

Festival Highlights: Join Edinburgh and Barnet UNISON for 'A Tale of Two Barnets' film - Plus **Tony Benn** and **Woodie Guthrie** 'Songs of Struggle'. **p4**



March for a Future that Works: In London and Glasgow on 20 October - plus more stories from Conference **p2-3**



PUBLIC WORKS:

a million voices for public services

July/Aug 2012 No. 96

Scotland in UNISON

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

What kind of Scotland do we want to see?

by Dave Watson
Scottish Organiser

Plans have been announced to engage UNISON members in the constitutional debate through meetings across the country leading up to STUC community events.

This is the next stage in a process that started with a briefing, discussion paper and workshops at the union's Scottish Council of branches. UNISON Scotland's approach to constitutional questions is one that is driven by the interests of our members, by the sort of Scotland we want and deserve to live in.

This means that for us constitutional arrangements are the end point of the debate not the starting point. We must first define the sort of Scotland we wish to see and then try and then examine the likelihood of differing constitutional arrangements to deliver on that vision.

To support this approach we published a briefing in February on constitutional change together with a more detailed discussion paper for branches.

Based on the views received, we made a submission to both the UK and Scottish governments' consultations on the referendum process. All of these documents are on our website.

In April, Scottish Council considered what a UNISON vision for Scotland should look like.

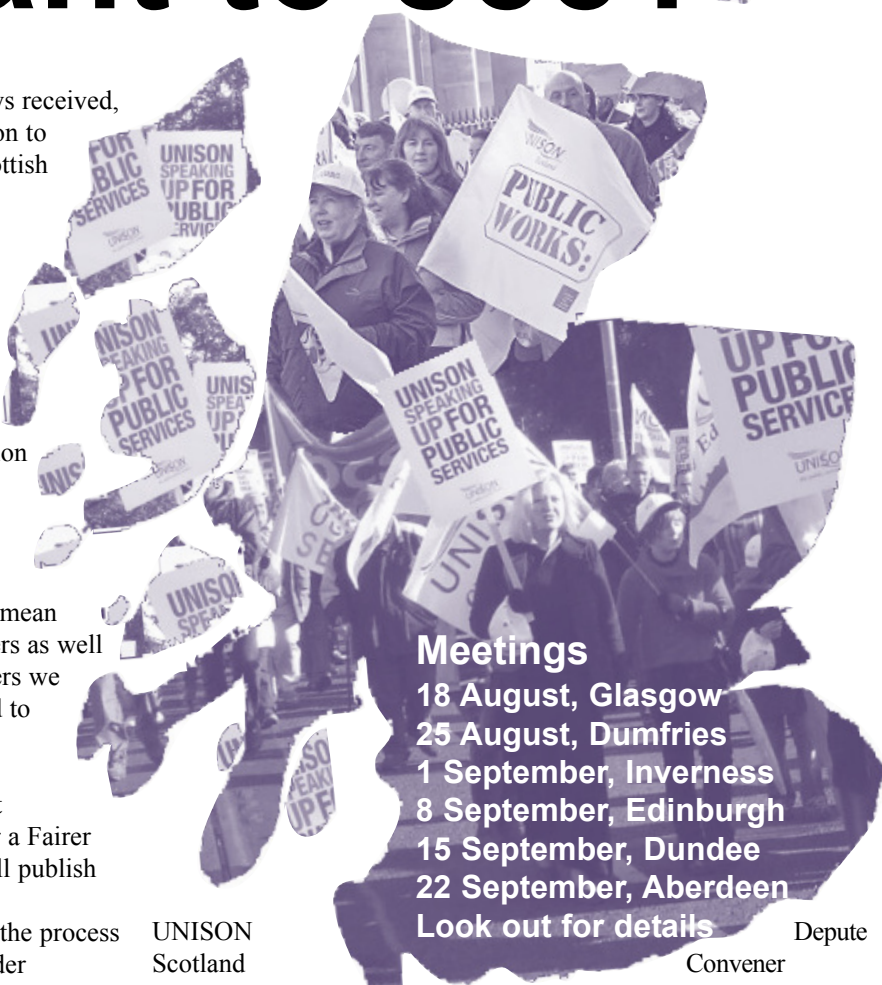
Workshops also looked at what independence might mean for UNISON members as well as what further powers we might want devolved to Scotland.

