



PROTECT
OUR PENSIONS

Scottish Action Bulletin

No 1

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All Out on Mar 28!

We are now gearing up for strike action on 28 March 2006. On the day, we need an overwhelming display of unity and solid action, right across Scotland, in all affected branches.

We need to cover every employer and workplace. We need to ensure that **all** Branches and activists are fully briefed on the action and how to involve all members.

We need to hold meetings in all key workplaces to get the message across as to why the action is vital and must be supported.

We need to make sure that you have all the campaigning and recruitment materials that you need to publicise and explain the Pensions campaign and our action.

We need to work with colleagues in other trade unions, through Joint Strike Committees, to deliver rallies and events on 28 March 2006 in the various cities in Scotland. Further details of those rallies will be notified to you, as soon as we have the information.

We need to work together in UNISON to make the action the biggest and most successful ever mounted by the union.

Regional Organisers know that winning the Pensions dispute is an overriding priority and they will be with branches helping to deliver the action in the run-up to the 28 March 2006 and thereafter, as we organise all-out and selective action.

I hope that all of the above is helpful and that it enables all of us to deliver successful action. Where the Pension Scheme is protected from attack and discussions for the future take place on a proper basis. We will be better able to do this if we can maximise our membership, so don't forget - we recruit best on issues and pensions is the biggest issue that we have faced for many years.

Branch Support

UNISON Scotland, has established an action team to support branches and activists through the action. The Scottish Organiser (Bargaining), Joe Di Paola is the member of the Scottish Management Team designated to lead on Pensions and he will be supported by a number of colleagues based in UNISON House, Glasgow and Belford Road, Edinburgh, who will provide support to members, activists and branches through the action.

This will include a dedicated helpline, which branches can call with queries about the action.

Exemptions

Already we have had a number of queries from branches regarding exemptions from strike action. In order that we can deal with this difficult issue consistently, Branches and Regional Organisers should carefully note the following:

- Branches should **not** be offering exemptions to employers. It is for the employer to request exemptions and we should not normally exempt members that we have balloted.
- Any requests from employers should be discussed locally and then referred to Joe Di Paola in the Glasgow office, who is the officer in Scotland with responsibility for exemptions.

As is our practice, members in the following categories will be exempt from taking action:

- Employees currently in their last year of service with their employer, who are members of the Pension Scheme
- Pregnant women who have notified their employer of their expected date of birth.

We also need to consider those people whose state benefits may be affected if they take part in strike action. Branches must advise members in that circumstance to get advice from the Benefits Office, as it will depend on the individual's circumstances whether they should be exempt from the action.

Helpline No: 0141-342-2886