

# UNISON Matters

Aberdeenshire

Winter 2016

## WE CARE, DO YOU?

Christmas good wishes to all our members and their families



Scotland needs a quality home care service to meet the growing demand and also ensures that patients who shouldn't be in hospital are cared for at home. While there is a welcome commitment to address this, the service at present is struggling.

This is reinforced in a report UNISON Scotland has published. *'We care, do you?'* It looks at the state of social care in Scotland and asks the staff who deliver the service to describe their experiences. The survey revealed:

- 9 in 10 (88%) said they were limited to specific times for client visits, with many reporting this was too short a period to properly cater to a client's needs.
- 4 in 5 said they believe the service has been affected by budget cuts or privatisation with carers saying the emphasis was now on "quantity rather than quality".
- Over a quarter (26%) said they were not paid for their

travelling time.

- Two thirds (66.5%) said they did not have anywhere to go between visits to have a meal, hot drink or toilet break.
- Nearly half (43%) said they worked longer than their contracted hours.

### KEY POINTS:

- The Ethical Care Charter was developed to provide a better quality and dignified care service
- This should be delivered by a stable, well paid and trained workforce
- All Councils

are urged to adopt the Charter and become Ethical Care Councils

- All councils should insist that their contractors pay the Scottish Living Wage.

Renfrewshire Council has signed the Charter, City of Edinburgh and Aberdeenshire are almost ready to adopt it and others have agreed in principle.



## ABERDEENSHIRE FOODBANKS CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Please see support Aberdeenshire's Foodbanks by donating food for families at supermarket collection point near you.

Christmas is a tough time for families on low pay. Parents who relied on the free school meals to feed their children will find themselves struggling over the Christmas school holidays to provide meals out of their limited funds.

With rising heating and other costs this Christmas families on low pay really need our help. You can provide this help by donating a range of

food including biscuits to the instore foodbank collection point at your local Tescos or Morrisons.

The foodbanks at Banchory, Inverurie, Ellon and Huntly provide three-day emergency food supplies to people in crisis last year. 1 in 5 people live below the poverty line. You can help make their Christmas better.

[aberdeenshiresouth.foodbank.org.uk/](http://aberdeenshiresouth.foodbank.org.uk/)

[aberdeenshirenorth.foodbank.org.uk/](http://aberdeenshirenorth.foodbank.org.uk/)



# 'NAE BAD FOR AN ABERDEENSHIRE LASS!'

I was honoured and amazed to find myself co-chairing 2 meetings and a workshop in Brighton at a National UNISON Conference? To me it seemed impossible but that is exactly what I did at the National Disabled Members Conference this year!

I co-chaired the Women Caucus meeting, the Scottish Delegate meeting and the workshop *'Don't target me I'm disabled'* which was basically looking at workplace reorganisation and discrimination. I enjoyed all three although they were all very different and hard work. Our chairperson in Aberdeenshire Kate Ramsden is a great role model for me and I hope to work as hard as Kate and deliver outcomes to the same high standard.

There were a lot of motions tabled around mental health issues as they are so relevant and need to be discussed in an open forum. I moved the amendment on *'Reasonable Adjustments and Sickness Absence Policies'* and how it is important for Disabled Members to be able to attend disability related medical leave without it being classed as sick leave. Branches need to negotiate UNISON model of Disability Leave with employers. Both the motion and the amendment were passed.

The Annual National Disabled Members Conference nominates two delegates to go to each of six service groups (Community, WET+Energy, Health, Higher Education, Local government, and Police + Justice) conferences the following year on their behalf. The conference also elects two delegates to go to the National Delegate Conference in Brighton in June. I was approached several times to stand for the Local Government and National Conferences which I duly did -not expecting to be successful in either but as it turned out after the elections I was successful in both! I was also asked to stand for the committee called *'Standing Orders'* which oversees conferences and ensures they are ran appropriately and again I was elected. Although I realise it involves a lot of hard work I am so thrilled and honoured about these elections and being recognised in this way - on a personal level, a branch level and a Scottish level! I thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience of being stretched, and meeting the expectations placed on me! Or putting it another way *'nae bad for an Aberdeenshire lass!'*



*Kathleen Kennedy (Equalities Officer)*

## LEISURE/CULTURE TRUST OR ARMS LENGTH EXTERNAL ORGANISATION (ALEO)

**A**berdeenshire Council is investigating the possibility/probability of setting up an ALEO for Leisure, Culture, Libraries, and Community Learning etc.

