

Blue light changes

Last year the Christie Commission report on the [Future Delivery of Public Services](#) set out a roadmap for reform. UNISON welcomed the fact that the commission reaffirmed our belief that public services are central to a fair and just society. The four principles set out for reform received widespread support and the Scottish Government agreed that these should form the basis of ongoing reform of public services.

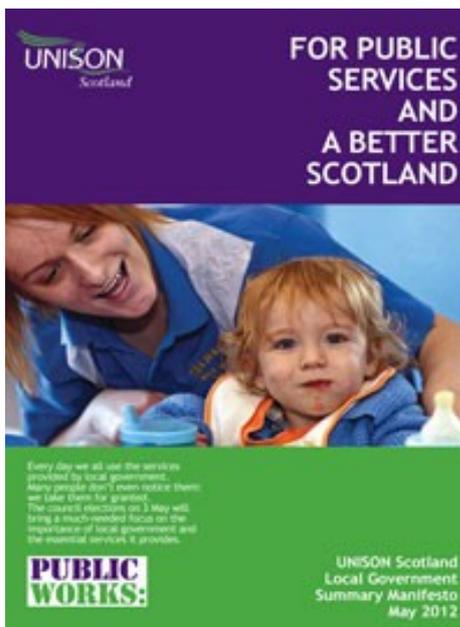
The principles are:

- Empower individuals and communities
- Integrate service provision
- Prevent negative outcomes
- Efficient public services

UNISON is therefore concerned that the actual direction of travel of the reform programme is one of increased centralisation and top-down planning. The review of ICT seems to be heading in the direction of more centralised systems. The Police and Fire Reform Bill will set up single police and fire services moving control away from communities. Central police and fire services will lessen the ability of the forces to tailor the service to local needs. Integrating service provision, as called for by Christie, would mean the police building better links with other providers in their local communities, not removing local decision making through command and control from the centre. It is community links that will help service providers focus on preventing "negative outcomes". It's not even more efficient: the current plans mean that police officers are being taken off the streets to do the work of police staff who have lost their jobs in order to maintain the officer number target agreed with the Tories. Five hundred police officers have already been moved, and if the plans go ahead, a staggering 1500 will be taken off operational roles. Not only are they not qualified to do these jobs, they

cost substantially more money than the person they replaced.

Across the public sector there are calls to cut "backroom" waste but as the police service changes clearly show: efficiency is about having the right staff with the right qualifications doing the right job posts.



UNISON's latest joint publication with APSE [The front line starts here](#) shows that across the public sector time and money is being wasted when professional staff spend time on tasks that used to be undertaken by skilled administrative staff. Over 90% of those using so-called self service systems felt that they had less time to undertake their core functions now, almost 40% say tasks take between four and seven hours a week. This is not more efficient, it's a waste of money.

Public services are facing massive spending cuts. Only by listening to users and the staff delivering services can we make the right choices about reform.

Three things to do today:

- [Read up on childcare](#)
- [Learn about procurement](#)
- [Ask a friend to join](#)

Local Elections

The elections to local government are on May 3rd. The outcome will set the future direction of change in local government. This gives a great opportunity for a meaningful debate on the role of councils and their services.

These are tough times for local government workers. Job numbers are lower than they were in 1999 when power was devolved to the Scottish Parliament. Workers are also facing a pay freeze at a time of rising costs. They are struggling to deliver high quality services with less money and less staff.

The UNISON local government manifesto is based on the experience of our members and their knowledge of what works and doesn't work. (Click on the picture to download the full version.) Printed copies of the short version have been sent to all branches. UNISON members must take the opportunity offered by the election to make sure that those standing for election listen to those who actually deliver services and those who use them. We must question candidates on their policies and their implications. Please make sure you speak to candidates about our policies. There will be support available like key questions via your branch and UNISON website throughout the campaign.

Childcare benefits

Free childcare could boost the economy and support families to lift themselves out of poverty according to a report by the IPPR [Making the Case for Universal Childcare](#). This long-standing UNISON policy could pay for itself through the increased tax income from more mothers working.

A recent report: [The Scottish Childcare Lottery](#) found that childcare costs in Scotland are some of the highest in the UK and that only a fifth of councils had enough day-care places to meet local demand. Some parents are paying over £11,000 per year for 25 hours a week in a nursery. The high costs and scarcity of appropriate childcare are significant barriers to work for many women. Not only does this impact on family budgets when children are young, it means that when women try to return to work they struggle to find work like their previous jobs making them poorer during the rest of their working lives. This also cuts any pension provision they are able to make.

