



UNISON
Scotland

For Public Services



UNISON Scotland's
Manifesto 2011

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Investment and Equality	4-5
Integrated Services	6-7
Fair Treatment	8-9
Democracy	10-11
Care Services	12-13
Education	14-15
Environment	16-17
Health	18-19
Housing	20-21
Police Staffs	22-23
Social Work	24-25
Utilities	26-27

INTRODUCTION

This is UNISON Scotland's Manifesto for Public Services. It concentrates, not on the pressure on budgets facing public organisations, nor on the myriad of suggestions for reorganisation driven by budget pressure. Rather we focus on what needs to be done to sustain and improve Scotland's public services. We do not accept that there is any need for massive spending cuts at the expense of public services.

The words of Naomi Klein quoted below have shown themselves to be prophetic. The Coalition government in Westminster is cutting back on public services for reasons of ideology not economics. The Government are intent on cutting too far, too fast and refusing to raise money from those who can afford to pay.

The cuts process we are witnessing across the UK is not about money - but politics. A politics that hates public services. A politics that loves privatisation. A politics that sees a workforce engaged in caring and helping and educating, not as an achievement to be celebrated, but as a problem to be tackled.

“The massive debts the public is accumulating to bail out the speculators will then become part of a global budget crisis that will be the rationalisation for deep cuts to social programs, and for a renewed push to privatise what is left of the public sector.”

Naomi Klein, Guardian, 19/09/08

UNISON's vision is different. Public services are part of the fabric of society. An attack on those services is an attack, not on unions or workers - but on society itself. The cuts in public spending are driven by a Tory ideology that has little support in Scotland. But within the budget the Scottish Government has there are choices to be made.

Our view is clear. The choice should always be for public services - publicly delivered.

The current financial climate arose because the public sector had to resolve a crisis caused by private sector greed and market failure. To suggest the correct response to this is further involvement of either the private sector or market mechanisms in the provision of public services is to desert the path of reason.

This manifesto contains the principles we are urging on political parties standing in the Scottish parliament elections. And these are the principles UNISON will be defending in the months and years ahead.



Lillian Macer,
Convenor



Mike Kirby,
Scottish Secretary

INVESTMENT AND EQUALITY

QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES

Everyone in Scotland benefits from the existence of high quality public services. It is vital that these services are properly funded - and that everyone pays a fair share towards their provision.

To ensure that resources are available to meet genuine social needs we need to recognise the link between public spending and fair taxation. Quality public services benefit everyone in Scotland and the best off in our society should contribute a higher proportion of their wealth in taxation. As international studies show, more equal societies almost always do better.

INVESTMENT

Maintaining investment in public services is essential, both for the future of public services, but also to create and sustain economic recovery. The public sector can lead the recovery by both delivering services and providing the stimulus to support the private sector. Far from crowding out the private sector, the public sector supports business. The market has consistently failed to deliver the infrastructure required for a successful economy: public transport, roads, an educated and healthy population, a fair and binding legal system - all require public investment and direction.

If public services are to plan for the future then secure long term funding is vital. If public services are to involve users in making decisions about service provision it is even more important that information is available about the future level of resources. This applies equally to the funding of community and voluntary organisations in order to assist them in raising their standards of provision.

EQUALITY

Recent wide ranging international studies have shown that societies which are more equal do better across a range of social indicators - physical and mental health, crime, social mobility and many others. This means that the relationship between tax receipts and income equality is highly significant. Countries with higher state involvement generally have lower levels of income inequality, suggesting that government intervention remains important in ensuring wealth is fairly distributed.

FAIR TAXATION

To build a fairer and more sustainable society we need fair taxation and a crackdown on tax avoidance. The wealthiest in our society need to pay their fair share. High income tax for the super rich makes society fairer by both providing resources to pay for services and by reducing the wealth inequalities that cause so much harm to our society. Taxes are good value for money. Public delivery means economies of scale and stopping shareholders taking profits out of the pot. Democratic control allows users a clear say in how services are run.

The average household receives more than £10,000 a year in benefits and services. To take just one example, having your bins collected by the private sector would cost £45 per week (£2340 per year). This shows what good value council tax provides. Public refuse collection also means that all the refuse is collected and other people's unwillingness to pay doesn't lead to the spread of vermin and disease.

The Scottish Government requires greater financial powers, these should include both tax raising and borrowing. The current Scotland Bill being considered at Westminster is a welcome acknowledgement that the Scottish Government requires greater fiscal powers but its proposals are inadequate. The Scottish Government should have the power to vary the rate of income tax on both the basic and higher rates.

Borrowing for investment, is an essential part of financing public services. The Scottish Government currently has virtually no borrowing powers. The Scotland Bill acknowledges this as a failing but proposes only that the Scottish Government should be able to contract loans. This is inadequate.

We believe the Scottish Government should be given the power to issue investment bonds. As well as being cost effective and flexible, this would allow the Scottish government capacity to set its own investment priorities without having to rely on the discredited PFI methods which have been extensively and expensively used in the past.



PROPERTY-BASED TAX

A property-based tax is the best way to fund local services - it is a reasonable indicator of wealth, simple to collect and hard to avoid. The wealthiest people tend not to be found living in small high rise flats in poor areas rather than paying council tax on large houses in smart areas. Parties in the parliament need to revisit the Burt Report and work together to create a fair local property tax.

In the mean time the ongoing council tax freeze is depriving local authorities of desperately needed revenue and should not continue. It provides a real terms tax cut for the wealthiest homeowners at the expense of vital services.

