

UNISON Matters

Aberdeenshire

April 2015

WHAT YOUR BRANCH DOES FOR YOU

Aberdeenshire UNISON organises within Aberdeenshire Council but also in 53 other employers mainly in the North East of Scotland but some members are throughout Scotland from Ayr to Inverness. We have a number of Officers and Stewards that assist individuals through grievances, disciplinaries etc.

We also negotiate on Pay, Reviews, Working Groups, Legislation and much more.

Much work goes on behind the scenes, keeping us fully occupied, whether it is looking at the recent Holiday Pay issue, to changes to the ways of working or Health and Social Care Integration. Some of the Branch are involved in nationally negotiating pay and

other issues not just for local members but for all public service workers in Scotland.

UNISON nationally negotiates and campaigns on issues throughout Scotland and Britain to get the best deal possible for Local Government workers.

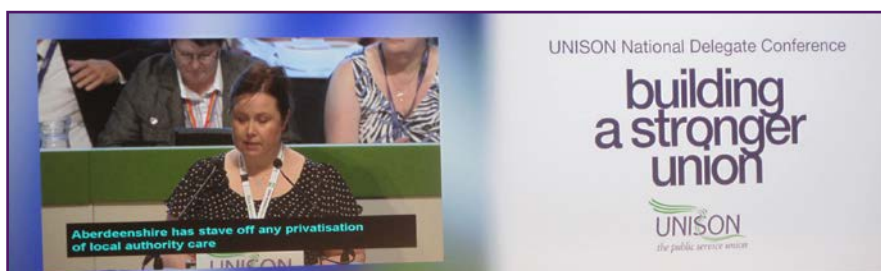
In this newsletter we tell you what the branch



has been doing on behalf of our members over the past year and some of the things we will be doing in the year ahead.

But remember UNISON relies on you to tell us what matters to you and to respond to questions and surveys so that we truly have the opinion of our membership.

Remember you are the union, and the more members we have the more CLOUT.



UNISON Aberdeenshire Monthly Surgeries

Ever wanted to ask about a workplace issue, or find out more about UNISON and how it represents you?

Interested in finding out how you can get training to become active in your UNISON Branch?

Woodhill House, ABERDEEN

Every second Thursday in the month

Gordon House, INVERURIE

Thursday 9th April	Wednesday 13th May	Wednesday 10th June	Thursday 9th July
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Viewmount, STONEHAVEN

Wednesday 1st April	Wednesday 6th May	Wednesday 3rd June	Wednesday 1st July
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All 12.30 - 1.30

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE INTEGRATION

The branch has been fully involved in the planning and preparation for the integration of Health and Social Care, to protect the interests of our members, after the Scottish Government passed legislation to create a joint body for the delivery of Health and Social Care for each Local Government area in Scotland.

Branch Secretary, Inez Teece has taken a lead on this and said, "What this means is that Aberdeenshire Council and Grampian Health will now be a joint body or partnership where all Adult Care will be delivered by a single organisation.

"Work started on this process 18 months ago.

"What this means for staff is that they will remain employed by their current employer but work will be delivered from this joint body. Terms and Conditions, pay etc will remain the same but staff will be working alongside colleagues from a different employer on potentially different pay and conditions."

"This is a legislative change and cannot be undone.

"In Aberdeenshire, UNISON has been involved throughout all aspects of preparation and the work leading up to the formation of the Joint Board which will come into law on 1st April 2016. We have worked closely with our UNISON colleagues in Health.

"UNISON has a seat as an advisor on the Transitional Leadership Group, a group where decisions are made about what services are included and how they will be delivered. UNISON sits on the Strategic Leadership Group which looks at who will be delivering the Services in the future.



"UNISON is an active participant in the Communications Group, making sure the workforce in all organisations know what is happening.

"UNISON has and continues to respond to situations and play an active role in ensuring the rights and working conditions for all staff are protected.

"This is one of the biggest changes to the way Services will be delivered and UNISON is at the forefront ensuring that staff have a say on what happens.

