



The real effect of cuts: Building for March and Rally 10 April p3



New Media a UNISON opportunity see p4

PUBLIC WORKS:

a million voices for public services

March 2010 No. 83

Scotland in UNISON

scottish council activists bulletin Use these stories in your branch newsletter or circulate the pdf version to members

Campaign launched against £300million in cuts

by Chris Bartter and John Stevenson

General Secretary Dave Prentis launched UNISON's major 'Public Works' campaign at a public services rally at Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall on 6 February.

The next step in the campaign will be a major march and rally in Glasgow on 10 April.

Dave launched the campaign with Local Government Chair Stephanie Herd, Health Chair Tom Waterson, Police Staff Chair Raymond Brown and Dick Carrabine from Govan Community Council.

Dave attacked all political parties' 'macho politics' and announced that the union's research has uncovered cuts of £300m across Scottish local government with a planned job loss of over 3,000.

"No school cleaner gambled billions on the stock exchange. None of them created this recession. Why should they be expected to pay for it?" said Dave.

He also pointed to the danger of cuts plunging the economy back into recession as public spending is the only engine of growth we have. "Spending on public services makes sense if you are trying to grow the economy."

He said, "for every pound spent on public services, 64 pence goes back into the local



March and Rally against the cuts SAT 10 APRIL Glasgow see page 3 and check the website

economy."

Dave made it clear that all the major parties were to blame in a rush to the bottom, but reserved particular criticism for David Cameron's Tories who, he said, hadn't changed.

"They are calling for savage cuts - using the crisis to dismantle the welfare state. 20% cut in public expenditure over two years, but tax cuts for the rich. A world of haves and have nots."

He also urged Gordon Brown to learn from President Barack Obama's decision to stand up to American bankers. "Let's hear more about pay freezes for bankers," he said. "Let's hear Gordon calling for every last dime to be paid back to the taxpayer."

The rally, was attended by around 400 UNISON delegates from branches all across Scotland, and invited guests from communities fighting cuts.

The week before, Glasgow City Branch reached out to the



6 Feb Rally Photo: Malcolm Burns

No school cleaner gambled billions on the stock exchange. None of them created this recession. Why should they be expected to pay for it?"

Dave Prentis

community with a successful open meeting for members, unions and community groups affected by cuts.

City of Edinburgh Branch is set to follow with a meeting to set up a joint campaign with community and service user organisations.

UNISON is now building to

towards the mass march and rally on 10 April in Glasgow. Full details were going out as we went to press. Check the website for updates.

UNISON will be making public spending a major campaign issue in the forthcoming General Election campaign.



Aberdeenshire Branch members added their voices for public services at 'Public Works' stalls set up by the branch in Gordon House, Inverurie and Woodhill House, Aberdeen. Many non-members also took away application forms to join.



Morag Lawrence



Bob Slessor



Les Chalmers

UNISON rejects report on 'crude productivity' in NHS

UNISON Scotland has criticised a report published by the Nuffield Trust which claims that the NHS in Scotland is underperforming in comparison with England.

Glyn Hawker, UNISON Scottish Organiser said, "It sounds like this report has started from the wrong premise. It is precisely because Scotland has high levels of poor health, larger areas of health

disadvantage and more challenging geography that spending is higher here.

"And to suggest that spending on the NHS is likely to tackle the root causes of ill-health is fanciful.

"As research and many reports have pointed out - ill-health inequalities will only be tackled by providing safe and healthy work, and well-funded public services that can guarantee decent lives for all -



Glyn Hawker

including housing and a safe environment. Fundamentally we need to address growing social

and economic inequalities.

"We would also question what 'crude productivity for hospital doctors and nurses' means.

"If it is only to do with 'inpatient admissions' or waiting list reductions, then that would call into question the methodology behind this report.

"While they may increase numbers of sick people processed, they won't necessarily tackle poor health."

2010 Budget will fail to deliver for Scotland

Matt Smith, UNISON Scottish Secretary has told the Government that the Scottish budget fails to meet the needs of the

Scottish people and is likely to threaten the economic recovery.

