



No. 26

September 2011 (2)

## Vote YES to protect your pension

Following the Scottish Spending Review the position on public sector pensions in Scotland is somewhat clearer. Scottish Ministers will impose 50% pension contribution increases for NHS staff because the UK Government will dock their budget if they don't. There are no similar consequences for staff covered by the Local Government Pension Scheme so they have decided not to impose increases on them.

Pension contributions are of course only part of the attack on our members pensions. These attacks are not because your pension scheme is unaffordable, or even because people are living longer – it's to pay for the deficit caused by an irresponsible banking system.

### **That's why we're asking you to vote for strike action to protect your pension.**

UK ministers have already cut the value of your pension when you retire by around 15% by changing the way inflation is measured from RPI to CPI.

On the Hutton recommendations, Scottish Ministers have not given us clear assurances that other changes will not happen in Scotland. These include:

- Working longer so that by 2020 you'll need to be 66 to collect your pension – and this is going to rise to 68 later.
- Changing the way pension benefits are calculated so you will get a smaller pension on retirement.

UNISON is also concerned that UK Ministers could use their budgetary powers and/or UK legislation to force changes to your pension in Scotland. This is implied in a recent letter from Treasury Minister Danny Alexander to Scottish Ministers.

These changes affect NHS staff, council workers, SEPA and other NDPBs, Scottish Water, police staffs, school workers, members in the community and voluntary sector, people working in higher and further education – and many more. These are the very same public service workers suffering a pay freeze, redundancies, cuts in pay and conditions and cuts in the services they deliver. This attack on your pension is the final straw. We need to take a stand across the UK to say enough is enough.

A big YES vote will give UNISON the power to plan a campaign of industrial action, leading off with a one-day strike on 30 November. A big YES vote will mean that together we can campaign to put pressure on ministers to think again.

So make sure you vote – and vote YES. And urge your colleagues in UNISON to do the same. And if they're not in UNISON, get them to join – together we are stronger, together we can win.

## Pensions Ballot Materials

Vote YES leaflets and posters for health branches are now available and supplies have been sent direct to branches. They can also be downloaded at:

Vote Yes leaflet: <http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/20352.pdf>

Vote Yes poster: <http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/20354.pdf>

There is a separate leaflet for branches with members in the Scottish Local Government Pension Scheme (see attached). Bulk supplies will be available at a special meeting of the Scottish Council on 5 October in Glasgow. All Branch Pension Champions are invited to attend this meeting. An e.version will be available for downloading off the pensions page on the UNISON Scotland web site. Further materials will be available next week.

Branches producing their own newsletters can use the same words as used in this Bulletin and attached materials.



### More information at:

Scottish Pension Web Pages: <http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/pensions/index.html>

UK Campaign Web Pages: <http://www.unison.org.uk/pensions/protectour.asp>

Advice on Pensions: <http://www.unison.org.uk/pensions/index.asp>

#### Contacts:

Dave Watson, Scottish Organiser: [d.watson@unison.co.uk](mailto:d.watson@unison.co.uk)

Malcolm Burns, IDO: [m.burns@unison.co.uk](mailto:m.burns@unison.co.uk)