

**UNISON at the STUC**  
All the main UNISON reports from the 118th Scottish Trades Union Congress in Ayr - p1, 2, 3, 4



**HEALTH CONFERENCE**  
Scotland wins devolved bargaining- p2



**Glasgow homeless workers on all out strike** p3



**PUBLIC WORKS:**

a million voices for public services

May 2015 No 112

# Scotland in UNISON

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

# Use your vote for public services

by John Stevenson  
SiU editor

**UNISON Scotland is urging members to quiz election candidates of all parties on what they will do to protect and invest in public services.**

Those questions have never been more critical in Scotland.

62,000 jobs have been lost from the public sector in Scotland since the post-crash high point in 2009.

Essential local services are in crisis as an astonishing 40,000 jobs have been lost in Scottish local government with six years of cuts and deeper cuts to come.

Although health staff numbers rose last year, there are still 1,091 fewer jobs than in 2009.

FE colleges have lost 3,000 jobs lost over the same period.

1,600 police jobs have been lost since the new national force was created.

All this makes May 7 the Public Services Election.

Mike Kirby, UNISON Scottish



**'This is the Public Services Election. The outcome will have a huge impact upon UNISON members, their families, communities and the public services in which we work, to protect the disadvantaged and provide a better quality of life for all'** MIKE KIRBY

secretary, in a series of articles leading up to the election, said: "This is the Public Services Election. The outcome will have a huge impact upon UNISON members, their families, communities and the public services in which we work, to protect the disadvantaged and provide a better quality of life for all."

This is reflected in his introduction to UNISON Scotland's General Election

Manifesto.

"During the election campaign we will strive to keep UNISON policies and objectives fore and centre of the political debate.

"UNISON priorities of an end to Tory austerity, fair employment and trade union rights, pay and public services... by challenging all political parties on what they will do for our people."

The manifesto quotes a poll undertaken by Survation, for UNISON Scotland in which

Scottish voters said that public services, welfare, jobs and pay were the most important issues for them in the coming general election.

The manifesto warns: "A Conservative Government will see the continuation of the austerity programme that has caused so much damage.

"We know that 60% of the total revenue cuts are still to come, with the deepest cuts in 2016-18.

"The Institute for Fiscal

Studies (IFS) has described this as a 'rollercoaster'.

"We estimate that the Barnett consequential of these cuts for Scotland means another £2bn of cuts to vital services and a further 30,000 public service job losses.

"Austerity economics aren't working. Further reductions will not increase efficiency; they will merely decrease the quality of services and the quality of life of those who provide them.

Questions: Turn to page 2

**PUBLIC SERVICES ELECTION**

**UNISON Scotland**

**General Election Manifesto 2015**

[www.unison-scotland.org.uk/publicworks](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/publicworks)

## TTIP needs international response

**The STUC in Ayr heard a stark warning from UNISON's Jane Carolan that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) would be "an assault on democratic government".**

TTIP means that public services will face wholesale privatisation, over-ruling any state's laws or policies through secretive tribunals. Worse still, any service privatised will not be able to be brought back in house.

UNISON's Jane Carolan told delegates: "it is a secret treaty hidden from politicians and negotiated by the EU trade commissioners in secret.

"These politicians who want to read it have to attend a special location where it's available in numbered copies for reading only in that location. What was that to do with democracy, transparency and accountability?"

And she warned: "It is an assault on any society - that in any

way seeks to tackle equality, provides any level of social protection or provides rights for the labour as well as capital.

"The intentions of this treaty are clear. It seeks to open all of Europe's public services to privatisation by the transnationals - any services provided from general taxation for public good.

Jane warned: "And in this treaty once services have gone they are gone for good. Market liberalisation cannot be reversed

because of the so called Ratchet clause, that once the service is privatised this cannot be reversed.

"So no rail nationalisation, no reversal of the Health and Social Care Act."

Jane called for an international response:

"Where corporations are acting multinationally, trade unions must act in unity and solidarity across international borders. Together we can defeat this so called treaty", she said.



