



There is a Better Way

JOB SERVICES  
FAIR TAXES  
A LIVING WAGE

STUC March and Rally 23 October Edinburgh

11.00 am: East Market Street Edinburgh, 11.30am: March off 12.30 pm: Rally Ross Bandstand

**PUBLIC WORKS:**

a million voices for public services

Sept/Oct 2010 No. 87

# Scotland *in* UNISON

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

## As cuts destroy our services, public and private sector jobs, and grind the economy to a halt, unions say...

# There is a better way

by John Stevenson  
SiU Editor

**There is an alternative to savage cuts in public services was the message from a conference of unions and community groups hosted by UNISON Scotland in the run up to the major STUC demo on 23 October in Edinburgh.**

UNISON's Scottish Secretary Matt Smith said: "There is a real economic alternative to the cuts and privatisation agenda and we want to make sure that the services the people of Scotland have come to expect continue.

"I would urge as many members as possible to join me at the STUC demonstration in October to show your support for our public services (details top of page).

"We need to stand together and send a clear message to politicians and the media that there is no need for job losses and cuts to our services - there is a better way."

Conference delegates united behind a call from Dave Prentis, UNISON General Secretary, to build, "Our vision of a good society. A society based on fairness, solidarity, and democracy.



Join me at the demo on 23 October to show support for services'

Matt Smith



Let's not fall for the lie that that this society can't afford decent public services'

Dave Prentis

"A society in which public services are there to enable everyone to participate.

"This vision, and these values, have always been fundamental to our ethos as a union. Because it's what our members try to turn into reality every day when they go to work.

"So let's not be fooled by the scaremongering about the debt", said Dave. "And let's not fall for the lie that that this society can't afford decent public services.

"The money is there in our economy, if we want to raise it and put it to good use. But this government doesn't want you to realise that.

"Not because half of the cabinet are millionaires who don't want to pay their share...although half of the cabinet are millionaires who don't want to pay their share.

"It's because of an ideology. An ideology that hates public services. An ideology that sees public service employment - millions of people caring and helping and educating. - not as an achievement to be celebrated - but as a problem to be tackled."

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### Myths about the 'crisis'

**"Cutting public services will boost the private sector ...." WRONG**

**1 = 1** For every one job cut in the public sector at least one is lost in the private sector. (Treasury report Guardian 29 June) Cuts don't just damage essential services, they damage the whole economy.

**£1 = 70p** About 70p of each £1 a public service worker earns is spent in their own community. Pay cuts and job losses will damage local businesses and local jobs.

**"The national debt has never been higher... we can't afford public services and benefits...." WRONG**

**In place of fear...** The national debt was proportionately four times higher in 1948 but the government - with Nye Bevan (left) - could still afford to introduce the NHS, the Welfare State and a huge house building programme! [www.ukpublicspending.co.uk](http://www.ukpublicspending.co.uk)

**"Cutting public spending will get us out of recession...." WRONG**

Recent reports from the International Monetary Fund and the OECD warn that cuts are grinding the whole economy down, risking the disaster of a double-dip recession. The last three month trade gap was the worst on record (Guardian 9 Sept, Herald 11 Sept). Public services and industry need investment not cuts!

**"We're all in this together...." WRONG**

The poorest families will be hit five times worse than top earners by government cuts (Institute for Fiscal Studies August 2010). Meanwhile bankers go on collecting bonuses, top businesses go on paying no corporation tax and billions are lost through tax avoidance by the very rich.

Drawn with thanks from ideas and information from participants in this year's UNISON National Leadership School

## There is an alternative, so TELL A PAL!

by Stephen Low  
Policy and Information Team

**That's how UNISON Scotland will mark the European TUC Day of Action against Cuts on 29 September.**

We need to get the message out that cuts will damage everybody, that they can be avoided if the wealthy pay their fair share and that job losses in the public sector will cause job losses in the private sector.

In short that "There is a better way".

**Campaign to mark European TUC Day of Action 29 September**

We should all turn out in support of it in Edinburgh at the STUC demo on 23 October.

We need to be getting our members to get the message out about the threats to the services they deliver.

**So we'll be asking stewards and reps to TELL A PAL.**

UNISON will be giving people key facts about the importance of

services, and why we don't need cuts, printed postcard size and credit card sizes.

They'll give people the basic knowledge they need to rebut the propaganda from employers and the media that there is no alternative.

