**UPDATED 22 January 2019**

**Speak up for schools - school funding consultative ballot**

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**What are we being asked about?**

UNISON is very concerned about the ways in which funding cuts to schools are affecting our members’ jobs, terms and conditions. We want to hear directly from you about the effect of funding on your work and what you are prepared to do about the ongoing cuts. We will ask you three questions – each one has a ‘yes’/ ‘no’ answer.

**Who is being consulted?**

UNISON is asking all members working in England in publicly funded schools. This includes academies, multi academy trusts, free schools, studio schools, university technical colleges and  local authorities.

Members working in independent schools and contractor staff will not be balloted for legal reasons.

**When is the consultation?**

The consultation will open on 22 January 2019 and close on 5 March 2019 at 4pm.

**Is this a national or local consultation of school members?**

This will be a national consultative ballot being conducted nationally by UNISON.  UNISON branches and regions will be campaigning locally to raise awareness about the ballot and participation in it.  UNISON centre will be working closely with branches and regions throughout the process.

Branches are not sending out ballot papers or ballot emails – all of the voting is being coordinated centrally by UNISON.

**How will members be able to vote?**

Those members for whom we have email addresses will be sent a link to vote in the consultation by email – so members need to keep an eye on their inbox. Members will receive a series of reminder emails if they don’t vote.

Members should *not* forward their voting link that has been sent to them. The link sent directly to their inbox is customised for them to vote without further verification. If anyone sends on their link to someone else and the person who receives the email then votes, then the original addressee will have lost their vote.

There will also be a general weblink. This can be used by any member in the consultation even if they don’t have an email address on RMS. The weblink will be posted onto the [**speakupforschools**](https://speakupforschools.unison.org.uk/) website and UNISON web–based [campaign tool](https://speakupforschools.unison.org.uk/). This link *can* be shared and forwarded.

It is vital that as many schools members as possible update their UNISON membership records so that it contains a correct email address and mobile phone number too. Members can update details by [following this link](https://www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/speak-up-for-schools/) or by calling their local UNISON branch and asking them to help to update their membership record on WARMS.

**What if members don’t have an email address?**

If members don’t have an email address they will be able to vote through the weblink. This will be available on the [speakupforschools.unison.org.uk](http://sp.dep.unison.org.uk/SG/EdandCS/Schools/Funding/speakupforschools.unison.org.uk) web page from the date when the consultation opens. Members will need to provide some information to verify their membership including either their UNISON membership number or National Insurance number, date of birth, surname.

You can help members to vote in their workplace by visiting and arranging a ‘virtual polling booth’ i.e. visiting with phones, tablets or laptops with the weblink set up so that members can vote online.

**How can we encourage members to vote?**

By talking to them - tell them about the campaign.

Plan your workplace walkarounds and meetings. You can run workplace meetings to explain the consultation to members, encourage new members to join and for members to engage in the consultative ballot.

Use the [UNISON PowerPoint presentation](https://www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/speak-up-for-schools/) to explain the reason for the consultation. If you need speakers’ note for this presentation please email [education@unison.co.uk](mailto:education@unison.co.uk) and we can send you the version with notes. The presentation has also been sent to branches in a UNISON local government branch circular.

**What other resources will branches and regions have?**

Click on the resources tab on the [Speak up for Schools](https://www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/) campaign page of the website to find all of the resources.

There are campaign **leaflets** from the UNISON online catalogue – stock number **4052**.

You can download and customise campaign **posters** from the UNISON online catalogue – stock number **4053**.

UNISON has produced Speak up for Schools **stickers**. These can now be ordered from our online catalogue on **4056**. They may be useful for school walkarounds and/or meetings when you are finding out who has voted.

**Will there be a social media campaign?**

Yes, please use the hashtag **#speakupforschools** on all social media postings**.** UNISON has produced two designs of the **speakupforschools photoboards**. You can download these from the UNISON online catalogue stock number **4057** or from[**UNISON website**](https://www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/speak-up-for-schools/)speak up for schools campaign page.

Please take as many photos of individuals and groups of schools members as you can and post them on our twitter account @UNISONinSchools.

There is also a [**gif**](https://medialibrary.unison.org.uk/pages/search.php?search=%21collection200&k=31a9146a2d) that you can share on social media to illustrate you tweets!

**What happens if members don’t get a consultative ballot email?**

Sometimes members’ records are not updated on the systems we hold (e.g. if surnames change). Members can check the information that we hold for them using this link <https://registration.unison.org.uk/> or by calling UNISONDirect on 0800 0 857 857. Members will then be able to update records with their current email address and mobile phone number and to tick the box that they are happy to receive email communications from us.

Please make sure that members get in contact as soon as possible if you have not had their vote by the end of January 2019. Initially, call UNISON Direct. If the problem is not resolved email [ballotenquiries@unison.co.uk](mailto:ballotenquiries@unison.co.uk).

**Where can I get more information on the consultation?**

A website has been created with information about this important campaign.  You are encouraged to check it out to keep yourself and members updated.   The website is [unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/speak-up-for schools/](https://www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/speak-up-for%20schools/).  Updates and resources can be obtained from this website.  You can also e-mail questions to [education@unison.co.uk](mailto:education@unison.co.uk). with any questions.

**Will new members be able to vote in the ballot?**

Yes, so make sure that as many school support staff as possible join UNISON. All those who join by 15 February 2019 should be able to vote in this consultation.

Remember, members will only be in the consultation if they work for a publicly funded school in England.

**Can members vote more than once ?**

No, whether you vote online via your email link or whether you vote using the generic website the e-balloting system will only enable you to vote once.

**Campaign tool**

UNISON has developed a [web-based campaign tool](https://speakupforschools.unison.org.uk/). This is designed to be used by branches and organisers on mobile phones and tablets when they are visiting schools and talking to members. Go to <https://speakupforschools.unison.org.uk/> to access the UNISON schools campaign tool.

Use this online tool to: membership details; access join online; log where schools meetings or schools visits have been held; and access the voting link. This campaign tool will have the link to the online vote from 22 January onwards. You can also access the schoolcuts.org.uk website to find out how your local school is affected by the cuts.

This campaign tool can be used on laptops and PCs as well.

**Mapping of school visits**

Please use the campaign tool [web-based campaign tool](https://speakupforschools.unison.org.uk/) to log all of your school visits and meetings during the campaign. This information can be inputted by branch activists and reps or by regional staff who are visiting schools to keep a record of which schools have been visited.

**Are other unions involved in the schools cuts campaign?**

Other unions (NEU, NAHT and ASCL) have been consulting their members; asking similar questions to the ones UNISON is asking.

**Will UNISON be sending out paper ballot for this consultative ballot?**

This is an online ballot only and members will be sent an email with a link so that they can vote. If members don’t have an email address on their membership record then they will need to vote using the weblink that will be posted on [speakupforschools.unison.org.uk/](https://speakupforschools.unison.org.uk/).

To be counted, all votes need to be coordinated by UNISON Centre through the consultation methods outline above.

Members can contact UNISON direct if they are having problems voting.

**Is there a threshold for the number of votes that need to be cast?**

This is not a statutory ballot so there are no legal thresholds to comply with.  However, all members are encouraged to vote. The highest possible turnout will send a stronger message and help us to build a stronger campaign.

Please do all you can to help members engage in this consultation.

**How will I know about any updates?**

Any updates will be posted on <https://speakupforschools.unison.org.uk/> or on <https://www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/speak-up-for-schools/> as well as being sent out in branch circulars.