“The budget will not cover the increased

demand that Scottish people now make on their services, nor will it cover the increased costs”, said Matt.

“That means cuts in services, cuts in jobs and cuts in the amount that public authorities pump into the economy. It looks like a triple whammy for the people of Scotland.”

“This crisis was not caused by the public sector and we know that public services work, yet some politicians and media commentators seem to think it axiomatic that our services and those who deliver them should pay for the irresponsibility of our private sector banks.

“As part of our Public Works campaign, UNISON has produced an alternative budget that shows how the cost of bailing out the country’s financial sector can be met without cutting the vital services people depend on”. See the alternative budget at www.unison-scotland.org.uk



Home Carers kicked in teeth by private care company

UNISON Scotland has condemned the news that over 300 low paid Home Carers employed by Choices - Care at Home, are to have their contracts of employment ripped up and replaced with “zero hour” contracts, removing any guarantees of how long, or if, they will work in any given period.

Choices Care Workers received letters from the company on 28 January.

In them Assistant Director of Operations, Fiona Ford, tells Home Carers that the cut in conditions is due to company



“The company should change their name to “NO Choices Care at Home”

Stephen Smellie

difficulties and not enough work from local authorities.

The Home Carers, currently paid just 5p above the National Minimum Wage, were shocked at the news and many have contacted UNISON for advice.

Stephen Smellie, Secretary of UNISON in South Lanarkshire,

said, “This is an atrocious way to treat a group of dedicated low paid workers who deliver essential services to elderly and disabled people living at home”.

UNISON is urging the Home Carers to join the union to fight the company over this and other poor working conditions.

Stephen added, “There has been no consultation with anyone over this.

“Not staff, not UNISON, certainly not service users and not local authorities.

“The company should change

their name to “NO Choices Care at Home”.

Choices bought over the home care company Domiciliary Care Scotland just before the BBC did an expose of DCS’s practices on Panorama last year.

Local Authorities contract out home care services to companies like Choices because they are cheaper.

Such companies like Choices Care at Home, already have recruitment and retention issues.

The Panorama programme highlighted how poor wages and poor conditions led to a lack of staff and poorer services to service users.

Returning to learn about computers

by Jane Aitchison
Communications & Campaigns Committee

South Lanarkshire UNISON is proud to continue its backing for the highly successful Return to Learn IT programme in 2010.

This is a joint initiative from the UNISON branch and South Lanarkshire Council delivered by the Workers Education Association.

The course is about giving people who don’t normally use computers as part of their work a chance to get up-to-date with IT so they too can join the electronic age.

147 people from different work backgrounds, including roads workers, laundry assistants and home carers,



have benefited from the course over the last six years. A new course is currently ongoing, and recruitment for the next one is under way.

Stewart Strang (pictured back row third from right), UNISON member and a very new

activist, completed the course last November.

Stewart, a Residential Worker at the Hillhouse Children’s Unit in Hamilton, said, “Everyone really enjoyed it. It was very positive, giving people the confidence they needed.

“I am actually dyslexic

and avoided using a computer at all costs. But it’s been excellent - a phenomenal saving, especially with spell check and the ability to change things easily.

“I won’t think twice about using a computer in future.”

Key officers flag retirement

Matt Smith, UNISON’s Scottish Secretary since the inception of the union, has signalled that he intends to retire at the end of the year.

Matt is also treasurer of the STUC, an STUC past president and has been on the General Council for over 20 years.

And flagging up retirement in the spring is Scottish Communications Officer **Chris Bartter**.

Chris was a lay activist with the Glasgow City Branch, lay Secretary of the old NALGO Scottish District, Publicity Secretary and the union’s first Scottish Communications Officer.

Matt and Chris are enormously important figures in the union so look out for more about them in the next issue.

Domestic violence: UNISON backs bill to give women more protection

by Fiona Montgomery
Information Development Officer

UNISON has backed plans to give greater legal protection and support to women experiencing domestic violence.

A Bill proposed by Rhoda Grant MSP would make several changes to the law to ensure women have stronger protections.

