

UNISON Matters

Aberdeenshire

September 2014

PAY — VOTE YES

USE YOUR VOTE for FAIR PAY
YES to FAIR PAY
 Industrial action ballot 2014
 9 to 29 September

The Branch is gearing up to win a YES vote in the forthcoming strike ballot for fair pay. Following a 65% yes vote in a consultative ballot, UNISON Scotland will ballot council members on industrial action. The ballot will be held from 9th to 29th September 2014.

The Branch has sent out Briefings to all members encouraging you to vote and explaining why UNISON is calling for a YES vote.

The Branch is also encouraging members to write to their councillors calling for fair pay and has sent out a model letter for you to use to write to your councillor.

The Branch has held two members' meetings, the first in 53 Windmill Street, Peterhead on 21st August and the second on 25th August at Gordon House, Inverurie, both from 12-2pm. All members were

encouraged to come along and hear why you need to vote in the ballot and why UNISON is calling for a YES vote.

Inez Teece, Branch Secretary said, "This year's imposition of a 1% pay increase was made without reference to the agreed bargaining machinery.

"This can't go on. We need to get back to proper negotiations with the Scottish employers on pay.

"We have all seen the value of our wages drop in real terms. Everything else has increased in price while our wages have stagnated "We are continually told that the economy is recovering, yet for local government employees the prospects continue to be as bleak as ever."

Inez added, "This is a national Scottish fight and we must ensure that we deliver a resounding YES so that all local government employees across Scotland receive a fair wage for a fair days work."

In the past 10 years increases in the cost of living have risen by: Childcare 37% / Rent 26% / Food 24% / Energy bills 39% / Public transport 30%



However Local Government Pay has NOT increased at the same rate!!



Cost of Living Comparisons April 2014

Aberdeenshire	Scotland	UK
Housing		
£220,000	£161,402	£206,884
Earnings average Per year		
£26,000	£26,432	£26,884
Groceries average Monthly cost per Family of 4		
£435	£416	£335
Utilities average Per year Gas, electric, oil		
£1700	£1424	£1290
Taxi Fare 1 mile journey		
£2.40	£1.20	£1.25

The Worth It Campaign is all about getting a fair deal for public service workers. One of the issues so often swept under the carpet is how contracting-out damages service quality and drives down the terms and conditions of workers. Outsourcing organisations often make fairytale promises at the start of a contract but end up making workers and service users pay for their failures.



Morag, Mike, Inez, Kathleen & Kate dressing up as some of Aberdeenshire's most important employees before speaking to staff in Woodhill house where we collected many signed postcards including one from Colin Mackenzie our Chief Executive.

AGM 2014

held on wednesday 19 february 2014

“We’re Worth it”


Members attending the 2014 AGM threw their weight behind actions to protect members in the workplace and to support their standards of living, at a time of cuts and change for the workforce in the council and the voluntary sector.

The AGM unanimously supported calls to campaign for affordable housing and for decent pay, alongside measures to monitor the effect of cuts and to press for fairer funding for local government. Members heard of the new threats to social workers and others working to protect children; and of the unreasonable expectations on some of our lowest paid staff to administer medications to children.


Changes overriding issue

Members heard of the challenges which the Branch has faced over the past year, in which “Changes have been the overriding issue.”

Speaking to her annual report, Branch Secretary, Inez Teece, told the meeting “Changes are difficult for us at the best of times, but when that change is aimed at saving money, losing jobs, cutting pay and



Susan speaking on staff being asked to administer medication to children



Steve speaking on the lack of affordable housing

increasing workloads then change is something we quite rightly resist.”

She spoke of the highs and more frequent lows throughout the year. Of a new pension scheme that does look as if it will benefit most members, with improved accrual rates and based on a career average – to an imposed pay increase of 1% which is the equivalent of a pay cut of almost 16% when you take increased prices into account.

A full report on: www.aberdeenshireunison.com

New Compulsory Pension Enrolment

A brief explanation of how this might affect you as your employer is obliged to enrol those eligible in the workplace who are not already in the pension scheme

If you are:

- Are at least 22 years old.
- Have not reached state pension age.
- Earn more than £9440.00 gross pensionable salary per year
- Work, or ordinarily work, in the UK.

