

Welcome to our UNISON Lothian Health Branch Newsletter

September 2024









Dalkeith Festival -The branch was delighted when we were invited to take part in the Dalkeith festival parade. We decorated our Mobile Advice Centre and marched proudly up the high street. Many of our members live in Midlothian and it feels even more special when we are there representing them. We are already looking forward to next year.

By Tracy Miller



DISABILITY RADAR KEYS & LANYARDS - An accessible toilet is a toilet that has been designed to accommodate people with disabilities and long term health conditions. The purpose of an accessible toilet should be to enable disabled people to gain prompt access to facilities that might be different from regular toilets in terms of the available space, layout, equipment, flooring or lighting. The National Key Scheme (NKS), previously referred to as RADAR keys, offer disabled people independent access to locked public accessible toilets around the country. Toilets fitted with National Key Scheme (NKS) locks can be found in shopping centres, pubs, cafés, department stores, bus and train stations and many other places. You may also sometimes find keys called NRS Disabled Access Toilet keys which also fit NKS locks. A RADAR key allows 24 hour independent access for people with disabilities to around 7k fully accessible toilets in the UK. RADAR stands for the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR), a national organisation of and for disabled people. Unison Lothian Health is committed to supporting our disabled members and to that end, we are offering members who join our Self Organised Group (SOG) RADAR keys.





By Margaret Callander

STAFF LOTTERY -

25 winners EVERY SINGLE MONTH. Will you be one of them? It's simple to play, so if you haven't already, sign up today. The quickest and easiest way to sign up is by visiting: nhslothiancharity.org/staff-lottery.





NHS Scotland Pensions

UNISON Scotland



NHS PENSION UPDATE - On 1 April 2015 public sector pension schemes were reformed and the Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) pension scheme was introduced.

The UK Court of Appeal found that the protections that were put in place for members of the old “final salary” scheme who were close to retirement were discriminatory. In response the UK Gvt were forced to take steps to remove the discrimination for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. This is known as the “remedy period”.

From 1 April 2022 all of our NHS workers who were member of the pension scheme (SPPA) became members of the 2015 pension scheme and the pre-reform schemes were closed to any further pension build-up.

Eligible members who retired after 1 April 2022, are entitled to both legacy and reformed scheme benefits.

After you retire, SPPA will offer you a choice between your final salary benefits and your CARE benefits for your service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022.

To help you decide, SPPA will send you a choice letter, known as a Remediable Service Statement (RSS), when you retire (or access your pension). This will show your pension benefits side-by-side in your final salary and CARE scheme for the remedy period, and details of any contribution and tax adjustments. This will help you decide which option is the right one for you.

You can keep up to date with NHS pensions at :
https://pensions.gov.scot/nhs/nhs-remedy-hub/nhs-remedy-what-remedy

All outlets now have access to the digital edition of Morning Star

for Peace and Socialism Morning Star





PRIDE EDINBURGH - Lothain Health Branch in collaboration with colleagues from across Scotland attended another highly successful march and a well-attended festival. We had the opportunity to join UNISON colleagues at the stalls in McEwan Hall, providing advice, merchandise and attracting a lot of interest from members and potential members. We had a very busy stall throughout the afternoon with many people happy to pose for a photograph.

Another fantastic pride!
By Robert Pollock











SEVEN SITES AND COUNTING -
Our LGBT+ Officer Stewart Young, launched the Year of the LGBT+ Worker in NHS Lothian in February.



Three more sites to go -
Astley Ainslie Hospital 18/09/24
Royal Edinburgh Hospital 16/10/24
Lauriston Building 22/11/24.

Drop in and say hello!

By Stewart Young

Celebrating 2024
Year of LGBT+ workers

Another amazing family fun day at Trade Unions In Communities - UNISON Lothian Health Branch were, once again, the backbone of a very successful Big Give Away/Fun Day hosted by Trade Unions In Communities in Craigmillar on Saturday 17th August. This was the 3rd such event, the first being hosted by the branch itself prior to the formation of TUIC.

