



@NoSchoolCuts

## How fair is your school's funding?

School funding has become a prominent issue in politics this year. It is widely acknowledged that this is due to the work done by the joint unions (notably the schools cuts website: [www.schoolcuts.org.uk](http://www.schoolcuts.org.uk)) and parent groups such as Fair Funding for All.

This pressure led most political parties to make manifesto commitments to increase schools funding in the run-up to the general election in May. In England, the minority Conservative government has restated its promise of putting an additional £4 billion pounds into schools by 2022.

Whether any of the promised money will be 'new' money remains to be seen. So far, £1.3bn has been identified from savings from other parts of the Department for Education's budget.

The government has reaffirmed its manifesto pledge that no school will lose out under a new national funding formula – and Northern Ireland schools look likely to receive additional money as part of the deal between the Tories and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). The

governments in Wales and Scotland have claimed they are increasing school funding.

However, school budgets across the UK are suffering. Schools in Cymru/Wales are at a critical point in many areas as local authorities continue to suffer significant cuts; cuts to council budgets in Scotland have led to a 20% reduction in support staff in schools since 2010; and schools in Northern Ireland had been facing cuts of £50 million before the deal with the DUP was agreed.

Meanwhile, figures from the Department for Education show an 8% reduction in teaching assistants in England's secondary schools since 2013.

While some additional funds may make it into schools, rising inflation could still mean that it isn't enough. We will be working with other unions and parent groups to keep up the pressure on the government in the run up to this autumn's budget. We may also need to consider stronger action if funding cuts continue.

SCHOOLS

Find out more



UNISON in  
Schools



@UNISONinSchools  
#StarsInOurSchools

**Inside: Join the Experts, training for you, pay update, fire safety and much much more...**

# Help build the vision for schools in Wales

Will you come and help build the vision for the future of schools in Wales? The Cymru/Wales UNISON schools seminar is happening very soon. Share your views and hear from the experts. Meet people from right across the school team and from right across Wales.

This one-day event is free to all UNISON members in schools in Wales so join us on 28 September, 9:30am-4pm at the Marriot Hotel, Cardiff City Centre.

You will hear from the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams AM; chief executive of the EWC Hayden Llewellyn; and UNISON's own head of education, Jon Richards.

We will cover:

- curriculum reform in Wales

- changes in additional learning needs
- professional standards for support staff in Wales
- UNISON and the Open University learning opportunities for support staff
- There will also be sessions on issues like term-time pay, access to training and how to get your voice heard.

Find out more at:  
**[www.unison.org.uk/events](http://www.unison.org.uk/events)**

Register interest by emailing **[d.rees@unison.co.uk](mailto:d.rees@unison.co.uk)** who will send you full joining details.

And if you miss this event email us to get in early for the next one!



**Recent activities in Cymru/Wales**



*UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis, UNISON members and children from Waverley School, Enfield celebrated Stars day.*

**24 November**

## Who are the Stars in your school?

UNISON is holding its annual celebration day for all school support staff – Stars in Our Schools – on Friday 24 November 2017.

We will be celebrating the positive role of the whole school support staff team in making your school a safe and happy place for children to learn. We believe it is important to celebrate our schools' successes even in tough times.

You can organise a special assembly and ask your local elected representatives and press to

join you for the day. Or you could ask pupils to make 'thank you' cards or nominate a support staff member for a special award. There are lots of ideas and downloadable materials in our online resource guide at: [www.StarsInOurSchools.uk](http://www.StarsInOurSchools.uk).

Contact your local UNISON branch to discuss your plans for Stars in Our Schools and join us on 24 November – or any time that month that fits with your school's plans. And don't forget to join UNISON in schools on Twitter and Facebook.



UNISON in Schools



@UNISONinSchools  
#StarsInOurSchools



# UNISON welcomes apprentices

Schools across the UK are likely to see an increase in the number of apprentices after the government introduced a new levy to encourage more apprenticeships.