These views have contributed to a draft UNISON 'Vision for a Fairer Scotland' that we will publish in August.

The next stage of the process is to encourage a wider engagement with members across Scotland, in conjunction with an STUC initiative to engage communities in the constitutional debate.

There will be a series of UNISON meetings across Scotland the week before the STUC events. Full details and registration will be sent to branches.

Announcing the meetings,



Meetings

- 18 August, Glasgow
- 25 August, Dumfries
- 1 September, Inverness
- 8 September, Edinburgh
- 15 September, Dundee
- 22 September, Aberdeen

Look out for details

UNISON Scotland Convener Lilian Macer said: "Constitutional change will have huge implications for our members. It is vital that UNISON Scotland is at the forefront of the debate and our members get every opportunity to contribute their views.

"I would therefore urge members to come along to these events."

Depute Convener Stephen Smellie gave an insight into the debate at UNISON's National Conference in June: "It is not about where the political power is held - Edinburgh or London - but what the politicians will do with that power, and how it will make a difference to our security of employment or our children's future", he told delegates.

Conference report Page 2



Local government workers Across Scotland took part in a day of action on 27 June to mark Fair Pay Day.

Thousands of Scotland's council workers called on employers to implement the living wage of £7.20 an hour for all staff - promised by both Labour and the SNP before the election - and end the pay freeze.

Full story and pictures on page 2

PENSIONS

Financially illiterate drivell from 'tax dodgers alliance'

UNISON Scotland has called on the so-called Taxpayers' Alliance (TPA), to get its facts straight after the shady right-wing, low-tax pressure group attacked local government pensions. Again.

The truth is that payments into the Local Government Pension Scheme in Scotland last year were £299.944 million MORE than being paid out to pensioners.

This inconvenient fact was ignored by the self styled think tank - who likewise seem not to have noticed a connection between the cuts in council workforce that that they have been urging and decline in local government workers paying in to the pension schemes

The tax dodgers' alliance report points out the LGPS is maturing with an increasing number of pensioners. What they fail to mention is that this is the case with almost all pension funds in the UK.

Similarly unmentioned are; · That the pension funds enjoy an enormous income from investment - and so aren't entirely reliant on contributions from members and employers

Turn to page 2

NHS on-call final offer - time to use your vote

by John Stevenson
SiU Editor

NHS Scotland members are set to vote on a final offer on on-call payments.

They will have their say in a consultative ballot from 27 July to 17 August on an offer that the Scottish Health Committee is recommending as "the best that can be achieved through negotiation."

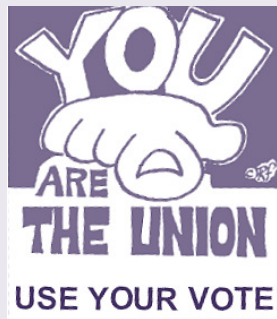
"We have moved the management position significantly since their initial offer", say Health Chair Tam Waterson and Secretary Willie Duffy in a briefing to members. If the offer is rejected, members then have recourse to seek a ballot on industrial action.

The final offer includes:
From 1 October 2012 availability payment of £16.50 per session.
From 1 April 2013 availability payment of £17 per session.

From 1 April 2014 availability payment of £18 per session.
Payment for work done, including travel, will be at time and a half, except on public holidays which will be paid at double time.

6 We have moved the management position significantly since their initial offer'

Tam Waterson



There will also be 'mark time' protection for staff that need it.

For full details of the offer, a briefing and a series of frequently asked questions see www.unison-scotland.org.uk/healthcare/oncallballot

Tax dodgers need to get facts right on pensions

From Page 1

- That a recent (2011) actuarial valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme Scotland was very positive

- The LGPS Scotland is currently taking in almost £300 million per year more than it is paying out.

- Even in the event that the scheme was felt to be under pressure - a cost sharing agreement is in place.

- Just 5p in every £1 paid in council tax goes towards pensions. Councils get only 25% of their revenue from council tax, 75% comes from other sources, including business rates and local government grants.

