SCOTTISH HEALTH COMMITTEE 2009-10

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November 2009 saw the very successful Scottish Health Awards ceremony in Edinburgh, of which UNISON is a major sponsor.

Following on from the visit of some of our activists to Cuba earlier in the year, the Scottish Health Committee and branches have set out to raise £25,000 to make a solidarity donation to the Cuban health service in relation to the 50th Anniversary of Cuban culture. A Cuba Night on 4 December 2009 raised a further £500 towards the tally. This was followed by a very generous donation of £5,000 from the December Scottish Council to help build the total (all other donations gratefully received!)

SCOTTISH HEALTH COMMITTEE
2009-10 ANNUAL REPORT

The Scottish Health Committee continues to progress its work plan, which was set out at the Committee’s Annual Policy Event in May 2009, to meet the key objectives and priorities of UNISON within the service group in Scotland.

Objective 1: Recruiting, Organising and representing members

Health Service Group membership in Scotland for January to November grew by 5.3%, a total of 6,406, (compared to 4,434 in 2008 and 4,790 in 2008).

The Scottish Health Committee is developing a strategy around potential cuts that may be made in the NHS Scotland and the increasing financial pressures the NHS is facing both nationally and locally.

An NHS Staff Side Seminar with all trade union and professional organisations is planned for February 2010.

The Scottish Health Committee is implementing a recruitment strategy on the NHS Pension Choice Exercise. FDO funding is supporting the campaign. A branch briefing was held on January 11 2010.

Objective 2: Negotiating and Bargaining on behalf of members and Promoting Equality

The Scottish Terms and Conditions Committee of 16 December 2009 considered the following issues: Annex T Guidance (progression Band 5 to 6); On-Call review; Payment of on-call during periods of sickness; UK Staff Council agenda reports; update of Agenda For Change in Scotland.

In December 2009 the Pay review Body confirmed that it would not seek a remit from Ministers to re-open the third year of the three year NHS pay deal as at 1 April 2010 (2.25%; flat rate £420 for the lowest 13 points, and some changes to bands 5 and 6.) This settlement is likely to be above the economy median settlement for 2010/11, continuing a long trend for the NHS PRB remit group.

Concern remains at the failure of the four countries to implement the recommendation of the PRB to award a recruitment and retention premium to Pharmacy staff.

December 2009 saw the launch of the new NHS Scotland Uniform Policy. Steady progress is being made on the review of all NHS Scotland model employment policies.

The December Scottish Partnership Forum considered the following: Swine Flu pandemic; Health budget 2010; the NHS Quality Strategy; HEAT targets 2010; Pilots for Elected Health Boards

December 2009 also saw the election of two new UNISON Employee Directors: Lilian Macer (NHS Lanarkshire) and Wilma Brown (NHS Fife)

The December Scottish Health Committee had major discussions on Dignity at Work, and received a presentation from Margo MacDonald MSP on the ‘Right To Die’ issue.

Objective 3: Campaigning and promoting UNISON on behalf of members

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Objective 4: Developing an efficient and effective Union

Representatives of the Scottish Health Committee have been participating in a Working Group on the impact of Devolution on the Health Service Group. There is a further UK meeting on 18 January 2010.

The Health Pages on the UNISON Scotland website continue to be updated.

A Scottish Health Committee Newsletter for the Service Group in Scotland is being produced quarterly.

The Health Service Group Executive (SGE) have been considering proposals to revise current sector “sector” committees in light of the recent rule changes agreed at the 2009 NDC. Ideas have been developed for restructuring to give a real voice to greater range of occupations, integrating effectively across the union to represent the interests of social care staff and enabling members working for private contractors to articulate their perspectives and organise successfully. Further work will now take place to firm up the proposals ready for implementation and the February Scottish Health Committee will give further detailed consideration to these proposals.

Tom Waterson Chair of Scottish Health Committee