



**Covid-19 - Making Black Lives Matter**  
UNISON leads the way in equality fight - p2

**Branches thank members for work**  
Covid safety packs, free drinks, badges, masks and thank you letters - p3



**Care home sick pay**  
#ClaimCovidCash campaign launched - p2

**PUBLIC WORKS:**

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# Scotland *in* UNISON

scottish council activists' bulletin..... Use these stories in your branch newsletter or circulate the pdf version to members

**UNISON members working in social care have been in the frontline of the battle against the Coronavirus.**

Alongside our members in the NHS they have been front and centre from day one looking after the vulnerable and the sick.

Even in the early days when many of them were not provided with enough PPE they were providing care, love and solidarity in care homes and in the community.

As a union we are proud of the role our members played, and are continuing to play, whether employed by local councils, charitable organisations or private companies.

UNISON prioritised these members and for those in the charity and private sector fought, and won, battles over PPE, payment of wages when members had to self-isolate and to get the Scottish Living Wage paid.

**'The time for a National Care Service and proper investment in care is long overdue'**

We are delighted that thousands of social care workers have joined UNISON in the past few months.

We welcome every one of them and urge them to get active in their union to make their voice louder and their arms stronger.

Of course we have been fighting for members in social care for many years, opposing privatisation of care services, promoting our Ethical Care Charter and campaigning for the Living Wage.

We have highlighted the scandal of private profiteers who provide the majority of social care in Scotland in a market system created by the Tory government in the 1980s in order to allow these profiteers to increase their profits.

Millions of pounds of public money have been diverted from providing care into shareholders returns and, in many cases, off-shored via tax havens, whilst the pay and conditions of staff have been kept down and the standards of care deteriorated.

The private dominated care market has been broken for a long time but the past few months of Covid-19 has demonstrated this

# Scotland's care workers for change

**Care is in crisis, thanks to a system that has been underfunded and ignored by governments for years. Care workers and the people they look after are paying the price. Scottish convener LILIAN MACER and depute convener STEPHEN SMELLIE outline why UNISON is campaigning for change.**

in the way that no-one would have wanted. The scandal of deaths in private care homes and the treatment of staff has brought to everyone's attention the nature of the broken care system.

That is why UNISON has launched a campaign to bring an end to this broken system. Firstly we are organising our members, fighting for them, bringing them together locally and in their companies to assist them in fighting for themselves for better pay, terms and conditions.

Secondly we are calling on the Scottish Government to start the process to create a

National Care Service, publicly funded and publicly delivered.

The government had to step in to ensure PPE could be provided for staff.

They had to intervene to ensure staff were paid wages when self-isolating.

They had to give responsibility to local Directors of Nursing to monitor and ensure that the correct clinical control measures were in place in care homes.

The time for a National Care Service and proper investment in care is long overdue.

We are determined that UNISON and its social care members will win this battle.



## Napier redundancies - UNISON ballots and calls for Fair Work standards

**UNISON is balloting for strike action at Edinburgh Napier University, as the university seeks to make at least 50 compulsory redundancies, overwhelmingly in professional and support service grades.**

At the time of writing, there is a financial crisis in higher education, with grave projections based on reduced international student income, deferrals of 'home' students, lost research

partnerships and a wipeout of commercial income from events, conferences and campus outlets.

UNISON is calling for employers to only make decisions involving detriment when the true picture is clearer, and to ensure our low-paid members are not the first hit or worst hit in any cost-cutting measures.

Napier is not immune from the broader crisis, but it had comparatively strong finances before the crisis hit and is far

from the worst impacted university in Scotland.

Lorcan Mullen, UNISON regional organiser said: "The clear institutional preference for compulsory redundancies feels opportunistic and consistent with a concerning pattern of anti-worker, anti-trade union behaviours at the university over a number of years.

"The battle against compulsory redundancies at this university will set an important precedent for crisis response in

Scottish higher education and the broader Scottish public sector."

Members at Napier should receive their ballots from 21 July and the union is urging people to back their representatives and return their vote before 16 August.

UNISON is also calling on Richard Lochhead, the HE/FE minister, to intervene and enforce the Scottish Government's much vaunted Fair Work standards.

The minister has previously

given written and verbal assurances to education trade unions that the Scottish Government's Fair Work standards must be applied to institutions' response to the university funding crisis.

Lorcan added: "UNISON sees Napier's approach as a clear breach of those Fair Work standards, and expects the minister to use his influence to secure a just outcome in line with government policy.

