



UNISON Lothian Health Annual Report 2023

Annual General Meeting

Friday 9th February 2024

Danderhall Miners Club

6pm to 7pm





ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
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AGENDA

- 1) Chairperson's welcome and opening remarks
- 2) Presentation of ERA accreditation certificates
- 3) Minutes of previous AGM
- 4) Matters arising
- 5) Financial report
- 6) Branch Secretary's report
- 7) Election of Branch Officers and Auditors
- 8) Ratification of Stewards
- 9) Ratification of delegates to the Scottish Council and the Scottish Health Committee
- 10) Ratification of delegates attending the National Health Care Conference and the National Delegates Conference
- 11) Motions
- 12) Any Other Competent Business
- 13) Presentations
- 14) We welcome our guest speaker Lilian Macer

Branch Secretary



This year has been a hard year for Unison members as the cost of living hit and hit hard. Not only did this have an impact on our low paid members but impacted on all our members. We saw interest rates soar and this

in turn dramatically increased the cost of mortgages and rents. Domestic fuel and food prices almost doubled overnight. Yet again the Conservative Policies hit the public sector like a sledgehammer! Members turned to the Branch for support. We reached out to NHS Charities and jointly set up Food Pantries across 6 main hospital sites. The Pantries were all staffed by Unison Stewards who, as they always do, stepped up to the plate and opened them early in the morning and late into the evening working 12-hour days on a voluntary basis. This allowed our members, regardless of their working hours, much needed access to the Pantries. The Pantries opened from December to April as we all agreed these were the hardest months for many due to high fuel and food bills. We heard many heart-breaking stories from our members about their daily struggles to put food on the table. The stress and anxiety felt by Unison members cannot be underestimated and the Branch's 3 fully trained Well-being coaches provided 1:1 sessions and group sessions throughout the year. They have reported a record number of members using their services this year. We should all be very proud as a Branch that we have been there when our members needed us.

On a much more positive note, we are nearly at the end of the CSW Band 2 to 3 re-banding exercise which saw a massive 85% of our lowest paid clinical staff increase their income by £2000 per year by moving to a Band 3 role. This was a Unison campaign and one we should all be really proud of.

Recruitment is always a top priority for the branch – the larger the membership, the louder the voice! We lost many members at the start of the year due to the cost of living crisis and members often told us leaving union membership was a hard decision. We have a recruitment plan in every area in the branch and have worked harder than ever before to recruit new members. All of the hard work is finally paying off and the last 6 months has seen a steady increase in our membership. Well done to each and every one of you for your commitment.

We purchased the Mobile Advice Centre in July – or the Big Mac as we all affectionately call it. Not only do we use it for meetings with members in the Private and Voluntary Sector, but it is there on every march and demonstration we participate in, proudly displaying the Branch logo and that of Trade Unions In Communities (TUIC). The Stewards in Lothian Health Branch now work hand in hand with our comrades in many unions, including the RMT, CWU, EIS, UNITE and the PCS, as well as our Unison colleagues in local government branches across not only Lothian, but the Scottish region. Stewards spend a half day each in the Craigmillar Hub working alongside fellow trade unionists to help and support people in this working-class community. The trade union movement started in communities like Craigmillar and we are proud to be a part of TUIC.

This has been a year of industrial unrest which has seen a renewed determination in the trade union movement to campaign on behalf of working class people. As a branch we proudly marched down the Royal Mile on May Day, we travelled to Durham Miners gala along with the amazing City of Edinburgh Pipes and Drums and marched alongside thousands of trade union activists. We have supported striking workers from posties to lecturers, railway workers to driving instructors, teachers to janitors and classroom assistants to cleaners. The dedication and determination shown by the activists in Lothian Health Branch is truly awe inspiring.

As always in the Branch we see many changes amongst our staff and Stewards. I would like to warmly welcome every new Steward elected in 2023 to the Branch and I

hope you find the role of a Unison Shop Steward as rewarding as I have. I would also like to officially welcome George Grime. George started with the Branch a year ago now and is a welcome addition to our hard working admin team. Barbara, Margaret and Megan (and of course now George) are the unsung heroes in the branch and making sure we run smoothly.

So whilst this is a new chapter for some people, it is always inevitably the end of a chapter for others. Lynne Williamson left the Branch in October to start work for Unison as an Area Organiser – our loss is the Region's gain and we wish Lynne every success in her new role. We have one retiral this year and we certainly couldn't liken this to the closing of a chapter but more like reaching the end of an encyclopaedia on the trade union movement. Derek Durkin is finally hanging up his boots – well for at least a year whilst he travels the world with his long suffering wife, Aideen. I first met Derek at the start of my trade union career 32 years ago when he was a Shop Steward with the CWU. At that time he had fiery red hair and a temperament to match! The Branch cannot express in words the contribution he has made. Derek's knowledge of the trade union movement and his ability to remind us all that anything and everything is possible when we stand united is unsurpassed. I know our younger Stewards have loved every minute of learning from and campaigning with Derek. We have ended up with a core group of Stewards who have proudly stood on picket lines alongside their fellow trade unionists from all unions. They are now known as "the flying pickets" and the branch banner has been in Greenock, Glasgow, Durham, Fife and all across Lothian. So please enjoy your travels Derek, you deserve it and you never know we may catch a glimpse of you on the news standing on picket lines in far off lands.....

I would like to end by thanking every member and Shop Steward in Unison Lothian Health Branch for your loyalty to Unison, your hard work over this last year and your commitment to both the trade union movement and our treasured, grand old lady – the NHS.

*Tracy Anne Miller – Branch Secretary
UNISON Lothian Health Branch*

Branch Chairperson



2023 saw Unison members continue to face many challenges, so whilst the pandemic may be dwindling the same cannot be said for other things. Members and Stewards have had to face so many other

issues from the cost-of-living crisis to the staffing crisis. Things got to a point in the earlier part of 2023 that staff really were choosing between "heat" or "eat". We have continued to fight as hard as possible for our members every day and tried to help where we could. Unison set up and staffed Food Pantries over the winter months and referred members to the Branch Welfare Officer for expert advice and guidance. Our Health and Wellbeing Service has supported a record number of members this year with 10 sessions tailored to the individual. Unison is not there only to help with representation, we really care about our members and will always try to help them with any issues they have.

The Trade Unions in the Community Hub in Craigmillar is thriving and gives much needed advice and support to those living in some of the poorest conditions in society. This Hub is staffed by Shop Stewards from a variety of unions all working together for the common good. True solidarity! Last year I stated we wanted to continue to integrate into the communities the trade unions grew up in and we are doing just that. One of the things Lothian Health Branch excels at is campaigning and 2023 was no different. We attended and marched in Durham Miners Gala, marched through Edinburgh for May Day and Pride, proudly displaying our branch banners. These events are hugely important to us and help us to remember why unions exist, and why we do the job we do every single day.

I am hugely proud of all of Unison's achievements - we received our highest ever pay award over the last two years. I am even more proud of Unison Lothian Health Branch – the Stewards in the branch have been working flat out supporting CSW's moving from a band 2 to band 3. A staggering 85% of this group of staff are now £2000 a year better off thanks to Unison's determination and campaigning. The day-to-day battles that our members face will always be the priority for the Stewards in the Branch. Thank you to everyone for all your hard work every single day – you are a credit to Unison!

2023 has been a year of struggle, strife and stress for our members. However 2023 has been another year I can proudly say I am a Shop Steward in Unison Lothian Health Branch and whilst I may be biased I believe we are the best Unison Branch in the country.

Thank you to every Steward and member for making 2023 another year where being a Unison Shop Steward is a privilege.

*Gemma Brennan – Chairperson
UNISON Lothian Health Branch*

Branch Treasurer (Joint Post)



The Treasurers role includes presenting financial reports, maintaining accounts and managing/recording of assets. A large part of the role is the administration and processing of payments, planning finances and budgeting and budgeting reports to the branch. We learn and grow as a team each year and we continue to develop Branch

protocols and guidelines to ensure good financial governance.

This year we reviewed the robustness of the Treasurer role and are now piloting the role of Assistant Treasurer. This was presented to and agreed by the Branch Committee midyear. If needed the role will be ratified at the AGM in February 2024.

The Treasurers support Officers, Leads and Stewards with their Branch activities. We have been supporting a number of initiatives and celebrations in 2023. Some of the celebrations included the 75th birthday of the NHS, the Astley Ainslie Hospital's 100th year and of course Unison's 30th birthday.

Many Branch projects this year have had input, assistance and support from the Treasurers. It is our role to ensure that we are all working within the national union's financial rules. An example of the support and advice we give is working with the Branch Black Members Self organised Group to launch the 2023 Year of the Black Worker. The Treasurers were able to guide and support the team to achieve a plan of activities to promote this campaign which will hopefully leave a legacy for the future.

