

Role of education workers goes to Parliament



UNISON represents a huge range of the staff who deliver Scotland's education. Now we are telling the politicians - don't ignore our members!

UNISON has been busy, promoting the role of education workers with politicians in different forums, and giving them the views of our members on a variety of related issues.

In March a UNISON delegation met the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Fiona Hyslop MSP, to start the process of weaning the Government away from the blinkered view that teachers are the only staff in education.

Chair of the Education Issues Group, Carol Ball said;

"We took the opportunity to raise a variety of issues with the Cabinet Secretary, and use those to demonstrate to her the important roles that UNISON members have at all levels of education - from the very youngest to adults."

Issues raised included; the role of early years workers in nursery education; equal pay problems faced by classroom assistants; problems facing school

workers caused by term time contracts; and future UNISON input on policies about food sourcing and school meals.



Carol said "We were concerned that the Cabinet Secretary was unaware of the key role that so many UNISON member's play, and the meeting opened her eyes to this. We will now monitor Government proposals to identify if our views have made an impact."

A briefing paper entitled - *Interested in delivering Scottish education? SO ARE WE!* has been sent out to all Scottish MSPs to get across the arguments about the key role of our members. It was circulated after our response to the Scottish

Government's consultation document on Early Years was sent in.

The briefing is available on the website at www.unison-scotland.org.uk/educationissues/index.html

Pat Rowland - UNISON Scotland treasurer and an early years worker, also took the arguments to Scottish Labour Party Conference at the end of March. In a hard-hitting speech she criticised government concentration on teachers.

"I have been managing an early years centre for 20 years," she said. "Why are this SNP Government now telling me I need a teacher to come in to tell me what to do?"

Further initiatives including a major conference on early years' provision are planned to highlight the many jobs our members do, and the need for the Scottish Government to take their views into account as seriously as they currently appear to do with teachers.

Review sparks moves towards Scotland-wide college staff discussions

A stakeholders' review of the work of Scotland's FE colleges, has led to both a positive response from government and an important recommendation that a Scotland-wide approach should be taken on equal pay audits.

The Review of Scotland's Colleges (ROSCO) was the most in depth look at Colleges since incorporation in 1993. It took place over 2005/7. Its purpose was to consider what the college sector delivered for Scotland and what more it could do in the future. Those involved were- the Scottish Funding Council, the Association of Scottish Colleges (ASC), the STUC and affiliated trade unions, including representatives from UNISON. Four work streams were set up, which then reported back to a Core Group.

Mary Dignam, from UNISON said

"It was particularly helpful to have recommendations that all staff in colleges should fulfil a minimum period on continuous professional development - regardless of status (6 days for FT staff and pro-rata for part time staff)."

The Core Group's report *Transforming Life, Transforming Scotland* provided commentary on the work undertaken by the Review of Scotland's Colleges and reflected on the work completed by the work streams.

The Scottish Government officially launched its response *Promoting Excellence* at Lauder College, Dunfermline last year. Fiona Hyslop, the Cabinet Secretary, called for a number of actions which went further than the original ROSCO recommendations. These actions would benefit all staff and students in further education.

Mary said

"A significant step forward is the Cabinet Secretary's proposal for the ASC and the STUC to work together to co-ordinate a 'sectoral approach to equal pay audits' - the ASC has consistently argued against Scotland-wide negotiations."

The full review contains 83 recommendations which are available on the Scottish Government web site. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/17135/RSC>

Technicians—the need to get involved

Technicians must get involved in the different machinery set up to negotiate their conditions and to advise on training—that's the message from UNISON's Education issues group.



Technicians provide vital technical support in many Scottish educational establishments. They may have different job titles depending on their employer,

some may be generic technicians others may be identified with more specific subject areas, e.g. Science, Technical, Multi-Media, ICT or other variations.

Technicians are employed by more than 32 different employers, so their terms and conditions, job evaluation results etc. are negotiated at a local level with individual branches.

UNISON is heavily involved at all levels in negotiations and consultations that directly impact on the jobs that technicians carry out on a daily basis. These include new government initiatives, staff development issues, recruitment, training and changes to vital health and safety regulations.

All employers maintain the mantra that staff training and development is a vital aspect in the career of a technician, but the extent of the training is the responsibility of each employer.

There is a national body - the Scottish Technicians Advisory Group (STAG) - that acts as an umbrella group, advising individual employers on staff development for technicians. [More info on this group can be found on the Technology /Technicians section in the SSERC web site <http://www.sserc.org.uk/>]

Each authority should have a representative on the group. Why not find out more information on your individual employer's involvement? The website has links to various

reports, including the SEED project for Technical Support staff. This has each council's response to a survey into aspects of their recruitment, staffing levels, and staff development policies.

Gordon Lees, from UNISON's East Renfrewshire branch said "We urge all technicians to get involved in their local negotiating machinery. More school-based technicians mean a stronger voice for technician members. This means our views on how best to provide technical support to educational establishments at local and national levels, can be expressed."

Contact your local branch and/or your local STAG rep to get involved.

School Clerical staff - make a stand!

Clerical and administrative staff appear to be the forgotten force in schools. Now it is time to fight back!

