



ISSUE No. 20 SPRING 2009

voice @ work

Newsletter for UNISON Scotland's Community & Voluntary Sector members

IN MEMORY OF



**The lost jobs and
services in Scotland's
Voluntary Sector**

**Lobby of the Scottish Parliament
Tuesday 17th March 2009
11am Edinburgh**

YOUR ATTENDANCE IS REQUESTED



around the SECTOR



Voice@Work

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UNISON

**Scotland
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Sector
Committee**

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Death by a thousand cuts

Come along to the UNISON Voluntary Sector Lobby of Parliament – 17th March

UNISON members are being asked to get involved in a lobby of the Scottish Parliament on 17th March 2009. This is to coincide with the presentation in the afternoon of a petition on fair funding for the voluntary sector to the Petitions Committee of the Parliament.

The petition calls on the Scottish Government to agree to the Fair Funding Pact UNISON signed with other unions, the STUC and Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and Community Care Providers Scotland. The key demand of the pact from UNISON's point of view is that frontline staff in the community and voluntary sector should enjoy pay and conditions equal to those of public sector workers doing similar jobs.

The activities at the Parliament will start at 11.00 am with a procession outside the Parliament building. The theme of the day is 'death by a thousand cuts' so there are plans for a horse drawn funeral carriage to lead the march to highlight the many redundancies that have already taken place and the further dangers if funding is not improved to the sector. So please come along and join us wearing mourning black. Following the procession there will be a press conference and then a lobby of MSPs.

UNISON will be involved in hiring a room and laying on a buffet to attract MSPs so as we can speak to them

about the need to protect jobs and improve pay in the voluntary sector. We need members working in the sector to come along and buttonhole their own and other MSPs to tell them what is really going on on the ground.

“redundancies are now occurring on almost a weekly basis in the sector and it is typically the lowest paid providing services to the most vulnerable who are affected”.

*Simon Macfarlane,
Regional Organiser*

If you can come on the day it would be great if you could contact your MSPs to let them know you are coming and to say that you would like to discuss the issue with them. Remember you have a constituency MSP and six regional MSPs, the more you can contact the better. You can find your MSPs by entering your postcode under the MSP tab on the Parliament website: www.scottish.parliament.uk or by visiting your local library.

The formal presentation of evidence to the Petitions Committee will be at 2.00pm.

Stephen Brown, Vice Chair of the Scottish CVS Committee and Quarriers Branch Secretary, says of the lobby: “during a recession the demand for the services that we provide increases dramatically. It is important as many people as possible turnout at the Parliament, to say to the

Government that the sector needs to be paid the full cost of those services. Cuts in public funding just mean that the Community and Voluntary Sector suffer knock-on job cuts.”

Simon Macfarlane, UNISON Lead Officer for CVS said: “redundancies are now occurring on almost a weekly basis in the sector and it is typically the lowest paid providing services to the most vulnerable who are affected. The continuation of the Council Tax freeze will only accelerate this process. Our lobby and petition of the Scottish Parliament is about getting the message over that our CVS members can no longer be expected to subsidise the provision of public services through poverty wages and inferior conditions.”

So please get in touch if you can come along to our lobby so we can ensure you get smooth access to the Parliament. Please contact Robert Rae on 0141 342 2882 or r.rae@unison.co.uk to let him know you are coming.





Enable staff in pay action ballot

UNISON members working for Enable, the charity that works with people with learning disabilities, are to be balloted on strike action over pay.

The consultative ballot follows a 2 to 1 rejection of the employer's offer of a £300 rise for the lowest paid, plus a £100 non-consolidated payment. This works out at only 1.5% for many staff. Staff in Enable were due a pay rise from 1st October 2008, when inflation was running at 5%.

Last year UNISON lodged a claim for an increase of 5% or £1000, whichever is the greater, an extra day's holiday and an end to a system that pays people differently for doing the same job. In December 2008 Enable finally made their offer.

Speaking after Enable members rejected the offer, Simon Macfarlane, Regional Organiser for the CVS, said: "Our members are sick of receiving below inflation pay settlements from Enable and have clearly voted to reject this poor offer. These staff cannot continue to subsidise vital care and support to some of the most vulnerable in our community by poverty wages.

"This offer is simply unacceptable. It is clear from its overwhelming rejection that there is a level of anger and frustration amongst our members, even at a

time of economic uncertainty. We are recommending they vote 'Yes' in this ballot. Our members don't want to take action that will impact on people with learning disabilities, but they will if Enable force them in to it. Enable must get back round the table and make a more serious offer."