- The numbers in the tax Dodgers Alliance report would only begin to make sense if everyone in local government decided to retire on the same day - a social, political and actuarial absurdity.

Mike Kirby, UNISON Scottish Secretary, said:

"This right-wing pressure group never lets facts get in the way of attacking public services and the people that deliver them. This is financially illiterate drivel. The TPA are simply out of touch with reality.

"Pensions for local government are an affordable way of people saving for their retirement - and the results of that are modest enough. The average pensions for council workers in Scotland is just £4,000 a year, dropping to just £2,800 for women.

"We need to bring private sector pensions up to a decent level, not pull public sector pensions down - two thirds of employees do not get a single penny in contributions from their employers towards their pensions. The government's plans for auto-enrolment will not go far enough to keep people off means tested benefits."

Police and Fire centralisation will not deliver

The centralisation of Scotland's Police and Fire services is being driven entirely by cost savings that will not deliver for Scotland, says UNISON.

George McIrvine, chair of UNISON's police staff committee, said: "The Government's plan to maintain an artificial target of police officers, within the budget cuts, will result in the loss of up to 3,000 police staff roles. Hundreds of police officers are already being taken off the streets to backfill police staff jobs - jobs they aren't trained to do and at a greater cost - and this will rise significantly if plans go ahead.

"We need a balanced police staffing structure that's free from political direction on officer numbers. The spotlight has to be on need, not cost."

New food standards body risks back door privatisation

UNISON has raised concerns that a new food standards body for Scotland could mean watered down standards with a risk of back door privatisation.

Responding to Scottish Government plans to create a new body for food safety, food

standards, nutrition, food labelling and meat inspection, UNISON stressed it is not opposed in principle to devolution, but urged that any changes to the Scottish Meat Inspection Service are aimed at enhancing consumer protection and animal welfare in Scotland.

Dave Watson, UNISON's Scottish Organiser, said: "Our members are rightly concerned about any move that may weaken public protection and damage the Scottish meat industry.

"We need to move away from the 'boom and bust' approach to regulation that has, in the past,

resulted in serious outbreaks of food poisoning, such as the Wishaw E.Coli outbreak.

"Any change to the delivery module of meat inspection should ensure it is protecting the public, not serving industry, and we must ensure this is not used as a backdoor to privatisation."

Fair Pay Day: Local Govt pay freeze must end say unions

UNISON, GMB and Unite members launched a petition and urged politicians and members of the public to sign up to fair pay for local government workers on Fair Pay Day on 27 June.

Branches around the country set up events to mark the day, calling on their local councils to implement the living wage of £7.20 for all staff - a commitment made by both Labour and the SNP prior to the election - and to put an end to the ongoing pay freeze.

"Local government workers are among the lowest paid in the public sector, with more than 18,000 paid less than the living wage," said Stephanie Herd, chair of UNISON Scotland's local government committee.

"Teaching assistants, care workers, librarians, school catering staff, refuse collectors, street cleaners - they are all struggling to make ends meet and can no longer afford this continued pay cut."

Regional organiser Dougie Black added: "It's not just a matter of fairness, it also makes economic sense as increased wages would boost local economies"



Campbell Peden and South Ayrshire cleaners mark Fair Pay Day at Scotland's oldest secondary school



North Lanarkshire Branch organised a great Fair Pay Day event, getting many Councillors to sign the petition.



South Lanarkshire UNISON held a stall outside the Council HQ where 200 signatures were collected in just over an hour. Stewards in other workplaces also collected signatures. Over the next few weeks they plan to visit other workplaces to promote the campaign and collect signatures.



Sign the petition and follow the campaign on the website, facebook, the blog and twitter.

More resources for bargaining and devolution debate

Devolution took centre stage at National Conference, as delegates agreed a call from Scotland to review the devolution protocols and recognised the need to support devolved bargaining with additional resources and appropriate procedures.

Crucially, it also agreed support for UNISON in Scotland to engage members in the constitutional debate to ensure the union reflects the views of Scottish members.

