

Unison Inverclyde Branch Newsletter August 2020

# Bread & Roses

Solidarity is Our Strength

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



Be  
on the  
**safe** side

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there  
for you

Get help with  
school uniform  
costs

UNISON  
the public service union



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## Safe Return to Work Online Seminar



UNISON Scotland has developed a short online two hour course which any member or current activist can attend. UNISON is trying

to develop a network of Covid19 Contacts/ Reps across every workplace so that risks and hazards can be identified and addressed as quickly as possible to ensure staff are safe at work. If you think having a Covid19 rep/ contact would benefit your work place this is the course for you.



Unison Scotland Local Organiser Joe Pearce (pictured above) explains more “the training consists of a two hour webinar (with a comfort break) it is interactive and participative, aimed at our new army of safety reps all over the public & care sector. The course will provide you with an introduction to the right in law we all have to a safe return to work and how UNISON safety representatives in every workplace are vital to that.

Unison Inverclyde in partnership with NHS 24 is running 3 online seminars on:

Tuesday 11th August 2020 4.30pm

Friday 14th August 2020 12pm

Wednesday 19th August 2020 4.30pm

For more information, please email me at [Joe.Pearce@unison.co.uk](mailto:Joe.Pearce@unison.co.uk) outlining your name, employer, workplace, email and phone number and lastly the date which you'd prefer to participate in the seminar on. We will be using Microsoft Teams to hold the meetings if you don't have this platform and need guidance on how to down load the app please include this in the email and we will talk you through what to do.”

## Unison Welfare, There for You

UNISON has once again launched a scheme to help members on low incomes deal with the cost of buying school uniforms



In response to the growing difficulties many members on low incomes face, a programme has been put in place that will assist our most vulnerable members with the cost of purchasing school uniforms.

The Union's welfare charity There for You has a limited fund to help members deal with the costs of school uniforms.

Applications are open now, full details are available on the Branch website.

Branch members who would like to apply for the Grant or are looking for further information please contact the Branch Office on 01475 715900.



Branch Secretary Robin Taggart details some important links which he encourages you to spend time reading especially as members in schools and ELCs who will be returning to work next week.

The Branch website has the article in full which includes the links which will be of interest.

“Members in other services and those who are partially or entirely office based are also being asked to return to work as part of the council’s recovery plans. For members who are not providing a front line service and who have been working from home then returning to work should be on a rota basis to ensure appropriate physical distancing . It is important that where there is to be a mix of continued home working and coming to work, managers are able to clearly explain the reasons for attending the workplace and why they consider that some work and activities require partial attendance at work. This is not to say that there will not be justifiable reasons for a member being asked to attend work. However we need to ensure that members are not coming to work to undertake tasks that could be just as effectively undertaken at home.

The first link will take you to the CoSLA website page which has all of the guidance and associated documents across a range of council services including schools and ELCs. This is effectively a glossary of all the guidance that has been produced over the course of lockdown.

The second and third links take you to the council website page and ICON page with the same information. This provides details of the risk assessments that have been completed across a full range of council services and activities. This includes individual risk assessments for vulnerable and pregnant employees.

The fourth link is particularly relevant for learning support staff and in particular members who work with ASN children and covers spitting and body fluids.”

Latest Scotland in Unison – Out Now!

Unison Scotland’s latest edition of Scotland in Unison is now available on the Branch and Unison Scotland websites. Articles include Scotland’s Care Workers for Change, Branches thank hard working members, Covid-19 – Making Black Lives Matter, Army of Covid safety reps take new UNISON course, School staff make voices heard on reopening and much more.

## 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.



“It was called the ‘Beast from the East’, the cold and wintry weather conditions that arrived in Inverclyde at the end of February 2018 and covered our roads and homes in a deep, deep snow. Against a dramatic backdrop of extreme weather, there was one group of people that remained highly visible throughout: care workers. Like me, you will remember seeing people – mostly women – battling against the snow to look after the most vulnerable members of our society.

Care workers tried to do the same again during Covid-19, to give everything within their powers to look after the people who need it most. These workers have been at the frontline of the pandemic and UNISON has been right there with them, calling out the lack of appropriate PPE and highlighting concerns about low pay and insecure contracts.

Many UNISON members will have first-hand experience of the impact of the pandemic on our care homes with more than 2000 deaths in Scottish care homes linked to Covid-19. BBC’s Disclosure has investigated how homes in Scotland have been affected by the

pandemic. Questionable and heart-breaking decisions were taken at national level and we all need answers to explain why carers, residents and their families have been so badly let down.

Richard Leonard, Scottish Labour leader, has been leading calls for a Covid-19 public inquiry to include a consideration of whether the human rights of care home residents have been breached, back by the Scottish Human Rights Commission. Since 2011, Scottish Labour has been demanding a National Care Service and we will push into next year’s Scottish Parliament elections with this at the heart of our campaign. Just imagine what sort of improvements could be made for care in our country with politicians who focus on health, jobs and education instead of independence and the constitution.”



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## Branch keeping members safe

After the success of our earlier delivery of hand sanitisers to workplaces in June our activists were again out and about in their workplaces last month handing out 50ml bottles of hand sanitiser and hygiene key rings to those helping deliver essential services in and around the community at this time.



Branch Communications Officer, Doug Maclean, pictured above, said “there was such a high demand from our members in June we immediately made the decision to order a second batch and also took the opportunity to order hygiene keys which have proved very popular”



Branch Officers, Gary Mcmenemie, Francesca Brennan and Robyn Garcha are pictured above collecting hand sanitisers and hygiene keys from the Branch office.



## Branch highlights Sunflower Lanyard

The Sunflower Charity have produced a special lanyard for people with hidden Disabilities and Illnesses and Branch Health and Safety Officer George Steele (pictured below) explains more below.



“Some TESCO stores are giving the lanyard out to shoppers who request them from customer service desk like the one in the photo attached. Boots, Next, M & S and Morrison’s are also discussing the possibility of getting supplies to customers. Anyone with health issues that prevents them from wearing a mask doesn’t need to produce any documentation regarding their illness or disability.

Anyone who is not wearing a face covering/mask should not be under any scrutiny from shop staff or other shoppers. There should be a poster at the entrance to the shop explaining the purpose of the lanyard therefore no one should be subject to any confrontation, abuse or criticism from other shoppers or members of the public whilst going about their daily business or shopping.”



## UNISON Scotland LGBT+ Newsletter



The UNISON Scotland LGBT+ Newsletter summer edition is now available.

Articles include:

How your LGBT+ committee have been representing you during coronavirus, Virtual Pride, Scottish Equality Liaison Group Health and Safety Reps and much more.



The newsletter is available on the Branch and Unison Scotland websites.

