



Social Care Newsletter Autumn 2020

UNISON Calls for a National Social Care Service

Prior to the crisis, the care sector was already in a precarious state as a result of chronic underfunding, an unstable market system and workforce shortages, with successive governments failing to take meaningful action. The pandemic has made it clearer than ever that there is an urgent need for an entirely different, more ambitious approach to care.

A UNISON document looks at the impact of the pandemic on the sector, why we need a new system for social care and the actions that need to be taken in pursuit of a national care service. This can be accessed using the following link: <https://www.unison-scotland.org/wp-content/uploads/Care-After-Covid.pdf>

A message from Mark Ferguson, Branch Secretary

I would like to take this opportunity to thank members working in Social, Residential and Community Care for the significant contribution you have made in these unprecedented times. It is without doubt that you have saved many thousands of lives and you continue doing so. UNISON is fully committed to a 'Covid Legacy' that does not see you paying for this crisis. We will seek improvements in terms and conditions, working environments and pay for you.

UNISON was at the forefront in campaigning for appropriate PPE provision and payments for social care workers in the private and third sectors, where employers were failing in these areas. In these challenging times and with more issues to arise in the coming months, it's more important than ever to be a trade union member and UNISON is the biggest union representing members in public services/care services. **JOIN US NOW** at <https://join.unison.org.uk/>

Adult Residential Care

UNISON has been aware that staff in residential settings may not all have been provided with uniforms.

This is something we are asking the HSCP to review.

We will also be asking that roles in residential settings are reviewed as a consequence of Covid-19 and job evaluated accordingly.

Welfare & Breaks

UNISON has been concerned with the lack of welfare and break facilities for a number of years. It would appear that we have now exhausted all avenues with management directly and we have raised the issue formally at the Council's Joint Consultative Board (Elected Members, Management and Trade Unions) on 2 September.

Whilst we accept that some progress has been made, we still consider this situation to be unsafe, unfair and detrimental to service delivery. We have had situations where members are congregating on street corners, sharing scheduling information, taking breaks in car parks and in some cases not having access to water or toilet facilities - **THIS CANNOT CONTINUE.**

We do not rule out the possibility of formal action should this issue not be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Covid-19 Arrangements

UNISON has raised the issue of care workers only being provided with 2 uniforms. Given that many of our members are split shift workers and require to wear 2 uniforms each day, we will be demanding that staff are provided with additional uniforms and the appropriate PPE for all weather working.

UNISON has formally requested to the Council and HSPC that retrospective payments are made to staff in respect of additional laundry costs, transport costs and normal break facilities not being available.

Members have raised concerns about reporting to the Milend Centre to collect PPE in their own time - we raised this issue earlier in the pandemic and requested that PPE be distributed in each locality. We understood that this had been happening but recent reports suggest otherwise. We will take this up with management again.

UNISON is distributing high vis armbands for the winter for members in an effort to highlight the dangers faced by staff and to increase our involvement in members' health & safety.

WE URGENTLY NEED STEWARDS - FULL TRAINING & SUPPORT PROVIDED! GET IN TOUCH

Covid Reward

As part of UNISON's Campaign "Fighting Today for a Better Future Tomorrow", we have requested at a national level a Covid Recognition Reward payment which should be paid to local government and social care workers in recognition of their commitment to service provision during the pandemic.

This payment would be in addition to the forthcoming cost of living pay rise due on 1st April 2021. Discussions are ongoing and members will be kept up to date with developments.

Job Evaluation

UNISON's Scottish Local Government Committee has made September the month for Social Care - every branch in Scotland is being asked to request each authority carries out a new job evaluation which should incorporate the new qualification requirement as stipulated by the SSSC, including changes to roles as a consequence by Covid-19.

The Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership and Renfrewshire Council have been notified of this request and we expect discussions to start in the coming days.

The previous changes proposed in relation to the Team Leader Role were challenged, as we did not feel that the job evaluation outcome fully reflected the duties carried out. This will now be raised as part of the above campaign and the appropriate retrospection applied.

Medication Policy

UNISON has been made aware of a new policy issued by Renfrewshire Council on Medication and associated training.

The policy is confused at best and provides conflicting guidance in relation to prompting and administering medicines.

UNISON has raised this issue directly with Health & Social Care Partnership management and following these discussions members will be advised of any developments.

Electric Cars

Members using the electric cars have highlighted a lack of charging facilities in their locality. This is impacting on scheduling and service delivery.

The branch will raise this issue with management.

Renfrewshire Social Care Forum

The Branch intends to establish a Social Care Forum to maintain regular contact between Branch Officers and members.

Initially we will be doing this by video link until physical meetings can resume. We intend to use this space to invite speakers to attend from management, politicians and the wider community.

Anyone interested should contact the branch with their details and email address and a link will be sent out for the first meeting in early October.

Community Meals

UNISON has been invited to a meeting with members of the HSCP and Environment & Infrastructure Services to discuss the service.

We will keep members advised.

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