

Hands off our pensions!

Many UNISON members who work in schools are in the Local Government Pension Scheme. The forthcoming ballot will affect them – and anyone in UNISON who is eligible to join the LGPS, will get a ballot paper. This includes members who work in academies and other self-governing schools.



If your employer operates the local government pension scheme, NHS pension scheme or civil service pension scheme then in October you'll receive a ballot paper asking you to vote on whether you are prepared to take

industrial action over your pension.

I'm asking you to vote 'yes' because proposed changes to your pension schemes simply aren't fair.

You pay into your pension throughout your career so that you can have security and dignity in retirement. Now, ministers want most of you to pay more, to work longer and at the end of your working life, to receive a worse pension.

Did you know that the ministers we're negotiating with, without agreement, have changed the inflation measure to worsen existing pensions? They have stopped using the Retail Price Index which has been used for decades and, from this year, pensions will only increase in line with the Consumer Price Index – a much worse index. This change alone has reduced the overall value of the pensions by over 10%.

Now, they want to increase your pension contributions by nearly 50% if you earn above £15,000. This will be based on actual salary for term-time workers but there are no concessions for part-timers.

Not a penny of this major increase in your contributions will go towards improving your pension schemes. Instead it will go to the

Treasury. This is an additional unfair tax on public sector workers disguised as money for the pension schemes, which they falsely claim to be unaffordable. The truth is public sector pension funds are cash rich and affordable.

On top of this, they want most of you to work longer before you can take your pension in full. Even if you have a protected pensionable retirement age of 65, this will be torn up. You will be expected to work until 66, then to 67 and 68 as the state retirement age increases.

They then want us to agree to new pension schemes, but we have no idea what the value of any new scheme would be or the transitional arrangements to it.

UNISON working together with other TUC trade unions has opposed this attack on our pensions.

I want to assure you that we have negotiated with ministers in good faith and will continue to negotiate. But we also know that public sector workers like you are already enduring pay freezes, the threat of privatisation, reorganisations and cuts in services. It's not fair to target you any further. You deserve the pension you are already entitled to.

And so we have decided to ballot for industrial action. We only take strike action as a last resort. UNISON members care about the public that they serve, and in your case the children and young people in your schools, but we need to send a message that we will stand up to protect our pensions.

We need your support and your help to send this message. When you receive your ballot paper I urge you to vote 'yes'.

N S S C H O O L S



Contact

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Email
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Academy status – what does it mean for staff?

Academies have continued to hit the headlines as more schools have changed their status on a promise of independence or financial advantage. By August there were 1070 academies in England with over 1400 more waiting in the wings. Members may wonder what difference it will make to them if their school becomes an academy. It is true that in the first instance they are covered by protection arrangements which are supposed to ensure that terms and conditions do not worsen. But as anyone who has been transferred to a private company will tell you, it can be hard to resist changes which are introduced to put transferred staff and new staff on an equal footing. Academies are free to employ staff on their own terms and so anyone who wishes to switch jobs or gain promotion will be expected to move to the new pay structure and conditions of service. These may even be good in parts but schemes like sick pay are common casualties. The exercise of other freedoms may impinge upon staff, like longer or more flexible working hours.



There is also the loss of local authority support on issues affecting staff such as health, safety and welfare, maternity provision, reasonable adjustments for disabled staff, statutory induction provision, staff training and development and dealing with challenging parents and pupils. Academies will have to buy in these and many other services.

You have a right to be consulted if your school is considering the academy route. UNISON opposes the loss of community schools and has produced materials, some jointly with teaching unions, to explain its opposition to academy status, to advise on process and to help staff persuade governors to stay within the community school family. They are downloadable at unison.org.uk/education/defendyourschool/

If you are a business manager your working life may have changed considerably. Let us know what is different about working for an academy. Email education@unison.co.uk

New government advice on use of reasonable force in schools

The Department for Education (DfE) has updated its advice on the use of reasonable force in schools. It emphasises that:

- All staff, as well as volunteers and parents helping on trips, have the legal power to use reasonable force on pupils when necessary
- If accused of excessive force staff should not be automatically suspended
- School leaders should support their staff in the use of this power.

