

UNISON Matters

Aberdeenshire

February 2020

2020 UNISON AGM 19TH OR 20TH FEBRUARY



It's that time of year again when we need you, our members, to step up and let us know how you think we should go about representing you in 2020. Some of you will be asked to nominate our officers and stewards who have a responsibility to represent you and your views at both branch and national meetings.

Branch AGM

This year you will have an opportunity to find out more about how your branch is involved in overseeing your pension benefits and how you could influence the considerations affecting the future of the pension fund through branch pensions' officer Morag Lawrence.

UNISON EQUALITY
Women's Organisation
Black Members
LGBT+ Members
Disabled Members
Young Members
Retired Members

You will also learn more from branch equalities officer Kathleen Kennedy about how you could be involved in setting up and being part of a Self organised Group (SOG). These are groups that provide a voice for people who are traditionally under represented.

UNISON has SOG's at national, regional and local level for women, LGBT+ members, black members and disabled members. These groups are designed to be self-organising but also integral to the union's structures.

An important part of the AGM is to seek your approval for the motions that some officers have written and would like to take forward to the relevant conferences on your behalf to play our part in influencing what our union takes forward as future policy. So I hope you see how important your role is and that we will see you at one of our three AGM meetings.



North East Scotland has an LGBT+ group who are organising a fund raising 'Race Night' so if you are interested in supporting or joining this group why not come along to this event



'Race Night'

7pm 14th February 2020

Ashvale, 42 - 48 Gt Western Road

Tickets £12 include a meal

buy them in advance

Sponsor a race £50 or a horse £5

Get your ticket today

Speak to your steward or branch secretary

UNISON
North East Scotland

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SECTOR BODIES IN TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

This is the UNISON Scotland response to the Scottish Government's consultation [http://Consultation response on the role of Public Sector Bodies in tackling climate change - UNISON Scotland](http://Consultation%20response%20on%20the%20role%20of%20Public%20Sector%20Bodies%20in%20tackling%20climate%20change%20-%20UNISON%20Scotland).

UNISON is very concerned that the austerity funding cuts which have hit public bodies so hard over the last decade have impacted upon work to date on tackling climate change and ensuring it receives the priority necessary. Local government has taken the brunt of the cuts, but NHS services are clearly also under severe strain.

Given the scale and urgency of the climate emergency, the funding of public services is an absolutely crucial aspect of the role of public

bodies in securing a just transition to a climate resilient net zero Scotland.

We need government at all levels to ensure sufficient funding for the magnitude of the climate emergency.

What is crucial is that, however the arrangements for training and collaboration between public bodies are organised, the need for urgent action is treated as the emergency that it is, with sufficient funding to deliver the action required. We want to see public bodies working together and leading by example and we want to emphasise the important role of trade unions in how the public sector does this.

Please use the web version to access links



QUIZ NIGHT SUCCESS WILL SUPPORT SOGS IN GRAMPIAN

Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City and Grampian Health Branches held a cross branch Quiz Night in October to help support UNISON self organised groups (SOGs) in the Grampian area.

The funds raised will support participation in various events that help to raise public awareness such as Grampian Pride, Aberdeen MELA and other events linked to self organisation.

Local organiser, Ann McEvoy

said, "The night was a great success and is the first of various events that are being organised to raise awareness and funds. Aberdeen City Branch team 'No idea' defied their name to win by the skin of their teeth.

"The next is a Race Night at the famous Ashvale Restaurant in Aberdeen on Valentine's Day.

"So if you don't know what to get for your loved one,

or where to take them for a Valentine's treat, bring them along for a night of fun. I'm sure they won't forget that night in a hurry!"



PENSION QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. How do I know if I qualify for the rule of 85?

A. You qualify for this by reaching the age of 60 and your age plus years of service add up to 85. If this happens before the 1st of April this year, you are still able to request retirement using this rule.

Q. Can the rule of 85 still be considered if I reach it after the 1st of April?

A. If your age and years in the fund total 85 after 1st April 2020 it could still make a difference but after that date there would be a reduction calculated on the years worked after the 1st April.

Q. Why am I classed as part time when I work 36.25 and have always understood this to be full time?

When the new career average (CARE) pension scheme came in, in 2015 people were concerned

that they would be put at a disadvantage because their full time post was classed as part-time. The pension fund explained that they needed to differentiate between the employees whose working week, although full time, is a shorter week than for example the craft workers in the council who work slightly longer weeks.

