

ON THE BORDER

UNISON Scottish Borders Public Service Branch Newsletter

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS



- 23 March - 9am to 11am - Hawick Community Hospital, Seminar Room
- 23 March - 1.30pm to 3pm - Katherine Elliot Centre, Hawick, Meeting Room
- 24 March* - 9am to 11am - Borders General Hospital, Staff Canteen
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- 30 March* - 12pm - 1.30pm - SBC (HQ), Canteen Meeting Room

Money off lunch vouchers will be provided at the BGH and SBC HQ aggregate AGM's



ALL MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD.



LOOK OUT FOR AN AGGREGATE AGM NEAR YOU!

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 2020 or would like to know more, please contact the branch office for more information.

All members are encouraged to attend an AGM. We hope to see you at one of the aggregate meetings.

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
unisonscotborders.org.uk

E: g.kelbie@unison.co.uk

Call: 0800 0857 857

DISABLED MEMBERS LAUNCH 'BE REASONABLE' CAMPAIGN



UNISON Scotland's 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, experience 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 below with members through meetings, events, newsletters, websites and social media."

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.

SCOTLAND'S MOST VULNERABLE PUT AT RISK AS SOCIAL WORK SERVICES REACH BREAKING POINT

UNISON has warned of a social work crisis as cuts have left the service struggling to cope. UNISON's report - Save from harm - is the latest in UNISON's damage series of reports which looks at the impact of austerity on Scotland's public services.

Freedom of information requests to local authorities and a Scotland-wide survey of UNISON members working in social work teams reveal a dedicated workforce working hard to support the public but who are under enormous pressure.

The report also revealed that violence at work is a major issue among staff with two thirds having experienced physical or verbal abuse at work. Only one third of those who had experienced abuse knew of a risk assessment following that abuse. Save from harm lays bare the impact of major budget cuts which have left social work teams severely underfunded and services that have now reached breaking point.

You can access the full report by visiting: unison-scotland.org

Local Reports



By Kaymarie Hughes,
Branch Secretary

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.

I will shortly be distributing a full Branch Secretary report for the AGM meetings. I hope you can make it to an aggregate meeting.

SB CARES

Homecare - Subsequent to staff roadshows held by management, UNISON met with staff in two homecare areas in mid to late September and sent out member surveys and in response issued a formal grievance with SB Cares.

We met with SB Cares management in response to the grievance on the 4th November and discussed that the points raised in the grievance. To that end the final outcome of the grievance was it was agreed to move forward with working groups to consider issues and solutions. These groups will have representation from the recognised Trades Unions and will include staff from all levels.



By Karen Lawrie,
Branch Officer (NHS)

It has been a busy year for the health side of the branch as we have been working hard to support and campaign for our members.

Membership of the branch has continued to grow and this must partly be down to the great work of our stewards and their local campaigning work. Over the past year, we have made a massive effort to run local workplace campaigns that will return positive results for our members. Including our 'Record it & Report' it campaign and our 'Busy Bee' campaign to support members through regrading processes, as we believe many members current job descriptions does not accurately reflect the duties they actually do on a day to day basis. Be sure to follow our website and social media channels to see how you can get involved with UNISON.

GOODBYE SHIRLEY

In October last year we said goodbye to our Branch Secretary, Shirley Aspin as she made the decision to retire. Shirley had been a great UNISON activist over the years and she supported hundreds of members and campaigned tirelessly for workers rights. Her knowledge and leadership will be missed. Time to put your feet up, Shirley!



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 Secretary

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, my name is Alastair Stavert and I work in the Financial Inclusion Team at Paton Street in Gala.

I have worked in welfare rights for over ten years in both Midlothian and the Borders. I want to use my experience of helping people stand up for their rights to help UNISON members and I have recently trained as a UNISON steward.

I spend my spare time with my family or cycling around the Borders.”

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

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.



ALMOST 40,000 ASSAULTS ON PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF HAVE BEEN REPORTED THIS YEAR IN SCOTLAND

Almost 40,000 violent assaults on staff in the public sector have been reported this year including hundreds in the Scottish Borders.

UNISON Scotland's annual survey found there were 37,662 attacks reported, though officials claimed the figures were "only the tip of the iceberg". UNISON called on the Scottish Government to extend violence at work legislation to cover all public sector workers and not just emergency staff.

"The Scottish Government must move to address this issue," officials said in their "Violence at Work: A Survey of Unison Employers in Scotland, 2019" report. Scott Donohoe, chairman of Unison's health and safety committee, said: "These figures are brutal and they are only the incidents that we know about.

"There could be thousands more and we believe this is only the tip of the iceberg.

"Some employers seem to believe that violence is part of the job. We don't believe that that and we are working to change that culture.

The branch has been working closely with NHS Borders to address violence towards staff after an FOI revealed there has been more than 400 reported assaults on nurses and midwives in the last year. Branch Officer Karen Lawrie said: "Nobody goes to their work to be assaulted, one assault is one too many and that's why we've been leading proactively on a local campaign on this issue.

"Record it and report it, that is our mantra and that is what we are encouraging our members and staff to do." Staff are leaving the service it's hard to retain staff, we're seeing an overstretched and very stressed workforce and these assaults and violent incidents are happening with that very much in the background." We have recently met with chief executive to discuss what measures they're taking to deal with the findings from this report and how we as a union can work in partnership through that process."

RECORD IT & REPORT IT
STOP VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

BEING ABUSED IS NOT PART OF YOUR JOB!

Report all abusive incidents - including violence, threats of violence and verbal attacks through LEXI (Council) or DATIX (NHS).

For further information and advice, speak to your UNISON Rep.

[/ScottishBordersUnison](https://www.facebook.com/ScottishBordersUnison)
unionscotborders.org.uk

Join online at joinunison.org or call free on 0800 171 2193

What if you experience violence at work?

- Inform your line manager immediately.
- If you are able to, make sure the organisation's policies are followed in relation to safety and violence.
- YOU are responsible for recording your own experience on LEXI or DATIX..
- If you require further support, contact your UNISON rep or your branch.

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