



Welcome to our UNISON Lothian Health Branch Newsletter

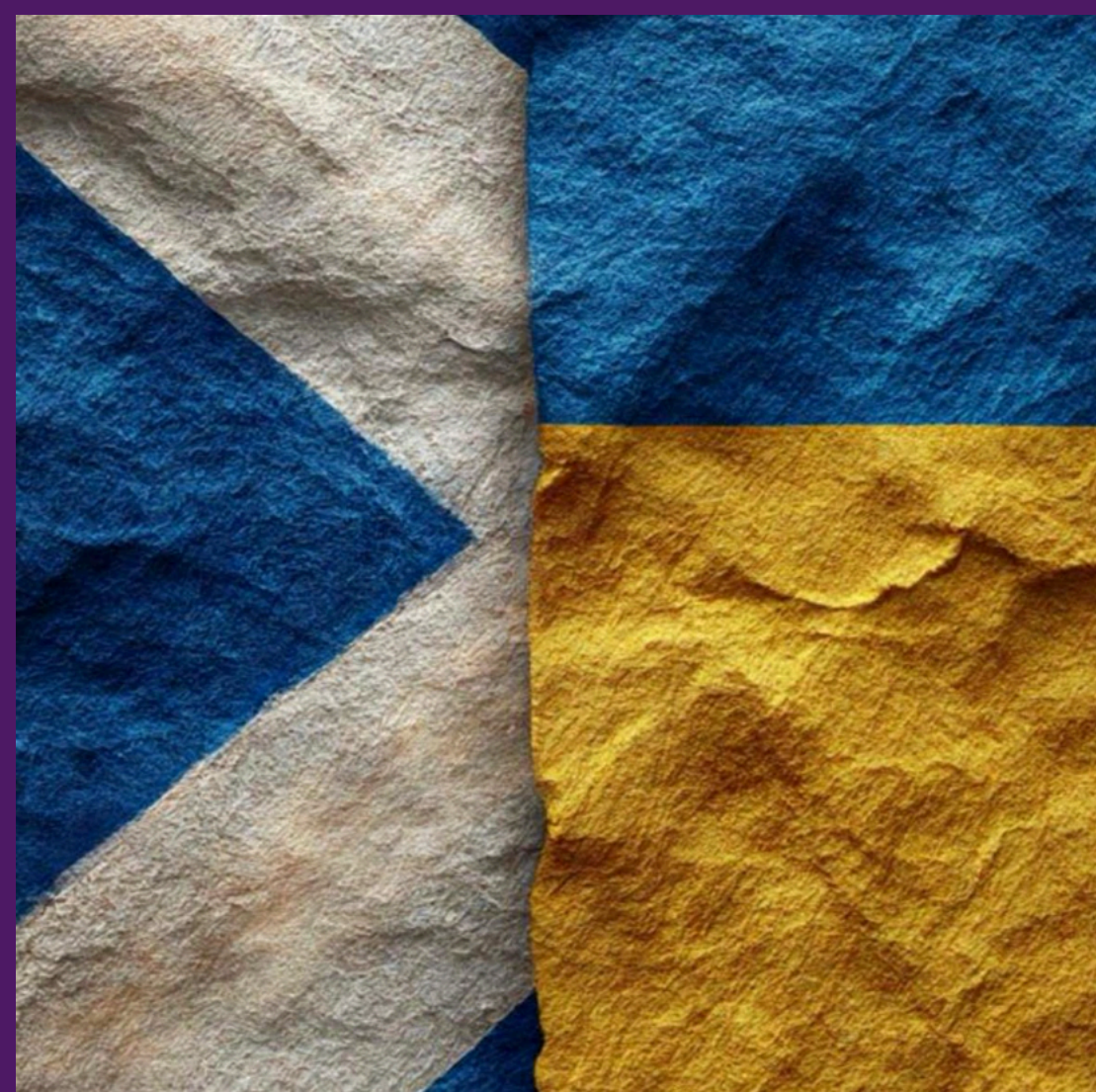
MAY
2026



Give your 'elf a big pat
on the back for raising

£ / 888.22

Thank you for spreading some elf magic across NHS
Lothian hospitals and communities.



