

UNISON Matters

Aberdeenshire

Scotland's
care workers
for change

August 2020

CLAIM COVID CASH NOW!

UNISON has won full pay for all staff who were sick or self isolating **#claimcovidcash** campaign for Scottish Care Workers

SCOTLAND'S CARE WORKERS FOR CHANGE

BECOME A CAREWORKER FOR CHANGE AND JOIN OUR FIGHT FOR RECOGNITION FOR THE HIDDEN HEROES.

WE DEMAND:

- 1 Backpay for all workers who have lost pay during Covid-19.
- 2 Pay for the remainder of the pandemic if sick or self-isolating.
- 3 A sick pay system that has parity with NHS and Council workers.

UNISON Scotland

If you work in social care or home care and are self isolating, or on sick leave and are not receiving full pay – we want to hear about it so that we can support you. So watch the video and fill out the short form on this link <https://www.surveygizmo.eu/s3/90256781/Claim-Covid-Cash> to make your claim.

Remember let your colleagues know so that they can also benefit from this well earned cash.

COVID-19 - MAKING BLACK LIVES MATTER

"It's a fantasy to say that the risk linked to discrimination doesn't happen in Scotland."

Black workers facing the heightened risk of C19 infection and death are getting protection and reassurance from UNISON's "Equally Safe" campaign, according to regional manager Peter Hunter.

Early data from NHS workers exposed the threat to Black lives and a 2,000 member survey pinpointed workplace inequalities that demand urgent action. UNISON Scotland now has revised safety training and Covid safety materials designed in response to our research findings.

This includes a ground breaking Covid equality plan for work with employers. In response, the Scottish Government has issued initial guidance and commissioned an expert advisory group. In truth, government and employers must go further. "There may be an underlying health factor at play here but we simply don't have time to mess about with further research", Peter Hunter explained. "We can see from the NHS contact centre, the Hereford farm workers and Leicester sweatshops that Covid-19 thrives

in exploitative work settings. Safety is overlooked and the fear and silence of exploited workers creates a perfect breeding ground for infection. Bad jobs kill but Fair Work saves lives." UNISON's key finding is that Black workers are segregated into jobs and services where safety management is poor and Black workers fear reprisals if they speak up for safety. Changing the patterns of employment for Black workers will take years, so the urgent task is to

reach Black workers where they are now and fight the inequality that fuels infection rates. Aberdeenshire UNISON has a Black members Officer Benson Mugenyi who would be happy to be your contact if you are aware of any issues. bensmugenyi@gmail.com



ETHICAL FINANCE AND A GREEN RECOVERY: Your pension could help fight climate change and make the world a better place



A recent report found that investing in fossil-fuel companies means firms could lose money by missing out on growth in clean-energy investments. Covid-19 will raise many issues for our fund to consider, so we need to identify the ways to build sustainable portfolios in these challenging times ahead.

Additional recent research by a global agency has concluded that: Over 10 years, the average annual return for a sustainable fund invested in large global companies has been 6.9% a year, while a traditionally invested fund has made 6.3% a year.

UNISON Scotland on your behalf recently submitted its response to the Scottish Government Inquiry on a Green Recovery.

The following are the key highlights from letter which was drafted by the members of the UNISON Scotland Green Networks working group.

"A green recovery must also be a socially just recovery. The framework also needs to incorporate the Just Transition principles. And be informed by the work of the Just Transition Commission and the ideas of the Just Transition Partnership, of which we are part.

UNISON believes that planning and direction and delivery by the public sector are essential for a green recovery. The experience of the pandemic has demonstrated the crucial role of public and government initiative and direction

in dealing with a national public health crisis. It has also shown that private ownership was a weakness when it came to organising provision of care and supplies for care workers.

Significant opportunities exist for a green recovery. Research by Transition Economics commissioned by the STUC estimates that 150,000 jobs could be created in the immediate term, based on a £13 billion over 2 years in infrastructure investment. This includes land re-forestation, environmental restoration, green energy and waste recycling. This is economic activity which meets existing social and environmental needs. However it requires the stimulus of public investment".

Full copy of letter sent by UNISON: <https://www.unison-scotland.org/inquiry-into-a-green-recovery/> plus a link to more information: <http://www.stuc.org.uk/policy/seminar-series-catch-up-on-previous-events>

Don't under-estimate how much influence you can have on your pension provider. Investment decisions should reflect the issues you care about, such as the environment. Contact from fund members to Committee and Board members about investment issues is likely to be discussed at the following meeting.

