reductions to take home pay."

## Anti-union bill

From Page 1

Mass opposition has had a visible impact in the Commons and the union is now opposing by targeted lobbying of the Lords on a host of technical issues and maintaining the mass campaign and that must be carefully co-ordinated.

*It is essential that any contact with Lords is planned and coordinated through the national campaign via the Scottish Secretary.*

The aim is still to defeat the bill but if it is enacted we will need to resist through negotiating now for commitments from employers to resist some or all of the measures in the bill.

And if elements of the bill are enacted, branches will need to mitigate the effects through co-ordinated organising and recruiting on the ground.

As its stands the bill would stop subs deductions from wages, limit how unions can use their funds, interfere with facility time and set ballot thresholds that will effectively remove the right to strike.

## Personal injury settlements

UNISON Scotland won £126,213 in personal injury settlements for members in November 2015 alone.

## Tayside health branch wins low pay victory

by Danny Phillips  
Communications Officer

**UNISON Tayside NHS Health branch has agreed a re-grading for all Band 1 staff.**

UNISON NHS laundry members who are currently on Band 1 pay scale, will be re-evaluated to the top increment of Band 2 by February 2016.

They will receive four years back pay from February 2012.

All other Band 1 staff in NHS Tayside will have a job review in line with Agenda for Change. They will get back pay from July 2015.

Raymond Marshall, joint branch secretary of UNISON Tayside Healthcare branch, said: "This is a tremendous victory for all our Band 1

members and a major step forward to fulfilling UNISON's commitment to improve the lives of our low paid NHS members in Tayside.

"We should be proud of the fact that we were able to achieve this working in full partnership using the Agenda for Change process. And this has been achieved without any disruption to our health services

within Tayside. It shows what can be achieved when we all work together."

NHS Tayside has also given a commitment to the branch to begin discussion on Band 2 Health Assistants roles. UNISON is seeking to ensure that all Band 2 Healthcare Assistant roles are reviewed and developed to meet the current and future patient care models.

## Welfare seminar 'great success'

by Andy Douglas  
'There For You' Trustee

**Over 25 welfare officers and members of the Welfare Committee attended the annual Welfare Seminar in November.**

Also present was Julie Grant, head of There for You (UNISON's own welfare charity) and Jane Clack from Payplan and UNISON debtline.

The seminar was a great success with



Andy Douglas and Welfare chair Adanna McCue make a special presentation to Maureen Whitelaw

# Council cuts will bring greater burden on NHS

**Cuts to vital council services will lead to poorer health and greater burdens on the NHS in coming years, says UNISON Scotland's Local Government Committee.**

As councils prepare to introduce the worst package of cuts in living memory there are real concerns that with the reduction in services the health of children, older people and the disabled will suffer.

Inez Teece, vice-chair of the committee said: "All politicians are telling us that cuts have to be made but of course governments and opposition MSPs alike always talk about protecting the NHS.

"However when councils are forced to close public toilets, reduce the standard of cleaning in schools and nurseries and cut the number of school support assistants there is an impact on the health of the community.

"A poorer cleansing service, less grounds maintenance workers clearing dog dirt and fewer environmental health inspections of shops and restaurants will inevitably lead to increases in disease and



Edinburgh branch backed Glasgow's lobby of the Scottish Parliament on 10 December to urge an end to the policy on restricting funding for council services

illness amongst children.

"And of course, cuts in social work day care centres and libraries will mean greater social isolation for older people leading to the likelihood of a greater burden on doctors and other health services.

"These cuts are a false economy, storing up trouble for the future."

The Local Government

Committee is writing to the Scottish Government calling on them to ensure that in the Scottish budget 'protecting health' includes protecting these vital council services.

### Day of protest against cuts

Local government branches will mount a 'day of protest' in the new year to highlight the effect of massive council cuts.

Each branch will organise different stunts,

protests, stalls, and other initiatives. They are being encouraged to use facebook, twitter and other social media to publicise the events and the real effects of cuts on services.

## UNISON welcomes NHS apprenticeship award

by Watty Gaffney  
Comms & Campaigns Cttee

**Skills Development Scotland have awarded NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Public Sector Employer of the Year 2015 for showing exceptional commitment to the Modern Apprenticeship programme.**

100 modern apprentices (MAs) have been employed across 13 different frameworks - in both clinical and non-clinical roles.

All receive mentor support and are given role-specific training packages which ultimately lead to SQA qualifications.