The advice attempts to define what is reasonable in the circumstances and distinguishes between control and restraint in terms of the level of physical contact. Control may involve blocking a pupil's path or leading them by the arm. Restraint is more extreme and may involve holding a pupil back, for example, when refusing to separate from a fight. Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property or causing disorder. It cannot be used as punishment and does not require parental consent.

All schools and academies are required to have a well communicated behaviour policy. It is expected to cover the power to use reasonable force and should acknowledge the legal duty to make adjustments for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. It is up to the school to decide whether to report incidents to parents and how best to record those judged serious in terms of risk, age and degree of force used. Decisions on appropriate staff training are left to the school and members should ensure that it is provided to all staff in order to feel confident in using reasonable force.

Schools are advised to refer to 'Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff' when facing complaint. The DfE advice emphasises that the burden of proof is on the person complaining and that schools should provide pastoral care for employees who are accused. Although the advice refers to all staff, it lapses into 'teacher' specific language. Members should make sure that school behaviour policies and advice on the use of reasonable force refer to all staff.

The advice can be downloaded at <http://www.education.gov.uk/publications> Search using the ref: DfE-00060-2011

School session times opening up for community schools

Academies are free to set their own start, finish and break times at school and from 1 September 2011 this freedom has been extended to all schools. Schools will be required to consult parents and staff on changes and to give reasonable notice but it will be down to the individual school to decide how this is done. Any changes to the working week or pattern cannot be imposed and if your school is ignoring your views consult your UNISON rep.

Administration of medicines and medical support update

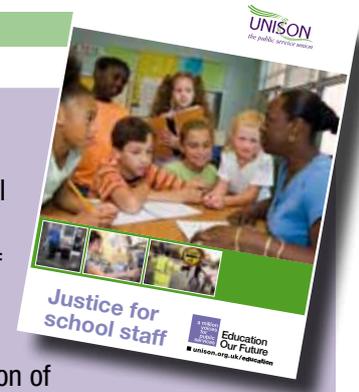
The revised government guidance to schools and authorities on the administration of medicines and medical support is still not published. UNISON has been in dialogue with officials from the Department for Education and Department of Health and a further meeting has been promised. They have indicated that the guidance will be less detailed relying on the "school knows best" principle at the heart of government policy. UNISON is working with the Children's Health in Schools Alliance on issues of joint concern like staff deployment and training. The Medical Conditions at School website is an awareness-raising advice tool focused on the most usual conditions that members will encounter: anaphylaxis; asthma; cystic fibrosis; diabetes and epilepsy. It can be accessed at: Medicalconditionsatschool.org.uk

UNISON and Co-operative schools

In a matter of months there will be 200 co-operative schools in England; the largest network of non-community schools. In September UNISON signed a national framework agreement with the Schools Co-operative Society. It acknowledges our policy differences on community schools but tries to build on common principles like solidarity, equality and democracy. A national joint forum will be established, producing model agreements and good practice guidance. Composition of the sides has yet to be agreed and consultation mechanisms with members need to be established as soon as possible. We would like to hear from members in co-op schools who would like to join an electronic network. Also, if you are a co-op school rep, let us know at education@unison.co.uk

Justice for school staff

As UNISON organises for the new school year, it must plan and prioritise its campaigns. There is never a shortage of things to fight for whether it is saving school crossing patrols, helping with professional issues like the administration of medicines and medical support or wider social campaigns such as free school meals. There are also UNISON wide campaigns like protecting pensions and ones that cross all sectors such as Education Our Future, promoting UNISON policies from nursery to university and beyond.



In schools there are still:

- More support staff with greater responsibility – site and business managers, learning mentors, higher level teaching assistants, cover supervisors and more new titles for expanded roles
- More staff working in classroom teams supporting learners and learning
- More professional and managerial staff in leadership roles
- More tasks transferred from heads and teachers to other staff
- More after school activities through the day and year
- More staff supporting children and young people and families with additional needs
- More demanding nutritional standards in school meals and healthy food policies.

And to reflect this we need:

- Role profiles – the detailed descriptions of different jobs which capture the skills and responsibilities necessary to assess them fairly
- A clear, consistent and fair way of representing school working time
- Training and a qualifications framework to support career progression.