Investment and equality are the key to a successful economy and society. The debt accumulated bailing out speculators cannot be used as an excuse to scale back public services. In the face of budget pressures public service organisations should, wherever possible, set their budgets on the basis of proven need for services rather than simply implementing an agenda for cuts determined elsewhere. Excellent public services will make our society fairer and are an essential component of economic recovery. Building these means we must have adequate funding through a fair and workable tax system.

UNISON believes that the fairer Local Property Tax can be achieved by a:

1. new banding system with a wider range of top and bottom bands
2. change in multiplier rate between bands to make system fairer
3. regular and frequent revaluation to match wealth with bills
4. overhaul Council Tax Benefit to make it more accessible



PUBLIC WORKS

Scottish public services should generally be delivered by their own directly employed workforce and facilities. This approach delivers the integrated, cost-effective and universal services that the public needs.

Public Public Partnerships funded through conventional borrowing are preferable to the waste and inefficiency of private finance. We believe that the private profit motive has no place in running public services. The Scottish public service ethos has a proud history, is valued by the general public and should be maintained and strengthened.

Quality public services are a marker of a decent society. Renewed investment in recent years in Scotland's public services has made a real difference to people's lives, strengthened our communities and boosted the economy. Cutbacks in public services will damage communities and local economies.

UNISON's Public Works campaign highlights the excellent value for money that quality public services deliver. Prosperity and sustainability depends on further investment in the public sector, supporting recovery from the economic crisis, not targeting cuts at those who did not cause the crisis and are most affected by it.

UNISON's realistic plan for alternatives to PFI/PPP includes:

- 1. no new PPP contracts**
- 2. review existing contracts with 'buyouts' where that saves public money**
- 3. Scottish Government grants for new capital projects to create a true level playing field irrespective of the method of procurement**
- 4. give health boards Prudential Borrowing powers**
- 5. Exclude staff from transfer and strengthen PPP staffing protocols**

INTEGRATED SERVICES

PROSPERITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Lessons have been learned from the disasters of contracting out hospital and schools cleaning and catering services. Most have since been returned in-house and UNISON will strongly oppose any renewed attempts within the public sector to contract out work and privatise on the flawed premise that this would lead to savings.

The lowest price is rarely the best value for money and past experience shows that such ruthless cost cutting leads to reduced services, poorer conditions for staff and the cutting of corners in vital areas (e.g. hospital cleaning), with potentially lethal consequences. UNISON is proud of the work the union has undertaken in opposing such privatisations and in securing the return of contracts back in-house and in the ending of the two-tier workforce in PFI/PPP and other contracts. We view with dismay the recent announcement by the Scottish government that they will return to using PFI as a method of funding capital investment.

Conventional borrowing would be a cheaper method of financing (particularly if the Scottish Government are given wide borrowing powers). It is vital that PFI does not become “the only game in town” public bodies must be given a real choice of funding. The public still has to pick up the tab for many remaining years of extortionate payments for the schools, prisons and hospitals commissioned previously using PFI/PPP. The total annual cost of the unitary charges for the £30billion worth of PFI/PPP projects in Scotland is set to rise from £820million in 2010-11 to a peak of £1.097billion in 2024-25, putting huge strain on public sector budgets. This does not include the cost of the planned joint facilities to be built around Scotland under the country’s newest form of PFI/PPP, the £1billion hub community partnership initiative, being managed by the Scottish Futures Trust. The hub could see private companies managing health centres and similar community health facilities.

UNISON wants to see a complete end to PFI/PPP. Instead ‘Public Public Partnerships’, funded through conventional borrowing, should be the future policy for public investment. The Scottish Futures Trust has also been widely disparaged and seems unlikely to deliver any major benefits, while paying out six figure salaries to its top staff. Increasing financial pressure has encouraged many public bodies to discuss the

idea of sharing services. UNISON supports partnership working and believes public sector organisations should make the most of opportunities to work more efficiently and effectively. However, while sharing services might offer some opportunities, we are sceptical that it can be any kind of panacea for making significant savings and certainly not in the short term.

Experience has shown there are many downsides, including centralisation, the loss of jobs with resulting damage to local economies, and the loss of local accountability. The evidence is that sharing of services can cost money in the short term, due to the need to invest in new processes and systems, accommodation and IT. Such moves may not save money in the longer term either. The National Audit Office suggests it takes an average of five years before any savings materialise. UNISON is also concerned that some proposals may include privatising services via sharing with a private provider. This could put at risk terms and conditions and lead to relocations and further job losses.

Where this has been tried elsewhere in the world it has resulted in service dislocation and an increase in real transaction costs. Frequently service users have found themselves caught up in a complex system that fails to deliver the service they require. Where there have been moves to look at sharing services, such as in the Clyde Valley councils covered by Sir John Arbuthnott’s 2009 report, UNISON argues strongly that engagement with the trade unions is essential in examining the many implications, for the affected service(s) and for the workforce.

There must be full consultation and negotiation with staff. They have the knowledge and understanding to assess whether proposals are realistic and possible to implement or perhaps are unworkable or have the potential to seriously damage the service(s) involved. Any moves towards shared services should be considered on a case by case basis rather than adopting shared services as a general model. We recognise the tight financial situation and the need to deliver services as efficiently as possible. We are in favour of working with employers on how best to do that, based on the evidence of what does and doesn’t work. This will involve examining services from the perspective of the service user rather than the creation of public service ‘factories’ far removed from delivery.

FAIR TREATMENT

FAIR PAY AND CONDITIONS

Public services can only be as good as the workers who deliver them. Fair treatment and remuneration including pensions are essential to motivating any workforce - from bankers to bin collectors. This is never more the case than at times such as this when it is expected that workers will engage in developing new ways of working and delivering services. We expect our members to be respected and rewarded with fair pay and conditions. This should at the very minimum include paying a living wage of at least £7.15 per hour to every person who works delivering public services.

