

Unison Inverclyde Branch Newsletter November 2020

Bread & Roses

Solidarity is Our Strength

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



#Plug the Gap
UNISON Scotland
launches Campaign
to protect our council
services

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Standing up
for public
services

#PlugTheGap

UNISON, the public services union has launched the #PlugTheGap campaign to protect our Council services.

WHAT WOULD A £1 BILLION FUNDING GAP MEAN FOR SCOTTISH COUNCILS?

A: JOBS LOSSES

B: CUTS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES

C: BROKEN COMMUNITIES

D: ALL OF THE ABOVE

UNISON
Scotland

#PLUGTHEGAP

UNISON's campaign is calling for:

Securing the long term financial stability of local government: calling for further investment in local government to protect jobs and pay for the future.

Rewarding local government workers: for the vital services that local government workers provide to our communities.

Shaping local government for the future:

looking at how roles have changed as a result of the pandemic

Consolidation of the Living Wage:

Delivery of full consolidation of the living wage for all across Scotland

Plug the £1bn funding gap:

The Scottish government must fund local councils properly to keep communities safe and rebuild the country following the pandemic. We have launched a campaign, #PlugTheGap, to call on the Scottish government to find additional resources for Scotland's councils to avoid devastating harm to services that have already suffered ten years of budget cuts.

Our governments must #plugthegap in funding. Please join our campaign to protect council services.

Ask your MSP to demand that the Scottish government acts to protect essential council services

Write to your MSP using our automated email page – Sign up to support our campaign, read the letter and if you agree, we can send it for you. Or edit the letter yourself and we will send it.

Join UNISON Scotland 's Question Time event on 12 November

Join our live streamed event on Facebook on 12 November – A discussion panel looking at the current state of Local Government finances and UNISON Scotland's #PlugTheGap Campaign

The event will be broadcast live on Facebook Thursday, 12 November 2020 18:00 to 19:30.

The discussion will include: Mark Ferguson, Chair of UNISON Scotland's Local Government Committee; Cllr Gail MacGregor, COSLA Resources Spokesperson. And Cllr Jim Logue, Leader North Lanarkshire Council and Johanna Baxter, UNISON Scotland Head of Local Government

Full details are available on the Branch and Unison Scotland websites.



Labour Link Officer Update

UNISON has always given its members the choice of opting in to its affiliated political fund, that gives them a say in the democratic processes of the Labour Party, or of opting into the General Political Fund, independent of any political party. For those members that choose to opt into the affiliated political fund the following will be of interest.

Branch Labour Link Officer, Francesca Brennan gives her thoughts



My grandparents worked for local government, and so did my parents. When my sister and I were old enough to enter the workforce, we also made a choice to work in the public sector. It felt like the most natural place for meaningful, purposeful employment matched with good terms and conditions. When I approached a referee for my first council job, he said: as an employer, the council can't be beaten.

That's why the hollowing out of vital local services by the Scottish SNP and UK Tory governments breaks my heart and was a key factor pushing me towards political activism. Without local services, communities fail to thrive and society starts to break down. There is no logical reason for under-funding the services that support our communities so it all comes down to money and priorities.

This pandemic has exposed the fault lines in society caused by years of austerity and the need for adequate funding. I want to put my full support behind UNISON's Plug the Gap campaign which launched on 30 October. I will be writing to our MSPs to ask them to work to properly fund local government and I would urge all UNISON members to do the same.



Also this month:

Keir Starmer commissioned Baroness Doreen Lawrence to undertake a review into the disproportionate impact of the corona virus on the Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities of the UK. The Lawrence review concluded that the virus has both "exposed" structural racism in the UK and itself "fuelled" racism.

Please remember that 25 November 2020 marks International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Many UNISON members will continue to be survivors of domestic abuse and this day allows us all to renew our support for women who have experienced violence and pledge to eliminate it. If you are affected by violence, please contact the National Domestic Abuse helpline.

Links to how to contact your MSP regarding the Plug the Gap campaign the Lawrence Review and the National Domestic Abuse Helpline are available in the labour Link article on the branch website.

Get the Branch News as it happens



Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to get the Branch news as it happens!

Facebook : [unisoninverclydebranch](https://www.facebook.com/unisoninverclydebranch)

Twitter : [@unisoninver](https://twitter.com/unisoninver)



UNISON Inverclyde Branch have submitted a pay claim on behalf of members to Quarriers senior management team. Pay discussions are scheduled for later this month and members will be kept up to date regarding the progress of the pay claim through the Branch website.

