

It's Time to Train

UNISON is at the forefront when it comes to training and development for staff in schools. We know that much has been done in recent years since the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) was set up. But we wanted to see for ourselves what training looks like on the ground and asked UNISON national officer Bruni de la Motte to research the provision of training at school and local authority level – and to ask support staff themselves. The findings are published in our report *Time to Train*.

Key findings

75% of staff say they have been involved in some sort of training over the previous year, but the nature of training varies considerably in both quantity and relevance. Training needs to be relevant and of high quality to be meaningful. When support staff take on extra roles and responsibilities, training needs must be identified.

About half of support staff said they experienced no barriers to training, but 25–30% said that timing of training and getting cover for courses during school time were the main barriers to training. Facilities staff particularly said that the biggest issue around training was the lack of it. There should be a whole school approach, developing all staff not just those who are classroom based. Timing and payment for training courses held outside working hours remain major issues.

Workload is the main reason why some support staff, particularly in administrative roles, find it difficult to take time out for training. Every member of staff should have access to training. And the stress connected with a high workload, which makes taking time out to train feel impossible, must be addressed.



Only between 17–30% of training staff undertake seems to lead to a qualification. The research found that the concept of training varies widely. While head teachers seem keen to deploy support staff in new roles, this is seldom linked to appropriate training and development opportunities.

Only 40–50% of support staff have an annual development review.

Development reviews provide support staff with opportunities to discuss their work and plan areas for further development, which can then become the basis for a personal training programme. However, UNISON is opposed to any review or appraisal system linked to performance-related pay – as currently exists for teachers.

UNISON believes there should be an entitlement to training for all school staff. UNISON is determined to use the new negotiating body for school support staff to guarantee an entitlement to training and development.

N S C H O O L S

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New national pay and conditions framework one step closer

A new School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) is to be set up under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill which is currently going through Parliament. The SSSNB will negotiate pay and conditions for all school support staff in England, including those working in foundation, trust and voluntary-aided schools.

UNISON welcomes the principle of setting up the new negotiating body with legal backing to its agreements – indeed, we have been pushing for this – but, of course, “the devil is in the detail”.

UNISON will be working with the other local government unions and with labour MPs to try and get changes or further clarification where necessary.

We will also give oral evidence at the committee hearings of the Bill. In the meantime, negotiations on the content of the new pay and conditions framework continue in the national support staff working group. National role profiles and a core national contract of terms and conditions are being developed, which will be the basis of consultation with members shortly.

UNISON is committed to balloting our members on any new proposals before reaching an agreement.

Remember – to have a say in this you must be a member. You can join by contacting your local UNISON branch or UNISONdirect on 0845 355 0845 or by filling in the form on the back of this newsletter.

Support staff are special – official

Last November, Ofsted published a report that concluded that pupils benefit from contact with staff from a wide range of backgrounds, with diverse skills and life experiences.

The *Deployment, Training and Development of the Wider Workforce* report suggests that learning mentors and higher level teaching assistants, for example, have a positive impact, especially with pupils most likely to truant, underachieve or be excluded from school. They are also more likely to reach out to parents who are reluctant to come into school or need support with their children’s schooling.

The report recommends that the TDA provides information and guidance so that the wider workforce and their managers gain proper understanding of national occupational standards and the career development framework. Schools should use reliable indicators when monitoring and evaluating the impact of the wider workforce on pupils’ attainment. They should ensure that everyone works together to raise achievement; should be aware of the TDA’s role; and should provide coherent induction and training.

Chief inspector, Christine Gilbert, said “As this report has found, the wider workforce has an important role to play in improving children’s achievement, however all too often it was left to individual members of staff to identify and request professional development for themselves. It’s vital that schools invest time and money in evaluating and developing all of their staff, not just teachers.”

The ideas exchange – 2009 school staff seminar

Come together to exchange ideas, share experiences and listen to prominent speakers. UNISON is holding a seminar for members in schools on 7 May in Manchester.

Last year, minister for schools, Jim Knight, addressed the seminar and answered questions from the floor. Members discussed the new negotiating body in workshops; no doubt the hottest topic this year too. An update on national negotiations will be given and there will be workshops on employment and professional issues, including training. Sir Tim Brighouse, the Training and Development Agency for Schools CPD champion, has been invited.

