

Glasgow City members stand firm on action

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Health Secretary challenged on cuts 'NHS Glasgow and Clyde is not overspent, it is underfunded' - p3



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Scotland in UNISON

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

Colleges hit as staff strike for fair pay

by John Stevenson and Trisha Hamilton

College support staff across Scotland walked out for a second time on 27 September in an increasingly bitter pay row in the troubled further education (FE) sector.

More strikes are set to follow in October but hopes were raised when strikers rallying at the Scottish Parliament heard the employers had called for a meeting on 13 October.

John Gallacher, UNISON Scottish organiser, put the members' case to Deputy First Minister John Swinney at the Parliament's 'Colleges Scotland' event. And in a letter to MSPs, he urged the government to step in.

He wrote: "The conduct in 2016 of Scottish negotiations (set up by SNP in 2015) by FE employers is the most unfair and unjust I have seen in almost 30 years as a trade union official in Scotland."

The strike and rally on 27 September followed previous action on 6 September and is the second national strike within a year of the new national bargaining arrangements being set up.



FE members took their message to the Scottish Parliament

Photos of pickets on the day flooded into the UNISON Scotland website and social media Thursday via Stranraer via Stornoway and across the whole country.

Some 2,500 support staff from UNISON and GMB – including classroom assistants, estates staff, key finance staff, librarians, catering staff, cleaning staff and

'Conduct in 2016 negotiations is the most unfair and unjust I have seen in 30 years'

JOHN GALLACHER

others took part in the action.

A further two days are planned for October as the autumn term in Scottish colleges is beset by closed campuses, cancelled classes and a chaotic student experience.

The row centres on the pay rise for 2016, as college bosses awarded lecturing staff a flat rate rise of £450, while most low-paid support staff were offered £230 - almost half that awarded to their teaching colleagues.

A college additional needs assistant and UNISON member, who asked to remain anonymous, said: "I cannot believe my employers are forcing me to withdraw my labour yet again and have not treated me the same as the lecturers with whom I work in the same classrooms.

"Is my role seen as second-class by college management?"

"As an ANA, I work with young learners who have a

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Scotland's home care at breaking point

Scotland's home care service is at breaking point, says a report from UNISON Scotland.

The report - We care, do you?, available on the website - is the latest in UNISON Scotland's damage series which looks at the impact of austerity cuts on the country's public services and the people who deliver them.

The survey of home carers revealed that:

- Nine in 10 said they were limited to specific times for client visits, with many reporting this was too short a period to properly cater to a client's needs.

- Four in five said they believe the service has been affected by cuts or privatisation with carers saying the emphasis was now on 'quantity rather than quality'.

- Over a quarter said they were not paid for their travelling time.

- Two thirds said they did not have anywhere to go between visits to have a meal, hot drink or toilet break.

- Nearly half said they worked longer than contracted hours.

Many carers are not being paid for the time they spend travelling between clients, or reimbursed for travel costs.

Twenty-five councils said they pay travelling expenses, but four were only for their own staff; three did not pay at all and one council said it varied.

The percentages of the services contracted-out varied

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£650k won in injuries claims for members

UNISON Scotland won almost £650,000 in personal injury damages for members via Thompsons Solicitors in the second three months of 2016.

Dave Watson, UNISON Scottish organiser, said: "We continue to recover around £250k in damages for members every month."

Remind your colleagues about UNISON's legal services. For non employment related services phone 08080 864 766. For employment issues contact your branch.

UNISON launches Public Service Champions campaign

UNISON is launching an exciting new Public Service Champions advertising campaign.

The campaign stands up for the people who deliver our public services - people like you - but for the first time, we're telling the story from the point of view of the person in the street who uses the services.

The ads are aimed at everyone - the general public - who use our magnificent public

services every day.

And it will remind people of the unsung heroes - people like you - who are part of the wider team that provides them.

So, look out for the ads in newspapers, on the radio, in the street and on Facebook over the next few weeks and let us know what you think.

Read more about the campaign on the UNISON UK website at <https://champions.unison.org.uk>



Scotland's Mental Health First Aid - basic skills to help in a crisis

by Shirley Ballingall
Fife Health Branch

Twelve years ago I had a conversation with someone that changed my life. Someone at work disclosed to me that they were feeling suicidal.

It was an emotional discussion in which I was acutely aware that perhaps if I said or did the wrong thing that it could have serious consequences.

Luckily, that person got the help and support they needed and it all worked out fine, but sometimes it doesn't.

The question that went around my head for days was; did I do and say everything I should have for the situation?

