

 copy or cut out sections of this bulletin for branch or workplace newsletters

Action plan on Social Work crisis

by John Stevenson
SiU Editor

UNISON is calling for urgent meetings with minister Cathy Jamieson and a local authorities' task group as Social Work members kick off a campaign to confront the crisis in recruitment and retention of staff.

Fifty reps from 29 of Scotland's 32 local authorities reported on the work they were already doing locally and forged the joint action plan at a conference in Glasgow on 29 August.

And, because low pay is a key element, an action group will urgently consult branches on how best to push for better pay across the board.

It will also collate information on resource problems which are leading



Crisis: Danger or turning point?

Mike Kirby

reviews of social work pay and structures were needed - not exactly like the McCrone Report in Education but perhaps a range of initiatives to address deep seated problems.

And UNISON will use its voice to combat the demoralising 'blame culture' that pervades the press.

Crisis, what crisis?

Mike Kirby, UNISONScotland Convenor told the conference, "Vacancies are running as high as 25%, fewer people are coming through colleges and only one in ten want to go into children and families".

80% of staff were unqualified, wages had fallen behind dramatically and violence to staff was on the increase, especially in residential child care. Absences were higher than in all other areas.

Challenging those who question whether this was a 'crisis', Mike said, "In the dictionary a crisis is a time of danger... but another definition is a turning point".

The problems certainly pointed to a crisis but the initiatives the union could get involved in also offered a turning point.

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Run win for Salud ambulance

Anne McGinley, a UNISON steward in the Glasgow Health branch clutches her celebratory bottle after completing the Scottish Women's 10K run on 19 May.

Anne finished the course in one hour nine minutes, and was running to raise money to purchase a reconditioned ambulance for Cuba via Salud International.

Anne said, "I was pleased with my effort - both because it was the first time I have ever run a 10K and because it meant the amount I have raised for Salud went up to £450.

"If anyone else wants to assist me reach my target of £950 they can contact me at the UNISON Glasgow Health Branch Office, 2 Fitzroy Place, Glasgow G3 - 0141 243 2119."

For more details on Salud International, see www.unison-scotland.org.uk/salud.html

Catch up!

Scotland inUNISON comes out six times a year and this is our first issue after the summer (what summer?) - so a lot has happened.

● Conference

Conference reports are on the website at www.unison-scotland.org.uk/conf2002. If you don't have web access contact the editor (see back page).

● Local Govt strike

England, Wales and Northern Ireland local government members are being consulted on a two year pay offer of between 7.7% and 10.9% - in Scotland we won a four year deal in 2000 for about 14% which ends in 2004.

● Latest Submissions from UNISONScotland

* Gender Equality & Best Value Inquiry

* Scottish Higher Education Review Second Consultation

* Fire Service of the Future

* National Education Debate

see them at www.unison-scotland.org.uk/response/respons.html

● Latest Briefings

- Disability Leave Scheme

- Audit Scotland Report on PFI Schools

- Water Environment and

Water Services (Scotland) Bill

www.unison-scotland.org.uk/briefings/briefings.html

● Courses Coming Up

- Magazine Editors 25-27 October

- Handling the Media 13-15 December

- Building a Website - date to follow

Contact Chris Bartter for details 0870 7777 006

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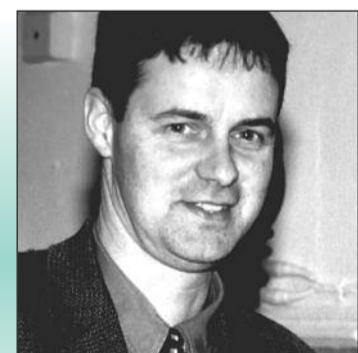
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We need to tackle pay head on

Stephen Smellie

to stress and workers leaving the job.

"We need to tackle pay head on", said Stephen Smellie, Local Government Group vice chair. The 'golden handshake' response by some authorities was only redistributing the problem, creating a vicious circle and sapping the morale of existing staff.

There was broad agreement that

Social Work crisis from page 1

Among the opportunities Mike listed was the CoSLA 'Recruitment and Retention' task group set up under Edinburgh Councillor Kingsley Thomas.

"This is an opportunity for us to pick up the issues with employers", said Mike.

We also need to influence the Action Plan for Social Services Workforce launched in April by Cathy Jamieson, Minister for Education and Young People - who has a social work background herself - with targets varying from nine weeks to nine months.

"We broadly welcomed this but we are concerned at the extent of the plan and the fact that it does not address pay", said Mike.

