

Aberdeenshire UNISON Annual Update

First of all, I want to say an absolute thank you to every one of you for all the work you have done for your respective employers throughout this past and difficult year of 2020.

No one could have predicted the situation we would find ourselves in just one short year ago. It has been a hard slog for every one of us with our new ways of working and the equipment we now have to use to keep safe.

I know staff have been concerned not only about their own safety but also concerned about the people and service users we work with on a daily basis. This has had a toll not only on physical but also on mental health.

Please remember that UNISON is always here for you with any concerns, not only with employment matters but also supporting you and your family through practical support from our There For You charity, heating and school uniform grants, but also assisting you with finances should you be struggling with the costs of self-isolation or illness.

Throughout the year we have had some successes in ensuring you all get paid appropriately when self-isolating and that you have the correct PPE to keep you safe at work but we cannot know everything that is a problem to you so I ask you to keep in touch and play an active role in your union. We are always looking for new activists to represent your workplaces.

In the new year we already know that local authorities are facing massive budget shortfalls. This will not only affect those directly employed by councils but also those services in the third and private sector. As councils try to make savings, we will see them passing on those cuts to the other service providers, squeezing them further to do more for less.

We will continue fighting to ensure that staff in all sections continue to be valued and that services to often the most vulnerable in our societies remain.

We will also work nationally to ensure there is enough money to provide the services we all rely on in our daily lives. This is going to be a fight for our ways of life, to keep essential services and fight any cuts.

So my Christmas message to you is please try to relax as much as you can. For those still working, thank you for all that you do, and I hope you all get some time to relax and unwind.

Next year will continue to be difficult but we will be alongside you all the way.

Together we are stronger, stronger in UNISON.

Thank you so much and please keep safe.

Inez Kirk
Branch Secretary