

# Talks go on to get a better pay offer

**A**s you are aware, the employers have offered 3 % up to £36,500, 2% from there up to £80,000 and a flat rate of £1,600 above that.

Both UNISON and COSLA have made representations to the Scottish government for funding an improved offer.

After two exchanges of letters with Derek Mackay MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution, a meeting was set up with him on 10 May which was described as 'constructive but not conclusive'. A further meeting is being sought as we go to press.

Meanwhile, union



negotiators are urging members to check out the full details and the letters at [www.unison-scotland.org](http://www.unison-scotland.org) (Click on At Work, Local Government and Local Government Pay 2018):-

- Share this information with your colleagues and let them know what UNISON is doing to get you a decent pay increase.
- Ask fellow UNISON

members to update their membership details so we have an e-mail address we can use to keep them up to date

- Follow @UnisonScotLGvt on Twitter for updates.
- Write to your local Councillor/MSP and ask them to support our claim.
- Recruit a colleague – the more members we have the bigger our voice in negotiations.

At the end of the process it is likely you will receive a consultative ballot on accepting or rejecting the offer.

Whatever your view we urge you to vote, pay is the most important issue we have.

## Pupil support assistants and nursery nurses violence survey

**O**ver the last 18 months UNISON has noticed a significant increase in the number of members suffering violence at work from children and young people.

To get information on the scale of the problem - and to plan how best to take the campaign forward - all members will shortly receive a survey on the frequency and impact of violence at their workplace.

They will also be invited to attend members' meetings in each of the localities.

Pauline Henderson, UNISON Communities and Families convener, said: "It is no longer enough to deal with these cases individually so UNISON will start a campaign with PSAs and nursery nurses to ensure the council exercises its duty of care to staff and follows its own Violence at Work policy."

## UNISON wins major travel costs deal for social care staff

**T**hanks to UNISON intervention, all peripatetic Edinburgh social care workers will now get a Citysmart card for travel.

In addition, members who are authorised car users will now be able to claim mileage from their home or the city boundary to their first visit if they stay outside Edinburgh.

**‘This is a tremendous and hard-fought victory for our low paid members.’**

David Harrold

UNISON first raised the issue of bus fares and car mileage for peripatetic staff with the employer as early as May 2017.

Tom Connolly, branch secretary, said that UNISON was extremely concerned and disappointed at the level of avoidance obstruction and delay that we experienced from senior members of HR and employee relations in achieving a workable and sensible change to

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## Braced for attacks on our terms and conditions

**UNISON has warned that the forthcoming review of the pay and rewards policy is unlikely to bring good news for our pay and conditions.**

It is not at the stage of being issued to the trade

unions for consultation yet but we remember the 'modernising pay' fiasco in 2010 and the effects of that are still with us.

It is only a few years ago since we were all dismissed and reinstated to impose 'modernising

pay' and we need to be ready to fight any proposals that reduce your pay or amount of increments you receive.

We will let you know of what actions we need you to take as soon as we have the proposals.

## Working through the red weather warning

**There is no doubting the commitment shown by staff in their attempts to get to work during the extreme Red/Amber weather warnings of the 28 February 2018.**

Extreme weather situations like this may occur every few years but the council needs to plan in advance for any emergency.

Unfortunately, individual sections did not put contingency plans in place which resulted in staff placing themselves in

potential danger in an attempt to get to offices, depots and vulnerable people.

UNISON received a number of complaints from members, some of whom walked substantial distances to get to work or between vulnerable clients as there was no public transport.

UNISON contacted the council's Resilience Team in March, highlighting our members' concerns and requesting a meeting to review the Council Emergency Plan.



That meeting has taken place and several points have been submitted for consideration with joint meetings to take place in due course.

Reviewing the plan has received widespread support from the Executive Director of Place and several other sections which were affected.

UNISON would like to place on record our thanks to all our members and staff for their efforts during this time.

## Building Control crisis is not the staff's fault

Hopefully this is not a sign of the times as staff cuts start to bite.

Starved of recruitment for many years and combined with a booming construction sector in Edinburgh, the siphoning off of warrant fees for other services was bound to lead to a crisis.

This has led to a Scottish Government improvement team coming in with one last chance to turn the service round before it is removed.

Gerry Stovin, service conditions officer, said: "We must move on from thinking that smarter working and tinkering with the structure will solve the problem, when extensive recruitment and a long-awaited IT upgrade is needed to start to reverse the decline.

"This crisis is not the staff's fault, it's a decade of poor management decisions and inadequate funding."

## Travel costs victory for social care workers

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procedure that would benefit a large section of low paid council staff.

Peripatetic workers (that being those with no work base or who are based in various places for relatively short periods) were only able to claim travel costs from their first job rather than from their home and were also expected to pay for each individual journey throughout the rest of their working day.

This was causing financial problems for many of our low paid members who were paying as much as quarter of their monthly salary to go about council business,

sometimes not being recompensed until two months later.

The pressure we placed on the council has achieved an agreement that all peripatetic workers will now be issued with Citysmart cards making travel no longer a financial concern and burden.

This alongside the decision that our members who are authorised car users will now be able to claim mileage from their home or the city boundary, if they reside out with Edinburgh, to their first appointment, is a major achievement.

David Harrold, Edinburgh

UNISON's service conditions convener said: "This is a tremendous and hard-fought victory for our low paid members.

"As a result of UNISON raising this as a serious concern for our members and arguing the point at the highest levels of the council, including elected members, no longer will those who provide the valued services within Homecare and Reablement be put out of pocket for fulfilling their duties.

"This would not have been achieved without our members standing firm with their union".

