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change



UNISON
Scotland

**PUBLIC
WORKS:**

Public Works: Update April 2011

Scottish Parliament elections 2011 – use your vote for public services

Our public services are facing an unprecedented assault from the cuts that have been announced by the ConDem coalition. UNISON members are being threatened with redundancy and countless services are being cut across the country. However, there are things the Scottish government can do to stop this.

The Scottish Parliament elections will take place on Thursday, 5 May. This election gives you an opportunity to send the government a very clear message. We can make the arguments to the government, we can challenge decisions made without proper consultation, we can take industrial action where our members agree to do so, but we know that politicians feel most vulnerable when votes are cast at the ballot box.

Over the next couple of days, all branches will receive a copy of UNISON's manifesto for the Scottish Elections. You can also download this document at www.unison-scotland.org.uk/publicworks. This manifesto is part of UNISON's Public Works campaign to defend public services and should be used to lobby political parties standing in the forthcoming Scottish Parliament elections.

Our manifesto – For Public Services – concentrates, not on the pressure on budgets facing public service organisations, but on what needs to be done to sustain and improve Scotland's public services. Among others, it highlights the need for fair taxation; the importance of transparent and accountable services and calls for an end to PFI and PPP.

Based on this information, we have outlined some key questions to ask candidates standing for election to the Scottish Parliament. Next week, we will be issuing leaflets to branches outlining these key questions and branches should circulate these widely among members, asking them to put these questions to candidates. We need to encourage members to use their vote for public services and to support candidates who stand up for public services and challenge these destructive cuts.

Questions for candidates

1. Most parties are in favour of a council tax freeze, which is costing public services at least £70 million pounds a year, and a small business bonus which is costing £117m a year, that's enough to pay the wages of nearly 9,000 nursery nurses for a year. Wouldn't spending money on children be better than tax freezes?
2. Is the shortage of money for public services caused by having too many classroom assistants and carers, or because we had to bail out the banks? If it's because we bailed out the banks, then why are classroom assistants and carers facing losing their jobs?

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**Public Works is the Scottish arm of UNISON's
Million Voices for Change campaign**
www.unison-scotland.org.uk/publicworks
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3. What is fair or right about a 50% increase in public service pension contributions that will go straight to the treasury and not into our pensions? What will you do about that?
4. Inflation is currently at five per cent, so a two year pay freeze will mean a real drop in income of 10% – and that's before you look at the increase in pension contributions we will be expected to make. How can that be fair when the economy isn't in recession?
5. Why does it make sense to sack police staffs and have police officers with less training and higher wages doing their jobs instead of being out on the beat?
6. Some people needing care are being pushed into self-directed support / direct payments, this means that personalised collective provision is being cut. How would you ensure self-directed support remains a choice, rather than the only option because all other provision will have been cut?
7. How will you deliver integrated social care without centralisation and the loss of local democratic accountability?
8. How much of the planned decrease in further and higher education funding will you reverse? And will those cuts make for better educated students?
9. Water is a highly capital intensive public service – whoever puts up the money, calls the shots. Who should control Scotland's water? The public through public ownership and Scottish Water, or the banks and private water companies through schemes like mutualisation or public benefit companies?
10. Electricity generators in Scotland are hampered by the amount they get charged to feed power to the national grid. Will you promote a postage stamp principle so that it costs the same wherever you are?
11. 200,000 Scottish households are on housing waiting lists, yet only 6000 social houses were built last year. How many new houses will you build?
12. Do you agree that the rich in the city, some paying less tax than a hospital cleaner, who should be doing more for less? What will you do to get more money into public services?
13. Do you support measures to make the banks pay more by imposing a Robin Hood tax on large financial transactions?
14. We have a range of top down solutions to public service reform promoted by big business and management consultants. Shouldn't staff and service users get a bigger say in how their services are designed?
15. Should public services be provided by directly-employed staff with a public service ethos, or by private companies who must prioritise profits?

Upcoming events

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| 9 April | LGBT Hustings – Glasgow |
| 13 April | SCCS Climate Day – election events on climate change |
| 15 April | UNISON local government election hustings |
| 15 April | UNISON health election hustings |
| 16 April | Scottish Council |
| 18-20 April | STUC Congress – Ayr |
| 23 April | Save Fife's Public Services campaign day – Kirkcaldy |

28 April	Workers' Memorial Day – commemorative events around Scotland
30 April	North Lanarkshire cuts rally – Duchess Park, Motherwell
1 May	May Day Rally – 11am, George Square, Glasgow
5 May	Polling Day

For more information on any of the above please contact Trisha Hamilton, Communications Officer, on 0141 342 2877 or email t.hamilton@unison.co.uk

Case studies

We are constantly on the lookout for people willing to act as case studies and share their stories with the media. Case studies are a key resource in helping us attract media attention and we need people from all sectors and on all issues. If you, or one of your members, would be willing to talk about how the cuts are affecting you then please contact Trisha Hamilton, Communications Officer, on 0141 342 2877 or email t.hamilton@unison.co.uk.

We want your pictures

UNISON's Public Works campaign is not just about challenging cuts, it's also about promoting a positive image of Scotland's public services. We are currently looking for photographs of public services, from all sectors, to use in our publications and materials. Please spread the word among your members and ask them to send us photographs of them at work providing a public service. If you would like any more information, or if you have photographs you would like to send, then please contact Trisha Hamilton, Communications Officer on 0141 342 2877 or email t.hamilton@unison.co.uk

Cuts Impact Assessments

It is important that we ensure a strong flow of information through the Cuts Impact Assessments. Branches are reminded to update your Cuts Impact Assessment forms and send them to Fiona Montgomery, Policy and Information team, at f.montgomery@unison.co.uk

Branch 'to do' list

- Familiarise yourself with UNISON's manifesto for the Scottish Parliament Elections and encourage members to download a copy via the website at www.unison-scotland.org.uk/publicworks
- Start thinking about putting questions to candidates standing for election. Leaflets with the questions above will be circulated to branches next week and these should be circulated as widely as possible to members.
- We need real-life case studies of members who are willing to talk about the impact of the cuts. If you, or someone you know, is willing to take part then please contact Trisha Hamilton, Communications Officer, on 0141 342 2877 or email t.hamilton@unison.co.uk
- We are looking for photographs of members at work to promote a positive image of public services. Please send your pictures to t.hamilton@unison.co.uk
- Remember to update your Cuts Impact Assessment forms and send them to Fiona Montgomery, Policy and Information team, at f.montgomery@unison.co.uk