

ISSUE NO. 19

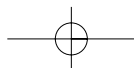
SUMMER 2008

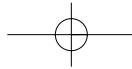
voice @ work

Newsletter for UNISON Scotland's Community & Voluntary Sector members

Any spare change for the Third Sector?

CVS workers the victims as funding squeeze tightens





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The loudest voice in the voluntary sector

As voluntary sector organisations begin to feel the effects of the latest round of local authority funding cuts, there has never been a more important time for workers in the community and voluntary sector to belong to the leading union in the sector, UNISON.

Chances are, of course, that if this issue of voice@work dropped on your doormat, you are probably a member already. However, some of your colleagues at work may not be, and, in a climate of very real threats to jobs and terms and conditions, an opportunity exists for every one of us to do our bit by making the case for membership of UNISON.

Make no mistake, workers in the sector will be in the firing line as organisations attempt to adjust to changes in funding arrangements. The removal of ring fencing has put service providers in a state of high anxiety and uncertainty, and the squeeze from the belt tightening in local government financing is already in evidence in the £1m plus in cuts faced by one of the largest employers in the sector, Quarriers, and in the pitiable pay offers made by a number of third sector employers.

A further threat comes in the form of routine tendering for local authority contracts, meaning that bidders go head to head in a competition which could reward those organisations who interpret 'best value' as 'cheapest', and

who look to labour costs for savings.

As noted elsewhere in this issue, UNISON is one of the leading voices on the STUC/SCVO Partnership, working alongside other trade unions and voluntary sector organisations to campaign for a fair deal for the sector. At first glance the idea of sharing a platform with employers, some of whom may be locking horns with members at local level, may be an uncomfortable one, but the bottom line is that UNISON's demands for adequate funding, long term contracts, and parity of terms and conditions with front line council staff are at the heart of the campaign.

Over the past few years, UNISON has steadily built a healthy membership base in the community and voluntary sector in Scotland. It is vital that we continue to strengthen this presence so that our voice is heard by employers and politicians alike. Every new member in the sector adds volume to that voice.

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NHS Glasgow & Clyde branch appoint caseworker

UNISON's Greater Glasgow & Clyde NHS Branch, which has a large voluntary sector division within it, has appointed a Case Worker to cover the Community and Voluntary Sector and private nursing home membership within the branch.

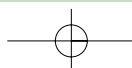
This is the first time such a post has been created by a branch in Scotland on this basis. Donald Frew took up post in April 2008 and has hit the ground running.



Donald Frew

Donald says: "It's been a baptism of fire and I now have over 40 live cases but this has allowed me to get up to speed with the sector quickly. The issues workers face in the sector have much in common with workers elsewhere." Donald has been able to identify new stewards and recruit new members as part of his case work.

<http://groups.google.com/group/UNISONScotlandCVS>



Volunteer Development Scotland pay dispute

UNISON members at Volunteer Development Scotland and Central Registered Body in Scotland recently lodged a formal dispute with their employer over the imposition of a 2.1% cost of living rise without proper negotiation.

The increase was initially offered at the end of February and was rejected by members. A pay claim was then submitted in early April asking for:

- An increase on all Salary Band Points of 4.6% or £750 (whichever is greater)
- A lump sum of £500 to be paid in April 2008 to all staff employed at that time (pro-rata to contracted working hours).
- From the date of transferring business to the new premises, £47.50 per month (equivalent to £2.50 per working day) to be paid to staff working 5 days per week (pro-rata per number of working days for those on alternative working patterns) and requiring to pay for car parking facilities to attend work

Before the pay claim could be submitted, a notice had been posted on the staff intranet advising that the cost of living increase of 2.1% would be paid in April. A further meeting was held with the employer in mid April, at which the employer stated that the cost of car parking is not relevant to cost of living and would not be discussed at this time, but would be considered closer to the time of moving

premises. At the moment members have access to free parking and to have to find £47.50 per month to pay to park at work will directly hit members pay packets with a huge impact on their financial budgets.

