



UNISON'S PARLIAMENT
Scotland voices at
UNISON National
Conference p3-4



Liverpool 2013



Mobilise! 2013 - See page 4



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Scotland in UNISON

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Local Government Pay Ballot Runs from 3 July to 13 August - Make Sure You Vote!

Vote Yes for strike action to win fair pay

by Fiona Montgomery
Joint Communications Officer

Vote Yes for strike action to win fair pay. That was the message to members as ballot papers were being sent out to local government workers across Scotland.

Branches were stepping up the 'Yes to Fair Pay' campaign and urging members to use their vote in the ballot, which runs from 3 July to 13 August.

Scottish Secretary Mike Kirby said: "Council workers deserve better than a miserly 1% offer after two years of pay freeze and just 0.65% the year before that.

"At a time when bankers' bonuses keep on piling up and the rich get ever richer, our members are angry and have rejected the 1% offer.

"Our message to the employers is that they could avoid industrial action by improving their offer and committing to annual increases in the promised local government Living Wage."

UNISON is balloting 75,000 members and colleagues in Unite are also taking part in a ballot on industrial action.

Inez Teece and **Mark Ferguson**, Vice Chairs of the Scottish Local Government Committee, have jointly written to all members in a letter inserted with the ballot papers.

They said: "Now is the time to stand up to the employers and tell them that 1% is



Scotland delegates to UNISON's UK Local Government Conference in Liverpool calling for Fair Pay! They got a message of support from General Secretary Dave Prentis who said: "This union salutes you and will rally behind you."



Now is the time to stand up to the employers and tell them that 1% is simply not good enough'

Inez Teece and Mark Ferguson



simply not good enough. It is time for them to properly invest in their staff and award them an acceptable pay rise.

"Given the employers' position, it won't be easy to persuade them to return to the negotiating table and make an improved offer. That is our aim.

"However, we need to plan for sustained industrial action in support of this to convince them of our case."

If members vote yes, the proposal is for a minimum of three days of strike action

over a seven week period in the autumn.

Two of these would be national one day strikes and there would be a rolling programme of one day strikes around the country. Selective action is also being considered.

Dougie Black, Secretary to the Committee, told the June 25 Fair Pay Day rally in Dundee: "Local government workers are struggling to make ends meet after the value of their pay has gone down nearly 13% in three

years, while their daily bills go up and up.

"What communities need is workers spending money locally. We know that council workers do that, so giving them a Living Wage, with annual increases, and a fair pay rise, will boost local economies."



NHS LOBBY IN SEPTEMBER

General Secretary Dave Prentis has called on the TUC to have a national rally at the Tory party conference in Manchester on 29 September in defence of the NHS.

The message will be: "Hands off our NHS it's not theirs to sell."

Dave also demanded that a future Labour government repeal the Health Act (which applies only to England) and fully restore the NHS, as it was before it was "chopped up and sold off to the highest bidder".

At UNISON's National Conference Dave vowed that UNISON, "will fight for a better world. They (the ConDems) speak for the millionaires, we speak for the millions", he said.

UNISON wins historic equal pay case worth millions of pounds for members - Page 2

UNISON wins historic equal pay case worth millions of pounds for members

by Fiona Montgomery
Joint Communications Officer

After a seven year battle, Elaine North, Karen Korus and 249 colleagues in Dumfries have won a historic equal pay victory worth millions of pounds for UNISON members.

In emotional scenes in UNISON's Glasgow office Elaine watched the live-streamed UK Supreme Court judgment on 26 June and then told television interviewers how important the case is for equality for women now and for future generations.

The women's victory finally demolishes the long-running defence by Scottish councils of paying men discriminatory bonuses that are denied to women.

Now nearly two thousand women members across Scotland will share in an estimated nearly £12 million in compensation

Elaine, a support for learning assistant from Dumfries, and her colleague Karen, who attended the Supreme Court in person, did numerous TV, radio and newspaper interviews describing why it had been wrong of the council to argue they should not receive bonuses.

Both women said the fight was about each individual member in Dumfries & Galloway and across Scotland who has been denied pay they were entitled to and they praised UNISON for pursuing the case to the Supreme Court.

