



Edinburgh TUC Anti Cuts Newsletter March 2012

Protest Meeting Against Cuts in Library Services

On 5th March a protest meeting was held in the McDonald Road Library regarding cuts in Edinburgh library services. It was organised by East Edinburgh Save Our Services and Greater Leith Against the Cuts.

Speakers called for libraries to be defended in an era of austerity. A case was put forward that funding for libraries services needs to be increased when youth unemployment was rising and a drop in income was denying people easy access to the internet. As a UNISON speaker, a librarian, said:

“ If you cannot afford a key book for your studies and the library can't afford to buy it either how are you to achieve your full potential? If the library is not open what can you do? And if skilled library staff are not available because jobs have been cut or downgraded, the service will be less effective. Access to knowledge and information is the key to a fair society and a well educated population will be the key to a better economy. And for that we need libraries - and librarians.”

Library services are, short sightedly, being cut all over Scotland. Opening hours are being cut by 17% in Falkirk, half the librarians posts are being axed in Glasgow. In Dumfries and Galloway the libraries materials budget is being cut by 25%. In Edinburgh there is a shortfall of £ 200k in the projected budget for 2012/2013.

Anti Tory March and Rally in Troon

On Saturday 24th March campaigners from Edinburgh travelled to Troon to join an STUC protest outside outside the Scottish Tory Party Conference. The focus of the march and rally was youth unemployment. This theme highlights the failure of the main Tory pledge that public sector jobs would

be replaced by private sector jobs. This has not happened and will not happen under the ConDem government. In the meantime young people cannot get entry level jobs. The quality of jobs are falling.



There are few full time jobs and too many jobs with no guaranteed working week.

Young people were prominent on the march many sporting Panda Masks to make the point that there is one Tory MP in Scotland and two Pandas.

It is hard to get a reliable report on what the Tories



were discussing at their conference. Apparently there was a lot of gloom about their electoral prospects. The gloom was worsened by the developing scandal of what a donation can buy in terms of a cosy chat with David and Samantha plus an open door to the Tory Government's Policy Committee.

Donations and Privatisation

The film made by the undercover reporters showed how the Tories did their privatisation business. Access to the PM was guaranteed if you paid your £250k and if the objective of your lobbying was possibly buying the Royal Mail.



SUPPORT THE EDINBURGH ANTI CUTS ALLIANCE (EACA)

Edinburgh Trade Union Council invites you to support the Alliance. You can show your support in various ways:

** Join our email network to receive newsletters and hear about campaign activities and events. Email: info-etuc@btconnect.com*

** Website: <http://edinburghagainstcuts.org.uk/>*

** Or give us a ring at 0131 556 3006.*

Home care for elderly branded 'shocking and disgraceful' - BBC Report - 16th March 2012

The standards of care provided for older people in their homes in the UK has been labelled "shocking and disgraceful" by 'Which'.

Which? found cases of missed visits, food left out of reach, medication not given and people being left in soiled beds during its investigation. It concluded too many faced a "constant battle" to just get the basic help. The UK Home Care Association said it was never acceptable for people to experience rushed or inadequate care.

Which? said the findings - based on a survey and diaries kept by the elderly - showed the system needed reform. More than 500,000 people rely on help at home with activities such as washing and dressing. These include both people who get council-funded care and those who pay for it themselves.

While Which? said there were some examples of excellent care, it claimed too many were being poorly served. The group asked 30 people to keep diaries over the course of a week detailing their experiences.

Home care: 'So useless I told them to leave'

One elderly lady was left alone in the dark for hours unable to find food or drink. Another was left without a walking frame so she was unable to get to the bathroom and one man was not given vital medication for his diabetes.

The poll, of nearly 1,000 people, found one of the most common complaints was missed or rushed visits. Nearly half of respondents said visits had been missed in the last six months with most not being warned in advance.

One daughter said: "They missed a day just after Christmas. I covered, but mum didn't contact me until early evening by which time she needed a lot of cleaning up. You wonder about the elderly with no relatives."

Which? said the situation was only likely to get worse as councils increasingly squeeze funding. This report is just the latest in a series that has highlighted the struggle the elderly are facing.

At the end of last year the Equality and Human Rights Commission said standards were so bad they even breached human rights.

Which? executive director Richard Lloyd said: "Our investigation found some disgraceful examples of care with elderly people given little time or respect. The government can no longer claim to be shocked as report after report highlights the pitiful state of care for older people." And Michelle Mitchell, of Age UK, said the system was putting the "health and dignity of older people at risk".

The UK Home Care Association, which represents the agencies which provide many of the services, said its members were increasingly under pressure to cut the length of visits by councils wanting to save money. Local councils need to place the needs of elderly and disabled people at the forefront in the current economic climate, to avoid the concerning picture described in today's report.

We need a long hard look at the way Home Care for the elderly and disabled services are evolving in Edinburgh so that an unacceptable level is not reached - as it has in other parts of the UK.