Jane Carolan

## Higher education commits to living wage

**Universities Scotland has committed to paying the living wage as a minimum for all staff 'for the foreseeable future'.**

At least one employer is currently an accredited living wage provider.

The announcement, though welcome, falls short of a long term commitment due to 'uncertainty in higher education funding'.

## The Public Services Election

From page 1

"Austerity has already resulted in the longest and slowest recovery from recession on record. The medicine nearly killed the patient, so we need to stop administering it."

It also calls for better employment rights, an end to public sector pay cuts that have made people on average £2,000 worse off and an end to zero hour contracts.

It also warns of the 'unpredictable public finances' of so-called 'full fiscal autonomy'

It urges members to ask general election candidates:-

- What will be the consequences for public services of the Conservatives proposed job cuts?
- If elected as my MP, how will you protect these threatened jobs?
- How will you ensure my pay makes up lost ground in the next parliament?
- How would further cuts to public services help me and the local economy, exactly?
- Personal debt is rising again, how do you expect low-paid workers to make ends meet?
- How will you ensure rich individuals and corporations pay their taxes like the rest of us?
- How will you use further devolved powers to support and protect Scotland's public services?

## Flexible working good for life and the workforce

The STUC will campaign for a legal right to flexible working and will support affiliate trade unions to challenge unreasonable and discriminatory management practices.

UNISON's Maggie Cook told delegates that flexible working, when handled well, can enhance workers' quality of life and lead to a happier and more productive workforce.

"We welcome the change in legislation to broaden the request to work flexibly to all employees regardless of gender, caring responsibilities or health reasons.

"However we need to campaign to secure the right to flexible working NOT just the right to request it."

# Scotland wins devolved NHS pay bargaining

**After eight years of UK Health Conferences the persistency and consistency of UNISON Scotland finally won through when UNISON voted to devolve how to approach pay bargaining to each of the four nations.**

This allows UNISON Scotland to determine whether it believes it is in its members' best interests to remain in a Pay Review Body or seek direct negotiations with the Scottish Government.

The motion that finally saw this significant change in UNISON policy was moved by Ayrshire and Arran and amended by the Scottish Health Committee and attracted a number of high quality speeches from Scotland.

**Lucie Fontana** from Ayrshire and Arran spoke passionately on how the Pay Review Body had: "let down low paid NHS workers and was simply an instrument of a Tory government of the wealthy."

**Gordon McKay** of the Scottish Health Committee told the conference how UNISON Scotland's successful bargaining strategy had delivered the living wage in NHS Scotland and meant for example that a Band 3 worker in Scotland was paid £466 a year more than a worker in England doing the same job.

UNISON Scotland has fought off any attempts to reduce sick pay, halt incremental progression or alter job profiling unlike the rest of the UK. "This shows that UNISON Scotland's industrial strategy has worked", said Gordon.

**Sandra-Dee Masson** of the Scottish Health Committee won applause with a passionate speech that assured delegates that UNISON Scotland's commitment was to work to roll out all of our success stories across the UK.

"UNISON is a family of workers and that is how it will stay", said Sandra-Dee.

Lanarkshire delegate and UNISON Scotland convener

## SPECIAL REPORT: UNISON UK HEALTH CONFERENCE

**UNISON Scotland once again showed itself at the head of debate, engagement and thinking in the NHS'**



**Margo Cranmer: 'Obscene rise in registration fees'**

**Lilian Macer** reinforced that gains that had been won through hard bargaining and the strength of UNISON.

Lilian listed examples: "Lifetime pay protection, a no compulsory redundancy agreement and family friendly policies such as four weeks of parental leave a full pay, including enhancements, for each child."

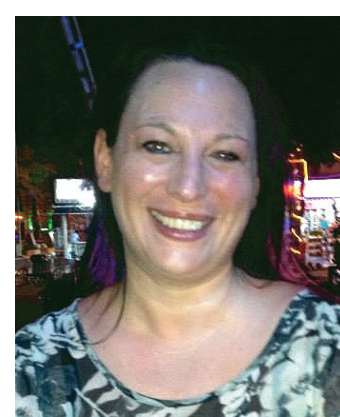
### Support for Northern Ireland strike

**Cathy Miller** of Greater Glasgow and Clyde CVS branch praised UNISON members in Northern Ireland who were on strike and promised them that UNISON Scotland would be there for them if they needed us.