So that our members will know what is going on and they in turn can TELL A PAL.

You can find out more about the European TUC Day of Action Against Austerity at [www.etuc.org/a/7407](http://www.etuc.org/a/7407)

# Police staff cuts 'great news for criminals'

**UNISON has called for a halt to the proposed job cuts among police staff.**

The union said that the proposals made by various police forces were "great news for criminals" and that if implemented the sackings would make Scotland less safe.

UNISON has already sought a joint approach to the Scottish government with Strathclyde Police to address the threat to

jobs and service levels. The union is widening the approach as the scale of job and service cuts now being proposed across other Scottish police forces becomes clearer.

UNISON organises police staff in forces across Scotland and was reacting to announcements by three forces to cut both police staff and police officers.

A UNISON spokesperson

said: "This is great news for criminals across Scotland as police are taken off the beat to do jobs more usefully, and cost effectively, done by police staff."

"These proposals are turning the clock back thirty years and will wipe out all of the efficiencies and advances we've made since then. We now have specialised, trained and dedicated staff whose employment means police

officers can be released for frontline duties.

"This is not even a saving - it will actually cost more and take officers away from the frontline where the public rightly expect them to be.

"No one can pretend that Scotland will be a safer place if these cuts are implemented. As they stand these proposals are little more than a charter for criminals."

# Lessons of past and present to face today's union challenges

by Nancy Kelly  
Regional Organiser

**Organising, history of unions, law and campaigning were all part of a recent pilot course giving activists the tools to face the challenges to public services.**

Provisionally entitled 'Trade Unions and Politics', the course was a great success with all who attended feeding back comments like, 'Every UNISON Steward should go on this course', 'Very enjoyable', 'Incredibly interesting', 'Renewed my enthusiasm'.

The course was run by Jim Burnett, Stephen Smellie and Nancy Kelly and encouraged delegates to share their own experiences.

We asked people to bring with them books, posters, badges etc and created an exhibition space to share all these.

Over the weekend we covered many issues including 'The history of Trade Unions in the Public Sector', 'Women Workers in Trade Unions', 'Trade Unions and the Law' (a session facilitated by Suzanne Craig, Legal Officer).

We came bang up to date with a session on how to campaign on

immediate issues affecting members, with a briefing from Dave Watson on the union's Political funds and how we lobby and campaign with decision makers at local, national and international level.

Having identified that privatisation was a big issue for everyone we held a mock radio debate and phone-in 'Call Kaye' where delegates took on the roles of those making decisions and those affected by them.

We even worked through Saturday night when Stephen Low (Policy Officer) gave an after dinner talk (with audio clips from the speakers themselves) about the UCS work-in. As the event took place just a few days after the death of Jimmy Reid it proved very topical in a way we had not planned.

The L&O Committee are certain that these discussions are now essential given the scale of attacks on the public sector and we will certainly be running another one at Regional level.

It might also be suitable to run a shortened version for branches and we will be looking at that too. So watch this space and if anyone can think of a better name for the course we would be delighted to hear it!



Course participants took time out to remind themselves of labour history with a visit to the Glasgow statue of Dolores Ibárruri or 'La Passionara', a memorial to those who fought against fascism in the Spanish Civil War.

## Unions and pensioners join the Defend Glasgow Services campaign

**Glasgow branch held its latest 'Defend Glasgow Services' public meeting with speakers from Strathclyde FBU, Glasgow UNISON Health, PCS Scotland and the Scottish Pensioners Forum.**

They outlined the scale of attacks and the effect on workers and hard-pressed communities alike.

Eleanor McKenzie, Chair of the Scottish Pensioners Forum, explained that the ConDem coalition is embarking upon an assault on the welfare state through cuts and privatisation.

She contrasted the plight of pensioners against those on the Sunday Times Rich List. Patrick Harvie, MSP Green Party, called for the building of a "progressive coalition" in Scotland to challenge the ConDem Government.

During the discussion speakers welcomed the Defend Glasgow Services campaign and many agreed that industrial action allied to community support would be the most effective way forward and that the DGS campaign should make formal links with other anti-cuts campaigns.

The idea of calling on elected politicians in local councils and the Scottish Parliament to refuse to vote through cuts was also discussed.

The DGS campaign will now be taken on to the streets with stalls and leafleting across the city in the run-up to the STUC demo on 23 October.

