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A message of support was sent to all UNISON members in Glasgow taking strike action.

National Delegate Conference Business

- Draft Motions Agreed
 - Branch Resources Motion may spark some contentious debate, it is vital that Northern Region delegations understand it's importance – Josie would be happy to brief any delegation on the implications.
- Rule Amendments Agreed
 - Proposal to delete the Deputy General Secretary Position
- Conference Plan
 - Rosa Parvanelli (General Secretary of Public Services International, the global union federation for public sector trade unions), is the first confirmed speaker.

Austerity Roundup

All the national secretaries gave a verbal update on the impact of the Government's austerity cuts across the public sector, concentrating on their specific remit.

Local Government – Heather Wakefield

- Between 2008-2016 LG funding cut by 79% (after adjustment for inflation)
- 50% of total cuts, £31BN coming from social care
- LGA are reporting a £16BN funding gap by 2020
- Core services closed, increasing privatisation
- 500,000 jobs gone
- Attacks on pay and conditions
- 500,000 LG workers below living wage

Priorities for future UNISON LG SGE

1. Visible campaign – public need to be made aware of the cuts – SOS Save Our Services Branding
2. Additional support for Regions and Branches to help them cope
3. Greater political impact/ influence required
4. Campaign for an alternative model for LG

Councillors against the Cuts

In line with a conference motion, Local Government national officers met with representatives of CATC. The organisation wanted a joint statement and joint campaigning to be agreed but the national officers felt that they (catc) and UNISON were “quite far apart”, particularly with regard to the question of setting an illegal budget. Further meetings may take place.

Further Education – John Richards

- FE taken brunt of cuts in Education, 20% cut in funding
- FE remains a vital part of Education Framework though
- Accepted 0.7% pay award, however only 70% implementation

- Cuts in T&C's
- Campaign to have the living wage implemented across the sector

Higher Education

- £800M cuts to teaching
- Fees charged now largely fund teaching and learning
- Universities have sound funding but seem to be using that funding to disproportionately increase senior management salaries at the expense of cutting other staff
- Outsourcing and restructuring seen right across the sector
- Members have taken 3 days strike action in support of their current pay claim
 - Indication that UCU unlikely to take more action

Schools

- Nationally, budgets maintained or increased, however, cuts to Local Authorities do impact on schools
- Careers / Connexions Service decimated across the country
- Massive increase in Academisation
- Ideological attacks on teaching assistants

Health – Christine McAnea

- £20BN efficiency savings required by Government
- Pay cap / Freeze and attacks on T&C's – downbanding widespread
- Waiting to see what emerges from the Pay Review Body
 - Pay must become a big issue
- Integration between Health and LG underway

CVS, Private Sector, Water Energy & Transport – Dave Johnson

- CVS at the sharp end of funding cuts
- LG underfunding commissioned contracts
- LA's not commissioning contracts
- TUPE changes
 - "No less favourable" – What does that mean?
 - Branches required to negotiate on many more issues previously covered by TUPE
- Personal Attacks on Government on Environment Agency – unacceptable and unhelpful

Police & Justice, Probation

- Significant job loss
- Reorganisation – staff transferring employer
- Probation privatisation

Summary – "We're all doomed"- It can feel like that but UNISON must take the lead in fighting back – See General Secretary's Report.

General Secretary's Report

- Union has done a great job in keeping the membership and finances in good order
- The union needs to spend in line with its income – need to spend money directly on supporting our members (see GPF committee section later)
- Supporting members in the CVS & private Sector
 - Presidential Team, Chair of D&O – looking into the issue
- Political battle to fight

- Rise of UKIP – they stand against everything we stand for in public services
- Relationship with the Labour Party – Collins Review – UNISON largely unaffected
- **“Call To Arms”**
 - **National demonstration 18th October 2014, Hyde Park, London**
 - **Unite Against Fascism – 22nd March 2014, London**

National Recruitment Advertising Campaign

- NEC agreed to continue block advertising in Jan/Feb, late March, September and end of the year
- Cannot be sustained indefinitely (although results have been excellent in attracting new members)
- Must be supported by recruitment activity on the ground across all sectors

Worth It Campaign

Work is continuing under the governance of the Service group Liaison Committee on developing campaigning resources and materials to support the union’s focus on pay and related issues over the coming months. The *Worth it* campaign aims to raise the profile of pay within our membership groups, with influencers and with the wider public, and to provide a means of clustering and promoting pay-related work, issues and actions undertaken within service groups and regions. The campaign will also provide the backdrop to the industrial strategy taken by the union during 2014.

