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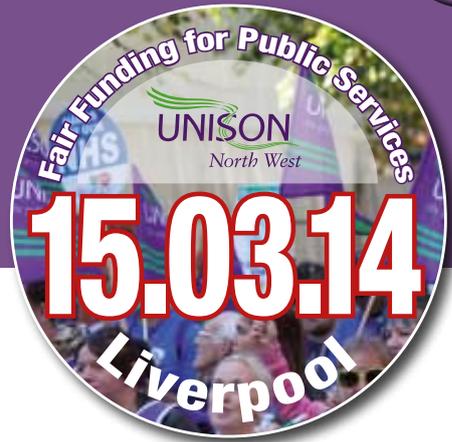
The Newsletter for all UNISON Stewards and Activists in the North West Region

Spring 2014

Join the March and Rally

FAIR FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SERVICES

SATURDAY 15 MARCH IN LIVERPOOL



It is a crucial time to show the Government that public services matter.

The Coalition Government has been hacking away at funding for public services for nearly four years. Initially, they presented this as being temporary – an unfortunate necessity to stave off a Greece-style financial meltdown.

As time has gone on, it has become obvious that this Government wants permanent austerity – at least for the likes of you and me.

We are witnessing a deliberate and sustained attempt to dismantle our public services and welfare state.

There is an urgent need to show this Government, and indeed the entire political class, that people do not accept permanent austerity. We do not accept that it is necessary and we are not prepared to accept its impact on our society.

Amongst the worst hit areas of the public sector is local government, and amongst the worst hit regions is the North West.

Join our March and Rally

Saturday 15 March 2014

10.00am: Assemble at the Pier Head

10.45am: March through city centre

11.30am: Rally at St George's Plateau

12.30pm: Close

The Government has deliberately targeted funding cuts on areas that already suffer higher levels of deprivation. It has been northern and urban areas of the country that have borne the brunt of austerity.

Liverpool, Knowsley, Manchester and Blackburn are all amongst the worst hit areas in the country. Many councils in the North West are struggling to operate within such tight financial constraints. While we must put pressure on councils to do all they can to minimise the harm of austerity to their employees and service users, we must also be clear that we know where the blame really lies - it is central government that is responsible for many of the unpalatable decisions being taken by local councils.

UNISON's North West Regional Council agreed a proposal from Liverpool Branch that there should be a regional march to highlight our support for local government services.

It's time to stand up for the North West and to stand up for the public services we provide.

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Use your vote in the euro elections

Vote on 22nd May

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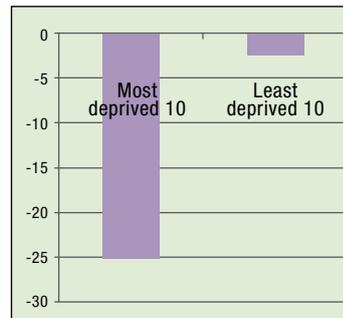
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All in it together?

The Unfairness of Local Government Cuts

Analysis carried out by Newcastle City Council shows that Central Government funding cuts in the country's most deprived areas are TEN times greater than those in the least deprived areas of England.



Average cuts 2010-11 to 2015-16 (%). Ten most and least deprived councils in England.

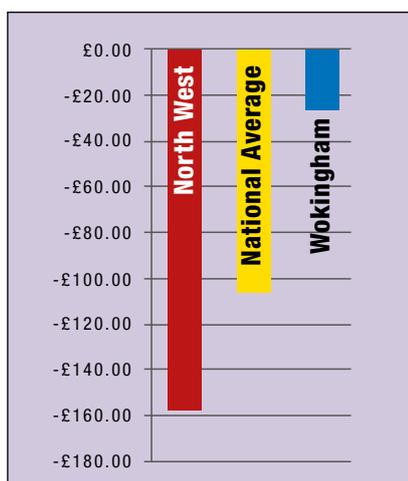
Source: Newcastle City Council

Liverpool City Council is the most deprived local authority area in the country and is suffering cuts of 27.1%. Meanwhile the least deprived area in the country, Hart District Council in Hampshire, is facing cuts of 1.5%. Liverpool is of course the focus of our demonstration for fair funding for public services on 15 March.

