

School members have their say

UNISON launched its 'Listening to You' survey earlier this year to get a steer from school members on how we should respond to the abolition of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB). The vast majority (70%) of the many replies which were from individuals and groups of members, believed that we should try to establish school-based bargaining with the employers and 80% thought that we should lobby to finish the SSSNB work on the working year and role profiles.

Even in these difficult days of cuts and threats to jobs, 60% of respondents said that they would be prepared to take strike action in pursuit of a national pay and grading framework for school support staff. There were a range of other options for taking action which attracted massive support e.g.



working contracted hours only (87.3%); not working in your own time (84.3%); not working beyond job and grade (83.9%) and taking contracted lunch breaks and time away from computers (76%).

This demonstrates that despite crushed hopes, a hostile economic climate and a government which seems indifferent to them, school members are still prepared to fight against injustice.

● See page 2 for the hot school issues identified in the survey.

IN SCHOOLS

What's in the bill?

The Education Bill 2011 is the latest desperate act of the current government. UNISON has been campaigning to alter the bill in line with its many concerns. It separates schools from councils even further, as well as encouraging the formation of more academies.

The bill abolishes the SSSNB and introduces anonymity for teachers facing allegations of misconduct from pupils, parents or guardians. But why only teachers?

26 March – you were there!

● See page 5 for more pictures.



Contact

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School members have their say (continued from page 1)

School staff certainly got a lot off their chests in response to the 'Listening to You' survey. Much was about pay and grading with the underlying theme of injustice. A tension was expressed in working for a school, while employed by a council and in being in a team with teachers but with very unequal treatment. Questions were posed, for example, if our conditions must be the same as council workers, why can't we take our 28 days' leave



when we want as they do? Many support staff have suffered pay freezes in the face of teacher pay awards. So the pay gap between them has widened while the difference in responsibilities has narrowed. Job evaluation was frequently cited as reinforcing unfairness and term-time contracts continue to symbolise inequality.

Many staff feel used and abused, with more expected of them than can be achieved in the working day; unpaid overtime and working at home is rife. Extra duties and roles, like teaching, are foisted upon them without consultation and there is clear evidence of responsibility drift: employment on a grade 1, for example, and expected to perform at a grade 3. One reply

reported teaching assistants taking classes, while paid on the minimum wage. There was a great sense of being undervalued with several replies stating that support staff were believed less than pupils. One comment on what support staff need reflected many others: "Fair and equal treatment from our employer regarding working conditions, workload and, if at all possible, recognition of a job well done by valued staff."

Where next?

The SSSNB was supposed to deliver fair and consistent pay and conditions, but the Tory-led government has abolished it. Yet our survey demonstrates that all the factors that led to its establishment still exist and UNISON will look for new ways to follow the same agenda. Some survey respondents commented that local branch reps must develop an "active negotiating interest" in school members and that every school should have someone trained and able to challenge abuses at local level. The Justice for School Staff campaign will be developed by the national school committee, which represents the members in all of UNISON's regions.

DO THE RIGHT THING!

The government promised that during the current public sector pay freeze, anyone earning less than £21,000 would get a £250 lump sum. The teachers' review body has agreed this for unqualified teachers but for support staff, it is up to local employers. Let us know if your authority or school are doing the right thing by paying £250 to all their lower-paid staff.

- Let us know at: education@unison.org.uk

The changing role of senior support staff

The National College has just published research findings on the roles of staff on school senior management teams who are not qualified teachers. The study concluded that these roles have continued to evolve and benefit pupils, the wider workforce, the leadership team and school improvement. But more than half of the staff interviewed were unhappy with their pay and conditions and many felt that they didn't reflect their skills and expertise. Some reported problems with the size and scope of their role and responsibilities, often working additional hours in their own time.

The report can be downloaded from nationalcollege.org.uk

Equality matters in UNISON

The government has revised its guide on the public sector equality duties which have been in force since 5 April 2011. Disappointingly, the revised guide states that general equality duties do not impose a legal requirement to conduct equality impact assessments. Wales has adopted the more specific equality duties, which make it clear that public bodies must carry out assessment of the likely impact of their activities on compliance with the general duty to ensure equality. The regulations apply to the education sector and it is essential that we continue to monitor and assess the impact on equality of employers' proposals, policies and procedures, including cuts, redundancies and changes in terms and conditions.

Become a UNISON equality rep

To become an equality rep contact your branch, which can advise you on the role and the free three-day training course.

All public sector employers should consult with employees on the likely impact of proposals.

- If you have concerns on work-related equality issues consult your local equality rep or branch equality officer and look at UNISON's equality pages on our website: unison.org.uk/equality/index.asp

UNISON organising in schools

Real Time in Dorset



UNISON members' contribution is celebrated

UNISON in Dorset has relaunched its Real Time campaign, originally run in 2005, which recognises the work of often part-time school support staff. The message is that all school jobs are essential, whether working an hour a day on a school crossing or helping children to enjoy their lunch. Staff, parents, pupils and governors were invited to nominate in a range of categories and an awards ceremony was held on 13 May at the Lifeboat College, Dorset. There were awards for outstanding contributions to school life, the community, special awards, including recognition of an outstanding activist.

