

nipsa

May 2026

Reports

GIVE US A BUDGET THAT WORKS FOR WORKERS

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Bieldin Public Services
Heftin' Waarkers in the Public Airt

Protecting Public Services
Supporting Public Servants

Ag Cosaint Seirbhísí Poiblí
Ag Tacú le Seirbhísigh Phoiblí

COVER STORY

Give us a budget that works for workers

NIPSA is calling on the NI Executive to set a “needs-based budget” that works for workers and addresses “the economic, social and environmental issues that plague society”.

The call – set out in an emergency motion to be debated at conference next week – comes as members of the union gather in Enniskillen for ADC 2026.

Noting the “precarious financial situation” faced by ordinary people in Northern Ireland, the union warns the

setting of a Westminster-dictated budget based on current funding levels would “precipitate a wave of brutal cuts” that would greatly worsen their plight.

The motion states: “The calls from ill-informed professional commentators for the budget crisis to be bridged by introducing additional taxes on people in Northern Ireland, and/or by cutting public service jobs, pay and T&Cs, reflects two things – their ignorance of public service funding and the fact that they live in ivory towers from where they decree

that the problem is the people rather than the capitalist economic system and its government.”

It adds: “Conference wholeheartedly rejects the notion that cuts which bring about more pain for ordinary people is the solution.”

Instead NIPSA wants the NI Assembly to implement a budget that breaks the spending restrictions to address the economic, social, and environmental issues that plague society.

The motion highlights how the

successful use of campaigning and industrial action culminating in a partial public sector general strike in 2024 led to significant additional funding being made available.

The movers of the motion will call on the incoming General Council to:

- Consider the lessons of that campaign;
- Seek to build a broad trade union alliance to fight for a needs-based budget; and
- Make the necessary preparations for a new campaign.



EDUCATION

Unions agree six out of seven issues with EA

NIPSA has said that six of the seven issues in dispute with the Education Authority have now been agreed, with hopes that the sole issue left on the table – on mileage and essential car user allowance – will also be resolved.

The Joint Trade Union body (NIPSA, Unison, Unite, GMB, AEP, and Prospect) at the Education Authority confirmed that a collective agreement had been reached with management.

This involves:

- Implementation of a job evaluation pilot;
- Casual staff working in Extended Schools moving to NJC pay rates and EA terms and conditions of employment;
- CA's moving from temporary

contracts of employment to permanent contracts with term-time and 52-week options;

- Other support staff moving from temporary contracts to permanent contracts of employment;
- Transport staff annual leave and training; and
- Redrafting of a disability redeployment policy.

Assistant Secretary Janette Murdock told *NIPSA Reports*: “We have been in dispute with the EA on a range of issues. Six are now resolved to the satisfaction of the trade unions and the workers in education.

“The seventh issue around mileage remains under negotiation and discussion, and we expect it to move forward over the next while.”

HEALTH

NIPSA warns Minister over ‘slipped deadlines’ on Real Living Wage

NIPSA has warned Minister for Health Mike Nesbitt the clock is ticking over his failure to bring in a Real Living Wage (RLW) for health workers in Northern Ireland.

Deputy General Secretary Pdraig Mulholland said: “He has made repeated commitments that he will introduce the Real Living Wage for the lowest paid people in the health service. But the deadlines for those commitments keep slipping.”

Pdraig pointed out that NIPSA had “reached the limit of its tolerance” on the issue.

He added: “There are ongoing negotiations at the minute across the water. If they do not bear fruit by June, then we will be taking action to force the matter.”

In a 12th February statement, Mike Nesbitt claimed that he was

“fully committed” to “ensuring that pay will be the first priority for the department” and to “progress towards” the HSC sector becoming a RLW employer.

NIPSA had been pushing for a clear commitment to a Real Living Wage of £13.45 an hour but the 3.3% uplift for AFC staff that came into effect on 1st April did little to advance towards this goal.

Reacting to the Minister’s statement, NIPSA Assistant Secretary Kevin Kelly said: “While the Minister’s statement references a 3.3% uplift and speaks of ambitions and desire, it falls far short of what is required for NIPSA members on low pay across health and social care.

“For staff struggling at the sharpest end of the cost-of-living crisis, this statement provides no certainty and no reassurance.”



Give disabled people access to free public transport

Sign the petition here



NIPSA is urging members to sign an online petition calling on Infrastructure Minister Liz Kimmins to give disabled people access to free public transport.

Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK or Ireland that does not offer disabled people free travel concessions on public transport.

Disabled People Against Cuts, the activist group that launched the petition on the Act Now platform, claims the

half-fare concession on single fares currently offered to disabled people is “unfair and ineffective” and wants the Government to “remove the barriers” to travel that “exclude us”.

In an open letter, DPAC told the Minister: “Making it a free concession would be a major step forward, addressing a long-standing inequality between disabled people living here compared to other parts of these islands.”

<https://my.actnowni.org/petitions/open-letter-introduce-free-travel-for-disabled-people-now>



Coleraine says No to Racism!

There was a sizable NIPSA presence at an anti-racist counter-protest in Coleraine on 4th April.

Trade unionists, community activists and anti-fascists joined concerned locals who braved a rain-soaked afternoon to make their opposition clear to a far-right rally held at the same time in the Diamond area of the town centre.

NIPSA member Ben Eaton (Branch 92) said he was at the counter-protest to speak up against “the anti-migrant agenda”.

