

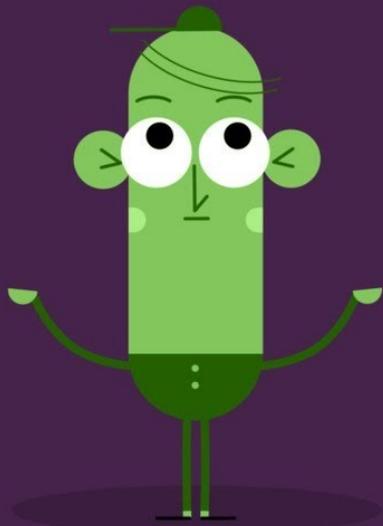
Unison Inverclyde Branch Newsletter November 2019

Bread & Roses

Solidarity is Our Strength

Old Library, 30 Bawhirley Road, Greenock, PA15 2BH

**Save from Harm - Unison Scotland Social Work Survey,
Page 2**



**SOCIAL WORK NEEDS A 16-20%
FUNDING INCREASE**

Also in this Issue:

**Unison Members Christmas
Cinema Treat**

**Council Budget update for
Classroom Assistants**

**UK General Election,
Register to Vote**

UNISON **WATERFRONT**
Inverclyde branch cinema

Members Christmas Cinema Treat

FROZEN II

sometimes you've just gotta have faith

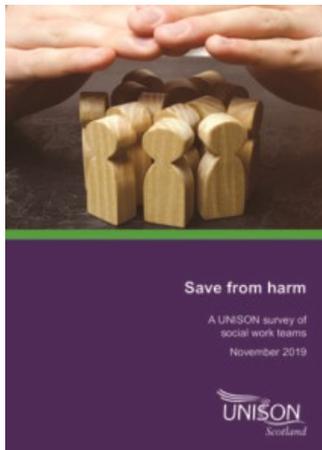
Last Christmas

CHARLIE'S ANGELS

Saturday 30th November & Sunday 1st December 2019

Save From Harm - Social Work Survey

This is a survey of staff working in social work teams. As well as social workers and social work assistants/support workers, it also includes social work managers, business support, administrative and clerical roles, mental health officers, occupational therapists, care workers, residential care workers, addictions workers and welfare rights officers.



It is part of UNISON Scotland's Damage series – a range of reports into the impact of austerity cuts on the delivery of public services. This report looks at issues facing our members working in social work teams in Scottish local authorities.

UNISON members were keen to speak out. It is obvious they are a dedicated workforce working hard to support the public but they are under enormous pressure. They feel exhausted, undervalued and suffer violence regularly. Many are looking for new jobs. They are struggling to deal with the demands placed upon them. Social work teams are severely underfunded and services are at breaking point.

As well as the sheer volume of work, many staff commented that work has become much more reactive. Workloads are heavier and staff shortages mean that work is being pushed down to less qualified and/or experienced staff. Staff report problems in providing support in crisis services like child protection and supervision of offenders. Many areas like home and residential care are seeing a high turnover of a staff, impacting

on building and maintaining relationships with clients.

Members say they are often forced to work unpaid hours in order to protect service users. While many are concerned about their own health because of stress and exhaustion.

Violence at work was a big issue among staff with half (49%) experiencing verbal abuse, 14% experiencing both physical and verbal abuse and 3% experiencing physical abuse. No one should be expected to consider abuse as 'part of the job'.

Key issues are:

76% of respondents stated their teams did not have enough staff and 82% stated their workload had got heavier in the last few years

89% of staff are working late and skipping skipping breaks to keep on top of their workload and two thirds of staff had experienced physical or verbal abuse at work

Only one third of those who had experienced abuse knew of a risk assessment following that abuse and one third describe morale in their teams as poor and a further 26% as very poor

Almost a third of respondents rated their stress as 9 or 10 on a scale of 1 to 10

90% of respondents are considering leaving their jobs in social work and only 31% would recommend social work teams as a place to work

There are 176 fewer social workers and 605 fewer business support staff than last year