The Civil Protection Orders and Access to Justice (Scotland) Bill aims to improve access to justice in three ways:

- removing the need to show a course of conduct before a non-harassment order can be granted by the civil or criminal court, meaning only one incident of harassing behaviour is required.

- making legal aid free for anyone applying to a civil

court for an interdict with power of arrest or a non-harassment order, where domestic abuse is involved.

- making it a criminal offence to breach an interdict with power of arrest.

Rhoda Grant said at the launch of her consultation in December: “While we do have interdicts and non-harassment orders, these are not always available due to financial or evidential constraints.

“Also, the response is not always effective when further abuse does occur and these orders are breached.

“It is unreasonable to expect people to have to pay for protection or to have to



Rhoda Grant

return to the civil courts, at their own expense, on numerous occasions to seek redress for breach of interdict.”

UNISON’s Scottish Women’s Committee and LGBT Committee have both given overwhelming support to the planned Bill.

Norma Black, vice-chair of the Scottish Women’s committee, said: “We are confident that the proposed Bill would make a major difference in offering greater legal protections and access to justice for victims of domestic violence.

“The benefits for individuals are immense and potentially life-saving. We hope MSPs will give cross-party support to the Bill.”

The UNISON response to the consultation on the proposed Bill is on the union’s website.

UNISON signs recognition deal with Police Service Authority

UNISON has signed a recognition agreement with the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA) and fellow trade union, Unite, which will confirm them as the unions recognised to represent police staff working for the Authority.

UNISON is the largest union representing police staff in Scotland and has around 550 members currently covered by this agreement across Scotland.

Kenny Laing - Chair of UNISON’s SPSA Sub-Group said, “I am delighted that this agreement has been drawn up and signed. At a time when there is much work to be done in job evaluation, harmonising conditions and with various modernisation agendas, it is clearly very important that UNISON is able to represent and negotiate with the SPSA as effectively as possible.

“That is even more important as we face very difficult times for public sector finances.

“I look forward to continuing to work hard, alongside my other

UNISON stewards, for the members in this new formal consultation process.”

UNISON has had good relations with this new employer and the agreed structure will enable issues to be addressed in an agreed procedure by both employer and union.

Jo Brigham, SPSA Interim Chief Executive said, “The establishment of this agreement between SPSA, UNISON and Unite is a very positive step. This will strengthen SPSA’s working relationship with the unions and allow us to better understand and communicate with one another.”

Peter Veldon, UNISON’s regional officer for Police staffs said,

“It is important that UNISON’s key role within other Police staffs across Scotland, is now replicated in this new authority.

“There is much to be done in the next few months and membership of UNISON is essential to ensure that staff views are considered in all parts of SPSA and to ensure the best possible results for employees during the negotiations.”

Cuts threats spark recruitment boost

UNISON Scotland membership has increased again, Scottish Organiser, John Keggie reported to the last Scottish Committee.

Despite (or probably because) of the squeeze on public spending initiated by the recession,

Scotland's membership increased by around 1,500 and now stands at over 160,000.

That figure covers varying ups and downs in branch membership figures and it is clear there is still potential for further increases.

John said, "It is a really

positive achievement by UNISON staff and activists to turn what was at one stage looking like a drop, into this increase in members. Financial pressures are squeezing recruitment and cutting new intakes – but these threats are making it even more important

that the protection of membership is extended to non-members. We need to be out there telling non-members – we can help you and you can help yourselves by joining and contacting UNISON as the union standing up for public service workers under attack."

COUNCILS, VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND POLICE ALL HIT AS HEALTH FACES CUTS TOO

Cuts: Real picture emerges as branches build up for April 10

by John Stevenson
SiU editor

As branches gear up for the 'stop the cuts' demo on 10 April, the real picture of job losses was emerging across local government in Scotland, with the major impact of Health Service cuts set to bite next year.

Glasgow plans to shed 4,000 jobs in an attempt to save £65 million a year. It is hoped the losses will be voluntary but UNISON and local communities fear the effects on services.

Branch secretary Brian Smith said, "As unemployment rises and the social fallout of the recession grows the demands on Glasgow's services increases. The council is proposing to cut services just as the demand for those very services increases."

