

Sexual harassment

Over three quarters of UNISON members are women and UNISON is proud to be the leading trade union for women. We have a solid history of women being at the heart of the union, through enshrining self-organisation into our rule book along with proportionality.

The recent rise of women's movements around the world campaigning against sexual harassment, whether that be in the workplace or otherwise

has really brought inappropriate conduct by men to the forefront.

We often think that we live in modern times and that we should be beyond this type of conduct in the workplace. But this

UNISON are here to say this is not okay. You are not alone and we will support you if you are being harassed at work"

Tom Howorth, Place Convener

behaviour still gets downplayed as flirting, banter or 'having a bit of

fun'. Women at work being pecked on the cheek, touched on the shoulders, hugged or worse are still stigmatised if they object.

There are still a shocking number of

cases of sexual harassment in the workplace that the trade

unions deal with every year and they are an all too familiar tale of abuse of power, misogyny and machismo.

The TUC carried out a study of sexual harassment in 2016. It is estimated that only 1 in 5 women report sexual harassment in the workplace, so we know that the cases we are dealing with are only the tip of the iceberg. If you want to talk to us in confidence, get some advice or make a complaint, call us on 0131 558 7488.

Annual General Meeting

Thank you all who managed to attend our aggregated AGM meetings. The aggregated meetings were a great success and resulted in us meeting the required quorum for us to move forward into the next year. Planning is already in place to organise further meetings across the neighbourhoods over the coming months and up to the next Annual General Meeting.

The issue of greatest concern for me at the meetings was members who were clearly expressing real distress by the volume of work that they are being asked to do. Staff are being left feeling stressed and unsupported resulting in members going off with work related stress.

If you are feeling stressed with the workload that you— have it is important

that you talk this over with your line manager and ask for an individual risk assessment to be carried out, if your team are feeling this your manager should be carrying out a team risk assessment.

UNISON is clear, no one should be made ill by their work"

Tom Connolly, Branch Secretary

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Upcoming Events

- Edinburgh Pride, Saturday 22 June
- Local Government Conference, 16 and 17 June, Liverpool
- National Delegate Conference, 18-21 June, Liverpool
- National LGBT Conference, 26 June, London
- Disabled Members Conference, 27 June, London
- Retired Members Conference, 1 and 2 October, Southport

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Employers have a duty of care to their employees, which means that they should take all steps which are reasonably possible to ensure their health, safety and wellbeing.

Requirements under an employer's duty of care are wide-ranging and may manifest themselves in many different ways, such as:

- clearly defining jobs and undertaking risk assessments
- ensuring a safe work environment
- providing adequate training and feedback on performance

- ensuring that staff do not work excessive hours
- providing areas for rest and relaxation
- protecting staff from bullying or harassment, either from colleagues or third parties
- protecting staff from discrimination
- providing communication channels for employees to raise concerns
- consulting employees on issues which concern them.

An employer can be deemed to have breached their duty of care by failing to do everything that

was reasonable in the circumstances to keep the employee safe from harm.

Employees also have responsibilities for their health and wellbeing at work - for example, they are entitled by law to refuse to undertake work that isn't safe without fear of disciplinary action.

ACAS

“If you feel that you are not being supported at work and your physical or psychological health is being affected please contact us for further guidance and support.” Tom Connolly, Branch Secretary

Overworked and under appreciated - Health & Social Care

The Health & Social Care Department is being asked to make £19m cuts this year. These cuts on the back of the supposed “efficiency savings” made these past few years will be disastrous, not just to ensuring that our high-quality services continue but to your health and wellbeing.

A recent UNISON survey of our Health & Social Care Services informed us that 52% of staff have experienced work-related ill-health in the past 2 years, the majority of which required their absence from work for treatment.

Health & Social Care is staffed by caring and professional people who continue to show dedication to the service of our citizens in need. Yet their reward is to be saddled with the uncertainty of future budget cuts and the knowledge that their workload will continue to increase.

UNISON says
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

David Harrold, UNISON Service Conditions Convener says, **“To cut their numbers and obstruct their ability to provide care of the highest**

quality is nothing short of negligence and questionable as to whether the employer is abiding by the SSSC employers' code of conduct”.

Vulnerable people will continue to be failed by a flawed system until the Scottish Government provides decent funding for adequate staffing, better training and fair pay for Health & Social Care staff. UNISON will continue to fight for our members and their services at every available forum; locally and nationally.

“For our greatest asset to be treated in such a manner shows nothing but disrespect”

David Harrold, Service Conditions Convener

Organisational Reviews

UNISON has been expressing concerns around the council budget proposals and how they have been presented to councillors and unions since December 2018.

It has taken a long struggle, through a full council meeting, Finance & Resource Committee and Joint Consultative Committee, but we have finally agreed with Resources that all information on the proposed reviews, including where the 200 proposed posts are to be cut, will be shared with the unions in advance.

Meetings are due to start this month and we will update you when we know more.