*Continued on page 2*

## UNISON will fight for better deal for Gas branch staff

UNISON has slammed the announcements that 20,000 British Gas employees face dismissal unless they agree to new contracts. This affects a number of UNISON members based in Scotland.



**UNISON**

Christina McAnea assistant general secretary

Christina McAnea said: "This is disgraceful behaviour. British Gas might be struggling financially but it's no way to treat loyal staff, many of whom have been with the business for years.

"Employees have worked hard throughout the past few months to ensure customers are well-served, despite the pandemic. This is no way for company directors to repay them.

"With so many jobs being lost across the UK, staff will feel betrayed by the business. Unions will be doing everything in their power to win employees a better deal."

## Napier ballot

From Page 1

"If members support our call for industrial action, and if Napier continues down this destructive path, UNISON will be able to call strikes in freshers' week and the first week of teaching.

"That is not something we take lightly, but we must keep all options open to protect the jobs and incomes of our members.

"We are hopeful the ballot will focus minds and lead Napier to adopt the unions' very reasonable counter proposal of pausing the process until student recruitment income is known, and opening a genuinely voluntary severance scheme in the meantime.

"Napier's finances were strong going in to the crisis, and they have the latitude to stand by their workforce, and we are calling on them to use that latitude, calling on the Scottish Government to make sure Fair Work standards are applied.

"UNISON takes the Scottish Government's Fair Work framework seriously, and we welcome the minister's previous remarks on the importance of this policy in responding to the crisis.

"From time to time, the policy must be re-emphasised so all employers in the sector play by the same rules. Employers making the effort to stand by their workforce should not feel they are being put at a disadvantage.

"We call on Mr Lochhead to use his influence to the utmost to defend the jobs of our members at Edinburgh Napier University."

## Action defends members' rights in Waverley Care

UNISON's Lothian Health Branch has successfully defended its right to negotiate with Waverley Care, after the charity had taken a decision to proceed with unagreed redundancies.

A recognition agreement with the company had been cast aside as the CEO and board unilaterally introduced a restructuring package under the guise of Covid 19.

However a campaign of political lobbying, street protests and media coverage has proved so successful that the employer has reinstated the recognition agreement and agreed to negotiate on the redundancies.

Explaining, organiser Derek

Durkin, said: "This was being introduced on the back of our dispute with the company over a previous decision to withdraw a cost of living increase in return for staff transferring their pension from the Lothian Pension Fund into a much less attractive private scheme."

The campaign proved to be very successful. Within five days the branch had an invite from the CEO to come to an online meeting to discuss a way forward.

Following discussion with the local stewards, negotiators had three objectives going into this meeting.

They would insist on a guarantee that the recognition agreement be adhered to, they



would insist that two of our members facing compulsory redundancy would have their final interview (due that day) postponed until full negotiations had taken place.

They would also insist that the CEO board reinstate full recognition to the organiser whom they had derecognised following the earlier dispute.

## Care home staff still not getting sick pay - putting clients and staff at risk

By Danny Phillips  
Communications officer

**Many care home staff are still not receiving full sick pay, months after they were promised they would by the Scottish Government, putting staff and residents at risk.**

Care home workers' entitlement to full sick pay was included in emergency Coronavirus legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament.

UNISON's #ClaimCovidCash campaign, launched as we went to print, wants to hear from social care or home care workers who are self isolating or shielding and are not receiving sick pay, so that we can support members. See full details on the website.

UNISON Scotland has submitted the problem in evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Covid-19 committee which is examining the Social Care Staff Support Fund regulations which were part of the emergency Coronavirus legislation.

The fund is necessary because so many care home employers do not pay their staff sick pay – meaning if staff either believe

themselves to be ill with Covid-19, or think they've been in contact with those who are, have the choice between taking a risk in going to work, or feeding their families.

The risk this poses was recognised by the Scottish Government in April, and a scheme to ensure that care home staff who fell ill or had to self isolate was included in the Coronavirus (Scotland) (No2) Act 2020 and the Social Care Support Staff Regulations.

The regulations make it clear that care home staff should not be

losing money if they self isolate to prevent the spread of infection.

They are to be paid by their employer – who then claims the money back.

Despite this many care home operators are either refusing to pay staff sick pay – saying that they do not understand the law or are paying staff only their contracted hours rather than the hours they normally work – leaving staff short.