We continue to financially support education and wellbeing activities, to name only a few. There has been many Unison courses for Stewards and members over 2023 and the Treasurers continued to support the Branch Education Officer by ensuring the process for stewards and members participating in educational activities was as seamless as possible. The Branch Well-being Officer and Coaches ran many individual and group sessions for members and the Treasurers assisted in the organising and financing of these activities.

The Treasurers have spent time with the Stewards and staff in the UNISON Outlets and Offices, giving training, guidance and support with a few things including the new online expense system MOLE and the completion of expenses forms. We would like to thank all our stewards for participating in the pilot for MOLE as we appreciate the additional time this required. We have also been busy with the annual review and update of the Branch Asset lists and worked alongside the site based Stewards and Branch employed staff to complete these. A big thanks to all involved.

Some of our sponsorships this year have included a further 3 year deal with Edinburgh City Pipes and Drums and a new two year sponsorship deal with Caledonian Thebans RFC. Both will proudly display the branch logo on their kit.

The Branch has also supported many community groups who requested donations. This support includes TUIC (Trade Unions in Communities) and this is a collection of activists from many different trade unions providing advice and support in the heart of our local communities.

One of our larger purchases this year was the Mobile Advice Centre following the end of its lease period.

We continue to donate to many groups and charities. The Treasurers will liaise with each group regarding their request and present it to the Branch Committee for discussion and approval.

The Treasurers would like to thank the Auditors Jackie Ritchie and Thomas Miller for their hard work - the skill sharing was greatly appreciated. We would also like to thank the Branch Executive and Committee for their support over the last year.

*Catherine Henderson and Carolyn Casey –
Joint Treasurers*

Health and Safety

Reg Lloyd /Andrew Taylor

UNISON Health Branch Joint Health and Safety Officers Lothian Health Branch



The past year has been another eventful year for us all.

We have been continuing to support and advise staff suffering stress and anxiety over the staff shortages and the post Pandemic phase.

The Branch has consistently kept up to date with the current Health and Safety issues to support our Members.

Notable successes this year due to our interventions and recommendations have been:

- Advise/Assist Management with Team and Individual stress assessments for staff in full consultation with staff.
- Assist and support staff who has suffered workplace injuries in conjunction with UNISON's Legal support Thompson's Solicitors who have processed injury claims for many of our Members.
- Supporting Members suffering Long Covid and ensuring management give provision of the appropriate consideration whilst recovering from a condition which is not fully understood.
- Ensuring that reasonable adjustments at work are implemented for staff with disabilities and conditions.
- Ensured all NHSL H&S Committees are Joint Chaired by H&S Reps.
- Working with OHSS/ Management to ensure improved recommended PPE for staff.
- Advised and led the many Short life Working Group's including revision of Lone Working Devices.
- Ensured all Safety related Groups include Branch H&S Reps.

Recent challenges:

- Making recommendations for safety measures to the Employer whilst the current financial situation and Departmental/Service budgets are stretched.
- Keep a watchful eye and ensure involvement with groups assessing the RAAC concerns with NHSL buildings.
- Assisting Members back to work Post Pandemic after working from home.

Adjustment to the workplace environment e.g., DSE workstation requirements.

- Team's virtual meetings: allowing for breaks and gaps between meetings to prevent a working day staring at a PC screen without due rest breaks.
- Safe staffing levels maintained during recruitment and retention challenges in the NHS.

We will continue to:

- Ensure that workplace Risk Assessments are robust and all Staff Health Safety and wellbeing factors are considered.

We engage with:

- The Health and Safety Executive:
- The Regulator HSE will consult the UNISON Branch H&S Officers/ Local
- Convenor on all reported incidents in NHSL and in line with the H&S at work Act and will always seek the staff's perspective.
- Scottish Fire and Rescue/ Police Scotland:
- Environmental Agencies
- We have close professional working relationships with Community Police and Fire and Rescue Officers with any topic that have safety implications for staff and Patients alike.
- We also have strong links with the National Hazards Campaign which fight for workers safety.

Health and Safety information and advice is available to Members from UNISON Representation and Advice Centres at all the three Acute Hospitals and UNISON site offices across Lothian. This can be accessed via Stewards who can put you in touch with the Health and Safety Officer or one of our workplace H&S Reps who are trained and accredited in the subject.

UNISON Health Branch will continue to keep a watchful eye and talk to our Members as your Health and safety at work is essential to us.

Reg Lloyd & Andrew Taylor – UNISON Joint Health and Safety Officers

International Officers

Hello Colleagues

Unison has a Scottish International Committee which meets three to four times per year and its remit is to work with trade unions across the world to call out injustice and Unison has very strong relationships with our counterparts/comrades across the globe.



It's been a busy year for us as International Officers. One of us attended Unison Womens' Conference in February where we supported a motion on global women's rights and the fact that in some countries they are being oppressed. At Conference we heard about the struggle of the women in Columbia who are constantly fighting for their voices to be heard in a male-dominant society.

We have also seen in Iran the terrible oppression of women and their brave stance against this. We applaud the bravery of women in Iran for taking a stand and demanding an end to the mandatory headscarf and modest clothing. The repression of women who have been physically attacked and killed for fighting for their basic rights. We stand in solidarity with them as individuals and with the women's organisations that are supporting them.

We are very active in the Palestinian campaign to prevent Israel from the 'de facto' annexing of the West Bank. The Israeli government has continued to colonise Palestinian land by expanding the illegal settlements, restricting access to land and natural resources and displacing the Palestinian population. The demolition of Palestinian homes and property, and the building of settlements continues at an unprecedented rate.

We attended Unison National Delegate Conference in June where again we confirmed our intention to support women's rights internationally and quoted the words of United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, "Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is the unfinished business of our time and the greatest human rights challenge in our world. We fully supported the position that identifying, celebrating and increasing visibility of women's achievements worldwide can help forge equality and combat gender bias, and that collaborating with women activists in different countries across the World, based on a foundation of shared purpose, trust and appreciation, can impact positive change for women.

At Conference we were reminded that the wall dividing the communities in Belfast is the oldest dividing city wall in the world. 2023 marks the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. The 'peace lines' or 'peace walls' are a series of separation barriers that predominantly separate Irish republican/nationalist Catholic neighbourhoods from predominantly British loyalist/ unionist Protestant neighbourhoods. Whilst most of the peace walls are in Belfast, they also exist in other regions with more than 20 miles of walls in Northern Ireland.

The Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign Action Group (NSCAG), which Lothian Health branch is affiliated to, works with Nicaraguan trade unions from various sectors, all of whom are members of the FNT (National Workers' Front). Since 2007, when the FSLN (Sandinista National

Liberation Front) returned to power, Nicaragua has undergone a remarkable transformation and the trade unions have seen the restoration of their rights following 17 years of right-wing government. This period saw the decimation of the labour and trade union movement, with thousands of public sector workers sacked and the trade unions severely weakened. Nicaragua remains the second poorest country in the Americas after Haiti. Some 65% of Nicaraguans work in the informal sector, for example selling goods at traffic lights and as ambulant market sellers and street sellers. The trade unions see the fight against poverty as one of their main tasks. They have prioritised employment creation and the improvement of working conditions for their members. A tripartite agreement between Government, the private sector and the unions was put in place at the beginning of 2014. The right to organise and the right to strike are enshrined in the constitution, although there have been only three strikes since the FSLN came back to power (as opposed to almost 500 during the neo-liberal years).

We also stand in solidarity with Abdullah Ocalan, seen as the Kurdish "Nelson Mandela", who has now been jailed and held in solitary confinement on the Turkish island of Imrali for over 23 years. Scottish Solidarity with Kurdistan hosted a media event in October in Glasgow to highlight his ongoing imprisonment and inhumane treatment and to join the world-wide call for news about his security and well-being.

Our Branch donated £250:00 to musician Carlos Arredondo who is holding a series of musical events to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1973 Chilean Coup d'état to raise awareness.

As Branch International Officers we continue to play an active role in all of these campaigns as well as supporting local demonstrations.

Susan Sim & Laura Turnbull – International Officers

Branch Recruitment

Another year has come and gone and as usual it's been a very busy year for UNISON Lothian Health Branch.

In 2023 we celebrated lots of events across all sites including international days of recognition for the many staff groups Unison represents. We also celebrated the 100th birthday of the Astley Ainslie hospital with cake and coffee and Unison's 30 birthday. However our biggest celebration was of course 75 years of our precious NHS.

To mark this momentous year UNISON stewards visited as many wards and departments as they could within all sites handing out birthday cake to all of our hard-working staff. This was a small token of thanks from Unison in recognition of the truly amazing jobs they do. Irene Salkeld and Ian Kilgour supported Stewards on these sites with the celebrations – manning the stalls, participating in the many walkarounds.



We are an ever-growing branch with a current membership of over 11,500. As Recruitment Officers we support the Stewards on the sites with their regular recruitment activities. It is always fantastic to recruit new members to Unison but is also a great time to chat with our existing members.

