



Gold-plated? Trudging though snow and ice to deliver home care for pension of £8.78 - p2



PUBLIC WORKS:

a million voices for public services

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Scotland in UNISON

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

THOUSANDS MARCH AGAINST CUTS

by Chris Bartter
 Communications Officer

Thousands of public service workers and service users took to the streets of Glasgow on April 10 in the highest profile action against public service cuts yet delivered by UNISON.

The March and Rally was part of UNISON's Public Works campaign, The Scottish arm of the union's million voices campaign aimed at changing the way our economy is run, and ensuring that those who deliver and those who depend on public services aren't sacrificed because of the greed of bankers.

The 2,500 marchers made a big impact as the UNISON Kinneil Band led them around Glasgow's West End. The display of flags and banners helped to make a powerful show on the BBC news, where the march was top of the news agenda.

At the final Rally, Mike Kirby, UNISON's Scottish Convenor summarised the level of cuts that communities across Scotland were facing.

"UNISON branches are telling us that cuts are already impacting on people from the cradle to the grave", he said.

"Fewer full time places will be

available for under fives in Edinburgh. Classroom assistants hours are being cut in Falkirk, Dumfries & Galloway, Highland, Inverclyde, and others.

"Many communities will see their mobile library service withdrawn, eg in Falkirk, Clackmannan and Moray. If you find yourself out of work due to the recession, better get yourself up to speed on how the benefit system works as Welfare Rights Units are cut back or closed in

Public services should not suffer because of the bank bailout. Our members didn't cause the crash, and neither did the people we serve every day in communities across Scotland.

Gerry Gallacher, UNISON President

Aberdeen, Glasgow, and East Lothian.

"The cost of meals on wheels for the elderly and vulnerable is going up in the Borders.

"And the cuts don't stop when you die as the cost of being buried or cremated is increased to more closely reflect charges at private crematoria in Fife.

"No-one is exempt." This was backed up by



The march in glorious sunshine on 10 April led by UNISON National President Gerry Gallacher, Vice President Angela Lynes, Scottish Secretary Matt Smith, UK Policy Chair Jane Carolan and STUC General Secretary Grahame Smith

speakers from most services in which UNISON members work, and support from other trade unions - particularly PCS and GMB. Grahame Smith, STUC General Secretary also came to bring support from the whole Trade Union movement in

Scotland.

UNISON's UK President, Gerry Gallacher came up from London to deliver his support and the support of UNISON's General Secretary. Dave Prentis was addressing a similar rally in London.

Gerry said, "In Glasgow and in London our key message is that public services should not suffer because of the bank bailout.

"Our members didn't cause the crash, and neither did the people we serve every day in communities across Scotland."

Election: Vote crucial for public services

UNISON's 10 April March and Rally is just one of a variety of activities being delivered by the union at UK and Scottish level in the run-up to the General Election.

The million voices campaign down south has unveiled YouTube and TV ads pointing out the likely impact of cuts to ordinary people - www.unison.org.uk/video/video.asp?did=10828.

And billboard ads drawing attention to the proposals of the Tories to take an axe to public service funding should they form the government, have been unveiled.

In Scotland a members' issue of *Scotland in UNISON* is being

Business think tanks continue to peddle the myth that we cannot afford decent services, taking advantage of the crisis they caused to make us pay for their bail out

distributed along with the spring U magazine. This gives the answers of the main Scottish parties to three key questions - Boosting the economy, Defending public services, and Affording decent conditions - and should mean that all members can see what the parties are saying about their jobs and services before they vote.

Scotland's Retired Members' and Health Groups both used their conferences as hustings, inviting the major parties along

to quiz them directly.

Branches have also been organising work with communities - street stalls, leafleting and conferences.

In addition to the existing 'day in the life' leaflet, a new poster has been produced showing the difference in all out lives that public services deliver.

The Spot the Difference poster shows a street with and without public services, and can be downloaded as a pdf from the UNISONScotland website [www.unison-](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/publicworks)

scotland.org.uk/publicworks.

The importance of the General Election to the jobs of our members and the services they provide is crucial and the Public Works campaign urges a vote for public services.