Local authorities are short 55 mental health officers

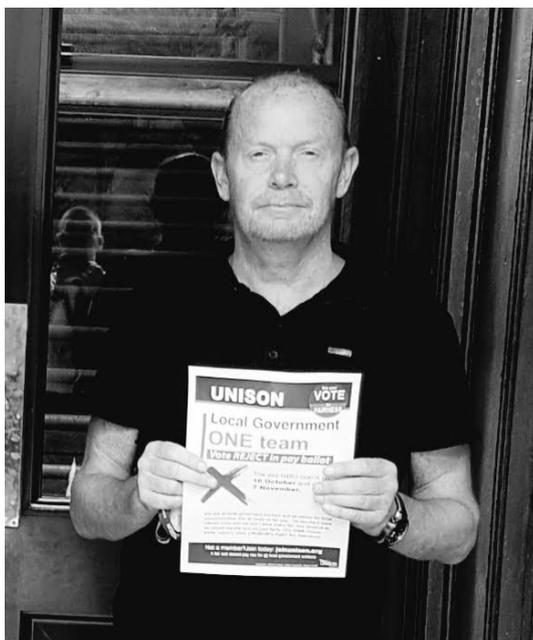
In 2016, Audit Scotland estimated that social work services needed a 16-21% increase in funding to cope with growing demand. The funding has not been put in place.

The survey is available to download on the Unison Inverclyde website.

Budget - Classroom Assistant

The branch will be issuing briefings and updates relating to the 2020/21 budget process over the new few weeks. Some of these will be generic and others, like this message, will be targeted at specific groups of members.

Branch Secretary Robin Taggart covers the issues concerning Classroom Assistants in this article



You will be aware that one of the budget cut proposals for 2020/21 is to reduce the number of classroom assistant posts across the council. Many of you attended meetings, the purpose of which was to explain what was being proposed. A large number of members have contacted me following the meetings and it is clear that some clarification is needed on this issue.

Firstly it is important to state that UNISON are totally opposed to any cuts to classroom assistant posts. We will be doing all we can through negotiations with elected members to ensure that these cuts are not accepted when the council agrees its budget in March of next year. Members will be aware that there have been proposals in the past to cut classroom assistant posts. On each occasion we have successfully managed to persuade elected members not to cut classroom assistant posts. I am hopeful that we will

reach the same outcome for the proposed cuts next year.

However it is possible that the council may decide to agree this proposal. In which case it is important that I clarify what impact this would have. The proposal is to cut 10 FTE classroom assistant posts across the entire school estate – approximately 30 schools. This would take effect from August 2020. The saving, if agreed, would be managed through removing vacancies and normal turnover. There may however be a small number of temporary classroom assistants – especially those with short periods of service – that may be expected to be redeployed to ASN posts. Although UNISON will be seeking to avoid any requirement for redeployment even amongst temporary staff. Permanent classroom assistants and many temporary classroom assistants would be completely unaffected. As there would be no redundancies or actual job losses, classroom assistants are not included in the voluntary severance trawl.

I hope this provides some clarity but please get in touch if you have any further questions.



Members Cinema Treat

Unison Inverclyde's FREE Members Christmas Cinema treat for branch members returns on Saturday 30th November and Sunday 1st December, tickets are now available from the Waterfront Cinema.



When are the showings?

Frozen 2, Saturday and Sunday mornings, 11.30 am, Doors will open at 10.45am

Last Christmas, Saturday evening, 7.30pm, Doors will open at 7pm,

Charlies Angels, Sunday afternoon, 2.30pm, Doors will open at 1.45pm.

How many tickets can I get?

Each member can get three tickets for one showing only.

How can I book my free tickets?

Please note that tickets cannot be ordered online or over the phone from the Cinema. Members must visit the Waterfront Cinema to book tickets. Tickets will be available daily from Thursday 7th November, 12.30pm to 7pm. You will be asked to confirm your name, employer, Unison Membership number and a Contact number. Work Identification will also be required.

How do I find out my membership number?

It is available through Unison Direct, 08000857857 and on any Unison correspondence that is sent to you through the post.

Extra information :

Children will be given popcorn and a drink upon their arrival for both morning and the matinee shows.

UK General Election

The 12th December General election will have profound implications for UNISON members across Scotland and the whole of the UK. It is vital that every UNISON member casts their vote.



This election matters... The vast majority of UNISON Scotland's members work in areas which are devolved to the Scottish Parliament, even so the general election will still have a huge bearing on our working lives. With reserved issues including overall public spending levels, most economic policy, most welfare spending and employment rights it could hardly be otherwise. We can't afford to sit this out.

Please ensure that you are on the electoral register. The closing date for registering and getting a vote in the general election is November 26th by 5pm. Registering is easy and can be done online at

<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

Never mind the weather... vote by post.

Anyone can get a postal vote so long as you apply. Applications need to be in by November 26th by 5pm.

Applying is easy and can be done online at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-postal-vote>