

Happy festive season to all our members ...especially to those delivering services over the holiday



★ **Morning Star**
Morning Star editor Richard Bagley launches first Scottish edition p3

Stronger Together campaign across Scotland p2



PUBLIC WORKS:

a million voices for public services

December 2012 No. 99

Scotland in UNISON

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

Organising for a better and fairer Scotland

by John Stevenson
SiU Editor

Scottish Secretary Mike Kirby has outlined UNISON's organising priorities for 2013 for a better, fairer Scotland.

Introducing a major debate at December's meeting of Scottish branches, Mike called for a renewed campaign against austerity and continued work on recruitment and organising.

He also laid out UNISON's demands on public services, rights at work, jobs, the economy and equality that must underpin the debate on Scotland's future.

He called on the government to ditch its failed austerity measures and 'throw a lifeline to Scotland'.

There was a real alternative to the cuts.

"UNISON has identified billions of pounds that could be used to provide an alternative to drastic public spending cuts that have vandalised our public services, devastated communities and laid waste to our economy", Mike told delegates. *Turn to page 3*



‘The cuts we are facing are not about austerity measures to meet an economic problem, but about politics.’

A politics that hates public services and loves to profit from privatisation. A politics that sees a workforce engaged in caring and educating not as an achievement to be celebrated but as a problem to be tackled.’ *Mike Kirby*

WE WARNED THEM And we were right! Spread the Word

In late 2010, Scotland inUNISON exploded the myths about government policies and warned they would make things worse, not better.

Sadly, as the government blazes on with cut after cut, we have been proved right on every warning.

As UNISON's Scottish Council calls for co-ordinated industrial action against the cuts (see page 3), it is time to spread the word again and remind everyone why austerity is not working.

We warned them... their cuts would bring a double-dip recession

Lo and behold we got a double-dip recession. Worse still, only hours after chancellor Osborne's 'autumn statement', experts were warning of a triple-dip recession (*Guardian 5 Dec*).

We warned them... cutting public services would not boost the private sector

Unemployment is growing to over 8% (Office for Budget Responsibility). 1.1 million public sector jobs will go by 2018. The claimed rise in private sector jobs is a big fib with public sector jobs like further education and sixth form corporations being 're-classified' as private sector jobs. And what about jobs just transferred from the public to private sector through privatisation? The number of people 'under-employed', stuck in part time work, is up a million.

We warned them... we are not all in this together. We suffer while the rich carry on regardless

The poorest fifth of people pay more in tax, as a proportion of income, than the richest fifth. Proportionately the poorest 20% will lose more than the richest 20% from the Chancellor's autumn statement. Inequality is now at its worse since the Second World War.

Local government 1% and Living Wage offer

Local Government Employers have made an offer of 1% from 1 April 2013. If after the 1% is applied, there are staff who fall below the 'Living Wage', this will be brought up to £7.50 an hour from 1 April 2013.

The offer also calls for a 'working party' on pay

for 2014/15 and on 'flexible and adaptable' working practices.

"While the Living Wage elements is welcome, the offer falls below what is needed to keep pace with inflation. Local Government workers have gone through a pay freeze at a time when inflation averaged 5%, food prices

have been going up by 7% a year and energy prices by 15%", said UNISON Local Government Chair Stephanie Herd

The offer was made outside the normal bargaining procedures and negotiators will seek to open proper negotiations and consult members via a ballot in January 2013.



Stephanie Herd

They will return to a recall conference of branches on 11 January to report on progress.

Earth Hour

23 March 2013

Earth Hour 2013 takes place on Saturday 23 March 2013, from 8.30pm.

UNISON Scotland supports WWF's annual event that sees hundreds of millions of people turning off their lights for one hour all across the planet.

Iconic landmarks are also plunged into darkness as part of Earth Hour, which highlights the need for action on climate change.