ELF & SANTA DAYS



Give your 'elf a big pat
on the back for raising



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Thank you for spreading some elf magic across NHS
Lothian hospitals and communities.

slothiancharity.org



slothcharity

British Registered Charity Number SC007342

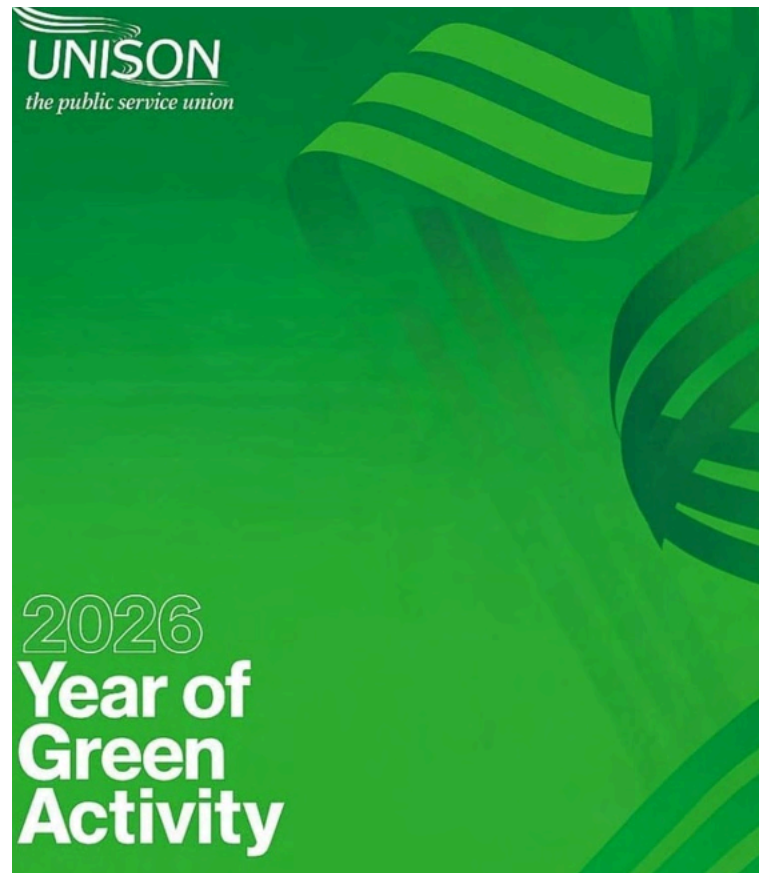


NHS Lothian
Charity

National
Elf
Service Day



YEAR OF GREEN ACTIVITY



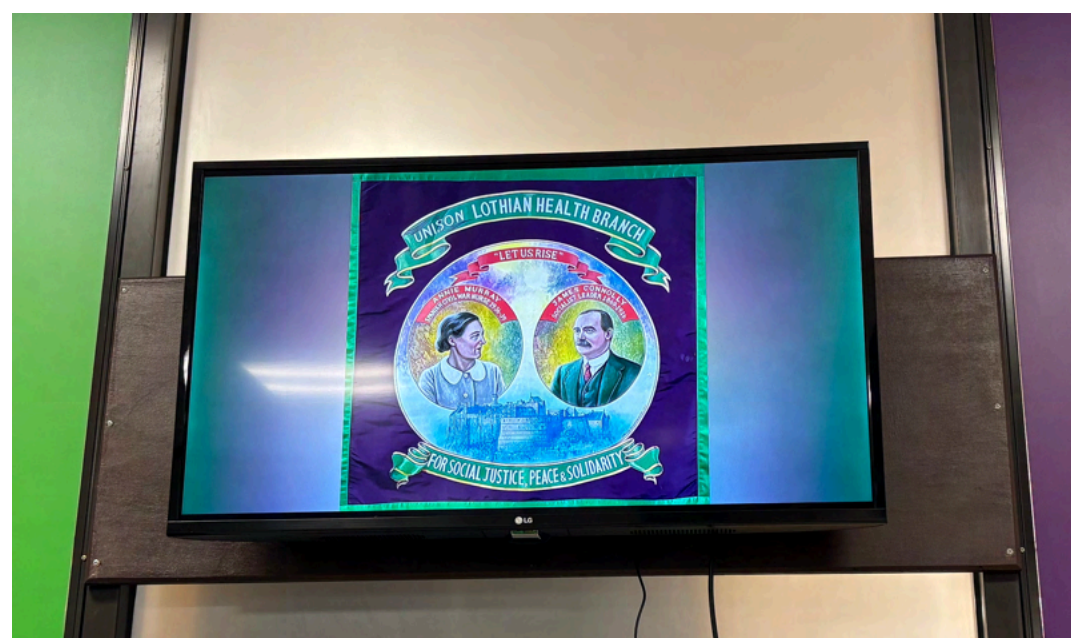
The national campaign for UNISON 2026 is Year Of Green Activity (YOGA).

