

Unison Inverclyde Branch Newsletter June 2022

Bread & Roses

Solidarity is Our Strength

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



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Local Government Pay Ballot

Hundreds of UNISON members in Inverclyde schools and early years establishments are being balloted for strike action as part of UNISON's campaign for a fairer pay deal. An offer by the Scottish employers of 2% on all pay scales was unanimously rejected by UNISON members.

Members being balloted will include pupil support assistants, early years workers, admin/clerical staff, cleaners and bus escorts. They will be amongst 25,000 members across Scotland who will be asked to take selective strike action. The employers 2% pay offer is considered completely derisory in the current financial climate and will do nothing to nothing to help with rising fuel, energy and food costs.

The ballot will run from mid June until late July. GMB and Unite members will also be balloted and this will include members working in front line waste services.

UNISON is undertaking the industrial action ballot for 25,000 local government workers in schools, early years, waste and recycling across Scotland.

UNISON are recommending the workforce vote yes to strike action as the only way left to move the employer's position. They intend to shut schools across Scotland when children return after the school summer break.

In a last-ditch attempt to avert industrial action processes UNISON wrote to the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, and Minister of Finance Kate Forbes, on 1 June to ask that they meet with the trade unions to discuss the funding for local authorities to improve the pay offer.

Kate Forbes wrote to UNISON and said 'it would not be appropriate to interfere in these negotiations, given their devolved nature' and that 'it is therefore for you to negotiate with COSLA and 'respectfully declined the tripartite meeting being proposed by COSLA'.



Johanna Baxter, UNISON Scotland head of local government said: "Local government workers have been offered a miserly 2%. With inflation at a 40 year high this goes nowhere near compensating them for the cost-of-living crisis or the loss in the value of their pay following real terms pay cuts over a decade of austerity. This comes on the back of the Scottish government announcing cuts to public services that Margaret Thatcher would be proud of, in their recent spending review."

"The fact they will not sit down with COSLA and the trade unions to try and find a solution is a kick in the teeth to all local government workers. They have forgotten already who was educating our children, cleaning our communities, caring for our vulnerable and burying our dead throughout the pandemic. Local government workers keep society running. We have no option left and will ballot 25,000 school, nursery and waste and recycling workers tomorrow."

Full details are on the UNISON inverclyde and UNISON Scotland websites.

**Recognise, Respect
Reward**

**Fair Pay Campaign for
Local Government Workers**

UNISON, Scotland's largest social work union, has welcomed the latest report from Social Work Scotland published last week but says reducing caseloads is only part of the solution.



Commenting on the report, Stephen Smellie, UNISON Scotland's chair of Social Work Issues Group, said:

“UNISON welcomes this research but sadly the findings come as no surprise. Social workers are under enormous pressure and our members have told us they feel exhausted, undervalued and are struggling to deal with the demands placed upon them. This is a dedicated, highly qualified workforce that is critical for ensuring the safety of the most vulnerable, yet it is severely under-resourced and services are at breaking point. This is true of the whole social work team including social work assistants, family support workers and administrative support workers.

“Social Work Scotland's clear support for reducing caseloads to keep them at a manageable and safe level is welcomed, but it is only part of the solution. There needs to be robust professional supervision and support and recognisable workload management systems in place. Even smaller caseloads can overload when sufficient time is not allowed for the high level of assessment and relationship building that is necessary to ensure that those who depend on us get the service they need and deserve.”



Kate Ramsden, a children's rights officer and member of UNISON Scotland's Social Work Issues Group, said: “Heavy workloads are endemic across the workforce and staff shortages mean that work is being pushed down to less qualified and/or experienced staff. Many areas are seeing a high turnover of staff which impacts on building and maintaining relationships with clients.

“Significant changes are needed to give proper support instead of just ‘firefighting’. The Scottish Government needs to provide substantial investment to tackle a social work service that is in crisis.”

School Clothing Grant 2022



UNISON's Welfare Charity, There for You, will be launching the 2022 School Clothing Grant on 24th June 2022. The fund is to help UNISON members on a low income with school clothing costs by way of a one off payment of up to £70 per child.

Please note this is a limited fund and the fund will close once enough qualifying applications have been received. Applications will be available on the There for You website from 24th June 2022.

The Branch Welfare Officer, Kathleen McLean can be contacted at the Branch Office.

Government Spending Review



Tracey Dalling, UNISON's Scottish Secretary, commenting on the Scottish Government Spending Review said: "This is a desperate day for public services that will have catastrophic consequences for Scotland's communities. Our public services have already been cut to the bone and are struggling to cope with the increased demands placed upon them.

The pandemic has shown us who really are the essential workers. It's the people who've looked after our elderly relatives, cared for our sick and dying in hospitals, the workers that deliver our housing, our education and social care, among others. It has shown that no society can survive without strong sustainable public services, or the dedication of the workers providing them.

These cuts are not inevitable, they are a political choice by an out of touch Scottish Government. Public services are not a luxury; they are critical to Scotland's health, safety and community cohesion and also vital to tackling poverty and promoting economic growth. The country is recovering from a pandemic and facing a cost of living crisis: this is the time to invest in our public services."

Are your Details up to Date?

The Branch is always looking for ways to improve communication with our members and ensure that we have the correct details to contact you especially by email.



Branch Communications Officer Dougie Maclean said, "It is important that we hold the up to date and correct details for you and I would ask that you register with myUNISON, this is an easy process and only takes a few minutes. This means that any all members emails will be sent to your preferred email address.

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.

if you are on Facebook or Twitter please take the time to like and follow the Branch Social Media pages, these are regularly updated with local and national UNISON news and this means that you won't miss out on any important updates.

The Branch website is also updated regularly and has more in depth articles about issues that will be of interest to members of the Branch."

SHOULD I JOIN UNISON?



 **YES**

 **YES, BUT IN GREEN**



Update
your details
online today

unison.org.uk/my-unison