The council there has announced a cuts package of £156 million. Vital services like day centres, children's homes, libraries, and sports centres face closure. Even the hostels for the homeless or those escaping domestic violence are not exempt. But it's not just Liverpool. Lancashire Council has just announced a further £300

million of cuts which could see one in every four workers being made redundant.

Across the North West, the average level of cuts is higher than the national average, while some councils in more affluent areas have seen comparatively modest drops in local government spending.



The North West is taking a hammering because of the unfair way the Government is attacking local finances. It is areas with greatest social need and most deprivation that are bearing the brunt of austerity. We need a system of funding that ensures needs are met. We need fair funding for public services. Add your voice to that call. Join us in Liverpool on 15 March.

Changes in spending per head (£), 2010-11 to 2014-15

Join us in Liverpool on 15 March

10.00 Assemble at Pier Head
10.45 March Departs
11.30 Rally at St George's Plateau

Further information from Babs Hennessy,
 Liverpool City UNISON Branch Secretary.
 Email: admin@liverpool-unison.co.uk
 Website: www.liverpool-unison.co.uk





Local Government Protest Day Ramps Up Pressure for Fair Pay and Funding

Members from across the region joined a variety of lunchtime protest events on 4th February. The events highlighted the issues of pay and local government funding.

The North West has unfairly taken the brunt of austerity and there is an urgent need to make sure that funding is sufficient to meet need.

Local government workers have seen their pay fall by 18% in real terms since 2010 and more than half a million staff currently earn less than the Living Wage.

The campaigns over pay and defending local government will intensify in the coming months.



Farewell!

Diane Kelly rides off into the sunset...

Our Regional Convenor, Diane Kelly is stepping down from the job following her retirement from Wirral MBC.

Universally loved by all parts of the union Diane has spent most of her lifetime helping others. She joined UNISON in 1973 and was an active steward in her NALGO branch from 1982. Assistant Branch Secretary from 1988 she became seconded Branch Secretary in 1990.

Her list of regional achievements is truly impressive. Diane has attended every national conference since 1984. She's been Regional Delegate to Conference, Deputy Regional Convenor and our Convenor since 2002. That's not to forget her time as Regional Education Secretary – all those weekend training schools at the GMB College and the Daniel Training Centre!

She played a massively important role in the merger of the unions to form UNISON and has championed, both in her branch and at regional level, issues such as equal pay, harmonisation, pensions, pay claims, branch development and anti-racism.

And there's a whole list of delegations that have benefitted from her presence on them: Derry and Belfast, Cuba, Guadeloupe, Palestine and Israel, Paris and Brussels, building our links with other public sector unions and fighting racism and austerity.

But all the statistics can't describe just what a lovely person Diane is. How on earth she has put in the hours to support so many of us with so many issues for so many years is truly amazing. Diane – you'll be very greatly missed Have a brilliant retirement.



Sefton Health Branch celebrates success

Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has been included in the prestigious Top 100 Employers' list – and much of the success is down to UNISON members. The list, announced at the National Apprenticeship Awards recognises excellence in businesses that employ apprentices.

The hospital was praised by Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg and Joe Anderson Mayor of Liverpool said, "The hospital's success demonstrates an eagerness to continually improve. This dedication to education of the workforce is impressive and a quality that should be celebrated by staff, patients and visitors alike."

UNISON Sefton Health Branch education team, Marie Reece, Dave Woodward, Jane

Downton, Alan Todd, along with Union Development Co-ordinator Tony Saunders, Senior Union Support Officer Laura Robertson Collins, UNISON Regional Learning Organiser Steve Swift, and Regional Officer Paula Williams attended an event to celebrate the Trust's achievement.

The hospital employs over 400 apprentices and works in partnership with UNISON Sefton Health branch and Unionlearn. The project had involved putting UNISON Learner Reps in touch with and working alongside staff in traditionally hard to reach departments such as domestics, catering, laundry, healthcare and portering. They enthused staff back into education and learning, helping them not only to gain a qualification in the roles they perform but also pick up qualifications in maths and English.

STOP PRESS

Local Government Pay 2014

Formal dispute lodged over failure to make pay offer

UNISON and the other local government unions have lodged a formal dispute with the Local Government Employers over their failure to make a pay offer.