Scotland's Stephen Smellie told Conference: "We are clear about the kind of Scotland we want - more equal, fairer, full employment, properly funded public services, no nuclear weapons - the same as the rest of you. The question for us is will independence or the status quo or more devolution short of independence make it more likely we will achieve our vision?"

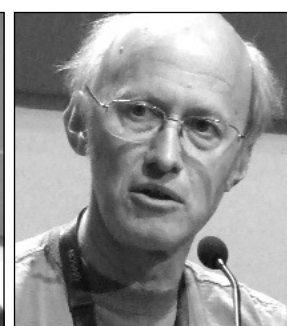
It was not about where the



Stephen Smellie
'Not just about a flag'



Gordon McKay
'Devolution moved on'



Gray Allan
'Common history unites'

political power is held -Edinburgh or London - but what the politicians will do with that power, and how it will make a difference to our security of employment or our children's future.

"We are determined that this debate needs to be brought to our people and must address the issues of our members and how we look after our people, and not just about a flag or powers for politicians," said Stephen, calling for resources to ensure the full engagement of members.

Gordon McKay, for the

National Executive warned that devolution has moved on and the union needed to move with it.

"The principle of devolution is about being closer to the people we represent, but the practice of devolution should be about ensuring that the powers that go with it are used for the benefit of our members."

It was important that campaigning, bargaining and decision making were made at the appropriate place and where our members relate to - sometimes that will be the UK

and sometimes the devolved nations.

Falkirk's Gray Allan welcomed the motion but warned that the constitutional debate was a complex issue, "loaded down with history and laced with sentiment" and we needed to

be ice cold in considering the only question that mattered, "Where do the interests of our members and of all working people lie?"

He told conference that the interests of our members across all the nations in the UK are the same - that what unites us is the common history of our movement.

"Putting football and rugby aside, between public service workers across the UK there can be no barriers, no boundaries and no divides," said Gray.

CONFERENCE CALLS RALLIES ON 20 OCTOBER

Organising for a future that works

Organising to break the pay freeze, to protect our NHS and our public services and to turn back the vicious impact of ConDem policies on our members, on the poorest in society, on the disabled, elderly and our children. A daunting list of tasks but one UNISON's National Conference in June was up for.

This year's conference was all about equality and social justice. It was about communicating, organising, campaigning to get our message to our members, prospective members and to the public at large. There is an alternative!

We will build now for massive demonstrations in London and Glasgow on 20 October to campaign for a "Future that Works" instead of the failed coalition policies.

Smash the pay freeze



Stephanie Herd

"We will smash the public sector pay freeze", said Dave Prentis, General Secretary in his keynote speech. He slammed three years without a pay rise, public service workers having to tighten their belts with escalating food and fuel bills, but one in four now struggling to survive.

Later Scotland's **Stephanie Herd** told delegates: "We know we are going into a fight. But rather than say, "We are all in this together", I say, "We'll win this together!"



Scotland NEC member **Jane Carolan** outlined UNISON's alternative to these failed policies.

"We have already agreed it wasn't the nurses, janitors, social workers or any other public sector worker who broke the bank.

"Let's not ask the government for a plan B - we already have one. A strategy that will create demand in the economy, will create employment through investment in skills and infrastructure, and that sees investment in public services as a boost to the economy.

"Why don't we invest in public services to ensure that basic needs like health and education are met? Build new social housing. Not just creating jobs but tackling inequality.

"We have a cunning plan. It needs to be at the centre of our campaigning," she said.

And Scottish Convener **Lilian Macer** promised: "We will continue to expose the coalition for what they are - ideologues pursuing an agenda to benefit themselves and their super wealthy funders."

Raise our sights

Depute Convener **Stephen Smellie** called on members to 'raise our sights' in opposing cuts to public services, which vice-president Chris Tansley described as "devastating" and a return to "Victorian values".

6 We have a cunning plan... Why don't we invest in public services to ensure that basic needs like health and education are met? Build new social housing. Not just creating jobs but tackling inequality.'

Jane Carolan



Lilian Macer



Kate Ramsden

Fighting child poverty

Victorian 'values' like child poverty, on the rise and hitting families in work as well as the unemployed. Aberdeenshire's **Kate Ramsden** told Conference: "Child poverty could be ended tomorrow if the political will was there to do it".