Elaine said: "That is the highest court in the land and they have said what the council argued was wrong. We were doing this for all women.



Elaine North celebrates and deals with the media scrum in Glasgow while (below) Karen Korus was in London to hear the judgement first-hand. Front Page: Joe Lynch, Elaine and Peter Hunter celebrate outside UNISON HQ in Glasgow

It is wrong that here we are in 2013 still having to fight for equal pay. But we were never going to give up and now we have won what we are legally entitled to'

Elaine North

"Forty three years ago the women of the Ford Dagenham factory fought and stood strong in the fight for equality in the workplace. They won equal pay for women. The result of this was the passing of the Equal Pay Act 1970, which came into force in 1975, prohibiting inequality between men and women in relation to pay and conditions.

"It is wrong that here we are in 2013 still having to fight for equal pay. But we were never going to



give up and now we have won what we are legally entitled to."

She added: "UNISON's logo has never meant more than at this time. We are stronger together. Thank you to all who made this possible and fought the fight with us and for us."

UNISON has been fantastic and we now hope the women employed by other councils who have been waiting for this decision can proceed with their cases."

Having conceded that council bonuses were discriminatory, more than 20 Scottish councils joined Dumfries in arguing that women should only get equal pay compensation if they worked at the same location as their male comparators.

UNISON had appealed after the Court of Session said the 251 classroom assistants, support for learning assistants and nursery nurses in Dumfries were not able to compare themselves with

groundsmen, refuse collectors and drivers and leisure attendants who received bonuses, but were based at depots, not in the women's schools.

The judgment overturns that decision, saying that UK equal pay law which allows a woman to compare herself with a man "in the same employment" does apply, even though the women worked at different 'establishments'.

Crucially, the decision also opens the way for thousands of workers in arms length companies to compare pay rates between different employers if the council has the overriding ability to control how these subsidiaries operate.

UNISON Scottish Secretary **Mike Kirby** said: "This is a landmark case in equal pay across the UK.

"More than 40 years after the Equal Pay Act, and after 30 years of equal value claims and 20 years after Scottish local authorities and trade unions reached agreement on implementing equal pay, there is finally no hiding place.

"We are proud that it was UNISON alone who got the final answer from the Supreme Court. It is time for councils to stomp up and give our members what is due to them."

Dave Prentis UNISON General Secretary, said: "Employers should be in no doubt that this union will continue to pursue cases until all women are treated equally.

"There are far too many who are still discriminated against and far too many employers who are using every single legal argument and loophole to dodge their obligations under equal pay law."

Ballot over Cornerstone's job and pay cuts

UNISON members employed by Cornerstone Community Care in the West of Scotland are being balloted on industrial action following proposals to cut 155 support workers jobs.

Cornerstone has said that those who are unsuccessful in securing their own jobs will be demoted to a support assistant role and see their salaries slashed by £2,000 - £3,000.

The support workers provide quality care services to vulnerable adults in our communities.

Mark Clifford, UNISON Regional Organiser, said: "Despite the organisation seeing a surplus of approx £375,000 last year, Cornerstone claims it cannot sustain the current levels of support workers. It also claims that the need to reduce

the numbers is driven by the self directed support agenda and service users' care needs.

Mark added: "UNISON has been left with no alternative but to ballot our members for industrial action.

"We have during our negotiations consistently requested that Cornerstone halt the changes and return to the negotiating table and embark on a more meaningful and constructive dialogue.

"Our members should not be held to ransom by the employer pushing ahead with the proposals come what may.

"We would urge the Cornerstone Community Care Board and the Chief Executive to halt the process and explore with UNISON a resolution to this dispute."

Ragged-Trousered Philanthropist grabs media

Agreat stunt by Aberdeenshire branch brought wide news coverage for the Local Government Fair Pay Day of Action in the North east on 25 June.

Dressed as a 'Ragged Trousered Philanthropist' handing out chocolate coins, UNISON's **Kate Ramsden** drew the link with Tressell's book where workers are educated to take poverty wages so the rich can get richer - a bit like much of the press agenda today that seems to be working!



Events were held across Scotland including a rally of over 200 council workers at lunchtime in Dundee attended by Dave Moxham of the STUC.

Regional organiser **Dougie Black** told the

rally that communities relied on workers spending money locally.