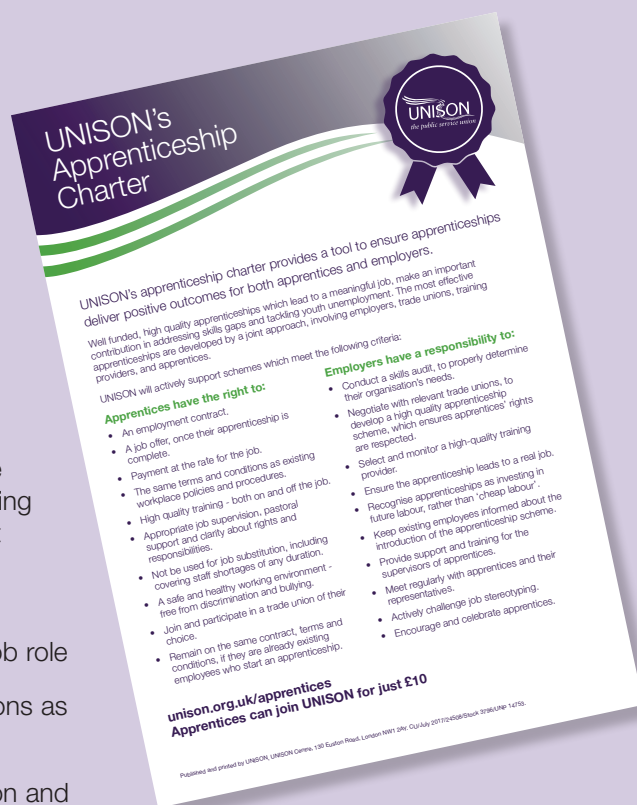
The shake-up will particularly affect England. Under the new scheme, the government is seeking to encourage workers of all ages to take up an apprenticeship. These should be 'real jobs' and take at least 12 months. They can be full-time or part-time and at least 20% of the time should be committed to off-the-job training.

The government is also introducing new Apprenticeship Standards. These will include some designed specifically for schools, including a teaching assistant apprenticeship, which UNISON (the only union involved), helped to develop.

UNISON has also been involved in developing new apprenticeship standards for school business managers. Other generic apprenticeship standards will cover areas such as catering and technical roles.

UNISON has raised concerns that some schools might use apprenticeships to replace current jobs or exploit apprentices, so we have launched a charter that lists what we believe represents good practice. Key points include:

- an apprenticeship employment contract for the duration of the training, leading to a permanent employment contract upon successful completion
- payment at the rate of the job role
- the same terms and conditions as other staff
- high-quality training – both on and off the job
- appropriate job supervision, pastoral support and clarity about rights and responsibilities
- a safe and healthy working environment, free from discrimination, bullying and harassment



- ability to join and participate in a trade union of their choice.

For more information on our work on apprentices go to:  
**[www.unison.org.uk/apprentices](http://www.unison.org.uk/apprentices)**

## Fancy becoming minister for education?

Interested in becoming an MP? UNISON members Angela Rayner and Eleanor Smith have done just that.

You can read Angela's inspiring story from council estate to the House of Commons on our website (search 'Angela Rayner'). She says: "You have the skills to do the job. All you need to do is have a passion for making a difference and to care about the people around you and you can do it. You can be amazing."

Eleanor was a theatre nurse in Birmingham, going on to become UNISON's first black president and is now MP for Wolverhampton South West.

You've seen some of the support and learning UNISON offers (pages 4&5) and we will support you to get active in your union and in the Labour Party. Find out more by emailing: [labourlink@unison.co.uk](mailto:labourlink@unison.co.uk).

As Angela says: "Stop maybe-ing and just do it."



**UNISON welcomes all school support staff workers and celebrates diversity. Why not join us? Visit [joinunison.org](http://joinunison.org) or call 0800 0 857 857.**

# So much to learn – with U

Did you know that UNISON does more than represent you in the workplace and negotiate your pay?

In fact, UNISON has a whole range of learning opportunities for members working in schools, and a network of union learning reps to help you get the learning you need.

What we offer varies from region to region, but in most regions we offer a range of courses.



## One-day workshops

We run one-day workshops on

- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Autism Awareness
- Mental Health Awareness.

These are a great option for in-service training days and are proving very popular with staff across the UK. The workshops are run in partnership with the Open University, who provide a bespoke session for UNISON members working in schools.

The north-west region recently ran a whole week of training sessions for

*"UNISON will support  
reps and provide relevant  
training and a support  
structure"*

school support staff – it was great to see so many people taking part (see next page).