The union says there are other issues at stake too. Members are annoyed that if you look after someone in

"Our members are sick of receiving below inflation pay settlements from Enable and have clearly voted to reject this poor offer."

Simon Macfarlane

Simon MacFarlane added: "UNISON knows the funding pressures there are on the voluntary sector, and we are calling on employers to join with us when we lobby the Scottish Parliament for fair funding for the sector on 17th March."

Glasgow you get paid £6.67 an hour but if you look after someone in Bearsden you get paid £7.24, and urges an end to this geographical discrimination."

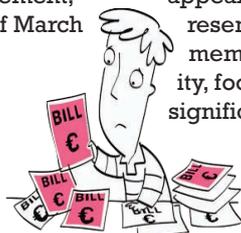


Mungo Foundation members gear up for pay claim

Members in the Mungo Foundation, a large provider of care and support services, are gearing up to submit their pay claim. They will shortly be consulted on the content of their pay claim following an 18th month settlement, which expires at the end of March 2009.

Alice Lyness, the UNISON Convenor in the Mungo Foundation, said: "the economic crisis is obviously a backdrop as is the fund-

ing pressures on organisations like the Mungo Foundation. However, our members, the vast majority of whom are low paid, will I am sure want to see a significant increase in their pay. The headline rates of inflation, which appears to be coming down, bears no resemblance to the reality our members experience. Gas, electricity, food and rents have all gone up significantly over the last year and continue to account for a far higher proportion of our income than before."



Service group structures

National Delegate Conference in June will include a debate on an issue of crucial importance to the community and voluntary sector: the paper *Bargaining structures in UNISON – proposals for the future*.

The paper arose out of a series of conference decisions, aimed at ensuring that the union's bargaining structures respond to the realities members are faced with. UNISON members in the voluntary sector (and other sectors such as further education) have for many years felt under-represented and denied a fair voice within the union's structures.

The paper followed consultation across the union, intended at coming up with proposals which would meet the challenge set – that bargaining around terms and conditions remain the union's primary objective, that each bargaining group is treated equally, that our existing structures could be built on, and that we are able to respond to further change in the future.

The paper proposes that sectors should be the key building blocks of the union – as they have responsibility for bargaining on pay and conditions.

It is proposed that service groups remain key bodies for policy-making across sectors, and that occupational groups be created so that work on common issues between sectors and service groups can flourish. A new 'Community' service group for community and voluntary members is proposed, with various sectors within that – including a housing association sector.

The National CVS Forum's view is that these proposals will meet the challenges posed, as we seek to ensure that each sector in the union receives an equal and fair voice, so that the union can best represent member's interests in their workplaces and employers.





around the workplace

UNISON calls on Includem to start talking

UNISON has written to Includem, a charity who work with vulnerable young people, saying that we are getting tired of waiting to talk. UNISON has an increasing number of members in this Scottish based voluntary organisation, yet so far the employer has refused to meet with UNISON to discuss voluntary recognition. UNISON has now written to Angela Morgan, Chief Executive, and Chair Professor Alec Spencer asking once again for a meeting. The letter also advises though that if they don't agree to this UNISON will pursue recognition via a ballot of staff using the statutory recognition procedures.

★ INCLUDEM ★



If you are a member in Includem please get in touch with Simon Macfarlane on s.macfarlane@unison.co.uk or call my Robert Rae on 0141 342 2882 or email him at r.rae@unison.co.uk .

Equal Say sign up to UNISON

Equal Say, a small advocacy project based in Glasgow, has signed a recognition agreement with UNISON. Management, the Board and UNISON have all recognised the benefit of having a structured relationship and a process via which to consult on and agree changes and developments. Members are now meeting to elect their first reps and will be holding their first negotiation and consultation meeting with management soon.

The employer recognizes the Union as the sole and exclusive bargaining agent, for the purpose of establishing wages, hours and conditions of employment.



Membership in SCIAF nears 50% tipping point

Over the last 18 months staff in the international aid charity Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund have been joining UNISON in increasing numbers. As Voice at Work goes to press UNISON is on the verge of recruiting the next member who will take the membership within the organisation to 50%. This is a significant figure as if a union has 50% of the workforce plus one they can use statutory procedures to gain automatic recognition.



UNISON has been trying to secure a voluntary agreement with SCIAF and progress has been made. However, UNISON has made it clear to SCIAF that we will use the statutory procedures if necessary. It is very much hoped though that in the next couple of months we will sign a voluntary recognition agreement.

North Edinburgh Trust and UNISON recognition

UNISON's local stewards have been beavering away behind the scenes, supporting the voluntary sector.

