

SSSNB talks in full swing

The first meeting of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) took place on 7 July. The body will not become statutory (agreements enforceable by law) until the necessary legislation is passed later this year. In preparation, there will be intensive negotiations on a national pay, grading and contract package, which will be put to members in a ballot.

The employers and trade union side (made up of UNISON (eight seats), GMB (four seats) and Unite (three seats) and pictured

below) agreed that detailed work needed to take place in working groups. A group working on the core contract and working year and another on role profiles and job measurement are now in intensive talks. These are overseen by an executive group. The groups are meeting fortnightly and bulletins on their progress are being sent to branches. An SSSNB webpage has been designed so that members can access the latest bargaining news, visit: www.unison.org.uk/education/schools/SSSNB.asp



First meeting of the SSSNB in July – an historic moment

It's all happening in the North West

UNISON's North West region has been fielding organising teams to visit schools, explaining the implications of the new School Support Staff Negotiating Body and more. The teams have included members seconded from schools for about 12 weeks, paid by the branch or from regional funds. The aim is

to recruit members, contacts and stewards, raise UNISON's profile and inform school staff about the possible changes ahead. Here is a personal account from Diane Ogg, a school administrator and steward in a high school in Salford.

"On 20 April, I started my secondment with UNISON. I remember the feeling very well. There was a mixture of excitement, apprehension and fear. My first school visit was to one of the most notorious high schools in Salford. There was a large turnout and all eyes were on me and the area organiser. It was very daunting and I just wanted to run away. This was the first visit of many more to come and I could write a book on the issues raised by school support staff. Many are clinging to the hope that the new body will bring recognition and fairness. I do think that the project in Salford was a success; the recruitment figures and list of new contacts and stewards speak for themselves."

The North West team plan their organising in schools campaign



IN SCHOOLS

UNISON
Education Services

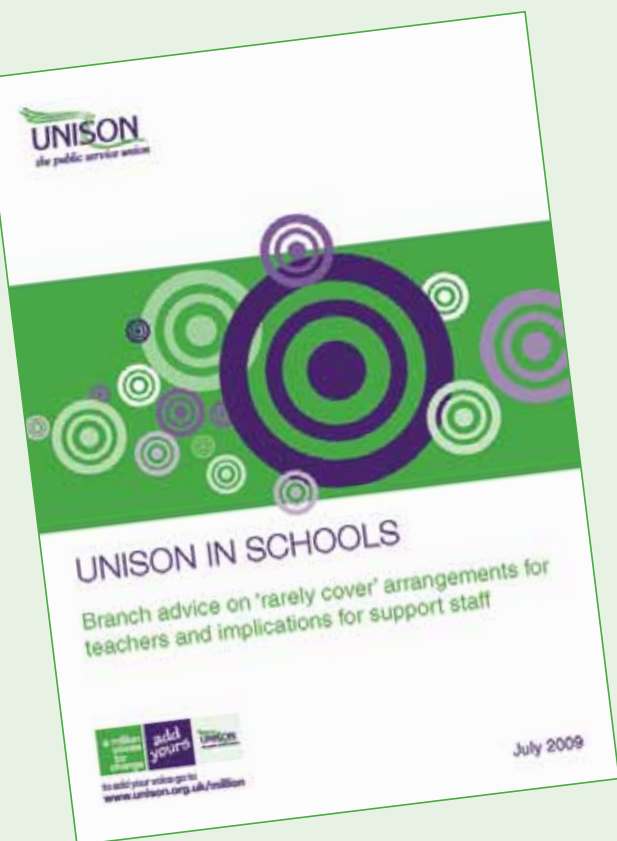
Contact

Telephone
0845 355 0845

Email
education@unison.co.uk

Rarely cover – a new challenge for support staff

From this term, teachers and headteachers in England and Wales will only be obliged to cover for absent colleagues in exceptional circumstances. This contractual change is known as the 'rarely cover' arrangement. It will require schools to review their cover policies in consultation with staff and their unions. UNISON has produced a booklet: Branch Advice on 'Rarely Cover' Arrangements and Implications for Support Staff. It includes the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group guidance on 'rarely cover' and advice note 22 on the appropriate deployment of support staff in schools. Questions and answers and a checklist are included in the booklet, which is intended to help school reps and members respond confidently to cover issues.