Several regions have now sent in their plans for rolling out the campaign. Plans submitted so far make the *Worth it* campaign a core part of both recruitment and bargaining strategies for the year ahead. UNISON Scotland is the first to have made use of the customisable materials, producing Scotland-specific leaflets that were used as part of the February SJC pay activity.

All RMS-registered activists have been added to the supporters list and will be receiving regular campaign e-updates. *Worth it* photo library now has a stock of *Worth it* images of lay members from most regions, plus photos from recent conferences. We are keen to add to these – jpegs of photos can be sent to worthit@unison.co.uk

GPF/Campaigning Priorities

The goal of the GPF in the period ahead is to focus as much of its resource as possible on achieving the political objectives (set out below) which best serve the NEC” priorities. As such the GPF committee now invite branches and regions to bid for resources to undertake campaign activity which supports one or more of our objectives. It is important to note that these objectives reflect motions passed at NDC 2013. It should also be noted at the outset that the GPF does not have unlimited resources. Its spending is also regulated by rules governing political expenditure. As such the GPF committee will seek to target expenditure carefully to where it can have most impact.

1 Campaign objectives

a) Defending public service jobs and promoting the alternative to austerity

Secure an alternative to cuts and austerity that prioritises saving jobs and public services. Achieving this will involve actively contributing to the debate about what type of economy we want to see for the future, how prosperity can be delivered for all and how public services can be properly funded.

b) Improving and defending members pay and terms and conditions

Overtake the prevailing narrative on public sector pay, and in so doing build member confidence to speak out on pay and support service group specific pay claims and negotiations.

c) Defending and promoting public services that reflect UNISON values

Defend public services delivered on the basis of social solidarity and collectivism, demonstrating the enduring relevance of such values in the context of the rights attack on the public realm the debate around public service reform and demographic and other external challenges.

d) Advancing the union's objectives with regard to the equalities and fairness agenda

Promote social and economic justice, fairness and equality. This will include fighting back against attacks on the welfare state, highlighting the impact of austerity on women, LGBT people, black communities, the disabled, retired and young members and championing the cause of fairness. The union's important work fighting back against the far right / EDL and UKIP will also be included under this objective.

2 Campaign strategy

Defined as the set of planned activities that will help UNISON to secure the outcomes listed above. Some of these activities will have a UK/national and/or devolved parliament/assembly focus (UNISON centre is planning UK oriented activity to underpin the overall strategy). Others will be more oriented towards action at the local level. In very broad terms the strategy can be summed up as follows:

3. Additional information

Recruitment

Our political and industrial influence reflects our ability to recruit and maintain members. As such it's crucial that when planning campaign activity we do think about the recruitment dimension. Wherever possible a direct recruitment ask should be incorporated in campaign materials. We also need to try and capture the recruitment dividend from campaign activity that raises our profile.

Centrally provided materials and other resources

The campaign team at national level, overseen by the NEC's policy development and campaigns committee, will produce support materials that can be adapted (and in some cases augmented) for use in local and regional campaigns. These will include up to date fact sheets reflecting the latest key information and evidence, and campaign messages that have been tested with focus groups that relate to our objectives.

Additional help (e.g. training in campaign planning and political organisation, advice on communications strategies and social media) is also available and highly recommended. Learning and Organising Services has developed a range of organising and campaigning workshops and learning resources. Resources available include short one hour workshops, political education resources and Strategic Campaigning training (in various formats), including a workshop that can be run by activists in the branch.

For further information please contact: learningandorganising@unison.co.uk

Regions

Regions have a special responsibility for encouraging branches to bid, and bringing campaign activity to life at local level.

Applicants will note from the operational guidance that regions can approve bids up to £5000 through a body established locally for such purposes (any lay members who are involved in that body should be GPF levy payers). Such bids are then reported to the national GPF committee.

Regional bodies responsible for considering branch bids are required to apply the criteria set out in this advisory note – and any subsequent advice regarding the operation of the forthcoming lobbying bill.

All regional bids, including regional groups, regardless of amount, are still required to be submitted to the national GPF committee for approval.

Spot bids

The GPF committee will from time to time issue invites to regions and branches to make spot bids for particular projects associated with one or more of our objectives at opportune moments in the political cycle. Examples could include local and regional activity during living wage week, voter registration or postal vote drive.