"UNISON will continue through the process and participate fully to ensure our members are fully protected," promised Inez.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR ISSUES

The branch has voluntary and private sector-employed members in over 50 different employers. This poses challenges for representing and bargaining on behalf of these members since we have very few workplace reps in this sector.

UNISON members generally contact the branch for help with specific issues, like a disciplinary investigation, rather than having regular, constructive dialogue with employers. There are continuing issues about low pay and keeping up with the cost of living, violence and aggression at work (particularly in the care sector) and lack of awareness of legal rights, including holiday pay, sick pay, maternity and paternity rights and reasonable adjustments if a member has health issues.

Our biggest voluntary sector membership is in Cornerstone, which has projects all over Scotland. Over the last year Cornerstone stewards, supported by Regional Organiser John Hackett, have been negotiating updated HR policies and procedures. Cornerstone is now a Living Wage employer thanks to UNISON pressure. We will carry on the fight for terms and conditions changes in Cornerstone to improve members' position



after radical restructuring over the last couple of years.

The branch is currently exploring ways to improve the support given to members employed in the private and voluntary sector. We want to tackle bad employment practices and members' lack of awareness of their rights before members find themselves at a disciplinary meeting. We would welcome your ideas on how to do this. Please get in touch with Inez Teece, your branch secretary at: **01224 620 624.**

BRANCH SUCCESS AT SCOTTISH COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS

Following on from their success at the 2013 Scottish Communications Awards, the branch has won a silver and a bronze in the 2014 awards.

The branch took the UIA sponsored second prize in the Best Campaigns category, for the campaign to recruit members in Children and Families Social Work teams. Judges called it, "the best planned out and evaluated campaign," and added, "In an object lesson in building on an issue – this one was the social work contempt of court issue - the branch went out on a programme of visits to social work workplaces using that issue to engage staff and recruit members and contacts."

The Branch newsletter was awarded a bronze award in the best publications section and was described by judges as, "the best designed magazine that makes great use of local and national news. The feature on austerity is a great example of using Scottish resources."



Kate receives the silver award from Sarah McLelland, UIS

The £150 prize goes to UNISON Welfare

DESIGN AND PHOTOGRAPHY SERVICES TO STAY IN-HOUSE AFTER UNISON PRESSURE

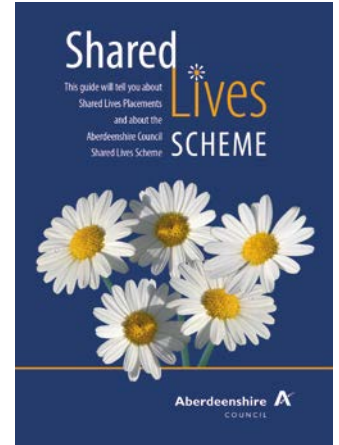
Aberdeenshire Council ditched plans to outsource its design and photography service after the branch sent a briefing out to all councillors making the case for in-house provision. The design service will now be formally reviewed by the council.

Inez Teece, Branch Secretary said, "We are very pleased that the council listened to UNISON's concerns and has agreed to keep the design and photography services in-house. We made the case that outsourcing rarely if ever saves money and often creates more expense if services, as often happens, have to be brought back in house.

"We are disappointed that the council still plans to outsource the print service and we will continue to make the arguments that this is a mistake which may very well come back to bite the council and council tax payers. We are also concerned that outsourcing the printing of confidential material risks breaches and we

hope the council will not fall foul of this, given the sensitivity of some of its information both personal and commercial.

"We know that job losses are being considered in the Design team and we



For full details and entry forms please visit www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/foodawards
email grampianfoodforum@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

are very clear that if these go ahead the design service will be unable to provide the excellent service that it currently does and that other parts of the council – those that use the design service – will suffer."

ETHICAL CARE

UNISON has developed an Ethical Care Charter which aims to ensure that an excellent Home Care service is provided by well paid, respected workers regardless of who they work for. It calls for the living wage and proper training and support for staff to make sure that service users get the highest quality of service.