“We have had the [religious] divide in this country before and it shouldn't now flip the other way [so] that now we're against another set of people. The problem our society is facing is about lack of jobs, a lack of housing, a lack of government responsibility.”

The colourful counter-demo, organised by the Causeway Trade Union Council, was well attended despite the dreadful weather. The group behind the far-right rally, was no doubt less

pleased with the turnout at its event. Only about 200 people gathered in front of the town hall to hear a number of speakers – that's less than 10% of the 2,500 they had estimated would attend.



Ben Eaton



CONFERENCE

'Fighting fit' NIPSA set for upbeat ADC

A "fighting fit" NIPSA is set to hold an upbeat Annual Delegate Conference over three days at the Killyhevlin Hotel, Enniskillen.

As in the previous few years, this year's ADC - from Tuesday 26th May 26th to Thursday 28th May - will be a hybrid gathering with some delegates attending online.

General Secretary Carmel Gates said: "This conference is taking place at a high point in NIPSA's history. We're fighting fit. We have never been in better shape financially. We have never been in better shape in terms of our membership, which is at record levels.

"We have a proven record of being the union of choice for public sector workers. Add to that, we have very high visibility in the media along with our highly-effective engagement with political parties. We can take pride in our strong record of standing up for members in the workplace."

She added: "And let's hope for some sunshine too!"



General Secretary Carmel Gates: ADC 2026 'taking place at a high point in NIPSA's history'



Get your Agenda 2026 click below...



<https://nipsa.org.uk/images/ADC/Agenda-2026.pdf>

STAGING A STRIKE... NI venues for Wreckers play

The centenary of the 1926 General Strike is being marked in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry this summer with a play that spotlights the most notorious incident of those momentous nine days that helped shape trade union history in Britain.

The Cramlington Train Wreckers tells the story of eight miners from Northumberland, sentenced to a total of 48 years for the accidental derailment of The Flying Scotsman during the strike. One person was slightly injured in the incident.

Playwright and producer Ed Waugh told *NIPSA Reports*: "We are delighted to be bringing the *Train Wreckers* across the water. It's a tragic but heart-warming story about working-class struggles, community and, ultimately, unity."

"The show premiered in November 2024 and sold out every venue it played, receiving standing ovations. Following the Belfast and Derry shows it transfers to the 1,200-seat Newcastle Theatre Royal, the most prestigious theatre in North East England."

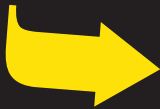
NIPSA along with Unison, Unite, the Fire Brigades Union and ICTU are sponsoring the events.

And in advance of the shows (details below), Ed will be giving public talks at the Waterfront Hall on Wednesday June 17th at 3pm, and at the Derry/Londonderry Playhouse on Thursday June 18th at 2pm and 7pm. Entry is free into the talks and no booking is required.

Picture: David Gibson



Book your tickets.
Click here...



Belfast

<https://www.waterfront.co.uk/what-s-on/the-cramlington-train-wreckers/>

Derry/Londonderry

<https://www.derryplayhouse.co.uk/event/the-cramlington-train-wreckers#bookwreckers/>

1926

THE CRAMLINGTON TRAIN WRECKERS

Written by **Ed Waugh**

Northern Ireland

-Back on stage by popular demand!
A commemoration of the 1926 General Strike. After the 2024 sold-out tour in England, **The Cramlington Train Wreckers** transfers to Northern Ireland before playing the 1200-seat Theatre Royal in Newcastle upon Tyne.

From the team behind the smash-hit plays **Hadaway Harry, Wor Bella & Carrying David** comes another incredible working-class story.

"BRILLIANT, ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT"
- Kevin Maguire, Daily Mirror & TV pundit

"A MUST-SEE PLAY FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN THE LIVES, STRUGGLES AND HISTORY OF WORKING CLASS PEOPLE"
- Matt Wrack, NASUWT General Secretary and former TUC President

THE PLAYHOUSE
WWW.DERRYPLAYHOUSE.CO.UK
Derry/Londonderry
8 July 2026, 7.30pm

nipsa
Protecting Public Services
Supporting Public Servants



STRONGER TOGETHER
CONGRESS
Irish Congress of Trade Unions



WATERFRONT HALL

Belfast
9 July 2026, 2.30pm & 7.30pm



Nowhere does May Day quite like us

THOUSANDS took to the streets for a rally through Belfast city centre on Saturday, 2nd May to celebrate International Workers' Day.

As usual there was a colourful NIPSA presence with members waving trade union flags as they marched behind a 'Fighting Education Cuts!' banner.

The NIPSA contingent was led by a troupe of street drummers who kept up a noisy tattoo as the marchers set off from Writers' Square towards Royal Avenue, passing in front of the City Hall and returning via the Albert Clock to Donegall Street.

Speaking before the parade, SIPTU Deputy General Secretary Ethel Buckley admitted "nowhere does May Day quite like Belfast", adding that "the numbers, the noise, the energy, the solidarity is what a strong, visible, winning workers' movement looks like."

NIC-ICTU chair Jacquie White had a straightforward message for the NI Executive: "Workers deserve better... the Good Jobs Employment Bill is overdue and the time to act and legislate is now."

In her contribution, Belfast & District Trades Council Vice-President Kerry Fleck warned the crowd: "Neo-liberalism does not know how to stop - it will keep waging war and destroy the planet in the name of profit until there is nothing left."



The NIPSA flags were flying up in Derry/Londonderry on May Day too