Branches can find ideas for local action in the toolkit from 2012 at http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/wwf_unison_toolkit_2012.pdf

Dundee move



Dundee City Branch has moved to a new office in the City's Castle Street, reports Margaret McGuire.

After being in Whitehall Crescent since 1977 we felt it was time to move to more accessible premises. Our new offices, Room 2, Floor 3, 11 Castle Street are exactly that. No more trekking up three flights of stairs. Now anyone can visit as we have lift access to the office.

The branch held an official opening on 2 November. UNISON Scottish Secretary Mike Kirby performed the opening and UK Vice President Maureen le Marinel (pictured) said a few words. Our thanks to both of them for attending.

We hope to hold an open day in January 2013 so our members can visit and see where we are now.

New office, new branch

After nearly 16 years, the Strathclyde Police and Fire Branch Office is moving from St Enoch Square, Glasgow to brand new premises in Sycamore House, 290 Bath St, Glasgow reports Stephen Diamond.

Complicating matters was the fact that the new Scottish Branch was coming into play in April 2014. The Branch won unanimous approval from colleagues in other branches to have the headquarters of UNISON Police Staff Scotland in Glasgow after a presentation to the 'All Activists' meeting in August.

The move to the new office was completed on 21 November with little fuss and thanks to the excellent organisational skills of the Deputy Branch Secretary, Norma Mackenzie!

Raymond Brown, Branch Secretary said: "The new premises promise to be an asset to the new branch when it comes into being. We have planned the space to be flexible to accommodate day to day business, branch meetings and training.

"With the use of electronic systems such as Skype, stewards from all over the country will be able to participate in meetings without the time and expense of travelling."

Keeping Stronger Together

Branches are still working hard on the Stronger Together organising and recruitment campaign.

It is not a one-off and branches are urged to keep going. We are recruiting but it is against a backdrop of jobs being lost in the public sector. That means, even more effort and imagination needs to be put in.

Recent activity saw UNISON

Grampian resource centre staff and new stewards from Grampian Police, Aberdeen Universities, Moray and Aberdeenshire branches rally round the Ad Trailer on its marathon journey around the area.

Aberdeenshire Branch members can win a dinner, bed and breakfast prize for spotting the adverts.

The Ayr/Prestwick bus has been sporting the UNISON advert, as has a bus shelter in Dumbarton.



Domestic staff members at Chalmers Hospital, Banff

Fix the 'Polishambles'

UNISON has called for the Scottish government to end the 'Polishambles' of police reorganisation and commit to a balanced police service which will better serve our communities.

George McIrvine, chair of UNISON's Scottish Police Committee, said: "The latest twist in the 'Polishambles' that is the new centralised police service is the public dispute between Chief Constable Stephen House and Vic Emery, the chairman of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA), over who should have day-to-day control over human resources and finance."

"The sooner the government acts to resolve this dispute - and commits to a balanced police service, rather than massive jobs cuts for police staff - the better our communities will be served."

Dave Watson, UNISON's Head of Bargaining and Campaigns, said: "Having botched the legislation the Scottish Government needs to resolve the mess they created.

"While we have had our differences with Steve House over his views on civilianisation, it simply isn't



Golden Jubilee Hospital victory

UNISON theatre staff members at Golden Jubilee National Hospital (GJNH) in Clydebank celebrate after winning a two year long dispute.

The grievance was at risk of being transferred to the Employment Tribunal after the employers withdrew a local allowance. Area Organiser Jennifer McCarey said: "This is a great result which delivers for those staff who stuck with UNISON and were prepared to raise grievances locally.

UNISON steward Anne Sinclair said: "Once again UNISON has shown why it is the biggest and best union on this site and across the NHS in Scotland."

credible to ask him to run the service when key functions are directed elsewhere."

"The wider lesson for government is that it is better to listen more carefully to the views of those who understand the services they are reorganising. 'I told you so' may give a certain level of satisfaction, but I would rather we didn't get into this 'Polishambles' in the first place."