The claim for a £500 lump sum was rejected without any negotiation from the employer and there was also no negotiation on the percentage increase. This was seen by members

“ Given the massive increase in the cost of gas, electricity, petrol, mortgages and food, lets hope that VDS will now award their staff a realistic cost of living rise.



as a failure to negotiate on any point of the pay claim and the dispute was lodged requesting that meaningful negotiations take place.

The employer has since suggested that the main focus of the next joint negotiating committee meeting be the cost of living rise.

Given the massive increase in the cost of gas, electricity, petrol, mortgages and food, lets hope that VDS will now award their staff a realistic cost of living rise.

Wendy McBeth, UNISON Steward

Glasgow Association for Mental Health:

After a sustained campaign by members in GAMH for the second year running the board were made to honour the national local government pay settlement for 2007/8. Members now await the settlement of the local government pay award for 2008/9 so as they can continue their campaign to maintain the linkage to local government pay rates.

This victory is a real testament to the solidarity and strength shown by GAMH members. We are aware other similar organisations like the Renfrew Association for Mental Health have broken the link with COSLA/UNISON negotiated pay rises and we hope that the GAMH result can give encouragement to members elsewhere to take a stand.

A meeting is also being held with representatives of the GAMH board to raise concerns over the handling of two redundancies earlier this year.

Mungo Foundation:

Members have just voted to accept an 18 month pay deal worth 3.25% (with an extra 0.5% for manual workers). This settles a pay claim outstanding since 1st October 2007 and will now move the settlement date to 1st April from 2009. This will make the settlement date closer to when the Mungo Foundation finds out its funding from local councils.

Meanwhile, a serious of recruitment and health and safety visits is being planned.

Capability Scotland:

The branch has launched a recruit a colleague campaign. There will be two prize draws, one for members who recruit a colleague and one for new members. Both will have a prize of the latest in audio visual gadgets a personal video recorder which allows you to record TV digitally and rewind live TV. If you are a member of the Branch, the more members you sign up the more chances you have of winning, so go for it!

Enable Scotland:

UNISON are pursuing parity in terms of sick pay for Enable Cumbernauld members who currently only get a maximum of 10 days paid sick leave as opposed to six months full and six months half for their Enable Scotland counterparts. Members in Cumbernauld have been enthusiastically collecting signatures on a petition which will be presented to Enable Scotland Board in coming weeks.

Blue Triangle Housing Association:

There are redundancies likely in Ayr due to South Ayrshire Council pulling the funding from a project. UNISON is involved in negotiations regarding these. A new lone working policy has been agreed.

Cornerstone:

The organisation has recently lost contracts in East Ayrshire to the Richmond Fellowship

and Lifeways. UNISON is working with local members to ensure TUPE is honoured including the transfer of UNISON recognition.

Across the whole of Cornerstone management are threatening to impose an inferior contract on staff. UNISON is working hard to resist this. For more information contact Norman Smith on 07986930042 or norman-smith@blueyonder.co.uk .



around the workplace

UNISON members within Quarriers facing renewed attack on terms and conditions

UNISON members within Quarriers are facing a renewed attack on their terms and conditions. This attack was outlined in a document provided to the Branch Officers at a meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) on 21st May 2008. Below Stephen Brown, Quarriers Branch Secretary outlines what this means for UNISON members.

In advance of the JCC UNISON was issued with a paper from Quarriers management that proposes to drastically reduce the salary scales for front line staff. The proposal does contain some element of protection for existing staff.

Quarriers believe they are too expensive to compete in the market with other voluntary sector organisations such as The Richmond Fellowship and private for profit organisations who they believe are undercutting their bids for contracts.

More importantly from a staff perspective is the fact that management are stating that unless their proposals are implemented in full they will not be able to fund an annual infla-

tionary pay offer from 1st October 2008 onwards. As a Branch Committee we had little time to consider the proposals before the JCC but gave a clear indication that we viewed these as an attack on our members grading structure and that we would need to consult our members. As 'voice@work' goes to press the consultation process has begun.

So what are Quarriers proposing?

Night Shift Enhancements
It has also been proposed that Quarriers will no longer pay night shift enhancements to night shift staff when they are on annual leave or off sick. This proposal singles out one

group of staff for detrimental treatment - other staff wouldn't lose money for being on holiday.