Copies of the advice are available from branches (stock number: 2795) and every school rep should have one.

'Rarely cover' checklist

- Schools must have a cover policy and strategy in place.
- It must not threaten teaching and learning standards.
- The governing body must ensure that 'rarely cover' is working.
- A change of duties or contract cannot be forced on support staff.
- Staff and unions must be consulted on the policy and annual timetable.
- There should be timetabled consultation with unions on cover staff, their supervision, training, contracts, pay and grading.
- Deployment of teaching assistants, higher level teaching assistants, cover supervisors and other staff providing cover or cover supervision should be reviewed.
- Cover supervision should be paid at least at level 3 and specified work at least at level 4 (in a four-level grading structure).
- Where there are grading implications, guidance should be sought from the local authority
- The number of adults in a class should not be reduced.
- Headteachers must ensure that cover supervision is only for short-term absence and demonstrate what that is.
- Schools and local WAMGs (Workforce Agreement Monitoring Groups) should define acceptable short, medium and long-term absence.
- Cover supervision should not be used in primary and special settings – these inevitably require higher level cover than supervision.
- Training needs assessment should be part of the cover review.
- There should be dedicated training time, periods of observation and ongoing mentoring and monitoring.
- All cover arrangements should be recorded for monitoring purposes.
- Leave of absence policies should be reviewed and applied equally to all staff.
- WAMGs must monitor and advise schools on cover policies and strategies.
- Branches need to have a system of consultation, negotiation and representation for school staff in place.

Compensation for school caretaker

Alan Thomas, a caretaker at an infant's school in Kirby, needed surgery for a hernia after lifting a room divider to clean and polish the classroom floor. With the support of UNISON, Alan settled out of court with Wakefield Council, receiving accident compensation of £3,471.

He said: "Schools should take into account how difficult it is to lift heavy equipment and should have measures in place to stop injuries. I am now back at work but will have to be careful with my health for the rest of my life."

Risks must be assessed and tackled, training given and systems should be in place to ensure that jobs are performed safely. Accidents, near misses or risks should be reported to a health and safety rep, steward or branch. Members should be aware that there are strict time limits in place to make personal injury claims.

Asbestos in schools campaign

Many schools were built with asbestos sheeting and fibre before people realised how dangerous these were. Employers, whether local authorities or governing bodies, have a legal duty to identify and manage asbestos in premises that they control. All schools should, therefore, have been surveyed to check for the presence of asbestos. UNISON has very clear advice and guidance for members who think that there may be asbestos in their building. This can be obtained from Denise Bertuchi at education@unison.co.uk

UNISON is part of a national campaign working to improve asbestos management in schools. It is calling for a national audit of asbestos in schools and an assessment of the risk to staff and children. To find out more go to: www.schoolasbestosaction.co.uk

UNISON children's centre survey

The Parliamentary Children's, Schools and Families Committee is holding an inquiry into Sure Start children's centres. It will look at the effectiveness of children's centres and whether they are providing joined-up services for children and tackling deprivation. The committee will also consider staffing and governance arrangements. UNISON believes that it is important that the views of staff who work in centres are fed into the inquiry. We are therefore conducting a survey of staff to help inform our evidence to the committee. It would be helpful if as many children's centre staff as possible fill in the survey.

The online survey is anonymous and should only take a short time to complete.

http://surveys.unison.co.uk/login.asp?survey=Childrens_Centres

Many hands make lunch work

The Many Hands Make Lunch Work leaflet and poster have been updated to take into account the latest changes to school meals in England. The poster focuses on the health and safety issues that arise in a school kitchen, especially when moving from fast food to meals cooked from scratch. The leaflet covers wider issues, such as training, and both refer to the need for a review of staffing levels. UNISON has commissioned the Association of Public Service Excellence to carry out a work study on workforce numbers which reflects increased demands on the school meals service. The leaflet (stock no. 2531) and poster (stock no. 2532) should be available from branches and are on the education website.



Points of view

- Do you want to share your experience with other members in schools?
- Raise issues?
- Share your local organising successes?