Some of the young Stewards in the Branch attended the Student Nurse Fresher's Fayre events run by Napier at the O2 and QMU on campus in September, supported by the Recruitment and Campaigns Officers. It is great to attend these events and to introduce the future NHS generation to Unison and all of its benefits.

Our plan for 2024 is for the Recruitment Officers to work closely with the new Campaigns Officer in the branch to plan, to develop and deliver a calendar of exciting initiatives, events and celebrations to support and acknowledge the work of our current members and to encourage people to join Unison.

Thanks to all Stewards and members of Unison Lothian Health Branch for your dedication.

Irene Salkeld/Ian Kilgour – Recruitment Officer

Branch Communications



Communications is an integral part of Unison Lothian Health Branch activities and plays a crucial role in both member recruitment, learning and campaigns. To that end the Branch Communications Officers strive to have a close working relationship with fellow stewards, including Lead Stewards and Branch Officers as they are key in ensuring the dissemination of information to our members. This year the Communications Officers have developed a process to store the Branch images that will be archived for use in future publication, for prosperity and nostalgia.

Earlier this year the joint Communication Officer, Terry Kirkwood stood down from the role to concentrate on other things and Stewart Young, a Corporate Services Steward has stepped into the limelight with fresh ideas. He has taken on the mantle of managing the Branch Twitter, sorry X page. This year the Comms Officers have found a way to store images that can be archived for

use in future publication, for prosperity and nostalgia.

We have continued to support our Self Organised Groups this year and publicised events such as the Year of the Black Worker, Disability History month, the Retired Members AGM, International Staff focussed days, Pride and gala days and parades, raising awareness through the production of posters for example Show Racism the Red Card.

Our largest piece of work is always the Branch Annual Report which is published prior to the AGM. This allows members an update on what Stewards have been doing on their behalf from every area.

So what will our focus be in 2024. We are looking at the possibility of producing a quarterly Branch Newsletter and are hopeful of launching the first edition in April 2024. At the recent Branch Development Days Stewart delivered a session on Branch Newsletters. The attendees were consulted on style and branding, along with what the content would be and who would be responsible for it. So, watch this space folks.

Our second key area of focus is the relatively new Branch website. It has not been as successful as was hoped and feedback from members is that they have difficulty accessing and finding the relevant information. During the branch development day, it was agreed that a short life working group would be formed. The group would look at the current web site and look to see how this could be improved, by looking at the design and navigation with a view to having more member relevant information to be accessed in a user-friendly way. This group would also look at ways to market the web site.

No doubt 2024 will bring its own opportunities and challenges for communicating more effectively with our members, the Communications Team look forward to this and it is hoped we can take Lothian Health Branch Communications forward through the many forms of media available to us.

*Alistair Mack & Stewart Young
Communications Officers*

Black Members Report

The Black Members group is growing tremendously, and we continue to chat on our WhatsApp about our challenges as Black workers. We have 45 members on the WhatsApp group. It has been a privilege this year for Black Workers as Unison has dedicated this year 2023 as Year of Black Workers, establishing a legacy to generate change. Members continue to seek support from the committee.

Five members from our group attended the STUC Black workers Conference in person from 6th to 8th October. We are very grateful to our Branch Secretary and the Branch Committee for agreeing to us sending more members to conferences. By doing this it allows us to meet activists from other branches and to learn more about Unison. Every Branch Delegate spoke to Motions at the Conference.

Our Black Members Group has had 3 online meetings this year and the 4th one was in person with the wider group at Danderhall Miners Club on the 21st of October.



We were celebrating Black History month at this meeting as well as celebrating the Year of Black workers. We launched the Year of Black workers at the Branch Committee in September. We also managed to visit some of our larger sites including RIE, WGH, SJH and Lauriston Buildings. Not only did we raise awareness around the Year of the Black Workers, but we recruited new members.

We have also reached out to some other Unison branches around us including East Lothian Local Government and Midlothian

Local Government, talking to them about year of the Black Worker. We have offered assistance to help them to set up Black members self-organised groups. We have 7 trained stewards in our group and we are hoping to have 15 by end of 2024.

We have plans for this coming year to continue recruiting members and also to organise training for Black workers so that they will be aware of their rights at work. One example is a racial discrimination awareness campaign. We are also hoping to recruit more members within the Black community and the wider group.

The Black Members Self organised group aim to

1. Support Black members to attend meetings and conferences.
2. Mentor new stewards and also encouraging more members to become stewards.
3. Invite the Branch Secretary and branch Chairperson to a meeting to hear first-hand the challenges faced by Black workers.
4. Mentoring new stewards and also encouraging more members to become stewards.

Our AGM is scheduled for 16/12/23 and we are hoping to have more attendance and encourage the group to be more visible at work and in the union.

Tina Makedenge, Reuben S Akor – Joint Black Members Officers.

Disabled Members Section

During this year we have worked hard to ensure the good work undertaken during 2022 Year of the Disabled Worker has been continued and developed. And in this we have succeeded.

Building on the update to the Equalities LearnPro module undertaken in 2022, alongside other colleagues having Protected Characteristics, we worked with HR to develop the NHS Lothian Reasonable Adjustments Guidance. This is a forward-thinking document supporting disabled staff

through the provision of information and guidance to all managers. This will be further enhanced by the Disability Passport due to come into practice by the end of 2023. These two documents will give stewards tools to support and promote best practice to retain our disabled members.

The third priority is the advancement of the Disability Employment Charter of which Unison is a founding signatory. This charter outlines the action the government needs to take to address the disadvantage disabled people encounter in their working lives. I took a motion on the STUC promoting take-up by the Scottish Government to the STUC Disability Conference in November.

Promoting and advancing these three big ticket items will be some of our priorities for 2024.

In July we were out and about at many of our hospital sites across Lothian, running stalls in celebration of Disability Pride month in July. This is an opportunity to raise awareness of disabilities, start positive conversations and celebrate the diversity and differences of disabled workers.

The Disability and Youth SOGs promoted Disability History Month in November/December. Everybody loves a raffle! Promoting SOGS working together will be another key issue for 2024.

Additionally we have had a focus on increasing the membership of the SOG. This has been massively successful and has expanded from 4 to 24.

We will represent the Branch at the Disabled Members Committee and Bryan Millan has put forward a motion on Neurodiversity Awareness.

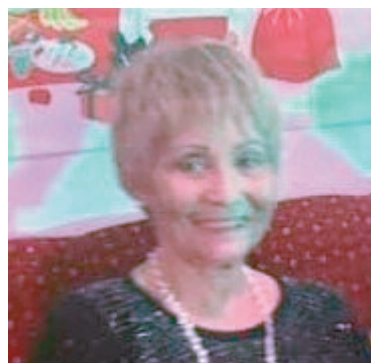


We have created a pamphlet for stewards on Neurodiversity Awareness and also written up the first of many guides that are on the Unison Lothian Health Intranet page and we hope our members will find these helpful. This first guide is on Disability Discrimination.

We will continue to ensure that our disabled members are well represented across Lothian

*Margaret Callander and Bryan Millan
Co-Chairs of Disabled Members SOG.*

Retired Members



This year we have had a new Venue for our meetings.

Virgin Money in George St has a room which is let for a donation to one of their chosen charities. This has been

brilliant as it is quite central.

We have had 3 meetings to date with speakers. These meetings were fairly well attended.

Sheena Callaghan stepped up and very kindly took one of the meetings as I was off for a few months after a very painful ankle replacement.

The Scottish Retired Members continue to have their Forum which some of our members attend.

In the summer we had our day out which this year was to Dunkeld and Pitlochry. 16 Retired Members attended. There were a few last minute cancellations due to various circumstances. We were lucky and had a lovely sunny day, which everyone fully enjoyed.

Despite more people retiring the invitation to join us for our meetings, which are usually educational as well as fun is not being taken up.

This year our Retired Members Conference will be held in Edinburgh so a few additional members will be attending. This is as a great opportunity and it is in our capital city.

We did not help this year with recruitment as I was off so was unable to let the members know when to offer help. I really missed this yearly occurrence.

In October there will be a Lothian Health Branch's Development days and Sheena Callaghan and I have been invited to take part in this.

Our AGM will be in November and I am hoping someone else will take the helm as I am getting a bit long in the tooth for this. Mind you I enjoyed every minute of my involvement with the Retired Membership and will continue to be part of the group without being in charge.

Jo McLean – Secretary, Retired Members

LGBT+ SOG Report

This has been another busy year for the LGBT+ Self Organisation Group. We saw the launch of the Trans Equality Training which was attended by Shop Stewards Tracy McBurnie and Gordon McFatter. This training will be rolled out to all Branch Shop Stewards.

We continue to advertise and promote the benefits of being a member of the LGBT+ SOG.



Stewart Young and Gordon McFatter represented the Branch at the STUCs annual LGBT+ workers conference in Glasgow in May 2023 and we are delighted to report that the proposal to make 2024 the year of the LGBT+ worker was unanimously passed by the STUC. Lothian Health Branch also had a delegation at UNISON National Conference

where UNISON endorsed the decision to make 2024 the year of the LGBT+ worker.