Are there any winners?

There are proposals for a small numbers of gainers such as the removal of a qualification bar from the Education Support Workers post and an increase in the starting rate, though even here the top of the scale is reduced by one point making it £265 less.

Implementation

In terms of existing staff, it is proposed to allow them to progress for three more years, from 1st October 2008, on the existing scales. If after this period their salary is above the new scale they would remain on that and would not be able

to progress any further up the old scale. They would continue to get a cost of living rise.

Post	Old Scale	New Scale	Difference between previous top of scale and new top of scale
Support Workers – Housing Support/Care at Home Services	Point 14-25 £15,367 - £20,345	Point 14 – 21 £15,367 - £18,147	£2,198
Relief Workers (remember this is the overtime rate for many)	Point 14-17 £15,367 - £16,352	Point 13 £15,102	£1,250
Project Worker and Residential Childcare Worker	Points 18 –29 £16,774 - £23,218	Points 18 –25 £16,774 - £20,345	£2,873



Picture: Robert Rae

Rain soaked Quarriers members protesting at the Village

Here we go again - time for

It is hard for me to believe that after last year's struggle it is time for Quarrier's Branch to lodge a pay claim already, yet Quarriers staff are due an increase from 1st October 2008.

We are all having to pay much more for fuel, home energy and basic foodstuffs, with the retail price index running at 4.2% in April. As many of us are low paid though, fuel and food take up a greater proportion of our wages, so for many members inflation on a personal basis will be much higher (you can have a go at working it out for yourself at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pic/>). Quarriers Branch has constructed a pay claim to meet these extra costs, but which we believe is also reasonable.

We also know that stress and work-life balance are major issues for our members in Quarriers and that our hours are much longer than many other workers. That is why as part of our claim we are proposing a phased reduction in the working week.

All members have received

Quarriers has South Lanarkshire transfers

lost contracts in South Lanarkshire in what UNISON believes was a flawed bidding process run by the council, where they reduced the number of providers from eight to three. This means approximately 50 Quarriers staff are due to transfer to the successful bidder Richmond Fellowship.

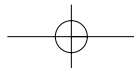
UNISON will be making con-

tact with the Richmond Fellowship to ensure they fully honour TUPE (i.e. they continue to honour existing terms and conditions) and to demand that they at least meet existing pension arrangements.

Stephen Brown, Quarriers Branch Secretary has already met with some staff affected and will be meeting with more

in the coming days and weeks.

It is crucial that staff are united and organised in advance of the transfer and in particular we could do with getting more UNISON stewards appointed before the transfer as UNISON recognition will transfer. So please keep in touch with the branch as this process develops.



STUC/SCVO/CCPS launch better funding pact for voluntary sector



UNISON was central to the signing of a pact between the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC), the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) and Community Care Providers Scotland (CCPS) - the trade body for many voluntary care organisations - late last year. The pact called on the Scottish government, local authorities and other funders to deliver a better deal for the voluntary sector and its workers.

Crucially, UNISON was able to persuade SCVO and CCPS to sign up to a call that funding should be at levels which ensure that front line staff employed by voluntary organisations enjoy broadly comparable terms and conditions to their counterparts in the public sector.

At the moment due to funding pressures there is a race to the bottom as voluntary organisations and increasing numbers of private companies seek to be the lowest cost bidder for council contracts. When staffing costs make up around 80% of the costs in many contracts, low cost means low wages and poor conditions. If this trend is not reversed the whole care sector is heading towards a minimum wage and conditions industry which will be disastrous for our members' livelihoods and for the people they provide care for.

The implementation of the pact would remove this pernicious downward spiral of wages and conditions as these would be pegged in line with public sector workers, in most cases council workers. This would mean that when councils put contracts out to let organisations would have to compete on things like innovation, quality, user involvement and management costs rather than simply reducing the wages of those who provide the care. It would also make

the option to provide services in-house a viable option for councils in some circumstances and deliver a truly level playing field.

