

# ON THE BORDER

UNISON Scottish Borders Public Service Branch Newsletter

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS



- 11.03.19 - Hawick Community Hospital, Seminar Room - 1330
- 11.03.19 - Hawick High School, Lecture Theatre - 1545
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 [ScottishBordersUnison](https://www.facebook.com/ScottishBordersUnison)

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**ALL MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND**

*LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD.*

## LOOK OUT FOR AN AGGREGATE AGM NEAR YOU!

Branch officer nomination forms and AGM paperwork were mailed out to members in December.

Aggregate agm meetings are a series of meetings, each with the same agenda so as to facilitate attendance from all sections of the membership.

Each aggregate AGM meeting will consider the Branch Secretary's annual report, branch accounts and nominations for elections of officers and stewards.

If you are interested in running for a branch position for 2019 or would like to know more, please contact the branch office for more info.

All members are encouraged to attend an AGM.

## WHAT IS A UNISON BRANCH AGM?

The purpose of the AGM is to bring the branch committee and its officers to account:

- to report on the branch's finances to report on the branch's activity during the past year and the implementation of the actions agreed arising from the previous year's annual assessment
- to receive a report on the annual assessment and the branch committee's plan to meet the actions required during the following year
- to elect, or confirm the election if these took place by ballot, of branch officers for the coming year

## CONTACT US!

Looking for advice, representation or want to become more active with UNISON Scottish Borders Public Services?

There are a variety of ways to get in touch with us:

Facebook.com/ScottishBordersUnison  
Twitter - @unisonborders  
[unionscotborders.org.uk](http://unionscotborders.org.uk)

E: [g.kelbie@unison.co.uk](mailto:g.kelbie@unison.co.uk)

Call: 0800 0857 857

# MENTAL HEALTH OF NHS STAFF SHOULD BE A 'PRIORITY', SAYS UNISON

Responding to health secretary Matt Hancock's pledge to overhaul mental health and wellbeing for NHS staff, UNISON head of health Sara Gorton said:

"The mental health needs of staff should be a priority. They're working long hours, in highly stressful conditions, often without a rest.

"NHS workers can't help patients get better unless they are well too. Proper solutions are needed though, not quick fixes.

"These proposals are a step in the right direction. But far-reaching reforms are also necessary, including proper breaks, manageable workloads, and protection from abuse and attack."

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## LIVE BORDERS / SBHA

Following on from harmonization in Live Borders and pay modernisation in SBHA with both resulting in changes to terms and conditions and pay scales, UNISON Scottish Borders are asking for our members in both these organisations to get involved and become reps. If you want to help members have a stronger union at work you could think about trying to get elected as a steward. Workplace stewards are the heart of our trade union. UNISON's stewards are the reason we win campaigns that result in better lives for our members and all working people. Please consider getting involved so we can have a stronger voice going forward. Contact the branch for more information.

## AWARD WINNERS



In January 2019, the branch picked up a silver award at UNISON Scotland's Communications and Campaigns Awards in the Best Campaigns category for the Save Scottish Borders School Libraries Campaign.

The national awards are to recognise the great campaigns UNISON branches run all over Scotland.

Kaymarie Hughes said: "We were delighted to win this award and to be recognised for the hard campaigning work we have been putting in."

"We hope that this win will kick us on for another year of campaigning in the Borders."

Check out the branch website or facebook page to see some of the campaign work.

# UNISON MEMBERS OVERWHELMINGLY VOTE TO ACCEPT PAY OFFER FOR COUNCIL WORKERS

UNISON, the largest union in local government, has informed COSLA that their members have overwhelmingly voted to accept the pay offer for local government workers.

The move follows a consultative ballot of UNISON Scotland local government members in which 91% voted in favour of the deal and in record numbers. UNISON's ballot closed on Thursday 31 January.

The pay offer would deliver 9.5% cost of living increase over three years: 3.5% for 2018-19, 3% for 2019-20 and 3% for 2020-21. In addition it provides a commitment to fully consolidating the living wage, putting more money in the pockets of lower paid council workers, something UNISON has been campaigning on for years.

It also provides a commitment to re-open negotiations in the event of another local government bargaining group's total pay offer value is 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. The award will be backdated to 1 April 2018.

UNISON Head of local government Scotland Johanna Baxter said: "This is a great outcome, delivered as a direct result of the campaigning activity and political lobbying efforts of UNISON members up and down the country. The cost of living increases meet current and projected levels of RPI and we have secured commitments to fully consolidate the living wage and maintain parity across the local government workforce. Our members have been waiting on a pay increase for over a year now so look forward to receiving their increase soon."

UNISON chair of local government committee in Scotland Mark Ferguson said: "UNISON has campaigned hard to get the best deal we can for local government workers. While the offer does not make up for the many years of austerity, the offer, and particularly the commitment to consolidate the Living Wage, provides important safeguards for our lowest paid members.

"We will work to ensure this is properly delivered and local government workers will now receive back dated money in their pay packets in coming months."

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## LG PAY - WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

UNISON is currently awaiting the GMB concluding their pay ballot. We have a meeting scheduled with COSLA on the 1st March - the day after the GMB ballot closes - where UNISON will be pressing for implementation as quickly as possible.