A joint meeting due on 14 February was cancelled by the employers the day before. Their excuse? The “need” to wait for the announcement of the rate of the 2014 National Minimum Wage!

So the local government employers have plumbed new depths in the treatment of local government staff who are already the worst paid of any public servant. Their move tells us that any offer they make will be the lowest possible rate that will be

legal when the Minimum Wage uplift comes into force in October.

The national employers are not scheduled to meet until 1st May – a full month AFTER the pay award should be in members’ pay packets.

As we went to press the North West Regional Local Government Service Group was urging the national committee to draw up a timetable for consulting members on industrial action including strike action to coincide with the local elections in May.

After three years of total pay freeze and last year’s miserly 1% award local government staff are now 18% WORSE OFF that they were

in 2010 because of inflation. We are not asking for the 14% pay increase bankers and top bosses are being given – just £1 an hour. Money that will be spent in the local economy in local shops and businesses and take the lowest paid local government workers out of having to claim in-work benefits to make ends meet.

The letter to the employers states: “In light of the failure to make us an NJC pay offer for 2014-15 and as a result of your suggestion that this year’s pay offer will in any case be ‘pegged’ to the national minimum wage, I am writing to notify you that the Trade Union Side considers itself to be in formal dispute with you.”

UNISON win sees end to zero hour contracts at University of Manchester

UNISON at the University of Manchester has put an end to the use of zero hour contracts within University of Manchester Catering Ltd, the University’s private catering company.

The victory comes after weeks of campaigning with staff, students and the general public.

Workers on zero hours contracts face uncertainty about their income and working pattern. It makes it hard to plan finances and indeed your life – putting a great strain on



employees and their households.

Kevin Gaskell-Clow, a chef at the University and a UNISON steward said, “The catering staff

at the University came to UNISON because they were unable to obtain a mortgage or secure rental agreements. Many were struggling to budget for the next week’s shopping. All this was because of the uncertainty around their working hours under zero hours contracts.”

“Now they have greater security of income and work regular hours each week.” Disappointingly, the University’s announcement did not come with news on a Living Wage for all staff. UNISON is continuing the campaign for fair pay for all staff including an improvement on the offer of a 1% pay rise and in support of a Living Wage.

USE YOUR VOTE ON THU

STANDING UP FOR YOU LOCAL

For UNISON the European Union is not an ideological question but a practical one. How best to defend members interests in the workplace, in your locality, across the UK and in the wider world?

Some things are better done through international co-operation, some at national or local level. In a globalised economy, the failed neo-liberal politics of the last 30 years have given more and more power to global business at the expense of our democracy. Whatever your view on the EU, there is no way governments can protect workers or our families without working together with other like minded governments abroad. Therefore we have to fully engage in European Elections in 2014, just as we do in any other election.

THE REAL PROBLEMS OF OUR TIME

The three main issues affecting UNISON today are living standards, the massive cuts in local government and the privatisation of our NHS. Yet it is our own government that is driving these changes, not Europe. The coalition has no mandate to introduce the longest cut in living standards since the 1870s, to push

local government to breaking point, or to privatise our NHS by forced competition. We need a referendum on austerity and the race to the bottom and the attacks on our national institutions providing vital services. We will not get one until the General Election in May 2015.

RIGHT WING DISTRACTS US FROM THE REAL ISSUES

A combination of the billionaire right-wing press and right-wing parties continually distract us from these real issues by focussing on anything but the real issues. Europe is a favourite target as is blaming all and sundry except the rich and powerful; young to blame the old, workers to blame the unemployed, and all to blame the migrants and those forced to claim benefits.

WHAT ARE THEY HIDING FROM YOU? DON'T LET THEM GET AWAY WITH IT

You could be forgiven for believing there is a centre-left government in Brussels, blindly supporting a bloated bureaucracy. The total lack of coverage by the press reinforces this. Yet the truth is Europe is currently being run by pro-austerity, anti-worker politics. **Only 2 out of 8 of your MEPs in the North West are on the side of workers. In the UK as a whole it is only 13 out of 72. And only 267 out of 741 Euro MPs speak out in our favour on the issues that affect us.**

TWIN THREATS – OPPOSITE EXTREMES BUT BOTH DAMAGING

UNISON promotes workers' rights in Europe, a level playing-field, and an end to the race to the bottom. Yet it is right-wing voters that tend to turn out in European elections. This could see the bigoted politics of the far-right, threatening hatred and division in our communities. On the other extreme are those who support total free markets across Europe, with unemployment to hold down wages, attacks on unions and public services fractured by competition and bent to service profit.

