

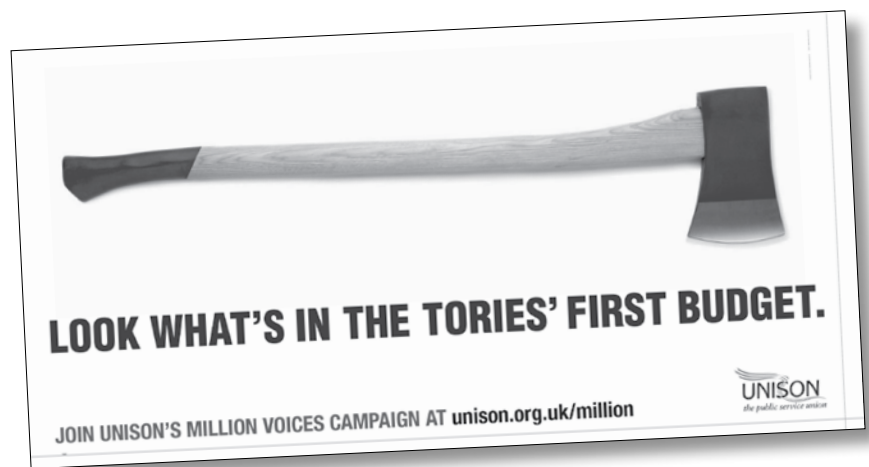
Don't Con-Dem young people!

The Con-Dem government wasted no time in going on the attack against our public services, public sector jobs, public sector pensions, and our trade unions.

The Treasury has predicted that around 600,000 jobs will be cut from the public sector, and up to 700,000 in the private sector.

Shocking ministerial announcements about cuts to budgets; news of service closures; job losses; vicious attacks on so-called 'gold-plated' public sector pensions – it's all in a day's work for this government and their allies. This is a lashed-up coalition that no-one actually voted for, and which includes Liberal Democrat politicians who have not simply abandoned key policies but have done a complete u-turn on them.

And it is simply not true that we are 'all in this together'. A Fabian Society report finds that the average cut in public spending on the poorest tenth of households represents a staggering 20.5% of their household income. For the richest tenth it is equivalent to just 1.6%. All in it together?



Young people have been targeted to be among those who will feel the impact of these cuts most keenly: the budget statement, its details, and subsequent announcements show a devastating programme of attacks on young people who are unemployed, and also those in education, in training, and in work. All this at a time when 1 in 4 young people are not in employment, education, or training – nearly double the number predicted by the government.

It is a very grim picture. But this situation is precisely what trade unions are here for: to defend our public services, our jobs, and our pensions.

“Dave Prentis called it right at national conference when he said ‘now is our time’,” said Graham Smith, Chair of the National Young Members Forum. “We’re ready to step up to the mark when action is required. And we will do it in a

disciplined and effective way that shows we mean business as we take on the biggest fight of our lives. It’s really important that we get our message out there – demolishing the lies and myths of the Con-Dem approach; recruiting and organising members to defend our services and ourselves; building the Million Voices campaign. We say: stop cutting vital public services; stop cutting public service jobs; cut bankers’ bonuses and bring in a Robin Hood tax; keep services in-house, instead of paying consultants; cut out the privatisation profiteers. The government has a duty to invest in young people, and not to consign them to the scrapheap.”

Keep up to date with UNISON's campaigning against the cuts at: unison.org.uk/million.

Bournemouth bowled over by young members

Almost a hundred young members – delegates and visitors – took part in National Delegate Conference, making a big impact in some of the key debates.

There is more detail on the Conference in other UNISON publications, but here's some of the young members' highlights.

Lisa Kelly (right), NYMF delegate to conference, moved the motion on the next generations of UNISON members, linking it with the importance to show leadership in campaigning against cuts in further and higher education. "We are facing the greatest challenge ever as the Con-Dem government swings its axe on our public services, and the impact in particular on young people's education will be terrible. But we have to recognise this as an opportunity to work with our members and young people especially in providing a lead in campaigning against the cuts in further and higher education."



10-pin bowling!

Young members (above) took the opportunity to relax with a spot of 10-pin bowling.

Lisa Kelly

fringe meeting

A fringe meeting (above) on youth unemployment raised the profile of the issue among delegates. Wendy Nicholls from the NEC chaired the meeting, and was joined on the panel by Matt Dykes (TUC), Roger McKenzie (Regional Secretary UNISON West Midlands), Nigel Szymczyk (Chair, UNISON's Connexions Committee), and Graham Smith (Chair, UNISON National Young Members Forum). Sadly conference ran out of time to debate the motion itself, but it is being considered by the National Executive Council.