This not only contravenes the law – but undermines the effectiveness of what is a

Derek said: "We are delighted that all three objectives were achieved and as a result we agreed to halt our campaign.

"We cannot thank the members enough and, in particular, the stewards and ex stewards who formed the team that drove this forward.

"We don't kid ourselves that the difficulties are behind us given the current financial situation in the third sector but we know and our members know that we are now back in position to give continued effective representation.

"We would also like to express our thanks to the branches and individuals that gave us so much support throughout."

public safety measure.

Deborah Clarke, UNISON head of community, said: "It's disgraceful that so many employers are refusing to comply with the Coronavirus emergency legislation.

"There is no excuse for employers to delay paying out to care staff who are sick or isolating. This is something UNISON fought hard for.

"Many care home staff who test positive are left in a position where they can't feed their families – and that stops them coming forward for testing. That puts them, their families and residents at risk.

"Scotland's care home system is broken. We've seen hundreds of deaths in care homes.

"Care home employers handle multi-million-pound budgets but claim that they don't understand the principle that staff should not be out of pocket when sick.

"But they still pay large salaries to chief executives and routinely pay large dividends to shareholders, meaning millions of pounds which should be used for care of residents, leaks from the system."

## Covid-19 - Making Black Lives Matter

**Black workers facing the heightened risk of C19 infection and death are getting protection and reassurance from UNISON's "Equally Safe" campaign, according to regional manager Peter Hunter.**

Early data from NHS workers exposed the threat to Black lives and a 2,000 member survey pinpointed workplace inequalities that demand urgent action.

UNISON Scotland now has revised safety training and Covid safety materials designed in response to our research findings. This includes a groundbreaking Covid equality plan for work with employers.

**'It's a fantasy to say that the risk linked to discrimination doesn't happen in Scotland.'** PETER HUNTER

In response, the Scottish Government has issued initial guidance and commissioned an expert advisory group. In truth, government and employers must go further.

"There may be an underlying health factor at play here but we simply don't have time to mess about with further research", Peter Hunter explained.

"We can see from the NHS contact centre, the Hereford farm workers and Leicester sweatshops that Covid-19

thrives in exploitative work settings. Safety is overlooked and the fear and silence of exploited workers creates a perfect breeding ground for infection. Bad jobs kill but Fair Work saves lives."

UNISON's key finding is that Black workers are segregated into jobs and services where safety management is poor and Black workers fear reprisals if they speak up for safety.

Changing the patterns of employment for Black workers

will take years, so the urgent task is to reach Black workers where they are now and fight the inequality that fuels infection rates.

Peter Hunter continued: "While we appreciate the constraints of the pandemic we are now in a situation where many public bodies are in breach of their equality duties.

"It's a fantasy to say that the risk linked to discrimination doesn't happen in Scotland. All public bodies should acknowledge the heightened risk and embed anti discrimination measures in their risk assessments. As ever, UNISON leads that equality fight"

## Army of Covid safety reps take new UNISON course

**UNISON Scotland has developed a short online two hour course on ensuring a safe return to work.**

And already health and safety webinars in Aberdeenshire have resulted in 19 new health and safety reps (see this page).

Aimed at new and existing health and safety reps, the course is available to branches, service groups and other

occupational groups.

The training consists of a two hour webinar (with a comfort break). It is interactive and participative, aimed at our new army of safety reps all over the public and care sector.

The course provides an introduction to the right in law we all have to a safe return to work and how UNISON safety representatives in every workplace are vital to that.

As part of that UNISON is

also developing a guide to holding online meetings with members.

If your branch, service or occupational group is interested in hosting a course, please email [activisteducationscotland@unison.co.uk](mailto:activisteducationscotland@unison.co.uk) to register any interest.

### Social care course

We have also developed and piloted an online one hour webinar for members in

social care focusing on health and safety, with detailed facilitation notes.

This course is aimed at new and existing members in social care to encourage them to become UNISON reps.

The course can be offered as a tutor briefing to existing lay tutors and organising staff.

Please contact [activisteducationscotland@unison.co.uk](mailto:activisteducationscotland@unison.co.uk) if you are interested in using this course in your branch.

## Branches thank hard-working members

**Branch members across Scotland have stepped up to provide essential services throughout the Covid pandemic.**

Here we look at some of the imaginative ways that branches have supported and thanked their members.

**Grampian Health Branch** decided to make up and hand out Covid safety packs to their members as a thank you during this difficult time.

