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# UNISON News

CITY OF EDINBURGH BRANCH

## 26 April pensions strike suspended

**A** breakthrough in negotiations between the joint unions and local government employers at UK level has led to suspending the UK action on 25-27 April, including the Scottish strike on 26 April.

Scottish branches are due to meet on 24 April to hear an update on talks.

*UNISON's Industrial Action committee agreed to suspend the strike action because the joint union/LGA statement provides a framework for negotiations on the future of the pension scheme and full protection for existing scheme members.*

Separate discussions are taking place in Scotland with the Scottish Executive, the SPPA and CoSLA to build on this UK position and resolve the matter here. Further information should be available at the branches meeting on the 24 April.

Matt Smith, UNISON's Scottish Secretary said; "We welcome the shift in the employer's position, and have suspended action to allow progress in the talks in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. There is a lot of detailed work and



**The commitment and determination shown by members on 28 March has brought these talks**

negotiations to be done over the coming weeks."

*"The show of solidarity in the action on March 28 and the likelihood of similar support on 26 April has achieved this breakthrough.*

"We trust that employers and government throughout the UK will use this time to establish protection for LGPS members that mirrors that received by other public sector workers."

**Meat Hygiene:** The week long threatened strike of meat inspectors across the UK kick-started the offer of

talks from English employers and the UK government.

UNISON's Scottish Council congratulated the members of the MHS in Scotland for their solid commitment to the action and resistance to threats, intimidation and smears, voiced by the MHS and the meat industry.

John Stevenson, UNISON's Edinburgh chair said "It is no accident that this move to talks came on the eve of a key strike of key staff. MHS members deserve our thanks and congratulations for leveraging this step forward.

## Well done and thanks

Edinburgh Branch Secretary George Lee has thanked members for turning out in their thousands on the 28 March strike.

"That show of anger and strength is what has kick-started talks again.

"There is a deadline of May on these talks. It makes sense to suspend action to allow talks to proceed but the employers must be well aware that our members are ready to act again if needed".

This was echoed by John Stevenson, branch spokesperson on pensions.

"You were brilliant on 28 March. From the groups on picket lines throughout the city, to those helping out in the branch office and the thousands who turned out in the rain - and with no buses - to the march and rally."

## What happens next?

**The strike has been suspended because, for the first time, protection for existing staff is on the table - along with long term discussions about the future of the pensions funds.**

Branches across Scotland will meet on 24 April (John Stevenson and Irene Stout are the Edinburgh reps) to hear an update on the talks at UK level and to discuss developments in at a Scottish level.

The Branch will report back to members as soon as possible after that.