**Cuts conference "We've got the arguments. We've got the vision - get out there and organise for it"**

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Underlining the point, the STUC's Stephen Boyd exploded the myths about the crisis, blow by blow. The STUC's new 'There is a Better Way' campaign ([www.thereisabetterway.org](http://www.thereisabetterway.org)) is a crucial resource for showing not only that the cuts are ideologically rather than financially driven - but also how they will possibly throw us into a further recession.

### Not just a talking shop

But this meeting was not just a talking shop. It was there as the first step in a series of events as participants moved into workshops to develop practical plans to campaign forward.

Nobody underestimated the task. As Dave Prentis told UNISON's National Conference in June, "the next four years will test us all. Test our resolve. Test our nerve. But we will pass the test. The world has changed - new worries, new fears. And our members look to us to lead. This is no time to hang our heads. It is time to stand tall."

He returned to that theme in Glasgow "We've got the argument. We've got the alternatives. We've got the vision. What we need to do is get out there and organise for it".

## Organising and rising to the challenge across Scotland

by John Stevenson  
SiU Editor

**UNISON activists are rising to the challenge as a new organising energy leads to events across the country looking at new ways to involve members and activists and get out the message that there is an alternative to the ConDem ideological offensive.**

UNISON Scotland's Learning and Organising Committee's seminar this weekend generated new ideas for engaging activists and bringing them together in an 'Organising and Campaigning Festival' weekend comprising short and linked modules on trade union history, political education, campaigning,

media, new media and organising.

They plan to jointly work with Communications and Campaigns colleagues and tap into the huge range of skills and knowledge from lay and full time officers across the Region.

Giving activists the tools for the job is a key part of organising.

"We don't need to re-invent the wheel", said Scotland L&O chair Jim Burnett.

"Across the union people are coming up with fantastic work. We need to learn from that, pull the resources together and find new ways of involving activists and members".

Plans for the event will include excerpts from

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inspirational speeches by great figures like Jimmy Reid.

Edinburgh City, where the Council is facing cuts of over £90 million, is an example where a branch is focussing on organising.

Pulling together ideas from work done by East Midlands on the budget, the STUC campaign, special Scottish Committee and Communications Committee events, along with work from the branch's local activists, it had a successful branch committee event using an

organising pack and powerpoint.

This is now being used by stewards at local meetings, building towards a major activists' organising event next month. See the pack at [www.unison-edinburgh.org.uk/publicworks/](http://www.unison-edinburgh.org.uk/publicworks/)

Other branches including Aberdeenshire [www.aberdeenshireunison.com](http://www.aberdeenshireunison.com) and South Lanarkshire, are running 'there is an alternative' initiatives.

An anti-cuts alliance in conjunction with the Trades Union Council and the PCS union has been set up in Edinburgh and Glasgow City Branch has held its latest in a series of 'Defend Glasgow Services' public meetings (see this page).

## Branches consulting on 'kick in the teeth' pay imposition

by Trisha Hamilton  
Communications Officer

**UNISON branches are holding meetings and ballots of members that work for Scotland's councils to establish the next step in the ongoing local government pay dispute.**

The move follows COSLA's decision this month to impose a three-year pay settlement of 0.65% in 2010/11 and 0% for the following two years, withdrawing its earlier offer put to trade unions in April.

UNISON condemned the action and described the deal as a "kick in the teeth" to local government employees.

Stephanie Herd, Chair of

**Imposing a deal is not the way to do pay bargaining and is totally unfair to hard working local government workers'**

Stephanie Herd

UNISON's Scottish Local Government Committee, said: "COSLA has misrepresented the unions' negotiating position and has said they value employees, while kicking them in the teeth."

"Imposing a deal is not the way to do pay bargaining and is totally unfair to hard working local government workers across Scotland."

"UNISON has made the case



that there is an alternative to the cuts agenda, an alternative that delivers the quality services Scotland needs, with decent pay and conditions for staff."

UNISON has lodged a formal dispute against COSLA, claiming its actions are wholly unacceptable to trade unions.

Dougie Black, UNISON trade union side secretary and lead

negotiator, said: "All three trade unions jointly sought talks with COSLA and these took place last month. We were prepared to negotiate with the employers on redistributing or reshaping the original offer but to no avail."

"COSLA had budgeted for 1% this year but have chosen to impose a lower figure than the Tory/Liberal Democrat coalition are prepared to pay public sector workers south of the border."