Environmental Officer tamzyn.mcfarlane@nhs.scot is asking all members to participate in the ongoing battle against climate change. We have all seen the increase in climate disasters across the globe. We can all make a difference working together. Would you like to become a Green Rep? Join the Green Network? Can you suggest a process to reduce the use of carbon? Tamzyn is coming to your site between March and November 2026. We are all in this together! Act LOCAL, think GLOBAL. Scan to QR code to visit the branch YOGA page.



UNISON WINS

Total payout for legal claims from our Branch members supported by Thompsons in the last 6 months was an impressive **£66,791**



Branch Receives Silver Award for Smart, Low-Cost Communications. UNISON Lothian Health Branch (LHB) collected the SILVER award, presented at the Scottish Council on 26 March 2026, recognising its innovative approach to member communications.

Facing delays with manually updated hospital display screens, the branch Communications Team introduced a simple, low-cost solution using Firesticks and cloud technology to enable real-time remote updates across sites at St John's Hospital, the Western General and the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

For a low cost per site, screens can now instantly display campaign messages, event updates, and live photos and videos from workplace activities. This has strengthened member engagement, improved visibility of union work and ensured consistent messaging across digital and physical platforms.

Developed and managed by branch activists, the system demonstrates how creative thinking and accessible technology can deliver results on a small budget. LHB is now keen to share this approach with other branches.

There were around 500 people at the Stop the War demonstration in Glasgow on Saturday 11/03/26. Protesters demanded an end to US aggression in the Middle East and an end to Israel's war on Lebanon and freedom for Palestine. Speakers included Dave Moxham from the STUC, Patrick Harvie from the Greens and Brian Leishman from Labour. Speakers spoke out against imperialist intervention in the Middle East and British involvement. They also argued that Scottish airports should not be used by the US for military attacks on Iran.

The aggression and attacks by Israel, backed by the US, are attempts at dominating the region and eliminating all opposition to its genocide of the Palestinians.

Keith Pender - Joint International Officer



HUSTINGS 2026



Members of UNISON Lothian Health gathered for a well-attended and engaging hustings event in March, bringing together candidates from across Scotland's main political parties to answer questions on the issues that matter most to health and social care staff.

The event, chaired by branch representatives, provided a valuable opportunity for members to hear directly from: Tommy Sheppard (SNP), Chas Booth (Scottish Greens), Jenny Butler (Scottish Liberal Democrats) & Jackie Baillie (Scottish Labour).

Questions submitted by members shaped the discussion, ensuring the debate stayed focused on frontline concerns. Topics included NHS funding, staffing pressures, privatisation, workforce challenges, disability rights, and the ongoing drug and alcohol crisis. There was strong participation from the audience, with members raising important issues such as:

- The impact of PFI and outsourcing on NHS services
- Lack of infrastructure alongside new housing developments
- Experiences of discrimination faced by disabled people
- The future of international workers in the NHS.

Across the discussion, there was broad agreement on several key points:

- The NHS must remain publicly owned and free at the point of use
- Further use of PFI and privatisation should be avoided
- Tackling poverty and inequality is essential to improving health outcomes
- International staff are a vital part of the NHS workforce.

However, clear differences emerged around how these goals should be delivered, particularly on funding, economic policy, and wider constitutional issues. The event highlighted the importance of giving health workers a platform to engage directly with political representatives. Members welcomed the respectful tone of the discussion and the opportunity to challenge candidates on real workplace issues.

Thanks to all panel members and attendees for contributing to a thoughtful and constructive evening. A special thanks to the the Political Group for organising.

With elections approaching, the hustings reinforced the importance of members making informed choices.