Staff engagement in reconfiguring service delivery can only be successful if conducted against a background of employment stability and security. Sadly that background is not present. Those who provide public services are being asked to pay the price; in the form of job losses, real terms pay cuts and reductions in terms and conditions, of bailing out the financial system. We do not believe that this is fair, justified or necessary. All areas of public services have demonstrated efficiencies in recent years - in some cases well above set targets. This has resulted in hundreds of millions of savings, and considerable workforce reductions in some areas (eg Local Government). Instead of our members - especially the low paid - being able to share in the benefits they helped to create, they are faced with the threat of pay freezes or redundancy.

The proposed round of cuts in public services are not aimed at increasing efficiency - merely delivering cash savings. Many of these cash savings will mean poorer and more expensive public services.

EQUAL PAY

UNISON Scotland is also concerned that below inflation pay will widen the gender pay gap. Equal pay is widely recognised as the greatest destabilising force to hit local government finance in recent years. Despite compensation payments running to several hundred million pounds, low-paid public service workers are still pursuing tens of thousands of equality claims. The Scottish Parliament's Local Government Committee has also expressed its dismay at the slow and costly progress towards pay equality.

UNISON Scotland would like to see more action taken to address this issue, including the use of capitalisation.

UNISON Scotland welcomed the 2009 Report on Public Sector Pay by the Scottish Parliament's Finance Committee which included recommendations to: ensure that low pay is addressed properly; review pay systems and the costs of addressing discrimination; and review controversial senior staff bonuses. The Finance Committee stated that the process used to determine pay for workers in public sector agencies has "further room for improvement".

The report is critical of delays in wage awards, and stresses the need for formal bargaining machinery, relevant benchmarks, and local flexibility. These measures should include non Departmental public bodies. UNISON Scotland believes that there should be a national bargaining framework for all Non Departmental Public Bodies.

PENSIONS

We believe that every worker is entitled to a decent income in retirement UNISON condemns the continuing attacks from politicians and the media on public sector pensions. These attacks often use misleading statements referring to public sector pensions as 'gold-plated' or claim that there is 'pensions apartheid' between public and private sector workers. However, the real pensions divide is not between public and private sector, but between rich and poor.

The average council worker's pension is around £3,800 per year while the average occupational pension in the UK is around £8,100. We call on the Government to reverse its decision that future indexing of public sector pensions will be done by using the CPI rather than RPI. Over time this could cut pension benefits by at least 15 per cent.

UNISON believes that the CPI is an inadequate measure of inflation and there should be a special index for pensions that is weighted on essential costs like energy, food and care cost increases. The UK Government should act to ensure that ensure every worker - including those in the public sector - has a decent pension scheme.



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Training and workforce development are essential to ensure that workers have the knowledge and capabilities to respond to the needs of the public. Public services have to be delivered against a backdrop of ever-changing legislation and guidance.

For this reason it is important that public sector staff are fully trained and have development plans to ensure that all staff are aware of any changes in legislation and guidance that will impact not only on their work but also the services that they provide.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Democratic structures create public bodies which are open and transparent in their dealings with the public. Government at all levels must explain and accept responsibility for its actions. However, weak mechanisms and the rise of the quango state have devalued many of our democratic structures.

Public Service Organisations increasingly need to collaborate and work jointly to provide public services. However we also need to address the fragmentation of services, disrupted by privatisation as well as the growth of un-elected public bodies. The drive towards shared services and proposals to reduce the numbers of service providers also raises issues of accountability. UNSON Scotland believes that issues of democratic accountability must be among the criteria used when considering any reorganisation of services.

Public bodies should as far as possible be directly elected. We were supportive of the pilot of direct elections to Health Boards and would like to see a move to full implementation.

Direct elections will not be practicable for every quango. Such organisations should become an amalgam of elected representatives, appointed laypersons and professionals with a statutory duty to engage with service users and the public. Others could be incorporated into existing democratic structures.

Local authorities are a key part of Scotland's democracy, and like the Scottish Government, require more control over their own finances. This requires the end of the council tax freeze and the return of business rates to their control.

DEMOCRACY

DEMOCRACY

The defining difference between public and private services is democracy. It is democracy that makes public services responsive to the needs of those who pay for and use them.

UNISON believes that democracy is about more than elections and a Scottish Parliament, it is about ensuring that the public can meaningfully participate in the decision-making processes about the areas in which they live. The principles of democracy and accountability should be at the forefront - and be key aims, of any process of reform of public services or the institutions that provide them.

Public services are the collective expression of our society and citizens should be fully involved in the development of our services.

This means greater devolution of powers to Scotland, stronger local government, extending democracy into the quango sector and the meaningful engagement of service users and staff in planning and delivering services. People are central to public service and its ethos. It is vital that service delivery is built around the needs of users and not structures. Staff, are both users and providers of public services and therefore have a unique voice and should be closely involved in any change process.

USER INVOLVEMENT

All public bodies should have a statutory duty to meaningfully involve users as partners in the decision making process, not as customers. This involves a high degree of transparency and the provision of capacity for users to fully participate. We need to celebrate the fact that public services benefit the

whole community they are not just a safety net.

UNISON is supportive of an increased role for voluntary and community organisations, and staff representative bodies in working with elected representatives to influence planning and delivery of local services. This cannot be achieved without appropriate resources. These are not just financial, although clearly crucial, it also means politicians and public service workers developing listening skills, the skills to get people together to discuss issues, and to ensure that all voices are heard, not just the best educated, wealthiest or the loudest.