"We know that council workers do that, so giving them a living wage and a fair pay rise will boost local economies."

Care solutions need to recognise devolution

As the numbers of people needing social care and support continue to rise, there needs to be a long term sustainable solution to the funding deficit.

Conference threw its weight behind a range of measures to address this, including support for a national care service, free at

the point of need.

Scotland's **Stephen Smellie** brought a Scottish perspective to the debate, reminding delegates that social care and the NHS are devolved matters, and different solutions will need to develop in response to different issues.

The Scottish Government has just published proposals

for improving the integration of health and social care. However this is not a single model – neither the top down National Care Service promoted by Labour, nor the original SNP idea for a lead agency model.

“The Public Bodies Joint Working Bill allows for models to be developed at local level between the local

authority and health partners,” said Stephen, adding that whilst Scottish outcomes will be set, local models will be developed to meet these, and these will be regulated in Scotland.

However, the main issue remains funding for the service at a time of austerity and this will be the case whatever the model.



National Conference Liverpool 2013

More reports and fuller versions of these reports are on the website www.unison-scotland.org.uk/conf2013
Stories by Kate Ramsden, Jane Aitchison and John Stevenson

A better and fairer way than austerity

Gordon McKay, NEC Scotland rep, told UNISON's National Conference that the union would campaign for an alternative to austerity - for a better way, that will put this country first by promoting jobs, public services and growth.

Gordon said, "We need an end to job cuts and the dogma driven pay cap in the public sector. Giving people work and paying a fair wage will promote spending and growth.

"We should raise the income of the lowest paid because not only is it the right thing to do, but it is the sensible thing to do when we need to encourage spending.

"We need to start a council house building programme and build public services to be proud of."



Whilst promising that UNISON would campaign to ensure that this is a one-term Tory Government, Gordon warned Ed Balls, "If you think sticking to Tory spending plans and cutting public services but just a bit slower, and not quite so deep is the way forward, do not expect this union to stand by and watch while our members and families are put

on the dole queue, and sent to the food bank or pay day loan sharks.

"We expect better from our Labour Party, we demand better from our Labour Party.

"There is an alternative to austerity, it is a programme of fairness, decency and justice. It is what this union is built on."

Scotland's **Jane Carolan** stressed that UNISON's response needed to be

practical, credible and deliverable and this motion provided that strategy.

Margo Cranmer, Lanarkshire Health, gave an insight into her own personal experience of the austerity cuts, working as a nurse for over 35 years:

"As the pressure to reduce costs increases, the temptation to downgrade posts increases. Not only is this exploitation of our members, it puts patients and our members at risk."

Gordon drew a stark contrast between the massive pay off for the Royal Bank of Scotland's **Stephen Hester**, whilst public sector workers delivering life line services will have had a 20% pay cut in real terms by 2016.

He said, "The Tories want public service workers to pay for the greed of international financiers."

Living wage and a living pension

UNISON will campaign vigorously for a living wage and pension overseen by a "Living Wage and Pension" Commission, to replace the Low Pay Commission.



Scotland Young Member **Jereth Perry** reminded Conference of the need to organise: "I earn the living wage but I am very aware that SERCO paying the living wage was not

an act of kindness. It was the result of a long running campaign by our branch and colleagues in the Scottish Health Committee."

Action on disability hate crime

UNISON will campaign to raise the profile of disability hate crime calling for it to be treated as seriously as other forms of hate crime.

Strathclyde Police and Fire's **Brian Molloy**, backing the National Disabled Members Committee motion, highlighted that legislation to combat disability hate crime has existed in Scotland since 2010.

Supporting members in dispersed workplaces

With more and more fragmentation of public services, through outsourcing, personalisation or the break up of bargaining arrangements, Conference backed measures to recruit, organise and support members in dispersed workplaces.

Katrina Murray, moving Lanarkshire Health's amendment, reminded



delegates that it is not just about recruiting new members but also retaining the members we have by proving to them the continued benefits of being in a union.

"We need to be very clear that we don't take our membership for granted," she said, adding that members appreciate local reps who know their members and managers and who can often sort things out with just a phone call.