I found the answer in a course called 'Scotland's Mental Health First Aid' [SMHFA] which is aimed enabling people with no mental health background to respond appropriately to someone who is experiencing some sort of mental health problem.

The course covers a wide range of mental health issues including depression, suicidal thoughts, stress, anxiety and psychotic disorders, etc. It's a 12 hour course delivered using a wide range of interactive activities, presentations and group discussions and helps develop your communication, people support and 'signposting to help' skills.

With mounting pressures on members it's not at all surprising that branches are seeing an increase in mental health issues being reported. However, SMHFA can provide stewards with the basic skills to deal with members in crisis.

In our branch we also offer a members' 'Help Sheet' for anyone in crisis that contains useful local and national numbers and websites where members can access further help and support.

SMHFA courses run throughout Scotland and are usually free for frontline workers. You can find out more about the courses and where they are running by checking out www.SMHFA.com for more information.

Home care crisis

From front page

from 10% (West Dunbartonshire) to 91% (West Lothian). The number of contractors used varied widely too from three in East Renfrewshire to 38 in West Lothian.

While almost all councils say they pay the Scottish Living Wage to their own staff, not many believed their contractors do so. The recent Procurement Act allows the living wage to be a factor in issuing contracts, but the councils who responded said they did not use the procurement guidelines.

UNISON Scotland is campaigning for councils to sign up to its Ethical Care Charter for home care services, which sets minimum standards to protect the dignity and quality of life for people who need home care.

Stephen Smellie, UNISON Scotland's depute convener, said: "This report highlights the shocking truths of a dedicated, caring workforce who are being stretched to the limit, often resulting in their own stress and ill-health.

"They juggle with travelling time and running late, to ensure their tasks are completed as best as they can. Some often go back in their own time to make sure their clients' needs are met."

NHS24 Branch celebrates 10 years of organising

by John Stevenson

SiU editor

UNISON Scotland's NHS24 Branch will celebrate its 10 year anniversary in all its contact centres starting on 14 October.

"We will be organising various events and hope to recruit new members", said branch secretary Kenny Woods.

UNISON faced a huge logistical challenge organising in the new NHS24 service when it started up, rolling out

in stages across the country.

"We have contact centres in Aberdeen, Clydebank, South Queensferry and Cardonald", explained Kenny.

"Initially it was Aberdeen, followed a few months later by Clyde then South Queensferry.

"From the start we were recruiting members who joined their different regions."

"We quickly established a good membership and after South Queensferry was fully up and running, decided to try and create our own branch."

By October 2006 the new branch was in place.

"Although difficult at the start to organise, we set up our network of stewards to serve our membership over a large geographical area.

"We have got better and better at this as the years have gone on. We continue to grow our membership and are active in all areas of NHS24."

From the beginning the branch won significant benefits for members including securing organisational change

and establishing a Disability Leave Policy, the first of its kind in Scotland.

It also took part in the ground-breaking 'Be Aware' mental health awareness campaign earlier this year through rep Colin Keys.

Kenny added: "We are now well represented at organisation level through our commitment to work with the other trade unions in the Staff Side and have stewards as co chairs at a centre level and a national level."

FE strike: UNISON will 'only accept fairness and justice for all'

From front page

learning difficulty. This can involve intimate personal care as well as drug delivery, for example for diabetes.

"The learning difficulties cover a wide spectrum of disorders due to autism, Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy and many others. Am I not worth a pay rise of £450, the same as a college lecturer?"

Chris Greenshields, chair of UNISON Scotland's FE committee, said: "Striking is a last resort and we're disappointed the employers have not listened to our calls for fair and equal treatment.

"In 2015, every single support worker and every single lecturer received £400 as a pay rise. The employers agreed an 'equality clause'. What is different in 2016?"

"Why should one portion of staff get £450, another £400 and yet another £230? It is a divisive negotiating strategy



It was one of the noisiest rallies the Parliament has seen on 27 September as FE staff from across the country put their case to MSPs from all parties.

and UNISON will only accept fairness and justice for all."

John Gallacher added: "UNISON has information that one college principal in Glasgow has seen his extremely high annual salary

be supplemented by pay rises of more than £10,000 in the last calendar year.

"Yet, he has stated publicly that there is no money in the sector to increase the current unfair and unequal offer to

support staff.

"It's no wonder our members feel it is one rule for them and another for us. Our members are fighting for parity of esteem and a fair and reasonable pay rise."

Lanarkshire Pathways course 'empowered me'

by Audrey Malloy

Area organiser

The three UNISON Lanarkshire branches (North LG, South LG and Lanarkshire Health) via the Lanarkshire Education Forum organised a Pathways course for women in May this year.

