

Updates for supporters of Stroud Against the Cuts - 2015

Written by Administrator

Friday, 09 January 2015 11:18 - Last Updated Thursday, 25 June 2015 10:26

- Since March 2015, our email updates are sent through Mailchimp. By clicking the links below you will be sent to an internet-page style version of the email, containing pictures and videos as well as text and links:

-
- 06/24/2015 - [Stroud Against the Cuts - come to our Public Meeting, Save the Independent Living Fund - and more](#)
-
- 06/17/2015 - [Invitation to a public meeting: Where next after the election?](#)
-
- 06/09/2015 - [Events this and next week - last chance to contact MEPs on TTIP - & more updates from Stroud Against the Cuts](#)
-
- 05/28/2015 - [Gloucester Anti-Austerity Demonstration, THIS SATURDAY, plus June 20th National Demonstration in London - coach details](#)
-
- 05/19/2015 - [Join us on coach to National Anti-Austerity Demonstration, June 20th \(AND MORE UPDATES\)](#)
-
- 05/01/2015 - [Happy International Workers' Day - plus articles and events of events](#)
-
- 04/17/2015 - [Update for Stroud Against the Cuts Supporters April 2015: Austerity Hustings video, NHS play, Workfare Week of Action + more!](#)
-
- 03/21/2015 - [Quiz the candidates! Stroud Against the Cuts Austerity Election Debate - Monday 7pm - Old Town Hall](#)
-
- 03/17/2015 - [An Invitation - Stroud Against the Cuts Public Meeting, Monday 23rd March 7pm \(& MORE!\)](#)

2015 updates before March:

15th February update

In this update:

1. Details of our public meeting on the NHS, Monday 23rd February 7.30pm at The Old Town Hall
2. New NHS book and updates from Keep Our NHS Public
3. Sisters Uncut against cuts to domestic violence support services sees women shut down Oxford St

4. Boycott Workfare Day of Action in solidarity with unemployed activist arrest for representing a jobseeker

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5. Disabled People Against Cuts day of action

6. ...and finally!

1. Is the NHS sustainable? Is PFI bankrupting the NHS? What's wrong with privatisation? What demands should we make? How can we rebuild the NHS?

Find out the answers to these questions and more at a Public Meeting, Monday 23rd February, The Old Town Hall, Stroud, 7.30-9.30pm (doors 7pm). We will meet in Kings St outside the entrance to Merrywalks to hand out flyers on Saturday 21st at 10.30am. Please print a poster for your local noticeboard (email contact@stroudagainstcuts.co.uk for a copy), or [share the link on our website with more information](#)

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FOUR CO-ORDINATORS OF THE CAMPAIGN THAT STOPPED LOCAL COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES BEING PRIVATISED SPEAK:

Hannah Basson - an NHS health worker and Equalities Officer for the Gloucester Health branch of Unite the Union (personal capacity).

Cllr Caroline Molloy - Editor of the OurNHS website, freelance writer, and Green district councillor for Stroud Central.

Chris Moore - led the local anti-poll-tax non-payment campaign in the 1990s, Trade Unionists and Socialists against Cuts (TUSC) candidate.

James Beecher - Chair of Stroud Against the Cuts, Economist.

Our NHS is under sustained attack

Earlier this year our local A&E department declared a 'major incident'. Local non-emergency ambulance services have been handed to a private company. Health and social care services have seen their budgets cut, while the government's 2012 Health & Social Care Act was just the latest way to introduce privatisation. Morale in the NHS is at a low ebb and workers deserve better.

...but we can resist - and win!

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In 2011 and 2012, a determined Gloucestershire-wide campaign led by Stroud Against the Cuts successfully used legal action, petitions and protests to force local NHS bosses to halt the transfer of local community hospitals and 3000 health workers out of the NHS.

The meeting will involve short speeches by the four campaigners mentioned above, followed by plenty of time for Q&A and discussion of the demands we should be making of politicians and the actions we can take.

For more information see [the press release published on our website](#) . --- **2. New NHS book and updates from Keep Our NHS Public**

The latest collection of stories about the NHS via Keep Our NHS Public and SATC member Hannah Basson is attached. You can read emails discussing these and other stories by people interested in campaigning on the NHS locally over the internet via [a yahoo group](#)

- access an excellent source of documents and news items.