TUIC would wish to give a massive thanks to the branch for the financial assistance that they give, but also for the enormous physical support in terms of year round volunteers and the brilliant turnout on Saturday that ensured a fantastic day. The sight of so many UNISON banners on the march was a joy to behold!

Over 500 local people attended the day with free food and entertainment provided by locals and different ethnic groups within the area. Of course there was also the free stalls consisting of clothes, bric-a-brac and toys donated by union branches. It was a real multicultural event and, given the recent events from the right wing, was truly inspirational.

THIS WAS TRADE UNIONISM AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITY AT ITS VERY BEST!

Long may it continue.

By Derek Durkin (TUIC)































Durham Miners Gala - This Gala has been taking place for 138 years and is the largest gathering of trade unions anywhere. There are approximately 200,000 people taking part in this momentous event and it is the world's greatest celebration of community, international solidarity and the trade union movement.

The Branch took the decision 3 years ago that we had to be involved in such a special event. This year we had stewards, members and their kids all attending. Sadly, the weather was awful and it rained non stop. However, we are hardy Scots and we didn't let the rain dampen our spirits. We marched proudly behind the City of Edinburgh Pipes and Drums who accompany us every year. There is nothing like the sound of a pipe band to lift the mood.

The trade union banners are spectacular and many of them are decades old. They remind us of the struggles faced and battles won (and lost) by the working class of this land. It gives us all a renewed focus on the battles yet to be fought.

The march ends at the racecourse and we are then treated to some amazing platform speakers. This year was very special because Unison's General Secretary,

Christina McAnea was addressing the event. Christina hails from Drumchapel in Glasgow and was the Women's Officer in her local Unison Branch there. We are all extremely proud of her.

Lets hope next year brings us a little sunshine.
By Tracy Miller







TRANS ALLY TRAINING - This short online workshop has been written together with the LGBT+ national self-organised group and trans caucus and is for both UNISON activists and members. Several thousand activists have benefitted from this training so far. Thanks to Watty Gaffeny, Chrissy McKeag and Michael Craig for delivering this thought provoking training session at Newhailes in June in person to many of our stewards.
By Robert Pollock





Phlebotomy Banding Win - Following the two year UNISON campaign that saw 85% of Clinical Support Workers in NHS Lothian move from a band 2 to a band 3, the Branch decided to support other clinical staff who were banded a 2 to fight for an upband. We asked our phlebotomy members to get in touch. We submitted Job Evaluation Review requests for the 19 members who contacted us and we are proud to announce that all of these hard-working staff have been moved from a band 2 to a band 3. Since our victory another 3 phlebotomists have contacted us and we are confident they will also win their case.

By Tracy Miller



UNISON COPRPORATE SERVICES - Representatives will be present every Wednesday at Comely Bank. Please come and speak with us if you would like to join or if you would like any support with work related issues. Angela Howard and Susan Sim, UNISON Stewards will be located in Room D opposite the canteen. Both will be supporting our recruitment programme and will be more than happy to speak to potential new members.

Come along and have a chat and see what UNISON can do for you!

Angela will be available all day every Wednesday. If you would like to make an appointment to discuss any concerns and you are located within Corporate Services pop in or please call our main office.

By Angela Howard

Newtongrange Gala Day - This is the second year the branch has attended Newtongrange Gala Day. The 8th June brought out the sunshine and what a fantastic day it was. The branch Stewards turned out in force to march behind our banner in the parade. The first ever gala day took place in 1770 in Loanhead. Gala days see workers coming together in a day of celebration of the community and the trade unions, particularly the miners union played a massive part. It is therefore with great pride that this branch takes part in such an historic event.