The event was a great success. We discussed everyday skills that women have that they don't realise they hold - the skills and expertise that activists in the union have like organising, communicating and bargaining.

We shared how UNISON and the branches work and where the members fit into this.

We also made them aware of opportunities that are available to members through the union like learning and benefits.

LabourLink Officer Angela Feeney arranged for Maria Fyfe, who was MP for Maryhill for 14 years and the only female Labour MP in Scotland when first elected, to come along.



Lanarkshire Pathways course: "We Come Together. We Are One. We Are UNISON"

She gave a wonderfully inspirational talk about Mary Barbour, the legendary organiser of Govan women in the rent strikes of 1915.

Course participant Kathleen Smith, who works at NHS Laundry in Wishaw, said: "Participating in this course has been a real eye-opener for me.

"I got out of my comfort zone and I went for it, I'm really glad I did. All the

woman there were absolutely lovely, not once did I feel like I shouldn't be there.

"Most of us listen to that voice inside our head telling us what we can or cannot do. It's time to kick it to the kerb and take the plunge! I promise you won't regret it.

"This course has empowered me and I now have a set of goals to better myself and to help others.

"I know there are many women out there who will benefit from this course, it made me feel the impossible is possible.

"We covered all aspects of the union therefore you get a taste of everything available, what you can do for your union and what the union can do for you.

"It's all about coming together and making working life easier for all."

Young members taking unions into schools



Over the last year, trade union reps have been visiting Scotland's secondary schools to speak to young people.

The 'Unions into schools' initiative is a great opportunity to inform young people about the rights and responsibility they have going into the world of work.

This has never been more important, with the rise of zero hour contracts, poorer terms and conditions and unscrupulous employers who seek to exploit young workers.

UNISON young member, Ryan Boyle said: "It's been

great experience taking part in this project.

"It's often the first time that many young people become aware of trade unions and their role.

"History shows us that workers' rights have never been stronger than when trade unions have been at peak strength.

"This initiative allows us to inform and inspire, and to give young adults the tools and the confidence to challenge bad employment practices while striving not only for better ones but also for a more socially just society."

Branches urged to support housing seminar

UNISON Scotland's Housing Issues Group is running a seminar on Tuesday 29 November aimed at members who work in the housing sector.

Running from 9.30 to 3pm with lunch provided, the event will be at Stirling Court Hotel, University of Stirling. Applications with a fee of £50 per delegate need to be in by Wednesday 19 October. Contact l.bartlett@unison.co.uk.

Speakers will include reps from Child Poverty Action Group, Fife Council, the Wheatley Group, the Living Rent Campaign, Govan Law Centre and Shelter Scotland.

Mandy McDowall, regional organiser, said: "This event will be our opportunity in UNISON to engage across the sector, to discuss the housing crisis in Scotland, how this is being tackled, what else needs to be done and what influence UNISON can bring.

"It will also discuss the wider social and economic impacts that stem from a lack of decent and affordable housing.

"This promises to be an interesting debate which we hope branches will support by funding delegates."

The Scottish Housing Issues Group (SHIG) is keen for more branches to become involved in the group. This seminar will also be a good opportunity to hear about the work of SHIG with the hope that colleagues will become future delegates to it.

Branch challenges Health Secretary on NHS cuts

by Watty Gaffney

Comms & Campaigns Committee

UNISON's biggest branch - protesting outside the NHS Annual Review at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital - demanded that Health Secretary Shona Robison listens to its concerns over massive cuts to services and the impact they will have on patient care.

The 18,000 strong NHS Glasgow Clyde and CVS Branch says staff are already stressed due to understaffing and consistent cuts over the last few years.

It warns that further cuts will have a detrimental effect on staff, services and patients.

Branch secretary Cathy Miller told the Health Secretary: "This is not about the Board. This is about the Scottish Government funding Glasgow.

"Another year, another budget settlement which falls far short of what it costs to deliver services across NHSGCC."

Cathy added: "NHS Glasgow and Clyde is not overspent, it is underfunded.

"In addition to the centralisation of more services and short staffing right across



Branch confronted Shona Robison at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital

our membership, we are now at the stage where the Board are relying on selling off parcels of land to release one off money to help balance the books."

The protest follows a leaked development plan suggesting maternity and vital wards face the axe in a cost cutting drive.

They include the closure of midwifery facilities at Vale of Leven Hospital in Dunbartonshire and Inverclyde Hospital in Greenock.

Lightburn geriatric hospital in Glasgow could also shut

NHS Glasgow and Clyde is not overspent, it is underfunded'

CATHY MILLER



while children's emergency care may be moved from Paisley's Royal Alexandra Hospital.