In North Edinburgh, a recognition agreement was achieved between the North Edinburgh Trust and UNISON, ensuring members had a fuller say in the projects planning and organisation.

UNISON Steward, Cammy Day, said: "The North Edinburgh Trust have been supportive in recognising the benefits of trade union recognition, both for members'

UNISON Scotland National community sector seminar

This month, Glasgow will welcome community and voluntary sector activists from across the UK, as UNISON's biennial national seminar for the sector comes to the city.

This is a crucial time for the sector, in every part of the UK. Organisations are seeing contracts change hands, funding from local authorities cut, and the effects of the economic downturn beginning to bite. For our members this may mean unsatisfactory pay increases, job instability and stress at work. UNISON has an important role to play in dealing with these problems, by organising workers locally and taking action politically. Delegates at the seminar will hear from speakers from the Scottish TUC and the Westminster Government before debating what needs to be done.

The seminar will also feature workshops and activities on a range of other important voluntary sector issues: the new proposals for safeguarding vulnerable children and adults, and how they affect our members; how stewards and members can challenge racism in their

interests, and for the project as a whole. If only other projects were so forward thinking".

Sadly Cameron also reports that in the North Edinburgh area CVS funding has just been savagely cut by the council, knocking over £800,000 out of local voluntary sector projects.

And that this will see the demise, if not destruction of, projects fought for by local grassroots campaigners, services closing, and local people losing their jobs.



health & safety
at work

id welcomes the nity and voluntary lar to Glasgow



"I am delighted to welcome our fellow workers from across the UK to Glasgow. We see this seminar as an acknowledgment of all the good work that has been undertaken by UNISON Scotland in organising across the community and voluntary sector".

Ian Williamson

workplace, working alongside employers; representing members' interests during that procurement and commissioning process; the new proposals around the union's service group structures; and trade union organising.

Perhaps most importantly, the seminar will give everyone an opportunity to meet other stewards from across the union, discussing their workplace concerns, sharing ideas about how to deal with them, and building UNISON's organisation in the community and voluntary sector.

Ian Williamson, chairperson of UNISON Scotland's Community & Voluntary Sector Committee, said: "I am delighted to welcome our fellow workers from across the UK to Glasgow. We see this seminar as an acknowledgment of all the good work that has been undertaken by UNISON Scotland in organising across the community and voluntary sector".

Workers Memorial Day 28th April



At 12 midday on Tuesday 28 April, UNISON staff across the UK will take part in a minute silence. Please join in and make this International Workers Memorial Day (IWMD) the most "remembered" so far. Speak to your employer about asking all staff to take part in a minutes' silence whilst at work.

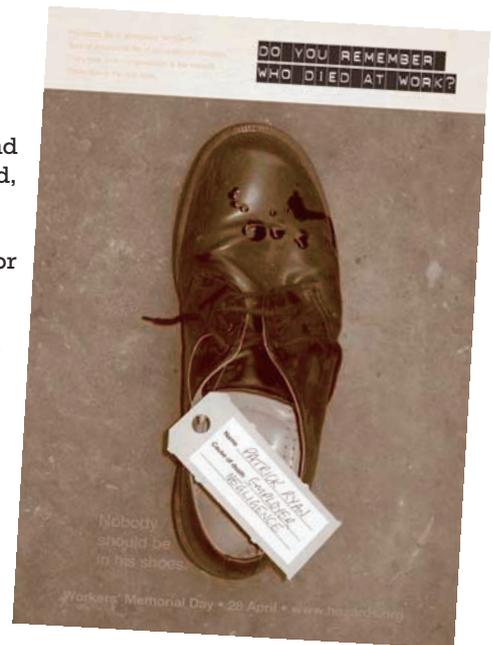
BACKGROUND

Each year IWMD is marked around the world to "Remember the Dead, and Fight for the Living". We remember those killed, made ill, or injured by their own or someone else's work - their pain and suffering and that of their families deserve not to be forgotten. And we renew our commitment to and demand once more, safe and healthy work for all.

This year is the third year of UNISON's campaign for IWMD to be formally recognised as a national day of remembrance. Far too many workers and their families suffer each and every year. The figures from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and which make the headlines never tell the full story.

So what is the full story? It is estimated that each year work incidents cause up to 1,600 deaths; including deaths to members of the public, work-related suicide, and road traffic accidents whilst driving for work. On top of this, it is estimated that there are up to 50,000 deaths from work-related illnesses including cancers, respiratory illnesses, and heart disease.

