



Edinburgh TUC Anti Cuts Newsletter January 2014

Osborne threatens the UK with further Austerity - £ 12 billion more from the welfare benefits budget.

Osborne shows just how class biased are the Tories. They want working people to bear an even greater load of austerity. Their ally Clegg now says that what the Chancellor is proposing is grossly unfair.

It is said that the HMRC could collect £35 billion in tax if it had the resources to deal with tax avoidance and evasion by the likes of businesses and the rich. Avoidance and evasion by businesses and wealthy individuals dwarfs petty fraud by rogue benefit claimants.

“Oh No!” - Scottish Tories to come to Edinburgh in March 2014

The Scottish Conservatives are having their conference in Edinburgh this year. It will be held at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre and will last for three days from Friday 14th March to Sunday 16th March. We are expected to be ‘honoured’ by the presence of Cameron, Osborne and IDS.

People have started planning to give the Tories the Edinburgh welcome that they deserve. It is expected there will be a trade union sponsored all Scottish demonstration on Saturday 15th.

There will be other events and protests organised to highlight their attacks on the low paid and the welfare state, including benefits and social care, on people with disabilities and their obnoxious policies regarding migrant workers.

We expect that our February Newsletter will have details of events in which you can participate.

Lobby the City Council on 13th February

The City of Edinburgh Council will be setting its budget for 2014/2015 at a full Council meeting on Thursday 13/2/14. The meeting will start at 10.00am.

Edinburgh TUC will be applying for a deputation to be heard by the Council to protest about the impact of austerity on Council finances and Council services. We call on the local trade union movement to support our deputation by lobbying their Councillors on the day and by packing out the public gallery. The lobby will be from 9 am to 9.45 am.

We are calling on our affiliated trade union branches to also apply for deputations to the Council to highlight the way austerity is hitting their members and the particular services in which they work.

It is the trade union movement’s view that the main impact of cuts has so far been on our members wages, terms and conditions. The worst affected are those members who are relatively low paid.

The future of Austerity

In its financial projections the City Council assumes that austerity will apply for the next four years. If that were to happen, and the money the Council gets from the Scottish Government continues to be cut, then vital services will be eroded. The services in danger include primary schools and services to the elderly.

We will be asking the Council, in the run up to the General Election in 2015 and a Scottish election in 2016, to represent the people of Edinburgh by joining us in campaigning against austerity and for decent services. We will be asking them to campaign against a low wage economy.

Come to our planning meeting on Thursday 16th January at 6.30 pm in the Augustine Church, George IV Bridge. Help us build the lobby.



THE EDINBURGH ANTI CUTS ALLIANCE

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

Tax Inspectors find that social care providers are flouting minimum wage rules

HMRC has produced a report on NMW enforcement over the period 2011/2013. They looked at 224 employers in England that provide residential and domiciliary care services.

183 investigations into employers have been completed. It has been found that 48% of these employer are not in compliance with regulations. £338k arrears of pay is owed to 2443 workers.

The reasons for failure to pay the NMW were:

a) in domiciliary care

- * **unpaid training time**
- * **unpaid travelling time between appointments**
- * **hourly rate below NMW rate**
- * **incorrect use of apprentice rates**

b) in residential care

- * **a failure to pay workers for all working time**
- * **hourly rate below NMW rate**
- * **a lack of awareness of accommodation offset rules and their effect on NMW pay calculations**
- * **incorrect use of apprentice rates**

The report identified how poor record keeping by employers is used to obscure NMW violations.

Spokespersons for employers blamed cuts in council funding for the non compliance. They said

that more and more care firms have little option but to break the law by paying below the NMW.

Although the UK Government say that all employers should obey the law it is their austerity policies that are responsible for the current situation.

We call for the HMRC to do a similar investigation in Scotland as we believe that there are many non compliant firms here.

Foodbank Demand Increases

UK Foodbanks helped 129,000 in 2011/2012 and 350,000 in 2012/2013. There are now 13 million people in the UK below the official poverty line.

Half of those using Foodbanks are working but their wages are too low to sustain them and their families.

Other major factors for users are cuts in welfare benefits or delays in paying benefits.

Residential Workers Strike Against Cuts

Residential workers in Glasgow City Council, who work in fifteen older people residential units will be on strike on Tuesday 14 and Wednesday 15 January, with action beginning late on the evening of Monday 13 January at 10pm. The UNISON union members are resisting council plans to cut pay, change job roles and introduce new twelve and a half hour shifts.

The introduction of the new shift rotas will result in 7% wage cuts for 182 workers, out of a workforce of just over 500. 122 full time workers face losing £1495 per year and 60 part timers £794 per year.

UNISON says:

“The Council have tried to bully workers into agreeing to the wage cuts and changes on an individual basis. The Council has been unwilling to reach an agreement with the trade union.

UNISON members do not take this strike action lightly but have been left with no alternative.

The purpose of the strike action is to force the Council to reach a negotiated settlement acceptable to UNISON members.”

<http://uniteresist.org/2014/01/residential-workers-in-glasgow-city-council-to-strike-48-hours-from-10pm-monday-13-january/>