As well as taking the lead as always on pay, Scotland was to the forefront on professional and occupational issues.

**Liz Rankin** of Greater Glasgow and Clyde CVS moved the composite calling for a salary of no less than the living wage for all pre-registration healthcare students.

Liz said: "85% of student nurses now earn a wage but the problem is they earn it in fast food outlets, call centres and bars



**Lucie Fontana: 'PRB has let down low paid workers'**

because they cannot live on the miserly bursary from the Scottish Government."

**Tom Cairney** of Ayrshire and Arran said it was to the: "shame of our society that we refuse to pay a wage to those people who are going to look after us, our children and our parents when they are at their most vulnerable."

### Campaign against registration fee rise

**Margo Cranmer** of Lanarkshire moved motions on HPC registration fees and nurse staffing levels. Margo called on the Service Group Executive to: "organise a high profile campaign against the obscene increase in registration fees at the same time as NHS workers have seen their wages cut by 16% in five years."

Lanarkshire's **Margaret Anne Hunter** spoke on NMC revalidation and on the use of agency staff.

"12% of the NHS budget goes on agency and bank staff and this is to the detriment of both staff and patients. This money should be spent on funding permanent jobs", said Margaret Anne.

**Claire Haughey** of Greater



**Cathy Miller: Support for Northern Ireland strike**

Glasgow and Clyde CVS spoke passionately on rejecting the Tory vision of the NHS. "There is no place for privatisation of the NHS. UNISON Scotland is always willing to talk with employers on ways of improving services and we do it every day.

"However, any attempt to take any part of the Scottish NHS out of the public sector will be met with a strong and vigorous response from UNISON."

### Healthy eating facilities

**Helen Ann Hawkins** of Lanarkshire moved the motion on catering services for all NHS staff. Helen told the conference that for the overwhelming part of the working week if NHS staff wanted a hot meal they had to rely on old and dirty microwaves or cold food from under-filled vending machines.

"A health service that wishes to promote healthy eating should see its first duty to provide such facilities to its staff who provide the care for those in need", she said.

UNISON Scotland once again showed itself at the head of debate, engagement and thinking in the NHS.

## Care workers deserve living wage

**The STUC endorsed UNISON's Ethical Care Charter and committed to campaigning for a living wage for all care workers in Scotland.**

Delegates backed the call from the Chartered Society for Physiotherapy, which recognised the invaluable contribution of care workers to health and social care provision in Scotland and slammed the terrible working conditions for

### STUC endorses UNISON's Ethical Care Charter

many as exposed by UNISON's "Time to Care" survey.

Seconding, UNISON's **Mark Ferguson** told delegates that since the launch of the "Ethical Care Charter" tens of thousands of social care workers have benefited and there have been significant improvements to service delivery where

employers have signed up.

His own authority Renfrewshire Council was the first council in Scotland to adopt the charter "which sets out a step change process to end 15 minute visits, introduce the living wage and pay for travelling time as a minimum.

"When did employers think that it was OK to employee Social Care Workers on low pay, poor conditions and refuse to pay for travelling time whilst

many companies are lining the pockets of shareholders," asked Mark.

"Whether you work in Local Government, Health, Third or Private Sector - the best way to deliver high quality essential care to the most vulnerable in our communities is to include the principles set out in UNISON's charter and include them in service level agreements and contracts.

## Quality child care needs a valued workforce

UNISON's Carol Ball, chair of UNISON Scotland's Education Issues Group drew the STUC's attention to UNISON's Childcare Charter launched last month.

Carol said, "At the heart of

any provision offered, its standards and design must meet the needs of those it is being provided for, and in this case it is for the early learning, care and wellbeing needs of children and young people.

"This must be paramount

when we are discussing what needs to be provided."

She told delegates that UNISON's Charter calls for childcare free at the point of delivery, provided by the public sector, not for profit and designed by local communities.