If you are interested in running a course in your school, talk to your local UNISON branch or call 0800 0 857 857 and ask to be put in touch with your UNISON regional education team.

## Learning is for life, not just for school!

UNISON has a number of free courses that can be run by your UNISON branch.

Power to Be You is a confidence-building course designed to help improve your self-esteem and assertiveness.

Your Skills, Your Future or Facing Change Together are ideal if you are facing any changes at work – restructuring, academisation or a brand new job.

*"I didn't realise I would  
learn so much"*

## Go at your own pace

If you prefer to study at your own pace, we have online learning modules on our e-learning website at: [learning.unison.org.uk](http://learning.unison.org.uk).

Or visit the OpenLearn website for hundreds of free courses at: [www.open.edu/openlearn](http://www.open.edu/openlearn)

## Help with funding

UNISON offers a limited number of bursaries for school support staff members studying with the Open University. Up to £200 is available for your personal study. Email: [learningandorganising@unison.co.uk](mailto:learningandorganising@unison.co.uk) or call 020 7121 5116 for more information.



## And there's more!

This is just a sample of the learning opportunities we offer to our members in schools. We also offer...

- Job applications workshops
- Return to Learn and Women's Lives – two 12-week courses aimed at empowering women and encouraging people to return to the world of learning
- Dyslexia Awareness – e-learning module
- Bursaries for maths and English qualifications
- Union Learning Rep and workplace representative training.

Your union is there to support you, so if you would like more information or advice, talk to your local UNISON branch or visit our learning website: [www.unison.org.uk/get-involved/learning-development](http://www.unison.org.uk/get-involved/learning-development).





# UNISON!

## Learning in action...

UNISON in the north west hosted a week of courses for school support staff in the summer. More than 150 teaching assistants, learning support, admin support and midday supervisors attended.

Promoting Positive Behaviours looked at strategies for improving behaviour and recommended the establishment of regular school forums to ensure leadership teams hear the views of all staff. Jeremy Bringham, tutor and

deputy head of a special behavioural unit explained, "School support staff have an indispensable role as the eyes and ears of the school and can make a real difference in creating a positive environment for young people".

Improved teaching strategies with maths expert Stephanie Lawrence of School Improvement Liverpool, explained changes to the curriculum and offered some excellent tips for hands-on activities for classroom support. Cathy Gilroy, a teaching assistant, commented: "Really enjoyed the course. Has given me a renewed enthusiasm for Maths".

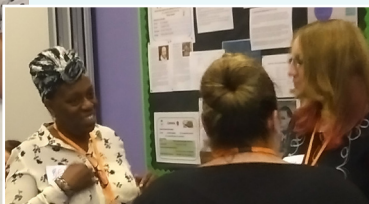
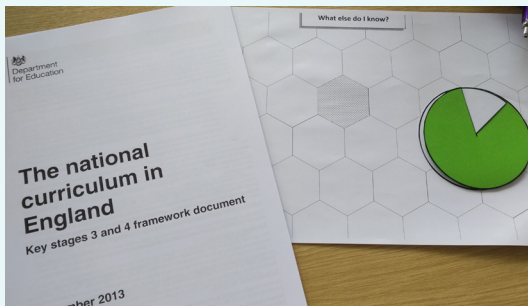
Members joined Polish workers for a workshop on Polish language, culture and understanding more about Poland, delivered by Gosia McKane, from Merseyside Polonia.

Autism Awareness was delivered by Joy Rowlands, of the Open University, followed by Mental Health Awareness – and Dyslexia Awareness delivered by Cath Roberts from Manchester College.

Teaching assistant and UNISON rep Cheryl Parker commented, "Cath's knowledge of mental health and dyslexia was brilliant. Keep the courses going, they are brilliant!" UNISON's very own regional schools lead Keith Bradley responded: "We look forward to offering further development opportunities and access to the Union Learning Fund".

A confidence and self-esteem workshop was delivered by the Workers' Educational Association. One discussion looked at the importance of having a workplace representative in every school. Regional learning organiser Tom Jenkins explained: "A workplace rep is vital to ensure members can raise issues. UNISON will support reps and provide relevant training and a support structure. UNISON's membership learning and development offer is an excellent issue to raise with senior leaders in schools".