To find out more please contact your UNISON local government branch.

Campaign for the Book

King Edward’s School Birmingham is holding a conference as part of Campaign for the Book on 27 June 2009.

Details from: aagibbons@blueyonder.co.uk

Email us about your Campaign for the Book events.



Illustration: Ros Asquith. First published in the Guardian

School catering staff want just desserts

Just Desserts

UNISON supporting school meals staff

Increased workload and unpaid overtime were the burning issues to emerge from our school meals campaign survey, Just Desserts. The survey went out to school meals staff last November and asked about working hours, training and pay and conditions.

Many responses described the time allowed for tasks as “a joke” with barely enough time for cleaning, preparation or paperwork, much of which is done in staff’s own time. And if there is such pressure on time, there won’t be much opportunity for training.

This is a scandal! How often do we hear praise heaped upon our national treasure – the “dinner lady”? But when it comes to decent treatment, they are at the back of the queue. Improving school meals cannot be done by cutting staff hours or kitchen budgets. Keep your comments rolling in as UNISON will use these findings to lobby the government, schools and employers for fair funding for school meals and the staff who provide them.

Fill in the questionnaire online at: www.unison.org.uk/education/schools

More free school meals

The Scottish Parliament has voted for free school meals for five to seven-year-olds, which will benefit 118,000 children (90,000 living in poverty but currently ineligible) from 2010. UNISON has been at the forefront of this campaign with churches, charities and anti-poverty groups.

Meanwhile, the education and health departments in England will fund a £20 million two-year free meals pilot for four to seven-year-olds. It will provide free meals in two authorities and extended entitlement in a third from September 2009. Councils and primary care trusts must bid for funding, and match it from their own resources. UNISON has always insisted that meal price and take-up are linked and that there is a low-pay poverty trap that makes meals unaffordable for many families ineligible for free school meals.

Keep up to date with events and news by signing up for our email updates on education and schools.

To find out more please go to www.unison.org.uk/news/maillinglist.asp

STOP PRESS: Islington local authority has just agreed to provide free school meals.

Heather's a winner

When higher level teaching assistant Heather Collins was nominated for the National Association of School Business Management Learning Support Assistant of the Year last autumn she was thrilled to bits.

Nominated by three staff including the deputy head at West Blatchington Primary and Nursery School in East Sussex, it “was a huge, huge compliment that they thought I was good enough”.

But when you talk to Heather it’s really not so surprising; “I always tried to learn more, take an extra step. I feel very loyal to the school and would put myself out for the school”, Heather says, displaying the kind of commitment UNISON sees day in day out from those working so hard in our schools to give children a good start in life.

For 11 years Heather has worked her way through the training and experience available to her and has been a school volunteer (when her son was in the school), teaching assistant and midday supervisor as well as taking on the role of governor “so I could understand better how the school works”. Oh yes and nine years a UNISON member too.

Heather used to work in insurance, but was made redundant 11 years ago: “It was a light bulb moment,” she says. “I realised I wanted to work in a school, not just volunteer – and it’s snowballed from there.”

So it’s not so hard to see why Heather was not only nominated, but won the UNISON-sponsored award.

UNISON head of education, Christina McAnea said: “This is great news for Heather. As the main union for professional support staff in schools, UNISON is working hard to get their roles recognised and rewarded.”

Heather was whisked up to London with her husband Paul for a “magical” awards ceremony. “The venue was beautiful, the food was beautiful, the hotel was wonderful and the award was beautiful too. We were looked after so well – everything was fantastic, except I was so nervous I couldn’t eat my pudding!”

“It was really nice to have my work in the school recognised, and to see all my friends and family and the school so chuffed for me.”

Learning Support Assistant of the Year award winner and UNISON member Heather Collins (centre), collects her award from William Simmonds, chief executive of the NASBM with UNISON’s Bruni de la Motte



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UNISON, EDUCATION WORKFORCE UNIT, FREEPOST WC56552/13, 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 Other
 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	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 £110 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
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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.

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