

Council staff pull out the stops to serve most vulnerable during red alert

Deserved thanks for keeping vital services going

A special thanks must go to home care staff who made it through a red weather warning to plough through heavy snow to provide life-saving visits to vulnerable people.

The assistance provided by the council to keep these staff safe appears to have been patchy and we have already been in touch with the emergency planning team to ensure this is much better coordinated in future.

And thanks must also go to the host of other workers who pulled out the stops to ensure essential services were maintained.

We know that, for some people, getting into work was a complete impossibility and many worked at home co-ordinating and backing up colleagues.

There are a host of stories about people getting in through the snow to their workplace or doing essential work from their nearest workplace on behalf of colleagues from other areas, and of support staff walking into work to back up these services.

The roads workers, the residential care workers, the social workers, the community safety workers and the



thousands of other workers that did their best to keep Edinburgh's essential services going, all deserve a big thank you.

UNISON put bulletins on our branch website throughout and noted that the council's guidance was clear, fair and reasonable.

However, this was not always followed by some managers and UNISON is following that up.

RECALL UNISON AGM Tuesday 13 March 6.30pm METHODIST CHURCH, 25 NICOLSON SQUARE

We need your support to get a quorate AGM with an attendance of 200 members. This will enable us to approve changes that will make future AGMs easier to go ahead.

We will also have updates and discussion on these topics and what you want your union to be doing.

- Pay Offer update, if available.
- Janitors' review update and ballot
- Cleaners' review update
- Pupil support - violence at work & administration of medication
- Health & Safety – increasing workloads and stress
- Social care - Workforce Planning & H&SC Survey
- Transformation reviews for 2018
- Open Libraries
- Update on proposed new Sickness Absence Policy

Janitors ballot: 95% rejection of review proposals

In December, janitors rejected the current review proposals that would see compulsory Saturday working, initial drop in pay, part time janitors in some schools

and community centres amongst many other issues.

There are serious health and safety concerns around reduced hours in schools and community centres where there is no janitor present when after school clubs and activities are taking place.

Gerry Stovin, lead negotiator, said: "We are still awaiting the final model to be presented to the unions to determine if a full industrial action ballot is required."

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- Time to get active in your union

Join us in UNISON 0131 558 7488 or www.unison-edinburgh.org.uk

Stress and violence increases

by Ian Mullen

Health & Safety Convener

UNISON has identified a large increase in work related stress and mental health illness following the Transformation reviews.

Departments throughout the council have seen reductions in experienced staff and increased workloads.

Remaining staff are in large expected to cover the remaining work with little or no additional assistance.



UNISON has actively highlighted our members' concerns at senior management and councillor level, as a result the new occupational health advisor PAM now

provides a specialist counselling service called PAM Assist.

UNISON Communities and Families reps are continuing to monitor the increase in violence at work towards staff, particularly in schools, libraries and community centres.

We continue to work with senior departmental managers, FM and the council security manager to reduce/alleviate further assaults on our members.

Staff-less libraries: Questions still unanswered

It's been over six months since UNISON raised concerns as to the introduction of staff-less libraries and the council has still to provide us with formal plans or a strategy about Open Libraries Solutions.

This is a major concern as it has been confirmed that a pilot scheme will go ahead at some point in 2018.

Questions remain unanswered as to what measures will be put in place to ensure that libraries do not become focal points for antisocial behaviour, that the safety of the public is assured in the event of emergency and that assistance is quick in coming for those who fall ill or are injured on

These points go against the very ethos of public library services'

David Harrold

library premises.

No thought appears to have been given to the subject of equalities either.

Women are far less likely to enter an unstaffed building.

Physical access is prohibitive to those who are elderly or disabled and for those with learning difficulties there will be no one to support them in the use of the facilities.

These points go against the very ethos of public library services yet, as above, UNISON's questions on these issues also go answered.

David Harrold, UNISON service conditions convener said: "It appears that management are entrenched in their view that staff-less libraries are the way forward, failing to acknowledge that the greatest asset in these buildings are those colleagues who make a visit to the library worthwhile.

"UNISON will actively involve itself from the beginning of any pilot scheme or introduction of Open Libraries Solutions, with the purpose of ensuring that quality of service remains intact, and that this project does not threaten the jobs or terms and conditions of our highly valued library staff".

PAY 2018

The much publicised 3%, up to £36,500, 2% above that with a flat rate over £80,000 pay proposal announced by the Scottish government does NOT apply to local government.