KONP also pass on information about a new book:

NHS FOR SALE -

Myths, Lies and Deception

by Jacky Davis, John Lister and David Wrigley

Owen Jones describes it as 'the most important recent book about the future of the NHS. It examines the havoc created by Andrew Lansley's costly and damaging "reforms" and George Osborne's spending cuts. It's a must read.' KONP say "This book sets out what needs to be done to protect the NHS against corporate greed, and enable future governments to meet the challenge of delivering high quality and affordable health care for all." Copies

will be available at the public meeting mentioned above. You can find more details on [the Merlin Press website](#)

3. Sisters Uncut against cuts to domestic violence support services sees women shut down Oxford St

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Yesterday, Saturday 14th February, women-only direct action group Sisters Uncut "stopped traffic on Oxford St... resisting cuts to domestic violence services". Earlier the group laid flowers at Picadilly for women who died from domestic violence. There are some [great photos on the group's twitter account](#)

(you do not need to use twitter to view them). The protest was partly about the cuts and changes that have been made to the legal aid system. Emma Scott, director of

[Rights of Women](#)

, describes Laspo as a "fundamental attack on the rule of law". "There are women who tell us that without [access to] legal aid they are staying in abusive relationships. It is not over-dramatic to say that women will die," she says.

[Read the full article from which that quote was taken in The Guardian](#)

Sisters Uncut have issued a "Feministo" which includes the following demands explaining other aspects of the protest. The

[full text is available on the Sisters Uncut Facebook page](#)

"Demands:

- No more cuts to domestic violence services
- Restore funding that has been cut
- Secure funding for specialist domestic violence services; this should be ring-fenced* at a national level.
- Local Authorities to fully meet the demands of their communities, recognising that different women have different needs.
- Guaranteed access to legal aid for women experiencing domestic violence.
- Provide access to safe and secure social housing for women who otherwise cannot afford to flee.

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- Panic rooms should not be classified as a spare room under the Bedroom Tax.
- Safety should not be subject to immigration status; extend access to safe housing to women with no recourse to public funds."

4. Boycott Workfare Day of Action at Jobcentres Nationwide - 25th February 2015

Scottish Unemployed Workers Network activist Tony Cox was arrested on 29th January after Arbroath Jobcentre management called police to stop him representing a vulnerable jobseeker. Boycott Workfare are urging supporters to join a Day of Action on 25th February at Jobcentres round Britain to show your solidarity. Is anyone able to attend an event in Stroud on Wednesday? Please get in touch if so and we will arrange a time.

Boycott Workfare have circulated the following message from Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty:

"We must fight back against this clear attempt to intimidate claimants and deny us the right to be accompanied and represented... As we face unprecedented sanctions and benefits cuts, it's more important than ever that we support each other and stand up to the DWP bullies. The Scottish Unemployed Workers Network, Dundee Against Welfare Sanctions and other groups have established a strong presence at the Jobcentres in Dundee and in nearby towns and cities like Arbroath, Perth and Blairgowrie, supporting claimants in opposing sanctions and harassment.

On 29 January Tony was accompanying a vulnerable woman claimant, who suffers from severe dyslexia and literacy problems. The claimant, D, had been signed up to the Universal Job Match (UJM), the computerised job search system, and was being forced to complete five job searches per day, the pressure of which had led to her having several panic attacks. Tony proposed that D's UJM account be closed, and that her number of job searches be significantly reduced. The adviser refused to consider this, and so Tony and D met with the Jobcentre manager.

The manager likewise refused to even look at the issue, falsely claiming that all jobseekers had to be registered with UJM. She even suggested to D that she should arrange another

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meeting without Tony or any other witness or rep present. Despite the pressure D was being put under by the manager, she replied that she would not attend another meeting without Tony. At this point the manager demanded that Tony leave the building or the police would be called. Tony refused to leave, but the meeting ended when it was agreed that a further meeting be arranged to discuss the issue further. Tony was arrested after he left the Jobcentre.

The right of claimants to be accompanied to interviews, and for the accompanier to have the right to speak, has been established by groups like Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty, who have forced the DWP locally and Britain-wide to apologise for calling the police on ECAP reps, and to affirm [claimants' right to representation](#). The DWP [clearly state](#) "Claimants accessing Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) benefits and services can have someone to accompany them to act on their behalf..."

The attack on benefits and claimants is part of the austerity assault on the entire working class. We call on all unemployed and claimants groups, anti cuts and anti austerity groups, human rights groups, workplace activists, and all working class people, waged and unwaged, to show solidarity with Tony and the right of the unemployed and all claimants to organise collectively to fight back.

