

# voice *atwork*

Spring 2011 vol.2 no. 2

the electronic bulletin for unison scotland community members

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**SATURDAY 26 MARCH 2011**

**Transport details inside**

## UNISON letter to Third Force News

11/2/11

Dear Sir/Madam,

At a time when a broad, cross sector campaign against the coalition's ideologically inspired spending cuts is required, it is disappointing to hear the Chief Executive of SCVO, Martin Sime, call for the Scottish Government to 'stop protecting' the jobs of public sector workers delivering vital public services ('Battle Begins for a Fair Future', TFN 4 February).

His assertion that the third sector also provides public services is one that UNISON is in complete agreement with. It is for this reason that UNISON has over the years worked with third sector employers to push for funding arrangements which factor in full cost recovery and parity (with the wider public sector) of pay and conditions for employees in the sector.

Our 6,000 members working in the sector in Scotland are among those facing redundancy or an uncertain future as a result of the cuts. We are determined to fight for each and every one of our members' jobs in the third sector as well as the public sector.

Instead of evoking the legacy of Thatcherism with his attack on the 'bloated' public sector, Martin Sime should be standing alongside his partners in the trade unions to defend all public services, whether they are delivered by the public sector or by voluntary and community organisations. Instead of engaging in a divisive "don't sack us, sack them" exercise, he should be directing his fire at the Government in London, whose programme of savage cuts will throw hundreds of thousands on the dole and do untold damage to public services and to the wider economy.

*Ian Williamson*  
**Chair**

UNISON Scottish Community  
Service Group

## EDITORIAL

At the time of writing, local authorities throughout Scotland are setting their budgets for the year ahead. For workers in the community and voluntary sector, the expected huge cuts in funding for organisations in the sector mean the misery of job losses, pay cuts, and regressive terms and conditions.

These cuts will, of course, only intensify a process that has been well underway for some time now. Over the past year or so we have witnessed a sector-wide pattern of cuts and redundancies, as employers have responded to local authority pressure to make savings, and positioned themselves for the major cuts coming in the next financial year. In the large employers such as Quarriers, Enable, Capability Scotland, and The Mungo Foundation, for example, our members have endured pay freezes and major reductions in their terms and conditions, while job losses have been scattered here, there and everywhere across the sector.

UNISON's defence of public services recognises the role that the sector we work in has in delivering these, and, as the cuts deepen, it is vital that we continue to have our voice heard in the campaign against them. Unlike some who claim to represent the community and voluntary sector, we believe in defending all public services and the jobs and terms and conditions of the workers who deliver them, whether employed in the public sector or the community and voluntary sector.

Although the cuts have started, the battle for an alternative goes on. An alternative that takes as its starting point a recognition that the viciousness of the cuts reflects the Tories' inherent ideological hatred of public services. An alternative that points to a tax system weighted in favour of the wealthy, and to the continuing scandal of bankers' bonuses, to give lie to the claim that 'we are all in this together'. And an alternative that challenges and dismantles the 'common sense' assertion that these cuts are necessary and unavoidable.

The ConDem government has made its intentions clear. Our jobs and livelihoods, the services we deliver, and the future of public services as a whole are at stake.

## MARCH FOR THE ALTERNATIVE:

Transport is available from across Scotland contact your local UNISON branch for further details and to book a place. Further information can be found on UNISON Scotland's website or telephone Lorraine Bartlett on 0141 342 2841.

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**SATURDAY 26 MARCH 2011**

# in the workplace

## UNISON ERSKINE: a major contributor to a new national service group

Michael Betan is the Senior Steward for the major Scottish charity, Erskine Homes. Michael has just been elected as Convenor of Community stewards in the NHS Glasgow, Clyde & Voluntary sector branch. Below we print a copy of an article from Erskine's staff magazine.

Following the creation earlier this year of UNISON's National Community Service group, Erskine Members will be able to benefit greatly within this exciting new arena.

Prior to this new sector being formed, all health care workers were governed by UNISON's Health group which is mostly dominated by large organisations such as the NHS Senior Steward Michael Betan

explained "Although the health branches endeavoured gallantly to represent their members who are employed in the private or voluntary sector, many of the issues faced by those who work in care homes like Erskine, were often diluted with the major issues faced by those employed within the NHS."

