



No. 27

November 2011

## Strike for Pensions Justice on Nov.30

UNISON members in Scotland have voted decisively for strike action on 30 November. 73% of members covered by the LGPS scheme voted yes - 88% of health members also voted for action. This vote reflects the deep concern that our members have over Government ministers' proposals for their pensions. This concern is shared by members of 25 trade unions resulting in some 3 million workers across the UK going on strike.

UK Ministers have published some new proposals on accrual rates and transitional arrangements. We welcome this movement which has come as a direct result of the strength of feeling shown by public sector workers across the UK in a string of positive ballot results. However, these proposals have to be considered in detail within scheme negotiations and there are no firm offers for members to consider. The UK Government's position on all the other issues including contribution increases in health, increases in pension age, and the 15% cut in pension benefits caused by RPI to CPI indexation remains unchanged.

**STUC DAY OF ACTION  
FOR PENSIONS JUSTICE  
30 NOVEMBER**



The position in Scotland also remains unchanged as a consequence. The Scottish Government have published their proposals for contribution increases next year in the NHS Superannuation Scheme (Scotland) and you can read the UNISON Scotland response on our website. Scottish Ministers have also written to the Treasury saying that they cannot support the "extremely constrained timetable" that requires scheme negotiations to be concluded by the end of the year.

UNISON and the other trade unions remain committed to a negotiated settlement, but unless further real progress is made the planned day of action on 30 November goes ahead.

## Information – and misinformation!

UNISON members have been sent a letter from the General Secretary that explains the reasons for the action on 30 November. Further details are on our websites (see over). Questions on industrial action are covered in the [FAQ](#) section and branches have been sent a Guide to Industrial Action.

There has been some misinformation sent to members by employers, particularly those covered by the LGPS (Scotland) scheme. A generic rebuttal of this has been sent to branches and specific advice in response to particular publications. In the main these demonstrate a lack of understanding of pension issues and/or industrial action law.

The notice of action will be sent to employers on 17 November. Members are not required to advise their employer that they are going on strike, however many times some may ask!

## Political support

The Scottish Government has confirmed its opposition to the contribution increases, although it believes it has no option but to implement these in health due to the financial consequences. Ministers have also indicated that they will develop long term plans through the partnership structures in Scotland and will not be constrained by the timetable imposed by UK Ministers.

Scottish Labour MSPs have decided to oppose the parliamentary programme for 30 November in solidarity with workers taking action on that date. We have urged other MSPs to follow this line and not cross PCS picket lines at Parliament on 30 November. Labour and Green MSPs have supported this position. All the Scottish Labour leadership candidates have indicated their support for the action. There is also a TULO [campaign pack](#) for Constituency Labour Parties.

The Tories have tabled a [motion](#) in the Scottish Parliament attacking the action. The motion sadly demonstrates that they simply don't understand the pension position in Scotland, or it was drafted for them in London! We have sent a further briefing to MSPs to respond to the points in the motion.

A similar briefing will be sent to councillors across Scotland next week.



## Organising for 30 November

Branches will have developed their plans with organising staff for the day of action. This will include meetings and other communications to members in the run up to the day. Life and limb cover is being coordinated through service groups and this will be covered at the special Scottish Council on 17 November. On the day arrangements will include liaison with other unions, picket lines and transport arrangements to the nearest march and rally. There are more details in the Branch Guide to Industrial Action and a short workshop activity on organising for industrial action can be run locally.

Branches will receive UNISON leaflets for members and the public and posters shortly. Other materials including placards, armbands, tabards, flags and even vuvuzelas can be [ordered](#). The message to the wider public is being coordinated through the STUC and the Pensions Justice Scotland Campaign. Trades Councils have been leafleting towns and cities in the run up to the day of action and a series of marches and rallies are planned for the day. All of this can be accessed through the Pensions Justice website <http://www.pensionsjusticescotland.org.uk/>

There will obviously be a lot of media interest on the day. Branches should ensure that their key media spokespersons are available on the main picket lines. Real members with a story to tell as case studies are most effective. Branches have copies of the UNISON Scotland resource pack for messaging and this will be supplemented with new materials next week. Web sites, blogs and social media should be regularly updated. On the day branches should send in pictures of picket lines and other events as we will be running these on the web site. Details of this to follow.

## And finally.....

The Stand Comedy Clubs in Glasgow and Edinburgh have a great track record of supporting good causes and 30<sup>th</sup> Nov they will be showing support for another one - Us. The Stand have very kindly offered half price tickets for the shows on the night of the 30<sup>th</sup> to striking UNISON members. Details on our website or phone 0131 558 7272 for Edinburgh or 0844 3358879 for Glasgow.

## More information at:

**Scottish Pension Web Pages:** <http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/pensions/index.html>

**UK Campaign Web Pages:** <http://www.unison.org.uk/pensions/protectour.asp>

### **Bargaining & Campaigns Team contacts:**

Dave Watson, Scottish Organiser: [d.watson@unison.co.uk](mailto:d.watson@unison.co.uk)

Stephen Low [s.low2@unison.co.uk](mailto:s.low2@unison.co.uk), Malcolm Burns [m.burns@unison.co.uk](mailto:m.burns@unison.co.uk)