Edinburgh Pride took place in June and was well attended by Branch members and Steward. It was one of the hottest days of the summer and everyone there had a fantastic time. Stewart Young manned a stall where we promoted Pride and our LGBT+ Self-organised groups.

The branch Stewards manned LGBT+ stalls to celebrate Pride month across all of our Lothian Health sites prior to this year's Pride event itself. UNISON prides itself on being inclusive for every member of staff.

Earlier this year Gordon McFatter stepped back from the LGBT+ Regional Committee to concentrate on other commitments and Stewart Young will now represent the branch on the Committee and we are sure he will do an amazing job.

November sees the annual LGBT+ national conference in Liverpool which Lothian will have a delegation attending.



The Branch will be planning a year of activities in 2024 to celebrate the Year of the LGBT+ worker and our programme of events will be advertised on our social media accounts and website so look out for them and come along and join in..

As your LGBT+ Officer I am committed to ensuring that annual LGBT+ events are marked pan-Lothian. Please join me in supporting these to challenge discrimination, win equality and celebrate the diversity in our Membership.

*Mr Gordon B. McFatter,
pronouns he/him/his; LGBT+ Officer.*

Branch Education

2023 welcomed the return to a full training programme delivered by Unison Scotland as well as Lothian Health Branch. A number of training activities were run in house by our senior and most experienced stewards. These activities centred on Policy training and delivered to ensure our Shop Stewards are fully aware of the NHS Policies and procedures. This in turn ensures we provide the very best representation to our members. Training online is still an option and one which is likely to remain. This type of training delivery continues to complement in-person training. As a branch we also adopt other styles of learning and development opportunities which include shadowing, peer support, development days and team based work.

The Branch welcomed 9 new stewards in 2023 who have all completed training throughout this year. The new stewards have been recruited from a number of areas, including the little France Campus, Western General Hospital, Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Edinburgh H&SC Partnership, East Lothian H&SC Partnership and Corporate services. Lothian Health Branch continues to access Scotland wide regional training for our new recruits. Feedback continues to be positive about the training delivered and is attended by a mix of stewards from differing work places/employers/ areas of Scotland. This offers a range in diversity, and enriches the learning experience.

Re-accreditation for existing stewards is mandatory and as a large branch we have a continuous flow of Stewards attending this training. All attendees have opted for online training and again report the learning and shared experiences from stewards from other employers is a rewarding and enjoyable aspect of the course. Stewards have also accessed training on a number of subjects including Well Being, Equalities, Campaigns and Digital Organising. These are Unison Scotland courses and most with positive feedback and shared learning brought back to the Branch.

The Newhailes Office is now an invaluable resource with the large Meeting Room available to be used for training activities. in addition to hosting the Executive

Committee, the Campaigns Committee, and area Steward's Committee meetings, it is also used for peer support, webinars, shadowing opportunities and training given by our experienced stewards. This year specifically "One For Scotland" Policies has been a rolled out programme for all Stewards either on ring fenced facility time or regularly representing members, and with the second tranche of policies going live on 1st Nov 2023 this again will be a priority to deliver training /education sessions to ensure all Stewards keep fully updated with Policy and the changes.

As a Branch we also use our monthly Committee meeting to deliver training and keep learning as a focus and priority for all Stewards. Stewards have been enjoying monthly sessions with Gordon MacKay – using scenario based activities and teaching to support learning and encourage shared experiences from Stewards at all levels of experience. These sessions are very interactive and informative and have become a firm favourite at the meeting.

Training and development for 2024 will continue to focus on having our Stewards at the very centre of the plans for both the individual and the Branch – our recent branch development event identified education and continued learning as pivotal in all stewards journeys.

Commitments for 2024 include

- 1 day equality training delivered to all stewards in the branch by year end.
- 2024 Year of the LGBT+ Worker – locally delivered training to support this.
- Leadership and supporting succession planning.
- Mentorship to complement the existing peer support and shadowing framework already used to further identify individual training needs.
- Working with the Lead Stewards to identify training needs and development opportunities. The training and development of the Stewards will be delivered via a variety of routes including internal training, Regional Unison training and external agency training if appropriate.

As Education Officer I will attend Regional sessions linking in with The Learning & Organising Committee to look at best practise and education priorities. This will help to shape development opportunities for the Branch.

Louise Allan – Education officer

Lifelong Learning Coordinator



There is little doubt that 2023 has been an odd year, while we have been trying to get back to 'normal'.

Again, UNISON Scotland has met a huge demand for member learning and delivered a huge number of courses using

ZOOM and Teams platforms. UNISON continues to deliver courses online but are now gradually going back to in person training. For member learning in Lothian, this will provide a challenge as NHS Lothian has changed the use of much of the accommodation, I would have booked for member learning! However, those of you who know me, know I am definitely up for this challenge!

As Lifelong Learning Coordinator I continue to work with our Communications Officers to ensure that the UNISON courses are advertised to you in a timely manner via our revamped member learning Intranet page and via our member distribution list.

Let's hope that 2024 sees a full return to 'normal' and we can return to face to face member learning, in what remains of our NHS Sites, which is where UNISON'S strengths are.

To support Activist Learning, as a Lay Tutor for UNISON, I continue to co- deliver UNISON courses, for stewards and hope to return to delivering learning to members too.

Thank you to our members, I was overwhelmingly re-elected to UNISON

Scotland's Learning and Organising Committee and continue to represent you on this-putting our Health members views and opinions forward. Through collective membership, I can influence YOUR training and development. I hope to stand again for this committee in 2024 and hope that you, through your local activists, will support my nomination when it comes.

In 2024 I would like to hear from you, as to what you would like to learn-please email me with your ideas.

Thanks

Tracy McBurnie – Lifelong Learning Coordinator

Equality Officer

2023 has been very busy again for Unison with the high cost of living staffing crisis.

We have been continuing to promote equality via our various Self-Organised Groups and we challenge discrimination of individuals through robust representation in our Shop Steward's role.

We work hard to keep our members informed and distribute information via email and What's App groups on Equality issues. We need to ensure as a branch that we highlight inequality wherever we find it. Branch Stewards and activists have managed to attend several online sessions on equality issues delivered by various groups across the country. Knowledge is power and it is key that our activists are fully trained in order to support our members.

The Branch and region have been very supportive to our Stewards and members in sharing good practices during this period. The Black members Self-organised group had a meeting with our Regional Organiser earlier this year and we designed a work plan for 2023, which was the year of the Black Worker. The Black members self-organised group focussed on empowering members to address race discrimination.

As Equalities Officer it is my intention that in 2024, I engage with all of the self-organised groups in the branch to deliver a programme of activities that benefit a wider group of members. I am planning to look at raising

awareness in tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination in workplaces.



Our Branch Education Officer has worked hard to ensure that all stewards in Lothian Health branch receive Equality Training within the next 6-9 months and am delighted that this will form part of new Stewards' induction going forward. The training aims to develop our Stewards to a standard where they understand Unisons Equality Agenda and feel empowered to challenge discrimination and harassment.

Tina Makedenge – Branch Equality Officer

Youth Report



This year the Youth Forum have been working hard to engage with our young members and expand our current Youth Forum. We have been working close with community projects and in our new community Hub

to highlight the trade union movement to young people going into employment and in communities. The Youth forum have been involved in various events and campaigns including Pride in Edinburgh, Freshers Fayre for our new students, young members month in November and we teamed up with the disability forum to do joint stalls and recruitment for disability, children and youth, all of which were a massive success, recruiting hundreds of new members. We have also attended Youth training and

development weekends to improve our skills and knowledge of the trade union movement and youth forum and to get an understanding and clear view of how we can develop our roles within UNISON. We also attend several different conferences including the Young Members conference and National Young members committee meetings.

We are now starting to see our young members recruitment figures rising and more Young members becoming involved in the youth forum. We go around each site chatting to young members and have fun stalls and events to keep young members involved.

The youth forum have been involved in various educational trips such as Cuba and Poland to expand our knowledge of trade unions in different countries and to take part in the May Day Brigade which is massive in Cuba with over 5 million people marching which was truly amazing to see.

I would also like to congratulate our Youth Officer Cameron Smith for being elected for the National Executive Council, UNISON's senior body of activists.

The young members would like to thank all our members for their continuous hard work through these uncertain times. UNISON has your back and together we can build a brighter future.

Chloe Campbell – Youth Officer

Branch Welfare



This past year for Welfare has been particularly busy due to the cost of living crisis. We have seen an increase in members struggling with basic general living costs and I have assisted many members in completing

applications to our national Welfare Charity, There for You.

