

# voice *atwork*

july 2010 vol.2 no. 1

the electronic bulletin for unison scotland community members

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## Welcome to the new electronic edition of voice at work

**The launch of this electronic version of VoiceatWork comes at a time when our members working in the community and voluntary sector are facing the prospect of a prolonged period of pay cuts and job losses.**

The ideologically motivated assault on public services planned by the Westminster government could have a devastating impact on our sector, with councils passing on the cuts by chopping back or pulling the plug on funding arrangements. All public services, whether it's those delivered by the statutory sector or by large and small voluntary sector employers and community organisations, will be coming under threat and we have to ensure that our voice is heard both inside our union and through the broad campaign against the cuts.

As the number of C&V members inside UNISON has grown over the past few years, we have developed a

stronger identity and become better organised. We now have our own Community Service Group, and in Scotland we have an elected Service Group Executive and became the first UK region to hold a Service Group Conference back in March.

VoiceatWork has been an important vehicle for keeping members informed and giving them a platform to share their experiences and highlight issues in their workplaces and within the sector as a whole. Producing an electronic version of the newsletter means we can communicate with members more quickly and more often. As always, however, VoiceatWork ultimately depends on ordinary members submitting information and news articles about what's happening in their workplaces and branches, so please do get in touch, and please forward this edition on to your colleagues.

*Ian Williamson, Chairperson of the UNISON Scottish Community Committee*

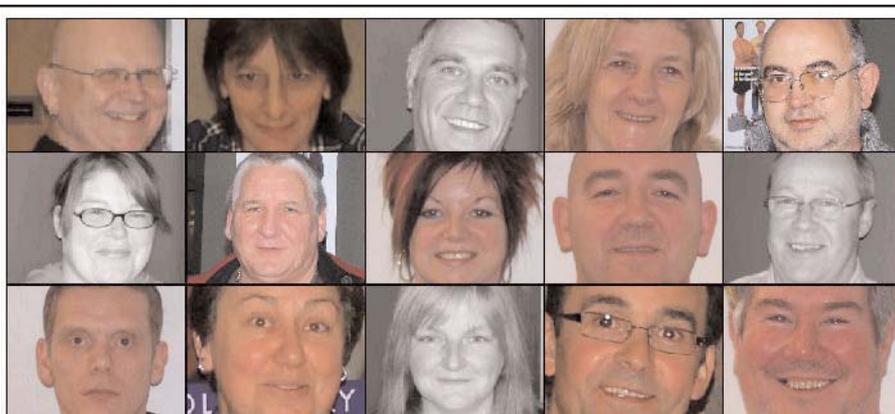
## Mungo Foundation members vote for 2.5% pay claim

**UNISON** members employed by The Mungo Foundation (TMF) have voted by over 90% to pursue a pay claim of 2.5% and are seeking that the organisation signs up to the Scottish Living Wage figure of £7.15 per hour as the minimum hourly rate within the organisation.

The Scottish Living Wage Campaign involves trade unions, religious organisations, poverty campaigners and community organisations who have come together to campaign against the blight of low pay in Scotland. Through vigorous research they have calculated that £7.00 per hour rising to £7.15 by May 2011 is the minimum rate of pay you need to adequately allow workers to provide for themselves and their families.

UNISON will be contacting Glasgow City Council who are the major funders of The Mungo Foundation and who signed up to be the first Living Wage City in Scotland to call on them to put their money where their mouth is and fund the Mungo Foundation sufficiently to enable them to pay the Living Wage. UNISON hopes this will then become a model that can be replicated in other voluntary organisation.

As you will see elsewhere in Voice at Work UNISON is including references to the Scottish Living Wage in other pay claims including the claim currently



**Giving UNISON members in the voluntary sector a voice**

## Quarriers Branch pay consultation

UNISON's Quarriers Branch are as we write consulting their members on the proposed pay claim for 2010/11. For the first time the branch are carrying out this consultation via their website: [www.quarriersunison.org.uk](http://www.quarriersunison.org.uk) were members can log in, give their view of the claim and vote.

We have detailed the claim below.

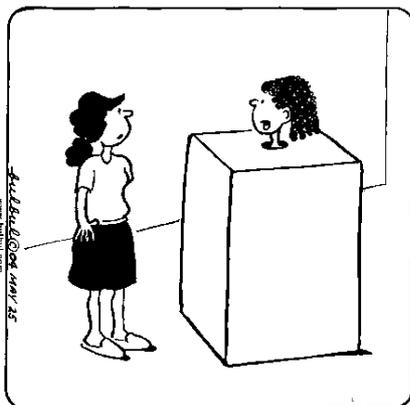
UNISON submits this claim in good faith on behalf of our members within Quarriers. We are fully aware of the challenging financial environment that Quarriers operates in along with other social care providers. Last year our members accepted a pay and increment freeze and significant reductions in terms and conditions as a reflection of the tough economic times. Staff have already made a huge contribution in terms of reducing costs and can no longer be expected to bear the brunt of this.

In previous years we have set out a list of aspirations on behalf of our members. This year in continuing recognition of the economic climate we are solely focusing on a straight pay claim.