# Glasgow all out strike enters fourth week

by Ian Leech  
Glasgow City Branch

As we went to press, 70 members working in Glasgow City Council's Homeless Service entered their fourth week on all-out indefinite strike in a dispute over pay grading.

The caseworkers, all members of UNISON, are paid one grade lower than that of colleagues doing a similar 'frontline' job in social work addictions teams or older people's teams.

Their role is to assess the needs of homeless people and families across Glasgow, organise and oversee appropriate crucial support and help people to access and maintain emergency, temporary and permanent accommodation.

The 70 workers have nearly 3,000 people on their caseloads.

The action, which started on 31 March, followed a number of weeks of a work to rule and has been extremely successful on a number of fronts.

This group of workers had previously experienced strike action when they spontaneously walked out over 18 months ago in support of a UNISON colleague who had been suspended for participating in a work to rule linked to a grievance.

Their experience in that action has created a level of confidence and awareness of the need for effective organisation that has stood them in good stead.



UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis (left) and Scottish convener Lilian Macer (right) supported the strikers at the STUC annual congress in April.

The level of organisation on each picket line has been extremely high.

Due to the solid nature of the action, members have been able to leave their workplace and take initiatives that have sought to raise the profile of the dispute.

Actions such as pre-advertised bucket collections for the hardship fund, speaking tours to offices and stunts such as the highly successful 'negotiating table' where a table was taken to the council offices and councillors and social work officers were 'empty chaired' creating wide media coverage and embarrassment for the

Labour controlled council.

One of the most effective aspects of organising the action has been the strike committee which has delegates elected from each picket line.

Throughout the dispute this committee has placed an emphasis on maximum participation, democracy in decision making, communication and well organised public events.

There has been regular coverage of the dispute in the local media and, together with the use of social media, information has been distributed internationally.

Messages of support and

donations both individual and collective have been sent to the branch office since the action began.

If you wish to donate to the strike fund you can do so in three ways:

1. Make cheque out to Glasgow City UNISON Branch and send to 84 Bell, Glasgow G1 1LQ

2. Bank transfer to branch account. Sort Code is 08-60-01 and account number is 20275792. The account name is Industrial Action.

3. Pay cash into our branch office at 84 Bell, Glasgow G1 1LQ.

## Return power to local councils to act on services

UNISON Scotland deputy convener Stephen Smellie called on the STUC to campaign for a return to the kind of local democracy that Scottish Councils used to enjoy.

"But it is not just about cuts, changes and job losses," warned Stephen. "It is also about power and aspiration."

He warned that too many services have been centralised, like water, further education, careers, economic development, police and fire, and in some areas housing stock transfer.

This reduces the ability of councils to co-ordinate services and effort and reduces ability to adjust to local need.

He pointed to the 1970s and 80s when, in response to poverty councils employed welfare rights officers and community development workers to maximise benefits and to support communities to identify their own needs and either devise ways of addressing them or campaign for additional resources and funding.

"In fact, councils used to challenge government cuts, not simply administer them," said

Stephen.

And councils themselves had powers to raise finance through business and domestic rates so they could raise cash for anti-poverty initiatives or to improve services.

"Now council tax has been locked into a permanent permanent. The net result is that not only local services but local democracy has been destroyed."

Stephen called for councils to have the powers to explore new tax raising initiatives like a tourist tax or an alcohol sales tax; and for greater partnership with trade

unions, service users and communities.

"Councils should be agents of change," he said, "Setting targets to improve equality, reduce poverty, improve educational attainment and independent living."

"They should be agents of democratic renewal. They should be agents of service delivery."

"But to achieve these aims we need to raise our sights. To encourage councils and councillors to both raise their aspirations and raise their game and to fight for local government."

# stuc

## Ayr April 2015

The STUC stories were written by Kate Ramsden with contributions from John Stevenson and Danny Phillips.

These are just a few selections. For full coverage see the website at [www.unison-scotland.org.uk/stuc2015](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/stuc2015)

### Change society so women can live free from violence

Helen Duddy urged STUC delegates work to change society to make sure women can live free from violence and pointed to UNISON's new guide published last year on why domestic abuse is a trade union issue and what we can do to support women.