Last winter Unison Lothian Health Branch, along with NHS Charities arranged food pantries across seven sites in NHS Lothian for

all members of staff struggling with the cost of living and struggling to buy food. Stewards in the branch volunteered to staff the food pantries, often working out of hours to ensure staff on all shifts had access. Some of the members I was supporting as Welfare Officer were directed to these Pantries and when they were unable to make it in person our dedicated Stewards personally delivered food packages to members homes. I cannot thank these Stewards enough for this selfless act and helping their colleagues in their time of greatest need.

Unison continues to support our low paid members throughout the year via our There For You charity with Winter Fuel Grants and School Uniform grants. These services are invaluable and Unison Welfare will do all it can to support members in their time of need.

As always all members are able to approach myself as Branch Welfare Officer directly or contact their local Unison Office for my details and be assured the information you share with me is held in the strictest confidence. I will help, support and advise where I can.

Megan Reilly – Branch Welfare Officer

East Lothian Lead Report



2023 has been another tough year for the staff and UNISON Stewards in East Lothian. But the UNISON Stewards have stepped up to the challenge once again.

Over the last year I have formed a good working relationship with the new Chief Officer Fiona Wilson. But on the down side of this our Chief Nurse Lorraine Cowan has moved on after about 14 years. She is greatly missed. We have a new Chief Nurse Sarah Gossner who is starting to settle into her new role.

Lothian Work Services has settled into East Lothian and is now starting to grow with a couple of new staff joining the team. This

service works very well along side Occupational Health in supporting staff back to work and is welcomed by Unison.

The Edington Hospital remains closed to in-patients, but the building has been getting used by our community services.

Physiotherapy and vaccinations are just a couple of services currently being provided from the Edington.

Belhaven Ward 1 reopened at the start of the year, and the work is now finished in Ward 3 and its ready to reopen its doors to patients. Work is still being carried out on the hub (ward 2). When concluded this will be a community base for staff and a vaccine unit.

Hospital to Home has grown again this year. It hard to think that this team was started only a few years ago with 3 staff and now employs over 65 staff. The aim of this team is to get patients out of hospital sooner and support them at home for a period of time or until a care package can be put in place.

ELCH also opened an Ortho Rehab ward in ward 5 to help release pressures in RIE, this mean all 6 wards are open in ELCH.

East Lothian is now also hosting services, Chalmers Sexual Health, RFU and the AAH.

This year we have opened a UNISON office in East Lothian Community Hospital and that is manned 5 days a week. Its good to see members dropping in when they have issues or are looking for advice – or indeed just for a chat. This gives us somewhere confidential to meet with members on this hospital site.

The Stewards in East Lothian have worked hard this year between case work and recruiting. They are doing this on weekdays, evenings and weekends. This allows us to speak with members who we don't often see. Sadly a couple of Stewards have moved on to do other things this year and we had to say goodbye to Colin Canning and Terry Kirkwood, but we have gained two Stewards - Tina Makedenge from Edinburgh and a new Steward, Angela Carroll.

East and Midlothian now work together and we have formed a great team that works well and I would like to thank Jordan Miller, Michael Shaw, Liam Kerr, Cath Henderson, Sharon Jamieson, Wanda Fairgrieve, Louise Allan, Robert Callander, Angela Carroll and

Tina Makedenge for all the help and support they show the membership and myself throughout the year

Thomas Miller – UNISON Lead Steward

Edinburgh Health & Social Care Partnership Lead Report

So the most important news for our members in Edinburgh is that our Unison Office has moved from Liberton Hospital. We are now all happily settled into our new home based in the Charles Bell Pavilion on the ground floor within the grounds of the Astley Ainslie Hospital, our door is always open and we love seeing you all whether it's for advice, a chat or just to say hello. Our office hours are Monday – Friday 8am-6pm.

We sadly said goodbye to Unison Steward, Fiona Stenhouse who has now moved to Corporate Services, but said a big hello to our new Shop Steward Deborah Lettieri who is based within the CTAC team. This takes our team to Jackie Ritchie, Kenny Anderson, Bryan Millan, Claire Holmes and Deborah.



Have you considered being a shop steward and being part of our family, looking after our members, taking part in all of Unisons campaigns, attending meetings and making a difference, we have our monthly Branch meeting where you can meet all our other stewards from all sites in Lothian. The Edinburgh Stewards also have a regular monthly meeting to catch up on new issues or campaigns within our area.

We are at the moment supporting all our members working within Edinburgh in the Dental Service through Organisational change.

Bryan Millan is Chair of the Disabled Self Organized Group (SOG) and also continues to be very proactive in Mental Health awareness and you can find a piece written by Bryan on the local Intranet.

Unison, as you will know led a very successful campaign where we saw 85% of band 2 CSW's promoted to band 3's due to their clinical skills; this is in addition to our everyday work supporting members through Investigatory meetings, disciplinaries, grievances and PAW's.

We have had a great year visiting the Edinburgh sites, recruiting new members and catching up with our long-standing members. To ensure we speak to all of our members we have been out and about on night shifts and weekends, giving advice and support where needed.

As always, we would like to say a big thank you to Tracy Anne Miller (Branch Secretary) for her continued help and support.

Also a big shout out to all of the Edinburgh Stewards for continuing to support our members and each other. Unison is One Team.

Jackie Ritchie – Lead Steward, Edinburgh IJB

Midlothian Health & Social Care Partnership Lead Report



As 2023 draws to a close we take time to reflect on the past year and use this report as an opportunity to highlight the dedication, commitment and tenacity of the staff who work in NHS Lothian and

once again they stand tall in the face of adversity.

Here in Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership UNISON Stewards have worked with and alongside our NHS colleagues to ensure staff well-being was at the forefront of

our priorities. As the cost of living soared, our staff were hit by increased costs in food, fuel, energy, rent and mortgages. UNISON Stewards saw our members really struggle financially to make it through each week and were truly upset. We have been trying to counter this by providing essential assistance to our staff.

The UNISON Branch Secretary worked alongside NHS Lothian Charity to find a practical way to help staff and it was agreed to open Pantries across 7 Lothian sites for the first 4 months of 2023. It costs so much more to heat your home in the winter so providing groceries would help, even in a small way. Midlothian UNISON Stewards opened a Food Pantry in MCH which enabled staff to get much needed household essentials. Ensuring staff confidentiality was key and the Stewards would work with each member of staff to find solutions to this, often delivering the groceries to their homes.

Following the success of the Pantries UNISON Stewards and staff have been running the "Soup Stop" in Midlothian Community Hospital. This enables any member of staff working across Midlothian to grab a hot lunch. The staff work tirelessly and under pressure due to staffing shortages and workload.

A major triumph in 2023 that must be highlighted is UNISON's victory in our long battle to have the clinical skills and expertise of our CSW's recognised and paid appropriately. Not only did we see 85% of CSW's move from a Band 2 to a Band 3, we secured agreement to have the re-banding back dated to October 2021. UNISON will continue to fight for fair pay and better conditions for our staff and are currently heavily involved in the pay negotiations for 2024.

I would like to thank all our staff for their continued hard work and support which allows our beloved NHS to keep looking after the sick.

I would also like to thank all our Stewards here in Midlothian for their exceptional effort this year - Wanda Fairgrieve, Liam Kerr and Michael Shaw and I look forward to working with you all again in the new year. My final thanks is to Thomas Miller, Lead Steward for East Lothian, whose wise counsel and sage advice is worth its weight in gold

Jordan Miller – Lead Steward

Annual Lead Report for SJH and West Lothian



It's hard to believe that another year has passed by, and it is that time of year again when we deliver our annual report to members. 2023 has simply flown in, not because I am getting older, but I am sure like all

areas because of how busy myself and the team have been. We cover 23 Sites across West Lothian plus HMP Addiewell and this year in particular our workload has increased. We are representing and supporting more members than ever, and I have no doubt this is mainly due to anxiety and stress due to staffing levels and problems with staff recruitment. We therefore welcomed Janice Makinson to the current cohort of Derek Thompson, Gemma Brennan, Gill Trotter and Margaret McFarland with dedicated facility time for representation. We have a local Unison Well-being Coach, Lisa Quarrell, who is fully trained and is delivering much needed 1:1 sessions with our members. Our advice centre has been well used and is a bonus to our members.

On a brighter note, there are positive developments at SJH which will enhance not only patient care but hopefully raise staff morale. We are all very proud of the Unison campaign that saw 85% of our band 2 CSW's move to a band 3. Well-deserved and long overdue recognition.

While it was sad that we had to introduce our food pantry it was very well received by our members, and we had nothing but positive feedback. Unison worked alongside NHS Charities and opened these pantries to staff in the first 3 months of 2023 when fuel and food bills were at their height and our members were struggling most. The Unison Stewards volunteered to staff the Pantries and often delivered food to staff homes when they were unable to get into the building, proving again that Unison is more than a union, it is a family where we all look out for each other.

Car parking on site remains a major problem and in some instances is a negative to staff recruitment.

Like everyone else I was shocked to hear the news of Tracy Anne Miller's car crash but relieved to know she is ok.