Visit your local Jobcentre on 25th February with banners and placards and distribute leaflets to claimants on Tony's case and the right to be accompanied to all benefits interviews.

- Send a message of support to admin@scottishunemployedworkers.net
- Complain to Noel Shanahan, Director General Operations DWP, Caxton House, Tothill Street London SW1H 9NA
- [Sign the petition](#)

Call out by [Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty](#) - ecap@lists.riseup.net

Supported by [Scottish Unemployed Workers Network](#)
[Dundee Against Welfare Sanctions](#)
[Boycott Workfare](#)

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Please add the support of your group/organisation: email admin@scottishunemployedworkers.net & ecap@lists.riseup.net;

5. Disabled People Against Cuts have a day of action following week on Monday 2 March.

Disabled People Against Cuts say "the Day of Action is aimed at the objective of ending the Work Capability Assessments and destroying the credibility of Maximus which should be relatively easy to do given their appalling track record". Maximus is the company set to replace ATOS, to whom the Work Capability Assessments (WCA) have previously been outsourced.

Actions are planned or in planning for *Aberdeen, Balham, Bournemouth, Bradford, Brighton, Cardiff, Croydon, Dundee, Ealing, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Ipswich, Leeds, Leicester,* *Lincoln,* *Manchester,* *Norwich, Plymouth, Reading, Sheffield*

,
Sunderland, Toronto, Truro, Wrexham

and

[Maximus HQ in central London.](#)

You can also show your support via
[social media - see information on the DPAC website](#)

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6. ...and finally!

After a week in which the skullduggery of the financial sector and the tax avoiding habits of political donors have once again been in the spotlight...

"Everyone has threatened to sue former Conservative Party treasurer Lord Fink after he claimed yesterday that [everyone avoids tax](#) .

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Lord Fink was accused of making the untrue and defamatory remarks about everyone – and has now also been [threatened with legal action](#) by everybody after the Tory peer claimed in a newspaper interview that “*tax avoidance is so wide that everyone does tax avoidance at some level*,” and that “*everybody does it*” too.

In a statement, a spokesperson for everyone and everybody strongly denied the accusations and said that if the Conservative Party donor does not withdraw the accusations and issue an immediate apology, then legal action against him will be considered."

from [Thomas Pride's blog](#) .

James Beecher

for Stroud Against the Cuts

Read previous updates by clicking "Read More" below:

5th February update

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In this update:

1. Public Meetings on the NHS and the Economy organised by SATC
2. Ed Miliband in Stroud tomorrow 6th February
3. Cuts to domestic violence services and a protest (in London)
4. NHS updates
5. Carmichael interview

1. Public Meetings on the NHS and the Economy organised by SATC

We will host evening public meetings at the Old Town Hall in Stroud on Monday 23rd February & Monday 23rd March. Please put dates in your diaries. Both meetings will take place from 7.30-9.30pm and will be free to attend.

The 23rd February meeting will cover "Rebuilding the NHS", with an emphasis on developing a short list of demands we can make of politicians both in the run-up to, and after the General Election. Four of SATC's co-ordinators who successfully fought privatisation of some of our local NHS services will speak, relating current issues to the successful campaign against the transfer of 3000 health and social care staff out of the NHS, and exploring the lessons we learned from that campaign. A poster will be circulated shortly. If you can help us publicise the event we will be leafleting on Kings St (at the entrance to Merrywalks) on Saturday from 10am.

The meeting on Monday 23rd of March will focus on the UK economy since the financial crisis,

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the impact of austerity, and again, how we can organise - looking at successes in areas other than the NHS.

We hope many of you will join us for two events we hope will be informative and inspiring. We are also planning a third event focusing on the election for April and will circulate details ASAP.

2. Ed Miliband in Stroud

If you haven't already heard, Ed Miliband will be in Stroud tomorrow - here is a link to [the Stroud Life article](#)

There is little information about this online, but it appears that to attend you need to have received an invitation, and registered. The 'People's Question Time' event is scheduled to take place at 10.15am in the Subscription Rooms ballroom. Contact Stroud Labour Party on 01453 840080 for more information. Apologies if you have received this email after the event has taken place.

3. Domestic Violence - cuts to support services and protest in London

The Western Daily Press has a long report "Cash cuts leave South West's domestic violence services 'in chaos'"; available on its website. Here are two quotes from the article

"In the last year alone, Devon has lost one of its few remaining women's refuges, while the Plymouth-based DV organisation AHIMSA announced it would be closing down in March due to a lack of funding. And Plymouth Council, which set out an ambitious domestic violence strategy in 2011, spent just £628,098 in 2014/15 compared to its previously proposed £1,050,000."