But it will not stop there. Establishment figures, the private sector and big business think tanks continue to peddle the myth that we cannot afford decent services, taking advantage of the crisis they caused to make us pay for their bail out.

This will continue and increase after the election. UNISON's campaign is key to the fightback and must also continue.

VOTE!

NEVER has your vote been more important for public services.

With an election dominated by political beauty contests on TV and simplistic calls for 'change', the real issues are our services, the people who rely on them and the people who deliver them.

We can afford these services and they are crucial to rebuilding the economy.

We musn't repeat the mistakes of the 80s and 90s that brought our services to their knees.

Apathy could be the winner in this election. Don't let that happen.

Whatever you do, vote on 6 May.

Invest in training and jobs and restore union rights

The 113th Scottish Trade Union Congress kicked off calling on Governments to work with the STUC and employers' groups to limit the effect of the recession and to create a fairer and more sustainable economy and society.

The motion called for a national living wage, a fairer tax system; investment in training and manufacturing and maintaining public spending to embed the economic

recovery, alongside measures to tackle youth employment, increased benefits for those out of work and on low pay.

It demanded the reform of anti-trade union legislation which has led to a "more unequal and unjust society and an economy that is less stable"

James Corry, of UNISON's Skills Development Scotland Branch, called for continued lobbying of the Scottish Government on the Modern Apprenticeship programmes to allow funding for the over 20s to continue.

By doing that, James said, "We will continue to offer much needed support to not only school leavers entering the labour market but also assisting those who are facing the threat of loss of employment due to the financial crisis.



James Corry

Councils must deliver on support needs for children

The STUC urged all councils to make sure children with additional support needs continue to get the services they are entitled to.



Sam McCartney

UNISON's Sam McCartney stressed the key role of classroom assistants and support for learning auxiliaries in providing support but "sadly these can be the very posts most vulnerable to cutbacks", he said.

Fund Nutrition Champions in NHS

Unions will urge the Scottish Government to fund an extension of the two-year Nutrition Champion posts in the NHS which will run out of funding this month.

Malnutrition affects one in three people on admission to hospital and care homes and apart from the human cost, the financial cost is estimated at £13 billion a year, according to the British Dietetic Association.

Supporting the Association's motion, UNISON's Betty Thomson said, "You aren't being fed alongside any treatment you are receiving. Food is the treatment you are receiving. So the quality of the food in the NHS is absolutely vital".

UNISON's 'Food for Good' Charter outlines policies to ensure healthy fresh food in our hospitals, designed to undo the damage that was done in the era of Compulsory Competitive Tendering.



Betty Thomson

STUC invests in young activists

The STUC voted to support investment and training in young activists.

Not only are young people critical to the future of the trade union movement - but the trade union movement is critical for young people.

Following a statement on recruiting young people - "The

future is now", delegates backed a plan to encourage participation by young members as the best way to build their skills and help recruit others.

Speaking in the 'Organising Young Workers' debate, UNISON's Derek Burns pointed out that organising young workers isn't simply an act of solidarity.

"It is vital for all of us that we organise young workers,

"The alternative is that - unorganised - they will form a pool of low paid employees on poor terms and conditions whose impact on the labour market will be to act as a drag on attempts by others to raise wage rates and conditions of employment."



Derek Burns

The front line of public services; caring and compassion no matter what

by Kieron Green
Moray UNISON

There is often a public perception that everyone who is employed by the council works in an office, is paid a generous salary and will receive a 'gold plated' pension when they retire.

That is certainly not the case for most workers.

Helen Hardie is a Home Carer based in Keith. On the front line of public services, she is one of many who deliver essential services to the community.

For Helen a typical day begins at 6am as her first care of the day is at 7:15am. This is the first of six morning visits.

For some it is a case of prompting them to take medicines. Others need more help and she may have to prepare food, ensure they are eating and taking medication, provide personal care, and help around the house.

It's then off for a 18 mile round trip out into the country for lunch cares for three people. Once a month Helen will have to repeat the journey for a set of teatime cares.

Her working day finishes with four 'bed' cares and Helen finally gets home around 9pm - finishing her working day nearly 14 hours after it began.

Vulnerable people still need care no matter what the weather, and this winter Home Carers have delivered their service despite the severe conditions.