The Team at SJH/W Lothian look forward to working with you all in 2024

Derek.J.Thompson – Lead Steward

DATCC Lead Report



In a year where staff shortages and stress at work are at their highest, one of the achievements I am most proud of this year was fighting for and seeing the introduction of two Staff Health and Wellbeing

facilitators for DATCC. For many years staff from DATCC had to try and secure appointments from the acute sites Health and Wellbeing staff. This left the staff quite rightly feeling forgotten about. DATCC is a large pan Lothian its Directorate and sits separately from the wards and departments on the hospital sites. This means it was often the case that the staff in DATCC were unaware of many of the staff wellbeing initiatives taking place. Holly Buchanan (joint partnership lead and lead SoR staff side representative) and myself made it our mission for DATCC to employ our own Health and Wellbeing Facilitators to support DATCC staff. We both felt it was important now more than ever for this dedicated support given the challenges staff have faced over the past few years plus the challenges they continue to face daily with staff shortages etc. The 2 Health and Wellbeing Facilitators are now in post and the staff across DATCC will have easier access to health and wellbeing programmes tailored to meet their needs.

As the worst of the pandemic is now behind us, we face a whole new set of issues in NHS

Lothian. We are trying to re-mobilise and tackle huge waiting lists at a time where staffing shortages are at an all time high. We are seeing real recruitment difficulties across DATCC from Labs, to AHP's, from Critical Care to Theatres. Unison Stewards are reporting high numbers of members with work-related stress and are working with managers to look at all avenues to increase staffing levels including the introduction of Band 4 Assistant Practitioners and easier access to Registered Nurse training.

This year Unison has been heavily involved in the negotiations with the Scottish Government around Safe Staffing and we will continue to fight for this.

Unison is part of the negotiating team looking at the band 5 structure, roles and responsibilities and will be part of the team responsible for negotiating the new Band 5 Job Descriptions.

As the largest union in the NHS Unison always has a guaranteed seat at every negotiating table and this ensures our members' voices are heard.

Sharlene Philp – UNISON Lead Steward, DATCC

Facilities Lead Annual Report



Nothing stands still in the NHS and again this year there have been changes within Estates and Facilities in Lothian. Workplace Organisational Change has featured in a number of areas

including East and Midlothian for example where Estates have taken over responsibility for additional surgeries/clinics in the Edinburgh area including Danderhall, Leith and Currie areas. This protects our substantive post holders for future years. At some point in 2024 we are expecting Liberton Hospital to close – this is a decision that was taken several years ago.

The Shop Stewards in Facilities are currently in discussions regarding the existing “RRP” recruitment and retention premium paid to staff and believe there is a case to have this applied. We have significant difficulty in recruiting hard FM craftsmen and retaining them. Part of our negotiations centre around multi-skilling with the aim of looking to a Band 5 role in the future. This provides a more realistic basic pay for a tradesman than the current band 4.

A few sites in Lothian have had instances of legionella in our domestic water systems. Our dedicated and hard-working staff have ensured that legionella is close to being eliminated across NHS Lothian. The perseverance of our hard FM trades and soft FM colleagues introducing running water and flushing regimes has paid dividends.

NHSL have taken on four new modern apprentices from our current staffing cohort. This is a fantastic initiative and we need to ensure this is an annual intake. Succession planning is a key focus for hard FM. We have an ageing workforce (not me!) and planning for the future of the NHS is a priority.

I must thank all of the Shop Stewards, Leads and senior Branch Officers for their continued support. I look forward to working with you all again this year.

Robert Callander - Facilities Lead

Little France Campus Report (RIE, DCN, Womens Services, RHCYP, EQUANS)



The Stewards have had a busy year again and both Chloe Campbell and Angela Howard are now fully embedded in the LFC Team, alongside Denise Wilson, Leigh Brown and Barbara Milligan.

Chloe continues to work in her role as Youth Officer in the Branch and this keeps her very busy. We said farewell to Debbie Westwood as she moved to another area and welcomed Reg Lloyd to the LFC. Reg brings with him a wealth of experience and is the Branch Health and Safety Officer.

One of the biggest Unison campaigns this year was the up-banding of the band 2 CSW's to band 3 and over 85% of our members have seen an increase in their banding. The Stewards at LFC have now been approached by members in Radiology and Phlebotomy and we intend to support them through a re-banding request also.

Recruitment has been going very well and now that we have RHCYP and DCN on the Campus we are hoping to be more visible in these areas with regular site visits and recruitment stalls. We plan to come to wards and departments to speak to our members face to face as we know how difficult it is for staff to get away. Visibility and accessibility to members is vital and the Stewards intend to open the Outlet over a number of weekends during the coming year.

As always there are issues that impact on staff on the Little France Campus and none more so than the ability to park. The staff car park simply isn't big enough and Edinburgh Council's green policy won't allow for further car parking to be built. As a union we felt it was important to focus on finding solutions to the problem and Unison fought for a car share scheme and this has proved hugely successful with over 200 cars registered. However, we knew that wouldn't solve all of the parking problems on the campus and we approached NHS Lothian to fund a Shuttle Bus pilot. This pilot was only to run for 6 months but the Shuttle bus has now been in place for over a year and we are currently fighting to make this a permanent service for staff.

At the start of 2023 when the cost of living and fuel bill increases were at their highest, Unison saw the horrendous impact this was having on many of our staff and our Stewards wanted to do something to help. The Branch Secretary, Tracy Anne Miller met with NHS Lothian Charities and they jointly agreed to set up Food Pantries across 7 sites in Lothian

- one being on the Little France Campus. NHS Lothian Charities purchased the food and Unison Stewards volunteered to staff the Pantries. The Little France Stewards came in early in the morning, before they started their own work to open the Pantry on the Campus, ensuring night and day staff had access. This service was vital during the winter months when fuel bills were crippling. The Food Pantries began by members asking if there was anything Unison could do to help.

Unison prides itself on being a union that welcomes all staff, regardless of role. The NHS is a family and every member of that family is needed to make it work. Unison is proud of the fact we are One Team. We love to recognise the contribution made by staff and we do this by celebrating the numerous International Days - Nurse, AHP, A&C, Estates and Facilities, CSW, Midwife. The Stewards at the Little France Campus had stalls and walk-arounds to give small tokens of appreciation for all of the hard work our members do.

We will continue to represent, support and advise members and are there when you need us

Jean Nolan – Little France Campus Lead

Western General Hospital Report



In taking the time to reflect over the last 12 months, it has been an extremely busy year here at the Western General Hospital. Navigating the current climate has not been without its

challenges to the team but I'm sure we can agree it has been very rewarding providing representation and support to our valued members. We have welcomed a new Steward, Neil Cook and he has very quickly become an integral part of our team, learning fast and really emerging as a steward to

watch out for. As always, we are extremely busy not only supporting our members but being actively involved in several ongoing issues. We are looking forward to the next pay campaign, getting out and talking to our members and finding out what they want and what they care about. We value your thoughts and opinions and are always here to listen.

The membership plays a vital role in ensuring our voices are heard. Together we can have a direct impact and affect positive change within our working environment as a result. We will continue to take all opportunities to discuss the importance of being a member and the benefits it brings. Recruitment will remain a strong focus over the next year for “we are stronger together” and the louder the collective voice the better for us all.

The roll out of the band 2-3 transition is almost complete with just a few members looking for assistance and we will continue to support any member who has issues regarding their role and job descriptions.

It is inspiring for me to see those stewards in our team without regular facility time engaging with us in the Advice centre and collaborating as One Team. As Lead Steward, I want to continue to prioritise the One Team approach as this ensures our foundations are strong and our members are represented to the best of our abilities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the stewards at the Western General Hospital for their hard work and continued support over the last year, particularly Stewart Robertson. I am proud to be a part of such a strong focused and forward-thinking team of individuals who have supported each other throughout another extremely challenging period. The team would like to take this opportunity to welcome one of our long standing stewards, Susan Sim back to the team. She has been sorely missed over the last year and we are all delighted to have her back.

*Lynn Johnstone – UNISON Lead
Western General Hospital*

Corporate Services Report



2023 has been a busy year for Stewards within Corporate Services as we continue to support our members through tough times. Our services and members

continue to experience significant challenges due to pressures on staffing and trying to tackle the long waiting lists that have resulted following the Covid 19 Pandemic. The team have continued to support members back to work and it's great to see more staff physically back in the work place across our sites.

We have been visiting all of our sites regularly and meeting up with members to allow them the opportunity to discuss any issues they are experiencing. The team have been out recruiting regularly and with new staff inductions taking place face to face again at Comely Bank as well as staff training we have been focusing our efforts there.