REMEMBER, THE FIGHT FOR WORKERS DOES NOT STOP AT OUR BORDERS

WHAT PRO-UNION MPS HAVE HELPED US WIN US IN EUROPE IN FACE OF RIGHT WING AND EMPLOYER RESISTANCE

- Vital protection when your employer changes.
- Introduction of parental leave.
- More rights for temporary, fixed term and agency workers.
- Minimum holiday entitlement.
- Equal rights for part time workers.
- Laws preventing human trafficking.
- Guaranteed health and safety standards.
- Increased rights to trade unions.
- Data protection of your personal information.
- Cutting mobile phone charges.

THURSDAY 22nd MAY 2014

LOCALLY, NATIONALLY AND IN EUROPE

It may be tragic, but it is none the less true, for most of the last 30 years, we have had to use Europe against our own anti-worker government.

LOVE IT OR HATE IT. WE HAVE TO USE EUROPE TO DEFEND YOUR RIGHTS.

WHAT PRO-UNION MPS ARE FIGHTING FOR IN EUROPE – HELP YOURSELF BY HELPING THEM

- Creating and retaining quality jobs and promoting our region, products and services internationally
- Securing EU support to enhance and expand high quality training
- Using EU funds to regenerate our great cities and coastal resorts, develop our rural economies and maintain our existing employment base
- Building sustainable communities where every voice is heard and fighting oppression
- Securing workplace rights and social protection
- Ensuring that the EU continues to lead the rest of the world to deliver a binding plan for the reduction of greenhouse gases globally and to tackle climate change
- Working to protect human rights and end the misery of cross-border crime and human trafficking

STAND UP FOR YOURSELF AND USE YOUR VOTE!

BEWARE FALSE PATRIOTISM!

The Prime Minister has sought brownie points from the British public by claiming to stand up for Britain in Europe.

Yet what issue did he make the symbol of that stand? Did he use his veto to protect British jobs or public services? Did he use his veto to bring more money to deprived areas of the



North West? Not a bit of it! He used his veto to protect British Banks from tighter regulation. Worse still. His government is now seeking a legal challenge to stop Europe introducing a financial transaction tax that could see some of the massive profits made by banks used to restore growth. Poll after poll shows British people want our banks paying their share.

Use Your
VOTE 

DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE TO VOTE FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS, FOR GROWTH NOT AUSTERITY AND FOR PUBLIC SERVICES.

USE YOUR VOTE IN THE EUROPEAN ELECTION ON THURSDAY 22ND MAY 2014.

MAKE IT EASY – SIGN UP FOR A POSTAL VOTE:

Just go to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk and choose "How I vote?" and then "Voting by post".

Mechanics Institute sees new face of UNISON

The Mechanics Institute in Manchester was the birthplace of the TUC getting on for 150 years ago. In its time it has seen a few faces – but the ones on the display boards showing the history of COHSE, NALGO and NUPE were getting, it has to be said, rather tatty.

But now the Institute is home to three splendid new displays charting the history and family tree of UNISON. Regional Publicity Committee and designer Andy Garside worked together to produce the attractive new display. Set on hard-wearing plastic mounts and illuminated from behind the display boards chart UNISON's history from its very beginnings back in the 1800s.

Check them out next time you're in the Mechanics – they're on the third floor.



Mechanics Institute – a plea for help

The Mechanics holds a unique place in the history of the Labour and Trade Union Movement. It was the place where the TUC was born and since then has been a focal point for organising and developing the causes and struggles of workers and their class. The Mechanics is run by a board of volunteers and employs a

small staff of four people.

But the truth is that times are hard. The Institute, in financial terms, survives by hiring out its rooms. Without that support it would face closure and staff redundancy. The venue is always available for social and other events – you can even get married there. The bar lounge has been spruced up very pleasantly thanks to UIA Insurance and the main hall has also been decorated and re-carpeted.