Bosses hope to raise £23 million by selling off 19 disused sites including Victoria Infirmary, Merchiston, Blawarthill and Drumchapel Hospital, but amid warnings of a economic slowdown they branded this a

'desperate gamble'.

Cathy said: "It is clear that despite near constant change and review, this Board can't meet the demands being placed on it.

"If they are not funding us, we can't do everything they are asking us to do. If they do not do something about this, these services will be lost."

Lothian Health aims high with new advice centre

by Steve Faulkner

Lothian Health Branch

UNISON Lothian Health Branch has raised its public profile with the opening of a new advice centre at Edinburgh's Western General Hospital.

The new centre was officially opened at the beginning of August by Sheila and Jack Smith in memory of their daughter Lynn Jackson.

A proud Debbie Reilly, lead steward at the WGH, said: "It took some hard

work from all concerned to get the new outlet up and running but I believe that it is an important way of supporting existing members and attracting new ones."

The decision to open the new advice centre at Western General Hospital follows the success of the existing outlets in the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and St John's Hospital in Livingston.

Like these other centres, the outlet at the WGH will be open from 8-5 Monday to Friday.

This is the third outlet to

be opened in as many years and follows a deliberate strategy by the branch to recruit new members and offer existing ones access to advice and representation from experienced stewards in convenient and confidential locations.

The advantages of these resource centres to the branch are not only their accessibility for members when looking for assistance but also as a means of promoting the services and benefits on offer from UNISON.



Scotland hosts international seminar

UNISON Scotland welcomed delegates from Northern, North West and Northern Ireland to a joint international seminar in Glasgow in September.

"The theme running through the seminar was of the creative arts and industries and how they are part of the struggle for social justice", explained Sam Macartney, chair of UNISON Scotland's International Committee.

That brought a new initiative as delegates headed off to the Glasgow School of Art for a screening of 'True Cost' at the Take One Action! Film Festival, partly sponsored by UNISON.

Northern Region led a session on their solidarity project in Buenaventura, Colombia, in collaboration with Show Racism the Red Card and the NOMADESC human rights organisation.

The seminar heard from Hasan Barghouthi, general director of the Democracy and Workers' Rights Center, a Palestinian organisation dedicated to defending workers' rights and promoting social justice; and Salma Karmi-Ayyoub a barrister working on Palestinian human rights.

UNISON North West president Glen Williams spoke on 'Knowledge & Socialist Thought Institute Palestine' and he and Sam Macartney reported on their part in the recent UNISON delegation to Palestine.

Northern Ireland reported on developments in the Colombian peace process and Tracey Delaney, vice chair of North West's International Committee, led a session on Pablo Navarrete on documentary films.

Call for united campaign to defend council services

The People's Assembly Scotland has called for a united front to campaign to defend council services.

The organisation, made up of a broad spectrum of Scottish trade unions and community, campaigning and political groups, laid out the plans at a conference in Glasgow last month.

UNISON Scotland convener Lilian Macer and Communications chair John Stevenson both spoke at the event which called for unions and communities to work together to back councillors willing to fight cuts.

It backed many of the measures in UNISON Scotland's

'Combating Austerity' report to reduce the costs of PFI and debt and to reform council tax and give more flexible capital budgets.

Lilian Macer spoke on challenges facing the NHS and urged unions to be proactive in engaging with government on health and social care.

Tom Morrison, Clydebank TUC and long time UNISON activist, moved the campaign motion and was seconded by John Stevenson.

John focussed on the threat to local democracy as education looks set to follow the centralisations of police, fire and to an extent social care.

£100 million council tax grab is like Trump's Mexico wall'

Slamming Scottish Government plans to move schools away from direct local control, he said:

"A bit like Donald Trump's Mexico wall, the plan is that local government will actually pay for this, with £100 million raised locally in council tax being taken away from direct council control.

"Breaking the link between local taxation and local spending would be another nail in the

coffin of local democracy."

Calling for unity, People's Assembly chair Phil McGarry said: "Scotland has been through two major referendums in as many years. Whether people voted for independence or not, or to leave the EU or not, we all face one challenge in common - the damage caused by austerity."

The conference also heard from Mike Dailly of Govan Law Centre on the housing crisis, the FBU's Denise Christie, Graeme Stevenson, former president of the European Transport Workers' Federation, Gordon Martin of the RMT and Unite Labour NEC rep Martin Mayer.

Community Safety workers strike over shift payments

One hundred and forty workers employed by Community Safety Glasgow, a company of Glasgow City Council, took strike action from 9-11 September.

