



Issue 284 10th -24th May 2020

Coronavirus (Scotland) (No.2) Bill

The catastrophe engulfing Scotland's elderly care sector cannot be separated from the policy, pursued by government's Scottish and UK level to shift residential care into the private sector. This is not a case of market failure – the failure is the market. As well as being a crisis in itself, the lethal swathe cut by the Coronavirus through Scotland's care homes has revealed that the system is in crisis.

Fragmented, profit driven and with a workforce treated so poorly that the sector has an acute recruitment and retention problem – our care home system is broken. We welcome the Scottish Government's explicit commitment to bringing failing care homes into public ownership. This is a small but essential step to fixing our broken care system. It is urgent that moves are made to take care into being a directly provided service. One where residents are seen as members of the community rather than commodities.

Whilst there have been some advances in recent years prompted by the Fair Work Convention, this remains a badly treated workforce. It seems only fair that provision via a social care worker fund should be utilised to prevent Care workers who have been off work – and in most cases this will be to protect residents – being penalised. That it is necessary though says a very great deal about conditions in care homes. This is a sector that pleads poverty while containing elements depositing significant sums in tax havens and paying directors seven figure rewards. One where it seems all of the risks lie with residents and staff rather than investors.

We welcome the amendments to the Bill proposing a national bargaining framework for the care sector. Given that the vast bulk of staff will be employed to look after people covered by the National Care Home Contract it makes a great deal of sense to have nationally determined terms and conditions. If existing arrangements were functioning – we wouldn't have the staffing crisis.

Everyone agrees that when the lockdown is eased that those returning to work should do so safely. It is therefore incumbent on parliament and government to ensure that that's what happens. This is why the proposed Trade Union health and safety network is so important. Without this there will be no effective enforcement of any guidelines. Neither the HSE, nor any other agency – such as council environmental health departments have the capacity to undertake work on the scale that is necessary. Nor can the good will or common sense of employers be relied upon. Were that the case employment protection legislation – from Equal Pay Act to the laws prohibiting child labour would have been unnecessary. Only unions will put workers safety ahead of profit, this is why the amendments stating that TU access should be a condition of businesses receiving government support are so important.

It should go without saying, but for the avoidance of doubt. Those basing themselves offshore for the avoidance of tax – should have no claim on public funds we would urge MSPs to support amendments recommending this..



Everything you need to know on Coronavirus and your rights at work [here](#).



TAKE OUR CORONAVIRUS SURVEY

This is a survey for all UNISON members. UNISON Scotland is campaigning to ensure our members receive the support and resources they need to protect our communities. Take part [here](#).



LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKERS' SURVEY

This is a survey for all UNISON members. UNISON Scotland is campaigning to ensure our members receive the support and resources they need to protect our communities. This survey will inform our campaign for local government "Fighting together today for a better future tomorrow". Take part [here](#).

Dave Prentis, UNISON's General Secretary, talks to members about support over returning to work.

Read our Public Works Blog: Cleaners on the frontline - Coronavirus

Our Bargaining Brief on the Living Wage Guidance

Read our responses to the latest Scottish Government consultations

UNISON Scotland response: Vulnerable children during the coronavirus pandemic;
Improving Energy Efficiency in Owner Occupied Homes and
Draft Offshore Wind Policy Statement



We're Here For You

Members experiencing financial and emotional difficulties can contact our welfare charity, **There for You**, which provides a confidential advice and support service for members and their dependants.

During the COVID-19 crisis, UNISON has changed its processes **to make it easier for members to get legal support at no extra cost**, as part of their union membership.

UNISON members in Scotland who need advice during Coronavirus



Please speak to your workplace rep first. If possible.



Glasgow: 0141 342 2899

Aberdeen: 01224 620624

Inverness: 01463 715891

When you call us you will be asked to leave a message, please do and we will get back to you as soon as we can.



For membership enquiries: 0131 226 0090
membershipassistancescotland@unison.co.uk

UNISON
Scotland

MEMORIAL FOR DENIS GOLDBERG STRUGGLE HERO AND SO MUCH MORE

PICK OF THE MEDIA

13/05/20 unison-scotland.org holyrood.com

Coronavirus death rate twice as high in Scotland's deprived areas. ...

Campaigners call for emergency cash boost to prevent child poverty crisis.

12/05/20 unison-scotland.org

CORONAVIRUS HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE STAFF: Launch of new national digital wellbeing hub.

11/05/20 unison-scotland.org

UNISON launch campaign for 'heroic' local government workers.

29/04/20 unison-scotland.org

International Workers' Memorial Day

Moving moment as the country falls silent to remember all the workers who've died during the pandemic.

29/04/20 thecourier.co.uk

UNISON demanding to know why the test site at Perth College was agreed without wider consultation.

27/04/20 unison-scotland.org

UNISON welcomes decision by Scottish care charity to pay staff full pay if shielding or self-isolating

NHS Scotland's self-help guide on the coronavirus



Learning in Lockdown

UNISON has increased the number of online courses. [Find out more](#)

UNISON - ALWAYS WITH YOU

Join UNISON now ▶



PUBLIC WORKS: TOOLKIT

Public Works is the UNISON Scotland campaign for jobs, services, fair taxation and a Living Wage... and against austerity. **This toolkit** provides branches with campaign resources to save our public services from the cuts driven by an austerity that is a political choice not an economic necessity.