“becoming a mother is the most important factor in explaining gender inequalities in the labour market”

The Government’s inquiry into preventative spending saw expert after expert give evidence as to how spending on children in the early years will save money in the long run by preventing health and behavioural problems in the long run.

In Britain there is already a high financial penalty for motherhood. Soon to be increased by the cuts in childcare tax credits. While Britain has relatively high female employment rates, the gap between female employment and maternal employment is higher than in other OECD countries:

“becoming a mother is the most important factor in explaining gender inequalities in the labour market.”



Making childcare free at the point of use would make sense for families. What the IPPR research shows is that it also makes sense for the public finances. They calculate that universal childcare would bring a net return to the government of £20,050 over four years for every woman who returned to work after one year of maternity leave. Since 2000, Quebec has provided heavily subsidised childcare for all children aged 0-4. Childcare costs \$7 a day. This policy was introduced alongside enhanced parental leave. Following these changes the maternal employment rate increased by 11 percentage points to 74%. This led to a 3.8% increase in Quebec’s GDP. On top of this the state increased its tax revenue and decreased benefits claims. In total for every dollar the state spend it got \$1.05 back. The programme was therefore self-financing.

Universal childcare would mean that work pays for large numbers of women. This would reduce child poverty and provide a boost for the economy due to their increased spending power. It would also create new jobs delivering the service. These jobs need to be secure, well-paid and offer the opportunity for career development for those (mainly) women who take them up, if we wish to reduce poverty and inequality. Keeping the service in the public sector is the best way to ensure that this is the case.

None of the money invested is lost through profits it all goes on high standards of care for children and adequate terms and conditions for the staff who deliver. Work has to pay for those who deliver the service as well as those who use it.

Failed again

Yet another report has found that shared services have failed to deliver for the public sector. The new report by the [National Audit Office](#) found that the plan to save £159m actually cost £1.4billion.

Following the Gershon Review eight major shared service centres emerged in central government between 2004 and 2011. The new Government then introduced its vision with a plan for two cross government centres and a small number of stand alone centres. The Audit office have been investigating whether these plans are delivering value for money.

The findings make grim reading:



- The five centres were expected to cost £0.9billion they actually cost £1.4billion
- The £159million in promised have not materialised: Only once centre has broken even and two have a net cost of £255million

Much of the discussion around the reasons for the high costs is that the systems are too complex and “overly tailored to meet customer needs”. What this seems to mean is that in order to make any savings the system needs to be more one size fits all. That the “customers” need to standardise and simplify their systems.

They conclude that shared services “have not so far delivered value for money for the tax payer.”

Services are complex. Simplifying the systems will not meet the needs of public service users. Sadly, they have not decided to go down a new route but have instead an “ambitious new shared services strategy to address these issues.”

Better buying

The Jimmy Reid Foundation has produced an interesting report on possibilities for change in public sector procurement. There are real opportunities for the Scottish Government to make its £9billion annual procurement spend work better for the Scottish economy and the Scottish people.

The Scottish Government is to introduce a Sustainable Procurement Bill later this year. They must not waste the opportunity. Procurement covers the process where public and private sector bodies buy a range of goods and services from external suppliers. It covers everything from apples to zips.

Procurement has also long been identified as a key route for making substantial savings for the public sector through driving down prices through economies of scale. The upcoming Sustainable Procurement Bill offers real opportunities to fix the flawed system. The correct problems need to be identified in the first place if this opportunity is not to be wasted.

Key issues highlighted in this report on the current system are:

- Pressures to make the contracts so large that Scottish companies, particularly small ones, cannot compete
- Too narrow a focus on costs savings rather than the wider economic impact
- Assumption that the best strategic solution is a partnership with a large corporation. This often excludes Scottish companies. It also puts a great deal of control in the hands of the corporate partner.
- Procurement can have wider benefits. Encourage better business, a living wage and meeting carbon targets

The full report is available from the [Jimmy Reid Foundation](#)

Using Our Buying Power to Benefit Scotland

- the case for change



Jim and Margaret Cuthbert

January 2012

McClelland Review of ICT

The Scottish Government has taken the first step towards implementing the recommendations of the McClelland report into public sector ICT. The new Advisory Board, now named the Public Sector ICT Industry Board met for the first time in November. It aims to bring "industry expertise" to the development of a national Strategy for ICT. The board members are:

- John McClelland (Chair) Chair of the Scottish Funding Council and author of the Review of ICT Infrastructure in the Public Sector in Scotland
- Polly Purvis, **ScotlandIS**
- Alan Quinn, Castle Computers
- Susan Chadwick, Edge Testing also on board of Scotland is
- Niall Brown, IBM also on board of **ScotlandIS**
- Rab Campbell, Logica also on board of **ScotlandIS**
- Brodie Shepherd, Fujitsu
- Andrew Campbell, Sopra
- Kay Brown, South Lanarkshire Council
- Anne Moises, Scottish Government (SG)
- Alun Hughes, University of the Highlands and Islands
- Andy Robertson, NHS National Services Scotland
- Calum Elliot, SG
- Julie Kane, SG
- Paul Spence, SG

ScotlandIS is a trade association for ICT professionals and lobbies on their behalf.

