

UNISON wins recognition ballot at Barnardo's

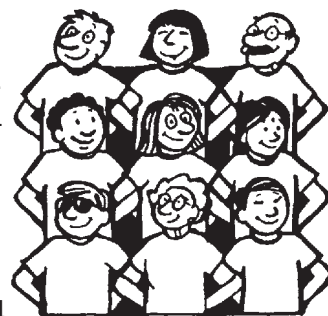
UNISON's Community & Voluntary sector membership is set to grow within Barnardo's after staff voted for UNISON to be recognised by their employer for bargaining purposes.

This result was warmly welcomed by the Scottish Community & Voluntary sector committee Chairperson, Gerry MacGarvey who said: "This positive result in one of the UK's largest voluntary sector organisations shows that when workers in the sector are given a choice, UNISON is their first choice."

UNISON
are well placed
to look after
their interests
and to represent
them in the
workplace.

Dave Prentis

The charity's Ian Theodoreson said:
"Barnardo's has worked successfully with UNISON on an informal basis for many years. In light of forthcoming legislation we decided to consult with staff as to whether we should formalise this arrangement and are happy to be able to respond to the clear mandate given."



UNISON

UNISON General Secretary, Dave Prentis, said: "I am delighted that the overwhelming majority of staff who voted have backed UNISON. We are well placed to look after their interests and to represent them in the workplace. We look forward to working with Barnardo's to ensure they can continue caring for children and delivering quality services across the UK with well motivated staff."

** If you work for Barnardo's in Scotland and would be interested in becoming a mailing contact/steward or health & safety rep please get in touch. Contact Robert Rae, details on the back page.*

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Upgrade your skills - Learn with UNISON

UNISON offers members many **FREE** opportunities to learn new skills, including how to organise in your workplace! Get in touch to find out more? Contact details inside.





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Quarriers agree new proposals

A busy Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) discussed and agreed a range of proposals which will benefit UNISON members and staff working or coming to work for Quarriers.

These include:

- **Holidays for part-time staff** -Part-time staff consistently working additional long hours will be issued amended contracts which will entitle them to extra paid annual leave.

“ Quarriers is beginning to reward the valuable contribution of staff...”

Gary Marshall

- **No smoking policy** - A new policy has been agreed which takes account of smoking in Quarriers vehicles, issues of passive smoking and smoking in service users' hours.
- **Family friendly policies**--Quarriers has introduced a range of policies which go

beyond the statutory requirements introduced by the 2002 Employment Act.

These include:-

- **Maternity scheme** - Improved Quarriers maternity leave and pay.
- **Paternity leave** - One weeks full pay, one week's statutory paternity pay.
- **Flexible working policy** - Quarriers recognises that flexible working is relevant to staff at various stages in their working life. This scheme allows for requests to be handled and if necessary for union representation.
- **Adoption Leave** -Up to 52 weeks leave with no qualifying period.
- **Parental Leave** -In addition to the general Scheme, there is particular provision for 3 days paid leave per annum (up to age 18) for those with parental responsibilities.

UNISON Branch Secretary, Gary Marshall said: "With these measures, agreed with UNISON on behalf of the workforce, Quarriers is beginning to reward the valuable contribution of staff as its most important resource and to recognise our continued commitment".

Talbot Association members meet

Despite the confusion over the date of a members' meeting, a number of Talbot Association members managed to attend to discuss how they can help build the union

within the organisation. Another letter has been sent to all members encouraging them to make contact with the union and to pass on an application form to their colleagues. For further information contact: Robert Rae 0870 7777 006

National Community & Voluntary Sector Seminar

This year's national seminar for members employed in the community & voluntary sector will be held in London on Saturday 18 October.

The seminar will include a range of workshops on issues affecting workers in the sector.

Invitations to send delegates will be sent to branches within the next few weeks. Any member interested in attending should contact their branch.

Glasgow members

UNISON members within the Glasgow Health Branch can contact Jim Lamb on: 0141 221 3138 on Tuesday and Wednesday of each week at the Resource Centre, 2 Fitzroy Place, Glasgow.

Have I got news for you ?

Is your workplace/employer not mentioned in this issue?

Is there anything going on that you feel fellow workers in your own organisation or in the wider sector should know?

If the answer to any of the above questions is yes, then what are YOU going to do about it?