'Justice for school staff' will work on these issues but everyone's commitment is necessary to achieve success. We need to be greater in numbers, with a trained rep in every school to ensure that agreements are implemented and members feel empowered and part of something growing and vibrant. The best way to tackle abuse of power is to have strength in numbers, be informed and an active UNISON member. If your school has no rep, volunteer or encourage the person that you know would be good in the role, then let your branch or region know.

Join UNISON — your friend at work

PLEASE FILL IN THIS FORM IN BLOCK CAPITALS USING BLACK INK AND GIVE IT TO YOUR UNISON REP OR SEND TO THE ADDRESS BELOW

FREEPOST RSKU-RRCA-HHSJ, UNISON, EDUCATION, 130 EUSTON ROAD, LONDON NW1 2AY

1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Please tick or fill in the boxes below

Mrs Ms Miss Mr Other

First name Other initial(s)

Surname/Family name Date of birth / /

Home address

Postcode

National insurance number (from your payslip)

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Bangladeshi Asian Other Black UK
 Chinese Black Black Other
 Indian African White UK
 Pakistani Black White
 Caribbean Irish
 Asian UK White Other

Please tick this box if you require materials in a different format (eg large print or Braille) – be sure to supply contact details below

Please give a telephone number/voice/text/email address for UNISON to contact you – indicate if work or home

Contact tel/voice/text/email

2. YOUR EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Employer's name

Your job title/occupation

Department/section

Workplace name and address

Postcode

Payroll number (from your payslip)

3. WHAT YOU WILL PAY – FROM 1 October 2003

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions.

Weekly pay	Annual pay	YOUR SUBSCRIPTION—WHAT YOU PAY		Band
		per week	per month	
Up to £38.47	Up to £2,000	£0.30	£1.30	A
£38.48–£96.16	£2,001–£5,000	£0.81	£3.50	B
£96.17–£153.84	£5,001–£8,000	£1.22	£5.30	C
£153.85–£211.53	£8,001–£11,000	£1.52	£6.60	D
£211.54–£269.23	£11,001–£14,000	£1.81	£7.85	E
£269.24–£326.92	£14,001–£17,000	£2.24	£9.70	F
£326.93–£384.61	£17,001–£20,000	£2.65	£11.50	G
£384.62–£480.76	£20,001–£25,000	£3.23	£14.00	H
£480.77–£576.92	£25,001–£30,000	£3.98	£17.25	I
£576.93–£673.08	£30,001–£35,000	£4.68	£20.30	J
£673.08+	over £35,000	£5.19	£22.50	K

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid

Weekly
 Fortnightly
 Four Weekly
 Monthly

Please tick this box if you are a student member in full-time education (including student nurses or Modern Apprentices). Your subscription is £10 per year.

4. POLITICAL FUND

UNISON's Affiliated Political Fund (APF) is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliates to the Labour Party.

UNISON's General Political Fund (GPF) is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union and for research and lobbying in Parliament and Europe. It is independent of support for any political party.

It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes below.

Your subscription shown above includes a political fund payment so you do not pay any more by being in one of the funds.

5. YOUR AUTHORISATION

- I wish to join UNISON and accept its rules and constitution.
- I authorise deduction of UNISON subscriptions from my salary/wages at the rate determined by UNISON in accordance with its rules to be paid over to them on my behalf and I authorise my employer to provide information to UNISON to keep my records up to date
- I authorise deduction of the following Political Fund payment as part of my subscription: Tick one box only

Affiliated Political Fund General Political Fund

Now please sign and date below

Signature

Date

OTHER WAYS TO PAY

direct debit cheque
(please tick if appropriate)

If you have been a member of a trade union before, please state which one:

DATA PROTECTION

UNISON will process your membership information together with other information for administration, statistical analysis, conducting ballots and other statutory requirement purposes.

We may also send you newsletters, journals and surveys and let you know about educational and campaigning matters. We will disclose your information to our service providers and agents for these purposes.

If you do not want any mailings from UNISON besides those required by statute as shown in bold above, please tick this box.

We may share your information with organisations with whom we have a business relationship for your benefit. We, or they, may contact you by mail, telephone, SMS, fax or e-mail to let you know about goods, services or promotions which we think may be of interest to you.

If you do not wish to receive such information please tick this box.