Since the pact was signed in November last year UNISON has been pressing to turn this in to a campaign for action. Already this year the STUC has written to the leaders of major councils in Scotland, COSLA and the Scottish Government, and a series of meetings has begun to take place, with Dundee and Glasgow being two of the first. On each occasion politicians and council officers have agreed to take the pact away for further consideration. Simon Macfarlane, UNISON

lead officer for the Community & Voluntary Sector says: "This is going to be a long campaign to get funding on a fair basis for the voluntary sector. However, I am confident we can make progress and it is vital we do so. Our members in the voluntary sector deserve fair pay and decent conditions and linking them to those in the public sector is the



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Simon MacFarlane, Regional Organiser

best way of achieving this and reversing the current downward cycle.”

In the months ahead UNISON will be asking voluntary sector members to get directly involved in this campaign. In the meantime you could begin to raise these issues with your own local councillors and MSPs.

For more information on the campaign see <http://www.stuc.org.uk/press-releases/446/voluntary-organisations-and-unions-form-pay-pact> . If you want a full copy of the text of the pact email s.macfarlane@unison.co.uk .

another pay claim!

a copy of the full claim in the post. The key points are:

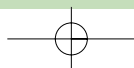
- £1000 flat rate pay increase as of 1st October 2008.
- The full-time working week to be reduced initially to 38 hours, then 37 hours with a commitment to meet a 35 hour week after a period of time.
- Sleepovers to be paid at the national minimum wage rate.

Organise and Unionise

It is clear that UNISON Quarriers members face a number of challenges at this time. Last year in the pay campaign we showed that by standing together and growing our membership we can win together. We need to continue to do that. There are two key steps UNISON members in Quarriers can take:

1) Get a non-member to join. Speak to them about the issues in this newsletter; why not give them your copy when you're done? And give them a membership form or encourage them to telephone: 0845 355 0845.

2) Ensure your workplace has a UNISON steward. Why not stand yourself? Full training, support and paid time off are given.



around the workplace

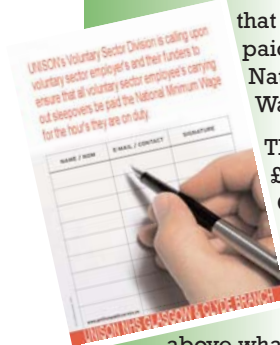
Glasgow sleepover petition launched

The Voluntary Sector Division of the Greater Glasgow & Clyde Branch have launched a petition calling on Glasgow City Council and voluntary organisations to work

between them to ensure that sleepovers are paid at least at the National Minimum Wage.

The NMW rises to £5.73 from 1st October 2008 which would make the rate for an 8 hour sleepover £45.84, significantly

above what the vast majority of members currently get. 'Voice@Work' will keep you updated on the success of this petition. It is readily adaptable for other areas so if you would like a copy please email: s.macfarlane@unison.co.uk



West of Scotland Voluntary Sector Branch

The West of Scotland Voluntary Sector Branch hasn't had a functioning branch committee for 10 years.

Members received representation via the Regional Office but they had limited access into the democratic structures of the union. A decision was taken last year to move the remaining members in the Branch in to the Voluntary Sector Division of the Greater Glasgow & Clyde NHS Branch where they would be part of a functioning branch with an active community & voluntary sector division.

It was intended that members would be written to at the time advising them of this.

Unfortunately, however, this did not happen for which UNISON apologises. Hopefully though, members are beginning to recognise the benefits of being in an active branch with access to the newly elected convenor Andy Pirie of GAMH, and the dedicated case worker, Donald Frew.

SFHA Staff T&Cs under attack

Staff at the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations were hit with a double bombshell on 1st of May (on May Day of all days) when management announced that they were not honouring the contractual formula for uplifting pay and that they proposed to slash staff terms and conditions.

For many years SFHA staff pay has always been uplifted on 1st April by the Retail Price Index (RPI) figure in the previous December. This year management unilaterally announced they were moving to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) figure which, for example, excludes mortgage interest payments and council tax (CPI in December was 2.1% whereas RPI was 4%). At the same meeting management announced they intended to tear up the existing contract and introduce a new one with less annual leave, public holidays, remove incremental grades and slash the sick pay scheme amongst other measures.