Send in your stories (not more than 200 words, and they may be edited). If your piece is published you will receive a UNISON schools goodie bag.

Email: education@unison.co.uk

Schools minister responds to medicines survey

In the last issue we reported the shocking results of our survey of increased medical needs in schools and the impact on support staff. The findings were sent to the government and schools minister Diana Johnson replied. She was encouraged that many members provide medical support competently and within a school policy. She conceded, however, that "it is clear that some staff feel vulnerable and have concerns about the amount of training they receive prior to undertaking their duties. We would stress to schools that they must ensure staff receive appropriate training and are covered by appropriate insurance."

The minister has given an undertaking that UNISON's input will be sought in the review of government guidance: *Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings* and welcomes our commitment to raise awareness of this issue.

Organising through education

The London Borough of Barnet contracted out its school cleaning service in 2008. Staff's right to participate in the council's training programme was lost in the procurement process, so the branch education team stepped in. They realised that many of the cleaners would benefit from English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses and were determined to secure paid release for them to attend. The key was the responsibility on local authorities, schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. The case was made that children usually speak to someone they know and

that cleaners were more likely to live locally than most school staff; this was born out by branch research. But the cleaners were unable to attend safeguarding training, so lengthy talks began between the branch, the council procurement team and the contractors. They agreed that training was needed and that ESOL was necessary to maximise the benefit. The employers pay the cleaners to attend classes on a Saturday morning at UNISON's training rooms and they have proved popular. Classes are open to all staff and demonstrate the positive role of our trade union.

Accidents can happen

UNISON has prepared a factsheet on continence and toileting issues in schools. The guidance should help staff understand their role in this area and that contractual changes should be subject to full consultation with unions. It suggests ways that schools can adopt policies and practices to minimise "accidents" occurring and that when they do, they are dealt with in an appropriate, risk-assessed way. The factsheet includes a negotiator's checklist and can be obtained on request from education@unison.co.uk

Changes to early years funding

All local authorities have to review their funding arrangements for free places for three and four-year-olds. They are required to develop a single funding formula by April 2010. These changes could have a major impact on funding for maintained nurseries and nursery schools and all authorities are required to develop an early years forum to consider these changes.

To find out more visit the UNISON website: www.unison.org.uk/education/children/index.asp

NurseryWorld SHOW 2010

UNISON is supporting the Nursery World Show 2010. It is the leading exhibition dedicated to early years and has a mix of workshops and seminars on early years practice. The show provides a unique opportunity for early years staff to come together to discuss issues that are relevant to the sector, learn about best practice and see displays of new ideas and the latest equipment.

The show runs from 22 to 23 January 2010 at the Business Design Centre in Islington, London and registration is free.

For more information and registration details visit the Nursery World Show website:

www.nurseryworldshow.com



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

UNISON, EDUCATION WORKFORCE UNIT, FREEPOST WC5652, LONDON WC1H 9BR

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 Black Other
 Chinese Black African White UK
 Indian Black White UK
 Pakistani 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	Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid
		per week	per month		
Up to £38.47	Up to £2,000	£0.30	£1.30	A	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£38.48–£96.16	£2,001–£5,000	£0.81	£3.50	B	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£96.17–£153.84	£5,001–£8,000	£1.22	£5.30	C	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£153.85–£211.53	£8,001–£11,000	£1.52	£6.60	D	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
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£269.24–£326.92	£14,001–£17,000	£2.24	£9.70	F	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£326.93–£384.61	£17,001–£20,000	£2.65	£11.50	G	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
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£673.08+	over £35,000	£5.19	£22.50	K	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly

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
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Now please sign and date below

Signature

Date

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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.

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for
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services

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your
voice

UNISON campaigning
for a fairer society

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There for you – Stronger together

Everyone who works in a school or college knows that cuts in education are no way to deal with the credit crunch.

A good education gives every child the chance to reach their full potential.

And behind those children is an army of education professionals dedicated to providing the expertise and environment children need to thrive and excel. You!

You are the teaching assistants, school crossing patrol officers, kitchen staff, midday supervisors, caretakers, technicians, admin – and all the others who provide a vital service and keep our children safe and happy.