The nearest the plan gets to pay is 'an

'Are they going to new projects? No, they're going to Asda!'

economic study of the labour market of children's services'. This is welcome in part but Mike warned that it would only create further problems if they only target that area.

The plan also aims to improve access to training for experienced but unqualified staff.

"Many staff may not feel comfortable going straight into further or higher education and there is a role here for the Return To Learn initiatives", said Mike.

This was a key area, with many branches reporting inappropriate use of Social Work Assistants left carrying what was in effect a qualified worker's caseload.

Delegates also highlighted the problem of the pressure on core services already at breaking point as staff moved away to new more attractive - but time limited - projects funded by the Scottish Executive.

But pay remained central to the discussion. When asked by an employer whether people were moving away to new projects, Stephen Smellie noted "They're moving away to Asda". Astonishingly they can get more money there with less stress.

What branches must do

- Look out for the consultation and start the debate in branches - everyone agrees we need to move fast
- Get into discussion with employers about CoSLA task group and the Scottish Executive's action plan
- Feed back on problems and developments in your area
- Use local media to highlight the problems - contact your full time officer or Scottish Communications Officer Chris Barter (0870 7777 006) for help.

Social Work: Get ready for workforce regulation

Branches are being urged to get into talks with local employers on how they will implement new plans for registering the social work workforce.

This was another issue examined at the Social Work conference on 29 August (see front page) and the new legislation - while it is likely to phase in - will impact on all social

care staff at some point.

It makes demands on practitioners about standards but also on employers and it is essential branches look at the procedures closely - not least suggestions of 'probationary' periods.

Staff could be open to open and public disciplinary procedures, unlike current disciplinary procedures with employers and UNISON will have to

gear up for how it represents its members.

Branches need to be talking to employers now, not least about who will pay the registration fees. The conference was clear that these must be met by employers.

Employers will also have to improve access to training to meet the need of staff to evidence professional progress.

UNISONScotland launches grading pack for nursing staff

Grading deficiency is leading to nursing crisis

UNISON has launched a grading pack for Scottish nurses, midwives and health visitors - warning that low pay is leading to a care crisis.

UNISON has cited as evidence a briefing from the Director of Nursing at Lanarkshire Acute to his Board colleagues in which he says

"The situation is so serious at Monklands that curtailment of services may have to be considered".

"Recently UNISON launched a grading campaign for Scottish nurses." said Jim Devine, UNISON Scottish Organiser (Health). "We said many nurses were working at too low a grade throughout Scotland"

"We warned that this was leading to recruitment and retention problems and unless this issue was resolved, patient care could suffer.

Losing nurses

"Our campaign has been vindicated in a report to today's meeting of Lanarkshire Acute Trust by the Director of Nursing, Paul Wilson.

"In his paper, Paul Wilson states: 'To illustrate this we are losing D and E grades from accident and emergency, acute receiving and other critical care areas to F and G grades in NHS 24. Similarly we are losing Nurses whom we have trained over several years in chemotherapy to the centres in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

'The situation is particular-

Copies of the pack are available from UNISON House (address back page) and on the website at www.unison-scotland.org.uk/nursing In the first two weeks, over 90 visits were made to the pack pages.

ly acute at Monklands Hospital where there has been an 82% turnover of Nurses in the last 12 months but where the replacement staff are not skilled in chemotherapy and other techniques. The situation is so serious at Monklands that curtailment of services may have to be considered.'

"Similar concerns have been expressed by both Glasgow and Argyll and Clyde Health Boards. If the establishment of a relatively small, new

NHS facility is having this impact on three of Scotland's largest Health Boards then there are clearly major issues relating to the grading and subsequently the pay of nurses throughout Scotland.

"UNISON has written to the Scottish Health Minister asking for a review of all nursing grades in Scotland and asking to ensure that D Grade nurses only remain in post for six months and E Grade nurses in post for 18 months."

250 back in house at the Victoria

South Glasgow Hospitals NHS Trust will bring back in-house over 250 people employed by the private contractors who run cleaning, switchboard, catering and portering services in Glasgow's Victoria Infirmary by 1 November this year.

This will mean the contractor - Sodexo - leaving the contract before it is due to finish, and comes after decisions in principle from both North Glasgow, and the Primary Care Trust, to bring staff back in-house when private contracts end.

Matt McLaughlin, Regional Organiser for UNISON said:

"This is a great result for the workforce and their union. UNISON and its members have campaigned tirelessly to see this contract brought back in house.