Our members are highly committed to the work they do and are not motivated by financial gain but by the contribution they can make. Our members work in a sector whose work is structurally underpaid and undervalued in many ways. They cannot be reasonably expected to see their financial situation continue to deteriorate and indeed UNISON and Quarriers should be working in partnership to improve it.

### Economic Background

RPI inflation continues to be high. The RPI inflation rate was 5.1% in May 2010. IRS's panel of expert economic commentators forecast that RPI will average 4.2% in the second quarter of 2010, falling back to 3.1% by the final quarter. For the first three months of 2011, headline inflation is expected to average 2.5%.



"I think out of the box but my low wage budget has me boxed in."

## Enable national office changes

UNISON recently responded on behalf of our members within Enable Scotland's national office about the employers plans for restructuring within the office.

UNISON acknowledged the financial pressures ENABLE operates under and indeed that our members have endured the pain of a pay freeze and cuts to the sickness policy.

We also noted the increasing drive in social policy towards personalisation. Whilst no one would argue against people who have learning disabilities getting more choice and control over their lives rather than just being passive recipients of services, our members have expressed concern that many people who have learning disabilities will not want the added responsibilities associated with becoming purchasers and com-

missioners. Additionally unless personalisation is properly resourced there is a danger it will push down pay and standards in the sector.

We hope ENABLE Scotland will continue to be a quality provider and seek to maintain and improve terms and conditions by not entering in a race to the lowest common denominator and will be seeking further discussions based on this.

To read the rest of our response or for other Enable Scotland updates, please visit our blog: <http://unison-ablescotland.blogspot.com>

**Mungo pay claim** under consultation in Quarriers.

*continued*

The wider Mungo Foundation pay claim calls for a modest 2.5% increase. This is in the hope that a swift settlement can be reached and illustrates the pragmatic and realistic approach of our Mungo Foundation members. The claim also seeks to harmonise sleepover arrangements. We are now awaiting management's response to our claim and will update you in the next issue of Voice at Work.

UNISON members in The Mungo Foundation now have a blog that

allows us to update information regularly. It can be found at: <http://unison-mungofoundation.blogspot.com>

**UNISON TMF Blog**

In May 2010 CPI was 3.4%. UNISON uses the RPI as a benchmark in pay claims because it more accurately reflects true cost of living movements for members. Our claim does not seek to match RPI and again this is a reflection of our realistic approach in the current economic situation. We are setting our claim at a realistic figure with the expectation it is met in full swiftly

### The Claim

- 2.5% on all salaries and allowances;
- Annual increments to be paid;
- That the sleepover allowance be paid for sleepovers up to 8 hours, anything above 8 hours to be paid at hourly rate;
- That Quarriers introduce the Scottish Living Wage as the minimum pay rate within Quarriers. The Scottish Living Wage is currently set at £7.00 per hour (due to rise to £7.15); more info on it can be found at <http://povertyalliance.org/slw-home.asp>

# Budget: Government declares war on public services

UNISON General Secretary, Dave Prentis, on Tuesday 22nd June, accused the Government of declaring war on war on public services and public service workers, whether employed in the public or voluntary sector, with the most draconian budget in decades.

Dave Prentis said: "This budget signals that the battle for Britain's public services has begun with the Government declaring war. Public sector workers will be shocked and angry that they are the innocent victims of job cuts and pay freezes.

"Freezing public sector pay when inflation is running at 5.1% and VAT is going up, will mean a real cut in living standards for millions of ordinary workers and their families - already struggling to pay rising bills.

"Nurses, social workers, midwives, paramedics, police community support officers, housing and environmental officers who provide vital public services, are amongst those who will be hit hardest by the two year pay freeze. And for local government workers this comes on top of this year's freeze.

"A 25% cut in departmental public spending will decimate our public services. The budget will do nothing to restore confidence or kick-start the recovery, but will push local economies into the ground, raising

the spectre of breadline Britain.

"They haven't even bothered to consider any other option but slash and burn. What of the bankers who caused the

**"Raising VAT affects the poor the most as they spend a higher proportion of their meagre incomes on goods and services.**

UNISON General Secretary, Dave Prentis

recession and the super-rich who evade tax? They must be breathing a sigh of relief that they got away so lightly. The bank tax levy is a poor substitute for a serious 'Robin Hood' tax on financial transactions. It is a missed opportunity to raise £30bn which would have made a significant dent in the country's deficit.

"Throwing tens of thousands of public sector workers on the dole will cost the country billions in lost tax revenue as well as piling billions onto the benefits bill.

"The Chancellor dreams of a private sector recovery but how can that be on the back of brutal cuts to public services workers. Local businesses,



UNISON General Secretary, Dave Prentis

shops, hairdressers, restaurants will go to the wall as spending dries up. No amount of fiscal stimulus will do any good if they have no customers

"Vital services that the poor, the sick and the vulnerable rely on, are in the firing line. There is no compassion in this coalition.

"Freezing council tax is a useless gesture saving people pennies but cutting tens of millions from council budgets, threatening jobs, losing services and undermining the local economy.

"Raising VAT affects the poor the most as they spend a higher proportion of their meagre incomes on goods and services.