# NHS Report



*As many of you will know, NHSB has had some financial challenges over the years that they have always managed to recover from by finding savings, with the help of their staff who have been given opportunities to make suggestions.*

Unfortunately, this position of overspend/deficit in budgets now remains untenable and as a result of these challenges and NHSB request to Scottish Government for brokerage (a loan to you and me) and with the pending retirement of the Chief Executive (Jane Davidson) and Chairman of the board (John Raine), the government has felt this is a particular risk to NHSB ability to balance the books and we have therefore been placed in level 4 (5 levels, number 5 being the most serious) This means members of the Scottish government working with NHSB to support changes to delivery of services that help to balance the books...for example, one project is looking at medicine prescriptions and ensuring we use cost effective medicines.

As a result of this NHSB are intending to go out to all staff to present the financial challenge and the need to alter how we work to be more efficient whilst taking in the strategic direction of moving services closer to home and better health promotion in local communities.

Several audits and reviews have recommended we look at bolstering our communities and our health and social care services in these communities to develop a culture of treatment closer to home and prevention of admission to hospital when possible. There is a push to tackle delayed discharges which blocks beds in our hospitals.

All of this comes under the umbrella of 'Better Borders' which is a term you may be familiar with and constitutes many projects in all areas working closely together to promote healthier more resilient communities that can provide care and treatment closer to home and prevent admissions where possible.

As an integrated board, this involves working closely with our partners in local government and independent/third sector. Whereas we cannot guarantee any outcomes to these projects, there may be changes to the way staff work in different areas to ensure we can move forward in this direction. If you hear of a review in your area, please contact the union and ensure your manager is aware that either partnership reps or your union rep should be involved at the beginning of any such reviews.

The payment band levels under Agenda for change job evaluation has been a source of concern for us nationally but also in the borders as there may have been some slippage due to constant reviews (especially in light of Better Borders projects/transformational change) As a result of this we are working on examining our bandings and encouraging members to seek out a review of their job descriptions if there have been changes or additional duties.

## SICKNESS ABSENCE

It is absolutely vital that you as a member of UNISON come to your local representative or contact myself at the partnership office (01896828273) before going into a sickness absence reviews (probably called a promoting attendance review) It is also vital that you as a member understand that your manager has been tasked to remain in contact with you whilst off sick as a supportive mechanism and that they will follow a process robustly that could lead to termination of your post. There is an assumption that this will only happen after you have been off for a year and go onto nil pay. Whereas with underlying health conditions, this process normally starts at 9 months absence, it may be seen as an option much earlier if you have a condition which is not showing that it will resolve timely, you cannot work in any other area (redeployment under ill health) and you fail to give a reasonable timescale for return to work.

Having a UNISON representative in these meetings with you will ensure a fair process is followed and will advise you of potential outcomes all the way along this process. Please ensure you contact your representative as soon as you hear you have a meeting.

# Local Gov Report



*As always, we have been a very busy branch and your stewards in Local Government have been working hard to support our members when they need us most.*

*We attend workplace meetings, attendance and disciplinary hearings, as well as offering help and guidance when requested. We are always keen to recruit new members as the union has a stronger voice when we have lots of members in the same work place. We always need more workplace stewards as they are the people on the ground that let us know what is happening in all the different services and departments and bring members issues to us.*

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## RECYCLING REVIEW

We worked with the other Unions to ensure that staff were consulted and their views taken into consideration, in regards to the new working patterns. Although there were changes that would mean that working patterns and bases would change...

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## SB CARES

We have continued our work with SB Cares throughout the year. We regularly met with staff and updated them on any progress, whilst hearing the views and dealing issues that arose. In October we were pleased to see the role out of the new contacts that saw everyone moving on to a contract size which fitted the new eight week rota. The new four on and four off shift patterns were welcomed by our members, allowing them see their working patterns and plan ahead with their free time. We have now entered in to negotiations around the frozen banked and deficit hours. We completed a border wide round of joint union meetings to collect your views. We urge all our members to ask for a breakdown of the deficit hours to allow you to check for anomalies before agreeing on a payment plan that is affordable to yourselves.

...we tried to ensure this would have as little impact on our members as possible. We suggested that all staff were given the opportunity to have a choice of role and base and that travel be kept at a minimum. Disturbance allowance would be available for the first year in line with SBC policies.

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## ANA GRADING

We have raised concerns that many of our ANA's working with Children with complex needs may not be paid at the right grade. We recently attended a meeting where we discussed the tasks that our additional needs assistance are being asked to do on a regular basis and that this is often, tasks that we deem to be out with their grading. We have been invited to look at the grade 4b and Grade 5c posts and we plan to negotiate a grade increase for those that need it.

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## SCHOOL LIBRARIES

In August we launched our "Please do not be quiet" campaign to fight against the decision to run a pilot which would see three high schools lose their qualified librarians. If this pilot was deemed successful we feared that it could lead to job losses.