Willie Docherty, of the Scottish Electricity Branch, backed an LGBT Committee amendment highlighting the key role for self organised groups in organising and recruiting around the equalities agenda.

Benefits cuts based on prejudice and dogma

This government's welfare policy is based, not on evidence but on prejudice and dogma, "drip fed through friendly right wing media to make sure that facts don't get in the way," and Conference agreed to challenge it at every turn.

Working with relevant allies the union will build an alternative vision of welfare provision for the 21st Century, including affordable housing, decent wages to end in work poverty, and an economic policy that prioritises jobs and growth.

Scottish NEC member **Jane Carolan** told delegates that we have practically the least generous benefits system amongst the industrialised nations, despite being the fifth largest economy in the world.



Lilian Macer



Jane Carolan

“Multinationals operating to guidelines that have seen even the dying declared fit for work... A matter of shame!”

Jane Carolan

"So who suffers from benefits cuts?" asked Jane. "The 300,000 children condemned to poverty.

"Those forced to take a weekly trip to a food bank to ensure they can feed their families. The thousands evicted in the name of housing benefit changes.

"And the disabled cut off from all support by a multinational operating to guidelines that have seen even the dying declared fit for work."

Jane slammed as

"vindictive" the bedroom tax, removing housing benefit for a so-called spare room. "Plunging the poor into greater poverty should be a matter of shame," said Jane.

Lilian Macer, Scotland's Regional Delegate told Conference that this government's ideological attacks will have a significant impact on our members since two thirds of those who will lose as a result of these welfare reforms will be in work, in predominantly low paid jobs delivering vital

public services.

Renfrewshire's **Brenda Aitchison** condemned Osborne's "ill informed rubbish" response to arguments from trade unions, charities and campaigners against welfare reform. "That Tory arrogance shines through. These changes happen to someone else, their families, their communities, no compassion, no empathy."

Brenda ended with a quote from Patti Smith's song, 'People have the Power': "Let us use our power to vigorously defend our people and end austerity."

Aberdeen City's **Peter Smyth**, a welfare rights worker himself, said welfare reform will take £62 million out of the economy, "from local shops and businesses, food out of children's mouths and shoes off their feet."

Scotland calls for end to scandal of publicly funded poverty pay

Conference slammed the coalition government's "slash and burn" responses to the economic crisis, with attacks on pay and conditions and growing privatisation creating a low wage economy, job insecurity and undermining employment rights.

Amending Northern's motion, Scotland delegate, **Stephen Smellie** called on the Scottish government to use their procurement policies to make sure that these employers also pay their workers the living wage.

Stephen highlighted the trend over the last 30 years of less and less of the wealth of the country being paid in wages to workers and more and more going to the profits and bonuses of bankers and investors.

"The lower rates in Scottish Local Government are around the national minimum poverty wage - a scandal which this union has to address with vigour and which in Scotland we hope to be leading industrial action on.

"The Living Wage campaigns are a significant start," said Stephen, "but they only apply to in-house staff.

"Councils are procuring services in the full knowledge that workers will be paid national minimum poverty wages, often on zero hours contracts. This is a



One of the highlights of the conference fringe this year was the screening of the film **The Happy Lands** organised by the North West Region and UNISON Scotland. Scottish delegates raised over £200 for the President's Fund, Hope Not Hate, through ticket sales. Pictured (L to R) are Mike Kirby, Jean Geldart, Hope Not Hate, Chris Tansley, President, Lilian Macer and Stephen Smellie.

publicly funded wages scandal," slammed Stephen.

Aberdeenshire's **Susan Kennedy** told delegates that her branch has staved off privatisation and has successfully negotiated a Scottish 'Living Wage' for all local authority employees including Modern Apprentices and is looking to see this assimilate into the pay scales.

Susan added, "We applaud NHS Scotland for their success in achieving the Living Wage.

Jim Main of Glasgow City told Conference of his branch's campaign, uniting their members with day centre users and carers to stop the closure of three day centres under the guise of personalisation; and supporting anti-bedroom tax campaigners.

But he warned, "We really need to raise our game, because if we don't defend our members, give hope, things could turn to despair. We have to fight like tigers."

International solidarity: Palestine and Colombia

The international session heard harrowing testimony of Colombian activists and calls for a sporting boycott to end Israeli apartheid.