"Meanwhile major utility companies spend money sponsoring sporting events whilst attacking pay and conditions - that cannot be fair."

Adding 500,000 public service workers to the dole between now and 2015 - which the CIPD says would be the likely effect of Osborne's spending plans - will cost around £10 billion in lost tax and increased benefit payments. This would almost entirely cancel out the reduction in the pay bill, as well as dealing a massive blow to local economies and communities.

## UNISON families hit by low pay

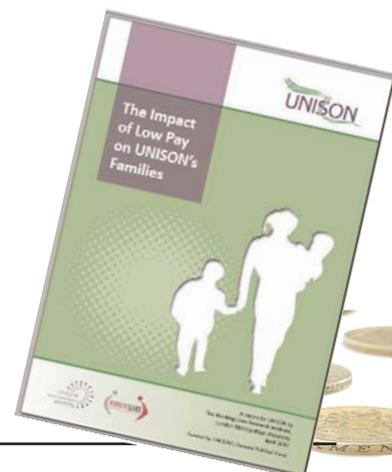
An in-depth study, published by UNISON, explores the complex relationship between working, juggling childcare responsibilities and low pay, a relationship that traps people into low wage jobs, with little chance of progression.

The knock-on effect to families is huge. From working two jobs, taking shifts on the weekend, or feeling too tired to discipline their children or help out with homework, many parents on low wages fear their kids are missing out on vital care and support.

Working alongside researchers from the Working Lives Research Institute from London Metropolitan University, UNISON members discussed and documented the effects of low pay, long and unsocial hours and/or multiple jobs on their own lives and those of their children.

The Impact of Low Pay on UNISON's Families is available here:

[www.unison.org.uk/file/Impact%20of%20Low%20Pay%20Report%20April%202010%20final%20v.5.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/file/Impact%20of%20Low%20Pay%20Report%20April%202010%20final%20v.5.pdf)



## Scottish Society for Autism

UNISON has been responding to proposed downgradings and redundancies in the Scottish Society for Autism (SSA).

Following being contacted by many members in the SSA, UNISON has raised concerns with the organisation over its current restructure proposals. SSA plans to downgrade many staff and make others redundant.

UNISON has written to the Chief Executive and secured a meeting with the organisation where we will be seeking protections for staff. This issue has also prompted us to look at our organisation within the Society and we will be seeking recognition and hoping to build our membership and recruit stewards.

If you work for SSA and would like to get involved please get in touch with Robert Rae at [r.rae@unison.co.uk](mailto:r.rae@unison.co.uk) or 0141 332 0006.

## UNISON COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

The first Community Service Group conference, will take place on 2nd November in Telford. There is still time for Community members to register for the conference and get your voice heard!

Any UNISON branch with members in the Community Service Group can send delegates - and that includes Health and Local Government branches. Of course, the delegates have to be members of Community, working in the voluntary sector, housing associations, and so on.

Conference delegates are elected by branches, so if you're interested in attending, please speak to your branch as soon as possible! The deadline for registration is 13th August.

To view the Conference Bulletin, including all the forms you need and lots more information, please click here. <http://www.unison.org.uk/conference/community.asp>

## Protection of Vulnerable Groups

*Goes Live 30th November*

**The Scottish Government have recently announced that the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme will go live on 30th November 2010.**

PVG is a new system to determine who is eligible to work with children and vulnerable adults. It will be an offence to employ someone in a post working with vulnerable groups who is barred from doing so.

When the scheme is introduced in the first year only new entrants to jobs and those changing role will have to register, but in time anyone working with vulnerable groups will have to register. Whilst UNISON fully supports the need to ensure that vulnerable groups are not exposed to risk we have reservations about the



scheme, most notably on cost.

Given the current financial climate there is a danger employers will try and pass the cost of the scheme on to staff, either directly by asking staff to pay the £59 it costs to register or more likely through the back door by cutting back in other ways. UNISON believes this would be unacceptable and that voluntary sector workers should not be asked

to bear the cost of ensuring the safety of service users.

Please let us know what your employer is up to around PVG and especially if there are

any overt or covert attempts to pass the cost on to staff. More info on the PVG scheme can be found at: [www.infoscotland.com/pvgscheme/](http://www.infoscotland.com/pvgscheme/)

## Action for Children – pay ballot

**A**fter several months of talks, pay talks with Action for Children have ended with the employer refusing to move from their initial offer of 1%.

The trade unions initially submitted a very reasonable claim, for 2.4%, and even reduced the claim to 1.5% plus two extra days' annual leave for employees on the employer's lowest tier of annual leave. But Action for Children would not shift their posi-

tion, even when talks moved to ACAS, and they left us with an offer which is so far below the current inflation rate of 5.1% that we have been forced to ballot members and recommend that they reject the pay offer.

Members will also be asked in the ballot whether they would be willing to take either strike action, or industrial action short of a strike. If members reject the offer, and indicate they are prepared to take action, we will initiate formal industrial action ballot proceedings.

Contact: [m.short@unison.co.uk](mailto:m.short@unison.co.uk)



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The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the UNISON Scottish Community Sector Committee.