# Relocation of nursery nurses halted

**Plans to cut the number of nursery nurses at Kaimes school have been postponed following talks between UNISON and management.**

The Communities and Families stewards' committee has been meeting management over the past year to discuss their proposals to cut the numbers of nursery nurses in special schools.

This was to be implemented by August 2018. We also held meetings for members to update them and to be able to feedback their concerns to management.

The feedback we got from members and staff made it clear that this proposal would endanger staff and pupils, and that the skills and experience of these four staff was vital to the safe running

of the school.

We discussed this with management and were able to negotiate this being postponed at Kaimes until some of the ongoing issues could be resolved.

Without UNISON's intervention, these staff would have been redeployed, and there would have been a significant negative impact on staff and pupils.

# Janitors' review complete but cleaning review put back to after summer

**Following revised proposals from Facilities Management the janitorial review is now complete and matching and assignment is taking place.**

It has been a long struggle over many years with some mainly positive and some negative results.

The janitorial service was retained in-house following our successful City's Not For Sale campaign.

Negotiations led to the review's original plan for a cluster model being replaced by one janitor for each school, with all schools having a full time janitor.

There will be 38 FTE additional janitors, an increase in grade, successful internal recruitment for supervisors, retention of shift allowances in high schools, and removal of unpaid breaks.

Unfortunately, the increase use of schools'



**‘Cleaning: UNISON will do all in its power to ensure these low paid staff do not lose out.’** Gerry Stovin

leisure facilities has expanded Saturday working on a rota basis.

## Cleaning review

The Cleaning Review has been put back again till after the summer.

This is frustrating for the supervisors who will now remain just above the Living Wage, while other FM supervisors move up a grade.

For the cleaning staff uncertainty remains and

current working patterns will remain in place.

Gerry Stovin, service conditions officer, said: “We await the proposals and, as we have said for many years, the lowest paid staff in the council will not suffer a change in hours, working patterns or terms and conditions.

“UNISON will do all in its power to ensure these low paid staff do not lose out.”

# Community centres UNISON lobbying for better service

**C**ommunity centres are going through a tough time at the moment with the removal of community workers and introduction of part time janitors.

Without help, we are already seeing reduced opening hours and responsibility being passed to volunteers.

We have raised this at the highest level and UNISON will continue to lobby councillors, Communities and Families and Facilities Management to get a better service for our communities.

# Health & Safety Taking action when needed

**U**NISON'S Health and Safety team are committed to the Working Together in Partnership agreement with the council.

However, over the last few months it has become apparent that issues highlighted in our workplace inspection reports are either delayed or not actioned.

Ian Mullen, health and safety convener, says: “UNISON will always endeavor to resolve health, safety and wellbeing concerns in-house, but we will reserve the right to call on the advice and assistance of other Regulatory bodies such as the HSE, SEPA or, as on this occasion, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service who have now carried out a full external fire audit at Leith Community Centre”.

The council's corporate health and safety team have produced new guidelines on the reporting of accidents, incidents and near misses without consultation with the joint trade unions. We would always encourage members to report these incidents at the earliest opportunity.



# UNISON report reveals trading standards cuts are putting public safety at risk

The number of trading standards officers has been cut by almost a quarter (23%) across Scotland in the past six years, giving rogue traders free rein to scam the public, says UNISON.

The findings are part of UNISON Scotland's latest survey – Trading Safety: a survey of trading standards staff – released on 30 May.

The report is the latest in UNISON Scotland's Damage series which looks at the impact of austerity on the country's public services and the staff who deliver them.

Trading standards teams are an essential local government service protecting consumers, enforcing safety legislation and supporting legitimate business to ensure public safety.

The survey reveals a dedicated group of workers who are struggling to deliver a high quality service.

Key findings from the survey show:

- Budgets have been cuts by 12% since 2012/13. An earlier report from the improvement service states that cuts amount to 21% "over the last five years"

- The number of trading standards officers

**'Cuts to trading standards hurt us all and it's crucial this work is taken seriously.'**

Dave Watson

has dropped by 23% since 2012/13. There have also been substantial job cuts for other roles in the teams

- This is an ageing workforce, experienced staff are retiring/being made redundant and fewer young people are getting the opportunity to start a career in trading standards meaning there will be a skills shortage in the future

- Brexit will increase workload substantially but the cuts continue

- 70% of respondents indicated that morale is



low or very low in their teams and 78% stated that they do not expect it to improve in the next few years.

Trading standards officers play an essential role in public safety by ensuring the things we buy are safe, are in the correct amounts, are as described on the

packaging, that price displays are fair and we are not overcharged.

They also support businesses by ensuring that they aren't undercut by fraudsters and those who don't follow the rules.

Dave Watson, UNISON Scotland's head of policy and public affairs, said: "Cuts to trading standards hurt us all and it's crucial this work is taken seriously."

"The focus must be on keeping people safe and the dedicated staff who work tirelessly to ensure the public are protected from financial and physical harm."

You can find the full survey online at: <http://www.unison-scotland.org/library/Trading-Safety-May-2018-final-version-.pdf>

## Civic Site & New Waste Transfer Review

### Make your views known now

With this review reaching the mid-point review on the 18 June it is important that our members put forward their concerns and thoughts regarding the implementation of the proposed new working structures.

UNISON and Unite met with Waste Management on 6 June

for a progress report.

All staff received a pack at the start of the 45 day consultation period which included the e-mail post box address where staff views could be registered.

Managers have said that to date they have received no feedback from affected staff.

UNISON would urge our members to send feedback, either through the managers e-mail or by contacting your local UNISON steward or the branch e-mail at [branchoffice@unison-edinburgh.org.uk](mailto:branchoffice@unison-edinburgh.org.uk)

Your views will be passed on to Waste Management in strict confidentiality.