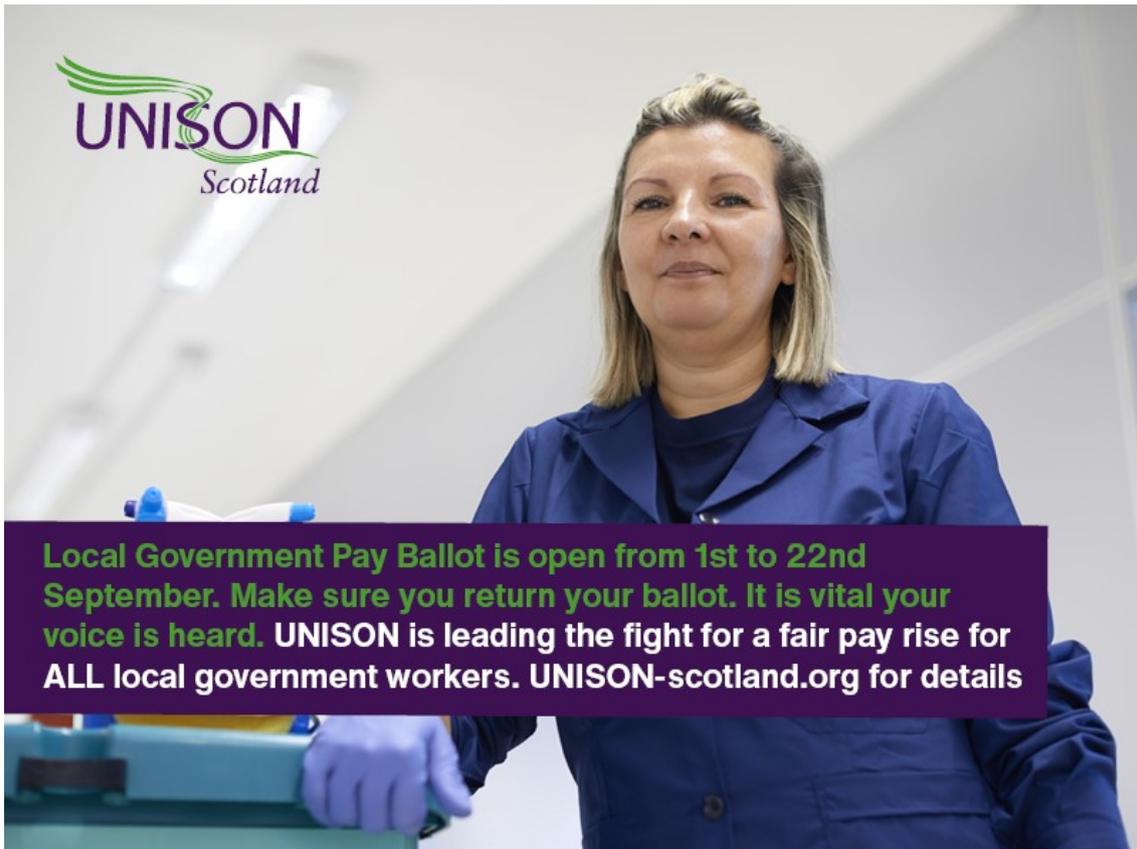


Unison Inverclyde Branch Newsletter September 2021

Bread & Roses

Solidarity is Our Strength

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



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Backbone of the Community



UNISON's general secretary Christina McAnea recently hosted a virtual pay rally to mark the launch of the union's formal strike ballot of select local government workers.

UNISON, Scotland's largest local government union, is seeking to take targeted strike action, which means select groups of workers will be balloted. These include members working in school cleaning, school catering, school janitorial as well as those working in waste and recycling services.

Christina McAnea said: "Council workers have gone above and beyond to keep services and schools running throughout the pandemic. They went to work, so others could stay at home.

"These workers, mostly women, are among the lowest paid in the country and have seen their pay drop substantially in recent years.

"We've always known the value and importance of these workers, but it's taken a pandemic for politicians to realise council staff are the backbone of our communities. Now the warm words must be backed with action to ensure the local government employees receive the fair and proper pay rise they deserve."



Johanna Baxter, UNISON Scotland head of local government, said: "We've all relied on council staff to keep our communities clean and safe, protect the most vulnerable and to work in our schools throughout successive lockdowns to allow others to work. Yet, we're now 18 months into the global pandemic and they have received no reward or recognition of their efforts at all.

"Scotland's councils have suffered a decade of cuts and jobs losses, and staff have received year-on-year pay cuts, with 55% of local government workers now earning less than £25k a year. The current offer from COSLA is simply not good enough – our council staff are worth more."



Scottish Government Programme

The Programme for Government for 2021-22 has been announced. This sets out the Scottish Government's legislative programme and other administrative actions for this parliamentary year. This briefing highlights the issues likely to have the greatest impact on UNISON members.

The most pressing priority is recovery from COVID. A Recovery Strategy and a Recovery Bill focused on the hardest hit will be produced in the first year of Parliament. The promised COVID recovery strategy will "outline a shared vision with local government." However, other than a commitment to a human-rights based approach there are few details as to what this will involve.

Legislation to reform social care and introduce a National Care Service is promised by June 2022. This will be accompanied by a 25% spending increase. However the Care Service that is being proposed will not itself deliver care. The Programme also announces the intention to increase frontline health spend each year so that it is at least £2.5 billion higher by 2026-27. Mental health spending is to increase by 25% over the course of this parliament.

In total fifteen bills are proposed, 12 of these new. Some continue arrangements put in place during the pandemic. With the exception of the Coronavirus Recovery Bill and the National Care Service Bill, they do not have public services as their focus. Some such as Gender Recognition and Good Food Nation are in line with UNISON policies and priorities.