DEVELOPMENT DAYS

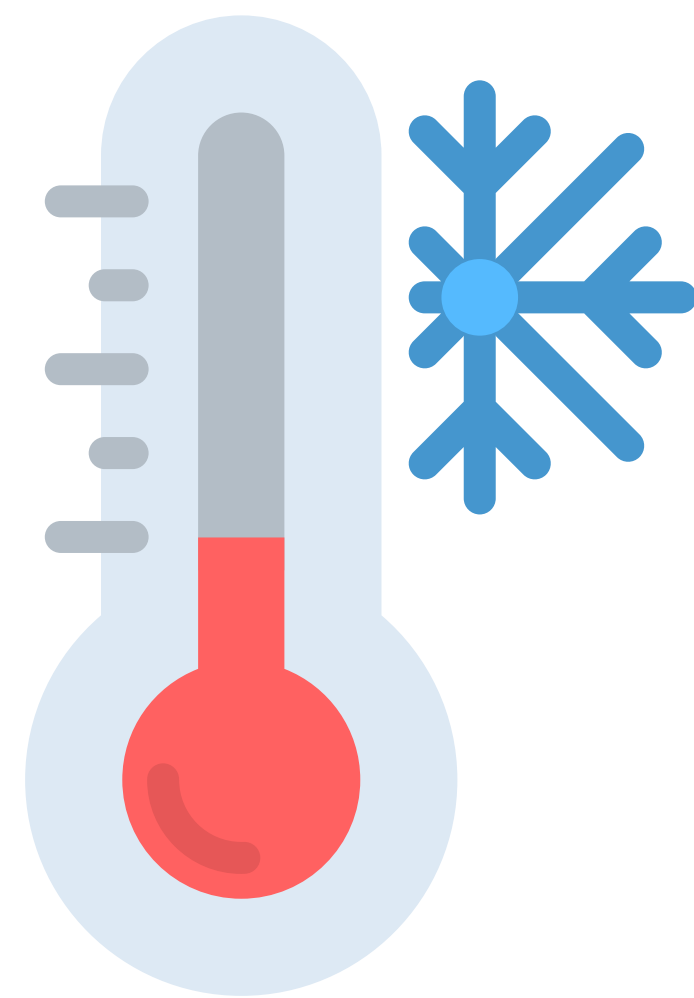


Back in October at the Branch Development Days we asked you to share your news!

Staff based at West Port are experiencing a chilling lack of support. Our management and the building owners battle over the heating system in the workplace. Workers are freezing, having to wear thick clothes to offset the chill and suffering without any signs of things changing for the warmer.

UNISON are working with NHS Facilities on a solution, but are facing stiff opposition from the building owners who are working off faulty heat measurements and reluctant to take action.

Urgent solutions are being put forward, a contractor has been requested on site to address the problems by the BMS. UNISON is hopeful this can produce a positive result for its members and they can soon hope to remove their jackets and complete their work comfortably.



Threat of job losses - prevented by UNISON. The closing of the catering unit at the Sick Kids Hospital (RHCYP), with staff facing redeployment. UNISON ensured that every single member got individual representation. All Staff remained employed at the Little France campus. UNISON protected members' jobs and protected pay. "Delighted to be staying with my team in the outlet, thanks to UNISON!" - Violet

In October 2025, 60 shop stewards from the branch attended 2 days of training. One of the key areas we looked at was the newly formed UNISON College and how we can signpost free learning opportunities for our members. There are over 600 courses available, ranging from family budgeting, mindfulness and IT training.