As such the branch has been working with both Officials and Elected Members to urge the Council to adopt this charter.



2015 UNISON PAY CAMPAIGN



Your pay matters and for this reason UNISON campaigns on your behalf each year for better pay. Meetings are held each year in Scotland and the UK between COSLA the association representing the local councils and the trade unions UNISON, UNITE and GMB representing you and your colleagues.

Over the last 6 years these meetings have been held with the growing issue of reducing council budgets.

Changes to the UK Government's deficit reduction programme mean that we are now only half way through a nine year programme of austerity. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), estimates that real per capita spending on public services will be cut by 23% between

Spending on public services cut by 23% will be at it's lowest since 1948

2007/8 - 2018/19. This will reduce spending on public services to its lowest share of GDP since 1948, to £3,880 per head in 2014/15 prices.

Around 60% of cuts will be delivered in the next parliament.



The current government plan to make further cuts of 60% in the next parliament

This is the background to the pay negotiations upon which you depend upon for the money to put a roof over your head, feed you and your family and have a life to live. While in the private sector the High Pay Centre estimates that Chief Executives of the top 100 Stock Exchange-quoted companies are paid an average of £4.72 million per year.

The 2015 Pay Campaign is being planned and will include again a cost of living pay increase, and deletion of the spinal column points below the level of the Living Wage. The success of the 2015 pay negotiations depend upon your help to support it. Watch out for further information on how you can do this.

Steven Gray
Aberdeenshire UNISON

WE COULD HELP YOU **SAVE ON YOUR INSURANCE**

As a UNISON member

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Lines are open 8.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat*



*For quality and protection purposes your call will be recorded. UNISON is an Introducer Appointed Representative of UJA (Insurance) Ltd. and UJA (Insurance Services) Ltd. UJA Travel and Pet Insurance are provided by third parties, see www.uia.co.uk/terms-conditions for details. All these companies are authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

CONGRATULATIONS 'TWO FAB LADIES'



UNISON member, Sheila

Waterhouse and a friend have completed their challenge and raised over £7000 in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.

They travelled to Nepal for an intensive 8 day trek in the Annapurna region of the Himalayas.

“You protect children, we’ll protect you”

Branch makes workplace visits to children and family social work teams

The Branch will make a second round of workplace visits to all the Children and Families Social Work Teams across Aberdeenshire early this year as a follow up to successful visits last year. The aim of these visits is to recognise the work of our members and to recruit more social work staff to the union.



Lyndsey Wallace, Local Organiser said, “Once again, we will be taking round cupcakes for our members to thank them for the work they do to protect our most vulnerable children and their families.

“Like last year, we also want to encourage non-members to join UNISON to have the protection of the union behind them as they undertake the increasingly complex but very important work that they do.

“UNISON promotes this important role of our members in social work and we believe that we have had some success in improving the profile of social work in the media and in promoting a better understanding of the work done by social work members and the pressures they face.”

Last year’s visits come in the wake of a verdict in the Sheriff Court in Edinburgh where two social work staff were held individually to be in contempt of court, and expenses awarded against them. Similar situations have arisen for members in other parts of the country and locally.

UNISON has supported members throughout this process, has issued guidance for social work and other members. UNISON has welcomed the recent judgement in the Court of Session

which has quashed the contempt ruling on both social work members on appeal. Branch Chair, Kate Ramsden, herself a social worker and a member of the UNISON Scotland’s Social Work Issues Group said, “We wanted to make sure that all Children and Families staff had the chance to join UNISON to get the protection of the union should they need it.



“In all 28 new members joined UNISON during our visits last year and we got a clear message from members that they welcomed the chance to meet with us and to raise issues, and would like us to do it again. That’s why we are re-visiting workplaces, and this time, as well as giving non-members a chance to join we are also hoping to persuade some existing members to become stewards.”



LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in Scotland is a funded, defined benefit, statutory occupational pension scheme and it is one of the main public service pension schemes in Scotland.

F.A.Q.