By Tracy Miller



UNISON MEMBER IMPROVING MOUTHCARE IN EAST LOTHIAN COMMUNITY HOSPITAL -
Anita, a member of staff in ward 1 at ELCH, has a dental nursing background with over 28 years of experience and over the pandemic moved into looking after patients in hospitals where she noticed there was a lack of mouthcare. Initially she wondered why nurses were not doing more regarding mouthcare and set about finding out why.

She asked a friend (who works in critical care) to give her a reference and she got a post as a CSW so she could hopefully transfer her skills and show just what you can accomplish with good mouth care and by doing so, shows the impact it can have on people's lives.

Anita has found it very easy to incorporate the NHS core values whilst helping the patients and families.

The dignity and respect the patients receive from Anita being able to transfer her oral care skills is lovely to see. This is done with the care and compassion, that we in the NHS pride ourselves on. To watch the families engage with their loved ones by doing the simplest of mouthcare that provides maximum impact is truly humbling. Enabling to patients to experience the joy of tasting and speaking for just that little bit longer.

Mouthcare is particularly challenging at the end of life. Anita delivers high quality mouthcare with the openness, honesty, in an inclusive team focused way that encourages/enables families to participate in the care of their loved ones at the saddest of times.

Anita has through her time at ELCH been recognised for her mouthcare care skills, and has went on to create resources/videos which are accessible to Edinburgh University students and Junior doctors. Her goal is that in 5 to 10 years good mouthcare will filter through to all nurses who will be able to deal with anything from black hairy tongues to Xerostomia, ill fitting dentures to name but a few and how the simplicity of care for all will become common place in hospitals. Anita is also currently in correspondence with the British Dental Nurses Association to have two dental nurses in every hospital in Britain to work alongside SALT in the future.

Anita has said “it is simply a privilege and pleasure to do what she does” being able to transfer her skills and work within a lovely disciplinary team. I doubt Anita will go back to mainstream dentistry, her mouthcare skills are very much needed in hospitals and she is happy to embark upon the journey of bringing mouthcare into hospitals to build on what she has achieved thus far.

Unison is proud to have Anita as a member.

By Catherine Henderson



EAST LOTHIAN CLOSURES - On the 28th March 2024 East Lothian IJB took the decision to close Belhaven Hospital, Abbey Care Home and the inpatient/minor injury at Edington Hospital.

BELHAVEN HOSPITAL

Ward 1 provided 12 council beds for residents of East Lothian, these beds where leased to the East Lothian Council and staffed by NHS staff and managed by the NHS.
Ward 2 is used as a community hub, carer teams and vaccination teams have been based in this ward since it was deemed not suitable to house patients.
Ward 3 was a 12 bedded unit with 6 of the beds being GP beds and the other 6 being NHS.
Belhaven Hospital has been open for over 100 years and has always provided excellent care to all patients and resident over the years.

In 2021 the patients/residents had to be transferred to East Lothian Community Hospital, this was due to water quality issues. While the patients and residents were out of Belhaven and work was carried out on the site regarding the water issues, management took this opportunity to up grade and renovate the wards with all new sinks, baths, kitchens and decorated the hospital. A total of over £1.1m was spent on the renovation. Belhaven Hospital had never looked as good.
Ward 1 was finished first and the residents moved back to their home in Belhaven Hospital.
Ward 2 staff managed to get back but ward 3 never did.
The Care Inspectorate carried out an inspection of ward 1 and deemed it to be unsafe should we ever had to evacuate the ward, the exits were not wide enough.
So the poor residents were moved back to East Lothian Community Hospital after only being back home for the matter of a few months, never to return again.
The community staff returned to ward 2, but will be moving out again.
Ward 3 never returned to Belhaven after having the ward totally renovated.
The IJB Board Committee took a vote and the Hospital was closed.

EDINGTON HOSPITAL

Edington Hospital is a 9 bedded GP unit that also provided end of life care, with a minor injury unit that operated 24/7, all staffed by NHS nurses.

