

Item 1 – Letter from Unite the Union to Angela Constance MSP

John Smith House
145-165 West Regent
Street
Glasgow
G2 4RZ

Tel: 0141 404 5424



SCOTLAND

12th March 2024

Angela Constance
The Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear Councillor

GEWA/Scotland

I write to you as Unite industrial officer representing thirteen women employed by Glasgow East Women's Aid that were suspended in October 2023 amid allegations of bullying that led to workers being targeted on the grounds related to their trade union activities. Unite was able to secure interim relief in a major legal victory last November on behalf of five of the workers who were dismissed and subsequently reinstated in January 2024.

I can further advise, in the latest development, that Unite members at GEWA were given no notification or consulted prior to the Easterhouse based organisation being placed into administration on 29/2/24. Indeed, Unite first heard that GEWA had been placed into administration through media sources.

The workers have reported to me that they have been told 'unofficially' that the decision to place GEWA in administration was triggered by funds being cut or withheld by the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council. I am however aware that the service continues to operate in some capacity and is being managed by Glasgow Women's Aid.

I have tried in vain to contact GEWA management for clarification on the funding situation as it has been claimed that a lack of funding is the root cause of the organisation going into administration. I have also sought to find out from them whether the service is now being funded and managed by Glasgow Women's Aid which has been suggested, however I have been met with a wall of silence.

As GEWA is in receipt of significant public funds Unite would wish your intervention to firstly seek clarification and confirmation whether what is being suggested vis a vis funding cuts, is the case and, secondly, if so, we are requesting that these funds be restored in order that the women affected can be reinstated and get back to work.

Item 1 cont.

Contd/ 2

This issue raises a number of potential reputational and legal issues for all involved in the demise of the service including the loss of this vital protection for end users, unfair dismissal claims for employees, claims for protective awards and questions around the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment Regs) if the service is still in operation and questions as to any relationship between the recent dismissals from employment and the trades dispute of last year.

To finish, I would like to put on record that Unite the union find the treatment of this group of women workers, involved in supporting vulnerable women in Glasgow's East End, despicable and the arrogant attitude of GEWA management in refusing to engage with Unite to resolve this matter, appalling.

I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss this situation with you and look forward to hearing from you in early course.

Yours sincerely



Item 2 – Email from Unite the Union to Angela Constance MSP

Angela Constance
The Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

12th March 2024

Dear Justice Minister

GEWA/Scotland

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Yours sincerely

<redacted>

<redacted>

Item 3 – Letter from Unite the Union to Neil Gray MSP

22 York Place
Edinburgh
EH1 3EP

Scottish Secretary
Derek Thomson

Tel: 0131 558 9676
Fax: 0845 364 9395

REGION SCOTLAND



15th December 2023

Neil Gray MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Sent by email: Neil.Gray.msp@parliament.scot

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Thank you for your time on Tuesday meeting with STUC representatives to discuss Fair Work and how we can strengthen the impact of the Fair Work measures implemented by the Scottish Government such as Fair Work First. I hope you found the contributions helpful.

I raised in my contribution the importance of evidencing and monitoring of funders who asserted they were Fair Work employers but their actions in relation to this were questionable. I cited the example of Glasgow East Women's Aid, who Unite have had to institute legal action against because of their victimisation of our members for using union services and being members of a trade union.

In August of this year all 13 members of staff submitted a number of grievances complaining of workplace bullying and a toxic environment emanating from upper management. Subsequently all 13 members of staff were suspended in September for advising funders of issues. The investigatory process is still not concluded and 8 staff members remain suspended. In November, 5 members of staff with under two years' service were sacked during a ballot for strike action and despite the fact that no investigation had been concluded.

On 30th November we won for the 5 members of staff dismissed an interim relief hearing where the employment tribunal judge ruled that Unite members had a "pretty good chance" of winning an unfair dismissal trial for participating in union activities and making use of union services. Our members therefore have their contract continued and will be paid until the unfair dismissal trial is heard. I have attached a copy of the press release Unite put out following the judgement from the interim relief hearing.

J.



www.unite-theunion.org

Item 3 cont.

Our members voted for strike action and we are on strike every Monday and Friday until mid-February. What our members want is to get back to work and provide the professional service the women and children of Easterhouse deserve. It has been nearly 12 weeks since the service has been disrupted with only telephone advice being provided.

We understand all members of the previous board have resigned and a new interim board has been appointed, but we do not know who has made these appointments and who the new board members are.

Both Glasgow Council and the Scottish Government provide funding to run this service and the Unite officer responsible for this organisation has called for intervention from both bodies, particularly from a Fair Work perspective where clearly the organisation is not meeting the "effective voice" criteria they committed to when receiving funds.

I would be grateful if you could look into and advise as to next steps from a Fair Work perspective.

Yours sincerely



Item 4 – Email from member of the public to Humza Yousaf FM

From: <redacted>

Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 9:01 PM

To: First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

Subject: GEWA Issue

4th December 2023

Dear Humza Yousaf

I write to you as a Glasgow MSP and as the First Minister of Scotland to bring to your attention and to request your support in resolving the issue affecting the thirteen suspended members of Glasgow East Women's Aid (GEWA) a registered charity funded by the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council. You are probably aware of the details surrounding this as it has been all over the news and social media but I will outline the main points. Thirteen women were suspended in September for 'whistleblowing' and subsequently five of the women, those with less than two years' service, were dismissed at the beginning of November. The five sacked women won an interim hearing on Tuesday 28th November, where they were awarded full pay and all other contractual benefits with the judge stating the reason for the decision being that they had a pretty good chance of winning their case of unfair dismissal at tribunal. Previous to the sackings and the interim hearing all thirteen voted to strike and this action began on Friday 1st December.

These events have taken a toll on all of the women and I know at least one, my daughter, has had to put her life on hold; no wedding, no buying a house, no planning a family. She is a strong, positive young women who had just begun her career after completing her degree in Social Services and Education. She loved her job at GEWA and was making a difference to the lives of women and children. Recently and embarrassedly she had to attend the doctor due to the stress and anxiety of the actions of the board and management.

I would be grateful if you could raise and discuss this at Parliament as a matter of urgency and press for an investigation into the Scottish government's role in supporting this Board and the decisions it has made. The union, Unite, has called for the reinstatement of the five sacked women and the resolution of the issue to allow the workers to get back to supporting and providing a crucial service for the vulnerable women of Glasgow East.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

<redacted>

Item 5 – Letter from David Linden MP to Tom Arthur MSP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

7 December 2023
Our ref: DL16818

Mr Tom Arthur MSP
Minister for Community Wealth and Public Finance
Scottish Government
St Andrews House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear Mr Arthur MSP,

RE: Glasgow East Women's Aid

I write to you today with regard to the ongoing industrial dispute at Glasgow East Women's Aid (GEWA) following a request for assistance from employees' union representation with Unite the Union.

As the Scottish Government is a major funder for GEWA, I am sure you will be aware of the matters surrounding the issues with staffing and the impact this is having on the vital services normally provided by the charity.

[REDACTED] has been in touch to ask if I could reach out to the Scottish Government to ask if any action is being taken, as a significant funder, to resolve the issues to ensure that lifeline services can be reinstated.

I understand that someone may wish to speak directly with [REDACTED] Her telephone number is [REDACTED] and can be contacted by email at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

David Linden MP