



# UNISON Matters

Aberdeenshire

March 2014

## Terms & Conditions

The vote was to accept 73.3% for 26.6% against



### Comments

Your comments were mostly about the reduction in unsocial hours and weekend working rates. Some staff stand to lose of up to £3,000 per year these are predominantly low paid women workers.

The loss of the mileage lump sum is not popular but the increase to 45p for mileage is welcomed.

Losing the last working day as a public holiday is a step too far for some especially as some local authorities are planning to close between Christmas and New Year.

Changes to standby/callout payments has caused confusion with many feeling it is unfair and will make it difficult to get cover.

Most worrying is the tensions caused by the belief that office workers are not losing out.

### Conclusion

The majority of votes were to accept the revised terms and conditions. Therefore UNISON members in Aberdeenshire have accepted these proposals.

This being said there is significant concerns for those working 24/7, 365 days a year and the amount of income they stand to lose.

The ability to attract and recruit good quality staff could be challenged by these proposals.

A significant issue for UNISON is the bad feelings created between groups of staff.

UNISON has requested that these issues are addressed by Aberdeenshire Council.

A full copy of the report is available on: [www.aberdeenshireunison.com](http://www.aberdeenshireunison.com)

Introducing your new Stewards who have just completed their training.



Ashok Mehta



John Leishman



James Mulholland



Kathleen Kennedy

# UNISON: HERE WHEN YOU NEED US

# Pensions Jargon Buster by James Mullholand

We've all been there, reading an annual statement for our pension or an article in a newspaper, so here is a short guide to pensions language that will help you understand what these phrases mean to you and your pension.

**Accrual rate,** This is the rate at which your pension builds up, normally shown as a percentage of your annual salary per year of membership, eg 1/60th, which means for each year you are a member of the scheme, your pension accumulates by 1/60th of your salary, so that after 30 years membership, your pension would be 30/60th (or half) your salary. With the change to 1/49th you will only have to work for 25 years to get half your salary.

**Actuaries,** These are the people who work in the background of all pension schemes to make sure the scheme has enough money to pay its liabilities (the amount of pension it has to pay out).

**Actuarial reduction,** If someone wants to get their pension paid to them earlier than their official retirement age (not an ill health retirement), eg they wanted to retire at 60 instead of 65, the pension scheme would have to pay the pension for an additional 5 years which would cost money, so the scheme would apply a reduction in your benefits.

**Pensionable pay,** This is the amount of your salary which is pensionable. This would not normally include overtime payments.

**Final salary pension scheme,** This is a type of pension scheme where

your pension is based upon your final years salary or your salary over your last couple of years of service averaged out, multiplied by your years of service and accrual rate.

**Career average salary scheme (CARE),** This type of scheme is the same as the final salary scheme except that the benefits are calculated on your career average salary rather than your final salary. CARE schemes can be better for lower paid workers and for people whose salary may go down in the last few years before retirement.

**Benefits,** This means what you gain from being a member of the scheme and they will typically include – a pension on retirement.

**Contributions,** How much you pay into the scheme. This is normally a percentage of your pensionable pay.

**AVC & FSAVC,** These stand for Additional Voluntary Contributions & Freestanding Additional Voluntary Contributions. These are extra contributions to a pension scheme over and above the normal percentage of your pensionable salary which you may pay into the scheme.

**Transferring in and out,** If you no longer wish to be a member of a pension scheme, you can stop paying in and transfer your accrued benefits to another scheme and likewise it may be possible to transfer an old pension scheme fund you have into your current scheme. Before considering either of these, you must contact your scheme and discuss it with them and also seek independent financial advice

before making any switch.

**Defined contribution schemes,** A final salary or CARE scheme is known as a defined benefit scheme. There is another type of scheme known as a defined contribution scheme, you will also see these called private pensions, stakeholder pensions & SIPP's (self invested personal pensions). These are generally the type of scheme you will find in the private sector. The biggest difference between these schemes and final salary/ CARE schemes is that you do not know what pension you will get when you retire. You pay your money into it and this money is invested on your behalf by the pension provider (such as Aviva, L&G, Zurich etc).

When you retire, the investments are cashed in and you are left with a sum of money (known as your pension pot) which is entirely dependent on how the investments performed, at this point you can take 25% of that sum as a tax free lump sum but the rest must then be converted into an annuity, which is an income for life. You buy an annuity by handing over your pension pot to an insurance company or other annuity provider and they will then pay you an income for the rest of your life.

Currently, annuity rates are at rock bottom and if you are a 60 year old man today, a pension pot of £100,000.00 will buy you an annual income of £5051.00.