In 2020 management took the decision to close the Edington and move the staff to East Lothian Community Hospital, as like most places we were in the middle of a staffing crises due to covid. This was likely to be for three months and would then be reviewed. The nursing staff and patients moved to ELCH and after a while orthopedics moved into Edington along with a vaccination team. This temporary closure continued until March 2024 when the IJB made the decision that the inpatients and minor injury at Edington would not reopen. This is not just a loss of more inpatient beds, but it is also the loss of a busy minor injury unit. In 2019 more than 1900 patients were seen in the minor injury unit.

ABBEY CARE HOME

Although the Abbey Care Home is a council run care home, the closure of this home will have a knock on effect on the NHS. With the closure of the Abbey, Edington and Belhaven where do East Lothian patients go after a stay at the Royal Infirmary or waiting for a care home and even for respite and medication reviews?

These beds are a great loss to the people of East Lothian and now the only inpatient beds we have in the NHS are at East Lothian Community Hospital. This is great if you stay in Haddington, however not so great if you stay in Dunbar or North Berwick. This is a loss of jobs for our members who live locally in North Berwick or Dunbar who are unable to travel. Whilst all NHS jobs are protected in reality not all staff would wish to add the additional travelling hours onto their working day. The UNISON Reps in East Lothian have tirelessly over the last few months worked through the organisational change with staff. To date there are still some staff who have been displaced and without a permanent base, however we do have an agreement that the staff who are still waiting on a permanent base have been given temporary placements in the meantime.

The 28th March was a sad day for people of East Lothian and the staff of the Edington Hospital, Belhaven Hospital and Abbey Care Home.

By Thomas Miller

OUT WITH THE OLD AND IN WITH THE NEW -

In May we were given access to our new UNISON outlet at the Western General hospital.

From the pictures you can see the progress from start to finish.

It has taken a bit of time and lots of work to complete the new outlet.

We would like to thank a few people for helping out along the way.

- MacSigns for all of our the signage.
- Tommy Logan Head of Operations.
- A special mention to Connor Wilkie for his help with the project, start to finish Connor has kept us updated most days and helped the whole process go smoothly. We couldn't have done it without him.

If you are passing the new outlet and want to pop in and say hello .

We are now located in the Alexander Donald Building Ground floor main entrance (see map below).

Finally, a big thank you from the Western General team to all who helped with the move.

By Stewart Robertson





PRIVATE & VOLUNTARY UPDATE - I am one of the Unison Stewards based in Private & Voluntary (P&V). We offer advice/support/representation to members who work in care homes, doctors surgeries, pharmacies, etc. We are a team of three and the other two stewards are Carolyn Casey and Robert Pollock.



I previously worked in the UNISON Outlet at the Royal Infirmary, helping members with advice and representation. Working in P&V really opens your eyes different terms & conditions there are within the sector.

Private organisations follow their own policies which are usually designed to benefit their organisations and not valuing the workers.
We have many members who have been unfairly dismissed and because if they do not have 2 years service, their rights in this sector are minimal.
We also have immigrant workers employed in Private Organisations on a sponsorship where many may be treated unfairly. We strive to support these members + work with UNISON regionally and nationally to gain recognition agreements which would also mean that trade unions would be recognised within their work place. This in turn would improve the workers terms and and enhance working conditions.
It is a constant battle everyday to make sure these members are hopefully getting treated fairly.
One bit of good news is that Edinburgh Council now take on Clinical Support Workers and also sponsor their visa (certificate of sponsorship). This is fantastic news for immigrant workers!!!

By Deborah Westwood

MIDLOTHIAN COMMUNITY HOSPITAL - A new pantry service delivered by local charity Cyrenians.