Health & Social Care cuts - time to speak out and campaign against privatisation of health and social care services

The Edinburgh Integrated Joint board have approved a number of controversial cuts to services and staff.

Two Day Care Centres to close

Reduction in Home Care Organisers

A permanent freeze on recruitment in Home Care vacancies resulting in more and more outsourcing to the external market

Review of Overnight Home Care and Overnight Support

Meetings with the EIJB have been arranged to enable UNISON to get

clarification on the impact of these cuts on our members. We need a lot more information from management, especially around redeployment as staff should not end up being declared surplus because of these cuts.

UNISON will make a deputation to the May Integrated Joint Board to oppose these cuts and highlight the effect on staff and services.

UNISON Scotland has called for an end to the exploitation in the privatised care sector. This is exactly where the IJB is proposing to extend Home Care contracts. UNISON is seeking the adoption of the Ethical Care Charter

calling for women's skills and labour to be better valued.

Lilian Macer from UNISON warned "*the needs of society's most vulnerable are not being met and in which care workers are almost universally underpaid, largely undervalued and often exposed to exploitation*".

Time and time again these organisations withdraw from their commitment to provide a service to the vulnerable in our community, usually with little notice, leaving the overstretched Council home care staff to pick up the pieces.

Managing Change Policy

A new policy was proposed by council to amalgamate the Redundancy, Redeployment and Organisational Review procedure, very important documents considering the financial challenges the council face for many years.

UNISON strongly opposed the new Change Policy and associated guidance document in the few days we were given to comment on it and only a deputation to a controversial Finance and Resource Committee forced the employers to consult and listen to the concerns from the trade unions.

A revised document is going to Finance & Resources on 23 May and although it is not a joint agreement, it is vastly improved on the original proposals and more reflects the existing documents.

“ We will need your support to campaign against the cuts and outsourcing in H&SC. When we have exhausted talks with management we will come back to our members and seek your support for the appropriate action”

Gerry Stovin, Assistant Branch Secretary

Scottish Social Services Council

Everyone should join a union

UNISON
City of Edinburgh

Don't leave it too late to join UNISON

Menopause and Perimenopause in the workplace

Although rarely discussed in the workplace, the menopause and perimenopause are a natural stage of life that millions of women workers are going through now or will experience in the future. Reasonable adjustments are

‘There is often little understanding of the issues surrounding the menopause and perimenopause, which results in a lack of support, with many women preferring to hide their symptoms.’

Ian Mullen, Health & Safety Convener

therefore less likely to be put in place to help women through their working day. This must change. In 2018, this branch passed a motion, which is going to this year’s National Delegates

Conference in June, calling for the City of Edinburgh Council and other employers to ensure that the menopause and perimenopause and its potential impacts on our female colleagues be reflected in their sickness absence policy and other procedures. We also call on employers to recognise that trans men can also experience these symptoms.

FACTS: 51% of the population in the UK is female. 71% of women in the UK are working. 48% of the workforce in the UK are women. 3.5 million women over 50 are employed in the UK. The number of women working at the age of 70, doubled in the last four years.

Researched Findings: An estimated 13 million women in the UK (1 in 3) are currently going through or have reached the

menopause. 8 out of 10 women will experience noticeable symptoms. 45% of women will find their symptoms hard to deal with. Finally, almost definitely, yes all women in our workplaces will be or have been affected by the menopause or perimenopause at some point in their lives.

Stress Survey

April saw the launch of the UNISON City of Edinburgh 2019 Stress Survey. The survey closed on Friday 10th May and we are now in the process of collating the overwhelming response and hope to circulate the results to all members in the coming months.

UNISON believes the results will assist our ongoing campaign to improve employee wellbeing.

May Day Rally - 2019

Another successful May Day Rally took place on Saturday 4th May.

Originally May Day was a pagan celebration of the return of summer. In the nineteenth century, as the industrial revolution spread around the world, men, women and children endured very long working hours, often twelve hours or more. The idea of a worker’s holiday celebration was born in Australia. In 1856 Australian workers organised a day of complete stoppage of work together with speeches and entertainment as a demonstration in favour of an eight hour working day. In 2019 we are fighting to end the ravages of austerity, for

secure homes, jobs and health and for a just transition to a sustainable zero carbon economy. Edinburgh is one of the richest cities in the world but here and



worldwide the wealth is concentrated in the hands of a tiny minority.

Edinburgh is an international city. Its working population comes from many parts. May Day stands for solidarity, internationalism and anti-racism.



El Presidente retires

Our former President and longest surviving Branch Officer and activist, John Stevenson, has retired. There is no need to add to the glowing farewell in the recent *Scotland in UNISON* bulletin other than to say we look forward to him working with the Branch in the near future.

May Day - 100 years ago

1919 was a tumultuous year. In the aftermath of the First World War there were mass strikes of workers, the Police and soldiers.

The Scottish Trades Union Congress voted in favour of a 30-hour working week. This was the period when the Scottish working class won a reputation for its militancy