If you meet all the above criteria and are not currently a member of a workplace pension, your employer must auto enrol you in the workplace pension. You may previously have opted out of joining your employers pension scheme, however,

if your circumstances change such as a pay rise taking you over the minimum limit or you opted out of the scheme more than 3 years ago, you will be auto enrolled into the scheme.

You can still opt out but you need to act promptly or at least within 31 days.

Your employer will write to you letting you know that you have been enrolled in the pension scheme. Any delay may result in you not receiving back any funds you have paid into the pension scheme.

If you need to borrow money don't add to the massive profits of the pay day loan companies.



grampian
credit union

All members of UNISON who live or work in Aberdeen and Grampian can join Grampian Credit Union for savings, loans and financial services.

Services available from Grampian Credit Union now include:

- Adult, Junior and Christmas savings accounts
- Saving via direct debit - from £10.00 per month
- Range of flexible loans, - first loans £200 to £5,000
- Current Account offering full banking facilities, plus VISA debit card
- Member only insurance products via partner CUNA Mutual
- Secure website to check balances - phone for savings withdrawals
- Membership forms can be downloaded from user-friendly website
- Deposits up to £85,000 covered by Financial Services Compensation Scheme, similar to all banks and building societies
- Open to everyone living or working in Aberdeen
- and Grampian, so family members can also join Credit Union.
- Members lottery, plus rewards for recommending new members

Office at 224-226 Holburn Street, Aberdeen AB10 6DB, Tel 01224 576990 Website: www.grampiancreditunion.co.uk Open Mon-Fri 9.30am to 4.30pm

Contact us on admin@grampiancreditunion.co.uk

Branch Successes

The day to day work of your colleagues who have taken on the role of Officers and Stewards of the branch.

Here are just a few examples of recent wins for the branch.

- There have been a number of dismissals found to be unfair with the employee being given the choice of retuning to work or offered redundancy package.
- One of our officers argued successfully for a member to be awarded an Ill health pension as opposed to leaving with nothing.
- Mostly though your Steward is there to listen and advise on everyday work issues. They can then pass on your opinions at our branch meetings so that we can decide how best to represent your views at Scottish & National meetings.

Any members who would like to get more involved and help themselves and their colleagues could become a Contact, Steward, or Officer.

Please get in touch and find out about the training available to equip you for this.

These courses are all free for members and can be undertaken in working hours with any expenses such as travel being refundable.

UNISON: HERE WHEN YOU NEED US

Write to: UNISON Aberdeenshire, Grampian Resource Centre, 7 Alford Place, Aberdeen

Call: 01224 620 624 or Email: Aberdeenshire@unison.co.uk

Gold awards for Our Branch

Your branch was awarded top honours twice at the UNISON Scotland Communications Awards.



Kate Ramsden won yet again with the branch web site while I (Morag Lawrence) won with the branch newsletter. We were both delighted and decided to donate the winnings of £150.00 each to charity.



Conference 2014

Kate Ramsden, Branch Chair was the only delegate to speak this year, speaking in the pay debate where she said:

"We must help our members to see that we need to act now – that we need to take collective action not just for ourselves but for our lowest paid members and for our service users."

Kate spoke again on Contempt of Court Proceedings against council staff involved in Child Care and Child Protection.

We have a law in Scotland that says the child's welfare is paramount. But in some recent cases the judge has said that doesn't apply in contempt cases, resulting in our members facing contempt proceedings for doing their job.

"UNISON did not just stand up with legal help. It stood up to defend our members' professionalism. This is the union for social workers," said Kate.



The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the UNISON Branch

Action around Scotland Meat Inspectors Strike

Meat hygiene inspectors, vets and support staff are embarking on two days of strike action from August 26th in a long-running dispute over pay.

Staff in slaughterhouses work in some of the most dirty, difficult and stressful conditions, surrounded by blood and faeces, to keep the public safe from contaminated meat. To add insult to injury, they are not even being offered the miserly one per cent increase that has been offered to other public service workers.



**There IS strength in numbers
ask your colleagues to Join
UNISON today
Call us on 01224 620 624
Join online at www.joinunison.org**