The community pantry at Midlothian Hospital is a partnership with our Community Gardens and has been running since September 2023. We are funded through the UK Prosperity Fund to run 4 pop-up pantries in Midlothian, of which the hospital is one. We are open to everyone in the community. The food is supplied by Fareshare. This has been such a benefit to staff in the pressures that they face financially. Having this on the doorstep is a great addition to the community and helps staff greatly.
I have added the website information of this and the opening times if anyone requires any additional information



By Thomas Miller



UNISON Health and Wellbeing Workshop - The Health and Wellbeing team held a workshop for our members on Wednesday the 26th of June in Danderhall Miners Club. The members who attended engaged in activities around looking after themselves and making them number one. The sessions showed them how they could really boost their confidence, motivation and self-esteem. With tools that would help all to review their lives and change their situation for the better were introduced by Valerie and Lisa showing them how they to can find a new zest for life, with more time for themselves. Setting boundaries to enable them to help others on their own terms showed all how they can keep or regain a good healthy balance moving into their future plans

There were opportunities throughout the day to share experiences and work together especially when visiting issues that individuals faced at work and/or at home and how some overcame them. The attendees particularly enjoyed the session on positive mental attitude with gratitude and journaling and how quiet contemplation, meditation or mindfully getting out into nature can assist in recovery when suffering from stress, anxiety and/or depression.

The attendees were asked if they would prefer to have some outdoor time or guided visualisation. Soon they were chilled out lying on the floor or lounging in chairs as our Health and Wellbeing officer Debbie took them on a journey with guided visualisation that proved to be both relaxing and emotional.

Everyone fully immersed themselves in the workshop and gained an introduction of how the 1:1 10 week coaching programme that is offered by our coaches can assist individuals in living the life THEY want to live.

If anyone is interested in further information about our 1:1 Coaching please email the team on: Loth.unisonhealthandwellbeing@nhs.scot







All photgraphs were taken with participant's consent

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We understand credit scores don't tell the full story. Every lending decision we make is based on your personal circumstances and what is best for you, not just your credit history.

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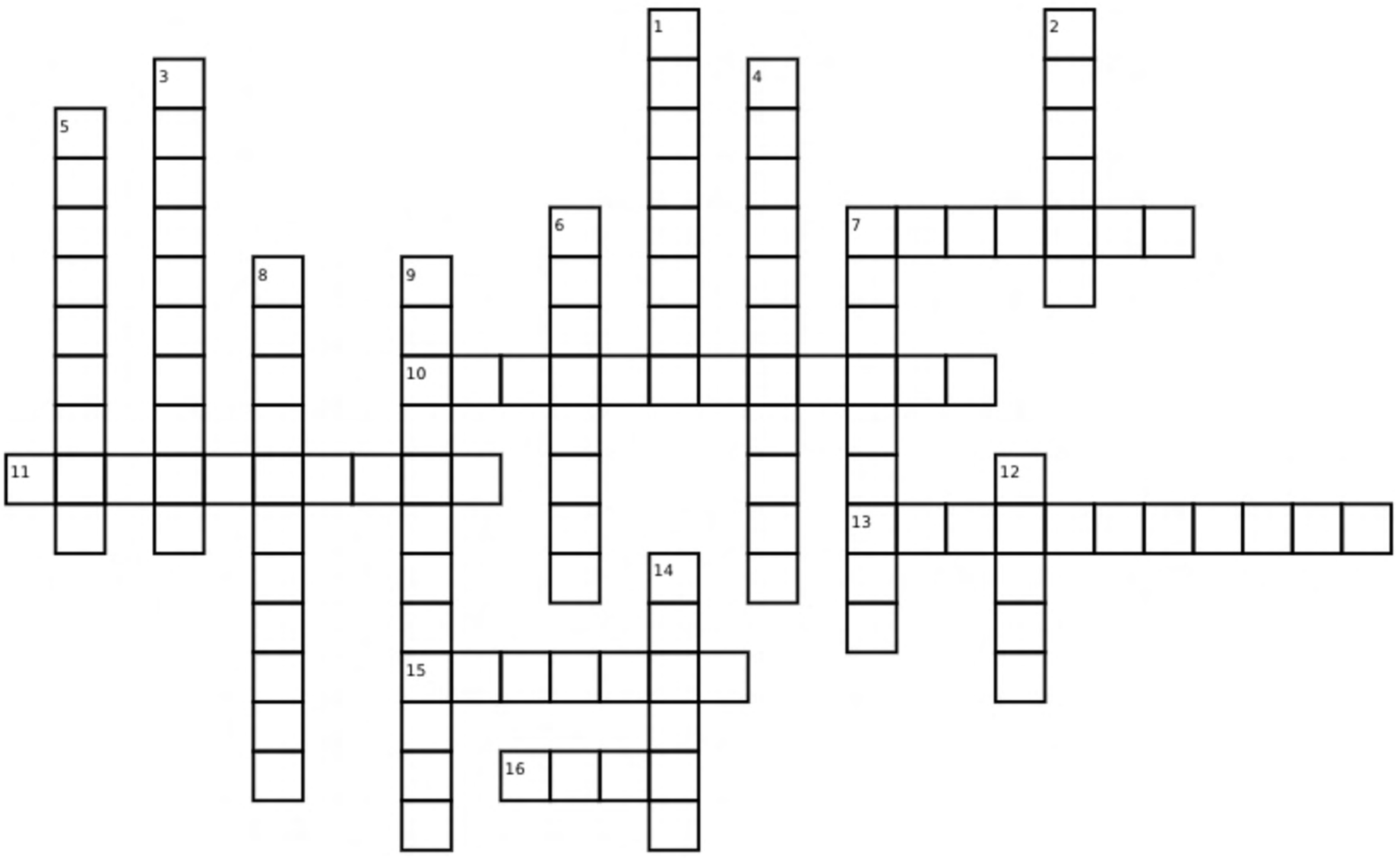
NHSCU provides a confidential service to help members take back control of their money, so only you can access it, find out more on our website.