Napier boss's offer is nothing like a fair Christmas bonus

UNISON members at Edinburgh's Napier University have criticised a Christmas bonus proposed by the principal on the grounds that it is "unfair and unworthy".

Cleaners and portering staff would receive less than £80 compared with the bumper gift of over a thousand pounds which Professor Dame Joan Stringer would be awarding herself.

UNISON Regional Organiser Emma Phillips said: "The principal's Christmas message tells all staff they have provided valued work to help achieve success for the university. Yet the unusual 'special payment' she proposes is a 'one off payment of 0.5% of your annual salary plus £100 (pro-rated for part time staff)'.

Marilyn Philip, UNISON branch chair at Napier University, said: "We believe that this Christmas offer is unfair and unworthy. A fairer way to do use the resources would be to give all staff the same amount instead of a 0.5% one off payment.

"There might be nothing like a Dame - but this is nothing like a fair Christmas bonus."

SOCIAL WORK ISSUES GROUP

Social care: Increase standards, not cuts

by Kate Ramsden
Comms & Campaigns Cttee

Self directed support should be based on the needs of the service user and should not be used to make cuts.

UNISON Scotland's clear position was restated by members of its Social Work Issues Group (SWG) when it met in November, just as the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Bill was passed into law.

Stephen Smellie, who chairs the meeting said: "Self directed support should be about improving choice for the service user based on a proper assessment of their needs, but some councils have already set targets for savings.

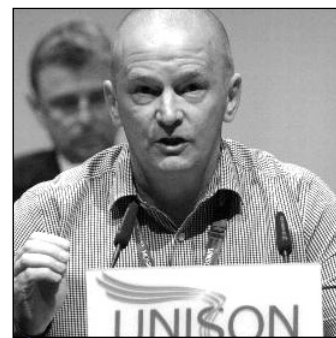
"We will be asking branches to keep an eye on what is happening in their area and to report this back to us."

Some SWIG members had come across situations where their social work members had been put under pressure to change their assessments to a cheaper package of care.

"Social workers should not be pressurised into signing off assessments that are not based on needs and should seek UNISON support if they feel they are being put in this position," added Stephen.

On a related matter, Lynne Rankin has been appointed to identify, recruit and organise amongst Personal Assistants - those workers who have been employed by service users through direct payments to support and care for them.

The 11 month post has been funded from UNISON's Fighting Fund. Lynne will concentrate on the Glasgow, North and South Lanarkshire and the Inverclyde areas to begin with.



UNISON will be asking councils to sign up to our Ethical Care Charter' John McLaughlin

Ethical Care Charter

SWG members welcomed UNISON's Ethical Care Charter for Home Care which sets out a minimum baseline for safety, quality and dignity of care by ensuring employment conditions which do not routinely short-change clients.

UNISON Scotland will be

holding a conference in the new year to extend the charter across Scottish social work services.

John McLaughlin, UNISON Scotland's representative on the National Home Care Forum said: "The Charter is based on the concerns of home carers across the UK who are worried that they no longer have the time they need to spend with vulnerable people and that there is often no continuity of care.

"Rather than councils seeking to achieve savings by driving down the pay and conditions that have been the norm for council-employed staff, they should be using the charter as a benchmark against which to level up.

"UNISON will be asking councils to sign up to the Charter and will regularly publish the names of councils who do." The Charter is at www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/21188.pdf

Austerity is the road to disaster

It is yet more evidence that austerity is hurting but has no chance of working. That was UNISON Scotland's response to George Osborne's Autumn Statement.

Only a few days earlier at the union's meeting of Scottish branches, leaders from each of the services UNISON organises told of the challenges they are facing.

With so much in common, the focus was on how we could support each other in these individual struggles.

Scottish Secretary Mike Kirby listed the damage being done to public services and the whole economy.