As everyone's pension is based on their contributions and the actual hours worked it makes no difference how that job is classed.

Q. Was there proper consultation on the introduction of the career average pension scheme?

A. The change to career average in 2015 came after members were balloted and agreed to take well supported strike action in support of their pension. This put UNISON in a strong position to play a major part in the negotiations which followed and resulted in

an agreement to change to career average on far better terms than some of the options that are being suggested for others at the moment.

Q. Why are some of the public sector challenging the career average introduction?

One part of our agreement was that this new CARE pension is based on an accrual rate of 1/49th of our pay which in comparison with others and previous agreements is far better.

Q. How do the pension fund calculate my pension?

A. When it comes to retiring the calculations will be made for each part of your pension based on the particular agreement in place at the time of working them. So only the part since 2015 will be calculated as a career average and added to the other totals for all the years worked.

Pension Fund contact details are as follows:

Phone: 01224 264264 (8:30am - 5pm) Email: pensions@nespf.org.uk

<http://www.nespf.org.uk>

Setback for the WASPI WOMEN but the fight must go on



The WASPI Campaign which is fighting Government changes to women's State Pensions has vowed to "fight on" despite a High Court ruling in October which rejected their

case against the Government and the DWP.

WASPI's campaign against the Government's decision to withhold their pensions for years beyond their expected pension age is 'discriminatory' - but more so it was imposed without adequate warning - giving them no time

to make alternative arrangements.

There were angry emotional scenes outside the High Court in when the decision was announced. An estimated 3.8 million women are affected, and some will lose £50,000.

UNISON must continue to back WASPI in an appeal the High Court decision if there is to be any chance they will be compensated for their unfair loss. Make sure your Branch presses the WASPI case <https://www.waspi.co.uk>

'BE REASONABLE' CAMPAIGN

UNISON Scotland disabled members launch 'Be Reasonable' campaign

Disabled Members' Committee has launched its new campaign which aims to challenge attitudes to disabled people in the workplace.

The Be Reasonable campaign highlights the need for employers to adjust their thinking when it comes to reasonable adjustments for disabled workers.

Alison Mitchell, UNISON's Disabled Members Committee, said: "UNISON is in a position to influence employers both nationally and locally, to affect policy and to affect attitudes to diminishing health (including disability) among decision makers, managers, staff, and members.

"Some of that will involve challenging and influencing deep-rooted attitudes.

"Some of our members don't have a platform and are unable to articulate themselves and

look to us. Our members have different experiences, they have different levels of ill-health or disability, and have differing confidence to stand up, to be seen, and to be listened to.

"Disabled workers want fairness not favours, and the Be Reasonable campaign aims to dispel some of the myths surrounding disabled workers.

"Through UNISON we can influence employers, affect policy and change attitudes. Most importantly, we want to make sure disabled workers have a voice in the workplace."

Branches and activists are encouraged to share the Be Reasonable campaign materials on the website with members through meetings, events, and

social media. You can download copies at unison-scotland.org.

People with disabilities are entitled to reasonable adjustments at work. A reasonable adjustment is anything that helps the person to carry out their normal duties. Often small things make the biggest difference.

A reasonable adjustment can be as simple as changing a harsh light bulb for a soft one. In fact, 70% of reasonable adjustments cost nothing at all.

You can contact the Disabled Members Committee Aberdeenshire Equalities Officer Kathleen Kennedy who sits on that committee via the UNISON Resource Centre on 01224 620624.



UNISON Scotland Education, Programme Calendar 2020

Whether you are a member or an activist in UNISON there will be a course for you in the programme. The important thing to remember is that if you would like to attend you will need to apply to your branch and also your manager at work. You can get the form and further information at the following link: <http://www.unison-scotland.org/learning/applying-for-activist-education-courses/> or phone **01463 715891**

GET OUR FULL SUPPORT BY JOINING BEFORE YOU NEED US

Please see our website at: <http://aberdeenshireunison.org>
email: aberdeenshire@unison.co.uk or call: **01224 620 624** or write to
Aberdeenshire UNISON, area resource centre, 7 Alford Place, Aberdeen,
AB10 1YD. You can also join online at: <https://join.unison.org.uk/>