Graham Smith (left), NYMF chairperson, spoke in support of a motion calling for elder abuse to be a recognised criminal offence.



Graham Smith

HONORARY YOUNG MEMBER!

It's always good to build links across the generations and young members are delighted to have had consistent support from the Retired Members organisation.

Lillie McNaughton, National Retired Members Committee delegate, spoke in support of the motion on the next generations of UNISON members, even referencing the Whitney Houston song 'The Greatest Love of All' saying "I believe that young members are our future"!

Lillie, 81 this coming November, has been one of our strongest supporters. She has spoken regularly in support of young members at conference. Her support led to the proposal that Lillie become an honorary young member.

Lillie lives in Greenock and was a communications operator for Strathclyde Police until she retired in the early nineties. Before Strathclyde region broke up in 1996 she was police convenor within the Strathclyde region branch of UNISON, a branch of some 26,000 members. Strathclyde Police and Fire branch was formed, and at that time Lillie volunteered to help out in the office 2 days per week with filing, and admin, etc. She continues to do this today but is also retired members officer and welfare officer for the branch.

Lillie also sits on the Scottish Retired Members Committee and the National Retired Members Committee. She first spoke at National Delegate Conference three years ago at the young age of 77! Lillie is a huge fan of the young members and constantly worries about their futures particularly when it comes to pensions.



Meet Martin Nelson

Martin is 24 years old, works as a Nursing Assistant and recently won the 'Aim Higher' vocational champion award 2010. He is a member of the Sefton Health branch in the North West.

Tell us a little about your job

As a nursing assistant my job is supporting nurses by doing patient care – feeding, helping with hygiene and physical observations like blood pressure. The patients are the best bit of my job, that day-to-day contact. I suppose it's also like helping vulnerable members at times. One thing we could do with though is more staff. It's a struggle to get everything done to the highest standard and more staff would mean a better standard of service.

How did you get involved in UNISON?

Well, like a lot of young people I suspect, I started off feeling 'What's the point? What's in it for me?' But gradually I saw how UNISON helped and it helped represent me on a couple of matters. Then I got elected as a steward and did my basic steward training, and this year I got elected to the young members post at our AGM. I now know what former UNISON President Gerry Gallagher's meant when he said at conference 'I owe the union everything, the union owes me nothing' and by getting involved I feel I'm giving something back.

What was the 'Aim Higher' award for?

Funnily enough, I was at home asleep when they phoned me to tell me I had won the award, and still half-asleep I had to ask what it was for! Basically it's to recognise that I'm the person on our advanced apprenticeship scheme who has



shown most improvement. I've recently completed the apprenticeship in health and social care, and came out of it with a range of certificates up to NVQ level 3, and I can now get on to do nurse training.

Tell us about something you've done in your branch?

It's not specifically young members work, but I was proud of the work I did to raise awareness of ovarian cancer. My mum died of it when I was 16. At conference last year there was a debate about the issue and although I

was only there as a visitor I wrote a speech for our delegate who spoke in support. After that I decided to run an awareness day involving charities at my workplace. It was so successful that the members want to run it again this year.

What's next for you?

Organising young members in my branch. I'm also going to Disabled members conference on behalf of young members. But who knows? One day I might even be UNISON President!

Thanks Martin, and good luck.



News round-up

Young Members NEC seat – *use your vote!*

There will be a by-election for the young members seat on the NEC. This will be your chance to decide who speaks for young members on the union's most important committee. Make sure you use your vote.

The National Young Members Forum (NYMF) has nominated NYMF chairperson Graham Smith to stand for this post. The nomination period will probably have closed by the time this newsletter reaches you, but the election period itself runs from 27 September to 5pm 22 October. More details about the election deadlines etc can be found at: unison.org.uk/elections/pages_view.asp?did=11411.

Young members campaigning

UNISON's young members are campaigning this year under the slogan 'A million voices for decent and properly – paid jobs for all'. This will be the 'umbrella' theme which will bring together the NYMF's work around the national minimum wage, public service cuts, youth unemployment and pensions. Watch out for news on our campaigning and let us know if you have ideas about what young members' campaigning is happening in your branch at: young.members@unison.co.uk

Young Members on Facebook

Want to chat with other young members about the issues in your workplace? Got some good ideas for recruiting and organising young members you want to share with others? There's now an informal young UNISON facebook group at facebook.com/youngunison

It's another good way of staying in touch with people and finding out what's going on for young members. It's not a formal UNISON-moderated page and all we ask is that people who decide to contribute remember that it's about being inclusive and welcoming to all young UNISON members.

General Secretary election

The NYMF nominated Dave Prentis for this post and are pleased to report that Dave was successfully elected!

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