"Chris Collier, a trustee for the Exeter-based DV charity SAFE (Stop Abuse for Everyone) said part of the problem was that domestic abuse was still very much a "hidden crime".

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And with the threat of further spending cuts looming, she suggested people needed to “get angry” in order for the issue to get the attention it deserved."

You can read more on this story (a rare example of an article of significant length published by a local paper) on the [Western Daily Press website](#) .

Regarding the "getting angry" part, [Sisters Uncut](#) have organised a protest in London on the 14th February:

"

WHAT:

Join us this Valentine’s Day for some direct action to commemorate the women who’ve been killed as a result of domestic violence, and protest the deadly cuts to specialist domestic violence services.

WHY:

In the UK, 2 women a week on average are murdered by a partner or ex-partner. Violence against women is now a global pandemic, yet the government is removing vital funding for domestic violence services. Sisters Uncut demand an end to these cuts, which are part of a programme of austerity that disproportionately affects women.

Safety is not a privilege. Access to justice is not a luxury.

HOW:

1. Bring a flower to lay in tribute to a woman who has been killed.
2. Bring something to make noise with: pots, pans, drums, whistles - whatever takes your fancy.
3. Most importantly: bring your sisters!

This event is women only. We call on all self-defining women, as well as those who experience oppression as women or define as women for the purpose of organising, to join us.

Domestic violence silences women, restricting their struggle to private spaces. This is an opportunity for women to draw strength from each other whilst bringing this issue out from behind closed doors into the public space.

It’s important this is a safe space for women, especially survivors of domestic or sexual violence, so we invite male allies to show their solidarity online rather than by attending. You can support us by changing your profile picture to an image of a black rose (coming soon), and linking to our social media: @sistersuncut.

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Stand with us to commemorate the women who did not survive, and show your solidarity with those still living under the threat of violence. There is a [facebook event page with more information](#) (you can access this even if you don't use facebook).

You may also be interested in this article "

[What will it take to end violence against women in the UK?](#)

". The subheader is "A decade on from the

[Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004](#)

, progressive policy, laws and attitudes are being undermined by draconian cuts to legal aid which are drastically reducing access to legislation put in place to protect women against violence."

4. NHS updates

The health unions Unite, Unison, GMB and Royal College of Midwives called off planned industrial action recently to ballot members on a pay offer. [More information is available from the RCM website](#)

Hannah Basson, a local healthworker and co-ordinator of SATC who will be speaking at the upcoming public meeting highlights the following links on the NHS:

[A man who uses both US and UK health services provides some comparisons](#)

A [BBC news article regarding the wasted money going to CareUK](#) Panorama on Monday was on '[Emergency in A&E](#)

A [petition here regarding GP contracts](#)

.....and another [here regarding privatisation](#) Those of you who use twitter, may be interested to know that [Bristol group P rotect Our NHS has a Twitter account](#)

(again, you can visit this page even if you do not use twitter, but much of what you see might not make immediate sense)

5. Carmichael interview regarding Pubs

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In the previous SATC email I circulated a link to [a Neil Carmichael interview that didn't work. Here is the correct link](#)

Looking forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming public meetings,

James Beecher

for SATC

22nd January update

In this update:

1. Details of our next organisational meeting: Monday 26th January 2015 - 7.30-9.30pm at The Exchange
2. An update on our work on the bedroom tax
3. Some recent NHS stories
4. ... and finally: A Neil Carmichael interview you won't want to miss.

1. Details of our next organisational meeting: Monday 26th January 2015 - 7.30-9.30pm at The Exchange

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Stroud Against the Cuts is organised by meetings and emails between a group of "co-ordinators". Anyone who opposes cuts and privatisation is welcome to attend our meetings and help co-ordinate our activities. We aim to meet monthly, but have recently had a break due to co-ordinators having other commitments.

The first meeting of 2015 will be held next Monday 26th January 7.30-9.30pm (we will start promptly at 7.30pm so please arrive from 7.15 for informal chat). Our meetings are always held at The Exchange, Brick Row, Stroud, GL5 1DF.

