

Branch Meeting

**Thursday
30th
June
6.30 p.m.**

STUC
333 Woodlands Road
Glasgow
G3 6NG



Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, addressing the recent amicus policy conference (Photo courtesy Donald Sime)

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- **Glasgow defies health minister**
- **NHS staff sick of change**
- **Union leader vindicated**

Audit Report Slams Scottish NHS

The audit committee of the Scottish Parliament has published a report which is highly critical of the NHS in Scotland. It queries whether pay modernisation (the new consultant contract and Agenda for Change) properly reflects Scotland's needs and is 'not convinced' that the new consultant contract gives value for money.

Another criticism is that health boards are using non-recurring funds to balance the books and that this is giving a false picture of a health service that appears to be in

financial balance. Overall, the report claims that the Scottish NHS is not seeing enough improvement from significant extra investment.

Health minister Andy Kerr has rejected the criticisms stating that the report is out of date and fails to take into account improvements made in 2003-04.

It is ironic that this report points out the issues which the NHS faced in 2003 and is issued in the week following the announcement of waiting times crashing down, Mr Kerr said.

Greater Glasgow Labs Under Attack Yet Again

With a regularity which rivals that of the sun rising, Great Glasgow NHS Board publishes plans to reform/reorganise/modernise/whatever the laboratory services in Glasgow. The latest ill-judged plans follow a process in which the much vaunted partnership involvement has been described as 'flawed', 'token' and 'downright farcical'. Basically, the proposals would reduce the current laboratory service provision with Haematology, Biochemistry and Microbiology being provided from two sites (the Southern General and

the Royal Infirmary) and Pathology centralised at one (the Southern General). Biochemistry and Haematology would have essential services laboratories at Gartnavel General and the planned ACADs, with Pathology having hot labs at Gartnavel General, Royal Infirmary and the ACADs.

The proposals include shift systems with Biochemistry, Microbiology and Haematology normal hours being 8am to 10 pm (Pathology 8 am to 8pm Mon-Fri, plus Sat am).

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Glasgow defies health minister

Greater Glasgow NHS Board is defying the orders of Scottish health minister Andy Kerr. Despite explicit instructions that all organisations in NHS Scotland must meet or exceed the standards set out in PIN publications, Glasgow is refusing to implement the PIN policy on parental leave. The policy allows parents of children aged under 14 years to take 4 weeks paid leave per child (that's 4 weeks over the 14 years, not 4 weeks per year!). A leading member of Glasgow Health Branch applied for 1 week of parental leave and was refused by his line manager. A formal grievance hearing followed but this too refused to follow the instructions of the minister of health. The matter was then reported to amicus Regional Officer Michael Fuller, who has passed the case to the union's legal advisors. Meanwhile, the question remains, how long will Andy Kerr tolerate Greater Glasgow's wilful defiance?

NHS staff 'sick to death' of change

According to a report carried out for the (English) Department of Health, NHS staff are 'sick to death of change being rammed down our throats'. Although the survey was carried out in England, the responses will no doubt be familiar to staff employed by NHS Scotland. The report, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, warns that pace of change, workload pressures and the development of a tick box culture have created negativity and resistance to change.

Union leader vindicated as CPS drops charges

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has decided to drop charges of criminal damage against the Secretary of Oldham Trades Union Council Martin Gleeson. The incident arose on Holocaust Memorial Day when members of the British National Party (BNP) gatecrashed an event in Oldham and, despite the organisations well known anti-Semitic views, laid a wreath with the BNP logo beside the official ones. Mr Gleeson was appalled at the offence being caused, as some of the audience were of Jewish heritage and had lost family members in the Nazi Holocaust. In order to hide the BNP logo, he laid the wreath from Oldham TUC on top of the offending one. Subsequently, the BNP complained to the police and Mr Gleeson was arrested, held in custody for 7 hours and charged with criminal damage. The incident produced a wave of protests from Europe, Canada and the USA, with the CPS eventually deciding to not proceed with the charge.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Branch Secretary Maureen Jenkins, who recently achieved registration as a Biomedical Scientist with the Health Professions Council.

Branch Meeting Thursday 30th June

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of previous meeting and arising.
3. Correspondence.
4. NEC proposals on branch reform
5. Reports.
6. Motions.
7. A.O.C.B.

The next meeting of the Branch will be held on Tuesday 30th August at 6.30 p.m. All meetings are held in the Scottish Trade Union Congress, 333 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6NG.
(Tea, coffee & biscuits 6.15 p.m.)