"One of the Community Service group's core principles is to give UNISON care home workers a more powerful voice, recognising the uniqueness of many of the associated difficulties and challenges the voluntary sector has to face"

"In previous years I have often been extremely frustrated towards playing a key part of health care based negotiations with the outcomes of those negotiations being non applicable to the members I represent at Erskine.

Those days are over now and it is with delight and pride I have been appointed to the post of Area Convenor for

the NHS Glasgow, Clyde & Voluntary Sector branch."

"I truly believe my appointment will greatly increase the quality of representation I can deliver to the Erskine membership. Although I am now accountable to all UNISON stewards employed within the branch, I remain highly motivated to cater for those employed on my "home turf."

"As ever, the relationship between UNISON and Erskine continues to be improved upon and I hope the added resources which accompany my role of Convenor should stand as an asset towards this exercise. With first class contributions from Steve Simpson, our new Director of HR and his entire HR team, we are venturing into a highly positive programme of improvement, inclusive of the creation of a true partnership agreement."

"The key to a correctly functioning partnership between the employer and UNISON is to gain inclusion, earn trust and deliver openness and transparency within our discussions and negotiations. If these attributes can be welcomed and reciprocated at Chief Executive / Board level, I would be very optimistic towards achieving a much more practical, harmonious and improved relationship."

Any employees who wish to join UNISON can do so by contacting Michael c/o McKellar House, Erskine Home.



Michael Betan

### Citizens Advice Direct recognition request

Following an increase in membership, UNISON had written to Citizens Advice Direct (CAD) seeking a voluntary recognition agreement in December 2010.

As we go to print, we are currently finalising the draft agreement and hopeful that we can have a recognition agreement in place by beginning of March 2011.

We would like to thank our new and existing members for their support through this process.

### Employee Counselling Service staff vote



We are pleased to announce that following a successful ballot of staff within the Employee Counselling Service (ECS), UNISON will be granted recognition for bargaining purposes within ECS.

We would like to thank ALL our members for supporting the union in pursuit of recognition and the Board of ECS for agreeing to consult staff on our recognition request.

We will now be moving to elect stewards and begin to develop a pro-active agenda for bargaining within ECS.

We will also take this opportunity to highlight the excellent services available from our members in ECS. If your employer doesn't offer support to staff now's the time to ask. You can find out more on ECS from their website: <http://www.empcs.org.uk/>

**If you are NOT a member of UNISON JOIN!  
If you are a member pass the information on to a fellow worker and encourage them to JOIN!**

# Community service group report to Scottish Council

Scottish Council is the UNISON body that brings together UNISON activists from all sections of the union in Scotland to discuss policy and plan for the future. At each meeting a report is circulated outlining our work in the Community service group. Below we publish the latest one.

Since the last report to Scottish Council was written the new Community Service Group had its first national conference in Telford on 2 November 2010. The conference was very successful and Scotland played a significant role in proceedings, with among others Angela Lynes chairing as President and Stephen Brown speaking as Chair of the Community Service Group on several occasions.

Community is still in its infancy as a service group but the conference which heard from Dave Prentis gave activists a real sense of confidence that voluntary and housing sector workers and their issues are now mainstream in the union and that the apparatus is now there to make things happen.

Which is just as well as overall the picture in the sector is very difficult. Organisations involved in the provision of social care have been asked to make significant savings in this financial year by most local authorities which have led to pay freezes; cuts in terms and conditions and redundancies. All organisations are being told that they will get less next year but the exact level of cuts will only become clear when each authority's budget is set, so there is huge unease in the sector. Additionally we are now seeing the squeeze being put

on the much smaller number of organisations that receive their funding from the NHS.

These cuts are being further compounded in many areas by the move to personalisation; the approach in Glasgow for example has been to use personalisation to cut the budget of individual services by between 20 and 30%. Employers are responding with cuts and redundancies e.g. the Mungo Foundation is cutting the contracted hours of all staff in learning

disabilities by 20% and talking of moving to much more flexible working (i.e. staff will be asked to work their contracted hours at any time in the week - a few hours here, a few hours there).