"It is contemptible that they say they value public service workers. They can't possibly when they are reducing wages, taking an offer off the table and imposing something worth less."

See UNISON Scotland's website for updates.

## They're still trying to privatise water!

**The Independent Budget Report is the latest body to propose the privatisation of Scottish Water, dressed up under the guise of a public interest company.**

"This is a purely ideological recommendation as there is no explanation as to how this would help the hard pressed capital budget", says UNISON Scottish Organiser Dave Watson.

"It makes no sense to sell off Scottish Water at a fraction of its asset value, only to send the cash to London. Meanwhile, the water charge payer will have to pick up the purchase cost through higher charges and cuts in service."

Paris is the latest city to bring its water service back under democratic control.

"Interestingly", says Dave, "it was privatised under the guise of a public interest company and just two years later production was in the hands of multi-national companies."

Back under public control charges have been frozen and profits are flowing back into the public purse.

The Scottish Government's new legislative programme includes a Bill to extend the powers of Scottish Water. Whilst we need to see the detail, this appears to be a positive development.

Both the SNP and Scottish Labour are committed to retaining Scottish Water in public ownership. So are the people of Scotland who understand the importance of keeping our most valuable asset under democratic control. For more details see the briefing 'Defend Scotland's Water' on the UNISON Scotland website.



Dave Watson

## UNISON 'powers up' at Belladrum

**UNISON young members and learning activists joined with full-time staff to take UNISON's message that there is an alternative to public service cuts to the Tartan Heart Music Festival at Belladrum near Inverness.**

"This is the first time we have tried anything like this in Scotland, and it worked really well," said Philippa Clark, Highland Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator.

"The Belladrum Festival attracts 12,000 people from all over Scotland so it was a great opportunity to get our message across and hear first hand what the festival goes had to say about the cuts to their services."

As well as giving out UNISON balloons, leaflets, t-shirts and freebies, UNISON was also well-represented in the debating tent.

Full time officer Peter Hunter put forward

UNISON's case for defending public services and its alternatives to the cuts.

And Highland young member, Jenny Roberts spoke in the "Votes at 16" debate.

"These inputs generated a lot of discussion," said Philippa, adding that people were then invited to put their own ideas on luggage tags.

"These showed that people do value their public services, with NHS, care for the elderly and schools top of the list."

"We made lots of good contacts, especially amongst younger people and we were able to tell them about learning opportunities in the trade unions, so it was a very worthwhile event," added Philippa.

"Would we do it again? Absolutely!"



## UNISON attacks CBI hypocrisy

**UNISON Scotland Convener Mike Kirby has responded angrily to a call from the Chair of CBI Scotland to end the 'war of words' over public services.**

At the CBI Scotland annual dinner Linda Urquhart declared it was time to "call a halt to 'them and us' attitudes which have prevailed for decades".

Mike Kirby responded: "A halt to them and us attitudes from big business would indeed be welcome. However, it is hard to take such calls seriously when the rest of Linda Urquhart's speech was an unrestrained attack on public service delivery."

"The current financial crisis was caused by private corporate folly and the deregulated financial system that the CBI supported.



**public service workers and the communities they serve are paying the price of the big business agenda'**

Mike Kirby

"It is public service workers and the communities they serve that are paying the price of the policy agenda promoted by big business. To impose this failed

policy on public services would be further economic vandalism."

The CBI leaders speech also called for further privatisation of public services.

Evidence submitted by UNISON Scotland to Parliament last week shows that this approach has cost the taxpayer millions of pounds in extra costs and undermined the integrated delivery of services.

Mike Kirby added, "In a week that has seen the spectacular collapse of a leading outsourcing company (Connaught), it is a strange time to call for the imposition of further chaos on hard pressed councils."

"Public services should be democratically accountable to local communities, not to the Boards of big business who are driven solely by the need to make profits."

## UNISON SCOTLAND NURSING CONFERENCE TUESDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2010

10-4.30pm - Trades Hall, 85 Glassford Street, Glasgow

Our public services are increasingly under attack and proposed job cuts in the NHS in Scotland could have a major impact on services and quality of patient care.