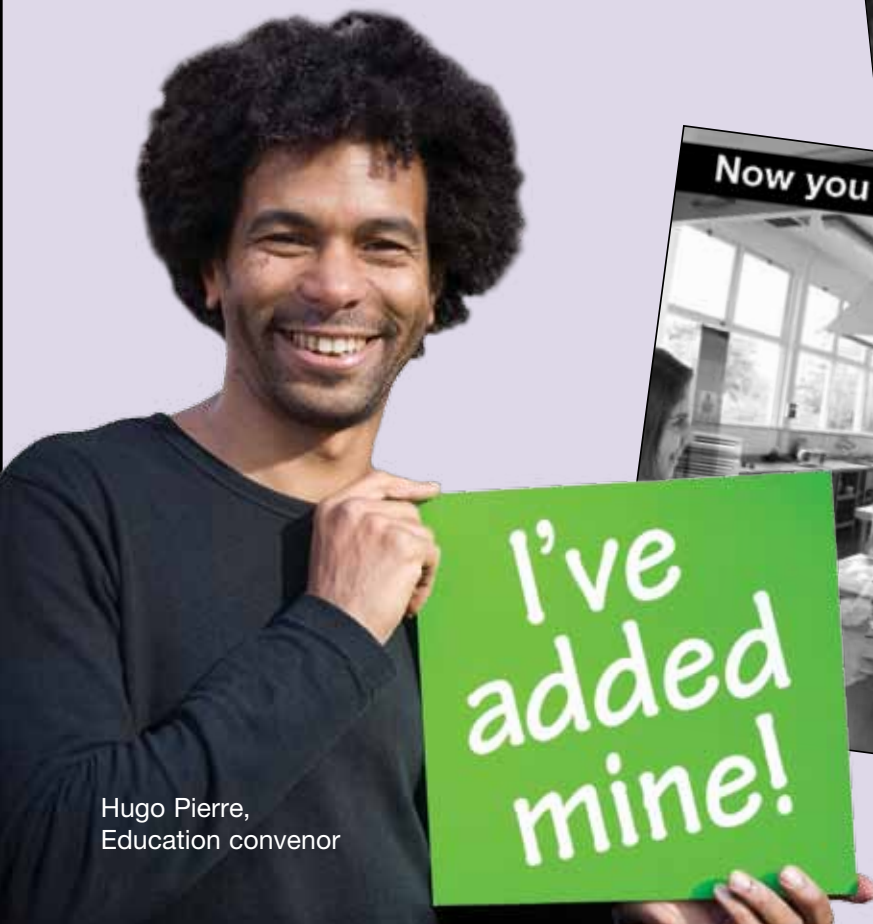
Attacking public services is no way to build a stronger, fairer society. Instead, the government should tackle the tax avoiders, and make the banks honour their obligation to our society by paying back their debts.

With pressure on all political parties to cut public spending, UNISON will stand up for all our members in education to protect their jobs.

We are calling for a million voices for public services. Add yours.



Don't wait till they've gone to defend them was the message we took loud and clear to the Labour and Tory party conferences. A giant melting ice sculpture of a 'lollipop lady' made the point that all the school community has a role to play in education and you can't just let them melt away.



Hugo Pierre,
Education convenor

Now you see her...

With that high-visibility uniform she's hard to miss. But with pressure on all political parties to cut public spending, will a service that ensures our children's safety go missing? And what else could disappear?

Your community under threat

Don't believe anyone who tells you the public sector is overflowing with faceless bureaucrats. Take a closer look and you'll find caring, committed people dedicated to helping every single one of us go about our daily lives. People like caretakers, teaching assistants and 999 operators. And the less visible staff like secretaries, IT workers and electricians who enable 'frontline' people to do their job.

Now is the time to defend the people who provide the public services we all rely on. Speak up before public service cuts hit families and communities across the UK.

Don't wait till they've gone to defend them
Speak up today at unison.org.uk/dontwait

Join us in UNISON
call 0845 355 0845

UNISON
the public service union

a million voices for public services

Now you see her...

With pressure on all political parties to cut public spending, will this vital service go missing? And what else could disappear?

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