Cathy Miller, branch secretary of UNISON NHS Glasgow Clyde and CVS Branch, said: "Modern Apprenticeships provide us



UNISON branch secretary Cathy Miller (front row fifth from left) with the apprentices

with the means to recruit young people into permanent employment within our organisation.

"I am pleased that NHS GGC & CVS Branch supports the Board's MA programme by

sponsoring a Modern Apprentice of the Year prize.

"All of these apprentices have gone on to secure posts within the organisation or have chosen to progress to further education.

"UNISON NHS Glasgow Clyde and CVS Branch is proud to have sponsored and supported these apprentices over the last three years, and will continue to support this innovative programme."

## Cordia janitors in conditions dispute ballot

**School janitors, members of UNISON's Glasgow City branch, are being balloted on action after their employer Cordia refused to pay Working Context and Demands (WCD) payments worth between £500 and over £1,000.**

The official ballot asks members if they are prepared to take action short of strikes and also if they will take strike action if there is a need to escalate.

The action short of strike would involve refusing tasks like weeding, litter picking, snow clearing, salt spreading, leaf clearing, heavy lifting, spillage clearing and animal clearing. UNISON says these duties are associated with the workers' 'working context'.

Brian Smith, Glasgow City branch secretary, said: "Cordia are using spurious arguments to justify not paying this non-core payment. UNISON is very clear that school janitors meet the scoring criteria to be awarded a WCD payment."

The action aims to force Cordia into offering an acceptable WCD payment.

A UNISON letter to members says: "Your claim is modest and just. Please have your say and return your paper NOW! Vote YES and YES!"

# Thousands march for climate, justice and jobs

by Hamid Rasheed  
International Committee

**UNISON Green Network members alongside some 5,000 climate activists representing 60 different organisations braved cold, high winds and rain to join Scotland's Climate March in Edinburgh on 28 November.**

The march was part of a global campaign ahead of the COP21 meeting of 200 countries in Paris to try to agree a deal on cutting greenhouse gas emissions.



Fiona Montgomery, Margaret Gallacher, and Hamid Rasheed brave the weather at the march

The marchers sent a simple message to the developed countries, that by agreeing to a deal; they must avail the

and livelihoods are already being impacted by climate change.

UNISON Scotland deputy convener Stephen Smellie,

opportunity to lead the way on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to make a huge difference to the millions of people globally whose lives

addressing the rally, said: "UNISON is clear in its understanding that climate change is the greatest threat facing the world's poor, yet it is countries like our own who are responsible.

"Here in Scotland we five million people are responsible for as much CO2 emissions as 150 million people in Bangladesh.

"We believe in keeping the rise in global temperature below 2°C otherwise hundreds of millions will face drought, floods, starvation and disease."

Stephen added that long ago

UNISON made it clear what we would like to see in Scotland.

- At least 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

- Statutory targets of at least 3% year on year emission reductions, including emissions from international aviation and shipping.

- Strong targets for the public sector to lead by example with negotiated green workplace agreements.

A UNISON Green Network member said: "The UK climate movement has united around three key slogans - climate, justice and jobs - mirroring the Public Service International demands."

# Speak up against police cuts

**UNISON is calling for senior Scottish police to speak out with senior police in England and Wales about the risk that budget cuts present to public safety.**

UNISON members are increasingly frustrated that nobody senior in Police Scotland will even question the pledge to maintain an extra 1,000 police officers while having to make £1.1bn savings from budget. No one at a senior level is willing to speak out and say this cannot be done.

David Malcolm, Scottish Police branch communications officer said: "Despite ample opportunity at the Scottish Parliament Police and Justice committee no-one from Police Scotland has taken the government to task. They bury the issues under a plethora of management speak.

"UNISON is the only one who is saying what is happening."

Police staff are leaving on voluntary redundancy packages with their jobs being subsumed into the remaining staff and when there are not enough staff left to carry out the task at hand, it falls to a police officer. This is backfilling.

David continued: "Police Scotland may deny there is a policy, but backfilling is now common place. How can the cost of redundancy on top of the cost of an officer on a higher rate of pay be justified? In reality this is happening and has been happening for a number of years.

"If a job needs done we need the right person with the skills to do it, at the best value for public money. We will continue to speak out against backfilling, and the wholesale reduction of police staff.

"When will we see those at the top of Police Scotland make a stand for police staff, police officers and our members against this blame shirking Scottish Government?"

## Retired Members conference call



**Scottish Retired Member delegates (above) had a strong presence at their national conference in Brighton in October. Now it's time to plan for the Scottish conference in April 2016.**

The UNISON Scotland conference will be held on Wednesday 13 April 2016 at the

STUC offices at 30 Woodlands Road Glasgow.