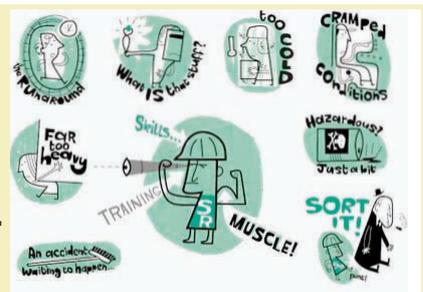
For more detail, see 'The Whole Story' on Safety and Health Practitioner (10.12.08) http://www.shponline.co.uk/article.asp?pagename=archive&article_id=8265



NOT ACCEPTABLE!
Society no-longer finds drink-driving or domestic violence acceptable. It's time for work-related ill-health, injury, and death to also become unacceptable rather than a tragic but accepted part of the world of work. Let's not forget that the HSE has stated in the past that about 70% of workplace "accidents" are due to the poor management of health and safety.

Do you have what it takes to become a UNISON Health & Safety rep?

If you believe you do we would like to hear from you. Contact details page 2.





**health & safety
at work**



Research on what's best for baby

Women who stop working a month or more before their babies are due are four times less likely to have a caesarean, says new research.



The findings, published in Women's Health Issues journal in January, attributes low rates to women being less tired and anxious.

Women who took six weeks or less off work after giving birth are four times more likely to be unable to establish a breast-feeding routine, according to another study by the same author, Dr Sylvia Guendelman of the University of California, and published in Paediatrics journal.

Women who take less than 12 weeks off are twice as likely to be unsuccessful in breastfeeding, the study says.

Staff worry over sick leave

British workers are afraid to take time off sick, despite having one of the lowest sickness absence rates in Europe.

Minster Law Solicitors found that four in 10 (42%) workers in Britain are worried about taking sick leave because they are afraid it will jeopardise their jobs. Two-thirds (64%) have serious concerns about the unstable job climate and would be prepared to forgo their basic rights to avoid risking their job security.

Matthew Briggs, chief executive of Minster Law Solicitors, said: "It is clearly an unsettling time and our research reveals that a large number are feeling under pressure to really go the extra mile to ensure they keep their jobs. However, it is worrying that they are prepared to forgo basic employment rights in order to do this."

The research coincided with the publication of Mercer's 2008 Pan-European health and benefits survey, which revealed that UK workers are low down the list of European countries for sickness absence. Its survey of companies across 24 European countries found that the average European employee absence rate was 7.4 days a year.

Bulgaria had the highest rates of absence, followed by Portugal and Norway. Turkey reported the lowest rate. The UK and Spain also had rates below the average.

Three-quarters (73%) of total lost working time was due to short, frequent absences (usually fewer than eight days) and a quarter (27%) was due to long-term disabilities.

GIVE US YOUR NEWS AND VIEWS

'Voice@work' is your newsletter. To make it more representative of members, we need your input! Why not write a letter, an article or give us your views of any issues that you feel we should be addressing. Alternatively, have we printed something that you disagree with? Get in touch!

Email: r.rae@unison.co.uk
 ☎ 0845 355 0845

Campaign for a maximum temperature at work

Every year, UNISON members and other workers across the UK suffer from having to work in too hot an environment indoors.

The TUC plans to progress the campaign for a legal maximum temperature at work indoors. Can you help?

You can support a legal maximum temperature at work by signing the petition at: <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/workinghot>.



New Health and Safety Act

The Health and Safety Offences Act 2008 came into force on 16 January 2009, increasing penalties and providing the courts with greater sentencing powers for those who break health and safety law.

Unions have welcomed the new law. Hugh Robertson, TUC head of safety, said it was "long-overdue" but warned that "it will only be effective if courts start imposing realistic fines for health and

safety offences." He argued that for many offences there was already an unlimited fine yet last year the average fine for a prosecution taken by the HSE was £12,896 and by a local authority, £7,663.

He added: "Courts must use their new powers to ensure that fines are more realistic and reflect the serious nature of these offences."



Beat the banks and the credit crunch, Join a Credit Union

Credit unions are financial co-operatives owned and controlled by their members. They offer savings and great value loans plus they are local, ethical and know what their members want.

Each credit union has a "common bond" which determines who can join it. The common bond may be for people living or working in the same area, people working for the same employer or people who belong to the same association, such as a church or trade union.



How do credit unions work?

The members of a credit union pool their savings together; these savings then provide a pool of funds from which loans can be made.

A credit union depends greatly on building savings and must therefore pay savers a return on their money (this is known as an annual dividend). The money rented from members is lent out to other members, who pay interest on the money loaned to them.