"Half a million jobs have been lost in the public services. 30,000 in Scotland since the economic crisis began and another 250,000 more will go as we're only quarter way through government's measures", he

told delegates.

He slammed the 'ticking bomb' of youth unemployment, the £50 million cut coming from college mergers and the starving of the voluntary and community sector.

Local councils continue to see their budgets squeezed while demand for services is steadily rising. Finances and welfare reform are two big issues facing all local authorities.

"In Health there is clearly a decline in nursing staff numbers", said Mike.

"While overall the Scottish Government is claiming a 4,000 increase in staff, that's not how it feels to people on the ground."

"With the reports of pressure because of staffing



North Lanarkshire UNISON's Marie Quigley addresses a rally against the council's £73 million cuts plans on 6 December. Scottish Secretary Mike Kirby warned that the union would consult on action in the event of any compulsory redundancies. Councillors decided to delay their decision.

levels, non-filling of posts and just general pressure and lack of goodwill, it is hardly the best background for a major upheaval involving the integration of health and social care".

Turning to pay, Mike said: "Wages have dived far below the freezing point and public service workers are being

frozen out from real pay rises for years into the future. The pensions tax of 3% which faces many of our members adds an extra burden."

One bright spot was that some colleagues in Utilities have scored fair deals but others will be balloted on action in the New Year.

"Promising still more austerity is not the answer to our growing economic and social problems. It is pure and dangerous ideological malice", added Mike.

"The Chancellor stood up and told us we were on the right track, and that turning back would be a disaster.

"The truth – as shown by his record of multiple recession, mass unemployment and a massive attack on public services – is that the ConDem austerity plan has already been a disaster."

Call for 'co-ordinated action' to fight cuts



UNISON's Scottish Council has voted to call on the STUC to co-ordinate Scotland-wide industrial action against the cuts.

As part of the campaign, it also called for a strategy with unions across the economy to build for a 24 hour stoppage.

With 80% of the government's cuts still to come and austerity to go on until 2018 at least, delegates agreed that the time had come to build for action to defend services and living standards.

No-one was in any doubt that there was a huge amount of work to be done to bring members together in such an action but with issues like pay, job losses, pensions and attacks on conditions affecting members in all services, the opportunity was there to co-ordinate action to make it more effective.

UNISON welcomes first Scottish Morning Star

by Malcolm Burns
Joint Communications Officer

The first ever Scottish edition of the Morning Star hit the streets as UNISON welcomed editor Richard Bagley to its Scottish Council of branches on 1 December.

The edition was again met with acclaim at a festive launch event in Glasgow that night.



Speaking at the event, jointly organised by the Star's Scottish Campaigns Committee and the Scottish Co-op Party, Richard Bagley told supporters: "The goal is to produce a regular Scottish edition of the Morning Star in 2013.

He said the paper needs more Scottish reporting and needs to invest in quality Scottish journalism to expose rogue employers and practices.

"But we need several hundred more sales a day to be able to make the next leap."

He outlined the Star's plan to launch a shares drive in the new year and urged occasional readers to take an active role in shaping the Morning Star through local readers and supporters networks.

Representatives from the Scottish TUC and trade unions lined up to congratulate the paper on its first Scottish edition.

Unite Scottish secretary Pat Rafferty said: "Our union looks forward to welcoming future weekly and daily Scottish editions which will report on the campaigns our members are waging against austerity and to secure a decent society."

Scottish Co-operative Party chairwoman Mary Lockhart said the Star's unique ownership model was key to a successful future.

"It is not an accident that the co-operatively owned Morning Star is the only daily paper which represents the truth as workers would see it," she said.

And GMB Scotland political officer Richard Leonard won applause with a rousing final speech in which he looked back at the Star's origins as the Daily Worker, his own early contributions to the paper 20 years ago, and to the future.

"Today's excellent Scottish edition of the Morning Star is only the beginning."