The boards remit is to:

- Support the delivery of the Scottish Government's public sector ICT infrastructure agenda and contribute to delivering the identified efficiencies and benefits
 - Support the development of the technical and design requirements at national and sectoral levels to ensure we can implement the national solutions for all areas of the public sector
 - Assist with gathering evidence and its analysis to inform strategic ICT priorities and options for delivery
 - Provide ICT industry input into the ICT enablement of public sector reform
 - Draw upon and make available best practice about ICT procurement and deployment in other countries
 - Identify barriers to successful engagement and partnership and offer solutions for improvement.
- At the first meeting they decided to include the Police and Fire services in their discussions.

Local economies suffer when small businesses lose public sector contracts

UNISON is concerned that it is lack of understanding of the public sector that has led to costly failures in ICT infrastructure projects rather than lack of private sector voices. We are also concerned that the increasing centralisation of buying decisions will hurt Scotland's businesses and local economies if they are unable to win public contracts due to their size. We will continue to monitor the implementation of the McClelland review and the changes to procurement currently under consideration by the Scottish Government.

Minutes of the meetings will be available to the public but not until they are approved at the next meeting. You can follow the activities of the board [here](#), though you will have to register to access the site.

Robbie the Robot or The Terminator?

Larbert Hospital is the first in the UK to have robots travelling its corridors. The new £300m hospital in central Scotland uses the machines to support services like laundry and cleaning. The Automated Guidance Vehicles carry out a range of tasks, including catering and waste disposal. Robots get around the hospital using a separate network of corridors that are completely separate from areas of the building used by staff, visitors and patients. The new Southern General in Glasgow, which will be the biggest hospital ever built, is likely to feature similar systems. UNISON Scotland's John Gallagher recently met with our sister union from Australia (United Voice) to discuss the impact of similar technology in their hospitals. He asked, "should we smash the robots or should we welcome these close encounters?" United Voice shared their experience of job losses following the introduction of robots giving the example of Fiona Stanley hospital in Western Australia. So far the Scottish experience has been more



Will new technology help workers or just get rid of their jobs?

positive. At Larbert hospital more staff are now employed in the hospital than transferred from the old Falkirk and Stirling hospitals. All the porters (who transferred) have jobs moving patients along corridors which are now free from other traffic. As ever though, when the technology fails, then it will be left to humans to keep the show on the road. It is not the technology itself but management practises that will determine whether new technology impacts positively or negatively on the lives of workers.

Reports of my death.....

To misquote Mark Twain, despite all the Government's talk of its demise PPP is alive and well in Scotland. The latest of five 'super-contracts' for new Scottish public infrastructure has gone to the Wellspring Partnership.

The Hub Initiative is managed by the Scottish Futures Trust and is based on the English Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) Public Private Partnership (PPP) scheme. It effectively bundles most local community facilities projects in each of five geographical areas into a pipeline as one 'super-contract'.

Hub West has appointed Wellspring as the partner to deliver more than £200m of projects such as schools and health centres in a joint venture with public sector bodies in the West of Scotland.

Wellspring is comprised of Community Solutions Investment Partners Ltd, Morgan Sindall Group plc and Apollo Capital Projects Ltd.

The hub programme is delivered through joint venture Hubcos set up by councils, health boards, emergency services, some bodies such as colleges/housing associations and a Private Sector Development Partner (PSDP).

UNISON believes hub retains many of the problems with discredited expensive PFI/PPP projects and that conventional funding of public infrastructure is by far the best route to funds infrastructure developments.

Four PSDP appointments have now been made, with the fifth, for Hub South West, expected later this year. A CEO post for the West Hubco has been advertised at a salary of up to £75,000 plus bonus and benefits.

More information available in our [PPP/PFI Briefing](#).

If you would like more information on any of the articles in this newsletter or have information you would like to share in the next issue please contact: [Kay Sillars](#) in the Bargaining and Campaigns team on 0141 342 2819 k.sillars@unison.co.uk



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