The credit union must be successful in attracting a sufficiently large number of savers to enable it to have a sufficient liquidity level to enable it to meet its members' demands for loans, share withdrawals and to pay operating expenses. It must therefore aim to give its savers a good return on their savings. The dividend payment to savers and the credit union's operating costs have to be met out of the credit union's profits.

It is therefore very important for credit unions to actively market the benefits of saving with the credit union, as well as the availability of loans. The main source of income for a credit union comes from the interest charged on members' loans.

Who runs the credit union?

The credit union is managed and controlled by a volunteer Board of Directors. All officers of the credit union are members of the credit union, who are elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting. All members of the credit union have one vote; regardless of the size of their savings.

Whilst some credit unions may employ staff to manage the credit union on a day to day basis, control lays firmly within the hands of the members – through their elected representatives, the Board of Directors.

What else is good about credit unions?

- credit unions have lower operating costs and overheads.
- profits are returned directly to the members not third party shareholders and therefore remain in the community.
- the common bond produces a form of "customer loyalty".
- credit unions provide a friendly and local service.

Scotland's voluntary sector has its own credit union - the SCVO Credit Union, many employers provide a payroll deduction to make it easier to save. Call the SCVO Credit Union for an application form today!

☎ 0131 474 8003

email: credit.union@scvo.org

Webpage:

www.scvo.org.uk/creditunion

Additional information about credit unions

An auditor carries out an annual inspection of the credit union's business. The credit union

away from
work

Rants & Rhymes

by UNISON Crossroads member

Christina Quarrell



It is worth remembering at this time of winter cold that Glasgow can also be a very warm city. This poem was inspired by the summer 05 heat wave.

10th July 2005

Glasgow impersonates Roma
temperature percolating at 31 centigrade
the jumper brigade shed
porridge grey bodies turn deep pink
fountains of water appear all over the
city
instant architecture
courtesy of the young proletariat
spontaneous garden parties erupt
alcohol & ice cream sales soar
chip shops are busy
bus's a nightmare
everyone talking about how they hope
the weather lasts
glasgow airport plans for 150,000 people
to be flown out to the sun over the fair
weekend

Ciao! Bella!

is required by law to maintain an insurance policy (fidelity bond) to protect the credit union against fraud or theft.

Members of credit unions with savings are **protected by the Financial Services and Compensation Scheme**. The FSCS is a safety net for customers of financial firms – **all savers with credit unions have 100% protection** from the FSCS for the first £50,000 of their savings. **This is the same level of protection that customers of banks and building societies enjoy.**



Q: Can you be imprisoned in the United States for opposing terrorism?

A: Her husband is.

Adriana Pérez has not seen her husband Gerardo Hernández for 10 years. Gerardo is one of five Cubans imprisoned by the US government in 1998.



Their crime?

Collecting and passing on to the FBI information on Miami based terrorists planning violent attacks against Cuba.

Their punishment?

Unfair trial, solitary confinement, life sentences, and denial of family visiting rights.

Jailed for fighting terrorism

For almost 50 years, Miami based terrorist groups have targeted Cuba. Nearly 3,500 people have died in attacks, including the 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner killing all 73 passengers.

To protect lives, five Cubans infiltrated these groups to gather evidence on future attacks.

This information was given to the US government, but rather than arrest the terrorists, the FBI used it to identify and arrest the five Cubans in Miami on 12 September 1998.

In 2001 they received severe sentences ranging from 15 years to double life on charges including conspiracy to commit espionage.

Unfair trial

A United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has declared the imprisonment of the Miami Five as "illegal and arbitrary."

Amnesty International has described their treatment as "unnecessarily punitive and contrary to both standards for the humane treatment of prisoners and to states' obligation to protect family life."

Families torn apart

For more than eight years the US Government has denied two of the wives visas to visit their husbands. Other family members see their loved ones less than once a year as a direct result of US visa restrictions.



The Cuban 5 are: Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, René González Sehwerert, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez and Fernando González Llort.

Visiting rights now

On the 10th anniversary of their arrests condemnation of the inhumane treatment of the five and their families is growing worldwide. Please join with us and add your voice today.

Sign the petition calling for justice for the Five and their families.

Make a donation to help the campaign for their freedom.

www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/miami5

☎ 0208 800 0155



CHANGE YOUR DETAILS ONLINE

- Moved house? Changed your name? Moved jobs?
- Need a new membership card? Retired?
- Got a question about your subscription?

You can make all these changes and queries quickly and easily online at: www.unison.org.uk/help

☎ **0845 355 0845**