UNISON welcomes Covid enquiry



In welcoming the Scottish Government's inquiry into the response to the Coronavirus pandemic, UNISON Scottish Secretary Mike Kirby said: "We acknowledge that families, many health and social care workers and other staff in public services still struggle with the consequences, and this will impact upon their capacity to contribute to the inquiry. However, our experiences, reflections and comments cannot be allowed to fade. They are so acute."

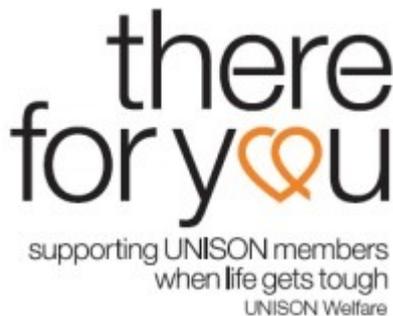
"The inquiry must also review the extent to which the resilience of public services was affected by austerity measures, the effectiveness of health and safety measures at work and the role and capacity of the Health & Safety Executive, the impact of current sick pay provision, the way in which configuration/fragmentation of social care provision had an impact on response to the crisis and outcomes, and the disproportionate impact on black and low income communities."



**Standing up
for public
services**

UNISON Welfare There for you

There for You, UNISON's welfare charity, provides confidential advice and support for UNISON members and their dependents experiencing financial and personal difficulties.



Knowing that the pandemic would drastically hit members with a loss of income, debt and bereavement, in 2020, There For You set up the UNISON COVID-19 Response Fund as an additional source of help for those directly affected by the pandemic.

The figures are in now, and There For You is proud to report that over the past year, 4,620 grants were awarded to UNISON members to help get their lives back on track. That's more than 12 grants every single day of the year.

The reasons for them are very varied: bereavement, sickness, sudden loss of income, relationship breakdown, caring for someone with special needs or an illness, or just an urgent repair cost that comes at the same time a child grows out of all their clothes.

Anyone can find themselves suddenly facing unexpected bills, but UNISON is determined to make sure that members don't need to shoulder the burden alone.

The There For You 2020 impact report details the stories of UNISON members who have been helped by the grants.

Thousands of UNISON members have been offered a lifeline from There For You. None of this would have been possible without the support of UNISON and individual branches.

Combined, UNISON branches donated a massive £533,504 to There For You in 2020 alone.



UNISON general secretary Christina McAnea said: "At a time of unprecedented pressure on our public services, UNISON has been proud to support There for You – and through them thousands of our members who have worked so hard to keep our NHS and our local services going.

"We are always proud of our key workers but this year a special thanks goes out to them and for all they have done, often at great personal cost to themselves."

For UNISON Inverclyde members, the first point of contact for welfare support is the Branch Welfare Officer, Kathleen McLean who can be contacted through the Branch Office.

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)

Green UNISON Week

In the build-up to COP26, from 18th to 26th September UNISON members will be marking Green UNISON Week, using it to celebrate, discuss and share how the union is working to green public services and to call for urgent action from politicians and employers.



Branches across the UK are organising a week of activities on climate change and green workplaces, raising awareness and demanding action, as well as organising for COP26 demonstrations and more. UNISON Scotland's motion at Special Delegate Conference stressed the importance of Green UNISON Week and COP26, and both feature on the current front page of Scotland in UNISON.

There will be demonstrations worldwide on 6th November, including around the UK, demanding that the UN Climate talks in Glasgow deliver climate justice. UNISON members will be among many thousands of protesters for the vitally important march in Glasgow and at the rally, calling on world leaders to act now on the climate emergency.

Green UNISON Week also gives members the chance to show support for and solidarity with the global youth climate strike on Friday 24th September.

UNISON general secretary Christina McAnea said: "Green UNISON Week gives young people a global space to demand politicians take seriously the damage being done to our planet and act to save its future.

"To support young people's demand, we'll be encouraging branches to talk to employers on how they can reduce their own carbon footprints, but more importantly, ensure their

employers have a plan to green their workplaces completely. That way we can all begin to make a big difference quickly."

Anti-trade union laws mean that UNISON branches cannot take strike action, but there are many ways to show your support for the school campaigners and take part in Green UNISON Week.

How to contact the Branch

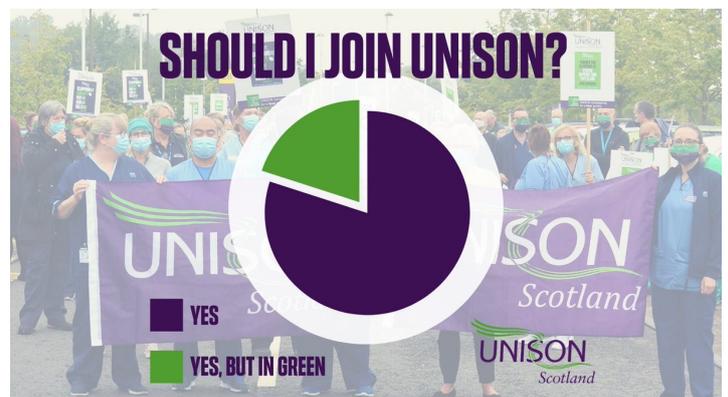


If any Members have any concerns or issues please contact your workplace steward or the Branch by telephone on 01475 715900 or by email to unison@inverclyde.gov.uk and we will respond to requests for advice and assistance.

Extra Public Holiday 2022

This week the council's policy and resources committee approved a report regarding the Queen's platinum jubilee next year.

This follows the UK Government's decision to announce a 'four day holiday weekend from the 2nd to 5th June 2022'. Inverclyde council employees will now be given an extra public holiday on Friday 3rd June 2022.





**Update
your details
online today**

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](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



**Standing up
for public
services**