For years clerical and admin staff have sat back and accepted everything loaded onto them without complaint. They might have moaned to each other, but few were prepared to stand up and do something about it.

The introduction of the McCrone agreement has meant clerical and admin assistants are now expected to take on a much wider range of roles and responsibilities, often without consultation or agreement with UNISON or the employees themselves. First aid and

administering medication is an example.

These changes have meant the job has become less clerical and increased the involvement in general pupil welfare. The National Job Evaluation Scheme should have highlighted these changes - it didn't, and often JE has left clerical and administrative staff amongst the lowest paid in local government. It is no surprise that staff morale and motivation in the school office is at an all time low.

We need to support our local branch of UNISON and campaign on behalf of yourself and your fellow workers! Persistence has already paid off for stewards in

some branches where the council has agreed to re-examine the job descriptions of school clerical staff. It's a start.

And the new Education Issues Group (EIG) is campaigning on term-time issues and equal pay. Both affect office staff. With your help we could do more.

The EIG now gives us a voice to raise issues you may have. Do you know who your work place steward is? Contact your branch office today and find out. Or ask how to contact your EIG delegate to discuss your concerns.

Better still why not become a steward or workplace contact? UNISON is only as strong as its members so please unite behind campaigns to help our members get a fair deal and recognition for the service we provide.



Clerical staff have been undervalued
photo Alan Wylie

Food for Good campaign launched in Gargieston!

UNISON has launched a charter calling on councils and other public authorities to use fresh, locally-sourced food for school meals and other public sector catering.



Gargieston primary pupils tuck into Food for Good
photo Alan Wylie

We chose one of the East Ayrshire schools that has helped show how healthy, sustainable meals can be provided at reasonable cost. The union wants to see *Food for Good* introduced across the public sector to help change the diet and health of the nation. It has recommended the changes in a response to the Scottish Government's consultation on establishing a national food policy.

Dave Watson, UNISON's Scottish Organiser, said: "East Ayrshire has delivered a first class example of how public sector catering can deliver quality, healthy food, that is fresh and prepared and sourced locally where possible. This is good for children as well as being good for the environment, for local suppliers and those in the developing world. And provided at a cost within the standard range local authorities already pay.

The *Food for Good* Charter addresses a range of issues including sustainability, health, fair trade, proper pay and employment conditions and animal welfare. It can be found at <http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/news/2008/mayjune/0105.htm>

Robin Gourlay, Head of Facilities Management at East Ayrshire Council, instigated the award-winning initiative at primary schools under the *Hungry for Success* programme and later adopted the Soil Association's *Food for Life* scheme. He said: "We must be able to teach children to be knowledgeable consumers of tomorrow who understand the impact of food on their health and on the environment. Our catering staff who provide school food understand the vital role they have within the context of an educational environment in achieving that goal. UNISON's Food for Good campaign recognises the bigger picture and acknowledges that local authorities can lead in this."

UNISON's Response to the Scottish Government Food consultation is at: <http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/response/futurefood.html/>.

Join UNISON — your friend at work

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EDUCATION ISSUES GROUP, UNISON SCOTLAND, FREEPOST NW 486, GLASGOW G2 6BR

1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Please tick or fill in the

boxes below

Mrs	Ms	Miss	Mr	Other
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First name	Other initial(s)
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Surname/Family name	Date of birth
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Home address

Postcode

National insurance number (from your payslip)

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Black UK
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Black	<input type="checkbox"/> Black Other
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Employer's name

Your job title/occupation

Department/section

Workplace name and address

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Payroll number (from your payslip)

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Up to £38.47	Up to £2,000	£0.30	£1.30	A
£38.48–£96.16	£2,001–£5,000	£0.81	£3.50	B
£96.17–£153.84	£5,001–£8,000	£1.22	£5.30	C
£153.85–£211.53	£8,001–£11,000	£1.52	£6.60	D
£211.54–£269.23	£11,001–£14,000	£1.81	£7.85	E
£269.24–£326.92	£14,001–£17,000	£2.24	£9.70	F
£326.93–£384.61	£17,001–£20,000	£2.65	£11.50	G
£384.62–£480.76	£20,001–£25,000	£3.23	£14.00	H
£480.77–£576.92	£25,001–£30,000	£3.98	£17.25	I
£576.93–£673.08	£30,001–£35,000	£4.68	£20.30	J
£673.08+	over £35,000	£5.19	£22.50	K

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Please tick this box if you are a student member in full-time education (including student nurses or Modern Apprentices). Your subscription is £10 per year.

4. POLITICAL FUND

UNISON's Affiliated Political Fund (APF) is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliates to the Labour Party.

UNISON's General Political Fund (GPF) is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union and for research and lobbying in Parliament and Europe. It is independent of support for any political party.

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If you have been a member of a trade union before, please state which one:

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UNISON will process your membership information together with other information for administration, statistical analysis, conducting ballots and other statutory requirement purposes.

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We may share your information with organisations with whom we have a business relationship to your benefit. We, or they, may contact you by mail, telephone, SMS, fax or e-mail to let you know about goods, services or promotions which we think may be of interest to you.

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