

Derry Education Branch AGM Newsletter 2022

Derry Education Annual General Meeting

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

This year the AGMs will take place face to face & online

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 2022

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 Meeting Dates

At each AGM there will be a raffle taking place.
*Physical meetings may not take place due to Covid-19 guidelines.

Monday 21st February 2022
Ardnashee School & College, L' Derry
3.30pm - 4.30pm

Tuesday 22nd February 2022
Online Zoom Meeting 7pm-8pm

Wednesday 23rd February 2022
Knockavoe Special School Strabane
3.15pm - 4.15pm

Thursday 24th February 2022
Rossmar Special School, Limavady
3.30pm - 4.30pm

Friday 25th February 2022
Pilots Row Youth Centre Derry
1.30pm

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

1. Click here: <https://bit.ly/3p7PisN>
2. Scan the QR code from a mobile or tablet.
3. Click the 'Join a Meeting' button below.



SCAN ME

Join a Meeting

The NJC Pay Award for 2021-22

UNISON members REJECT pay offer – and will be balloted for strike action



UNISON members have voted overwhelmingly to reject the 1.75% pay offer (2.75% for those on pay point 1) and will be moving to ballot members on whether they wish to take industrial action. The Joint Trade Unions have also written to the Employers' Side, making clear that our members have rejected the offer, that we are moving to a strike ballot, and demanding an improved offer.

We are also pushing ahead on the EA commitment to undertake a pay and grading review. The goal on trade union side is to reduce the number of NJC spinal points which EA uses in its pay structure.

UNISON is the largest union for Support Workers

The current issues UNISON is negotiating include the following:

- An ongoing EA review of contractual issues for classroom assistants, catering and cleaning.
- UNISON is challenging the reduction in the pay of special needs staff by changing contracts
- UNISON is addressing the collapse of differentials between supervisory and core staff in cleaning and catering.

UNISON also demands an education system:

- that protects and strengthens the work of classroom, nursery 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.

Not yet a UNISON Member? Join Today

Call membership on 028 9027 0190 or join online: www.joinunison.org

Free School Meals For All



UNISON has established a Working Group comprised of reps from across health and education 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;

In March 2021, UNISON NI launched the 'All We Need is Lunch' Art Competition as part of the wider Free School Meals campaign. Letters and materials were sent to every school and youth organisation in NI encouraging them to engage with children and young people on the issue of free schools meals, and asking them to support them to use the visual arts to explore what school meals means to them.

Congratulations to **All We Need is Lunch' Art Competition** winner **Brandon Magee, Rossmar School.**



Farewell to our Joint Branch Secretary Gabrielle Carton as she takes early Retirement



Gabrielle retired on the 30th October 2021 from her workplace in Ardnashee School & College, Joint Branch Secretary & Joint Regional Convenor.

Gabrielle has been a tremendous activists since joining UNISON in 1990 she then went on to become the Branch Secretary in March 2012 and on October 2014 became the Joint Regional Convenor for Education.

The branch would like to thank Gabrielle for all her hard work and dedication she has given to the membership of Derry Education Branch and the committee for all those years.

On behalf of the membership UNISON Derry Education Branch we wish you a very happy and healthy early retirement.

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>

Donations to Charities

The chosen charities for 2021:

- UNISON There For You
- Cuban Syringe Appeal
- Derry & Strabane Search & Rescue
- LIP (Limavady Initiative for the prevention of Suicide)
- St. Vincent De Paul

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/

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**

Covid-19

The closure of schools during the first pandemic surge presented bargaining challenges around the protection of employment rights. The re-opening of schools in 2021 highlighted continuing concerns of education workers. Towards the end of the summer we worked with teaching unions in a challenge to the Department's rushed plans. Major difficulties arose in early September 2021 around guidance on isolation, contact tracing and testing. These remain contested issues and we have brought these to the attention of the NI Assembly Education Committee.

Since schools reopened, we have worked closely with our lay bargaining team to protect and secure employment rights and health and safety standards for our members who work as classroom assistants, and in school transport, cleaning, catering, estates and youth services.

It's been a tough time for our members in schools, 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 schools safer.

Derry Education Branch Contacts

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Derry Education Branch