This one day conference is open to our members across the whole nursing family, including nurses, midwives, health visitors and healthcare assistants. Together we will consider the key issues

**Health for all:** Our NHS works for everyone's wellbeing

**PUBLIC WORKS:**

currently affecting members and offer an opportunity to discuss and debate the future for nursing in Scotland. £20.00 per delegate payable by your Branch. Contact Fiona Martin on 0141 342 2820 or f.martin@unison.co.uk

### Speakers:

**Nicola Sturgeon**  
Cabinet Secretary for Health & Wellbeing  
Keynote Speaker

**Roz Moore** Chief Nurse for Scotland  
Modernising Nursing in Scotland and Improvements to Patient Care

**Roger Thompson** NMC Director of Standards and Registrations  
Increasing Public Protection: moving beyond the register

**Gail Adams** Head of Nursing for UNISON Launch of 'Speaking Up and Speaking Out' and 'Raising and Escalating Concerns'

**Mike McEwan** with **Dave Mercer** Senior Lecturers, Liverpool University  
Why nurses should not be in BNP Debate:

Do we need as many registered nurses? Debate/discussion on skills mix and use of competences for Healthcare Support Workers.  
Chair: **Bridget Hunter**, UNISON Lead Officer for Nursing in Scotland

## Films and activists come together in film festival

**F**ilms and activists come together in September and October in the Take One Action Film Festival. This takes place in Edinburgh and Glasgow from 23 September to 5 October, with a wide range of films from around the world, which encourage debate and hopefully promote people to



take action on a wide range of social justice issues. UNISON Scotland is supporting this and may also get involved in touring some of the films early in 2011. Full details are on the festival website at [www.takeoneaction.org.uk/festival-info](http://www.takeoneaction.org.uk/festival-info).

Take One Action make global issues and positive action against the root causes of poverty accessible to thousands of ordinary people each year. And they celebrate great film.

## Black members AGM goes to Parliament

**T**his year's UNISON Scotland Black Members Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 13 November in Committee Room 1 of the Scottish Parliament from 11am-1pm.

Activists are urged to get the word about the AGM out to black members in their branches.

Delegates wishing to attend need to get a delegate form in by Friday

29 October and these will be available on the website.

Branches are responsible for funding delegates to the AGM, but as a bonus, lunch will be provided by the highly generous Scottish Black Members Committee.

The AGM will elect members nominated for the Scottish Black Members Committee and will also consider motions put forward by the committee and branches.

# Postcard and letter campaign to back protection of workers

**U**NISON Scotland has welcomed the publication of a Bill proposed by Hugh Henry MSP that would strengthen the legislation that protects public facing workers from abuse.

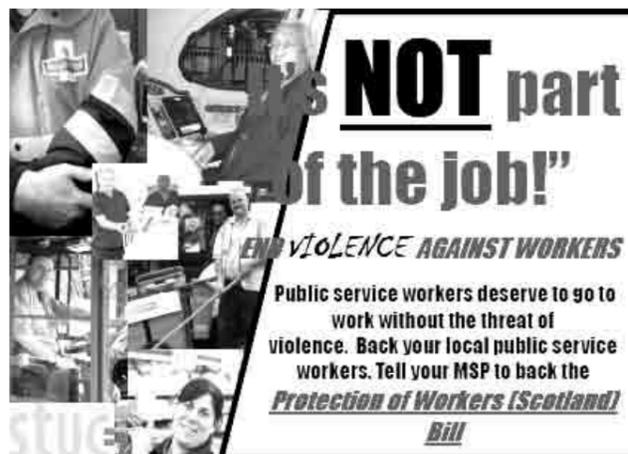
Some 30,000 public service workers in Scotland reported violent incidents last year and many more go unrecorded.

The Bill has already received support from most Labour and a number of SNP MSPs.

"However, we need more support if the Bill is to be passed before next May's elections", said UNISON Scottish Organiser Dave Watson.

"We are therefore urging branches to lobby their local MSP to support the Bill."

Materials to support the campaign, including a briefing, a model letter/email and postcards (right) will be circulated to branches.



## UNISON's Matt Smith to speak at CND Conference

**U**NISON Scottish Secretary Matt Smith is one of the speakers at the CND trade union conference on Wed 6 October, 6.30pm, at the STUC, 333 Woodlands Road, Glasgow.

The 'Trident, Jobs and the Economy' conference will be the Scottish launch of a recently published CND report of the same name.

The report finds that rather

than protecting jobs, Trident replacement will destroy many more jobs in conventional defence and jobs and services across all areas of public spending.

The speakers also include Arthur West (trade union and CND activist) and a speaker from UNITE.