On the agenda are: 1. Update and planning on Bedroom Tax campaign 2. NHS strikes and Feb 28th grassroots campaign conference 3. SATC's plans for the year including public meetings

2. An update on our work on the bedroom tax

Stroud Against the Cuts has been campaigning on the bedroom tax for some time. In November 2013 over 1200 signatures were collected calling for improvements in the way Stroud District Council dealt with tenants affected by the policy. Since July last year we have been working with several affected tenants - helping them to apply for hardship payments and appeal against decisions to impose cuts to housing benefit, and talking to other local agencies and officers and councillors about issues arising from the bedroom tax.

Last week, a tenant we were supporting had her appeal against the bedroom tax heard. Sadly it was turned down. We are exploring further options in this case as we have not yet seen the full explanation for the decision to reject the appeal. We also continue to support other tenants in making appeals.

You can read more about the recent case and the views of Stroud Against the Cuts co-ordinators regarding the bedroom tax in the [press release we sent out, which we have published on our website](#)

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We will be discussing our next steps in more detail at our next organisational meeting.

(meanwhile, in Kilburn - [the local Jobcentre fluctuates between calling the police on a group that regularly protests outside the Jobcentre, and referring claimants to them for advice!](#)
)

3. Some recent NHS stories

Jeremy Hunt has been [in talks with unions in an attempt to prevent planned strike action](#) by NHS workers pursuing a 1% pay rise (a 12 hour strike on 29th January is planned). Here is [more information on the strike and the reasons behind it](#)

One of Stroud Against the Cuts' volunteer co-ordinators Caroline Molloy has published a must-read article on "[Hinchingsbrooke - why did England's privatised hospital deal REALLY collapse?](#)"

If you need some light relief after reading the devastating story of Circle, this article by Alex Nunns pokes fun at the journalists and commentators who helped Circle push their PR: "[Hinchingsbrooke - how a disastrous privatisation duped the political class](#)"

Another must-read article, this time from David Owen, is of particular interest locally as it makes the links between the failure of Circle at Hinchingsbrooke and the "mutualisation" model of privatisation that we fought off for Gloucestershire's community health services: "[Lesson one from the Hinchingsbrooke hospital scandal: beware the ‘mutual’](#)"

The Liberal Democrats have been talking up their mental health policies recently. Here are "[Four reasons Nick Clegg is no mental health saviour](#)"

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Finally, here is an article from an anonymous health worker that provides interesting context to the recent A&E crisis: "[Dear patient - why your care is getting shattered, not more 'joined up'](#)"

4. ... and finally: A Neil Carmichael interview you won't want to miss.

It's not every day our local MP is called a 'whoreson wizen-scrotumed ninnyhammer' (at least not on BBC Radio!). Neil had his feet held to the fire on BBC Radio Gloucestershire's Breakfast Show on November 25th at 7am over policies to help pubs and publicans. Mr Carmichael told people "he was going to vote for the clause [to give PubCo tenants the choice of remaining tied or opting for a non-tied agreement at an open market rent], and then voted against it".

[Listen to the interview here](#)

James Beecher

for Stroud Against the Cuts

9th January 2015

Happy New Year. Here's to a better one!

Contents:

1. Crunch time for two local Bedroom Tax cases

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2. The NHS crisis and upcoming strike action by NHS workers

3. Campaign to Save the Independent Living Fund sees Disabled People Against Cuts blockade Whitehall

4. Upcoming events

1. Crunch time for two local Bedroom Tax cases

Next Monday 12th January two local council tenants will have hearings on their bedroom tax. One, a tenant we have been supporting for a long time is appealing the imposition of the tax on the grounds that the room was too small to count as a bedroom and was needed for equipment associated with her disabilities. We are hoping the arrears she has built up as a result of being unable to afford full rent since her housing benefit was reduced will be repaid if she can convince a tribunal.

This is the first appeal we have supported that has reached the tribunal stage, but likely will not be the last. Nationally, a number of people have been successful in launching appeals, and we have been in touch with the author of [this blog who reports on grassroots Liverpool group, ReClaim - who have won 36 of 50 appeals](#)

In the other case, Stroud District Council is pursuing a possession claim against someone who has been unable to pay full rent since his housing benefit was reduced by the bedroom tax. We have been assisting this tenant in making an appeal, DHP claim and adjournment request.

If you would like to show your support to these tenants on Monday, please call me on 07734 058789 and I will inform you of the times and venues. Neither tenant wants to make a big

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political statement at this point, due to the already considerable stress, so I am not publicising the details widely. However, both would appreciate messages of solidarity. If you are unable to attend in person please email a message and I will make sure the tenants know there are people concerned about them.