Check:

[www.aberdeenshireunison.com](http://www.aberdeenshireunison.com) for further information and web links

## Scottish Pay Campaign

Members may have seen press reports about CoSLA imposing a two year 1% pay offer.

CoSLA's criticism of UNISON "dragging its feet" is nonsense. The real fact is that CoSLA changed the deal from a one year offer to two years **after** the one year deal had been accepted by UNISON members in a ballot.

UNISON has dismissed COSLA's delay claims as 'utter nonsense' and says the organisation's decision to rip up its one year pay offer is a kick in the teeth for hardworking council staff.

The union reacted angrily to COSLA's plans to impose terms on workers for a two year period - completely outwith the bargaining framework - instead of honouring their agreement of one per cent for 2013/14.

Dougie Black, UNISON's regional organiser, said:

"COSLA's claims that UNISON is dragging its heels is utter nonsense.

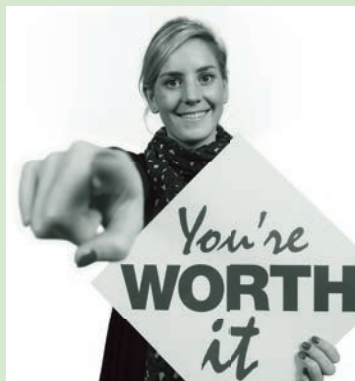
"Our members were balloted and had accepted COSLA's one year pay offer. It's completely unacceptable for COSLA to renege on the deal and it's a real kick in the teeth for Scotland's council staff who work hard to deliver Scotland's council services.

"Imposing a deal is no way to conduct bargaining and our members deserve more than these underhand tactics. COSLA needs to get back around the negotiating table and conduct their business in a fair, open and transparent manner and show our members the respect they deserve."

UNISON has now lodged a pay claim for 2013/14 asking for an increase of £1 ph and a consolidation of the living wage.

## UNISON's "We're Worth It" Campaign

We know that many of our members are lying awake at night worrying about their job or how to make ends meet while their pay is frozen but prices soar.



UNISON is helping by making sure pay stays at the top of the agenda, and continuing to campaign for better and fairer pay.

### Some facts for you:

The number of people earning less than a living wage rose from 3.4m in 2009 to 4.8m in 2012.

For every £1 cut from public spending, £1.70 of private sector economic activity is lost.

Average pay increases for FTSE 100 directors rose by 27% in 2012 - 15 times the average increase for employees.

The real value of UK pay packets has fallen by 7% since the 2008 crash, the longest fall in real wages since the 1870s.

**A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL THE MEMBERS WHO TOOK STRIKE ACTION IN 2011 OVER THE THREAT TO OUR PENSIONS.**

I know this was ages ago but your action along with the excellent work of our negotiators in UNISON has brought about the recently accepted offer on our pensions.



# Working Time & Stress Survey Report

Branch will work in partnership with council Health and Safety team to address stress at work

Assistant Secretary, Susan Kennedy met with Pam Bruce and Alison Mackay of the council's Health and Safety team on 6th November to discuss the findings of the Branch's Stress Survey and to agree a way forward.



The responses to UNISON's survey, which was issued to all members through the UNISON Matters newsletter, shows that many members are struggling with increased workloads, deadlines, time

pressures and worry about job security.

**From the survey, these key points were found: At least half of those who filled in the survey are stressed by deadlines and time pressures in the workplace:**

Education, Learning & Leisure	50%,
Housing & Social Work	62%
Infrastructure Services	65%
Corporate Services	76%

**There is significant concern about job security:**

Education, Learning & Leisure	50%,
Housing & Social Work	47%
Infrastructure Services	45%
Corporate Services	64%

**A third of those in Housing & Social Work feel they cannot cope with the amount of work (34%)**

## Aberdeenshire Branch Actions

The branch has circulated the report to the Council's Senior Management Team and will meet to discuss a Council wide strategy for stress monitoring and management for employees.

The Stress Survey links in with the national UNISON Campaign "What keeps you awake at night" [www.unison.org.uk/news/what-keeps-you-awake-at-night](http://www.unison.org.uk/news/what-keeps-you-awake-at-night). The Stress Survey report and the national UNISON Campaign is now on the branch website. There will be a review in May 2014 with a follow up Stress Survey by Stewards if the Council fails to prepare and deliver a Stress Monitoring and Management process which complies with appropriate legislation and best practice.

**Tell us what UNISON has done for you. The story we feature in the next issue will win you £20.00. We will keep the story anonymous unless you choose otherwise. Send your story to Aberdeenshire UNISON, 7 Alford Place, Aberdeen, AB10 1ZQ**



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