### Only hope for BME workers lies in their unions

First time STUC delegate and speaker, UNISON's Priscilla Maramba, told Congress that ConDem austerity has worsened the plight of BME workers, and the rise of UKIP and media bias have added insult to injury.



She called calling for more trade union mentoring to support BME activists in their role and to help them to realise their potential.

### BT police takeover plan another 'polishambles'

The STUC will vigorously oppose Scottish Government plans to absorb the specialist British Transport Police (BTP) into Police Scotland and delegates were dismayed that the announcement of these plans was made without any public consultation.

UNISON's George McIrvine listed one after another concern since the 'shambolic centralisation' merger of local police forces into Police Scotland.

He dubbed this yet another 'polishambles'.



Stephen Smellie

## Partnership means rights on both sides – repeal anti-union laws

**STUC delegates slammed the attacks on equalities, employment rights and trade union freedoms and backed a UNISON led composite to continue the fight for the repeal of all anti-trade union laws.**

The STUC reiterated its support for the Mather Commission “Working Together” report and pledged to make sure that the fundamental principles of trade union rights, including the right to strike, are at the heart of the Fair Work Convention.

In moving the composite, UNISON Scotland’s Depute Convener, Stephen Smellie slammed the approach of the Tories at Westminster.

“We all know that the Tories if re-elected will move to further limit the rights of working people in the workplace and further restrict the ability of worker’s collective organisations, trade unions, to represent them against the employers.

“We would be like a boxer in the ring with our hands tied to the ropes with two opponents knocking lumps out of us,” warned Stephen.

In contrast, he welcomed the Fair Work Convention but made it very clear that this “will not stop us looking sounding and acting like trade unions.”

“We will seek to improve our members’ conditions security and wages through collective



**Lilian Macer**

bargaining. But we will when necessary, and when members agree, take industrial action where the collective bargaining fails to produce a fair and reasonable outcome,” promised Stephen, adding, “This is what UNISON are doing at the moment in

Glasgow.”

Scottish Convener Lilian Macer, who was part of the Mather Commission, and who will sit on the Fair Work Convention, warned that many of the problems which affect the economy and society ultimately stem from a lack of worker bargaining power.

“Scotland’s increasingly low wage and insecure labour market is an inevitable consequence of falling trade union density and collective bargaining coverage.

“Workplaces will not become more welcoming places, nor society less unequal without more workers benefiting from the protection and security provided by trade unions and collective

agreements,” said Lilian.

She commended the Scottish Government’s commitment to the Fair Work Convention which “provides an opportunity to genuinely progress this work.”

She called on the Scottish Government to properly resource this the convention “to support the development and effective dissemination of a new industrial relations framework that puts trade unions at the heart of decision making.”

“We need to take the workers’ and trade union voice into the boardrooms and senior management decision making forums. And we need that voice to be loud and effective,” said Lilian.

## Pay success needs unions to work together

**The reason the Tories can justify five years of pay cuts for public service workers is simple according to UNISON’s Gordon McKay. “They don’t like you!”**

“In fact it’s far deeper than that”, he said. “They despise you”, he told the STUC.

“Every public sector worker whether it is in the NHS, education, or local government who delivers world class public services to the ill, the young or the vulnerable is a barrier to the selling off of these services to the Tory privatisers who see big profits there for the taking and they hate you for it.”

Gordon told the STUC that home carers are £2,500 a year worse off that they were five years ago. Early years workers

are £3,000 a year worse off and 48% of NHS workers in a Scottish city are struggling every day in in-work poverty

“These pay cuts for decent hardworking people who our communities rely on stand alongside a five year 30% pay rise for FTSE 100 chief executives at the same time as HSBC, Vodafone and Starbucks along with many others have avoided paying their tax with the connivance of the Tory Treasury”, said Gordon.

“And it has been over the same period that the Scottish Government has lost two and a half billion pounds by a Council Tax freeze that disproportionately benefits the wealthiest.”