SCAN TO EXPLORE OUR SERVICES

1. Open your phone's camera app.
2. Point it at the QR code shown here
3. Tap the notification to view our website



Crossword Puzzle



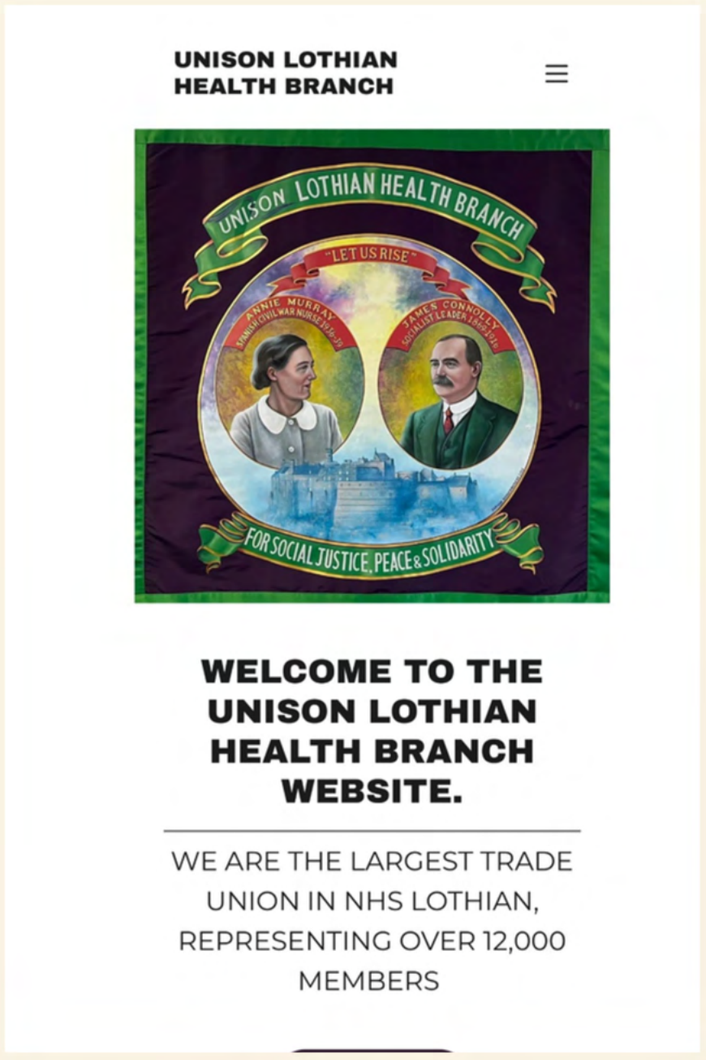
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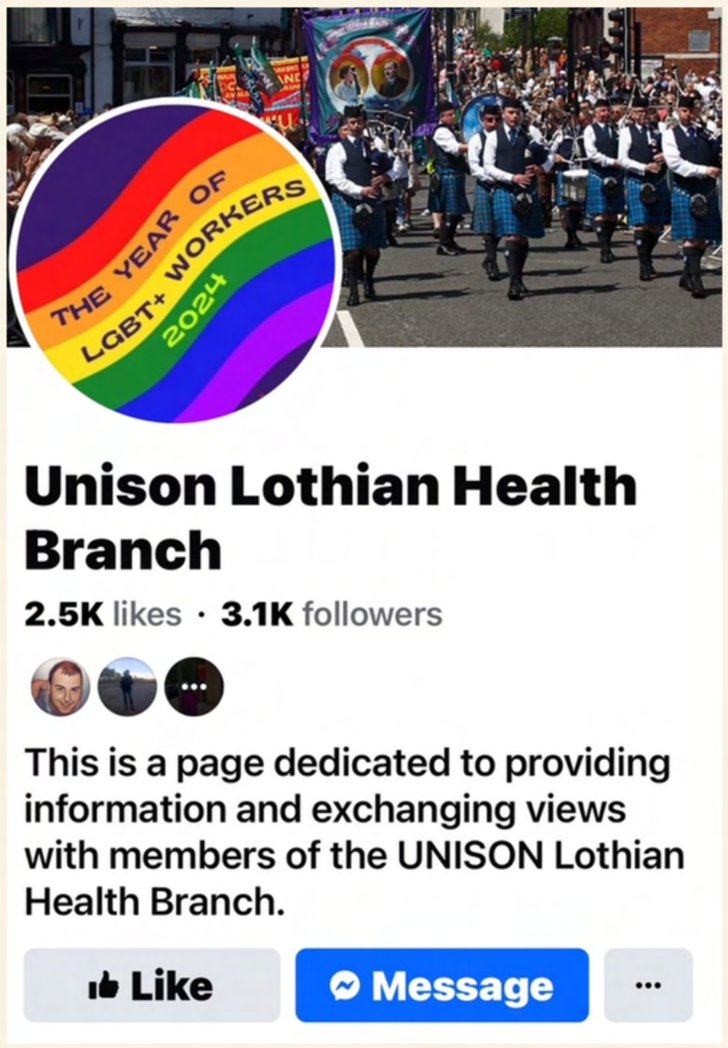
1. a sad day
2. person who contributed most stories
3. don't worry, just a small scratch
4. certificate of
5. improvements in ELCH
6. colleague with the same surname as famous british designer
7. angela works this day
8. local people attended
9. special mention
12. number of road show events so far
14. the largest gathering

Across:

7. new outlet
10. 1770 AD
11. where is Christina from
13. works at the TUIC
15. would you still come to work
16. will send you a letter