The branch has fought hard against similar proposals over the last six years; with previous attempts to set up a trust being abandoned by the council.

We have seen that even when an ALEO has been set up to run and manage services, that it is always the council that

is blamed or held to account when things go wrong.

Officers will be working within the council to fight these proposals to ensure that Aberdeenshire has the best services provided by the best staff that are valued.

The ELL committee met and discussed at length the proposals and asked probing questions, councillors expressed concerns about democratic control of services and what would happen if

the council no longer directly delivered these services.

Full council met on 25th November to discuss this issue and have asked that a public consultation be carried out which will happen between now and full council in January. Already decided is that CLD will no longer be included.

Your unison representatives continue to fight for jobs and services and will do our best to protect both in the coming months.

## Meet Your Branch Officers

Chair	Kate Ramsden	Branch Development Officer	Steve Gray
Vice Chair	Steve Gray	Communication Officer	Kate Ramsden
Branch Secretary	Inez Teece	International Officer	Bob Slessor
Assistant branch Secretary	Susan Kennedy	Equalities Officer	Kathleen Kennedy
Assistant Branch Secretary	Bill Edwards	Labour Link Officer	Kate Ramsden
Treasurer	Ann Gray	Magazine Editor	Morag Lawrence
Retired Members Officer	Bob Revie	Education Officer	Morag Lawrence
Health & Safety Officer	Richard Lawrence	Health & Safety Officer	Tricia Morrison

Find out there contact details by calling: 01224 620 624 or email: [aberdeenshire@unison.co.uk](mailto:aberdeenshire@unison.co.uk)

## (SOG's) 'self-organised groups'

*A voice for people who are traditionally under represented.*

These groups consist of Women, Black Members, Disabled Members and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Members (LGBT).

In addition, there are important structures for two other groups - Young Members (who are up to 26 year old) and Retired Members.

*All groups focus on the issues that affect their members.*

Aberdeenshire Branch would like to hear from anyone who is interested in being involved with any of these groups.

If you are interested get in touch with our Equality Officer

Kathleen Kennedy on 01224 664944 or email her:

[Kathleen.kennedy@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:Kathleen.kennedy@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)



## WOT, NO STEWARD?

In an ideal world each workplace and each distinct group of workers would be represented by a steward of its own choosing. UNISON stewards are elected (or railroaded into the role) by colleagues from among their own ranks. Stewards are not parachuted in from above and certainly stewards are not imposed by the branch committee.

UNISON is a DIY union. (Lay-member led) that is it is run by employees of the workplace it represents and not UNISON employees. They undertake trade union work out of a sense of If they do not elect a steward to represent their workplace, they and their colleagues will not be best represent. A branch officer or steward from another section would be available to deal with any problems. However, that person may not have as firm a grasp of the particular circumstances as one of your own colleagues.

Once elected, workplace stewards are entitled to attend monthly meetings of the branch committee. Indeed, stewards receive proper training from UNISON, and are supported and mentored while gaining experience and confidence in representing members and resolving their problems. UNISON stewards are entitled to facility time off at full pay – to engage in UNISON duties, which are undertaken during the ordinary working day. Also allowed is time off for attendance at steward training courses.

### What Does the Role involve

- Being the first point of contact for members in your workplace
- Representing/ accompanying members in meetings and hearings
- Organising and advising members around workplace issues
- Keeping members informed of latest developments
- Helping to recruit new members and retain existing members
- Encouraging existing members to become active at a local, regional or national level
- The role includes all or **any** of the above mentioned duties.

## WHAT WOULD I GET OUT OF THE ROLE?

- It would give you a deeper understanding of employment law as well as group and individual rights within the workplace, including local and national issues, concerns and campaigns
- There are regular training opportunities that will help you to develop as an individual
- You will gain a sense of personal satisfaction from helping others, having a positive input and changing things for the better.
- The Branch will support you all the way and be on hand to advise you, provide you with information regarding training opportunities as well as covering all expenses incurred as a result of being a steward.
- New stewards are encouraged to attend an introductory course. There is also training available on how to handle grievances and disciplinary matters, if representing members is something you'd be interested in.

Simply get in touch with us and let us know you're interested. We will support you from there.

## 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](mailto:aberdeenshire@unison.co.uk) [www.aberdeenshireunison.com](http://www.aberdeenshireunison.com)