Below is a snapshot on some of the larger employers we deal with to give an indication of what is happening on the ground to terms and conditions and Pay:

**Enable:** pay freeze last year and removal of sick pay from first 2 days sick; no response yet to 2.5% pay claim due from 1/10/10 but not looking good;

**Capability:** major reduction in terms and conditions last year, increment and pay freeze last year and proposed for this year too. About to consult members on 2.5% pay claim in response;

**Quarriers:** pay and increment freeze last year and reductions in terms and conditions; this year settled for £150 lump sum and half an increment;

**Mungo Foundation:** pay freeze last year; members just voted to reject pay freeze this year so we will be looking to exert more pressure on the Board;

**Erskine:** 1.25% pay award for this year (partly reflects high public support for services charities);

In **housing** the picture whilst not yet so stark is difficult. The pension scheme which most housing associa-



## Community report continued

tions are in is in significant deficit and is thus introducing increased contributions for staff and employers; they are also now offering Career Average schemes as opposed to final salary ones, which many employers are opting for to reduce costs. There is also widespread concern about the impact of the forthcoming changes to housing benefit and we have been supporting the campaign run by our members in the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations for a fairer system, and would encourage Scottish Council delegates to sign the petition and find out more at:  
<http://www.sfha.co.uk/sfha/current-campaigns/housing-benefit/menu-id-90.html>.

We were involved in the STUC's housing lobby of parliament on 10th February, which saw a rally outside the Parliament and then a lobby of MSPs from 1.00 to 2.30pm in Committee Room 1 of the Parliament.

The uncertainty is stimulating increased interest in union membership; we hope to sign a recognition deal for instance with Citizens Advice Direct and have finally managed to get a foot in the door with Includem, a provider of services to young people in crisis (on back of proposed 10% pay cut). Another positive note is membership in Community increased by a net 167 as opposed to 144 last year which is over 2% real growth. (The figures do need some health warning: these are RMS figures not line count, there is a negative trend in recent months and there is inevitably some lag in lapse time – that said positive news!).

We are working to build voluntary sector profile in cuts campaigning and will bring out an electronic version of Voice at Work our newsletter for Community members before the 26th March demo.

Lastly can I remind delegates and branches that we run email distribution lists for voluntary sector and housing activists (both Council and social) and would ask that if you want anyone added to these please email the address below.

**Simon MacFarlane**  
 Regional Organiser  
[S.Macfarlane@unison.co.uk](mailto:S.Macfarlane@unison.co.uk)

# Personalisation speech to CCPS Conference

Below we reproduce a speech given by Simon Macfarlane, UNISON Regional Organiser, on Personalisation to Community Care Providers Scotland (CCPS) Conference on 25th November 2010 (as part of a debate on whether workers had been dealt a full hand or no hand by personalisation).

UNISON's position on personalisation is clear - we support it, we have policy in support of personalisation; as recently as 2nd November our first ever Community conference for our new dedicated voluntary sector service group passed a motion clearly stating our support for the principles of genuine personal choice and control and independence in personal care. The motion also though set out our real concerns around the impact on the personalised workforce and the funding and quality of care.

This is entirely consistent from a union that has equality at its core and has pioneered self-organisation and vigorously addressed access issues within its own organisation.

So UNISON's position is not that the workforce has been dealt no hand, our concern is much more that the current construct of personalisation is in danger of becoming a house of cards due to inadequate resources.

UNISON has long been engaged in the personalisation agenda and the challenges it brings. In the past, UNISON was wrongly criticised for what was seen as our opposition to direct payments, and assertions were made that our members discouraged their take up.

### A joint statement

To counter this in 2006/7 UNISON met with various representatives of disabled people's organisations, such as the Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living (GCIL), Scottish Personal Assistants

Employers Network (SPAEN), and the Scottish Consortium of Direct Payment Support Organisations (SCODPSO). A joint statement followed confirming our support for the principle of independent living. More importantly, all parties agreed to work together on areas of mutual acceptance.

The statement acknowledged that direct payments had a legitimate role. However, it was clear that direct payments were not a substitute for other flexible and responsive public services, and were not appropriate for all people's needs. It was further agreed that direct payments must complement a range of public services and must not be used to cover for inadequacies in public provision. Additionally the organisations agreed to jointly promote union membership.



**UNISON's position on personalisation is clear - we support it**

Simon MacFarlane

### Inadequate funding

UNISON believes that the personalisation and transformation of social care has been introduced without adequate funding, with the focus being on reducing the cost of supporting individuals and reducing the proportion of provision in the public sector and potentially the voluntary sector.