Voice@work exists to provide a communications forum for members across Scotland.

If you have something to share then send it in. We are not interested in grammar, just the content.

Make voice@work your voice by sending in your news and views!

Deadline for the next issue is:
22nd August 2003
Contact details on the left!



Your Rights at Work

UNISON believes it is important that all workers are aware of their rights at work. As the largest trade union in Scotland, UNISON is working with the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) to ensure both employers and employees know their rights and responsibilities in the workplace.

From Day 1 of being employed you are entitled by law to the following:

- an itemised pay statement
- the National Minimum Wage - £4.20 an hour if you are 22 and over, rising to £4.50 from October 2003; or £3.60 an hour if you are aged 18-21 rising to £3.80 from October 2003.
- 26 weeks maternity leave (if your baby is due on or after 6 April 2003)
- time off for antenatal care
- equal pay
- no discrimination on the basis of sex or race or disability
- time off for public duties
- time off for trade union duties and no victimisation for trade union activities
- to be represented by a trade union in a disciplinary or grievance hearing
- a limit of 48 hours on the maximum average working week
- 4 weeks of paid leave every year (this can include public holidays)
- to work in a safe and healthy environment.
- You have additional rights when you have worked for your employer for longer.

Rights to Work Flexibly

- From April 2003 mothers and fathers of children aged under 6 or disabled children under 18 will have the right to apply to work flexibly. Employers will have a duty to consider requests seriously and will be able to refuse only where there is a clear business reason.
- The new right will apply to employees who have worked for their employer for 26 weeks before making the request.
- This right is in addition to the existing rights to ask for child-friendly working hours, such as part-time work, under sex discrimination law.

New Maternity and Paternity Rights

You will qualify for new maternity and paternity rights if your baby is due on or after 6 April 2003.

Maternity Leave

- All pregnant employees will be able to take 26 weeks Ordinary Maternity Leave.
- If you have worked for your employer for 26 weeks by the 15th week before your baby is due you can also take a further 26 weeks Additional Maternity Leave. Additional Maternity Leave is unpaid leave and starts at the end of Ordinary Maternity Leave, giving women who qualify for it up to one year off.

Maternity Pay

- There is also an increase in Statutory Maternity Pay. It will be paid for 26 weeks at a rate of 90% of your average earnings for 6 weeks, and £100 per week (or 90% of average weekly earnings whichever is less) for 20 weeks.
- To qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay you will need to have worked for your employer for 26 weeks by the 15th week before your baby is due and earn over the National Insurance Lower Earnings Limit (currently £75).

Maternity Allowance

- If you do not qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay, for example because your earnings are too low, you can claim Maternity Allowance from the Benefits Agency. Maternity Allowance will be paid at the flat rate of £100 per week (or 90% of average weekly earnings whichever is less) for 26 weeks.

ings whichever is less) for 26 weeks.

- You do not have to repay Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance if you decide not to return to work.

Paternity Leave and Pay

- Fathers of babies due on or after 6 April 2003 are entitled to two weeks paid paternity leave.
- Statutory Paternity Pay will be paid at a flat rate of £100 per week (or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less) for two weeks.
- Paternity leave can be taken from the date of birth or up to eight weeks from the birth.
- To qualify for Statutory Paternity Pay your partner will need to have worked for his employer for 26 weeks by the 15th week before the baby is due and earn more than the Lower Earnings Limit (currently £75). He must also give his employer notice of the date he wants to start paternity leave in the 15th week before the baby is due.

Parental Leave

- There is already a right for both parents to take up to 13 weeks unpaid parental leave per parent per child. You must have worked for your employer for one year by the date you wish to take it.



Rights for Temporary Workers

- If you are an employee on a fixed term contract you should not be treated less favourably than a comparable permanent employee, unless your employer can justify this treatment.
- If an employer renews your temporary contract when you have worked for a continuous period of 4 or more years for the same employer, the renewal or new contract is taken as a permanent contract.
- Agency workers are not included in these regulations.

Rights on Sexual Orientation and Belief.

- From December 2003 you will have new rights in the workplace not to be discriminated against because of your sexual orientation, or because of your religion or belief.

Rights for Part Time Workers

- You have a right not to be treated less favourably than a comparable full time worker. This means that you have the same rights, pro rata to holidays, pensions, training, sick pay and other benefits.