Jane Aitchison of South Lanarkshire Branch told conference of her branch's Skype session with Colombian rights campaigner Berenice Celayta Alayon and spoke of the bravery of trade unionists who are rising up and organising in spite of Colombia being the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist.



Mary Sampson from Lanarkshire Health told delegates that the numbers of trade unionists killed in Colombia in 2008 were equal in number to everyone in the conference hall - a shocking statistic which has got even worse since then.



Palestine: In a passionate speech Sam Macartney, Chair of Scotland's International Committee, told Conference that recently Scotland hosted Mahmoud Sarsak, a Palestinian football player recently released from an Israeli jail after being interned for three years without charge. No charges were brought against him as no crimes were committed. He was on hunger strike for 94 days.

Sam called for a sporting boycott to now be put in place "to draw attention to this Israeli apartheid regime."

Resisting reckless attacks on health and safety

UNISON will challenge the Government's reckless attacks on Health and Safety, whilst promoting Health and Safety in the union, ensuring that activists are appropriately trained, and know what their rights are as safety reps.

Chris Stephens, Glasgow City Branch warned that the 33% budget cut to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and additional cuts to the public sector will diminish the ability to inspect, enforce and advise and will result in an increase in injuries and fatalities.

He slammed the ConDem Government's unfounded ideological attack on health and safety, passing it off as a



Chris Stephens

burden on business: "Let us be very clear that there are very few accidents at work,

because an accident waiting to happen is no accident."

He highlighted the stark contrast between the HSE reported 173 workers killed last year and the real cost counted by trade union research of 1400 killed in work related incidents (not accidents) and up to 50,000 who die as a result of work related illness.

Chris also condemned the

removal of civil liability from the Health and Safety Act last Christmas, without debate, denying our members access to justice for workplace injury claims.

"We need to train more workplace reps, in order to defend members' health and safety, and to hold employers to account over unsafe conditions and practices. Organise, educate and agitate!"

UNISON calls for homes for people not profit

Conference called for a mass housing investment programme, building new and refurbishing old housing provision, financed from increases in progressive taxes.

Steve Gray, of Aberdeenshire UNISON, told Conference: "We need to bury Thatcher's Legacy with a new generation of council housing built by the people for the people."



Local Government in brief See more on our website

Thanks to Stephanie

Delegates gave best wishes to **Stephanie Herd** who stood down as Scottish Local Government Chair after 10 years. A full tribute to Stephanie's huge contribution to the union will follow in the next issue.



Support for scrutinising council budgets:

UNISON will train specialists to help branches analyse council budgets and alternative proposals to the employer's cuts in jobs and services. Edinburgh's **Andy Barnett** raised a laugh with the accountant's joke "What's one plus one? Whatever you want it to be."

Living wage and real jobs for modern apprentices

A line-up of Scotland's **Scott Donohoe**, **Susan Kennedy**, **Chris Stephens** and **Colin Turbett** told Conference that the best way to improve conditions for modern apprentices is to recruit them into the union as they called for a living wage and assured permanent jobs.

We want to hear your news

SiU is your paper, we want to hear your stories. John Stevenson (Editor) 0131 558 7488, webmanager@unison-edinburgh.org.uk or Malcolm Burns m.burns@unison.co.uk and Fiona Montgomery f.montgomery@unison.co.uk



6-8 September Lorne Hotel, Glasgow

Come along and learn new skills to help your Branch be more effective campaigners using performance skills to develop and deliver campaign plans. **Entertainment included!**

Friday night

Mark Thomas, Eleanor Morton
Compere - Susan Morrison

Saturday - all day

Workshops (including 2 from Mark Thomas)

covering strategic campaigning, media handling, using social media, cartooning, video-making, stand-up comedy, song-writing, public speaking etc

Saturday night

Workshop outputs, Learn and Do followed by

The Mobilise Show

Compere - Susan Morrison with comedy from Michael Redmond and guests as well as music and song from Arthur Johnstone, Fraser Speirs and Stephen Wright.

Sunday

More workshops and a mock radio phone-in with Susan Morrison and special guests

For costs and how to apply see www.unison-scotland.org.uk/mobilise13