2. The NHS crisis and upcoming strike action by NHS workers

The NHS crisis has finally fully hit the headlines this week. Sadly it seems there is little chance things are going to improve in the near future, which means many people will suffer. In addition, much of the analysis in the mainstream print and broadcast media has been woefully misguided.

This article by a Regional Organiser for GMB and a former Mental Health Nurse makes links to the A&E crisis as it is manifesting itself in the East of England and the ["Failed privatisation experiments, vanity IT projects and "disastrous" PFI deals \[that\] are enriching a familiar few, as patients pay the price"](#).

Locally, one issue that requires additional attention is the effect of cuts and changes to District Nursing, which have made discharging people from A&E more difficult. [You can read about the concerns District Nurses raised with us last year here](#)

Meanwhile, NHS workers continue to push for the 1% pay rise (still a real terms pay cut) that was recommended by the independent pay review body but rejected by the government. Stroud Against the Cuts hopes to organise support for upcoming strikes, and members will attend picket lines. We will circulate further information so you can help demonstrate your support. For our video of the previous picket line see below. You can [read more details from the union for many NHS workers, Unison, here](#)
- the most important section is quoted below:

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"UNISON members working in the NHS in England will walkout for 12 hours between 9am – 9pm on Thursday 29th January. They will then work to rule between Friday 30 and Tuesday 24 February which means they will be working their contracted hours and will take their breaks and not do unpaid overtime. This will be followed a 24-hour strike on Wednesday 25 February.

UNISON members along with workers from 11 other Trade Unions have already taken two four-hour stoppages in October and November. This third round of action is in protest at the Government's decision to reject the 1% pay rise for NHS staff as recommended by the independent Pay Review Body in 2014 and the fact most will be denied a pay increase in 2015/16."

3. Campaign to Save the Independent Living Fund sees Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) blockade Whitehall.

This week, Disability rights campaigners protested against the Government's continued attempt to close the Independent Living Fund (it has already been closed to new applicants). In this must watch film, people who use the fund share their stories and the story of the closure of the ILF - a fund which enables 18,000 of Britain's most profoundly disabled adults to live independently.

[We're NOT all in this together: the story of the closure of the Independent Living Fund](#) from [Moore Lavan Films](#)

on

[Vimeo](#)

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You can read about the protest, as well as see pictures and videos on Kate Belgrave's blog. Kate helped make the film linked above and attended a SATC public meeting last year. "[Disabled people block Whitehall and lobby MPs to save the Independent Living Fund](#)"

4. Upcoming events

The Gloucestershire branch of the Socialist Party has organised an "Anti-austerity fund-raiser Jumble Sale" on Saturday 17th January at the Barton Community Centre, 205 Barton St, Gloucester GL1 4HY



A play about building workers imprisoned on charges of conspiracy during a strike in the 1970s, **United We Stand**, will play at Lansdown Hall and Gallery, 14th March 2015. Doors open 7:00pm, local choir to perform at 7:15pm, play to start at 7:30pm.

United We Stand

tells the story of the Shrewsbury 24, builders who were imprisoned on charges of conspiracy in the building workers strikes of 1972 and who are still fighting to have the unjust prosecution overturned. This play comes with the backing of Ricky Tomlinson and the Shrewsbury 24 Campaign.

Please see below for more details.

All the best for the new year,

James Beecher, for SATC

United We Stand

Combining Townsend Productions' trademark cast of two playing multiple roles, grand theatrical style and wit with popular and political songs about the strike, arranged by renowned folk musician John Kirkpatrick and Ricky Tomlinson's poems from his time in prison, the production aims to bring the full story of the compelling dispute to life in a powerful and thought-provoking new play.

Ricky Tomlinson said about the play, *"I am delighted The Townsend Theatre Company are presenting a play about the 1972 building workers strike, and the plight of the Shrewsbury 24 building worker pickets. It is 41 years since I together with Des Warren and John McKinsie Jones were charged with conspiracy and jailed."*

We were charged with conspiracy, but we believe the real conspiracy was between the government, the building contractors and the judiciary. They wanted the prison sentences to act as a deterrent, to prevent workers from taking strike action.

"Every worker should know what happened to us so as to ensure it does not happen again."

Tickets for **United We Stand** are priced at £12 (£10 OAP, £7 Concs) and can be purchased from Stroud Subscription Rooms on 01453 760 900.

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