Support for third party campaigns

The GPF committee will continue to welcome bids from third party partner organisations that are sponsored by different parts of the union. It should be noted however, that given the need to focus resources more carefully in the period ahead such bids will need to be associated with activities closely aligned with our overall objectives and strategy. It will continue to be the case that GPF funds cannot be used as staffing / running costs.

Timing of bids / application process

If bids are to support activity that can be effectively planned and delivered in the required timescale (the period between now and May 2015) they will need to be submitted as soon as possible. Those making bids should also give careful consideration to ensuring that activity coincides with important pressure points (e.g. council / national parliament budget announcements, elections, publication of key data on jobs and cost of living indices).

All bids should be on the latest version of the application form – clearly marked 2013/15. Applicants should also consult the operational guidance. The up to date forms and other relevant documents are available on the Unison website <http://www.unison.org.uk/about/our-organisation/political-affiliations-and-support/> or from Maria Francis m.francis@unison.co.uk

Sharing good practice

It is important that we publicise good practice in the period ahead – to encourage as many parts of the union as possible to contribute to achieving our campaign objectives and to fully utilise the resources of the GPF. As such there will also be a greater emphasis on evaluation and feedback that can then be used in publicity for the GPF in our bulletins and journals.

Political Fund Ballot

A political fund review ballot has to be conducted every ten years by law in order to maintain UNISON's political fund and our campaigning voice. The NEC has previously agreed at its December meeting to hold the ballot in late autumn 2014.

The NEC agreed to the following recommendations:

1. That the NEC adopts the revised model rules for the conduct of the review ballot produced by the Certification Officer with the relevant minor changes going forward to NDC 2014.
2. That the organisation for the ballot will follow the framework used in 2005 with the ballot period November 2014.
3. That in order to maintain UNISON's Political Fund and our campaigning voice that the NEC agrees to support a campaign for a Yes vote in the ballot.

It is essential that Branches brief their membership about the importance of securing a yes vote in the ballot, NEC members would be happy to offer their support to Branches.

Below is the NEC committee report published by UNISON on its website:

"We have only one priority: to protect our members and the services they provide," general secretary Dave Prentis told UNISON's national executive council meeting in London today.

To do that, he added, "We need to stay strong and look after our members who are going through traumas. Strong cohesion will get us through the next two to three years."

Mr Prentis was speaking after the NEC heard an exhaustive report of the effects the austerity agenda was having across the whole union - in every service group and every country of the UK.

More than half a million jobs have been lost from public services, with another 400,000 under threat over the next year, the meeting heard.

But the union has managed to hold its own financially and reduce the impact of job losses on membership figures, in part because "we have never recruited more than in the past year."

And that recruiting work will continue in 2014, the NEC agreed, with a focus on several short sharp bursts of campaigning in January and February, late March and the autumn.

Two particular effects of the austerity drive are increasing attacks on members' pay, terms and conditions, and an increase in outsourcing.

Already the union has 150,000 members working in the private and community sectors, spread among 11,000 employers in 40,000 workplaces. That number is projected to double and Mr Prentis told the NEC "that quarter of a million private sector members will change the nature of the union."

The general secretary issued two direct calls to arms - for the union to start mobilising for the TUC-organised national demonstration planned for 18 October in London, and for branches to support the Stand up to Racism and Fascism rally in London on 22 March.

The NEC agreed to send messages of support and solidarity to members dealing with the direct effects of austerity, including:

- groups of members involved in industrial action across Glasgow;
- Environment Agency and other members dealing with or affected by the floods;
- higher education members involved in the current pay campaign;
- Scottish police staff members facing massive job cuts and plans to slash the number of police control centres in the country.

The meeting heard updates on the current state of pay campaigns and the union-wide Worth It campaign, as well as current and planned industrial action around the union; the recruitment campaign; general political fund and campaigning priorities for the year; the need to hold a political fund ballot this year; organising; and plans for the national delegate conference in June.

A number of these themes were picked up in the motions the NEC adopted to submit to conference, covering:

- campaigning against austerity up to the general election;
- a manifesto for collective bargaining;
- rebuilding local democracy and combatting local government cuts;
- planning for an NHS for the future;
- the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the EU;
- campaigning for a fair and just social security system;
- stopping probation privatisation;
- campaigning on pay and living standards;
- solidarity with Guatemala;
- organising in the fragmented workforce;
- promoting political education and developing activists;
- the branch resources review.

It also adopted a number of proposed rule amendments to put before national delegate conference.

The meeting also approved the union's provisional management accounts for 2013.