At the start of the year our Stewards were busy keeping staff up to date on the Pay Campaign which resulted in Unison securing a fair pay offer for staff, including a one off lump sum. We will continue to campaign to improve NHS pay and put pressure on the Government to invest in NHS pay and staffing. We have also been busy supporting our Clinical Support Workers throughout the Unison led re- banding from 2 to 3 process to ensure that staff are getting the right pay for the work they do. We are currently supporting our members in Dental Services and the Call Vaccination Enquiry team as they go through Workforce Organisational Change. This process always brings about stress and anxiety and the Stewards have made themselves available to answer any questions our members have had.

The Corporate Services Team has had some changes within the team. Gordon McFatter

was successfully promoted to a Senior Charge Nurse post in Dermatology and whilst he continues as a Shop Steward he has less available time for his trade union duties. I was therefore elected as Lead Steward and Valerie Beattie as deputy. Valerie continues to support our members through Unison Well Being Services which are achieving really positive outcomes. Laura Turnbull continues to have dedicated time within the Corporate Services team and is representing and supporting members across the area. She has also taken up the joint position of Branch International Officer alongside Susan Sim. Laura is excited about continuing the amazing international work Unison is renowned for. Stewart Young has taken up the position of joint Communication Officer with Alistair Mack and they are planning a regular Branch newsletter which will compliment our web page and social media page. Our Disabilities expert, Margaret Callander is working hard at a local, regional and national level to ensure our members are treated equitably. Tracy McBurnie continues in her role as Joint Womens Officer and Life-long learning Officer. Both Tracy and Rakiya Suleiman are Lay Tutors in the Branch and deliver training to Stewards both within the Branch and across the Region. All in all we are a busy and productive team.

I would like to thank all of the Stewards in Corporate Services for their continued hard work on behalf of the members and personally for their support over the year.

Fiona Stenhouse

Annual Report Private & Voluntary Sector

This year has seen some changes to the Stewards working within the P&V Sector. Lynne Williamson has successfully secured a new post as an Area Organiser with Unison at a Regional Level. Our loss is the Region's gain and Lynne will be a massive asset to the Region, just as she was to the Branch. Debbie Westwood has joined the team from the RIE and will bring all of her much needed

knowledge and skills with her and will be an excellent addition to the team.

We will also lose Derek Durkin in February from our P&V Stewards cohort. He plans to travel the world when he retires. A very well deserved and happy retirement to Derek when it comes. His vast knowledge and skills in the P&V Sector and wider trade union family is pretty astounding. Derek is a fantastic teacher and his training has ensured we are able to continue to represent our members at the highest standard.



Advising, supporting, and representing members in the P&V sector continues and we have a high level of cases every week to deal with. We work hard to engage with the many companies and agencies our members work for and this in itself can be challenging at times as there are very few employers in the P&V sector who have agreed to a Recognition Agreements with Unison. This limits our ability to have positive working relationships with many of the employers. We will continue to work hard and fight for recognition in all of the workplaces our members are in. We have Stewards available 5 days a week and the skills and abilities in this team of Stewards is wide-ranging.

A big focus for the P&V Stewards and the wider branch this year is the despicable treatment of many of our members working in private Care Homes. Some of these companies tie our members into a 6 year "sponsorship agreement", which in effect binds them to work for that Care Home until

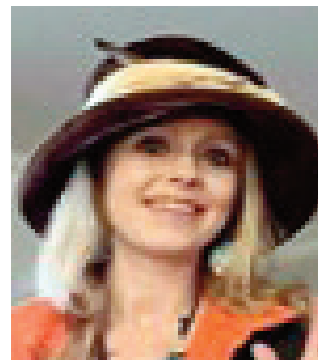
they have paid back the cost of flights, visas and so on. It also means that some of the more unscrupulous employers will exploit these staff by paying poor wages and offering terrible working conditions. The Stewards in P&V, supported by the wider branch and the national union are determined to wipe out this practise. This is Modern Day Slavery and must be called out publicly. We cannot treat people like this in the 21st century!

Unison has been heavily involved in the plan to implement the new National Care Service Bill. Whilst we hoped the introduction of this new national service would bring an end to the anti trade union mindset of the private Care Homes it has fallen far short of the mark. We hoped to see a national minimum wage, a standardised set of terms and conditions for our members and publicly managed social care homes and the Bill was delivering none of this. Unison has been at the forefront in challenging huge sections of the Bill and our tenacity has paid off. It is currently being re-written in sections and we await the revised paper. If it still doesn't do what it should then Unison will continue to fight until it gives employees in the private sector a decent living wage and decent working conditions.

We are now into our second year of Trade Unions in Communities (TUIC) and have our first community office in Craigmillar. We call it "The Hub". We have a Unison Shop Steward there every day and they work alongside comrades from RMT, UNITE, PCS, CWU to name but a few. We provide advice, support and guidance to working class people who want to pop in for help. TUIC is building a positive reputation and establishing itself as a useful resource in our communities.

The Branch choosing to purchase the Big Mac at the end of its lease has cemented its commitment to providing top class service to our members in the P&V Sector as this provides us with a private space to meet with members in our communities and outside workplaces.

Derek Durkin, Carolyn Casey & Debbie Westwood



Health and Well Being Officer Report

Well what a year! It has been a really good year for the Branch Health and Wellbeing Team. We

have been able to see more members and stewards over the same time period than we did last year. We are seeing a diverse range of people from all sections of NHS Lothian with a very wide range of issues but all have one common factor - work! The demands placed on members of staff is immense and is coupled with staff shortages where our members are having to do more work with less staff. In addition to these workplace stressors there is the ongoing cost of living crisis with no sense of this being abated in the near future.

All of the above can cause stress and anxiety that can impact on relationships at work and home. As stress tips into the home a work-life balance becomes non-existent. Then add the pressure of people struggling to keep their heads above water in this cost of living crisis.



Our Branch Health and Wellbeing Programme, which is free to all UNISON LHB members, is welcomed by our members and supported by their managers. Our Coaches listen and talk openly with those that come for the Coaching sessions. They advocate the need for self care and not being afraid to ask for support. It's also about setting boundaries when others are continuing to ask too much of you. "ITS OK TO SAY NO"! This includes saying no at work and having the ability to question and raise concerns. These sessions have helped all those that have come to us through the coaching service based on the feedback we have received.



We held two Workshops this year but intend to do more in 2024. Valerie and Lisa will both deliver separate Workshops and this will allow us to increase their frequency and the ability to reach more people before they get to a stage where they need in-depth coaching. The Workshops focus on members having the right tools in their box to be able to look after themselves. Attending a Workshop can also give people the courage to come forward for the 1:1 coaching. The Workshops always have a guest speaker who has been through the coaching sessions, as we believe listening to someone with a lived experience is much more profound and affective than just examples.

The Branch is very proud to have Valerie and Lisa fully trained and on board, in addition to myself. Having three fully trained Coaches has allowed us to deliver coaching on four days of the week rather than the one day we were previously delivering on. Whilst the coaching is confidential they can be difficult sessions for all and having a team allows us

to debrief and support the development of the service.

Demand is increasing for support services across NHS Lothian and there are waiting lists for many of these services. As a Branch we are extremely proud to bring this service to our members.

By October 2023 we had seen 25 members for individual 10 sessions of coaching. The members attending all reported that they had benefited from increased self esteem and confidence. Many are getting back to, or are being more productive in the workplace. Best of all these members have found a work life balance and learned how to take care of themselves. Members reported being less stressed having a far more positive outlook on life, with their families also noticing a positive difference in their mood and health.

Going forward and in the coming year the 10-week coaching sessions will continue and we will work to deliver many more Workshops. We intend on developing short relaxation/meditation audios in 2024 that can be downloaded by our members. We will also develop and deliver a self care booklet.



I want to thank the Lothian Health Branch for believing in and supporting this initiative. I want to thank Valerie and Lisa for all their hard work and the dedication they give to the Health and Wellbeing service whilst carrying on with their other work within the Branch

Debbie Reilly – Health and Wellbeing Officer

Environmental/ Sustainability

The WHO announced we are facing the “era of global boiling” at the end of July this year, which I reiterated to the branch in the August meeting. “Climate change is real, destructive and an absolute emergency.” says Unison General Secretary Christine McAnea.

The Climate crisis is escalating and in response so is the global movement for climate justice. Each Unison branch now has the opportunity to support an environmental officer and also have a dedicated Green Unison week available to all members. Unison Lothian Health Branch was one of the first in Scotland to adopt the role of Environmental Officer into its Constitution.

NHS Lothian has acknowledged the Climate Emergency, but the urgency that climate change demands has not been recognised by many employers or governments. Unison members are on the front line and the effects of climate change will be felt by us as healthcare providers first.

This year's Unison Green Week theme was “Green washing”, as governments continue to pay lip service but are not making real progress.

I have continued in a partnership capacity to sit on the Sustainability and Development Management Group. I will hold NHS Lothian to account regarding issues such as carbon reductions, particularly given the reductions are largely due to changes in the National grid providing more renewable energy sources and not through significant changes from within NHSL. Furthermore I continue to ask how NHS members' contributions to their pensions can be disinvested from fossil fuels and war. Currently NHS workers have a guaranteed pension from the government and have no influence on how their pension fund is being used.