Inequality

Almost every speech highlighted the growing inequality in this country. Delegates railed at the social injustices perpetrated by this government on our poorest and our most vulnerable, whilst giving tax cuts to their wealthy chums.

They railed at the thrust towards more and more privatisation, when keeping money in public services instead

of paying it as profits to private companies would save over £100 billion a year.

They railed at the impact of welfare reforms on the poor, the disabled and the elderly and the demonisation of these people by this uncaring government.

Pensions

And they called for fair pensions for all, including a state pension not lower than the official poverty line figure - currently £178.

A two hour debate about the England and Wales pensions proposals at Local Government Conference ended in a plan to consult and inform widely before a ballot.

The debate challenged the confusion many have between the two thrusts needed in the pensions campaign. The bargaining strategy in individual pension schemes to ensure fairness and sustainability, alongside the broad political campaign for fair state pensions for all and against the rise in retirement age.

Devolution

Conference backed measures to support devolved bargaining with additional resources. (See page 2 for full report).

Health and safety

Making health and safety the first debate was a key sign of the union's concern about laws that protect workers' basic right to come home safe from work being watered down to satisfy the greed of big business.

On the health aspects, **Bill**

What is National Conference?

UNISON's annual National Delegate Conference is the union's ruling body. Every year delegates from all over the country take part in debates to choose our campaigning priorities and policies.

Every UNISON branch elects reps to attend annual conference and vote on behalf of their local branch members. Scotland has about 200 delegates.

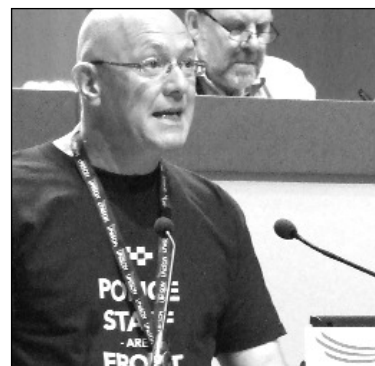
Conference reports are by **John Stevenson, Kate Ramsden and Jane Aitchison**. Full reports and photos are on the **UNISON Scotland website**.

Dunn from Highland Healthcare called on branches to negotiate disability leave policies and to challenge bad practice with the Equality Act 2010.

Reaching out

As befits a campaigning union, UNISON also agreed to reach out and campaign on issues like elder abuse, youth unemployment and equal chances for young black people.

The mover of the Elder Abuse motion was 'proud to be in a union that cares' and rightly so. Strathclyde Police and Fire's **Brian Molloy** added: "All the



Brian Molloy

citizens of the UK have a duty to protect the most vulnerable people living in our society."

Emotional and moving contributions came from **Neville Lawrence**, ever dignified after 18 years of seeking justice for his son Stephen. He called police privatisation plans a 'disaster'. See *interview on website*.

Tears also met the words of Carmen Mayusa from Colombia where on average one trade unionist is killed every three days. Standing ovations greeted four wives of the Miami 5, imprisoned in the US for trying to stop terrorism against ordinary Cubans.

Something to celebrate

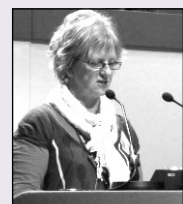
Bad as things are, Conference had things to celebrate. The victories against privatisation in Edinburgh and Aberdeen took centre stage. "We won in Edinburgh. We won in Aberdeen. We've turned the tide in Southampton. We're fighting on in Barnet and councils across the country. We've got a taste of victory and it tastes good. Let's go out and do it again!" Edinburgh's **John Stevenson** urged delegates.

Warnings about integrated social care services

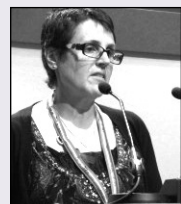
No-one is against integrated services but joining at the top with no new resources will only make things worse, Local Government Conference was warned.

Mary McCrea of Edinburgh city council highlighted the cost of the reorganisation required to create integrated services, when "surveys reveal most people are satisfied with the service they receive."