The week closed with British Sign Language (BSL) and managing conflict workshops. Dipti Patel from the Manchester Deaf Centre delivered an outstanding course in BSL. One learner commented: "I didn't realise I would learn so much, outstanding tutor!" The afternoon covered managing conflict and dealing with difficult situations – often with other school staff. Members also discussed how UNISON can help develop a positive response to benefit the whole school.



"Really enjoyed the course. Has given me a renewed enthusiasm for maths"



## Pupils at school with medical conditions

The Department for Education has made changes to its legal guidance for schools in England on supporting pupils with medical conditions.

Revised guidance designed to help pupils with long-term medical conditions and the staff who support them has been issued by the Department for Education (DfE). UNISON has campaigned long and hard to address inconsistencies in the provision of health support and the administration of medicines, which have left both pupils and the staff that provide these services vulnerable.

In light of the DfE's changes to the guidance UNISON has updated its advice to members. The updated UNISON advice is available on the UNISON website (search 'supporting pupils').

## Northern Ireland welcomes U-turn on school uniform grants

UNISON challenged the attempt by the Department of Education and the Education Authority to reduce the amount of money spent on school uniform grants and extended schools.

We did not believe that either body could justify their decisions and we have welcomed the announcement to reverse those cuts. The attempts to cut the school uniform grant and other support such as breakfast clubs and homework clubs discriminates against working class families including the many workers who are living on or below the poverty line.



## Victory for our bus escorts in Belfast

UNISON has successfully secured permanent status for bus escort members in Belfast who have been working on temporary contracts for several years.

This victory comes as the result of long negotiations between the Education Authority and UNISON. We will continue to monitor contracts for bus escort members in other areas and challenge the use of long-term temporary contracts.

## Office staff cuts put pupil safety at risk

Cuts to school office staff could put pupils' safety at risk, survey shows.

A UNISON survey of 1,400 school office employees revealed that administrative and finance staff carry out many duties that are crucial to the running of schools.

School administrators, business managers and finance workers are regularly administering first aid, handing out medicines to pupils and conducting criminal record checks.

These activities go way beyond the support role suggested by their job titles, and they have a direct impact on the quality of learning and pupil safety.

More than half of those surveyed say they administer medicines and first aid to pupils, and six in 10 update school medical records. This helps keep children well and allows pupils with special needs to stay in mainstream education.

Over 71% said they ensured that people visiting schools are safe to do so, with many organising security checks to make certain new staff have no previous criminal convictions.

Continued cuts to these support roles could lead to schools breaking the law or let people who could be a risk to children's safety slip through the net.

UNISON has warned that government advice to merge support staff or share them between schools could put children's health and well-being at risk as staff are already overstretched.

UNISON head of education Jon Richards said: "School office staff go above and beyond every single day and schools would struggle to manage without them.

"Our members play a vital role keeping

children safe, reassuring parents and ensuring the smooth and cost-effective running of schools. Without them, already overstretched teachers and teaching assistants could be pulled out of classrooms."

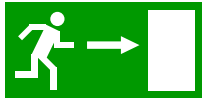
UNISON believes cutbacks in education funding are having a devastating impact on children's education. Instead of starving schools of funds, the government should invest in education and ensure children get the start they deserve in life.

**For more information on the unions campaign against school cuts visit the UNISON website.**



# Fire safety at work

UNISON takes your health and safety at work very seriously. Following the tragic fire in the London residential block Grenfell Tower, UNISON has had many queries on fire safety in workplaces.



Shortly after the fire, the government

implemented a checking and testing programme for Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) to ensure the safety of occupants of high-rise buildings (Over 18 metres).

All buildings – including those less than 18 metres – are covered by various pieces of legislation to ensure fire safety, but there are variations across the four UK administrations.

In Scotland and Northern Ireland, fire safety is the responsibility of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service respectively.

For legislation appropriate to your area search ‘fire safety at work’ online at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

## Safety in your school

Don't feel powerless. There is plenty you can do:

Find out if you have any cladded buildings over 18 metres. If you do, find out if your employer has implemented the checks for Aluminium Composite Material (ACM).

