

UNISON is there for you

UNISON City of Edinburgh Branch is the biggest Union in the City of Edinburgh Council, representing 8,000 members working for public services in the council, **associated bodies**, and **the voluntary and community sector**.

As a member, you are entitled to:

- Individual representation on work related issues
- Collective representation through negotiations on pay and conditions
- A system that gives you a vote on elections and on negotiations
- Access to our own welfare charity There for You (Members experiencing financial and emotional difficulties can contact our welfare charity

which provides a confidential advice and support service for members and their dependents)

But did you also know that **UNISON Living** is there to help you get the most from your own time too?

Maybe you want to head off to the sunshine on a budget, or perhaps you're looking to upgrade your car and want help from someone you can trust. Or maybe you're



looking for the peace of mind that comes from knowing health and dental bills for your family are taken care of.

Whatever you need, UNISON Living can connect you with a trusted partner who can help. We've used the huge power of our 1.3 million

members to secure some of the best deals exclusively for you to get...

- deals on holidays
- health and wellbeing
- help with finances
- great value car offers and insurance

More information at benefits.unison.org.uk

Changes to terms and conditions

Many of your employers have been making changes to your terms and conditions.

Autism Initiatives, for example, are currently reviewing terms and conditions across their organisation. Their proposals are unpalatable and we know members are extremely worried.

We recognise this can be stressful and we are here to help support you through this.

Members should encourage non-members to join UNISON as this will strengthen our position in our talks with your employer.

Whilst some

organisations, where we have recognition agreements, will consult with us directly, some others often use employee reps. This does not mean you cannot speak to us and have us work on your behalf. We can advise on processes and your rights.

We have recently supported members in **Dunedin Canmore**, **Freespace**, **Keymoves** through changes and Tupe transfers, redundancies etc, and **AMEY** Janitorial staff have just gone through significant change.

Edinburgh Leisure made changes to their pay and grading structure

affecting the whole organisation.

Ideally, we would like to have trade union recognition agreements with all your employers. This gives us greater strength in negotiations. However to do this we need the membership numbers.

Some of your Employers invite us along to their recruitment and new staff inductions. This is a very positive approach. These employers are wise to see the benefits of working with the trade unions and maintaining good working relationships.

Our strength is in numbers, simple!

Disciplinary and grievances

One of the main reasons members get in touch is when they are going through difficult times at work.

Whilst we would hope that none of our members would have to experience this we are always here to offer advice and support through these processes.

Members should always speak to us before raising a formal grievance and should always notify us if they are under investigation at work.

**See over for • FAQs
• Living wage •
Stress at work •
Learning opportunity**

Living wage and fair conditions

Did you know that new Social Care Rights were introduced from 1 October 2016 by the Scottish Government?

- This included;
- The Scottish Living Wage of £8.25 (£8.45 from 1 May 2017)
 - Fair working conditions
 - An effective voice for staff when negotiating with your employer
 - Secure working arrangements
 - Opportunities to advance your career in social care.

All this should now be embedded in the revised funding of the organisation you work for and we need you to tell UNISON what's happening 'on the ground'.

In December last year,



the Scottish Government identified £100 million to enable the **increased rate of £8.45 per hour to be paid, from at least the 1st of May 2017**, to care workers supporting adults in care homes and care at home / housing support settings and should now

include, where it hasn't already, adult day care workers and personal assistants through arrangements made where care is provided.

In addition, the Government and COSLA issued a statement which says: "as minimum sleepovers are compliant

as per HMRC guidelines.

"As stated before, this is for a transitional period with the ambition being that all hours be paid at the rate of the Living Wage... We will continue to support partnerships and providers in reforming sleepovers and looking to sustainable models of care based on improving outcomes for individuals.

"As part of the resource for Living Wage £10m was identified for sleepovers."

Progress will be reviewed throughout the year.

If you work in social care and are not being paid the Living Wage – or if your terms and conditions have been altered as a result of receiving the Living Wage – then you need to let us know.

Stress at work: Employers have duty of care

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) definition of stress is: "The reaction people have to excessive demands or pressures, arising when people try to cope with tasks, responsibilities or other types of pressure connected with their job, but find difficulty, strain or worry in doing so."