Gordon said UNISON is proud of its achievements in winning the Living Wage for its



**Gordon McKay**

members in the NHS and for toploading pay awards for those most in need.

“The reality however is that our members, decent men and women, are having to make decisions about who will go

without a meal to ensure their kids get fed.

“What’s the best night to turn the heating off because they can’t have it on every night? And whether they can get another year out of that coat.”

“That’s Tory Britain 2015 and it is to the shame of us all”, he said.

“Public service workers deliver the lifeline services that we, our families and our communities rely on.

“If the UK and Scottish Government do not treat the people who deliver these services with dignity and pay them fairly then UNISON will give our members full support in taking industrial action, and the most effective way of achieving a successful industrial action strategy is where the unions in this hall work together.”

### Migrant rescue cut ‘indefensible in its inhumanity’

**M**oving an emergency motion on the tragic loss of life in the Mediterranean the previous weekend, UNISON’s Mike Kirby condemned the replacement of the search and rescue vessels run by the Italian government, that were previously saving 100,000 lives a year, by a smaller European operation.

“It is difficult to put into words the degree to which this situation is unacceptable,” slammed Mike.

“It is to the eternal shame of the UK Government that they do not support the return to the full search and rescue function. A position that is indefensible in its inhumanity.”

He called for the search and rescue operation to be reinstated as a matter of urgency, to “try to prevent the needless deaths of men, women and children on Europe’s doorstep.”

## Climate change and fuel poverty are urgent challenges

**The STUC will work with NGOs and trade unions internationally to press for a Just Transition as part of a binding international deal at the UN Conference on Climate Change this year in Paris, which is “critical for the future of the planet.”**

UNISON’s Pat Rowland told delegates that a Just Transition will ensure that the costs and benefits of switching to a low carbon economy are fairly distributed, with workers involved in planning.

“Climate change is one of the most urgent challenges we face and the United Nations talks in Paris in December are critical,” said Pat.

“UNISON represents workers in the energy industry. We want to see public, democratic ownership



**Pat Rowland**

of energy. But in the meantime, it’s important that the STUC General Council demands energy market reforms that safeguard workers and all of us as customers.

“We oppose a race to the bottom that sacrifices service quality and sees massive job losses.

Pat added, “As we all know, fuel poverty is increasing to frightening levels. Nearly a million households are in fuel poverty in Scotland, the highest levels recorded.”

“We need major investment in

energy efficiency, a win win policy for helping deliver warm homes and emissions cuts.

“We need an end to damaging austerity policies that are inflicting such harm on the most vulnerable people.

“And the Scottish Government must step up after missing the first three annual targets under Scotland’s climate change legislation, much-touted as ‘world-leading’.”

Referring to UNISON’s 2014 report ‘Warm Homes into the Future’, Pat urged, “If we want to set an example here and at the same time call on world leaders to agree in Paris to strong action, we need politicians at UK and Scottish levels to make sure energy policy and energy efficiency investment works for people and for the planet.”

## End 1 in 5 children living in poverty in Scotland

**The STUC is appalled that 100,000 children live in poverty in Scotland and will call on both the UK and Scottish Governments to take steps to end the scourge of child poverty.**

UNISON Scotland’s Kate Ramsden supporting an USDAW motion said that that the STUC had highlighted as far back as 2010 that cuts and austerity would lead to a rise in the numbers of children in poverty.

“UNISON and the trade union movement has raised at every turn the shame of a society which allows one in five of our children to grow up in poverty.

“Most of these children are growing up in families that have at least one parent working, working for poverty pay. Many

of them our members.”

“Obscene cuts to welfare and a draconian sanctions policy have seen more and more families resort to food banks. Whilst the richest 1000 in the UK have seen their wealth increase by £190 billion - money that the rest of us can only dream of.

“This can’t be right. What kind of country do we live in that allows children to go hungry when there is so much wealth around?” slammed Kate

### We want your news

SiU is your paper, we want to hear your stories. John Stevenson (Editor) 0131 558 7488, john.stevenson@unison-edinburgh.org.uk