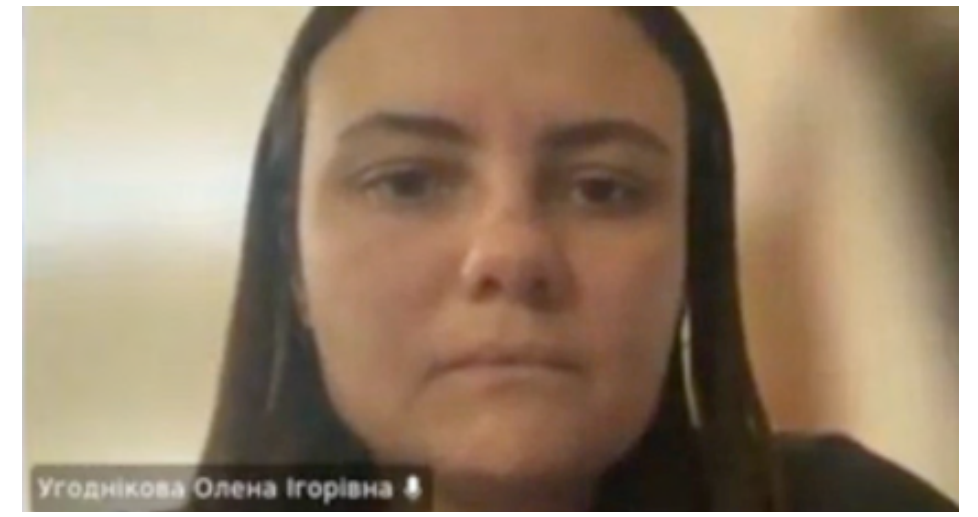
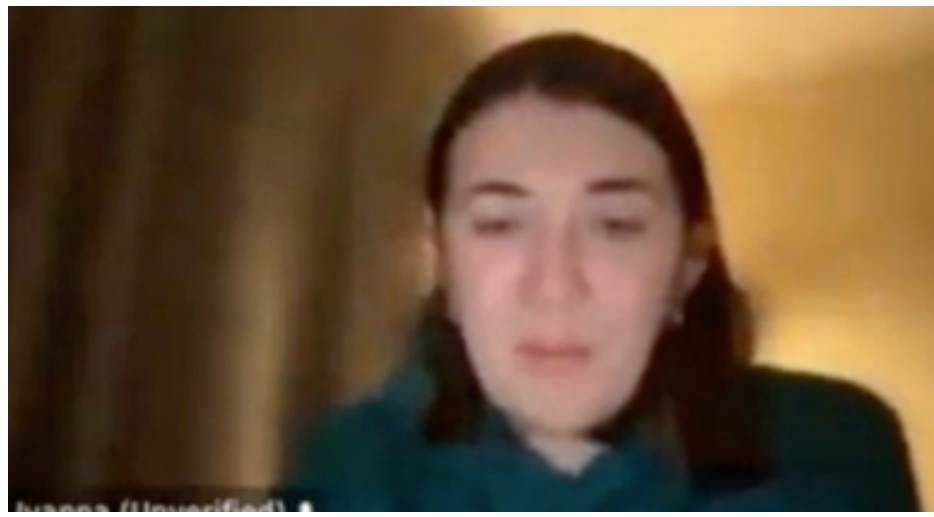


There are also CPD accredited online courses available on the web. We discussed how to distribute this information to members and an action plan has been put together including the possibility of a learning newsletter and each area having a learning representative. Liam Kerr a local rep said ' This is such an amazing resource we need to make sure our members are aware of it'



Remembering Food Banks - In 2023, due to the financial hardship that our members were experiencing, UNISON liaised with the NHS charity who agreed to fund food banks for NHS staff. The food banks were highly popular and well used by our members. UNISON identified areas on each of our sites where the food banks could be based. The food banks were widely advertised by the branch so our members were aware where they were and days and times they were open. Feedback from staff was immense with comments regularly received such as how grateful staff were. A quote from a member " a foodbank is not just about feeding the hungry - it's about nourishing hope, dignity and community".

AGM - UKRAINE



As part of our AGM on 6th February we welcomed (via Teams) Ivana Khrapkov and Olena Uhodnikova who gave a powerful first-hand account of life in Ukraine during the ongoing war and the role of trade unions under these conditions. They described how daily life is shaped by constant missile and drone attacks, with widespread destruction of infrastructure leaving many people without electricity, heating, or safe housing.

Civilians, including children, are heavily affected, and education is often forced online or into underground shelters. They stressed that the situation remains extremely dangerous and difficult, yet there is concern that the rest of the world is beginning to normalise the war and pay less attention.

They spoke movingly about the emotional toll on individuals and communities, sharing examples of loss and trauma, but also highlighting the resilience of people who continue to support others despite their own suffering. One example was a young woman who had recently lost her mother in an attack but still chose to become active in the trade union to help others, illustrating a wider spirit of solidarity and determination.