All PSOs should be required to produce a corporate strategy on participation and involvement which demonstrates how users, community organisations, staff and their trade unions can be involved in the planning, design, monitoring and review of services.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Meaningful involvement requires equal access to information. The Freedom of Information Act has been of real benefit to the people of Scotland in holding decision makers to account. UNISON welcomes the proposals by the Scottish government to extend the Act but believes they do not go far enough.

The public should be able to access information about the public services they use and about public and political decisions that affect them, whatever type of body holds the information or provides the service. People's right to information on their services should not be defined and restricted by the length and value of the contract.

CARE SERVICES

HIGH QUALITY CARE

We are in favour of flexible and responsive services which are adequate to service user needs. Government must develop a coherent strategy for care services that reverses the cuts in funding, staffing levels and increasing service charges.

The privatisation of services must be halted and full cost recovery introduced for the voluntary sector. We believe that social care and health services should be provided by well-trained, qualified and appropriately paid staff, able to provide the highest quality of care.

Social care procurement policies must not raise expectations that major expenditure savings can be compatible with maintaining and improving quality in services. Procurement policies must ensure that care provision is comprehensive preventing cherry picking by the private sector. The drive for savings risks creating race to the bottom in terms of quality of provision, staff numbers and wages on the other

We must back up public statements of support for community-based health care with the financial resources. Terms and conditions for voluntary-sector staff are lagging behind their role and responsibilities and resources are often project-based, time-limited and insecure. The Scottish Government must ensure that proper funding is available both to resource community-based services and to ensure good employment practice. This should also apply to community-based mental health projects in order both to improve accessibility to these services and to increase local educational work combating the myths and stereotypes affecting people suffering from mental illness.

DIRECT PAYMENTS / PERSONALISATION

Within the above context, direct payments to enable disabled people either to purchase services directly, or to employ staff directly, have a legitimate role. Disabled people are entitled to make a positive choice to access direct payments where this is the most appropriate method of service delivery.

However, it should be recognised that direct payments are not a substitute for other flexible and responsive public services, and are not appropriate

for all care service users needs. Direct payments must complement a range of public services and must not be used to cover for inadequacies in public provision.

It is inappropriate for direct payments to be used to cover for shortages in other services where the disabled person's preference is not for a direct payment. Nor should the way provision is funded be seen as a choice between direct services or direct payments. For a real choice to exist, facilities must be maintained for those who decide not to take direct payments. Where direct payments are the most appropriate method of providing services, and are the choice of the service user, the payment must be set sufficiently high to cover the cost of a decent level of pay, training, and holidays, and to enable that person to fulfil their other responsibilities as an employer. In our view, this is not the case at the present time.

REGISTRATION

We believe that all staff who are involved in carrying out tasks which can substantially impact on patient health or welfare should also be regulated to ensure protection of the public and the continued maintenance of high standards of care. UNISON Scotland recognises that there needs to be a system supporting the development of flexible, multi-skilled staff working across traditional professional boundaries and across specific care settings.

UNISON believes in shared standards of competency, fitness and conduct and would support the development of a collaborative framework between regulators in both health and social care in order to extend the protection of regulation without setting unnecessary barriers to staff movement.

The Establishment of Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS), should be a positive development. We believe that rigorous regulation of services, such as child protection must be undertaken by professionals who are able to ensure that such services meet the standards outlined by the Scottish Government. UNISON would urge that it should incorporate a duty for all employers, in the public, private and voluntary sectors to be bound by the SSSC Code of Practice.



FREE PERSONAL CARE

UNISON welcomed the decision to deliver free personal care to Scotland's elderly population. However, it is clear that this initiative is under-resourced and is heavily reliant on the traditionally poorly-funded care sector.

Free personal care for the elderly was one of the landmark decisions of the first Parliament and there is broad public support for it. In recent years the balance of care has changed with a shift to more care

at home. This brings out a need for more clarity in calculating the cost of free personal care. And more needs to be done to establish how well it is working in practice, and whether it is delivering what was promised.

The work of the Care Commission/ SCSWIS in registering and inspecting care homes also needs to be examined with a view to a new emphasis on direct physical inspection.



EARLY YEARS

There is though an ongoing split between care and education in early years provision. We need an integrated service disposing of the illusion that those who provide education for early years children don't care, and those who care don't educate. This is a fallacy. It is impossible to do one without the other.

Nursery nurses are the early years professionals. Their qualifications cover working with children from nought to eight years. It includes theory and principles of children as active learners and child

development (physical, emotional and social). Many also embark on further qualifications: a BA in Childhood Practice or the SVQ Level 4. All are involved in continuing professional development. All facilities should be led by someone with that level of qualification, not necessarily a teacher. UNISON believes that we need a mixture of high quality care and education for all children from birth to school age, childcare provided by trained and valued staff; provided in a way that suits the working lives and pockets of parents.

EDUCATION

INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

UNISON Scotland is committed to the modern comprehensive principle rooted in our belief in a decent society. Every child should have a genuinely equal chance of the best education in their local school. A whole range of professional, technical and administrative staff, not just teachers or lecturers, ensure that education in Scotland achieves a high standard. An investment in that team is an investment in our children's future and a failure to invest in that team is to risk blighting our children's prospects

SCHOOLS

We believe that schools should remain under the control of local authorities. We believe that the system where local authorities manage education provision provides an appropriate balance between local democratic control and economies of scale for capital spending, the procurement of goods and the provision of support services to schools e.g. social work and educational psychologists.