For more information on any of the above issues, please contact your UNISON rep, or phone UNISON Scotland 0870 7777 006

Health & Safety an issue for everyone

Health & Safety in our workplaces is a vital issue for each and every one of us. Your employer has a legal duty to provide you with a safe working environment and safe working practices.

If they do not, UNISON is here to challenge them.

But to be effective in our battle for safe conditions we need people in every workplace willing to act as UNISON health & safety representatives. People like you.

The job is important and very rewarding.

If you are interested in becoming a health & safety rep, you will get full training and support from UNISON, as well as paid time off from your employer to carry out your union role.



Can anyone become a UNISON safety rep?

Yes, if you are a member and even if you are already a steward. It does not matter if you work full or part-time, as long as:

- you are employed in that work-

place

- The members vote for you
- The union informs your employer in writing that you are a UNISON safety rep.

What does the job involve?

If you decide to become a rep, your job will be to look after the health & safety needs of the UNISON members who work with you.

You will have the powers to:

- Investigate complaints on behalf of members
- take up problems you notice or that members bring to your attention
- carry out health & safety inspections of your workplace at least four times a year
- demand information if it affects the health & safety of your members
- have time off with pay to do your job as health & safety rep and to attend trade union courses.
- the regulations which give you these rights also make it very clear that you are not legally liable for anything you do or fail to do as a safety rep.

Do you want to find out more?

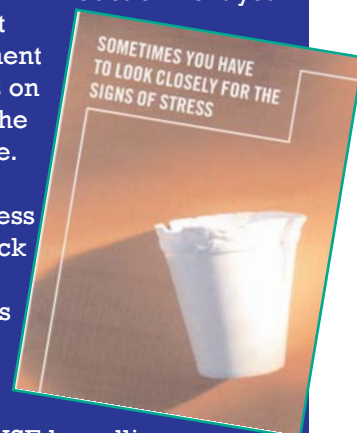
If you are interested in knowing more about becoming a health & safety rep contact your Branch or UNISON Scotland.

New Stress Campaign

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has launched a fresh campaign to highlight work-related stress in advance of the introduction next year

of the first management standards on stress in the workplace.

A free Stress Action Pack aimed at employers and managers is available from the HSE by calling 0845 608 1818, quoting code OSHI 1/7.



UNISON safety reps should ensure their employers are made aware of this important campaign, and should get a copy of the pack for themselves.

The HSE also publishes a short guide to work-related stress aimed at small to medium sized employers. This can be downloaded in PDF format from the HSE website, www.hse.gov.uk.

TUC backs plans to legislate on corporate killing

Home Secretary David Blunkett has announced that the Government is to publish a draft bill on corporate killing in the autumn.

Welcoming the news, TUC General Secretary Elect Brendan Barber said: 'I am pleased that the Home Secretary has confirmed that this continues

to be a priority for the Home Office.

The news is a welcome boost for health and safety at work.



Unions are keen to help draft the detail of the proposed legislation in partnership with employers.

This move will be good for workers, good for the public and good for responsible and accountable employers.'

Quarriers members receive health & safety training

Up to 20 UNISON members within Quarriers will receive Health and Safety training at Stow College.

Branch Secretary, Gary Marshall, said "this training is provided free of charge to UNISON members. It has generated a lot of interest in UNISON and the Branch have seen an increase in new members. We have also seen a noticeable increase in the number of people attending branch meetings."

Health and Safety was identified as an area for branch development in their work plan for 2002/2003 and stewards are pleased with the response both by members and Quarriers management who have welcomed this avenue of training.

It is hoped this partnership will bear fruit in the future.

If the course is a success it is hoped that the reps will continue to attend a further 10-day course where they can achieve a recognised Health and Safety qualification.

Roving safety Reps a step nearer after pilot success

A pilot programme to test the effectiveness of roving safety reps has been declared a success by participating unions, employers and employees.

An interim report on the pilot, run by the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) with the assistance of six major unions including UNISON, has concluded that in the majority of firms and organisations that received visits from the roving reps, both management and employees reported highly positive responses.

The roving safety reps (or Workplace Safety Advisors as they are called by the HSC) were recruited by the unions on behalf of the HSC, with a remit to work with a group of employers in one particular employment sector. UNISON's contribution to the pilot will be of particular interest to community and voluntary sector members in as much as the roving rep recruited by the union covered a number of organisations in the sector throughout the North East of England.