The issue was resources not



Mary McCrea



Liz MacKay

lack of integration. Pulling all social care under the NHS umbrella will not bring any more money, will not address the poverty wages for social care workers and, unless there is more money, it will make no difference

to bed-blocking.

While backing calls for better and more responsive social care, Mary urged delegates not be seduced by integration plans that were only there to save money rather than improve services.

Delegates were also concerned about the social model of disability being swallowed up by the medical model.

Another concern was bringing privatisation back into the NHS in Scotland through outsourced local government services.

Liz MacKay from Highland branch highlighted the huge problems in the integration experiment in the Highlands.

"We've got a long, long fight to go."

Scottish Conference

UNISON Scotland branches met in Glasgow shortly after Conference for a Health and Care Integration Conference. A draft revised UNISON policy statement from the meeting has gone out to branches.

Building strength as over 100 attend new officers training

by John Stevenson
SiU editor

If ever the union needed committed activists organising at grass roots level, it is now when we face so many ideological attacks on our services, jobs and conditions.

So the signs were good when over 100 members attended new branch officer training in April, the biggest cohort in recent years.

Run by the Scottish Learning and Organising Committee, the training concentrated on organisation and broader trade union education as well as the nuts and bolts needed to do the job.

That's why the weekend kicked off with an inspiring contribution from Vincent Dlamini, the general secretary of the Swaziland National Public Services and Allied Workers' Union (Napsawu).

We face struggles but they are put into context by the challenges faced by trade

unionists in Swaziland.

He laid out a calm and reasoned critique of what needs to change in Swaziland to bring a peaceful transition to democracy with new policies to fight poverty.

Things were so bad now that people who had been afraid to speak out because they might lose their job or not get their salary, now feel they have nothing to lose by speaking out for change.

Then it was down to work for the participants, learning how to administer branches, look after the funds, run training programmes, turn out magazines, leaflets and websites and many other skills.

"As a new branch officer I was keen to get the skills to do the job and this course gave me that", said Edinburgh's Andy Barnett.

"But just as important, I got to meet people from other branches and services - all facing common issues and learning from each other".



Participants on the communications officer course deep in concentration

A Tale of Two Barnets comes to Edinburgh

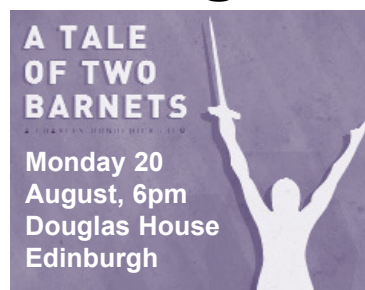
Barnet, site of the famous workhouse from the story Oliver Twist. Two hundred years after the birth of Charles Dickens, how has the area changed and how has it stayed the same?

In 2012, Barnet is faced with the biggest economic crisis since the second world war. The council, faced with budget pressures has embarked on a massive outsourcing program under the title of "One Barnet", which removes all democratic accountability, but keeps all the financial risk.

The makers of "A Tale of Two Barnets" visited every part of the borough and allowed the people of Barnet to talk about their lives and their concerns in 2012. The film is stark and enlightening.

Earlier this year, Edinburgh rejected mass privatisation of council services after a successful trade union and community campaign. The people of Barnet face an even bigger threat. One that will put almost all of their services outwith their control for years to come.

Edinburgh UNISON is hosting this screening to support Barnet's



campaign during the Edinburgh Festival on 20 August.

Go to www.unison-edinburgh.org.uk to reserve a ticket or phone 0131 558 7488.

Tony Benn and Woodie Guthrie at festival

Also worth seeing during the festival, promoted by FairPley, is Tony Benn's 'Will and Testament'. Tony is himself coming to Edinburgh on 21 and 22 August at noon to speak at two exclusive screenings of a 30 minute edit of the film, and a Q&A chaired by comedian and broadcaster Mark Thomas.

'Songs of Struggle' - marking Woody Guthrie's 100th anniversary - featuring Alastair McDonald, Arthur Johnstone, Sheena Wellington and Dave Anderson is on 10 and 11 August at 9pm.