Our campaign was featured in the local newspapers, borders radio and on line. We visited every High School in the Scottish borders and collected the thoughts of the young people who would be most affected. They raised the very real concerns that their ability to work in a safe, supported environment with qualified staff at hand to help would affect their ability to work independently, study for exams and apply for university. We have written to elected members and parent councils, asking them to show their support and handed over hundreds of post cards to Shona Haslam, elected leader of the council. We were recently told that the three pilot schools are unable to fully function without the support of the Librarians, who have been asked to help out in these schools. As a Union we are calling for the pilot as it stands, to be scrapped as it is no longer about providing a service without input the qualified librarians. We are pleased to announce that we received a silver award at the UNISON Scotland's Communications and Campaign Awards in the best campaign category for 2018/19.

# MEET THE REPS...

*Introducing some of your UNISON Scottish Borders Public Services Branch Reps...*



“My name is Linda Clotworthy I have been working at the BGH as a catering assistant for almost 11 years. I also have an 11 month old gorgeous baby boy.

I became a member of UNISON after going through the sickness absence process. I suffer from epilepsy and discovered more information about the disability policy and the benefits of being in a union.

I decided to become a rep last year after fighting for extra hours which I was consistently doing to be recognised in my contract.

I love my family, my job & being a union member & rep although any of those things can be quite trying at times.”



“Hello, my name is Kaymarie Hughes and I am UNISON Branch Chairperson, the Equalities Officer and Local Government Terms and Conditions Officer.

I am based within the UNISON Office within Council HQ and I feel very privileged to have recently been released to work full time for the branch. Although I am kept busy attending council meetings, planning campaigns and negotiating terms and conditions, I still enjoy regularly representing our members and visiting workplaces.

I married my wife Diane last year and have 18 year old twin boys. During my spare time I am a trustee for Scottish Borders LGBT Equality and a Burnfoot Community Councillor. I strongly believe that if you want to make a difference, you need to get up and bring about change. A belief that I feel is well suited to being a UNISON Activist.”



“My name is Mark Chandler, and I work as a Senior Support Worker at Garden View Assessment Unit in Tweedbank.

I have worked in the health and social care sector for the past 13 years and have worked for SB Cares for almost 7 of those years.

I am currently awaiting training to become a UNISON Steward and I will be undertaking the role of Assistant Treasurer to the branch.

In my spare time (not that I have a lot) I like to spend time with friends, going out to the theatre, ballet or to the cinema. I read a lot of books, my favourite author being Terry Pratchett and I have a very eclectic taste in music!”



“Hi, I am Terry Dunthorne, Local Government Steward in UNISON Scottish Borders Public Services Branch. I have been a Unison Steward for two years now. I work for Unison out of our very busy office in SBC HQ, Newtown St Boswells two days a week.

The rest of the week I work as an Additional Needs Assistant in Peebles High School, where I have been for the last 14 years. I work in both the Enhanced Provision Team and the Wider School Support Team and thoroughly enjoy supporting our young people, who have a very wide range of additional needs to be the best they can be.

I have three children of my own so understand the stresses and needs of our young people from both parental and education side of things. And from the staff side of things? I just want everyone to play fair!”

## MEET THE REPS...(CONTINUED)



“Hello my name Karen Lawrie. I am a UNISON steward and Health and Safety Officer based at the BGH.

I am a Mental Health Nurse and have worked for NHS for 21 years. I care passionately in protecting our NHS and public services.

I have been involved in UNISON's Scrap the Cap Campaign which gave staff an increase in their pay. You can often catch me running a UNISON stall at BGH Canteen. Come say hello!”

## GET ACTIVE IN UNISON

Contact: [g.kelbie@unison.co.uk](mailto:g.kelbie@unison.co.uk)

The branch is always on the lookout for new stewards, workplace contacts and health and safety reps. 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.

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.



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## SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT MUST ACT AS PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS FACE MORE THAN 40,000 VIOLENT INCIDENTS EVERY YEAR

Public services union UNISON has called for action from the Scottish Government to “end the aggro” faced by council and NHS workers.

UNISON's annual Violence at Work survey for 2018 published at the union's Health and Safety seminar in Stirling on Friday 19 October reveals figures for assaults on public service workers running at more than 40,000 for the third successive year. There were 40,568 violent incidents in total reported by Scottish councils, NHS boards and other public services in the most recent year – on top of 42,241 last year and 41,166 in the 2016 survey.

The figures are double the number reported in UNISON's first survey of violence on public workers in 2006. Scott Donohoe, UNISON Health and Safety committee chair, told the conference:

“The massive scale of violence against public service workers – and those in the community and voluntary sector – has been at least partially revealed, with more than 40,000 reported assaults each year for the last three years.”

Scott Donohoe said: “All employers engaged in delivering public services – whether in local government, health or the community and voluntary sector – should put the guidelines on violence in the workplace produced by the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives fully into practice.

“Community and voluntary sector employers should sign up to the UNISON Violence at Work Charter which aims to support staff who often face violence when providing essential and undervalued caring services.

“We support the extension of legislation covering violence at work to cover all workers engaged in delivering public services – and not just the emergency services. The Scottish Government must move to address this issue.

“We now need action by employers and stronger legislation, regulation and oversight by government to end the aggro. It really isn't ‘part of the job’.”

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