At a time when school staff are facing job cuts, mourning the loss of the SSSNB and struggling to keep their spirits up, this was a wonderful opportunity for UNISON to recognise and celebrate the work of school support staff.

North West actively organising – despite pressure

UNISON's North West region is at the forefront of organising school support staff. Its programme of school visits covered 90% of the region and attracted over 2,000 members into union rep or contact roles. And even though times are hard, the North West continues to bring together its school forum four times a year, supporting its local school activists.



When you come to the end of a lollipop...

UNISON is keen to know if the current climate of cuts is leading to the rationing or closure of school crossing patrol services. A survey has been launched at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Y3RFZ79> to ask branches about this important safety service for children. UNISON is supporting community campaigns and will share its results with them.

Join the South West's Save Our Lollipop People campaign; visit the website <http://save-lollipop-people.blogspot.com/> or search Facebook groups for Save-Our-Lollipop-People.



Health and safety matters in schools

The Health and Safety Executive has consulted UNISON on a new Classroom Risk Assessment Tool. Based on feedback from school reps, UNISON has challenged the idea that classrooms are low-risk areas and has reported that there is uncertainty about who should use the tool and with what training, as well as the omission of some important health and welfare issues.

UNISON is part of the joint union asbestos campaign, which carried out a survey recently revealing "worrying shortcomings" in dealing with the problem in schools. UNISON also works closely with the national asbestos in schools campaign which has a very useful website. Its aim is to inform parents and staff about asbestos in schools, give guidance on how to improve its management and to encourage openness in government policy.

For more information, visit: asbestosexposureschools.co.uk

Careers campaign

Careers services are essential to ensuring a positive future for new and long-term job seekers and we need to protect this vital service. Find out about campaigning in your area:

unison.org.uk/education/careers

Pensions negotiations and campaign timetable

Below is the predicted government timetable for negotiations, consultation and implementation. The critical period will be between June and October.

Began April 2011

Negotiations with government on public sector pensions

April/May 2011

UNISON regional briefings/branch meetings

May/June onwards 2011

UNISON training for pension champions and contacts

June 2011

Negotiations with government due to end

July 2011

Government departments consult on legislation that will increase contributions

July 2011 – September 2011

UNISON consults with members on action they wish to take

October 2011

Government issues statement on the 27 Hutton recommendations

October 2011

Negotiations with government departments Hutton recommendations

April 2012

Scheme member contributions start going up

January 2012

Negotiations on new pension schemes continue

2012/2013

UNISON members consulted on new scheme proposals

2014/2015

New schemes implemented

Pay more, work longer, get less – your pension under attack

UNISON members in schools are facing serious attacks on their pension rights. Most are part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The government has said that it wants to raise an extra billion pounds in contributions from scheme members, which means a 50% increase in staff contributions. They have also changed the way that inflation-linked increases in pensions are calculated and want the retirement age to be increased. UNISON thinks this is a grossly unfair attack on the pensions of school staff. The average pension payable in the LGPS is just £4,200 a year. For female and part-time staff it is even lower. These are not 'gold plated' pensions. They are the minimum required for a decent standard of living in retirement.

What you can do

All members need to fight to defend their pensions. UNISON is looking for pensions champions to help explain what these changes will mean for staff and lead the campaign against them. For factsheets with information on the changes, exposing media-driven myths about public sector pensions and on becoming a pensions champion, visit the UNISON pensions website: unison.org.uk/pensions



All staff need protection from false accusation

A clause in the Education Bill proposes anonymity for teachers – but not other staff – facing allegations from pupils, parents or guardians. This prompted UNISON to campaign for legal protection to apply to all staff. A proposed amendment was rejected by the government, which suggested that this is a problem for teachers in particular. We launched a survey which attracted 711 responses in two weeks; 46% knew of allegations made against support staff. In resulting investigations, 18% were suspended, in 15% of

cases police were notified and only 2% of staff were dismissed or resigned, possibly under pressure. Comments in the survey revealed a stressful scenario in which staff might be suspended for as long as 18 months before clearing their name. One respondent said that the day after a police interview, the case appeared on the front page of the local paper. UNISON is submitting evidence to the government and lobbying the House of Lords to support protection for all school staff who are wrongly accused.

26 March – you were there!

Speaking out in UNISON. Some said 500,000. Others, a million. There is no doubt that there was a massive turn out in London on 26 March to say “no” to the Tory plans to destroy vital public services.

What a fantastic first step in speaking out against the unnecessary and savage cuts to public services to pay for the mistakes of the bankers.

MARCH FOR THE ALTERNATIVE: JOBS • GROWTH • JUSTICE

UNISON SPEAKING UP FOR PUBLIC SERVICES



ANGRY YOUNG LIBRARY ASSISTANT!

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	per week	per month	Band	Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid
Up to £38.47	Up to £2,000	£0.30	£1.30	A	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly
£38.48–£96.16	£2,001–£5,000	£0.81	£3.50	B	<input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly
£96.17–£153.84	£5,001–£8,000	£1.22	£5.30	C	<input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly
£153.85–£211.53	£8,001–£11,000	£1.52	£6.60	D	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£211.54–£269.23	£11,001–£14,000	£1.81	£7.85	E	<input type="checkbox"/> 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.
£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	

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.