The main objectives of the pilot were to increase awareness of health and safety issues, and to promote employee consultation and involvement in health and safety.

Given that attention to health and safety is generally accepted as being far greater in larger firms and organisations where unions are recognised, an important element of the pilot was that the focus was on small workplaces and

those with no formal union presence.

The interim report noted that workers in participating firms were encouraged that health and safety was being taken more seriously by their management as a result of the roving reps visits, while a significant number of employers indicated that they had gained more from the pilot scheme than they had expected. Both workers and employers shared a hope that the scheme would continue in the future.

Addressing a recent meeting of UNISON's Community and Voluntary Sector Forum, National Health and Safety Officer Hugh Robertson said that if the scheme were to be introduced on a permanent basis it would represent an excellent opportunity for union recruitment, especially in typically small voluntary sector organisations.

Workers in non-union employers would see at first hand the benefits of union organisation, and this could lead to greater interest in union membership. The importance of health and safety to workers is illustrated, Hugh added, by the fact that the health and safety pages on UNISON's website receive over 13,000 hits per month.

The HSC is now convening a sub-group to consider the full report on the pilot programme, and to look at ways the scheme might be structured and funded should a recommendation to introduce it permanently be made.

In recent years there has been a huge increase in the use of water coolers and drinks machines in workplaces.

Unfortunately, while these are important in supplying refreshment to our members, they also have their risks.

There have been several cases recently of drinks machines being found to be infected with harmful bacteria, including E.Coli. This is mainly a result of a failure to clean the dispensers on a regular basis. If someone touches the spout when taking a drink, or refilling the machine, any bacteria that are left will grow.

Even when regular cleaning takes place, simple use of soap and water is more and likely to spread contamination to other machines than remove it.

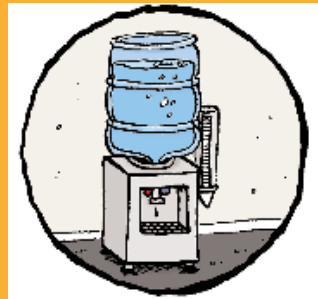
If contamination gets in the workings of a vending machine it can be quite difficult to eradicate.

This is particularly the case with some harmful bacteria called coliforms. Under the workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, the employer has a responsibility to provide an adequate supply of wholesome drinking water. However any water, or other beverage, which is supplied, must be provided safely.

Branches should ensure that there is an active cleaning programme that includes disinfecting machines on a regular basis (not just the nozzle).

Water Coolers and Drinks Machines

This information explains the health risks of Water Coolers and Drinks Machines and what employers must do to ensure the Health and Safety of members



In addition periodic testing of all drinks machines and water coolers should be arranged. Although mains fed static chilled water dispensers are probably safer, even they have to be checked on a regular basis.

If bottled water is used, it is important that the bottles are not stored for long periods beside the machine, but instead are kept in a cool dark place.

Water coolers using bottled water can also cause manual handling injuries. The standard bottle used in a water cooler weighs 18.5 kilograms. Coolers supplied by mains water prevent this risk, but if bottled water is used then only those staff who have been trained in manual handling should replace the bottles.

However employers should not be allowed to use health & safety considerations to stop providing drinks at work. If properly maintained drink dispensing machines and water coolers can be safe and are an important part of any workplace.

Columbian trade unionists under siege

Colombian trade unionists face death for simply being members of a trade union.

Trade unionists in Colombia are the most persecuted in the world.

A 'dirty war' has been waged against them by paramilitary forces, which operate in virtual impunity.

The civil war in Colombia has raged for 38 years and this, in combination with the drugs' trade, is continually used by the Colombian government as a smokescreen for the annihilation of the trade union movement.

Last year almost 200 trade unionists were assassinated in Colombia, this is more than in the rest of the world combined. A national newspaper in Colombia recently estimated that there are currently around 10,000 trade unionists under threat of death. Many thousands have been forced to flee their jobs, their homes, their families and ultimately their country to escape the brutality of the paramilitaries.

Things have been getting worse since the new President, Álvaro Uribe Velez came to power on the 7th August.