As you can imagine the reaction of staff was one of shock. Members are now galvanized in UNISON and have advised management that they will challenge vigorously the breach in their contracts. UNISON has also responded robustly to the proposed new contract. Further discussions will take place over the summer with UNISON members in a mood to defend their pay and conditions.



UNISON membership in Includem continues to grow

UNISON's membership within Includem Scotland continues to grow at a steady pace, with a successful meeting with members having just taken place prior to voice@work going to print. The employer has also agreed to

circulate information on joining UNISON to all their employees which we very much appreciate. If you are an Includem employee who would like to participate in future members' meetings please get in touch.

New convenor for voluntary sector division

Andy Pirie of Glasgow Association for Mental Health (GAMH) has recently been elected Convenor of the Voluntary Sector Division within UNISON's largest branch - NHS Glasgow & Clyde.



Andy Pirie, UNISON Convenor

and are keen to discuss how we can better represent and organise CVS members. The Branch has excellent new premises which members are encouraged to visit at 4th Floor, Empire House, 131 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2RX.

Andy can be contacted via 07525 236288 or andygprie@yahoo.co.uk and the branch can be contacted on 0141 331 4450.

If your workplace hasn't had a steward for a while, now is the time to improve UNISON organisation and we would be delighted to work with you to achieve this.

Andy's job is to be the voice of CVS members within the branch and to represent your interests; he also pulls together the stewards on a regular basis with the most recent meeting taking place on 23rd May 2008.

Andy and the branch are always delighted to hear from members

feature

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007

The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 (PVG) aims to make accessing disclosure information more straightforward for employers. It opens the system to a wider range of people who recruit individuals to work, in either paid or unpaid work, with vulnerable groups (children, young people or protected adults), whilst creating a regulated workforce composed of those individuals.

In addition, parents paying for private services such as a home tutor, dance instructor or babysitter will now be able to check they are not disqualified from working with their children. Persons looking to provide home carers for their relatives will also be able to check that individuals are not disqualified from working with vulnerable groups.

But, what does this mean for those working or looking to work with vulnerable groups? At present, it's uncertain what changes the new scheme will bring about. Whilst the PVG Act has been passed by the Scottish Government, it has not yet been initiated and a considerable amount of secondary legislation is still to be written to define exactly how the scheme will work.

At this point in time however, what we do know is that any person working with vulnerable groups, be that in paid or unpaid work must register to work in the regulated workforce. This registration will give individuals a 'scheme membership'. Once an individual is registered as a scheme member, an employer will be able to access either a full scheme record or a short scheme record.

The full scheme record will provide employers with similar information to that contained in an Enhanced Disclosure. A short scheme record will show whether any information has been updated since the last full scheme record was accessed. Furthermore, any recruiters,

whether they are employers, parents of children who use private services or protected adults for whom care is provided through direct payments, will be recorded as showing an interest in the scheme member.

A new vetting and barring unit will also be set up to look at the data available on each scheme member. This information will be updated as and when new records become available on an ongoing basis. The unit will look at new information, together with any details already held regarding each scheme member and decide if anyone should be barred from working within the regulated workforce.

When a scheme member is barred from working within the regulated workforce, any recruiter who has shown an interest in the individual will be notified. The decision to bar someone from working with vulnerable groups will mean that they will no longer be able to work in paid or unpaid work. It will also be an offence of the employer to permit them to carry on doing so.

Keeping track of scheme members and maintaining accurate, up to date records of who has shown (and still has) an interest in members, will be vital to ensure only those entitled to know when someone has been barred, receive that information. Given the high turnover of staff and volunteers in the voluntary sector, it will be essential that robust systems are in place to ensure the vetting and barring unit are advised when employers no longer have an interest in scheme members.

Until the secondary legislation is in place to demonstrate exactly how the scheme will operate, what the implications are or costs for each step in the process, it will be difficult to fully assess the impact on people working with vulnerable groups.