In England which is further down the track of personalisation the evidence is clear on the impact on staff personalisation is having:

The National Minimum Data Set for Social Care in England shows that between December 2008 and February 2010 the following occurred to pay rates in the following posts:

- Care Workers at NVQ 1 or 2 level saw their pay in the private sector drop from £6.30 to £6.00, in the voluntary sector it dropped from £7.04 to £7.03 and in the public sector is went from £6.80 to £7.73.
- For higher graded staff the results were equally stark. Senior Care Workers above NVQ2 saw their wages drop in the private sector from £6.85 to £6.80, in the voluntary sector from £8.34 to £8.08 whilst in the public sector they rose from £9.11 to £10.69.

### In the past 18 months

In Scotland I've spent the last 18 months in brutal negotiations with many organisations here today, seeing pay freezes, redundancies, terms and conditions slashed, and so far I have seen no evidence that a move to personalisation will lead to any reversal of this trend.

There is an issue that personal and privatised care has not increased the quality and choice of care for all care recipients, it has also produced a sector of the care market and workforce that is unregulated and provided little incentive for employers to invest in a well trained and paid workforce.

Not all service users wish to take a Direct Payment and become an individual employer. UNISON believes that individual service users would benefit from the option of paying for a Personal Assistant (PA) but not being their direct employer. This could be done by local authorities or voluntary organisations directly employing a pool of PAs which service users can select from. In this way PAs would be employed by the local authority and not budget holders acting as micro employers.

In Scandinavia models such as this are common and



**Join with UNISON and the STUC in campaigning for a better settlement for public services however they are provided.**

they offer significant benefits to the person requiring support and the personal assistant.

We need workforce remodelling agreements both at national level and at employer level. The direction of travel is clear and the key stakeholders are broadly signed up to this. So we need the Scottish Government, local authorities and health boards to set out some minimum standards and safeguards for individuals needing support, workers and providers. There is an opportunity for some joint work between CCPS and UNISON here.

### Poverty pay

It is incumbent on voluntary organisations to be clearer and louder about the need for care services to be adequately resourced and in particular about the pay and conditions of workers in the sector. It isn't right to portray pay freezes as evidence of the voluntary sector's efficiency.

Poverty pay and poor conditions are simply inimical to high quality personalised care. The right to a person-

alised care service can't be an unfettered right, it comes with significant responsibilities.

Many will need help and assistance in meeting those responsibilities and the voluntary sector has a unique and crucial role in assisting people to get the personalised support they need whilst acting in an ethical and responsible manner.

It doesn't have to be like this.

Personalisation can and should be introduced with adequate funding and safeguards for staff. The voluntary sector needs to get active in campaigns such as UNISON's Public Works and the STUC's There is a Better Way campaigns. There's too much fence sitting going on when many of the people you and our members support will be deeply affected by benefit cuts and the myriad of other cuts.

### Campaign for better service and funding

So I say to you don't let personalisation tumble like a pack of cards. Join with UNISON and the STUC in campaigning for a better settlement for public services however they are provided. If your organisation doesn't yet recognise a union, come speak to me about how we can work together to make personalisation work for service users, organisations and staff.

## in the workplace

Housing Support Services in The Mungo Foundation (TMF) have received two hits in the last few months to their terms and conditions of employment.

In the first one, because of the funding cuts being implemented by Glasgow city council, TMF asked staff to VOLUNTEER for a cut in hours or redundancy. TMF asked staff to volunteer a cut in hours or redundancy to try and make this saving then they then received another blow from the Council in relation to the Personalisation Agenda, with Glasgow city council seeking another 20 to 30% from

the Service User's budgets which would be passed on to staff.

As this was a staff at risk situation UNISON were consulted, UNISON assured members that they would work to ensure staff were fully consulted and the process was carried out properly. The process has almost been completed now and all staff working in the Learning Disability Service will have up to 20% cut in their hours and will receive new contracts from 1st May 2011.

Workshops have commenced where staff have been asked to contribute their views in

## Mungo Foundation Cuts!

the provision of this new service and it was clearly indicated by TMF the importance of the project workers roles in the delivery of this service. TMF have developed guides and handbooks for staff to assist with new ways of working, outcome based support training has also been arranged.

This has been an anxious few months for all concerned but UNISON hopes if the service develops and picks up new business, in the future they would be able to renegotiate hours lost to members.

Alice Lyness, UNISON Convenor, TMF

# UNISON on the internet

UNISON has a number of websites and blogs dedicated to members in various employers across the Community and Housing sectors. Below we list a selection of the sites where you can access information.