The first of planned strikes by members of three trade unions (UNITE, GMB and UNISON) was set to coincide with the first Old Firm game of season.

The dispute is over the level of shift payments that CSG are intending to make under a new pay scheme. CSG are trying to pay their workers less than other workers in Glasgow City Council for working nightshift, at the weekend, etc.

The workers do a range of jobs and include advocacy workers, community payback workers, community enforcement officers, community enhancement

Glasgow reports by Ian Leech
Glasgow City Branch

workers, security officers and CCTV workers.

Brian Smith, UNISON Glasgow branch secretary, said: "The trade unions believe that the payment levels are far too low compared to those in other parts of the Glasgow City Council family.

"For example, the nightshift payment in the council is almost double that which CSG intend to pay.

"The trade unions do not believe that the proposed payments adequately compensate workers who undertake shifts and our members have been left with no option other than to take strike action. Some workers are facing a pay cut of £3,000 per year."

Strike threat brings public holiday victory

The threat of strike action across three unions has stopped Glasgow attacks on public holidays and flexi arrangements.

A budget paper planned to cut the number of public holidays in a year from 12.5 to six days and a reduction in the amount of flexi days that can be taken over a year.

The reduction in public holidays over the year would not only have a detrimental effect on staff members' time spent with families but also, for those staff who are on rota to work (Residential and Refuse Collection), a substantial loss of income from working 'premium days'.

The sub-plot to these attacks, and the ultimate goal of the council was to reduce the terms and conditions of the 'Core Council' staff down to those experienced by staff working in the council's Arms-Length Organisations.

Substantial loss of income from working 'premium days' avoided

In turn this would enable the council to achieve the freedom of movement required to avoid TUPE when the redeploying of staff across the city as the financial crisis in the city tightened its grip.

A city wide campaign involving the unions Unite, GMB and UNISON threatened co-ordinated strike action which eventually led to the council having a change of heart.

The chief executive explained in a letter to staff that: "The council's administration had decided to withdraw proposals to replace some public holidays with annual leave, having made significant progress delivering budget savings."



Glasgow members lobby against privatisation

No to privatisation of Council ICT Services

Glasgow City Council's Chief Executive is proposing that the council's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) provision is privatised to a Canadian based global corporation.

UNISON believes that this is wrong for a number of reasons including higher long-term costs, loss of control of a key council function, the future impact for social care, schools, home care, financial payments, council tax collection and benefits and other vital council services, and the threat to workers' jobs, wages and

conditions.

The best way to ensure quality council services is to have them run in-house under democratic control.

Public money should not be used to increase the profits of global private companies.

Glasgow City Council's ruling Labour Group has yet to approve the proposal.

The trade unions involved lobbied Glasgow City Council on Monday 19 September at the start of a city wide campaign against any privatisation proposal.

See more at <https://www.facebook.com/event/s/1769574579924848/>

Jannies' action continues

UNISON members employed as janitors in Glasgow's primary, nursery and additional support for learning schools have mounted boycotts and 19 days of strike since January in a conditions dispute.

Cordia, an ALEO of Glasgow City Council, is refusing to pay a Working Context and Demands Payment (WCD) to school janitors and is using spurious arguments to justify not making this payment.

Glasgow City Council and its ALEOs' pay structure awards payments to workers who undertake duties which are dirty, unpleasant, involve working outside on a regular basis or heavy lifting.

There are five levels of annual WCD payment ranging from just over £500 to over £1,000.

UNISON is very clear that school janitors meet the criteria to be awarded this payment.

Janitors began industrial action on 19 January by boycotting weeding, litter picking, snow clearing, salt spreading, leaf clearing, heavy lifting, spillage clearing and animal clearing.

Teachers, education support workers, cleaners and catering staff have been advised by their unions not undertake the duties which the janitors are boycotting.

Since March 2016, janitors have taken 19 days of strike action in an escalation of the dispute.

"Our members have been left with no option other than to take action as both Cordia and the council are wrong and just not listening", said the branch.

During the strikes, practices have come to light that UNISON considers potentially detrimental for pupils and staff including:

- a lack of daily fire tests and trained, competent fire wardens;
- schools left open and unattended
- no evidence of amendments to premises Fire Risk Assessments as required by FSR 2006
- a lack of daily heating plant checks;
- untrained staff loading coal into fire;
- untrained staff opening schools and leaving them unattended;
- cleaners covering janitors' duties;
- litter picking not being completed;
- after school care, evening school lets unattended;
- lack of daily boiler house checks;
- asbestos logs not being completed for external contractors.

We want to hear your news

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