"UNISON has worked in partnership with South Glasgow Hospitals NHS Trust to agree a business case for bringing the contract back, and the union will now start working with the Trust to improve our members pay and conditions. It is a clear indication that people across the NHS recognise that the best way of providing world class public services is by having an in-house team, not with a two-tier workforce".

Commenting on the last portering contract at the Southern General Hospital that now remains in the hands of the private sector within the Trust, Matt said,

"It's a pity that we are not in the position today to announce the complete and total end of the two tier workforce in South Glasgow's Hospitals.

"Sadly the Trust have not taken the steps to also return these valued employees. UNISON will continue to oppose privatisation in our public services, we'll be working to ensure that maximum pressure is brought to bear on South Glasgow NHS Trust and that the private contractor staff at the Southern get the same fair deal as we've announced here today"

As victory in Lothian is followed in Argyll and Clyde and Glasgow, UNISON tells Scottish Executive...

£5 an hour, its time has come

The latest victories in the Health Service, especially for a £5 an hour minimum wage, are a 'wake up call' to the Scottish Executive.

Following the **Lothian Acute** branch success reported in the last issue of *SIU*, there have now been victories in **Argyll and Clyde** and in the **Sodexho dispute at Glasgow Royal Infirmary**

Of the Argyll and Clyde deal, Jim Devine, UNISON Regional Organiser (Health) said, "After days of protracted negotiations, lasting well past midnight, we concluded a deal that will see many low-paid workers receive an increase in excess of £20 per week.

"The barriers against £5 an hour for Health Service Workers have now been ripped down in both Lothian and Argyll and Clyde Health Boards.

"This agreement is a wake-up call to the rest of the Scottish Health Service, that in the year 2002 £195 per week, at the top of your salary, is a reasonable reward for the vital job these staff do."

Glasgow Royal

On 15 August, members at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary celebrated victory after action won a £5 an hour minimum pay deal.

The hospital ancillary staff – including cleaners, caterers, domestics and porters – agreed to accept an offer made by Sodexho management following a day of negotiations.

The deal also included a phased return to former NHS terms and conditions of employment, guaranteed to take place by April 2004.

This includes increased sick pay and overtime rates and the introduction of a shift allowance and an extra public holiday.

Carolyn Leckie, UNISON Branch Secretary said, "This was a sweeping victory for trade union organisation. We balloted 222 and now have 342

members, well over 90% density and many new, but now invaluable, activists."

Frank Morgan, the Sodexho stewards' convenor, was ecstatic. "We've been kept down, exploited and bullied for profit for too long. Now that we've won, Sodexho will know they won't get away with it ever again."

Conditions scandal

Earlier in the month, Jim Devine had called on the Scottish Executive to introduce a £5 per hour minimum for healthcare staff.

While slamming low pay in the NHS, he pointed out that directly employed staff have sick pay, extra duty payments, and pension schemes.

"That is not the case in the private sector", said Jim. "If you work for ISS in Lanarkshire you 'enjoy' the following terms and conditions:

- £4.18 an hour for new starts doesn't change whether you work for the company for 5 or 20 years.
- No overtime payments.
- No shift enhancements
- No night shift allowance
- No additional payments for working weekends
- No bonus scheme
- Annual leave entitlement does not accrue with continuous service.
- Sick pay is accrued at the rate of one day per month – provided there has been no absence.
- No pension.

"Lothian Health Board, other Trusts and some private contractors have shown the way forward. A minimum of £5 an hour for a 39 hour week is not an unreasonable rate of pay for vital public Health Service workers.

"Therefore, I am writing to the Health Minister Malcolm Chisholm today asking him to instruct Trusts to help eradicate low pay in the NHS by paying at least £5 per hour", added Jim.

6 The barriers against £5 an hour for Health Service Workers have now been ripped down in both Lothian and Argyll and Clyde Health Boards.

This agreement is a wake-up call to the rest of the Scottish Health Service, that in the year 2002 £195 per week, at the top of your salary, is a reasonable reward for the vital job these staff do. 9

Jim Devine



UNISONScotland and SAMWU twin



UNISONScotland and the South African Municipal Workers Union met at National Conference in Bournemouth in June to formally sign and discuss twinning links.

Roger Ronnie, General Secretary, South African Municipal Workers Union and Lance Veotte, National Water Sector Co-ordinator, met Mike Kirby, Matt Smith, Stephanie Herd (Chair Scottish Local Govt Service Group Exec), Jean Anne Goodbrand (International Committee) and Katrina Purcell who will visit South Africa this year as part of the STUC Womens Committee visit.