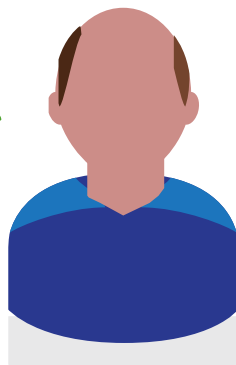
Why is another new scheme being introduced?

The UK government announced the intention to make changes to public sector pensions, including the LGPS when they came into office. The UK government asked Lord Hutton to chair a commission on reform of public sector

pension schemes.

Following publication of that report, changes were proposed to all the main public sector pension schemes, including the LGPS. In November 2013, Local authority employers and trade unions reached agreement on the new design of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in Scotland.

Are there likely to be further changes in the future?



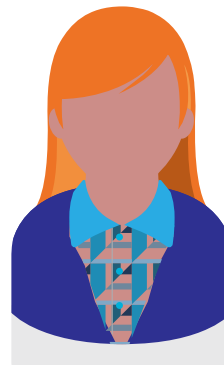
The intention of unions and employers is to keep the cost of LGPS 2015 stable so that further fundamental changes are not needed. The agreement reached set out a two stage process to scheme reform. The first stage centred on benefit design. The second focuses on cost management and reform to the governance of the scheme including the involvement of employers, trade unions and members in the decision-making and running of the LGPS.

Will my current benefits change?



The new scheme (LGPS 2015) will apply to all membership that builds up on and after 1 April 2015. The regulations for the new scheme passed into law by Scottish Ministers in June 2014 (coming into force 1 April 2015) with regulations covering protections for existing members (before April 2015) expected later in 2014.

When is the new scheme being introduced?



All pensions in payment or built up before April 2015 are protected. If you are currently in receipt of a pension or have left with a deferred pension the changes from April 2015 do not affect you unless you rejoin the Scheme.

If you are paying into the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) you will automatically be in the new scheme from 1 April 2015. All benefits built up before April 2015, will continue to be based on your final year's pay when you leave the Scheme as these benefits were built up in the final salary scheme. This includes a protected Normal Pension Age for payment of those benefits. The protected Normal Pension Age is age 65 (except for a very small number of members with an earlier protected age of 60).

If you are paying into the Scheme and have deferred and/or pensioner membership then only one death grant will be paid. This will be whichever is the highest amount of either the active membership or any deferred and/or pensioner membership added together.

UNISON NURSERY NURSE WORKING GROUP

Two Nursery Nurse members' meetings were held in February to discuss the impact of the government's changes to deliver 600 hours nursery provision to each child. UNISON members have had their administration time and their lunch breaks reduced to enable the extra hours to be delivered within their 35 hour working week. This has had a huge impact on communication, planning, setting up, cleaning and even getting their lunch break.

Assistant Branch Secretary, Susan Kennedy, who is leading on this campaign said, "Our members' workloads and stress levels have been further increased by the removal of Nursery Teaching staff at several locations, where as yet no concrete measures have been put into place to compensate and for which we await a formal consultation.

"Our Aberdeenshire UNISON members all have the knowledge and experience within the nursery settings, yet neither the Government or the Council have seen fit to properly recognise the importance of their views or worth over Early Years changes.

"The Nursery Nurse Working Group will be sending a report to Aberdeenshire Council to highlight the issues around the 600hrs and current situation with the removal of teaching staff. The group would ideally like a voice and practitioner representation on the Early Years groups."

Susan added, "The working group is open to all our Nursery Nurse members and we are always happy to welcome new members. More meetings are being planned over the next few months across all the CSN's, and details will be emailed out and advertised on the website at aberdeenshireunison.com. The 'group email' itself has been an invaluable tool for sharing information and dealing with various issues swiftly.



UNISON: HERE WHEN YOU NEED US

Write to: UNISON Aberdeenshire, Grampian Resource Centre,
7 Alford Place, Aberdeen AB10 1YD Call: 01224 620 624
or email: aberdeenshire@unison.co.uk www.aberdeenshireunison.com