Stress is one of the biggest causes of health problems in the workplace.

It led to 11.7 million working days lost in 2015/16: an average of 23.9 working days lost for each individual affected, (LFS/HSE, 2016).

According to a recent

stress at work survey of UNISON members;

- 60% of employers have not spoken to their staff about stress at work;
- 87% feel that services sometimes suffer due to pressure put on staff at work;
- 67% feel that "excessive demands of the job" are the source of their stress at work.

UNISON recognises the growing impact of stress on the workplace and campaign to improve working conditions so that stress can be reduced, and to provide people with protection against unfair working practices.

Stress - including

anxiety and depression - is becoming one of the primary causes for absence at work.

It needs to be understood, tackled, and managed in order to maintain healthy and safe working environments.

The lack of dialogue between employers and employees around the management of stress is concerning.

Financial pressures on many organisations, especially across the care sector have left staffing levels reduced and workloads increased, this is inevitably having a knock-on effect on our members health and

wellbeing.

Your employer has duty of care towards you.

Violence against staff

In recent years violence against public service workers has increased.

Worryingly, in the community and voluntary sector, whilst most employers encourage the reporting of violent incidents, there is a belief that some employers regard violence as 'part of the job'.

This is not acceptable; our members have a right to feel safe whilst they carry out their work.

YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK

Frequently asked questions

Should I have a contract?

Employees are legally entitled to a contract – a written statement of the main terms and conditions of employment – within two calendar months of starting work.

Your contract should include details of things like pay, holidays and working hours.

What should I be paid?

You should be paid at least the national minimum wage or national living wage (depending on your age) for the work that you do. This includes time spent caring for clients and travelling between appointments for care workers.

Should I be paid for a sleepover?

At the very least the work done must average out as at least the national minimum wage or national living wage.

Should I be paid whilst off sick?

Employers have different agreements on sick pay and you would need to check your contract to find out your exact entitlement.

This can often be linked to length of service.

At the very least you will be entitled to statutory sick pay (SSP).

Employees and workers whose absence lasts four days or more and who meet the average earnings threshold may be eligible for SSP.

The lower earnings threshold is £113 per week at 2017/18 rates (as of 6th April 2017). The first three days of absence are unpaid.

Can my employer change my job?

If your employer wishes to change your role, then they would need to vary your employee contract. They can do this if there is a clause in your contract which allows them to do so.

They must discuss the changes with you and you must agree to the change.

If you don't agree then your employer can end the current contract and then re-engage you under a new contract. If this is the case you should always seek advice.

Your contacts

This bulletin is from **Amanda Kerr**, the branch's organiser/caseworker for the voluntary and community sector. amanda.kerr@unison-edinburgh.org.uk

We currently also have shop stewards across the sector:

Amey: Gary Lockhart SACRO: Joe Wilson, Malcolm Hill

ELCAP: Martin Torley, Rab Bell

Edinburgh Leisure : Douglas Mackay, Iain Petrie

Edinburgh College convener of shop stewards committee: Kevin Dixon

We are always looking for members to become more involved and there is lots of different ways you can!

If you would like to join us in building our membership within our Community And Voluntary Sector please get in touch with us. Shop stewards are given full training and support. You may even wish to just be a point of contact for your union and help us to disseminate information?

Branch Office: 0131 558 7488 UNISON Direct 0800 0 857 857 (Lines are open 6am-midnight Monday-Friday and 9am-4pm Saturday)

Interested in learning?

As part of its extensive learning and training programme, UNISON offers new members a choice of free one-day workshops to help you at work and in



everyday life.

When new members join they will receive a handbook setting out their entitlements. This will include a choice of one of the following free workshops to take place later in the year...

- Welcome to UNISON
- Facing change together
- Your skills, your future
- Making the most of the internet

To take advantage of this offer, contact learningandorganising@unison.co.uk.

This is in addition to the many learning and training opportunities already available to UNISON members including our award-winning Return to Learn programme as well as discounts on Open University courses and locally organised training tailored to your needs.

For information on Scotland's Learning and Organising programme see www.unison-scotland.org