Branch chairperson and Scottish Convener Mike Kirby said, "Quality public services, particularly care, are dependent upon people providing services for the elderly, early years and the infirm.

"A loss of people means loss of quality of care. Quality of care for those in need is a measure of a civilised society."

Asking the question branches are asking across Scotland, Mike said in the Sunday Herald, "how do we manage the workload situations for those that are left?"

Edinburgh is facing 700 job losses and compulsory redundancies have not been ruled out as the council tries to cut £90million over three years. On top of that, the council is looking



UNISON members in Glasgow and Edinburgh lobby their council budget meetings against cuts and job losses



United against the cuts: Raymond Brown (Police chair), Stephanie Herd (Local Government), Tom Waterson (Health) and Dick Carrabine (Govan Community Council) were keynote speakers at the rally on Feb 6.

for people to take unpaid time off or career breaks.

City of Edinburgh Branch's website asks the same question as Mike, "it is what it means for those that are left over that we are worried about."

"Cut the people and you cut the services, it is that simple", said the branch's lead negotiator Kevin Duguid. "These cuts will affect everyone. It is no way to build out of a recession".

£40 million in cuts means North Ayrshire will lose 800 posts. Aberdeen City faced cuts of £23m, cutting over 400 jobs

and the picture is depressingly similar across the country.

All councils are predicting even worse next year with Edinburgh in particular planning a massive outsourcing exercise that could affect one in four staff.

Highland faces £60 million in cuts over the next three years. In addition to £4million this year, East Dunbartonshire faces cuts of up to £16 million in the next two years.

UNISON East Dunbartonshire's Jim Burnett predicted up to 250 job losses."This leaves the council

with serious difficulties about how they run core services. Our bottom line is there can't be a n y compulsories."

The real effect of many of the cuts will only emerge in the coming weeks. Particularly hit will be the voluntary and community sector, often the providers of essential services, as grants are reduced or projects shut down completely.

"Local authority budget cuts of 10-20% in voluntary sector grant support mean even more jobs going", said Mike

Kirby.

Police are also facing cuts - £16 million alone in Strathclyde - as UNISON Police staff chair Raymond Brown told the rally on 6 February. These cuts will fall disproportionately on support staff.

"This is a return to 1970's policing, most forward looking forces are looking to expand the role of support staff to release police officers to tackle crime", said Dave Watson, UNISON Scottish Organiser.

Edinburgh calls for outsourcing halt after care tender fiasco

In the wake of £250,000 wasted on a flawed bid to re-tender care services for vulnerable people, UNISON's Edinburgh Branch has called on the Council to halt its 'new business model' outsourcing plans and open up the books on its figures.

Calling for the release of an £80,000 confidential report into a retendering process that saw the majority of users opting for direct service, Branch President John Stevenson said, "How can we believe any of the claims the council is making about

UNISON lobbies to protect women's refuge

UNISON's Highland Branch has called for talks with Inverness Women's Aid amid fears that a review of services will lead to job losses.

Branch Secretary Liz Mackay told the Press and Journal newspaper, "This is an anxious time for our members in IWA, with cuts looming.

"They support vulnerable women and children in the community, and should be treated with respect during this worrying time."

Health weekend school success

by John Gallacher
Health Group Secretary

A very successful weekend school for Health Branches was held at the Apex Hotel Dundee 12-14 February.

Topics discussed included managing the 2010/11 budget process, Shared Services, Elected Health Boards, terms and conditions of service, as well as new approaches to recruitment and organising.

All the delegates found the school informative and took many good ideas (and some terms and conditions claims!) back to their branches.

Particular matters to take forward are engaging in the direct election campaigns in Fife and Dumfries & Galloway Health Boards.

Health branches are also keen to pursue further training in 'relational organising' and there are plans to set up a campaign to rival 'Camp Obama'.

Tom Waterson said, "This is the third annual workshop the Health Committee has run for branches and they go from strength to strength. Many thanks to full time staff (Suzanne Craig (Legal Officer), Jennifer McCarey (Area Organiser) and Kay Sillars (Information Development Officer) and fellow Lay Tutors Sandra Dee Masson and Lil Macer for making the weekend such a success.