● If you are finding it hard to get your copy of the Morning Star, you can ask any newsagent to order it. They have nothing to lose. Why not also get your branch to take out a subscription or order copies for activists?

Cuts are about politics not economics

From Page 1

"This funding would help save services, put people back to work, increase the taxes paid to the Treasury, boost consumer spending power and reduce unnecessary spending on benefits", added Mike Kirby.

The cuts we are facing, in Lanarkshire and across the UK, are not about austerity

measures to meet an economic problem, but about politics.

"A politics that hates public services and loves to profit from privatisation.

"A politics that sees a workforce engaged in caring and educating not as an achievement to be celebrated but as a problem to be tackled.

"Why should the jobs and services go if the need still

exists?" asked Mike.

The Scottish Government allocation has severely constrained local authorities.

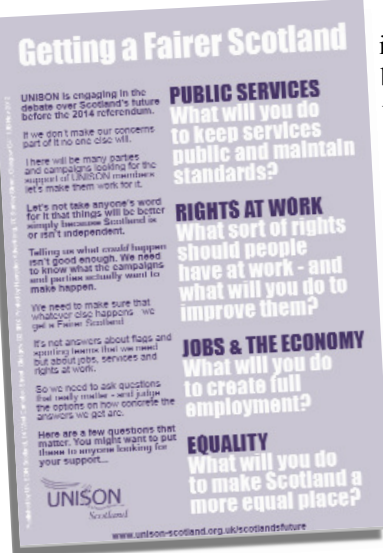
However the Scottish Government does have a choice - it may be a difficult choice, it may be a very expensive choice, but it is their choice nonetheless, and it could remove the council tax freeze.

'Match our vision for a Fairer Scotland' UNISON issues referendum challenge

UNISON Scotland has issued a challenge to campaigners in the independence referendum with the launch of 'For a Fairer Scotland' – a document outlining the union's priorities in the debate on the constitution.

The union will urge both sides of the debate to answer questions about how their scheme will match the aspirations and vision of UNISON members.

Alongside this, the union has framed questions that members will be encouraged to put to all those campaigning around the referendum in the coming months.



Launching the booklet, UNISON Scottish Secretary Mike Kirby said:

"UNISON's approach to constitutional questions is one that is driven by the

interests of our members, by the sort of Scotland we want to, and deserve to, live in."

"This means that for us precise constitutional arrangements are the end, not the starting point of the debate.

"We must first define the sort of Scotland we wish to see and then try and examine the likelihood of differing constitutional arrangements on offer to deliver on that vision.

"We are not interested in an argument about national identity. It's not where the power lies, but in whose interest that power is exercised that really

matters."

"Today we have outlined our principles for a better, fairer Scotland.

"It is the task of others to show how their proposals match up to those principles", he added.

Lilian Macer, Scottish Convener, said: "What we are looking for is a willingness to tackle inequalities, poor health and deprivation. Doing that is social change. Unless it is explained how this is to be achieved, arguments for or against constitutional change mean very little."

The full document and the questions leaflet are on the website at www.unison-scotland.org.uk/scotlandsfuture

Victory from standing together at Stow

UNISON action has stopped further job cuts and changes to working hours of canteen staff employed by a private contractor at Stow College.

It means students and workers will have a full canteen service for the whole academic year. Facilities management company Elior have also said they will talk to UNISON about recognition.

Shortly after Elior's takeover of the service last year, the company claimed

they needed to make at least £40,000 annual savings to ensure a profit - a figure which UNISON had long questioned from the days when the service was in-house.

Elior offered voluntary severance and two workers took this up. It then claimed the savings were not enough and moved towards compulsory redundancies and cuts to contracted hours of up to six weeks, meaning a loss of £500 to £1,000 for members and the closure of

the service for part of the academic year.

Brian Smith, Glasgow UNISON Branch Secretary, said: "Members voted time and again not to engage with the employer in concession bargaining to cut hours or more jobs. This was a brave decision as Elior was refusing to recognise UNISON and members were being pulled into one-to-one meetings".