As they met, Roger got news that SAMWU has resolved to embark on a national wage strike.

After three weeks of strikes, when sadly some strikers were killed, SAMWU won a deal on 19 July, including:

- A minimum wage of R2100
- An increase of 9% for workers earning between R2100 and R3200.
- An increase of 8% for those earning

above R3200.

- An increase of inflation + 1% for 2003/2004
- An increase of inflation + 1.5% for 2004/2005.
- An agreement to settle the medical aid dispute in August.
- An agreement to categorise municipalities within three months.

"This agreement is a victory for the mass of SAMWU members that went on strike," said SAMWU negotiator Dale Forbes.

"Just last week (8 July) Salga was refusing to talk to us. By Monday they forgot their stance as the continued pressure of our members began to take its toll.

"Not only did they come to the bargaining table but they were also prepared to consider SAMWU's demands for a minimum wage and for a higher increase for lower paid workers."

For more information see...

www.unison-scotland.org.uk/samwu

400,000 plus reasons to join UNISON Scotland

Personal Injury Settlements ranging from £400 to £84,000 were won by UNISON for members in Scotland in June and July. The total figure topped £412,000.

One of the cases was the important Glasgow Health case reported in the last *Scotland inUNISON*, but other cases came from across Scotland. Yet more examples to use when trying to convince potential members how important it is to join UNISON.

UNISONScotland's newest branch

July 23 saw the inaugural meeting of UNISONScotland's newest branch, reports **CHRIS BARTTER**.

The 250 or so members who work for the newly created Scottish Regulation of Care Branch set up their structures and elected office bearers including Paul Johnstone as the Chair and Catherine Hitchings as Branch Secretary.

The branch has been formed by and for staff working for both the Scottish Social Services Council and the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care, the new Social Work professional registration body and the commission that will set and ensure care standards.

A newsletter has already gone out and an organising training course is taking place for activists.

Key negotiators, including full-time official John Gallacher, have already been involved in discussions setting up Grievance, Disciplinary policies and service conditions such as travel and subsistence claims, car leasing.

In addition UNISON has been actively raising objections to attempts to sell members conditions short and making sure that the views of staff at all levels are heard.

UNISON Mela sponsorship celebrates diversity and all that's best in Scotland



The Roses turn to Bloom 
 a tribute to the Scottish internationalist and poet Hamish Henderson 

The late Hamish Henderson's celebrated anthem to freedom, peace and friendship - 'Freedom Cam A' Ye' - brought the house down at the UNISON sponsored 'The Roses Turn to Bloom' concert at the Edinburgh Mela last week.

A new arrangement by Colin Blakey tugged at the heart strings as verses were sung by Sheena Wellington and Bani Battacharya individually and as a duet, and by the full choir (Sangeet Mala).

The orchestra of pipes, horn section, guitar, keyboard, percussion, dhol, repenique, surdu, tambourim, timba and much more produced a stirring blend of Asian, Scottish and Caribbean flavours, building to a crescendo of sound and rhythm before finishing movingly with the voices

of Sheena and Bani Battacharya.

The audience wouldn't let them away with one rendition and they let their hair down dancing and clapping through the encore.

"The aim is to articulate in both musical and visual terms that this is truly and international anthem of Scotland, relevant to all the cultures that make up our increasingly wonderful diversity. It is celebration of Mela", said the programme notes - and they were right.

John Stevenson, Chair of its Scottish Communication and Campaigns Committee said:

"This was an ideal opportunity to celebrate all that's best in Scotland - its commitment to equality, its diversity and the host of cultures that enrich it. There is no better way to challenge the narrow racism that poisons those ideals."

The Edinburgh branch has always supported the Mela through advertising but this year the General Political Fund put in the lion's share of funding, with contributions from UNISON Scotland and the Edinburgh City Branch as part of the 'Positively Public' campaign.

"Public services are about people. They should be responsive to people's needs, offer complete equality of access and recognise the rich diversity in the communities they serve.

"This can only be done by public investment in quality services delivered by a properly trained and properly rewarded public service team", added John.

It is hoped that a video of the concert will be ready in time for the National Black Members Conference in Glasgow this November.

Education debate must include support staff

UNISON Scotland has warned that school support staff must be included in the National Education debate.

In an initial response to the Debate initiated by the Scottish Executive, UNISON points out that, although support staff have a key educational role, they appear to have been ignored in the Executive's introduction to the debate.