The speakers explained that trade unions in Ukraine are continuing their work despite the war, but their role has expanded significantly. Alongside negotiating pay and working conditions, unions are now providing humanitarian support, psychological assistance, and help for members dealing with destroyed homes and displacement. They are also addressing new challenges such as supporting returning veterans and trying to retain young workers, many of whom are leaving the country.

They also raised concerns about ongoing labour law reforms linked to European integration, warning that modernisation should not come at the cost of weakening workers' rights. At the same time, they emphasised the importance of continuing to organise, negotiate, and protect workers even in such extreme circumstances.

A key message was a call for continued international solidarity. Ivana expressed disappointment that some trade unions abroad had not responded or shown support, and urged organisations not to forget Ukraine and its workers. Despite everything, both speakers expressed hope for the future, highlighting the commitment of young people and ongoing efforts to plan for the country's reconstruction.

Their overall message was one of resilience, solidarity, and determination to defend democracy, workers' rights, and the future of Ukraine.

Both speakers thanked UNISON for their continued solidarity and ongoing support and received a standing ovation from the 125 attendees. It is hoped that Ivana and Olena will be able to attend a future AGM in person and update us in person.

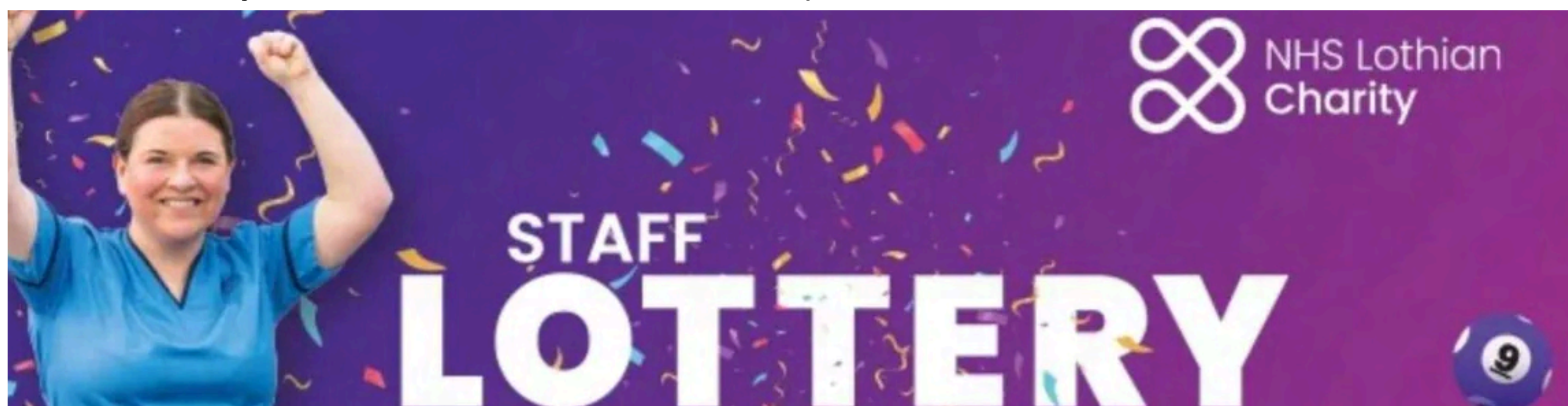
EQUIPMENT FOR UKRAINE



At the request of their UNISON branches, North and South Lanarkshire councils and UNISON Lothian Health are supporting communities in Ukraine affected by the ongoing war. Building on the recent Scottish UNISON branch delegation to Kharkiv and Kyiv, links with community organisations are now turning into real, practical action. Surplus gym equipment from Aquatec in Motherwell has been donated to support the rehabilitation of war-injured children at the Aquarena Sport Complex in Kharkiv. A total of 9 boxes of Sexual health and wellbeing literature and supplies donated by Chalmers Sexual Health in Edinburgh and contemporary LGBT+ fiction requested by the Spectrum Kharhiv project are also being transported along with the gym equipment, This was complemented by £1,000 already donated to pay for vital vaccinations.

We are pleased to confirm that the equipment and boxes (total 1.9 tonnes) have now been dispatched to Poland via London, waved off by North Lanarkshire Provost Kenny Duffy and transported by Willie Shearer and Alan Clark on behalf of the UNISON branches to London enroute to Poland and finally Ukraine.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the transport costs.