*Wendy McBeth,
UNISON Steward, CRBS*

Rants & Rhymes

by UNISON member Christina Quarrell



The Close Mouth

Weans greeting
Folks meeting
Toilets flushing
Lassies gushing
Men walking
Women talking
Sills sunning
Dogs running
Middens clattering
Smells battering
Tenements throbbing
Stairheads sobbing
Couples winching
Doughballs mincing
EAST
WEST
NORTH
SOUTH
All life began at
The Close Mouth

©

1982

From the book "To Heal A Wounded Spirit" 1995 by Christine Quarrell

The above poem has been selected by National Museum of Scotland Chamber Street Edinburgh as part of an exhibition on social reform beginning July 2008. Check website for further information: www.nms.ac.uk/

THANKS IAIN

The editors would like to record our thanks to our previous rants and rhymes poet, Iain Smith, for his contributions to 'voice@work' over the last few years.



Violence at work

Violence at work is a serious problem not just in the NHS and other public services, but also in the community and voluntary sector. John Murray, UNISON Steward at Blue Triangle Housing Association, reports on a recent conference on the issue held by the Scottish Government.

The conference was organised by Healthy Working Lives and involved the Scottish Government, STUC and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Over 30 Scottish organisations from the community and voluntary sector, trade unions and lobby groups attended. Conspicuous by their absence, however, were the Care Commission and any representative from a Scottish Police Force.

Introducing the day, Project Manager Linda Shanahan outlined the background to the project and pointed to research showing that over a 12 month period 38% of public sector workers reported verbal abuse and 10% physical abuse at work. While reliable statistics to back-up anecdotal evidence of violence to CVS workers were not yet available, the campaigns would be expanded to ensure that data on the CVS would be collected.

STUC Worker Safety Advisor, Terry Anderson, gave a CVS perspective on health and safety issues having been employed in the sector and having worked alongside CVS organisations in promoting good Health and Safety practices. Terry pointed out that four main issues affected the CVS in Scotland are risk assessments, safety committees, lone working, and working in the community.

Karin Ferguson of HSE spoke on the legal situation in terms of health and safety in the CVS. The clear definition of violence to workers stated in the law is "any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their



work". Karin outlined some measures that employers should take including recording incidents (countering underreporting of violent incidents endemic in public service and CVS), identifying potential assailants, and talking and listening to staff.

UNISON's Dave Watson presented the union's own research findings on violence towards public sector and CVS staff. This indicated 6,297 cases in local government and 18,860 in the NHS in the last year, an upward trend hopefully explained by better recording of incidents.

Within the CVS there is consistent underreporting for a variety of reasons, not least that it may have a detrimental effect on the service-user. Data collected by a UNISON survey of CVS workers showed that 75% of those responding had experienced physical abuse in the last year, and 65% had

been subject to verbal abuse. Almost a third had to take time-off work following a violent incident, while nearly three-quarters believed that their employers did not take the incident seriously.

Dave suggested that CVS employers had a responsibility to raise awareness of the issues through involvement in safety campaigns, and to implement practical workplace measures (policies, recording procedures, risk management systems, health and safety committees) to combat the problem. It was in the interests of employers to do this, since violence at work is a major contributor to absenteeism, costing on average £1600 per employee each year.

After Aileen Simpson, Assistant Director for the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, drew attention to the resources available to CVS employers via Healthy Working Lives website, a question and answer session took place. From this, a discussion took place about a potential conflict in terms of the operational interpretation of the National Care Standards and Health and Safety legislation. The HSE representative agreed that dialogue on this issue should take place between the Care Commission and HSE.

It was also highlighted that personal and public safety issues override the Data Protection Act. Veronica Kinahan from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust indicated that in requesting information about a service-user from other agencies the correct form of language is as follows;

"Will my personal safety be compromised as a lone worker working with this service-user?"

The response to this question is either yes or no and in answering the question the information-provider is not in breach of the Data Protection Act.



CHANGE YOUR DETAILS ONLINE

Moved house? Changed your name? Moved jobs? Need a new membership card? Retired? Got a question about your subscription?

You can make all these changes and queries quickly and easily online at:
www.unison.org.uk/help
0845 355 0845



If undeliverable return to:
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 14 West Campbell St,
 G2 6BR

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