With driving difficult or



The bitter weather may have looked picturesque but with cars buried and blocked roads carers often had to walk between clients. For some this meant up to eight miles a day trudging through waist deep snow and ice.

Inset: Home Carer Helen Hardie



Well paid? Gold Plated Pension? Hardly!

Helen has worked for Moray Council for five years. Her contract is 16 hours a week at £8.26 an hour. She usually works extra hours, but these vary, and do not count towards her pension.

Pay: £6,870 pa (contracted).
Pension: Based on current service Helen would retire on Lump sum £1020
Weekly pension £8.78

impossible carers have had to resort to walking between clients' homes.

Despite the dangerous state of the pavements and the cold temperatures there hasn't been enough money to provide them with adequate footwear or winter clothing. Instead carers have been told provide their own.

Home care is one of a number of council services often contracted out across Scotland.

Conditions for staff working for private and voluntary sector Home Care providers can often be far worse.

There, staff are often poorly trained and supported, get paid only just above the minimum wage, and are lucky to have a pension. It is the clients who suffer as a result of a lack of training and poorly motivated staff.

Moray Council has recently

taken over work that a private company was providing, due to the inadequate level of care being provided.

With the council, carers have a regular training program and now have to study towards SVQs. This ensures that staff have the necessary skills and experience to deliver a level of care the public deserve.

Carers do not do their job for the money or glamour. Their reward is making a

difference in the lives of some of the most vulnerable in society.

A lot is expected from carers explains Helen, "A carer needs a strong backbone, have a good mental balance, be physically fit, genuine, honest, reliable and compassionate - that's what makes a carer."

For the full story, see *Moray Matters* UNISON mag at www.morayunison.com/newsletters/mm-10-mar.pdf

Re-visit bus deregulation

Fractured and inconsistent bus services with not enough new build means bus services cannot be left exclusively to the private market, said the STUC.

"There is no bigger barrier for disabled people than the design of, and access to public

transport", said UNISON's John Nisbet, as he raised the impact on disabled people of other parties failing to support Labour MSP Charlie Gordon's Bus Services Bill.



John Nisbet

Protect vulnerable people but also low paid staff and services

stuc 2010

The STUC welcomed the additional protection for children and vulnerable adults in the new Protecting Vulnerable People Bill but warned that the costs of registration must not fall on employees, especially the low paid, and on the unwaged.

With over 400,000 workers to be registered plus 250,000 voluntary workers, registration was going to be a major issue.

Supporting a motion from the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, UNISON's Stephen Smellie said that it was right that service users can be confident that the people employed to support them are properly checked and vetted.

However, the risk of duplication of investigation by various regulatory bodies and employers, the additional cost imposed on low paid workers and the lack of a clear right to an open hearing could actually "make our members more

vulnerable in the future."

Calling on employers to bear the cost of registration, Stephen said, "Anything that makes working in the caring sector more difficult and puts more costs onto low paid workers will make it more difficult to recruit and retain the quality workforce we need.

"This will then impact negatively on the quality of services we are able to provide to the very vulnerable groups the legislation is designed to protect."



Stephen Smellie

Education not just teachers, says UNISON

Education - it's not just teachers UNISON told the STUC as it approved a statement on class size, teacher numbers and budgets for teacher education.

The statement commits the council to working with unions "representing the education team". It expressed concern over school closures dictated by

spending cuts at the same time that pledges on class sizes aren't being met. But "Education isn't just about teacher numbers and class sizes" was the message from UNISON's Pat Rowland.

She spoke up for the rest of the education team "who tend to be the lowest paid and least valued". Pat also questioned the priority given to reducing class

sizes and highlighted other strategies like changed teaching methods, the use of nurture classes, greater use of educational psychologists and classroom assistants".

But her key message was clear "The quality of education provision will be boosted by involving the whole education team in the process of change".



PHOTO: LOUIS FLOOD

Pat Rowland

Investment in services the only way forward

stuc 2010

The STUC public service debates saw the launch of a Charter for Public Services and a radical strategy for tackling poverty and inequality.

UNISON was at the forefront with Scottish Secretary Matt Smith and National Policy Chair Jane Carolan leading the way.