If you want a first class venue for a function, training or social event then just ask for details. Trade union members are often entitled to reduced or free room hire so that the Institute benefits from bar and food takings. Catering for events can also be provided.

Check out the Mechanics web-site at mechanicsinstitute.co.uk
The institute also has a Facebook page.

Young Members' Training & Social Event

Friday 28th March 2014 – Arena Point, Manchester

This is the North West Young Members' Forum's first training event. The course is designed to help young members fully participate in the union, and to increase their confidence in campaigning on issues affecting young workers. You will also gain valuable practical advice and experience through individual and group activities which will help you in your branch and workplace.

The course runs from 9.30am to 4.30pm and will be followed by an optional social event/meal in Manchester. Refreshments and food will be provided on the day. Any travel and accommodation should be arranged through your UNISON branch.

A course application form is available at www.unisonnw.org/equality-in-unison/young-members-

forum - please complete in full and send to Victoria Walton: v.walton@unison.co.uk by Friday 14th March 2014. You will need to get your branch to approve your attendance on the course.

If you require further information, please contact Victoria Walton, Regional Young Members' Contact: v.walton@unison.co.uk or call her on 0161 661 6716.

University of Liverpool dispute Urgent hardship donation request

Your support and assistance to enable members at the University of Liverpool to continue their fight against attacks on their terms and conditions is urgently required. The university is reducing the pay of its lowest paid staff by taking away nationally-agreed enhancements for working overtime, nights, weekends, and shifts.

The attacks will cut UNISON members' income by as much as £1,800 per year – more than 10% of their earnings. The staff provide services such as catering, cleaning and security at the University. These members are willing to fight this dispute but are struggling financially as they fight this attack. Their action is over and above the strike action around the national Pay dispute. This has so far meant four days strike action, and a week overtime ban with further action planned in the coming weeks.

The cuts are particularly unfair given the very high pay received by top managers. Vice-Chancellor Sir Howard Newby has a pay package worth £360,000 a year. He takes home in less than a month more than support staff earn in a year! The university doesn't even need to make these changes. The university is cash-rich, with income from fees rising by over 25% in 2013 to reach nearly £160m.

The branch urgently needs your support in order to sustain their action. Messages of support and donations should be sent to Karl Huxham, Acting Branch Secretary, University of Liverpool UNISON, c/o UNISON North West, Arena Point, Hunts Bank, Manchester, M3 1UN. Cheques should be made payable to University of Liverpool UNISON.

Further information from David McKnight, UNISON Area Organiser on 07939 583 844.

Homecare support workers join UNISON in Stockport



Westwood Homecare became the first of Stockport Council's private homecare providers to engage with UNISON as they welcomed organisers Niki and Dan to their team meeting.

Staff were eager to find out how UNISON membership can support

them in their roles providing care to some of our community's most vulnerable people. Niki and Dan were also pleased to learn that Westwood already employ a number of practices which UNISON outlined in our recent Ethical Care Charter – including paying staff for travel time and providing provision of at least 30 minutes for care visits.

All members of Westwood's staff signed up to UNISON membership and Westwood are keen to agree a recognition agreement with the union in order to develop our relationship.

Further information from Peter Urwin, Communications & Media Organiser on 0161 661 6720.

Keith Westley: Retiring and raising cash for Palestine

After 23 years with UNISON Keith Westley is retiring on 14th March. As well as saying cheerio, Keith is keen to raise money for a very important and worthwhile cause – Medical Aid for Palestinians. As you will know Palestinians are facing intolerable suffering, many under an internationally illegal occupation. You can find out more at:

<http://www.map-uk.org/news/yarmouk-camp-update.aspx>

All donations are welcome, and there's also a raffle which will be drawn at Keith's retirement "do" on 14th March. Amongst the raffle prizes is a pair of tickets for Manchester United v Olympiakos Champions' League fixture at Old Trafford on 19th March 2014 at 7.45pm.