Parents can take up the opportunity to be involved in their children's education via parent councils which are also supported by local authorities who provide ongoing training and development to members. The current system has a national set of terms of conditions for staff. Our experience shows us that moving staff out of local authorities leads to a reduction in wages and conditions for staff. Low-paid women in particular suffer. Further steps need to be taken to gain stronger recognition and integration of the work of school support staff into the life of education establishments; the qualifications, career pathways and personal development of these staff; and to consider the potential implications of this work for pay and conditions.

Past discrimination on equal pay needs to be recognised and provision made to ensure local authorities make provision to meet their equal pay obligations. UNISON Scotland has advocated developing a national framework of job roles, to ensure proper recognition for the role and responsibilities of classroom assistants, revisiting the job evaluation of classroom assistant roles and carrying out equal pay audits using a non-discriminatory job evaluation system.

TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

A Scotland wide training and qualifications framework for education support staff should be put in place to ensure a path for career development and

progression. The development of a new 'Support for Learning' Higher National Certificate, to develop and promote the role and progression of classroom assistants will support this aim. A system of registration for classroom assistant jobs in Scotland should be developed, to raise standards and promote their education and training. The General Teaching Council is not an appropriate body to carry out this work.

UNISON Scotland welcomed many of the proposals of the Additional Support for Learning Act but for the aims of this Act to be fully realised, schools must be resourced adequately to deliver and staff need to be properly trained and appropriately remunerated for developing new skills and taking on more responsibilities. In a period of rising youth unemployment it is more important than ever that there should be strong links in place between our careers service and our schools. The careers service should be an integral part of the school while retaining independent advice and a strong commitment to an all-age careers service. Careers guidance should be available through personal interviews.

FURTHER EDUCATION

Over 21,000 people work in Scotland's colleges, but with separate bargaining arrangements in the 41 colleges, levels of pay for lecturers and support staff vary considerably between colleges. Scotland's colleges should have a national bargaining framework to ensure fairness for all staff in the sector. This should be part of measures to strengthen governance in the sector

HIGHER EDUCATION

As in every other sector of education, higher education is delivered by a team, not just academics. If our higher education institutions are to realise their full potential they must involve and value all of their staff. We believe that the most obvious way of doing this would be to institute equality of status for all staff and a fair funding regime between institutions of higher education.

UNISON Scotland recognises that further and higher education are essential for society. As such there must be an acknowledgement that such services are social rather than individual goods. As such, we are opposed to approaches based on the idea that education is a commodity to be purchased and will work to support systems recognising the social role of education.

ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges we face in Scotland and globally.

The Scottish Climate Change Act demonstrates that a developed country, responsible for climate change, is willing to reduce its emissions in line with science and not bow to political expediency. To deliver on the Act's ambitious targets will require a concerted effort throughout society including at the workplace. Initiatives like UNISON's 'Food for Good' charter and Green Workplace can help.

UNISON members played a key part in achieving the Climate Change Act. Under the Act, a public body must, in exercising its functions, act: in the way best calculated to contribute to delivery of the Bill's emissions reduction targets; in the way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaptation programme; and in a way that it considers most sustainable. The duty should mean that the public sector will lead by example in areas including energy efficiency, procurement (including food), transport and workplace policies.

REDUCING EMISSIONS

However the Scottish Government consultation on guidance for the duty does not require public bodies to report on what they are actually doing to reduce emissions making it difficult to monitor their performance and therefore their overall progress. This is not acceptable. All public bodies should have to provide comprehensive reports on efforts to cut emissions and progress made.

UNISON has long argued for a wide range of environmental initiatives including cutting energy waste and supporting renewable energy sources and more efficient use of water resources. Our "food for

good" charter aimed at all parts of the public sector states that: "Food should be fresh, prepared locally and sourced locally where possible.

Mains-fed water coolers should be provided, minimising the use of bottled water. Public bodies should produce annual reports giving clear 'global footprint' type information on all aspects of their food use including, for example, percentage of fresh, local food, progress on waste minimisation and recycling.

A GREEN WORKPLACE

We have campaigned for increased investment in, and use of, an integrated public transport system. In addition to this we have advocated Green travel plans at work, with incentives for lower energy transport, cycling, car-share, public transport, walking and the use of lower emissions vehicles.

Tackling climate change is everyone's responsibility in the workplace - unions and employers alike. We are encouraging our branches to nominate green workplace representatives and call upon employers to recognise them. This way, plans to reduce the carbon footprint of workplaces can be devised and implemented with the input and support of the workforce - improving their support and relevance.

The financial crisis must not be allowed to be used as an excuse to drop or downgrade actions to tackle climate change. Tackling climate change is an opportunity not a cost. Energy efficiency, active travel and green workplaces can all contribute to more efficient as well as more environmentally friendly public services. The public sector has to lead by example.



ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

We have encouraged employers to develop environmental strategies and use of tools such as the Ecological Footprint in policy development, monitoring progress and awareness-raising.

We support the STUC/ Stop Climate Chaos Scotland demand for the setting up of “A Scottish Forum for a Just Transition”. While moving to a low-carbon economy offers the potential for thousands of new jobs in areas such as renewables and energy efficiency, we must plan for the necessary economic restructuring to ensure the benefits and costs are shared fairly across society. There must be retraining,

help with re-location and other support for those whose jobs change or go.

A Scottish Forum for a Just Transition should be established, involving the Scottish Government, public sector bodies, trade unions, universities and colleges, and business and third sector organisations. This forum should develop funded strategies on transitional skills and green workplaces. These two strategies must be set in place urgently to ensure Scotland can make best use of the opportunities of the switch to a low-carbon economy.



DELIVERING SERVICES

An improved and strengthened NHS which remains publicly-owned, democratically-controlled and not subject to privatised interests must be at the heart of any health policy in Scotland. There is no place for the private sector in capital investment such as hospitals, GP surgeries; for clinical services delivery, for community services or the provision of Facility Management Services.