"UNISON members are involved in all aspects of education", said Joe Di Paola, UNISON Scottish Organiser for local government.

"Caring, protecting, assisting and directly teaching our kids. Yet both the pack and the video that introduce the National Debate ignore them. McCrone's proposals could mean increasing loads on support staff, and yet they are given fewer than their teaching colleagues."

The union's response details a number of initiatives that members are already involved in - including improving the status of Nursery Nurses; campaigning for Free School Meals; better conditions for term-time only staff and opposing the use of PFI to build and run new schools.

Joe Di Paola said:

"PFI aggravates the split between teaching and support staff. Breaking up the team by transferring a whole range of support staff to the private sector,

to employers whose motivation is profit - not education. It is also increasingly being exposed as an ineffective and inefficient use of public money."

See the full response at www.unison-scotland.org.uk/response/eddebate.html

The Future of the Left in Scotland

October 6 STUC Centre, Glasgow

This important conference will include contributors spanning the spectrum of the left in Scotland

Chris Bartter, UNISON's Communications Officer said: "This conference has really gathered all the main protagonists on the left - from Bill Speirs to Tommy Sheridan and from Vince Mills to Shona Robison. It seems possible that it could be a turning point for the left."

Organised by the Morning Star newspaper the conference will discuss the way forward for the left in Scotland and the involvement of trade unionists, nationalists and members of different political parties on the left.

Fees are £4.00 waged, £1.50 unwaged. Contact John Foster, 845 Govan Road G51 3DL for registration forms.

Scottish branches top Communications Awards

Renfrewshire Local Government Branch has won this year's UNISON Communication Awards for best newsletter in the UK.

John McNaughton picked up the prize of £500 on behalf of the branch and co-editor Aileen MacDonald at National Conference in June.

The judges described the magazine *UNISON Feedback* as a 'great achievement' and a credit to the branch and the union.

Runner up and winning £250 was another Scottish branch, **City of Edinburgh**, "an excellent example of a well-designed newsletter with lots of news". Editor John Stevenson picked up the award.

A Special Merit Award went to **South Lanarkshire's Branchline** edited by Jane Aitchison, especially for a 'clear and reader friendly table' explaining conditions changes to members.

Lothian Acute Health branch also lifted £50 for its "great email bulletin".

Also winning a £50 Merit Award was **Ayrshire & Arran Primary Care** (Ed. K. McLeod) particularly for its excellent contact details providing a "really good service to the



John McNaughton picks up his award from Bronwin McKenna

branch members".

Best Website

There was a double for John Stevenson when Edinburgh also picked up the best website award. The site was described as "a veteran site that has been re-designed" with a clean and simple design and lots of information. This is the second time John has won the award.

The Best Article Award was won by Leeds Branch for their excellent story "PFI, what do our Leeds MPs have to say", which was 'worthy of any professional publication'.

Has your branch got a newsletter or a website? If not, why not get started - contact John Stevenson at webmanager@unison-edinburgh.org.uk

Equality theme call for anniversary

by Hamid Rasheed
 Black members Committee

Scotland's Black Members Committee (SBMC) is calling for a celebration of UNISON's 10th Anniversary in style, by adopting 'equality' as the main theme.

In 2003, the anniversary marks the successful merger of the original three unions (COHSE, NUPE and NALGO), some 10 years ago.

These 10 years have seen many achievements that UNISON should be proud of. It is essential that, this anniversary should reflect these achievements and pave the way forward to build for the future. All celebrations should be fully integrated into the 2003 objectives of the union.

In particular this event should achieve:

- raising the union's profile
- improving recruitment
- providing a focus to build the union for the future
- providing opportunities for re-profiling existing 'unseen, unheard, unheralded' initiatives within the union

- thanking those who have helped build the union.



The SBMC also believes that one of greatest achievements for UNISON was the development of self-organised groups that many other unions are considering.

The Youth and Retired Members Committees are also part of our structures in recognition of the need to involve young members as well as the valued experiences of our retired members.

The SBMC, also, believe that it is important for the union to acknowledge this by adopting 'equality' as the main theme for all celebrations.

We want to hear your news

Won any deals or cases for members? Any 'people' stories we could use? *SiU* is your paper, we want to hear your stories. Your *SiU* contacts are: **John Stevenson (Editor) 0131 220 5655**
Chris Bartter 0870 7777 006,
FAX PRESS RELEASES to 0141-331-1203
 E-mail: comms@unison-edinburgh.org.uk