UNISON stewards and members raised the issue with college management, gained support from the other unions

and worked with the students to put pressure on Elior. Members voted to take industrial action if any compulsory measures were used.

UNISON also looked to the UK employment laws to gain union recognition and asked ACAS to intervene on the matter of recognition.

"It shows that if workers stand together that attacks can be pushed back. Well done to the UNISON members and the local UNISON stewards", added Brian.

College merger £50million hole



UNISON Scotland has warned of more job losses and college course cuts as a result of Scottish Government college merger plans.

Chris Greenshields, chair of UNISON's Further Education Committee, said following publication of the Post-16 Education Bill: "Where does the Minister plan to find the £50 million savings as a result of mergers? Is it from more job losses and cuts to key services for our students?"

"We have already witnessed this year services for college students stretched to breaking point, with many concerned that they still won't have student grants and loans in their banks before Christmas, after starting in August."

UNISON members have been taking action. There has already been a day of action across Scotland and many individual lobbies and petitions over mergers and cuts and further campaigning is planned.

Chris added: "We are also very disappointed that, despite the Minister stating that he was keen to ensure that unions are fully involved, there is no place for union representation on the new regional boards. Staff representatives are of course welcome, but they perform a very different role from that of a union rep."

2013 UNISON LEARNING PROGRAMME LAUNCHED

'No greater honour than representing working people'

by John Stevenson
SiU Editor

UNISON Scotland has launched its 2013 learning programme with the focus firmly on providing the tools for organising.

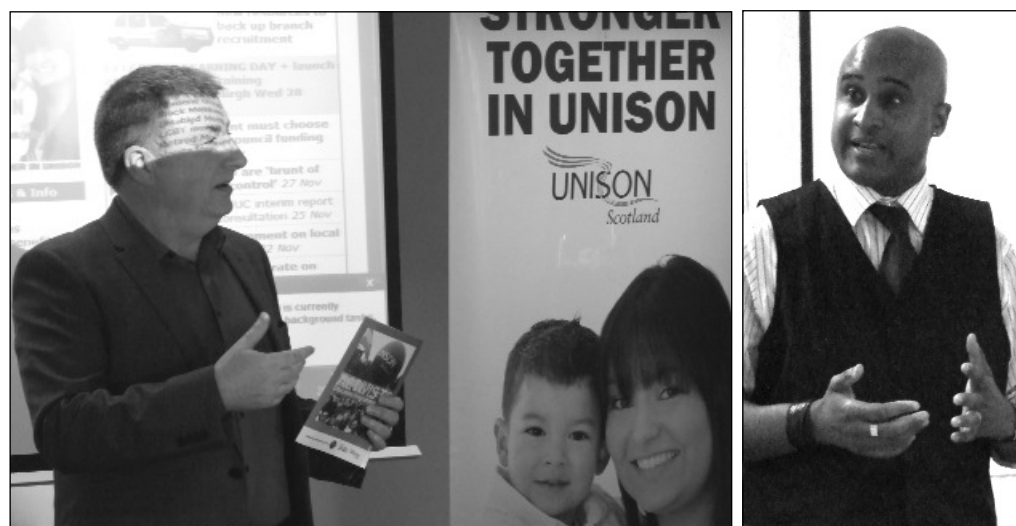
Jim Burnett and Lynne Rankin from the Learning and Organising Committee and Regional Organiser Nancy Kelly briefed branches on the new programme at UNISON's learning and organising centre in Edinburgh.

As well as the broad range of core courses for stewards and officers, there are new initiatives in 2013.

One of these is a Learning Pathway for new stewards and health & safety representatives so there is a clear route highlighting what core training they'll need and when it's available.

There will also be optional courses such as Employment Law updates, Bullying at Work and Equalities.