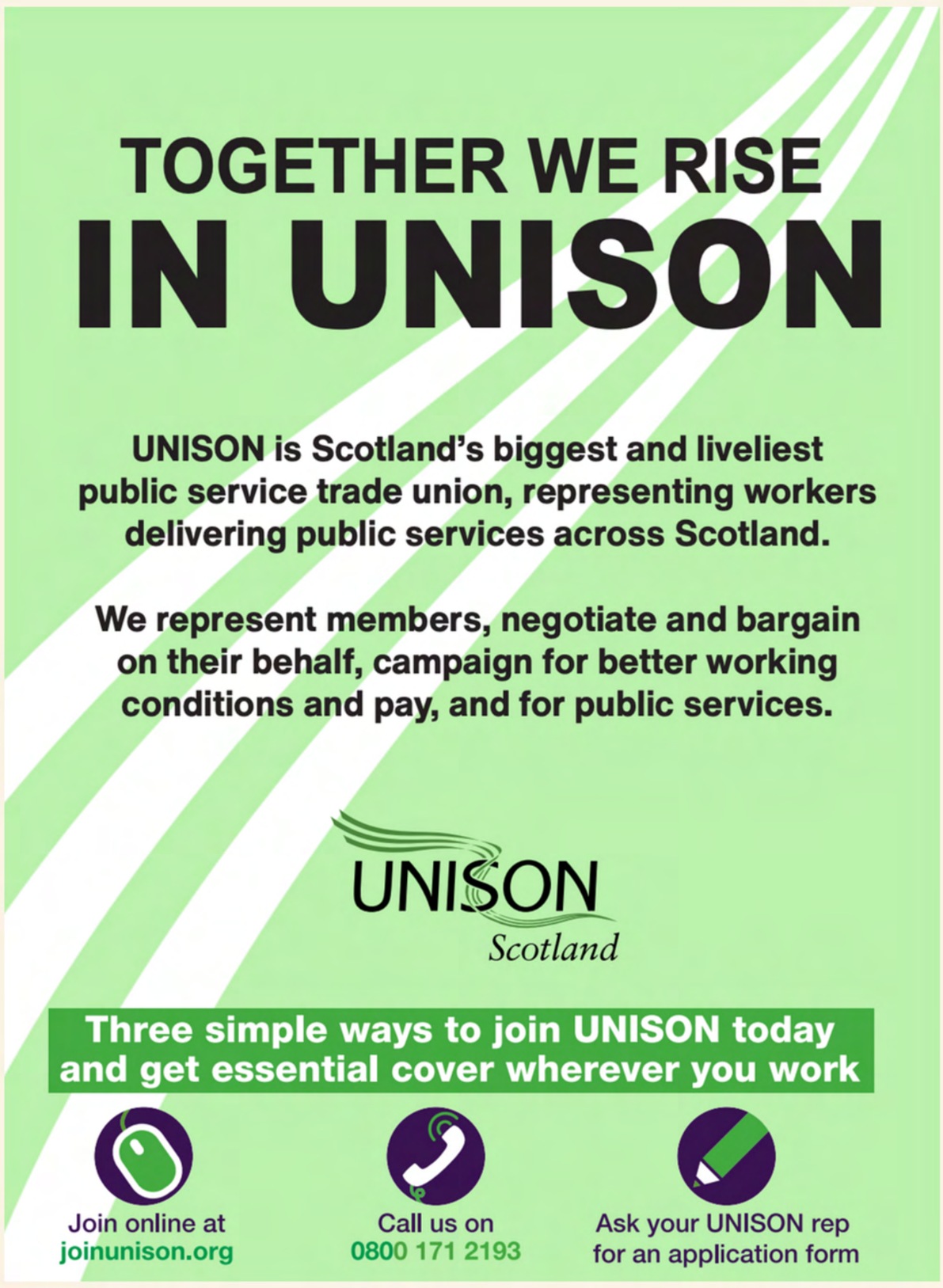
The first member to email comms@unisonlothianhealth.org with a picture of a completed crossword with the correct answers will win a £25 gift card.







In January 2024 we launched our new Branch website unisonlothianhealth.org to compliment our X, Facebook and Youtube social media channels



Scan QR code to join UNISON

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UNISON

Lothian Health Branch