The packs contain a reversible face covering in UNISON colours, hand cream, an eco friendly bamboo coffee mug and other UNISON merchandise. The face coverings were sourced locally to support local businesses.

Branch officers distributed the packs (socially distanced and taking proper precautions, of course) to members throughout the Grampian region, starting with porters, domestics and catering staff in Dr Grays Hospital in Elgin.

**UNISON Inverclyde** were not afraid to think differently about the best way of helping their members.

Their activists have been out and about in workplaces handing out 50ml bottles of hand sanitiser to those helping deliver essential services in and around the community at this time.

Branch health & safety



Fife Health Branch handed out thousands of bottle and cans of water and iced coffee to members along with protein bars



UNISON Grampian Health member with a branch Covid safety pack

officer, George Steele is pictured above at the branch office before helping distribute bottles to our members in many locations

**Fife Health Branch** gave their hard-working members a well-deserved treat by donating over 16,000 bottles and cans of flavoured water and 8,000



Inverclyde's George Steele sets off to distribute hand sanitiser.

boxes of instant iced coffees to all the staff hubs throughout NHS Fife during the Covid-19 pandemic. They also donated 3,500 CLIF Protein Bars.

The branch sent huge thanks to branch officers Andrew Verrecchia, Louise Noble and Yvonne Batechup and to the Transport Hub staff for helping to



The idea of the UNISON Rainbow badge was initiated by Sandra Hunter in Ayrshire and Arran Health Branch after a suggestion from a member, using a small local independent company in Ayr, supporting a local business during the pandemic.

It was taken up by other Scottish branches and some in England.

load, unload and distribute them.

To thank their members for their exceptional work and dedication **NHS Glasgow and Clyde and CVS branch** sent all their members a letter from the branch and a UNISON rainbow badge (see pic above).

The branch has also continued to highlight to their management the inequities faced by members in the workplace, managing childcare expectations, shielding, staffing crises, health and safety implications and managing work environments in acute sectors and in the community, Integration Joint Boards and voluntary sector.

## School staff make voices heard on reopening

**As plans progress for schools to reopen to pupils in August, Aberdeenshire UNISON has taken steps to ensure the concerns of school support staff members are fully taken account of.**

After information on reopening plans was sent out to support staff without proper consultation, the branch was inundated with concerns from education members.

It stepped in to remind the council that school support staff are just as critical to pupils' education as teachers and must be fully involved in the return to school process.



Acting assistant branch secretary, Ann Gray, and area organiser, Karen Davidson took the initiative to contact, by email or text, all members in schools for whom the branch had contact details to invite them to an online meeting.

Ann said: "More than 70 school support staff responded expressing interest, including pupil support staff, admin staff, janitors and cleaning staff."

An initial webinar was held and this led on to weekly online meetings each Thursday at 1pm and 6pm. These will continue through the summer break.

Ann went on: "A number of these members attended two-hour health and safety webinars which resulted in 19 new health and safety workplace reps, many of whom are also interested in becoming stewards."

Ann added that more training is planned for early August following government guidance on reopening.

A Facebook group has also been set up so that school support staff can keep in touch, get the latest news and ask any questions. It has 64 members and counting.

"This has been a great development, and one we plan to keep going if/when Covid recedes as a threat," said Ann.

"It has allowed direct communication between branch and members in schools and is a platform to further develop our members and increase membership in schools."

"It has also generated lots of interest in further training, both as stewards and health and safety officers in schools, as members become more confident."

## When Shetland became the UK's Coronavirus hotspot

By Kaila McCulloch  
*Shetland UNISON*

**In January there were reports on the news about a deadly new virus (Covid-19) spreading its way through China and then making its way through Europe.**

The first cases reported in the UK were in January and Scotland in March 2020.

When these reports started to emerge, I quite smugly thought how Shetland was well placed geographically as far as any pandemic was concerned.

Shetland is a subarctic archipelago in the northern isles of Scotland, situated in the northern Atlantic, between Great Britain the Faroe Islands and Norway.

I was wrong. By 5 March Coronavirus had arrived at our shores. Three weeks later we were described as a 'Coronavirus hotspot' of the UK, possibly the world, per head of population.

I will admit to having feelings of panic, I remember that.

Suddenly we were in the midst of a world event, something that will be marked down in history. The panic was the fear of not being able to protect my children, family, ageing mother and friends from this invisible danger.

Adjusting to working from home came next. During my 30 years of working life this was a new one. It felt strange and wrong at the time.