Under the banner of 'Rebuilding Collective Prosperity', motions laid out practical ways of protecting services and building out of the recession.

Matt Smith told delegates, "The provision of decent sustainable accessible and accountable public services lies at the very heart of our society. Without them we are all the poorer; with them we can all go forward with confidence."

But they were under attack as never before. "Not because our public services have failed - they have not. Not because the need has gone away - it is increasing. Not because their provision cannot be afforded - we are a rich nation

"They are under threat because of the activities of a few who probably despise public provision. Who finance their own needs from the bonuses they extort. Who care little about accountability and who couldn't care less about the needs

of others."

"In passing this today you are helping to set our agenda for the year ahead and beyond", said Matt.

"And saying to the people of Scotland that we will not stand idly by while attempts are made to make the many pay for the greed and folly of a wealthy few".

UNISON's Barbara Fulton



PHOTOS: LOUIS FLOOD

Without decent public services we are all the poorer - Matt Smith

added, "Right now, public spending is the only engine of growth we have. Cutting back now will jeopardise even the slight recovery we have.

In a masterful speech on tackling inequality and poverty, Jane Carolan said, "We need to stop believing that there is no alternative and believe in our own solutions."

The STUC backed a detailed strategy for a living wage, tax



PHOTOS: LOUIS FLOOD

"We need to stop believing that there is no alternative and believe in our own solutions." - Jane Carolan

and benefit reform and a blitz on excessive earnings and tax avoidance.

"The challenge for trade unions is that we take the words of this motion off the page, start to believe in them and act on them", said Jane.

"As a trade union movement we need to challenge the idea that our prosperity depends on an unfettered financial sector that should have died with the banking failures of 2009.

"We need to reassert that our economy has to be run on the basis of providing for the common good rather than to feather bed the bankers.

"We need to reassert that our welfare state is not a safety net that all too often fails those who fall into poverty but should instead be a comfort blanket that guarantees real human rights. Like the right to a home. The right to health. Like a living wage.

"And if we can have a minimum wage commission why not a maximum wage commission? How many millions can one human being need?" she asked.

● **Europe:** Jane also backed a campaign to defend union and employment rights from attacks by EU directives.

Alliance to challenge council cuts and sell-offs



PHOTO: LOUIS FLOOD

Unions will stand up for jobs and services. "Edinburgh is Not for Sale"

John Stevenson

stuc 2010

The STUC will support an alliance of unions and the community to seek widespread public support to challenge cuts and privatisation in local authorities.

UNISON's John Stevenson condemned proposals by the Liberal Democrat and SNP coalition in Edinburgh Council to sell-off a fifth of the workforce as a con to pay for the Scottish Government's Council Tax freeze.

He said that council tax payers were now paying three times over to get services they need.

"People are paying their general taxes, their council tax, and now higher charges on top."



He pointed to hiked charges. "Paying three times over to fund the con about a council tax freeze."

He condemned the proposed privatisation of a huge swathe of council services as a "multi-million pound Dutch auction, driven by a weird ideological partnership between the Lib Dems and the SNP, backed enthusiastically by the Tories", and pointed out that evidence was mounting to expose this council's model as dangerous.

Comparator councils seem to have been picked to be as little like Edinburgh as possible, one has been slammed on quality, others have lost money and

services have had to be brought back in house.

"If private firms corner the market in Edinburgh, they will have the council over a barrel - and accountability goes out the window."

Other councils have taken steps in the direction of outsourcing and the use of arms-length companies and John slammed the 'savage' cuts in conditions proposed in Glasgow's Culture and Sport organisation.

But none to the extent of the huge tendering process taking place in Edinburgh.

John queried why the SNP coalition partners were so silent about the process. "Maybe that silence is handed down from Government," he said.

"Because when Alex Salmond

stuc 2010

Stories from the STUC in Dundee from 19-21 April are by John Stevenson, Kate Ramsden, Stephen Lowe and Chris Bartter.

SiU can only run a selection of stories here. For much more go to www.unison-scotland.org.uk/stuc2010

Tackling crisis in NHS funding

The STUC backed a call for urgent talks with the Scottish Government to address pressures on NHS funding and called for a fight to protect NHS jobs and services.