UNISON Nursing Conference 2012

UNISON Scotland's Nursing Conference will be held this year on Thursday 27 September at the Grand Central Hotel, Glasgow.

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 currently affecting members and offer an opportunity to debate the future of nursing in Scotland.

Conference speakers:

Nicola Sturgeon, Cabinet Secretary for Health & Wellbeing

Ros Moore, Chief Nurse for Scotland

Gail Adams, Head of Nursing for UNISON



Debbie Donald, Programme Director, Pan Scotland Workforce Planning

Gordon McKay, Chair of the Nursing Sector and NEC Member

REGISTER TODAY

The cost for attending this one day conference, 10am-4.30pm, is £25 per delegate, payable by your branch.

To register, contact Delia Atherton on 0141 342 2851 or d.atherton@unison.co.uk

Movies, maternal health and making tax dodgers pay!

UNISON Scotland is again delighted to be partnering with Take One Action Film Festival to deliver events during its festival later this year.

The festival celebrates the people and movies that are changing the world and will host over 50 screenings and events in Edinburgh and Glasgow between 21 September and 6 October 2012.

As part of this year's programme, UNISON Scotland is supporting two films:

SISTER is a moving and intimate portrait of a global crisis in maternal health and infant mortality.

We'll be hearing from the Director, Brenda Davis, who travelled to Ethiopia, Haiti and Cambodia to gather the stories



of dedicated health professionals working in difficult circumstances.

Through intense and beautiful moments this film reveals maternal and newborn death as a human rights issue, and champions the frontline staff dedicated to making a difference.



With the wide-ranging public service budget cuts WE'RE NOT BROKE is a story many in the UK will recognise.

The film is an energetic exposé of how U.S. corporations have been able to hide over a trillion dollars from Uncle Sam, and how seven fed-up Americans from across the country, take their frustration to the streets.

Drawing on inspiration from the UK UNCUT movement they vow to make the corporations pay their fair share.

Each year Take One Action

welcomes thousands of people to be entertained, to learn about current global and environmental issues and to take action together - Join us at these and other Take One Action Festival events.

SISTER with Director Q&A Glasgow, 27 September.

WE'RE NOT BROKE with panel discussion Edinburgh, 2 October.

Sign-up for updates by subscribing to Take One Action's mailing list: www.takeoneaction.org.uk

The full festival programme will be released in August.

The Falkirk Wheel

UNISON Welfare: Sponsored Walk and Family Fun Day Sunday 9 September

In the setting of the world's only rotating boat lift - the Falkirk Wheel - walk along the canals, paths, trails and activity zones - see the Antonine Wall - or for those more energetically inclined, break into a jog!

FAMILY FUN DAY - BRING ALL THE FAMILY: Boat rides on the Wheel, Bouncy Castle, Face Painting, Balloon Modelling, Stalls, Raffle, Refreshments.

More details at www.unison-scotland.org.uk/welfare or from Diane Anderson at: diane.anderson@unison.co.uk Tel: 0141 342 2842

New Lanark Fun Day

The fourth annual UNISON Members Fun Day at New Lanark is on Sunday 26 August this year.

The event includes activities for kids, live music, free guided walks to the world famous Falls of Clyde, discounted access to the New Lanark Visitor Centre, UNISON freebies and a chance to have a great day out with friends and family. All Welcome!

For details of free transport from East Kilbride and Hamilton contact UNISON South Lanarkshire on 01698 454690.

Age assessment guidance for social workers

Aimed at helping vulnerable young asylum seekers get the right support, has been launched by Scottish Refugee Council and Glasgow City Council.

Young people often arrive seeking asylum without any documentation showing their age; may not know their age or their appearance makes it hard to judge.

Correct age assessment is vital to ensure they get the protection and support they need, said the Scottish Refugee Council.

The task is extremely difficult because research has consistently shown that there is no medical way of accurately assessing the age of young people.

UNISON Scotland opposed age assessments based on dental examinations in its response to the government in 2007 and its Social Work Issues Group issued a ground-breaking guide on working with asylum seeker children in 2006. (See www.unison-scotland.org.uk/socialwork)

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 or Trisha Hamilton t.hamilton@unison.co.uk