Sue Chalmers, Scottish Retired Members secretary, urged members to mark the date in advance: "Full details and delegate nomination forms will be sent out to branches by the beginning of February - please put the date in your diary NOW!"

## NURSING CONFERENCE Campaign for the profession and the NHS

by Gordon McKay  
NEC and Ayrshire & Arran Health

**This year's UNISON Scotland Nursing and Midwifery Conference again saw a packed audience of nursing members who listened to and engaged with a number of high profile speakers who are setting the political, professional and clinical agenda for nursing in Scotland.**

Speakers included Jamie Hepburn, Minister for Health Improvement and Mental Health, and Jenny Marra, Labour spokesperson on Equalities which includes health.

From nursing, speakers were Ben Whur of the Nursing and Midwifery Council on Nurse Revalidation, Professor Ros Crockett the recently retired Director Of Nursing and Midwifery at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde who spoke on the future direction of nursing in Scotland, and Gail Adams Head of Nursing in UNISON who delivered a talk on safe staffing levels.

Eddie Fraser Director of Health and Social Care in East Ayrshire and John Gallacher, regional manager with UNISON Scotland, debated the future of health and social care provision in Scotland.

While all the speakers were leaders in their field, and it is a sign of the influence and respect that UNISON commands that every year such high quality speakers line up to speak, it was the contribution from UNISON nurse members that really set the tone for the day with their expert contributions and questions.

Questions on the Trade Union Bill elicited a commitment from Labour that not only would they oppose the bill but would repeal it when in office. It was good to hear the SNP's opposition but disappointing that they would not pledge to refuse to implement it from Holyrood.

On nurse revalidation the view from UNISON was that while it presented no problems as regards achievability for our nurse members it did not really enhance the profession or increase public safety.

The overwhelming message from the day was that our members were proud to be nurses and proud of the NHS but that it was only by campaigning for both the profession and the NHS that both would continue in their present form, and that UNISON was the only health trade union who could do that on a service wide basis.

# Build links to save democracy in Turkey

**UNISON's Scottish Council has voted to build links with Turkish unions KESK and DISK and to urge the Scottish and UK governments to push the Turkish AKP government to restart the peace process with the Kurds and promote peace and democracy.**

It also sent condolences to families and colleagues of those killed in the Ankara bombing on 10 October when 105 died and 400 were injured at a trade union organised 'workers for peace' rally.

Unions lay responsibility for the bombings on the words and actions of the AKP government.

The government has since used the excuse of a threat of terrorism to attack freedom and democracy, including media bans and shutting down social media.

Margaret Gallacher, South Lanarkshire branch, told delegates: "Our motion notes the violent attacks on political opponents and trade unions,

**Scores of trade union activists and members are held in maximum security prisons just for carrying out trade union activities'**

women's groups, writers, artists and journalists.

"The AKP government also aims to create state-controlled government friendly trade unions and oppress authentic trade unions such as KESK and DISK."

It was no surprise that the

Turkish government wants to attack trade unions.

"They want to silence opposition against the war, crush Kurdish self-determination, quash workers' rights and subjugate women's rights", said Margaret.

"Women trade unionists denouncing violence against women are regularly repressed particularly during celebrations like International Women's Day the UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

"Scores of trade union

activists and members are currently held in maximum security prisons just for carrying out trade union activities."

Margaret stressed that UNISON members building links and exchanges with KESK and DISK and pressurising our governments to act could have a significant effect.

"Although sometimes it's not that obvious, the Turkish government still cares about international opinion so we must use that to reinforce democracy in Turkey."

## Inverclyde Christmas cinema treat

**UNISON's Inverclyde branch has found a novel way of bringing together members from five employers with a Christmas cinema treat.**

For the the second year the branch worked with the Waterfront cinema in Greenock to bring 800 members and families to the movies. This year it was The Good Dinosaur

for the kids and The Coopers for the grown-ups.

UNISON stewards decorated the cinema with tinsel and UNISON balloons and the programme was preceded by a short powerpoint about the union's activities.

"We have been trying to find ways to bring our membership together which is no easy task as there is 1,700



of them", said UNISON social convener Veronica Rassmussen. "We were overwhelmed with the demand."

### We want to hear your news

SiU is your paper, we want to hear your stories. Contact John Stevenson (Editor) john.stevenson@unison-edinburgh.org.uk Danny Phillips d.phillips@unison.co.uk