## UNISON backs Glasgay!

**U**NISON Scotland has welcomed the launch of 2010 Glasgay with its "irrepressible programme that continues to highlight prejudice, discrimination and inequality."

The international arts festival's annual celebration of queer culture runs from 14 October to 13 November in Glasgow.

It broadly celebrates relationships this year and UNISON is the premiere sponsor.

Branches that have also given financial support to Glasgay include Lothian Health, Forth Valley Health, Fife, Glasgow, Glasgow Housing, Aberdeenshire, Highland, South Lanarkshire, East Renfrewshire, Scottish Electricity and Strathclyde Police.

The full programme is on the



website at [www.glasgay.co.uk](http://www.glasgay.co.uk)

UNISON is sponsoring in particular Q and A, Queers and Answers, a short series of talks and debates accompanying the film and documentary programme.

These include, on 22 October at CCA, in Sauchiehall Street, a screening of Stonewall Uprising, followed by 'Don't Rock the Boat', a debate with speakers from Stonewall and UNISON.

This will focus on issues around freedom of speech, censorship, hidden identities and their effects on health, well-being and social standing.

## Reps brush up on 'Fitness to Practice'

**L**ay activists and full time officers from Health and Local Government recently attended a seminar on representing members in 'Fitness to Practice' cases.

With more and more workers having to sign up to registration bodies, it is essential that UNISON reps are up to speed on how to represent them if they face action from those bodies.

Specialists from the Professional Registration Representation Unit at UNISON

HQ took participants through the union processes for getting representation and advised on how to support members when they first come for help.

The main message is that members must contact their Branch immediately they know there is a problem.

## Child protection views

UNISON Scotland's Social Work Issues Group has been working on a response to the Scottish Government's new Child Protection Guidance. Check out the website for details.

## Big Climate Connection lobby

by Fiona Montgomery  
Information Development Officer

**I**t's time to lobby MPs on climate change in November.

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland is organising the Scottish part of the Big Climate Connection lobby on Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 November.

It takes place three weeks before the UN Climate Talks in Cancun, Mexico, so we can make sure our MPs push for key policies that will ensure there is significant progress at Cancun towards a fair, ambitious and binding global climate deal.

UNISON Scotland is also helping SCCS promote its 10-point manifesto for the Scottish Parliament elections next year.

SCCS coalition members, including UNISON, will be taking this to the autumn



party conferences.

The manifesto 'asks' include calls for: a green procurement bill; action on a Just Transition to a low-carbon economy; a strategic climate fund for public bodies and the integration of health and climate change policies.

Check out the SCCS and UNISON Scotland green workplace websites for the latest on the Big Climate Connection and for information about coming E-actions supporting the manifesto and calling on the Scottish Government to strengthen the public bodies climate change duty.

[www.stopclimatechaos.org/scotland](http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/scotland)

## Welcome Trisha

Trisha Hamilton has joined UNISON Scotland as Scottish Communications Officer, replacing Chris Bartter who retired earlier this year.

A big welcome to Trisha from the Communications and Campaigns Committee and grateful thanks to Malcolm Burns and Fiona Montgomery who held the fort throughout the summer.

## Scottish Women's Conference

UNISON Scotland's Women's Conference will be held on Saturday 9 October from 11am to 5pm at UNISON Glasgow City Branch Office, 18 Albion Street, Glasgow.

The deadline for registering delegates and making nominations for the Women's Committee, the STUC Women's conference, UNISON National Women's conference, STUC Women's Committee and UNISON National Women's Committee is Friday 24 September.

## UNISON Scotland Media Course 12-14 November

**T**his training weekend covers all the essentials of dealing effectively with the Media. It will give members skills, knowledge and understanding of methods and skills to improve branch level media contact.

The course, tutored by a practising journalist, the UNISON press officer, the Scottish Communications Officer and the Scotland in UNISON editor, gives real hands on experience in a friendly and informal way.

The all-important press releases, media organisation and presentation, tricks of the trade and practical experience of being interviewed are all included.

Suitable for any UNISON person who has contact with the media - or who wants to get organised to get more media interest in their part of the union.

No matter how new or experienced you are, there is always something to learn on this course. It is geared to give you what you need for your purposes.

Check out [www.unison-scotland.org.uk/education](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/education) for an application form or contact Trisha Hamilton at [t.hamilton@unison.co.uk](mailto:t.hamilton@unison.co.uk)

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