

# Derry Education Branch AGM Newsletter 2021

## **Derry Education Annual General Meeting**

*It's about You, Your Branch, Your Say and Your Vote!*

**This year the AGMs will take place online due to Covid-19 restrictions**

Our Branch AGM is the single most important meeting of the year.

Every year UNISON requires its branch officers and stewards to stand for re-election. The AGM is your opportunity to have a say in how the branch is run and who will represent you in 2021.

It will still be a great opportunity to meet with other members and UNISON stewards and to find out how UNISON has been active on your behalf during the year.

If you would like to become more active in UNISON: Representing your colleagues or becoming involved in solidarity or welfare work, please contact your branch.

## **AGM Online Meeting Dates**

At each AGM there will be a raffle for anyone who joins the AGM online.

**Monday 22nd February**  
4.30pm – 5.30pm

**Tuesday 23rd February**  
2pm-3pm & 7pm-8pm

**Wednesday 24th February**  
3.15pm-4.15pm

**Thursday 25th February**  
3.30pm-4.30pm & 7pm-8pm

Our AGM will be held via the **Zoom** online platform. **Zoom** is free to download on tablet or smartphone, or can be accessed at <https://zoom.us/>.

You can join the AGM on Zoom in a number of ways:

1. Click here: <https://bit.ly/3oh3HRu>
2. Join via the Zoom app (free to download)
3. Access the Zoom website - <https://zoom.us/>.

Join a Meeting

Meeting ID: 862 6519 0334  
Passcode: AGM2021

## **The NJC Pay Award for 2020-2021**

UNISON undertook a ballot of our members in Education and Local Government on the employers pay offer of an increase of 2.75% on all NJC pay points from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. An increase of one day to the minimal annual leave entitlement and to begin discussions on “comprehensive joint national review of the workplace causes of stress and mental health”. The majority of our members balloted voted to accept the pay offer.

The 2021 NJC pay award continues to be negotiated with management side.

UNISON Derry Education Branch will consult with members when more information is available.

## **UNISON is the largest union for Support Workers**

The current issues UNISON is negotiating on include the following:

- The ongoing EA review of contractual issues for classroom assistants.
- The database on temporary workforce numbers and also workers impacted by EU Exit across the EA has still not been published.
- School transport re-configuration.

**UNISON also demands an education system:**

- that protects and strengthens the work of classroom, nursery, youth workers and special needs staff;
- that protects cleaning, catering and schools based staff against the threat of privatisation;
- that ensures that all staff in schools are employed on fair contracts;
- that stops plans to curtail Special Educational Needs services for pre-school children;
- that ensures that future area planning processes consider workforce issues and maintain job levels.

## **Update Your Details**

Check your membership status by checking your payslip for deductions or your bank for direct debit. If this is not up to date, then you may **NOT** be a UNISON member therefore you will not have access to branch, regional and legal services.

Please contact membership services on 028 90270190 to update your details.

Changed your address, moved workplace or have a new number? Update your details using our online form. Go to <https://www.unison-ni.org.uk/update-your-details>

Not yet a UNISON Member? Join Today

Call membership on 028 9027 0190 or join online: [www.joinunison.org](http://www.joinunison.org)

## Free School Meals 4 All



UNISON has established a Working Group comprised of reps from our health and education branches to take forward the development of a new campaign calling for universal free school meal provision for all children and young people.

### **The campaign's objectives are:**

- Seeking universal nutritious free school meals for all pupils to both reduce poverty and improve public health;
- To safeguard and promote the vital work of our members within schools catering. School meals services should be publicly provided;
- As a response to Covid-19 to build support for the implementation of a public health model across Government that is aimed at dealing with health and educational inequalities that have been exacerbated during the pandemic.

We have started a petition calling on the NI Executive to provide universal free school meals. Further actions will follow before the New Year. Link to the online petition is here <http://chnng.it/ycDBDYHJ>

## Response to Covid-19

As workplaces began to return in August after the lockdown and summer break, our key focus was ensuring that the return to school was done in a way that protected pupils and workers from harm. At times this has required us to publicly challenge the EA and Department of Education on inadequate guidance, poor consultation, and a failure to put in place measures to protect your health and safety with the necessary speed.

Many of our members worked through lockdown to provide vital services in the local communities providing meals and educational resources to our young people to ensure they felt connected.

The *New School Day* Guidance published by the Department of Education in August (following the decision to reopen schools full-time, rather than part-time) raised more questions than answers for our members in catering, cleaning, transport and for classroom assistants. The Department gave trade unions less than 24 hours to respond to this draft guidance before its publication, showing complete disregard for their legal duties to consult.

It's been a tough few months for all our members. UNISON want to thank you sincerely for the work you've done. In the meantime we'll continue to push for improvements to Government guidance to help make your workplace safer.

## Your Branch Continues to Support Members!

- Goodie Bags delivered to workplaces open throughout lockdown.
- Youth workers providing a valuable service in their local communities.
- Supporting local bakeries providing cupcakes for stars in our schools.
- The branch has run a number of draws.



## Supporting our Members

Over the past year the Derry Branch has:

- Provided guidance to members on Health & Safety, Risk Assessments, PPE and much more.
- Held online meetings for members working in the Private Day Care Sector & Workplace members meetings.
- Provided ongoing advice and representation to members during Covid 19 restrictions facing disciplinarys and workplace issues.
- Resolved a number of issues raised by our membership working within the education sector such as cleaning, catering, transport, classroom support and admin.
- Represented our members at all Education Authority, voluntary grammars and integrated schools.

A full report on branch activity will be given at the AGM.

## Membership Services

### **UNISON Welfare – 'There For You'**

The Branch want to remind you to use this service which is FREE to all UNISON members and is there for you at times of difficulty and crisis. For full details please see UNISON's website.

[www.unison.org.uk/get-help/](http://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/)

### **Legal Advice**

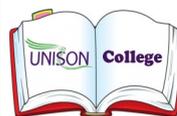
Thompson's NI our specialist employment solicitors. For free legal advice and support on Personal injury and non-employment matters, contact: **0808 252 2783**

## Donations to Local Charities

Our branch covers the North West Area. The chosen charities for 2020 supporting people through Covid-19 lockdown.

- **Foyle Women's Aid, Strabane Koram Centre, Limavady LCDI & Dungiven SVDP**
- **Christmas 2020 Donations**
- **Saint Vincent De Paul & Salvation Army**

## UNISON College



UNISON College have 550 Free E-learning courses available for UNISON members.

Check out the full list of courses here: <https://bit.ly/2VtXPI6>

## Derry Education Branch Contacts

Branch Secretary: Gabrielle Carton: 07988 724281  
Branch Chair: Caroline McDaid: 07710 618668

Regional Organiser: Joe McCusker: 07775 856286  
Area Organiser: Noreen Robinson: 07976 217080

**UNISON Direct - 0800 0 857 857**

Find us on Facebook

**UNISON Derry Education Branch**