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.

Step up, **Speak out**
for safe staffing



UNISON
Scotland

£ Your NHS Your Credit Union £ Your Money

THE BENEFITS OF JOINING THE NHS CREDIT UNION

We believe when it comes to your money, you should be reaping the rewards you deserve.

WE WORK FOR YOU, NOT FOR PROFIT

The NHS Credit Union is a not-for-profit co-operative, owned by its members. Members are the only people that profit from the NHSCU.

Did you know that
25,000 of your
colleagues are already
NHS Credit Union
Members?

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Our interest rates are often much lower than other lenders, and our interest is only charged on the reducing balance – as your loan balance comes down, so does your interest charge.

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Our flexible terms mean we work to your personal situation when considering your repayments, making every loan bespoke to each member.

NO HIDDEN FEES

No hidden fees mean you can make early repayments without any cost; in fact, you will save money on the reduced interest.

PAYROLL DEDUCTION

Sign up and save straight from your pay into your credit union, watch your savings grow and become eligible to borrow.





FREE SAVINGS AND LOAN PROTECTION

As a member of the NHSCU, you have unique protection provided free in the event of bereavement.



NHSCU HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT ON YOUR COMMUNITY

The profit we make is invested straight back into your credit union.

We also invest in your NHS communities through our charitable foundation.

Our members, that's you, may also be rewarded with an annual dividend – the icing on the cake.

WE DON'T BELIEVE MEMBERS ARE DEFINED BY THEIR CREDIT SCORE

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.

SAFE HARBOUR, A CONFIDENTIAL SERVICE

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



UNISON LOTHIAN HEALTH BRANCH



WELCOME TO THE UNISON LOTHIAN HEALTH BRANCH WEBSITE.

WE ARE THE LARGEST TRADE UNION IN NHS LOTHIAN, REPRESENTING OVER 12,000 MEMBERS



Unison Lothian Health Branch

2.5K likes · 3.1K followers

This is a page dedicated to providing information and exchanging views with members of the UNISON Lothian Health Branch.

Like **Message**

Celebrating 2024 Year of LGBT+ workers



UNISON Lothian health
@LothianUnison

UNISON Lothian Health Branch are dedicated to supporting our members, safeguarding our T&C,s and fighting to ensure our staff are paid appropriately

Scotland
unison-lothianhealth.scot
 Joined July 2020


131 Following 325 Followers

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

**TOGETHER WE RISE
IN UNISON**

UNISON is Scotland's biggest and liveliest public service trade union, representing workers delivering public services across Scotland.

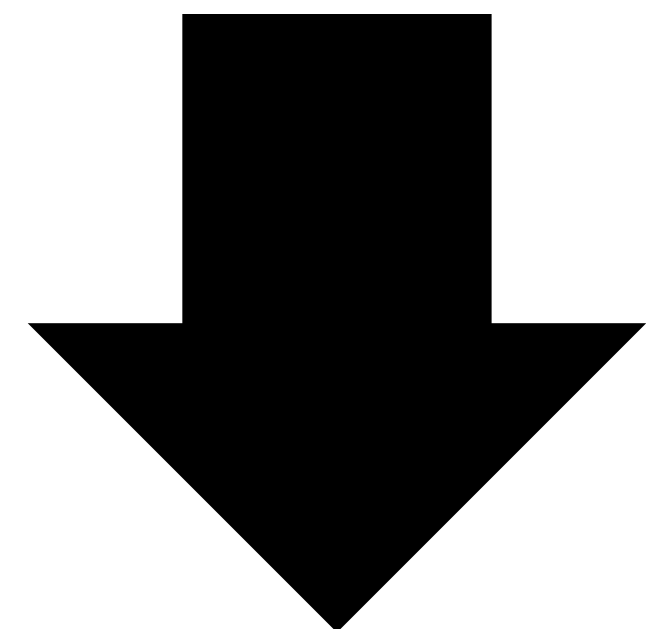
We represent members, negotiate and bargain on their behalf, campaign for better working conditions and pay, and for public services.



Three simple ways to join UNISON today and get essential cover wherever you work

- Join online at joinunison.org
- Call us on 0800 171 2193
- Ask your UNISON rep for an application form

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Lothian Health Branch