The responsibilities of the Committee and Board members can be found here: <https://www.nespf.org.uk/about/who-runs-the-pension-fund/>. The contact details for the fund can be found here: <https://www.nespf.org.uk/contact-us/>, also on the NESPF website you will be able to access information on the current investment managers: <https://www.nespf.org.uk/about/investment/fund-managers/>. UNISONS current Pension Bulletin is available here: <https://www.unison-scotland.org/scottish-pensions-bulletin-58-august-2020/>

SCHOOL STAFF MAKE VOICES HEARD

As plans progress for schools to reopen to pupils in August, Aberdeenshire UNISON has taken steps to ensure the concerns of school support staff members are fully taken account of.

After information on reopening plans was sent out to support staff without proper consultation, the branch was inundated with concerns from education members.

It stepped in to remind the council that school support staff are just as critical to pupils' education as teachers and must be fully involved in the return to school process.

Acting assistant branch secretary, Ann Gray, and area organiser, Karen Davidson took the



Ann Gray

initiative to contact, by email or text, all members in schools for whom the branch had contact details to invite them to an online meeting.

Ann said: "More than 70 school support staff responded expressing interest, including pupil support staff, admin staff, janitors and cleaning staff.

An initial webinar was held and this led on to weekly online meetings each Thursday at 1pm and 6pm. These will continue through the summer break.

Ann went on: "A number of these members attended two-hour health and safety webinars which resulted in 19 new health and safety workplace reps, many of whom are also interested in becoming stewards."

Ann added that more training

is planned for early August following government guidance on reopening.

A Facebook group has also been set up so that school support staff can keep in touch, get the latest news and ask any questions. It has 64 members and counting.

"This has been a great development, and one we plan to keep going if/when Covid recedes as a threat," said Ann.

"It has allowed direct communication between branch and members in schools and is a platform to further develop our members and increase membership in schools.

"It has also generated lots of interest in further training, both as stewards and health and safety officers in schools, as members become more confident."



WASPI
Women Against State Pension Inequality

WASPI WOMEN take part in International Womens Day event

Women born in the 1950s have been affected by the changes, introduced by successive governments in an attempt to ensure "pension age equalisation" by raising it from 60 to 66.

This includes 29,000 local women in North East Scotland, some of whom are having to try and find work which isn't easy for over 60s.

"1950s women started work without the protection of the 1970s equalities legislation.

"Now, it feels like we are being further discriminated against in the name of equality.

They have lost up to six years of their state pension, with little or no notice, despite, in many cases, having paid more than 40 years of National Insurance contributions.

Please don't leave it up to others. We must all play our part. <https://www.waspi.co.uk>



RETIRED MEMBERS

UNISON works to raise awareness of issues which concern older people and to influence decision makers. Our priorities include:

- Pensioner poverty
- Health care and age discrimination
- Isolation and mobility issues

Retired and working members have a shared



interest in obtaining decent incomes in older age, a universal health service and the creation of a civilised society. Today's workers are tomorrow's pensioners and

*As retired members are no longer part of the workforce they are exempt from voting on pay and policy issues

UNISON's members work in public services on which many older people rely.

UNISON retired members enjoy all the benefits of UNISON membership including:

- Legal advice,
- Welfare support
- Special discounts and offers on a wide range of financial and other services

If you've been a UNISON member for at least two years on the day you retire and have either received state pension age or get a pension, you can become a retired member. The diagram to the left shows all other groups that operate in a similar way to retired members. These are known as Self Organised Groups or SOGs.

Aberdeenshire branch would love to hear from our retired members who would like to become more involved in UNISON either by supporting campaigns or organising their own. Please contact us on any of the methods at the foot of this page.

UNISON and the WEA providing free courses for members

UNISON have organised the following courses which will be delivered online by the WEA (Workers Educational Association) and free of charge to UNISON Members.

Family History – (1 pm – 3 pm) on 1st, 8th and 15th September – More information can be found on the UNISON LAOS website along with a web form for members to register – please click on this link: <https://learning.unison.org.uk/2020/08/10/discover-your-family-history-with-unison-learning/>

Power To Be You – (7 pm – 9 pm) on 17th and 24th Sept and 1st October.

Your Skills Your Future – (10 am – 12 pm) 13th, 20th, and 27th October.

Get That Job – (6.30 pm – 8.30 pm) 18th and 25th November and 2nd December.

More information about these three courses and the registration forms can be found here: <https://learning.unison.org.uk/2020/08/10/growing-in-confidence-with-unison-learning/> Members will have the option to register for one or all three courses.

CONTACT DETAILS

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.

Equalities Officer Kathleen Kennedy can be contacted directly on email: kathleenunison@gmail.com