Within four days he had declared a state of internal disturbance thereby increasing the powers of the security forces and limiting civil liberties. His platform for election included the legitimisation of paramilitaries and bringing more civilians into the war. Uribe is seeking a military solution to the war and is not interested in talking with the insurgents.

This will ultimately effect all popular sectors of the community, in fact any person or organisation working for peace with social justice. This includes trade unionists who are usually targeted for their resistance to privatisation and their stance on national economic policy.

The tactic most commonly used for the elimination of trade unionists is to label them as guerrillas. This was recently done to the members of Sintraemcali, UNISON's sister union in Cali Colombia.

A local newspaper published several articles claiming that there were links between the union and the guerrillas. This followed only months after Sintraemcali successfully fought off the privatisation of Emcali the company providing electricity, water and



telecommunications to the residents of Cali through a month long occupation.

This victory displeased right wing councillors who made the accusations published in the local paper. Effectively these claims made all the members of Sintraemcali 'legitimate' paramilitary targets.

In response to requests from Sintraemcali to take solidarity action, the Deputy General Secretary of UNISON led a delegation to the Colombian Embassy to make representations on behalf of our Colombian comrades, highlighting the grave danger they had been put in.

Dave Prentis also wrote to the Colombian government asking for increased security provisions for Sintraemcali and to the paper that made the accusations asking for a retraction and apology. The following Sunday

Sintraemcali were given the front

page of the paper to expose the accusations for what they really were.

Countless reports by human rights organisations have established links between paramilitary groups and the state. They also suggest that many paramilitaries are in fact current or former members of the security forces.

The level of violence and intimidation suffered by trade unionists and other people working for social and economic change and basic human rights is unprecedented. Those particularly affected are workers in the public sector, the energy industry and teachers.

Our counterpart workers in Sintraemcali have been targeted for their opposition to the govern-

ment's policy of the privatising of public services.

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The relationship between UNISON and Sintraemcali began when Alexander Lopez, now ex-president of Sintraemcali, first visited London in December 2000. He was forced to flee Colombia after surviving his third assassination attempt. Since then the relationship between the two unions has gone from strength to strength.

UNISON had two Colombian guests to Conference 2001, then again in 2002.

We have also had Colombian guests at branch international seminars. UNISON has also been represented on two delegations to Colombia the first, in October 2001 was a human rights mission in conjunction with representatives of the Colombia Solidarity Campaign, War on Want and the Haldane Society. The second was a TUC General Council delegation.

For the past two years we have been closely following Sintraemcali's struggle against privatisation and the severe repression that they suffer.

At Conference 2001 two motions were put forward on Colombia and in the past year UNISON has been working closely with the Colombia Solidarity Campaign and the TUC to highlight the human rights abuses taking place in Colombia. The situation has also been raised at Public Services International.

Aside from the many letters that have been sent by members and the General Secretary to the Colombian and British governments, the International Unit have also established an Urgent Action e-mail network of members to get quick responses to Urgent Actions from Amnesty International and the Colombia Solidarity Campaign.

The recent delegation was at the request of Sintraemcali who have been fighting relentlessly under the most extreme circumstances and want the world to know about their struggle.

This gave the UNISON representatives a unique opportunity to gain a first hand understanding of the struggle and simply by their presence show UNISON's solidarity with our 'compañeros' in Colombia.

When Alexander Lopez last visited the UK he was asked what UNISON's solidarity with Sintraemcali means in real terms and he replied "it makes it more difficult for them to kill us."

For more information about Colombia and the occupation please contact the International Unit – t.sherar@unison.co.uk or the Colombia Solidarity Campaign on 07950 923 448.
www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk

Law at Work

by UNISON's Legal Officer,
Peter Hunter

Where is your head at..?

Drug and Alcohol policies in the voluntary sector



Ideally employees will present themselves for work free from the influence of drugs or alcohol.

But what happens if the effects haven't worn off?

There is a large pile of caselaw on the issue and the short answer is that drug and alcohol use can lead to trouble at work. Here are some general rules of thumb.

Most employers try to distinguish between capability and misconduct. Someone with an ongoing dependency problem should be supported as if they had an illness. But someone who gets into trouble because of one

particular incident will tend to be treated as a case of misconduct.

Long term dependency is not covered by the disability discrimination rules and dismissal may still occur if attempts to tackle the problem are unproductive.