As time progressed I realised I was extremely lucky. There was

**'Suddenly cleaners, domestic assistance, care workers, nurses, delivery people, posties and many others were being asked to put their lives at risk to protect/help others.'**

KAILA MCCULLOCH

no expectation on me other than to stay home and stay safe. Okay, trying to keep two teenagers focused on school work had its challenges but was not impossible.

I had various calls, messages and emails from UNISON members who weren't so lucky. Members whose jobs had turned into 'front line' key workers overnight.

Suddenly cleaners, domestic assistance, care workers, nurses,



delivery people, posties and many others were being asked to put their lives at risk to protect/help others.

By now Shetland was being reported as the UK hotspot for parcel deliveries. My postie described lock down as "Christmas everyday".

My life continues, the new 'normal' for me is okay. I am lucky. Isolation is not difficult when you live in a rural location

30 miles away from the nearest town.

I definitely don't miss my daily commute of 60 miles to the office. Working from home is certainly better for our environment. However, I am aware there are many who aren't so lucky.

**The UK government has failed in my eyes. The 10 years of austerity has already taken its toll on our public services. This became very apparent when key workers were not even able to access the proper PPE to carry out their jobs safely.**

This pandemic was not a surprise, we should have been prepared.

This pandemic has taught me to never take anyone or anything for granted.

# UNISON call to end unfairness for migrant workers on the front line

By Narmada Thiranagama  
Policy officer, UNISON HQ

**UNISON is campaigning hard in Parliament for urgent help for our migrant worker members.**

We are calling for all key workers to be given “indefinite leave to remain” as a thank you for the work they have done during the pandemic, for all health and social care workers to be given access to the visa extension scheme and for ‘no recourse to public funds’ to be suspended.

The Covid-19 crisis has changed our lives beyond recognition, but its impact has not been equal or evenly distributed.

The virus has highlighted every social inequality – insecure work, deprivation, decent housing and discrimination – and exposed deeper injustices.

Migrant workers have found themselves on the Covid-19 frontlines as key workers.

Instead of protecting them, government policies place them at greater risk.

Immigration rules meant that they found it harder to assert their rights, take sick leave and self-isolate if they had symptoms.

They are also subject to the financial pressures of rising immigration fees and charges.

UNISON has been contacted by migrant worker members across public services about the

injustices they were experiencing. Many are also from Black communities facing greater risks from Covid-19.

The Home Office recently announced that NHS and care workers whose visas were due to expire before 1 October would have them extended for a year free of charge so that they could ‘focus on fighting coronavirus’.

migrant workers have to pay a double tax for access to the NHS. This has to be paid upfront and for every year the visa covers, meaning families have to pay thousands of pounds each time they renew their visas.

While those workers on a tier 2 visa (which the government calls ‘high skilled’) will be exempted from paying, other migrant workers in the NHS and

Like many migrant workers, they are subject to a government policy called “No Recourse to Public Funds” which means they are not entitled to support like Universal Credit, housing benefit or child benefit.

So far government policies have led to the lowest paid migrant workers receiving the least amount of help.

Yet they are making a vital contribution with the greatest risks of exposure. This cannot be right.

Branches and regions have responded to this crisis by reaching out to migrant worker members.

This has enabled UNISON to provide vital help to individual members and their families as well as campaigning in parliament and the media on their behalf.

Branches can support migrant workers by signposting UNISON services such as our free immigration advice line – which can be accessed by ringing UNISON Direct and asking for immigration advice.

UNISON branches have also negotiated vital improvements for migrant workers such as getting employer support with visa fees and charges.

Sometimes, simply hearing from the branch and receiving support from other union members makes a vital difference.

One worker told UNISON: “I wish I had contacted the union sooner, I feel less alone now.”



While it sounded generous, the small print on this offer meant it only applies to around 3,000 workers.

It left out thousands of dedicated care workers and low paid NHS staff like hospital cleaners, porters and healthcare assistants.

This felt particularly unjust as those on lower pay would have gained the most from being included.

This unfairness extended to another government offer, to exempt health and social care staff from paying the Immigration Health Surcharge.

The surcharge means that

nearly everyone in social care will have to pay the surcharge upfront and wait to be reimbursed in instalments.

One member told UNISON that she and her husband, both in the social care sector were working every hour they could in order to save the money for visa renewal fees for themselves and their three children.

They now have to save more than £4,000 before the end of the year.

She told us that delivering social care during the pandemic is hard enough before worrying whether to feed their children or to put money aside for visa fees.