UNISON's Catriona Beveridge said, "It is no surprise to us that a hospital cleaner is more valuable than a city banker. And our health service is worth more than any number of bankers".

She outlined a number of cuts already in place in the NHS. The loss of 16 beds in Lanarkshire is just one of 120 proposals to reduce spending to avoid a £17million deficit.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has to claw back £60million next year and NHS Highland about £15million.



Catriona Beveridge

Catriona said, "Health inflation is higher than general inflation so the recent increases have been worse for health spending than in other areas".

Outlining how UNISON's no-cut recovery budget could raise £74 billion next year, Catriona said, "A lot of people are talking about cutting waste in the public services. I couldn't agree more. So let's stop throwing cash at management consultants. That would save another £2.8 billion and of course the £76 billion that could be saved on Trident".

said he'd freeze the council tax, I didn't hear him saying he'd sell off jobs and services to pay for it. I didn't hear him say he'd double charges for the elderly to pay for it. I didn't hear him saying he'd starve the voluntary sector of funding."

He pledged that the trade unions would not be silent. Standing up for jobs and services, they would make sure that the public knew exactly what is happening. "Edinburgh is Not for Sale", he said.

UNISON's Nahid Aslam warned that public sector cuts also contribute to social division.

"Don't let the high heid yins continue to sow the seeds of tension within our diverse working class communities", she said.

Workers should be able to work without fear of violence

All public facing workers should be able to work without fear of violence, says the STUC.

It agreed overwhelmingly to campaign for the Workers (Aggravated Offences) (Scotland) Bill to give greater legal protection to all front line workers.

"UNISON Scotland welcomed Bill when it was proposed by Hugh Henry MSP", said UNISON's

Barbara Fulton. UNISON has been highlighting violence against public sector workers since 2002, when we carried out a survey and in 2003 published a Trauma Report which indicated a high level of violence, with some horrific cases of assault, both physical and sexual, particularly against NHS workers.

"Since then we have been campaigning, against at times considerable



PHOTO: LOUIS FLOOD
STUC2010 Barbara Fulton

opposition, for legislation outlawing attacks on public sector workers", said Barbara.

"Our campaign was instrumental in bringing

about the Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2006, which for the first time specifically protected the "Blue Light" services and all those working or assisting workers in hospital Accident and Emergency Units.

"In 2007 the legislation was amended to include some additional NHS staff but UNISON continues to push for a much wider group of workers to be covered by the Act."

Pensions – private sector cutbacks threaten burden on the state

STUC2010

The action of private sector bosses in cutting staff's pensions is likely to threaten the UK's economy, UNISON Scottish Convener Mike Kirby told the STUC.

Mike pointed to the closure of large numbers of decent private sector pension schemes, and raise the spectre of a huge increase in benefits demands by their shortchanged staff.

He said, "Far from the tired old myth peddled by the CBI and the Tax Dodgers Alliance - that public sector pensions are unsustainable, and a huge drain on the taxpayer - the real demand on the taxpayer is likely to come from employees of their own members who have had fair pensions cut, while their

STUC calls for decent pensions for all

bosses protect their own large pensions.

"The private sector wants the public purse to bail out their employees' pensions shortfall, just as it bailed out the busted banks and caused this recession."

The STUC called on government to maintain fair and decent public sector pensions, and not to heed misleading calls by the private sector and the media condemning public service workers to reliance on means-tested benefits.

Mike said, "The real time-bomb for the taxpayer is the means-tested benefits bill, and increased take up of social care and health services to support people



Mike Kirby

who have been shut out of saving for their retirement.

"We already face such demands thanks to the irresponsible actions of the banking fat cats like those at Goldman Sachs, and the selfish actions of private firms cutting their own staff pensions.

"Closing public sector

schemes would see the bill to the taxpayer rocket by billions."

The STUC unanimously backed a call for decent pensions for all workers, public and private sector.

It went on in a separate debate to call for an increased state pension, linked to earnings.

Sharks are circling again for Scottish Water

UNISON's Dave Watson warned that 'the sharks are circling again' as the CBI and right wing think tanks campaign for Water privatisation.