Having said all that, there are overriding issues of public safety and safety at work. Where these concerns are relevant there will be less flexibility in the application of capability and disciplinary policies. Testing is also a very topical issue.

Off-duty drinking or drug-taking is generally not a sufficient ground for dismissal unless there is a

clear link with the employment relationship. Being hungover in an administrative post should not be a problem, but smelling of drink in a children's home might be. This distinction is also the key to understanding the impact of the Human Rights Act on drug and alcohol testing.

Drug and alcohol testing will generally be in breach of the European Convention rules on privacy, unless such testing was necessary for reasons of public safety, national security, prevention of crime or the protection of health or morals. So police employees, healthcare workers, lorry drivers and many more will have no right to refuse a drug test.

So each example has to be assessed on a case-by-case basis and you should seek advice on the application of the law if it is relevant to your work.

Available to UNISON members FREE

UNISON members can write in or call for a copy of 'The Pregnancy Diary' produced by UNISON in association with the Maternity Alliance.



The booklet includes the new maternity rights that came into force in April 2003. It takes you from the time you conceive up to a couple of months after the baby's birth.

Rants & Rhymes

our columnist is on leave!

Back next issue.

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Lifelong learning in UNISON

Did you know that as a UNISON member you could become a Lifelong Learning Adviser for your workplace?

UNISON will train you for free!

The kind of skills you could gain include listening skills, basic survey techniques, and finding out what training is available for you and your work colleagues.

You could also start working with your local branch of UNISON to negotiate with your management about education and training issues in your work-

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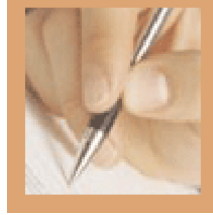
place.
Paid time off
for training
and for carry-
ing out your
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Learning Adviser is now guaranteed by law.

Those of you who are currently involved in the UNISON Return 2 Learn course would be particularly welcome to attend.

If any UNISON member would like more information please contact Karen Barclay on 01224 620624 or by email on K.Barclay@unison.co.uk.

Give us a call today. This could be the start of whole new career for you!



Glasgow members access Return 2 Learn

UNISON Community & Voluntary sector members in Glasgow have recently started a Return 2 Learn (R2L) course.

The members come from a range of organisations within the sector including Richmond Fellowship and the Archdiocese of Glasgow.

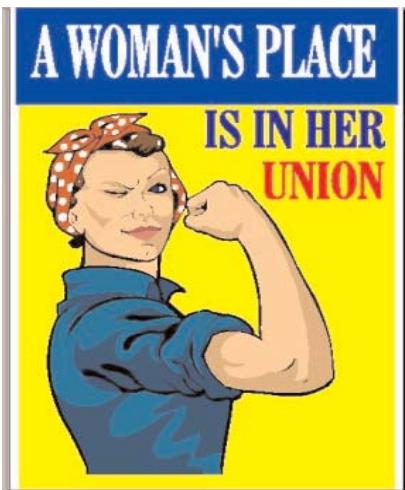
This course is provided FREE to UNISON members, the only cost to members is the use of their own time to attend the course.

If you would be interested in a R2L course running in your area or would like further information please contact: Barbara Diamond on: 0870 7777 006.

UNISON members employed by Enable Scotland, Capability Scotland and Quarriers have access to paid time off to attend R2L courses.



If you are a UNISON member and would like further information on what courses UNISON Open College offers, check their web site at: www.unison-opencollege.org or alternatively you can telephone: 020 7751 1154 or email: opencollege@unison.co.uk



If you are not already a member of UNISON - the largest union in the community & voluntary sector!

Joining is easy- whether you are male or female your place is in the union!

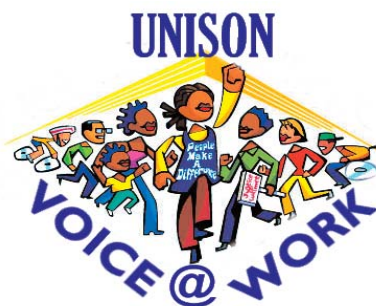


Complete the tear off slip below and send it FREEPOST requesting an application form or alternatively telephone UNISON Direct FREE 0845 355 0845

Freepost address:

Robert Rae
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FREEPOST NW486,
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Glasgow G2 6BR

☎ 0870 7777 006



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