"And Gallacher and Duffy were there too!"

Accounts Commission report 'misses the point'

It is disappointing that the Accounts Commission seem to have missed the point again, said Dougie Black, UNISON regional organiser, commenting on last week's report on Scottish Local Government.

Dougie, who is also lead negotiator for local council workers added, "Shared services cost money in the short term, they don't save it; cuts to so-called 'back room' service just mean hauling front line

workers away from service delivery to cover background work; and 'alternative delivery' means either expensive profit-driven private provision or services provided on the cheap by cutting resources, training, pay and conditions.

"The real question is - why do bodies like the Accounts Commission not talk to the people who use these services - all of us - the people of Scotland.

"We didn't cause the recession, we didn't drain the

public coffers of money to prop up the banks - why should our services pay for that when the bankers who are responsible are still awarding themselves huge bonuses?"

"Local Government is already facing cuts of over £300m, and job losses of 3,500 plus. That is why UNISON is running its Public Works campaign, is contacting local communities who depend on these services, and organising a 'Stop the Cuts, March and Rally' in Glasgow on April 10."

New 'Springboard' training for women activists

A new course targeted at new women activists in UNISON Scotland has been launched.

The new 'Springboard' programme builds on the successful Pathways Programme recently featured in *Scotland in UNISON*.

"Pathways courses have highlighted that some

participants don't feel they have the confidence or skills to become active in the union and would welcome further training that enables them to gain those skills", explained Gillian Ballantyne of UNISON Scotland's Pay Equality Group.

"The Pay Equality Group feels that the Springboard programme

could address this".

The Springboard development programme has been specifically devised and written for women.

The programme includes assertiveness training and encourages participants to develop ideas and skills and boost self confidence to make things happen.

The benefits of Springboard are:

- Self belief and goal setting
- Confidence to take on more responsibility
- Improved problem solving
- Improved relationships and emotionally healthier
- Positive thinking improved

The course is delivered by licensed Springboard trainers and consists of four one-day workshops run over a three month period, starting in the first week of March.

Branches can contact Gillian for more information on g.bannatyne@unison.co.uk or by telephone on 0141 342 2829.

98% of childcare workers abused

That shocking figure was revealed in a Glasgow City Branch survey of their residential childcare members about violence at work over a twelve month period.

At the same time, the union at UK level has issued a ten-point plan to address the problem.

The survey finds that the vast majority of the city's residential childcare workers were worried about violence in their job, and they don't feel that their managers take their concerns seriously.

The survey also found that a majority of workers have been physically assaulted (53%) and threatened with a weapon (51%) in the past year. Almost all workers responding (98%) said that they had suffered threats or verbal abuse.

Andy McCallion, UNISON's Glasgow branch Residential convenor said, "This survey was organised because our stewards were telling us that the levels of violence were increasing. Even we, however, were surprised at the levels of the concern and the frequency of the violence."

10 point plan

However, the union has found similar problems across the UK, and has issued a ten-point plan to tackle the issue.

UNISON has raised the survey findings in negotiation with management to improve the service to young people in residential units, and to build a safer working environment for our members. The ten point plan will be used both at local level with individual employers, at Scottish level in the joint working group set up with the Scottish Government, the STUC and CoSLA, and directly with employers representative groups.

New Media - a UNISON opportunity

UNISON Scotland needs to develop and promote itself through all new media platforms and should train activists up to use the relevant software ~ that's the message from a successful pilot one day course held in Inverness.

Arranged by lifelong learning worker, Philippa Clark and with the assistance of film company, Media Co-op, activists and full-time staff took part in a pilot course in Inverness to look at what would be useful and how to get to grips with the technology.

The course included producing a short video clip for uploading to YouTube and finding out about Twitter, FaceBook, blogging and the use of bulk texting software.

Communications Officer, Chris Bartter, said, "The course outlined the opportunities and some of the barriers to using these new media. Quite clearly UNISON Scotland is keen to get involved - some branches and activists already have FaceBook pages and blogs. We now need to develop training to roll out the techniques and practical details to activists."