Tickets for the raffle are available now and may be obtained from Francesca Nuttall at Arena Point (f.nuttall@unison.co.uk) Phone: 0161 661 6762. All that is required is a donation to the JustGiving page which Keith has created at <http://www.justgiving.com/Keith-Westleyretirement> Just call Keith (0161 661 6792) or Francesca and they will assign raffle entries to you in proportion to your contribution. Whether you want a chance of the football tickets, want to help mark Keith's retirement, or simply donate in support of the charity – please help. There will be other prizes too.

If you would like to know more details of the event on Friday 14th March in Manchester then please contact Francesca.

Still counting the cost of Christmas?

A new members' survey by UNISON reveals that on average it takes working families ten months to pay off debts incurred at Christmas.

In other words, it will be Hallowe'en before those families are in the clear. It's a tale that will be sadly familiar to many working families who are struggling to pay the monthly bills and meet every-day basic needs while still burdened by the high cost of Christmas. In fact, family debt levels are at their highest in at least two-and-a-half years, with the average household owing £13,000, according to a recent survey by insurance company Aviva.

For many working families, payday loans are increasingly being used to manage debt, which can very often lead to more debt. From talking to many members up and down the country UNISON understands that not only are people continuing to take out a large number of payday loans, they are often forced to clear their initial loan by taking out a further, larger loan.

Of course UNISON is always on hand to offer members invaluable support that can help get families back on track. UNISON provides essential benefits for members with money worries including financial assistance and a debt line that is open 24 hours a day.

'We know many more UNISON members are now suffering real

problems with money and debt,' says Julie Grant, head of There for You, UNISON's welfare service. 'UNISON can help – we offer debt advice, access to a wide range of credit unions who can help you to save and borrow safely, and can sometimes help with grants to help out in times of hardship.'

These services can be vital for members. One recent member happily told UNISON: 'Thanks to your help, both I and my family have been given the opportunity to start over financially, which in turn will stabilise our future. There has been much stress and anxiety over the last couple of years and we have constantly struggled to get by.'

But all this costs money. **One really practical thing you and your branch can do is to join UNISON's Octopus Lottery.** Have a bit of a flutter for a small amount of cash in the certain knowledge that the money you are contributing is going to a good cause – There for You – UNISON's welfare service.

To find out more go to: www.unison.org.uk/get-help/help-with-

problems-at-home/there-for-you/octopus-monthly-prize-draw

Each monthly entry costs as little as £1 and at least 50% of the proceeds from each draw goes towards prizes. All you need to do is set up a direct debit and a regular amount will be taken from your bank account each month. There's an affordable way to play for everyone – for members it costs just £1 up to a maximum of £10 each month. For UNISON branches, there's no upper limit. The draw is held monthly and there are 50 cash prizes to win including a top prize of £1,000. Simply download and complete the application form or call 020 7121 5620 and we will send you a form.



Book Review: **NHS SOS**



This excellent book contains essays by medics and academics with deep knowledge of healthcare in Britain. They give a concise account of the scale of NHS cuts and privatisation, and explain how the Tory-led Coalition got away with legislating the destruction of comprehensive, universal health care, free at the point of need, funded by general taxation, publicly provided and publicly accountable with the Sec of State holding ultimate legal responsibility. England is now in transition to a health insurance system modelled on US health maintenance organisations, with providers competing in a regulated market lightly supervised by unaccountable quangos NHS England and Monitor.

Prof. Allyson Pollock and David Price explain how the Health & Social Care Act removes ultimate legal responsibility from the Sec of State, destroys the area-based provision which had ensured equitable comprehensive care for everyone in each locality, allows Clinical Commissioning Groups to introduce charges, and opens commissioning decisions to legal challenge under UK and EU competition law or even US-European trade agreements.

No-one voted for this, and few saw it coming. But all those who could have stopped it failed to do so. Consultant Radiologist Jacky Davis and GP David Wrigley give a scathing detailed inside account of the failure of the medical profession to kill the Bill, highlighting the vacillations at the top of the British

Medical Association. Most BMA members opposed the Bill, but their leaders continued “constructive engagement” long after it was clear that Lansley wasn’t listening. Among the Royal Colleges, only the RCGP emerges with real credit.