Ask your employer about fire inspections and their frequency and request to be involved in the next one.

Check if there are any:

- blocked fire exits
- missing or damaged fire extinguishers
- damaged fire doors or surrounding areas
- damaged dry riser inlet cupboards
- damaged or covered sprinkler units (if installed).

If you have any concerns you should write to, or email details to, your employer asking them how and when they will address your concerns.

Additionally, you can contact your UNISON branch health and safety officer or branch secretary for further advice.



## Why not become a safety rep?

Your union needs people like you to become safety reps in your workplace. To find out about the training and support you will get, contact your UNISON branch health and safety officer or branch secretary (call UNISON direct on 0800 0 857 857 if you don't know how to contact them).

You can search our website for the guide ‘Health and Safety – The Basics’ to find out more about the role.

If you need more help or support you can email the UNISON national health and safety unit at: [healthandsafety@unison.co.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@unison.co.uk)

## News from Scotland

It's a mixed picture for schools in Scotland. Here we round up the top issues.

### Healthcare needs

We are close to having much better guidance for school staff on healthcare needs of young people in schools\*. This issue has caused confusion in school settings, with some staff being expected to undertake tasks they are neither trained in nor feel competent in.

UNISON Scotland has been involved in drafting the new guidance, which is now in the final stages of consultation and hopefully will be formally issued to schools in the first term of the 2017/18 school year.

The draft guidance contains the clear statement that school staff providing healthcare should receive appropriate training from a health professional or an accredited source. UNISON believes that the same principle should apply to the

provision of intimate care, which also requires appropriate training, and we've asked for this to be included in the final version. We've also asked for more clarity on what is meant by ‘appropriate training’ and the insurance/indemnity arrangements for staff undertaking these tasks.

\* See p6 for information on guidance for England.

### Education Governance Review

Less helpfully, the Scottish Government is pressing ahead with the Education Governance Review, which emphasises structural reform to create large regional collaboratives to oversee schools. UNISON responded to the first stage of the consultation stating our preference for schools to continue to be the responsibility of local authorities, because of the greater democratic

local accountability and efficiency through economies of scale. We are concerned that the trend towards greater centralisation has not led to better services.

### Budget cuts

UNISON Scotland believes that the key issue for school education in Scotland is not governance but budget cuts. There have been more than £300million in cuts over the last five years and more is likely to come. We believe that investment in schools and the development of education teams drives improvement and closes the attainment gap. Changing structures just focuses attention internally on the organisation itself rather than on the actual delivery of services. We will continue to campaign against cuts to school budgets and emphasise the need for proper funding for schools.



# Pay up now!

Like so many public service workers, school support staff have not had a proper pay rise for years – despite providing vital support for the learning and development of pupils.

For years now public service workers have seen their pay held back by government in the name of austerity. First a freeze then a cap, resulting in public sector pay rising by just 4.4% between 2010 and 2016 while the cost of living rose by 22%.

But the tide may be turning. The government is now under real pressure to scrap the 1% cap on public sector wages and UNISON is leading the fight to get you the pay rise you deserve.

They won't pay up if we don't all speak up. So, please get involved in our campaign and help us win. Together we can do it.

## HOW MUCH HAVE YOU LOST?

Check your pay with our online calculator at [unison.org.uk/payupnow](http://unison.org.uk/payupnow)

Go to [www.unison.org.uk/payupnow](http://www.unison.org.uk/payupnow) to find out more about how you can help us keep the pressure on.

## Your 2017 pay claim

**UNISON negotiates pay for hundreds of thousands of council and schools workers. This year we have submitted a pay claim to the Local Government Association for a 5% pay increase on all NJC pay points and the scrapping of NJC pay points SCP 6-9 so that nobody falls below the real Living Wage of £8.45 an hour (£9.75 in London). This claim also covers support staff in the majority of academy schools.**

## You should know this

**UNISON is one of only three unions that can negotiate nationally and with local councils for school support staff on pay and conditions for members.**

**UNISON is also one of only three unions recognised to negotiate for support staff in academies as detailed in the TUC model agreement.**

**The new union formed by the merger of ATL and NUT (called the National Education Union) is not one of these unions. Only UNISON has the history, knowledge and expertise of working with school support staff in maintained and academy schools.**