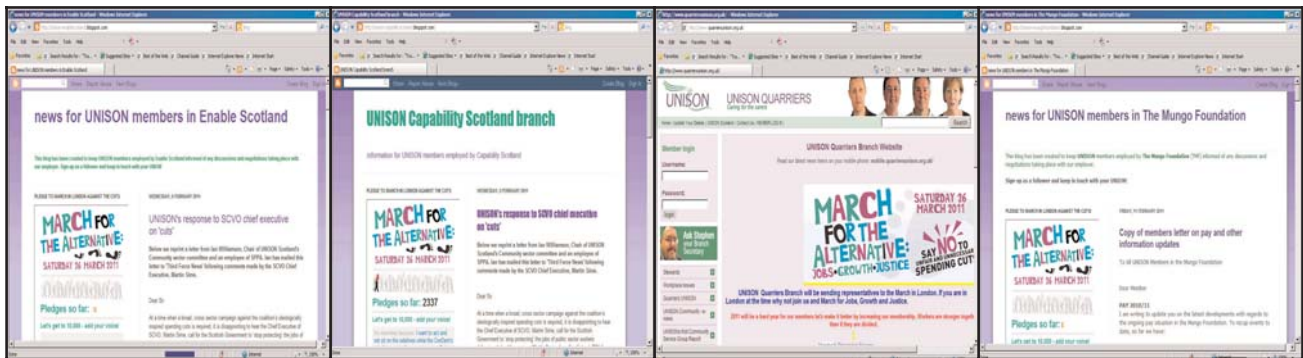
**Enable Scotland:** <http://unison-enablescotland.blogspot.com/>

**The Mungo Foundation:** <http://unison-mungofoundation.blogspot.com/>

**Capability Scotland:** <http://unison-capabilityscotland.blogspot.com/>

**Quarriers:** <http://www.quarriersunison.org.uk/>

**UNISON Scotland branch list:** <http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/contacts/index.html>



You can also join or find out the branch you are a member of by contacting **UNISON Direct**

**0845 355 0845**

Monday - Friday 6am to midnight Saturday 9am to 4pm



# JOIN US!

The union for  
**ALL workers in  
the Community  
and Housing  
sectors**



## Default retirement age comes to an end

The Coalition Government has announced that the default retirement age will be abolished from 1st October 2011. The phasing out will begin in April 2011. The last day workers can be forced to retire using the Default Retirement Age (DRA) is 30 September 2011. As a result, the final day that an employer can provide six months' notice using the DRA is 30 March 2011.

In general terms, under the new system the dismissal or retirement of older workers is intended to be dealt with either by an objective company policy, individual negotiation or by formal performance management procedures. The recently published ACAS guidance on this subject summarises the issue with the following statement: "Removing the DRA does not mean that employees will never be able to retire. It just means that employers cannot force employees to retire at a set age unless the age can be objectively justified"

UNISON advice to workplace reps is to monitor closely all retirement and dismissal procedures during the transitional period described above. Branches should seek to negotiate a workplace retirement policy which incorporates these changes and creates a level playing field for all employees regarding retirement.



# ADVANCE NOTICE !!!!!

## UNISON Scotland Community Conference

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**Saturday 14th May 2011  
Glasgow**

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The second Community conference will be held on Saturday 14th May. This will be an opportunity to meet up with fellow members working in the Community & Housing sectors. A calling letter will be sent to branches soon with registration details for members wishing to attend.

However, if you would like to register your interest in attending please call or email Wilma Kennedy on: 0141 342 2841 or [w.kennedy@unison.co.uk](mailto:w.kennedy@unison.co.uk)

## ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

February 2011

Below we print a snapshot of the economic background taken from UNISON's monthly Bargaining brief. This can be found at : <http://www.unison.org.uk/bargaining>

In the year to December, RPI annual inflation was 4.8%, up from 4.7% in November.

Average earnings growth including bonuses remained unchanged in the year to November 2010, from the October 2010 rate of 2.1%. Growth in average earnings excluding bonuses (regular pay) also remained unchanged in November 2010 from the October 2010 rate of 2.3%.

The number of people claiming

Jobseeker's Allowance (the claimant count) fell by 4,100 between November and December 2010 to reach 1.46 million, although the number of people claiming for up to six months increased by 7,200 to reach 960,300.

IRS predict that average earnings growth to increase through the course of the year, from 1.9% in the first quarter to 2.5% in the final quarter of 2011.

**voice atwork**

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