The joint trade unions for local government submitted a claim for 6.5% or £1500, whichever is higher to COSLA for April 2018.

There has been no pay offer yet from COSLA.

The recent headlines in the Evening News relate to the 3% set aside by Edinburgh Council to cover a possible single rate pay rise.

This is not an offer as pay is set nationally in Scotland.

Do the Pay Survey

Members have been asked their views in a Scotland-wide Survey Monkey ([see website](#)).

It will take no more than two minutes of your time and will give us valuable information that we can use in negotiations. **The deadline for responding is 5pm on Friday 16 March.**

Cleaning review

We are still waiting and pressing for further details on this review. UNISON has challenged the need for a full review, excluding the supervisors.

We have been assured that details will be available shortly with a timescale and direction of the review.

Health & Social Care Integration: Meetings called as services struggle

by David Harrold

Service Conditions Convener

Staff in the Health & Social Care Department continue to suffer from excessive workloads and higher rates of absenteeism caused by workplace injury and stress.

Services are at breaking point due to staff reductions and cuts to vital resources and yet we continue the journey to the cliff edge.

UNISON says enough is enough! It's time for all to come together and fight for our service.

We are holding a series of workplace meetings throughout March which are open to all our members.

Workplace meetings

These meetings will be to identify and take forward your priorities for action as a result of the recent H&SC workforce

survey, and of the cuts and restructurings related to Transformation and Integration.

Please make every effort to come and bring along as many of your colleagues as you can

Tuesday 13 March

Bonnington Social Work Centre, 1-3pm

Wednesday 14 March

East Neighbourhood Local Office, Front Of House

Meeting Room, 12-2pm

Monday 19 March

East Neighbourhood Local Office, Front Of House Meeting Room, 6-8pm

Tuesday 20 March

Drumbrae Library Hub, Meeting Room 2, 5.30-7.30pm

Thursday 22 March,

Wester Hailes Healthy Living Centre, Conference Room, 12.30-2pm

UNISON survey shows social care staff 'overworked and demoralised'

A recent survey of Social care members in Edinburgh has some startling and concerning results;

33% of respondents don't have regular supervision – unacceptable in regulated services.

64% say workload is too high. 20% say workload so high that they cannot practise safely or their health is at risk.

73% say they feel pressure to take on more work that they can manage.

52% have had work-related ill-health in the past two years.

Half the respondents said excessive workloads should be biggest priority, and 85% said they

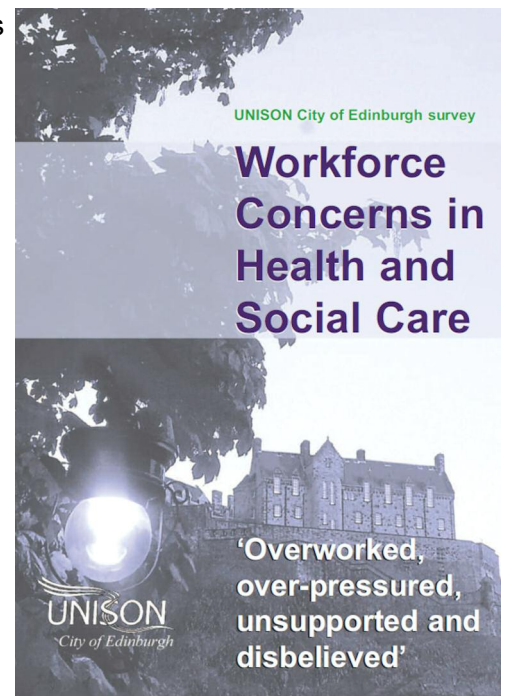
would take industrial action on this issue.

Kirsten Hey, UNISON Health and Social Care steward, said: "The survey gives a flavour of a workforce at times reeling under the pressures but committed to the services they provide and the people who depend on them."

The survey of UNISON members who are social workers, home care staff, occupational therapists and support staff revealed that they felt "Overworked, over-pressured, unsupported and disbelieved".

Details from the survey have been presented to the council.

See the full survey at unison-edinburgh.org.uk/hscsurvey2017



Time to get active in your union

Not in living memory have our members faced so many challenges in our workplace.

Through UNISON's work with the council

and councillors, we have kept Compulsory redundancies and attacks on our terms and conditions at bay.

Its hard to believe but there is more to

come, year after year as austerity continues in to the next decade.

Now is the time to get more involved in your union, become a steward or a workplace

contact. All the training and support you need will be provided and you will join a great team.

Contact the branch office below.

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