

Scottish Youth Climate Strike and UNISON Green Day

Friday 20 September 11.30am - 5pm
Meadows to the Scottish Parliament

The Scottish Youth Climate protesters have organised a week of action in support of climate change and are asking everyone of any age to join them on their biggest protest of the year.

Assembly is at 11am at Middle Meadows Walk, marching off at 11.30am to a rally at the Scottish Parliament.

August Branch Committee heard from Sandy Boyd, a young climate protester and the branch made a donation to the organisation.



Sandy Boyd, A young climate protester gives a talk at August's Branch Committee meeting

The branch banner will be there for the walk from the Meadows to the Scottish Parliament and we would urge everyone to attend if



possible, but especially workers based in Waverley Court and the City Chambers to come out and join the march as it passes at lunchtime.

Full Council passed a motion last month to support staff to attend the rally by approving non-essential staff annual leave or flexi leave. Speak to your manager to arrange time off or take an extended lunch break.

It is time to take action.

Please save the date in your diary.

Extension of Wind Down Days and VR Multiplier

UNISON's persistence with councillors has paid off when the Finance & Resources Committee rejected the removal of the retirement wind down days and reduced the multiplier used to calculate voluntary redundancy.

Having a strong argument is hard to defend against and both policies remain in place until next April.

In the meantime, we are collecting data on how many staff leave this year on voluntary redundancy and will put the case again when it returns to committee to retain the existing multipliers.

Many of the staff have been made surplus because HR have determined their job description has substantially changed and they must be interviewed for their own post. Some staff have lost their job even though a vacancy remains.

UNISON has ensured the new policy will be more flexible on the need to interview and continue to push for more informal interviews as an alternative.

Council Vehicle Tracking - Big Brother is Watching

Last year (UNISON News, May 2018), we wrote about the Council's plans to introduce live GPS tracking to all council vehicles and the introduction of driver behaviour monitoring in some vehicles ("O-License"). These systems have been collectively known as Telematics.

We have already won a number of concessions from management on the original system that was due to be introduced, including:

There will no longer be

driver behavior monitoring in the majority of Council vehicles;

The Council will be spending significantly less on the system;

Live tracking information will no longer be accessible by line managers;

Managers will not be able to carry out phishing exercises to target individuals.

After the latest meeting on 23 July, there are still insufficient safeguards to prevent rogue managers

being able to use this system to bully staff. However, we have been given assurances by the heads of service in Place that improvements will be made to the policy. Management have so far refused our calls for the system to be used only for its primary stated purpose, of vehicle usage monitoring and maintenance, by excluding it's use for disciplinaries.

UNISON is aware of cases with other employers where these systems have been abused by managers to

engineer unwanted staff out of the organisation.

Final meetings are planned for September.

Now we need to hear from you.

What are your concerns with this system? Are there any further safeguards you would suggest? Or should we be opposing this system all together?

E-mail or call the branch with your views. E-mail branchoffice@unison-edinburgh.org.uk or phone 0131 558 7488

Consolidation of Living Wage and the Fallout

There still has been no news from management on when and how the living wage will be consolidated from a supplement in our low paid staff's wages.

Although Unison Scotland campaigns for this to happen as soon as possible, we are concerned that our Council is taking a possible divisive route in implementing it.

Instead of, as some councils have done, implementing the living wage at little cost, our council is proposing another version of modernising pay. This

could entail changes to the pay bands, working time payments, increments, etc and current estimates are that this will cost the council an additional £20million. Instead of funding this additional cost, management propose to cover it from the existing pay bill, resulting in thousands of staff gaining or losing pay through alterations to their grades or working time payments.

When we have any further details, we will consult fully with our members and seek to have the impact reduced.

Pay Talks Re-Opening?

You will know the pay agreement included a re-opener which provided a "commitment to re-open negotiations with the Trade Unions in the event of another Local Government bargaining group's total pay offer value being revised such that it becomes greater than the sum agreed between COSLA Employers and the SJC Trade Unions for the SJC workforce for the period of the agreement"

We argued that COSLA should be bound by the re-opener and this decision of COSLA leaders and make an approach to the Scottish Government. We understand that they have now done so and we have also, along with other trade union colleagues, written to the First Minister requesting a meeting to discuss pay parity and the wider issue of local government funding.

Initial indications coming from the Scottish Government are so far not positive but we will keep you up to date with any news.

Cuts to Jobs and Services should not be played like a game

UNISON City of Edinburgh branch condemns the practice where our employer is inviting members of staff to take part in the budget calculator.

The elected members, our chief executive, executive directors and other senior managers have the responsibility of managing the council's budget and the services that they provide.

The biggest cause of absence across all service areas are work related stress and other mental health related issues. We have no

doubt that this is predominately caused by constantly being asked to do more and more with less.

Inviting our members and other staff to take part in the calculator exercise is an unaccepted exercise that only helps to rub salt into the wound of the scars of stress, anxiety and low moral that most of the staff face. It was not our members that caused the problem. The employer has a duty of care to our members and must ensure that they take this responsibility seriously.

We would recommend to our members that you do not participate in these exercises that encourage you to play one group of staff and the services that they provide off against each other. If you inadvertently find yourself being caught up in the process, we encourage your refusal and to contact us if you need support. We have already witnessed hundreds of millions of pounds being cut from the council budget with the consequence that thousands of jobs and services lost or struggling to survive.

Early Years Review - Meetings for Members

The Scottish Government has expanded the child care provision across the country. The expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland aims to almost double entitlement to free early learning and childcare (ELC) to 1140 hours per year by 2020 for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds.

As a consequence, UNISON and other trade unions have been in negotiations with the City of Edinburgh Council regarding implementation.

If you concerned about changes to your hours of work, contract of employment or job description, we have arranged for meetings to take place so that we can hear your views and shape the unions arguments going forward.

If you are not a UNISON member, there will be applications forms on the night for you to join us. Please feel free to forward this news-letter on to your colleagues who are non members.

The meetings to discuss this issue

for all those members affected have been arranged as follows:

MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER
Tynecastle High School
4pm – 6pm

WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER
Broughton High School
4pm – 6pm

WEDNESDAY 9 OCTOBER
Liberton High School
4pm – 6pm

MONDAY 7 OCTOBER
Portobello High School
4pm – 6pm

There is no better time to get active in UNISON City of Edinburgh Branch, particularly if you work in early years. We need your views, opinions and expertise. It really is the case that the more workplace representatives the branch has, the easier it is to keep in touch and deal with member issues.

BECOME A UNISON REP!

A UNISON workplace rep. is the



most important link between the union and its members. Support is available from your branch, UNISON staff and there are excellent training courses run throughout the year. You will get paid time off to attend training. Being a rep can be a great experience. Give it a go!

If you are interested in becoming more active with UNISON or want to find out more, please contact the branch.