UNISON is seeking:

- All frontline care workers to be paid minimum £12.00 per hour from 1st April 2020.
- An increase for staff at the bottom of the pay scale to bring their pay up to the level of the Scottish Living Wage currently £9.30 from 1st April 2020.
- An increase of salary to £30,000 per annum for Team Leaders.
- Minimum £900 flat rate or 4% whichever is the greater increase for all other workers from 1st April 2020.
- An increase on sleepover allowances to SLW rate (9.30) per hour from 1st April 2020.
- A full review of the pay system including a commitment to job evaluation to ensure equal pay for work of equal value.
- All (full) annual leave to be covered by holiday pay.
- To continue as a SLW accredited employer.
- Staff to be paid normal pay (including sleepovers and regular overtime) when off sick.

Robin Taggart, Branch Secretary gives an update on the Council's proposal



At the next Policy & Resources committee the council will consider a jobs recovery plan for Inverclyde. The proposal is to invest £5.6m in an effort to create over 200 jobs using a range of employment models. Most of these jobs will be temporary which is less than ideal. However given that the council has a projected budget deficit of £10.5m over the next two years then this is probably unavoidable. It is expected that 60 of these jobs will be generated through a refresh programme. This will allow existing employees to retire early with no pension penalties and up to 3 added years pension benefits. The subsequent vacancies will create job opportunities for local people. It is important to state that this is not an early retirement scheme as such. The refresh programme necessitates early retirement in order to create vacancies. The plan is to identify employees who are of an age to access their pension – it's not a redundancy scheme so there would be no benefit to employees under 50 – in jobs which are of a suitable entry level for local unemployed people. The target group will be up to council grade 5 although the majority of suitable posts will probably come from employees in grades 1, 2 and 3.

The branch have not yet had the opportunity to discuss the proposals. However there is no doubt that the scheme has merit and will provide significant job opportunities during the current climate which, from an employment perspective, is extremely unsettling. Moving forward there will be further discussions with UNISON and the other trade unions on the finer details of how the programme will be rolled out.



If you are a member and you are experiencing financial difficulties, whatever the circumstances, There for You can offer you support.

COVID-19 Response Fund

UNISON's There for You charity is reopening the COVID-19 response fund on 16th November to help members who are struggling as a direct result of coronavirus.

It's been a tough year for people right across the world, as COVID-19 has swept around the globe – and with no sign of it disappearing any time soon.

UNISON members have been among those facing the daily battle with the pandemic – not just in their work keeping our vital services going, but also on a personal and domestic front.

There for You is UNISON's unique welfare charity and, in the summer, introduced a new fund to help members who were struggling financially as a direct consequence of the new coronavirus.

The first round of the COVID-19 response fund ran from May to July and distributed over £250,000 in grants to individual members in financial difficulty due to the pandemic.

Please note that this is a limited fund and grants will continue to be paid until the fund is exhausted

Full details are available on the Branch website.

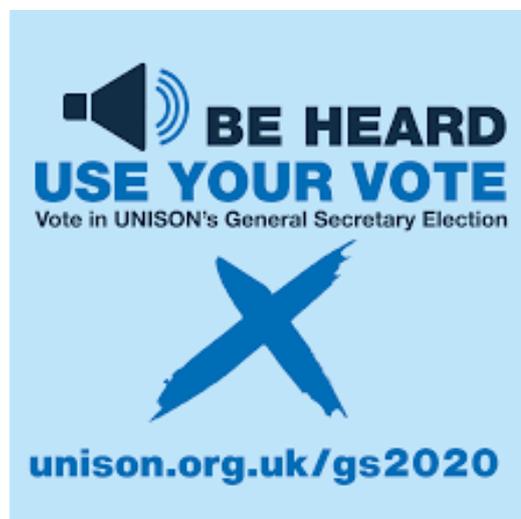


UNISON, the public services union, has given a strong welcome to last month's announcement by Nicola Sturgeon that priority testing is to be extended to homecare workers.

UNISON's research in August revealed that many care at home workers had never been tested and infection rates among workers were running at 8%. Many knew service users who had died.

Peter Hunter UNISON Regional Manager said: "It is clear that homecare workers face a massive infection risk. They work in multiple domestic settings that are a known risk factor and they travel from house to house. For vulnerable service users, workers and the families this is a vital breakthrough that reflects UNISON's call for testing. It will be a vital tool in saving lives and maintaining vital frontline services for the most vulnerable people in Scotland.

Further details are available on the Unison Scotland website.



Moved house, changed your name or started a new job?



Remember to update your membership details

You can update your details online at:
unison.org.uk/my-unison



Now more than ever, is the time to ensure that we hold the correct and up to date details for you, particularly your email address.

The Branch is always looking to improve communication to our members and we're asking all members to register with myUNISON. This is a fairly easy process and only takes a few minutes.

All you need to do is visit <https://www.unison.org.uk/my-unison> and follow the steps for registration. You will require your UNISON membership number.

Once you register you can update your personal details, including adding an e-mail address if there isn't one already on your membership file. Alternatively you can contact the Branch Office on 715900.

Branch members who have an up to date email address on their membership file will receive emails with links to future editions of the Branch newsletter and also any important information which is emailed to members which is especially important given the current circumstances.