This was a Tory Bill, but it was also a political plot stretching over 30 years, starting with Thatcher’s introduction of a managerial culture, privatisation of ancillary services and splitting commissioning from provision of NHS healthcare. In the 1990s, elderly care was transferred to local authorities, care homes were privatised and John Major introduced the Private Finance Initiative.

As Stewart Player recounts, Blair and Brown unleashed a huge wave of PFI hospitals, introduced Foundation Trusts, allowed “any willing provider” to offer clinical services, established Independent Sector Treatment Centres for orthopaedic and eye surgery, invited transnational companies to “support” commissioning, created the Co-operation and Competition Panel and the economic regulator Monitor. While bailing out the banks, Brown asked McKinsey Corporation to offer cost-cutting proposals for the NHS. They recommended removing procedures of “limited clinical efficiency” from NHS provision and imposing £20 billion of cuts (4% annual “efficiency savings” for 5 years).

And now? The authors give many proposals for community activists to engage with Clinical Commissioning

Groups, challenge privatisation in our local areas, support Keep Our NHS Public and other campaigns.

This is an important book. The one missing piece is any account of the role of the main TUC-affiliated health unions or what we might do now, as workers. UNISON is praised for documents exposing the Bill as it wound through Parliament. But there is no mention of the Government attack on public sector pensions, which Lord Hutton himself described as removing the barrier between public and private providers. Our strike on 30 Nov 2011 coincided with the climax of the argument in the BMA. Yet the real link between protecting pensions and halting NHS privatisation was barely recognised at the time. Now the government is attacking our pay, another step to prepare for transfer to private employers.

There is still room for a fight, and in the book’s foreword film director Ken Loach quotes a former Liverpool dockworker. “If we don’t understand that we’ve got to do everything, up to and including breaking the law, to defend the National Health Service, then we’re finished.”

Frances Kelly

NHS SOS, edited by Jacky Davis and Raymond Tallis. ISBN 978-1-78074-328-8. £8.99 paperback. Proceeds to Keep Our NHS Public.

Worth it campaign

Get £500 to help with your campaigning activities

Worth it is UNISON's national cross-service campaign on pay. Now, your branch can bid for up to £500 from the General Political Fund to help you raise the profile of pay with your members, with policy makers and the wider public.

Bids are currently invited to support local campaigning on the Worth It theme and are available to a maximum of £500.

The type of activity the bids could support include the following (*please note this list is just to give you an idea*):

- **Workplace campaign stall** - with petition and materials
- **Debt workshop** - bringing in a financial adviser to give ideas on spending less cash
- **Cooking for less** - hold a session on low cost meals, maybe with a chef,
- **Street stall** – with petition and materials (model petitions are available, and once complete can



be submitted to employers, local councillors, MPs and candidates)

- **Public meeting/rally** - bringing together all branches in a locality to highlight falling pay
- **Advertisement in local paper** - (if bidding for advertising branches should consult Communications Dept)
- **Campaign stunts**
- **Any appropriate campaign activity** associated with current pay claims, industrial action or TUC fair pay fortnight
- **Publicising UNISON services designed to help members through tough times** (e.g. credit union and debt line services offered by There For You)

The timing of the activity is up to branches and regions, though consideration should be given to

whether this can sit with current pay claim campaigns, and/or the TUC fair pay fortnight, which takes place from 24th March to 6th April 2014.

All materials produced should be badged with the Worth It logo. Branches should also refer to the campaign guide.

You'll need to fill in a very short application form and return it to the Regional Office at Arena Point. Bids will be approved or otherwise by the regional convenor (assuming they are a GPF payer, if not an alternative senior member of the regional council could perform this role) and regional secretary.

Further information is available from GPF officer, David Arnold d.arnold@unison.co.uk

Reading this but not a member?

It's easy to join the North West's brightest and best public service trade union. Phone 0800 0 857 857 for details and an application form.

www.unisonnw.org

Thanks this issue to Maria Francis, Steve Gwilt, Babs Hennessy, Judith Holt, Jason Hunter, Frances Kelly, John Lewis, David McKnight, Lynne Morris, UNISON Welfare, Peter Urwin, Victoria Walton, Keith Westley, and Dave Woodward.

Got something to say? Our next edition will be out in April 2014. E-mail J.Holt@unison.co.uk with details of your news story.