There are some courses that work well at branch level or with groups of branches –



Jim Burnett outlines the learning programme and Roger McKenzie lifts spirits with a passionate call to give activists the tools to organise.

for example, Procurement, Local Bargaining and Handling Redundancies.

Branches can try the new recruitment modules at branch committee meetings or development events.

There will also be new political education materials designed to be run with small groups at local level

Guest speaker, Assistant General Secretary Roger McKenzie, spoke passionately about learning and organising being at the very core of what a union does.

"There is no greater honour

than representing working people", declared Roger, stressing the need to underpin that privilege with learning, organising and solidarity.

Roger was upbeat about the future despite the vicious attacks on unions and working people.

"I'm optimistic about the resistance building up", he said, while not underestimating the size of the task.

We can win because: "There are more of us than them. So we have to work out how to organise. Learning is a big part of that."

At times like these when people feel powerless, who can they turn to?

"Well, there is only us", said Roger. "And we've always had to rely on each other. Part of that is teaching each other, learning from each other."

"We can make a difference and we do make a difference", he said citing the social benefits, safety and rights issues campaigned for and won by the unions.

The full programme has gone out to branches and is at www.unison-scotland.org.uk/education

UNISON help to apply for Winter Fuel Grant

This winter, many UNISON members will be worried about paying their gas and electricity bills as prices go up and wages stay the same.

And they're not alone. Fuel poverty in the UK is increasing and today one in four households in the UK suffers from it.

Worse yet, death rates in the winter in the UK are much higher than in other cold countries, with experts suggesting that as many as 7,800 extra deaths a year are because of lack of fuel.

there
for you
supporting UNISON members
when life gets tough



UNISON's charity **There for You** (formerly UNISON Welfare) can help. The charity offers financial help, debt advice, wellbeing breaks, support and information and this winter

will be running its winter fuel grants programme: a bit of money to help those on low incomes get by and pay those ever increasing bills.

We also know that we need to tackle the issue of high fuel costs head on. That's why we've joined forces with the Energy Bill Revolution to campaign to end fuel poverty.

The campaign aims to use the billions of pounds the government's carbon emissions tax raises to end fuel poverty, create jobs and help the economy grow.

To find out more about

how to apply for a winter fuel grant visit unison.org.uk.

Contact There For You, UNISON centre, 130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AY or thereforyou@unison.co.uk.

The application form will be available online from 1 January 2013 and the closing date will be 29 February. You can also sign the Energy Bill Revolution petition at energybillrevolution.org.uk.

This will help put real pressure on the government to sort out fuel poverty, and not a moment too soon.

Call to halt day care centre cuts

Carers and campaigners have called for Glasgow's day care closure plan to be halted at a Glasgow Personalisation Network Campaign meeting.

The meeting was chaired by Brian Smith, branch secretary of Glasgow UNISON, and addressed by carers Tommy Gorman and Grace Hannigan, as well as Ian Hood of Learning Disability Alliance Scotland. Numerous press and media attended.

Tommy Gorman told the meeting that his daughter attends the Summerston day care centre, one of the three which would close under the plan. He said: "You can have a consultation, and you can have a fair consultation but you can't have a fair consultation done by Glasgow."

Grace Hannigan, a carer who belongs to the East Carers group, said: "We feel the council wants to absolve itself of its responsibility. We believe they intend to hand this (provision) over to private and third sector organisations whose staff are on very low pay."

Ian Hood, Learning Disability Alliance Scotland (LDAS), called for the Care Inspectorate to investigate the Glasgow consultation and closure plan.

Glasgow UNISON's Sam Macartney explained on the UNISON Scotland blog that the proposals will see current day care services removed for 320 service users.

We want to hear your news

SiU is your paper, we want to hear your stories. Contact:-

John Stevenson (Editor) 0131 558 7488,
webmanager@unison-edinburgh.org.uk

Malcolm Burns m.burns@unison.co.uk

Fiona Montgomery f.montgomery@unison.co.uk