## Home working – the good, the bad and the video close-up

**I’ll confess that at the start the whole working from home thing was okay.**

I didn’t have to get a bus; my working environment was quieter than normal, I could get a decent cup of coffee any time I wanted without leaving the building and so on.

Then my broadband got upgraded. Which for reasons comprehensible only to the gods (or possibly IT support) fixed the previously non functional camera on my laptop. And over the course of those first few weeks – work seemed to just become an endless series of online meetings and video calls.

The extent to which this represents progress is wildly overstated. Famously ‘in space no one can hear you scream’. Equally with the camera off, no one can see the panic in your eyes as you say “it’s nearly finished”.

Of course it’s not just the case that your colleagues are looking at you. You are also looking at them. Hmm.

It is of course shallow and petty to have a go at colleagues’ appearance, but my mother told me that I should always play to my strengths so...

The shift from real life to

**As working from home becomes the new normal, our new virtual correspondent takes a whimsical look at the benefits and pitfalls from their perspective.**

permanent video conferencing can often show people in a bad light, literally. More disturbingly it also shows people in extreme close-up – and for quite a lot of folk that is a look that is some distance from being good.

Please don’t think I’m making this observation from any position of strength or cosmetic advantage. My strongest physical resemblance to Brad Pitt is that we have the same number of heads, so the opposite end of my video feed probably isn’t a lot of fun.

Video calls mean we are in a small but very real way inviting lots of people into our homes. Video calls don’t just feature your phizog but also what is behind it. Not that I’m suggesting colleagues will be judgemental about what they can



“they will definitely be judging you by what’s over your shoulder”

see over your shoulder – but they will definitely be judging you by what’s over your shoulder.

Living environments of course come in all shapes and sizes. Generally speaking in terms of presentability they will be on a spectrum between – ‘Home Illustrated photo shoot’ and “ehh no officer, the burglars weren’t in this room. If you’ll just come through here...”.

If like myself, you find your home is more unkempt than unspoiled, it’s not a complete disaster. It has been a bit trial and error but I now manage to show a passable façade of respectability. All it takes is a bookshelf and an attention to detail in positioning the laptop that makes Martin Scorsese’s camera work look a bit slapdash.

(NB About the bookshelf. This shouldn’t be left to chance. Shift the

trade union history and night school textbooks up, the chick lit and thrillers down and anything with any mention whatsoever of Hitler in way shape or form, right out of sight.)

Some people though are making rapid adjustments to ‘the new way of working’. One colleague – whom we’ll call Dave, because that’s his name, was asked by a manager to venture an opinion about what to do next.

Dave, fearing that anything he might have to contribute might later be held against him, said – nothing.

Without flinching he stared down the camera completely ignoring the request. So successful was this gambit that one of the other folk in the meeting called Dave, panicked, breaking the increasingly obvious silence with a contribution that went from stream of consciousness to total incoherence with a speed Usain Bolt would admire.

Silent Dave meanwhile demonstrated real strength of character in showing not a flicker of relief or satisfaction as Luckless Dave babbled away.

Less fortunate was

## Dave to stand down as leader of UNISON

**Dave Prentis, who has been general secretary of UNISON since 2000, is to retire on 31 December, when his term of office ends.**

UNISON Scotland would like to thank Dave for all his work as leader of our union and to wish him all the best for a long and happy



retirement when the time comes.

Announcing his decision, Dave said: “I’ve been so proud to serve as UNISON general secretary for 20 years. It’s been the honour and privilege of my life to be able to represent our incredible public service workers from across our four nations, and never more so than in the last few difficult months.

“I have always been driven by a belief in fairness and justice for all our members, especially in the past five months when they and our public services have risen to the many challenges posed by the pandemic.

“As the health crisis turns to an economic crisis, I will be here to continue to lead UNISON until the end of this year. There’s much still to do – holding the government to account for its handling of the pandemic, ensuring proper funding for our public services and a decent pay rise for all their hardworking employees.”

A timetable for electing Dave’s successor was due to be agreed by the union’s NEC by the end of July.

### We want to hear your news

SiU is your paper, we want to hear your stories. Contact Kate Ramsden (editor) [katearamsden@gmail.com](mailto:katearamsden@gmail.com), Danny Phillips [d.phillips@unison.co.uk](mailto:d.phillips@unison.co.uk), Trisha Hamilton [t.hamilton@unison.co.uk](mailto:t.hamilton@unison.co.uk)  
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