UNISON Scotland has proposed a realistic plan to deliver alternatives to PFI/PPP. We have argued for No new PPP contracts and a review of existing contracts, with 'buyouts' where that benefits the taxpayer. There should be a level playing field for Scottish government grants for new capital projects, irrespective of the method of procurement. Health boards should have Prudential Borrowing powers. In

the event that this cannot be achieved there should be a stronger PPP staffing protocol, and at minimum staff should be excluded from transfer.

The NHS in Scotland has a highly-trained and committed staff complement. There is a need to build on this well of human resource through a culture of improved leadership, collectivism and engagement with all staff using the partnership approach described.

Substantial and sustained investment in education and training for all NHS staff groups is the key to unlocking capacity and to modernising models of NHS care. As part of this strategy, student nurses should be employed on a proper salary as part of a series of measures to tackle drop out rates.

HEALTH

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The focus of health policy should be on tackling Scotland's health inequalities. In stating this as an aim it must be acknowledged that health inequalities do not exist separate from other inequalities.

The evidence which has been found to link social inequality with poor health not only explains health inequalities, but it explains why so many attempts to deal with health inequalities fail - including policies such as targeted health projects, area regeneration, and many health promotion initiatives. And it helps us to understand why even an institution like the NHS, founded on a principle of equal, free access to healthcare, has not been able to redress the health inequalities which exist in Britain or Scotland. Creating a healthier Scotland is therefore not simply a matter of determining policy for the NHS, vital though that is.

UNISON Scotland has long campaigned to improve health in and out of the workplace across Scotland, particularly in the public sector and we were proud of the role we played in the promotion of the ban on smoking and the introduction of healthy food, including fruit into schools (now a target for cuts in many areas). UNISON Scotland's Food for Good charter, produced in 2003, highlighted our commitment for healthy, locally-sourced food to be introduced across Scotland's public services. We remain firmly of the view that the provision of free school meals and breakfast clubs would assist in tackling some of Scotland's major health problems and assist in eliminating child poverty and promoting social justice.

DESIGNING SERVICES

Democracy requires that there is adequate opportunity for the public to participate in, and influence, the policy making process. This is more than being asked to comment on plans drawn up in private. It is also about defining the desired outcomes and the methods to achieve them. UNISON has supported the election of Health Boards as this will improve accountability by: allowing individuals to become board members; promoting debate about health care in local communities via the election process and help make boards more directly

accountable to the people they serve. Promoting the 'patient voice' must however complement, and not replace, the 'staff voice'. The 'staff voice' in partnership is the key to informed policy making and effective implementation.

Scotland has a decade of partnership working which has a proven track record in delivering a better NHS Scotland, better services and greater patient satisfaction.

EQUALITY DUTIES

UNISON sees the introduction of public sector equality duties as a step towards a society where diversity is accepted as normal and equality as a benefit to everyone.

Progress on tackling discrimination has been distinctly slow over the years and has often led to individual legal remedies that do not tackle underlying problems. The public sector equality duties are a fundamental change to this. NHS Boards must demonstrate they are positively promoting equality rather than solely taking steps to prevent discrimination, both in terms of an increase in equality for service users and for staff. Action in this area must be monitored and reviewed to ensure progress is being made and to ensure they are delivering results.

UNISON believes that prescription charges amount to a tax on the sick and fully support current moves to abolish them. Measures to control the NHS drugs bill should be implemented via controls on pharmaceutical companies.

INVESTMENT STRATEGY

We would like to see the enactment of Paul Martin MSP's Bill on NHS car parking. The role of the voluntary sector in the provision on health services must not be underestimated. However, clarity is needed in terms of the investment strategy, procurement rules and assurances on pay and conditions (including pensions) of those involved in delivering services to ensure the use of voluntary service does not become another route to contract out services.

HOUSING

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

UNISON wishes to see Scotland develop a new affordable housing strategy under democratic control. This should include a new council and social housing building programme and effective action to eliminate fuel poverty. Local authorities should play a key part in the development of sustainable communities and attempts to improve environmental and design standards which should help lessen fuel poverty.

UNISON Scotland believes that council housing has a key role to play in the provision of affordable housing as it retains democratic accountability between tenants and their landlords. Through their councillors, tenants can influence the development and management of their housing.

UNISON Scotland opposes large scale stock transfers of council housing as has happened in Glasgow and a number of other local authorities within Scotland. These transfers remove democratic accountability from social housing and result not only in the disenfranchisement of local councillors but also of their constituents.

A key issue for affordable housing is the investment required to bring existing housing stock up to a decent standard as well as providing funding for

new housing. UNISON Scotland supports the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) which aims to bring all social housing up to a reasonable standard by 2015. However the level of investment required is estimated at around £1 billion due to backlogs of repairs and improvement requirements. UNISON Scotland believes that direct investment into council housing is the quickest and cheapest method of reaching SHQS. One of the drivers of the large Scale stock transfer process was the offer of historic housing debt being written-off for those authorities where tenants voted for transfer.

UNISON Scotland believes there should be a level playing field when it comes to affordable housing investment, including debt write-off. Another aspect of funding which penalises councils is the amount awarded for new affordable housing. While councils can access a maximum of £25,000 per unit, housing associations can access up to £75,000 per unit. UNISON Scotland would like councils to have access to the same level of funds as any other social housing provider.

The removal of the Right to Buy for all new social housing is welcomed by UNISON Scotland. We believe this should encourage councils to build more affordable housing.



SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

An expansion of democratically accountable council housing with new, more environmentally friendly and better designed housing could lead to an expansion in the social base of its tenants and would give many more people a wider choice for meeting their housing needs than has been the case over the past few years. UNISON Scotland supported the call within the Firm Foundations consultation paper for higher environmental and design standards for all new

housing. We believe that such an approach would not only produce more sustainable housing but would also lead to a reduction in heating costs and thus lessen, over time, the problem of fuel poverty. UNISON Scotland has campaigned for many years on the need to tackle fuel poverty within Scotland and the setting of new environmental and design standards could make a major contribution to tackling this issue.



SPECIALIST TASKS

We are very concerned that a focus on police officer numbers - rather than deployment - will hamper the fight against crime. Across Scotland police boards are responding to pressure on budgets by removing civilian staffs and replacing them with uniformed officers. This makes little sense. Police officers are not trained to carry out the range of specialist tasks

in a modern force. Taking trained operational police officers off our streets to perform administrative tasks, at greater cost, represents very poor value for money. The public want their police officers to be out on the streets fighting crime, not behind a desk or in a call centre. UNISON Scotland agrees.

POLICE STAFFS

POLICE STAFFS

Police staffs deliver a wide range of routine, complex and specialised functions that are central to modern day police forces, while allowing uniformed officers to concentrate on operational policing duties.

We want to strengthen the delivery of police services by expanding the role of police staffs and bringing all forces up to the levels of the best as set out in UNISON's report 'Civilianisation of Police in Scotland'. In so doing we will help make Scotland a safer place by keeping police out on the streets fighting crime.

Police Staffs roles are multifunctional and diverse. They mainly operate in corporate and administrative support roles in functions such as intelligence, information technology and human resources. There are also increasing numbers of staff taking on operational roles in areas such as custody and detention, investigation and surveillance. These roles and the numbers have grown in recent years,

partly reflecting the increased specialisation of police functions and partly to free police officers from duties that do not require full police powers.

EXTENDING CIVILIAN POSTS

In England, 39% of police personnel are civilians (32% excluding PCSOs), while in Scotland it has fallen to 26.5%. We believe that there is scope to extend civilian posts within police forces. This can either be done by extending the civilianisation of existing police officer roles or through new policing roles (such as the use of Police Community Support Officers as in England and Wales).

Research carried out for UNISON made a comparison between Police Community Support Officers and community wardens and the possibility of introducing this role within Scottish forces. This highlighted that PCSOs (not to be confused with the acronym for Police Custody and Security Officers used in Scottish police forces) could be employed by the police and have a wider range of enforcement powers.

SOCIAL WORK

PUBLICLY-FUNDED SOCIAL CARE

UNISON Scotland believes that excellently provided, publicly funded social care services are an essential part of a caring and compassionate society. To deliver these services requires supporting the people who deliver them, as they are essential to the quality of service provided. The Scottish Government needs to ensure that social work staff are trained, supported and resourced to undertake the often difficult and complex tasks required by service users.

Demand has increased across the whole range of social work services, from home care to child protection, criminal justice to services for people with learning disabilities. Yet this has not been matched by an increase in available resources - indeed many areas are facing cuts. This means that staff are constantly overstretched, leading to stress and burnout, which can result in deteriorations in the quality of service. UNISON Scotland, in partnership with the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) produced *Helping People Change Their Lives* (www.unison-scotland.org.uk/socialwork/swmanifesto25june2009.pdf) A manifesto for improving the way social workers carry out their duties in Scotland.

SUPERVISION, SUPPORT AND CONSULTATION

Working with people where meeting need, assessing risk and ensuring human rights are respected is a skilled task. While workers are responsible for their own level of decision making and recommendations, employers must ensure they have access to good quality support and professional supervision to do the job.

ACCOUNTABILITY

All social service workers are accountable for their professional conduct through the Code of Practice for Employees and ethical social work is also promoted through training and professional development. However, although employers have begun to be accountable through the Inspection Agency and Care Commission procedures, we believe that employers must fulfil their responsibilities under the SSSC Code of Practice for Employers to support staff and service users.

REPORTING PROBLEMS

All staff must be able to identify and report problems within workplaces as an essential part of improving services. Staff can feel reluctant to report problems for fear that they will be blamed. A non-blame

culture where problems can be discussed and addressed with support is critical. Strong unions and professional organisations can assist with this.

CAREER AND REWARD STRUCTURE

Clearer career paths and reward structures must be introduced to enable experienced practitioners to be valued and remain in practice whilst moving on in their careers. Often the only promoted posts are in management and away from the frontline. We need the development of Social Care Leaders in workplaces, not just in management teams.

ACCESSIBILITY

Social services are for all people, not just the poor or disadvantaged. Most of us will use services at some time in our lives, whether we are old, or have to care for elderly parents, need to use a nursery for our children, have adoption or mental health issues. Many social work offices are old, run down and depressing to service users or staff. Modern, bright, welcoming workplaces that people are happy to visit or work in are essential.

COMMUNITIES

Achieving safe, strong and cohesive communities is part of the role of social service workers. Families' problems cannot be addressed in isolation and there needs to be more investment in community and group work where social work professionals employed by local authorities and the community and voluntary sector could build on building capacity in the communities and address poverty, lack of resources and fear which have an adverse affect on our communities.

RESOURCES

Increased spending across Scotland in recent years has not managed to keep pace with demands of governments and communities. Cuts in budgets are leading to real fears about service cuts in the near future at a time when increasing levels of unemployment, homelessness and poverty will place even greater demands on the services needed. Now, more than ever, social work needs additional resources to meet these challenges. Social work staff are expected to perform miracles by helping people to change their lives. However, with increasing demands upon them, it becomes difficult to maintain the high standards they set themselves. The above issues all need to be address in the near future to support social work staff to maintain and surpass these standards.



WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT

Workload management is key to ensuring that tasks allocated to staff are manageable and allow sufficient time for them to use their skills appropriately and meet the demands that are placed upon them. We believe that steps should be taken by all employers to introduce effective workload management systems. Few employers have effective systems in place to ensure that what staff are asked to undertake is manageable and allows for sufficient time for staff to apply their skills appropriately. In addition, time based schemes have to take into account the individuality of the worker, e.g. a newly qualified worker would take longer over most tasks than experienced workers.

Social workers accept that report writing is part of their job, as clearly records have to be kept of work carried out. However, increased requirements can result in some children or families having at least eight reports or assessments being carried out on them at any one time. Reduction in bureaucracy should be a clear objective for all employers and needs to be driven by government. Guidelines should be produced for local authorities on appropriate levels of staffing to meet the needs of communities which should be monitored by the inspection process. he guidelines should take account of safety and assessment requirements as well as the demographics and poverty indices. These guidelines must be based on need not budgets.



WATER

Scottish Water should be developed into a more democratic structure, as proposed in the STUC/ UNISON document It's Scotland's Water. This requires that it is put firmly into public ownership, to operate not as if it was a private corporation, but as a public service. It would not be required to prioritise market efficiency over social or environmental efficiency. The investment needed could be most efficiently achieved by cutting out the profit guaranteed to the financial markets and the other hidden costs of a market or privatised model.

Most importantly the control over decisions in the delivery of safe, sustainable water would rest not at the whim of the market but with the people of Scotland. The new body should have a statutory duty to prepare a public involvement structure that would have to be approved by the Scottish Parliament.

In November 2009 the Scottish Government and the Water Industry Commission for Scotland made combating climate change a priority one objective in Scottish Water's objectives and investment plan. More recently the Scottish Government have launched a consultation process "Building a Hydro Nation" as a step towards a Water Bill. We welcome the unequivocal commitment to keep Scottish Water in public ownership and extend its sphere of operations. A Water Bill provides the opportunity to

promote the long term vision that Scotland's water is much more than the provision of a utility. It is a vital economic asset that will become even more important in the years to come. If the 20th Century was dominated by oil, then the 21st Century will be dominated by water provision. Wet countries like Scotland are well placed to exploit the economic and environmental opportunities.

We believe the main elements of the democratic structure for Scottish Water should include:

- 1. accountability through information and openness to public participation regarding financing, safe water (public health) and environmental protection**
- 2. public involvement throughout operation and investment**
- 3. enabling cross-subsidy of public services**
- 4. a fair and equitable approach to charging**
- 5. a democratic model with public representation at its core**

UTILITIES

ENERGY

UNISON Scotland has consistently argued the need for a balanced energy policy in Scotland, including a range of sources. The absence of such a policy, and the pursuit of a competitive market at all costs have led us to a position where we now face an imminent energy gap with no plan to replace current power generating capacity and insufficient renewable sources as viable alternatives. In the present energy crisis we also face rising fuel costs and increasing fuel poverty.

One in three Scottish households are in fuel poverty, which means they have to spend more than 10% of income on energy bills. As domestic fuel prices continue to rise, Scottish Government figures indicate that for every 1% increase in fuel price approximately 8,000 more households enter fuel poverty. These high levels of fuel poverty in Scotland are unacceptable and require action as part of a Scottish energy strategy.

The problem is compounded by the regressive nature of the competitive domestic energy market. The poorest customers are forced into more expensive prepayment arrangements, while richer customers paying by direct debits are rewarded with discounts on their energy costs.

The Scottish Government has adopted the previous Executive's target of abolishing fuel poverty by 2016. However, despite some progress which was made by the Central Heating Programme and Warm Deal in the early years of the strategy, fuel poverty has been on the rise again since 2002.

The main factors in fuel poverty are poverty itself which is due to low incomes, and the rising cost of fuel. Short of abolishing poverty, which in itself would be desirable, it is clear that action is required on fuel pricing. UNISON Scotland rejects the idea that price competition alone is sufficient to assist those in greatest need. We believe that UK Government

should abandon its mantra of competition and review the Ofgem terms of reference to enable direct intervention on fuel pricing and establish incentives to encourage good practice by suppliers. The Scottish Government also has responsibilities in this field and should properly fund the range of programmes initiated by the last administration.

Network access charges discriminate against Scottish generators who have to pay more to get power to the main users in the large English conurbations. As renewable forms of generation like wind and wave power are in fact located outwith urban areas, the network access charges and proposed transmission loss charges clearly run counter to the aim of increasing renewables. We support the idea of a "postage stamp" principle for network access and hope that this will be the outcome of the Project Transmit consultation being undertaken by Ofgem. UNISON Scotland believes that the current regulatory regime with its primary emphasis on competition is damaging to the possibility of a balanced energy policy for Scotland and the UK, and should be reviewed.

We believe that only a planned, balanced energy policy can provide security of supply and meet our targets for addressing climate change. With concerted action in this direction from both Scottish and UK Governments, we can deliver the future we want in Scotland in terms of the production, distribution and more efficient use of energy; meet objectives of increasing renewable energy generation and reducing emissions; secure energy supplies at an affordable price; and maximise economic benefits from the energy industries.

In order to ensure that ordinary workers do not pay the price of shifting to a low carbon economy we must invest in the creation of green energy jobs in manufacturing, engineering and construction. This should be accompanied by relevant training and reskilling programmes.



**For further information, or to join UNISON,
call 0845 355 0845. Or visit our website at
www.unison-scotland.org.uk**