The students devised, planned and shot a 30 second video clip in

3-3 ½ hours using mobile phones and webcams.



Their results are on the UNISON Scotland YouTube page at www.youtube.com/user/UNISONScotland?gl=GB&hl=en-GB



Why not follow us on Twitter - twitter.com/unisonscot and become a fan on Face Book



www.facebook.com/pages/UNISON-Scotland/294958672345.

UNISONScotland's blog is on unison-scotland.blogspot.com/



and other useful blogs are by Graham Smith, of UNISON's Young Members - grahaminunison.blogspot.com, Dave Watson - unisondave.blogspot.com and UNISONActive - unisonactive.blogspot.com.

Photos of UNISONScotland events are on Picasa -

picasaweb.google.com/unisonscotland



To save yourself all the typing, all these addresses are but a click away from the top right-hand corner of the UNISONScotland home page on our website www.unison-scotland.org.uk

Sackings threat withdrawn at Renfrewshire leisure charity

Renfrewshire Leisure Ltd has withdrawn threats to dismiss ex-council staff working for the organisation unless they signed-up to a range of detrimental working conditions.

UNISON, which represents a large majority of the permanent staff in the trust which runs ex-council leisure centres, stepped in after being told that the company would cease negotiating and issue staff with an ultimatum - sign up to new conditions or face the sack.

UNISON had been negotiating to try and reach agreement on new working conditions, as part of an attempt to end discriminatory pay by the company.

The union told the company that legal advice they have received makes it clear that the company proposals continue unequal pay systems and are discriminatory.

Mark Ferguson, UNISON

Renfrewshire Branch Secretary said "I was disappointed that Renfrewshire Leisure were choosing to ignore the sound legal advice UNISON has received, and wanted to walk away from negotiation.

"This left our members with no option but to consider industrial action, a decision that is not taken lightly."

Renfrewshire Leisure had recently contracted a private personnel firm to give them advice, a service which was previously provided by Renfrewshire Council.

Talks are now under between the Renfrewshire Leisure and the union.

Leisure services in Renfrewshire, Glasgow, Edinburgh and other areas were farmed out to 'Trusts' in recent years as a way of saving tax, with the loss of democratic control and often attacks on conditions.

Scottish Water backs environment but regulator joins enviro-sceptics

Just as the Scottish Government prioritised the fight against climate change in Scottish Water's plans, news emerged that regulator Sir Ian Byatt was helping a group critical of the evidence behind climate change.

Campaigners, including UNISON, had just congratulated plans from the Government and the Water Industry Commission to make climate change a higher priority in Scottish Water's objectives and investment plan. This reflected the new climate change duties on public bodies from January 2011.

Then it emerged that Sir Ian Byatt, chair of Scotland's Water Industry Commission was to advise the Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF), a think-tank that questions the science behind climate change concerns.

The Water Industry Regulator has a key role in regulating prices charged by Scottish Water and monitors performance.

Dave Watson, UNISON Scottish organiser, said: "It beggars belief that the regulator of Scotland's water industry should ally himself with this group. I will be writing to John Swinney, calling on him to sack him."

Scotland backs Prentis for Gen Sec

UNISON's Scottish Regional Council has voted to nominate current UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis for the forthcoming election starting in April.

Dave, twice before backed by Scotland, has been General Secretary for nine years.

He could have stayed on until retirement without an election but chose to stand for re-election at the five-year mark to seek a "new mandate to take our union forward" through the difficult time ahead for public services. Dave has nominations from over 50 branches, the NEC, two service groups and

four other regions.

Other candidates seeking nomination include Kirklees Branch Secretary Paul Holmes, Knowsley's Roger Bannister and Manchester Metropolitan University's Delroy Creary.

We want to hear your news

SiU is your paper, we want to hear your stories. Contact:-

John Stevenson (Editor) 0131 220 5655, Chris Bartter 0870 7777 006, FAX PRESS RELEASES to 0141 331 1203

E-mail: webmanager@unison-edinburgh.org.uk