I continue to liaise with local groups, Edinburgh Climate Coalition and attended the End Fossil Fuels protest march on the 16th of September in Central Edinburgh. It has been

a very busy time for me and the branch activists. We have attended many protests against injustices across the world. We all should be concerned that any type of conflict in the Middle East does not detract from our commitments to focus on the climate emergency. We have to sustain our drive to minimise climate damage and protect/compensate the victims of global warming. In the long run, without intervention and help, climate change will kill and damage more people than current conflicts. We must have effective campaigns on both fronts. Of course, today's conflicts are generating alarming volumes of GHGs. So ending them is doubly important and very urgent.

I will continue to fight for a greener, cleaner world and workplace in 2024

Tamzyn MacFarlane – Environmental Officer

Joint Women's Officer Report

2023 has been a strange year! Coming out of COVID restrictions has had its challenges for both Norma and Tracy, as a result we have been unable to fulfil many of our commitments to our Women Members and for that we are sorry. We promise to do better next year.

We have been very fortunate to be able to manage a significant budget from the Branch, however for the third year running, we have been unable to spend this!

We have some amazing plans for the coming year.

We will compile a list of Women members in the Branch and create regular news updates for you, our Women members.

We will ask our members what type of meetings they want to return to i.e. online, in person and when they would like these to take place e.g. lunchtime, weekend or evening.

We will promote existing learning and development and also ask our members what learning and education they would like the Branch to provide.

We will discuss Women events with other UNISON Branches in the Edinburgh area- and hope to work with other sectors of UNISON to achieve this.



We will look to establishing a quarterly event for our Women members online-looking at key issues affecting our Women Members including: Menopause and Pensions

We continue to commit to working together with all of the SOG leads, where appropriate.

Tracy attended a spectacular talk on a new service that is being provided to victims of sexual assault in Lothian- Sexual Assault Response Coordination Service (SARCS). SARCS is a national service, being hosted and delivered in NHS Lothian. She promoted this to NHS Lothian's Networks. At the time of writing this, Tracy is glad to report that it will be the focus at each of the staff networks- BME, Women's, LGBT+ and DEN. Tracy would like to see this as a presentation at one of our Steward committees.

Norma, Tracy and Susan Sim attended National Women's Conference, which was held in Bournemouth in February 2023. What an excellent conference it was!

We were very proud to witness our own Susan Sim fight her nerves to support a motion at Conference, while Tracy couldn't bypass her nerves to get off her seat!

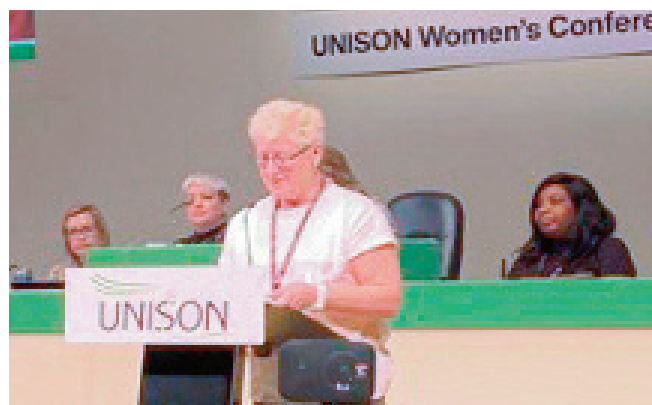
We were fortunate to meet and talk to Christina McNamee, who opened the Conference. Its fair to say that this made the first day of Conference for us!

This year, Tracy has been elected by the Scottish Region, to sit on the Standing Orders of the Women's committee and will be

attending Women's Conference in that capacity! A role she has been told she will be good at and is looking forward to taking on the challenge!

Norma and Tracy will be attending the Branch development days in October 2023, and hope to influence the work plan for 2024.

Norma is currently representing the Scottish Region women's group on the National Women's Committee where support for staff working in abortion services and buffer zones to protect patients and workers forms part of the NWC workplan having been carried at this year's NW conference. The Scottish Region motion also carried at 2022 conference 'Never forget to Lift as you rise' is something that Tracy and Norma feel passionate about. A part of this calls on self-organised groups to develop a programme which will support and mentor women activists into leadership roles in branches and regions recognising the different experiences of women.



We attended our most recent branch development days and had some excellent feedback on how we could improve our involvement with our women members. We are reviewing our work plan to look at different ways of engaging with members and seeking women's views on what matters to them and what support that they may need in the workplace. There has been much discussion around the menopause and how women continue to be adversely cared for by employers through current sickness absence management processes. Nationally there are likely to be some legal challenges on this and we will keep our members informed. We would like to work together to support activists who are supporting women to be fully informed on how best to support women at this time.

Our branch membership is made up of 81% women members. Our workplan will very much be focused around supporting our women members to be supported be infirmed and to get involved.

Please join Tracy and Norma in making 2024 Our Women Members' Year. Your UNISON Branch needs you- please join us in making your Branch even stronger still!

Norma Black - Joint Women's Officer
Tracy McBurnie - Joint Women's Officer

Regional Organiser Report

It is a privilege to write this report in my second year as the branch's Regional Organiser.

UNISON Lothian Health branch has an excellent reputation as one the most dynamic, active, and successful branches of UNISON. It is an honour to work with you, your local activists and branch leadership.

My role as Regional Organiser is focused on supporting your branch activists in their work representing members and their delivery of the union's objectives.



Priorities this year have included:

- Improving member representation through training and mentoring of local Stewards
- Growing the branch's political influence by engaging with local MPs, MSPs and Councillors.
- Building branch knowledge and skills in areas such as Pensions and Professional Registration case work.

- Growing the branch by increasing membership and recruiting new activists.
- Creating opportunities for future leaders in the branch

A less glamorous side to my role is working with branches to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our activity. This has included the introduction of new technologies such as an online case management system and communication platforms to improve contact with members.

Reflecting on 2023, your branch continues to lead the way in UNISON on campaigning, recruitment and representing members. Your branch leadership never shy away from new challenges and are willing to try different ways of working in the pursuit of achieving better outcomes for members.

I would like to thank all the Stewards and Officers for their dedicated work. UNISON would not be the union it is today without your leadership.

John Hackett – Regional Organiser

REAS (Royal Edinburgh Hospital & Associated Services) AGM Report 2023

This year has seen our Stewards within REAS and across the Branch incredibly busy with Pay Campaigns, International days, Recruitment Fairs and attending many community events across the region.

REAS Team:

The REAS team have had a successful year with many members seeking representation across all levels from PAW/Investigation to Whistle blowing. The team have worked hard in ensuring our members get the representation they have come to expect from UNISON Lothian Health Branch.

Comings & Goings:

Last year we said goodbye to Paul Marah & this year we said hello to George Grime. George has eased into his role of the Branch Administrator seamlessly and has become an invaluable part of the team. Thanks for your support this year George.

Barbara as ever works tirelessly behind the scenes helping with all campaigns/issues...

too many to list but I am sure the whole Branch as well as the team at REAS would like to thank her for all her hard work

At the end of last year our popular Steward Reg Lloyd moved to the RIE. To say he will be missed would be an understatement but we are sure his wealth of knowledge and experience will be welcomed by our colleagues at RIE. Good luck Reg and thank you for your hard work.

Andrew King has progressed really well and is now our Deputy Lead Steward so congratulations to him. Andy has proved to be an invaluable support to me and our members here & with succession planning in mind ... watch this space!! We also have a new addition to the team in Gordon McGregor, a veteran CCN at the REH, and we are really pleased to have him join us.



Achievements and Campaigns

At the end of last year the Branch organised and ran staff food banks across all sites. Within REAS this was organised and staffed by Andrew king. This ran until the end of February and the response from staff was incredibly humbling and moving. It is fair to say it was a success.

This year our beloved NHS turned 75. At the REH we organised and staffed the only birthday party on site. The staff enjoyed their cake and loved telling stories about their time and involvement with the NHS.

We purchased and placed 4 new notice boards across the site to let members know about upcoming events and campaigns as well as containing QR codes for prospective members to join online.

Our international days at REAS have been very well received with only positive feedback from staff about UNISON being the only visible UNION on these days.

Despite their base being moved from REAS Irene and Ian have been doing a stellar job with recruitment. Irene has been keeping us stocked up with recruitment goodies and Ian has been on fire with finding us new members. Thank you both for your hard work and dedication.

We have now managed to secure the office here exclusively for UNISON members and have invested in new signage... so you can't miss us!!!

On a personal note along with the Lead role here I have also taken up the Assistant Branch Secretary post which has proved enjoyable but time consuming so I would like to thank all of my colleagues in our office for their support. I am incredibly grateful.

With that in mind can I thank all Stewards who have attended our HR Update sessions at Newhailes. These have proved popular and the feedback has been positive so these will continue.

Grace Forrest – UNISON Office, REH



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