He laid into the by Water Industry Commission, led by Sir Ian Byatt, a former privatisation adviser to Margaret Thatcher.

To laughter from delegates, Dave said, "This is the man we, the charge payer, pay £36k for a flat in Stirling, £11k on flights and £8k on taxis - no wonder he is also a climate change denier - he is causing much of it!"

The Scottish Futures Trust was one of the 'new sharks in the reservoir - or should I say the sewage pipes' as it has 'given up on building schools and hospitals and now wants to argue for the privatisation of Scottish Water.'

This was "apparently at the personal request of its Chair, Sir Angus Grossart. One of the very same breed of bankers who got us into

the financial mess".

The latest case for privatisation is the financial crisis. "We can't afford Scottish Water - the money should be spent on front-line services. Excuse me, since when is clean drinking water and the avoidance of disease by safely removing sewage, not an essential public service?" asked Dave.

Across the world communities are rejecting privatisation. In Paris, they are taking water back into public control. The most efficient water services in Europe are in public control.



PHOTO: LOUIS FLOOD
STUC2010 Dave Watson

Dave urged delegates to read 'It's Scotland's Water' on the STUC website and tell the "think tanks, consultants and other parasites - it's our water and it's not for sale".

STUC International

Palestine: Mike Kirby moved the STUC's statement of support for the Palestinian people.

Swaziland: UNISON's Sam McCartney gave a passionate account of the repression of trade unionists he discovered on a delegation to Swaziland where the 'feudal dictatorship' denies its people education and freedom from poverty.

The STUC will offer aid to the Swaziland Federation of Labour and the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions.

See more on the website

Young and old agree - vote at 16 is way forward

The STUC backed a campaign to lower the voting age to 16 with support from UNISON members both young and old.

UNISON young member Jenny Roberts pointed out the contradiction that 16 year olds are deemed responsible enough to bring up children and join the military but not cast a ballot.

That's a policy that will disenfranchise 1.5 million people at the election in a few weeks time.

16 and 17 year olds are deemed to be careless, carefree and irresponsible "But you can find people at 20, 30 or 40 who are no better" she said.

After pointing out that most of the arguments heard against are the same as those used against giving women the franchise, Jenny said, "We recruit young workers into our organisations who are 16 and 17. We wouldn't tell them that they had no right to vote."

The motion was supported by Retired Member Lilly MacNaughton. For Lilly it was simply an issue of fairness, "16 and 17 year olds are expected to behave like citizens, it is not fair to deny them the rights of citizens."



Jenny Roberts



Lilly MacNaughton

Learning award for SPT



The joint UNISON/Unite union learning team from Strathclyde Partnership for Transport won this year's STUC Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning.

Pictured with UNISON's Gerry Hastings and Unite colleagues, Scottish Secretary Matt Smith said: "At a time when Strathclyde Partnership for Transport is receiving much media attention for other reasons, it is good to welcome the positive role that UNISON and Unite are playing there. We are delighted that Gerry has been given this award, and once again UNISON is at the forefront of learning agenda."

STUC in brief

Campaign goes on for humanity in asylum: Pat Rowland backed calls for dignity for asylum seekers and to rename asylum as sanctuary.

Stammering is no joke: John Nisbet backed a call for work to raise awareness of what is a disability - but often not recognised as such.

Children must have a right to music. John Stevenson backed the Musicians Union's campaign against cuts in instrument tuition in schools. See the website for more.

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Walk the Glen

Centenary Sponsored Walk and Family Fun Day

SPONSORED WALK/FUN RUN - 5K
Around the beautiful Pittencrieff Park - walk beside the well-kept shrubs and flower beds, or those more energetically inclined may wish to break into a jog! Route will be well laid out and easy to follow - with stops highlighted on the way round.

FAMILY FUN DAY - BRING ALL THE FAMILY
Bouncy Castle • Face Painting • Balloon Modelling • Children's Races • Stalls • Raffle • Refreshments

BRANCHES
Make £50 donation - Cheques payable to UNISON Welfare • Sponsor Walkers • Sponsor Events/Stalls • Donate Raffle Prizes

Please contact Diane Anderson at: diane.anderson@unison.co.uk
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Sunday 30 May Pittencrieff Park Dunfermline



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