



SOUTHERN EDUCATION BRANCH AGM Newsletter 2021

Southern Education Branch AGM 2021

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

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

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

**Monday 18th January 2021
@ 3.30pm & 7pm**

**Tuesday 19th January 2021
@ 1pm & 3.30pm**

**Monday 25th January 2021
@ 3.30pm & 7pm**

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://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUrfuivpz8jGN0x9TcORruRMvbtIM3IzQH4](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUrfuivpz8jGN0x9TcORruRMvbtIM3IzQH4)
2. Join via the Zoom app (free to download)
3. Access the Zoom website - <https://zoom.us/>.

Join a Meeting

Meeting ID: 816 9179 4929
Passcode: AGM2020

NJC Pay Claim 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 1st 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 claim has been published and UNISON branches will consult with their membership.

We are also currently negotiating pay protection for all workers redeployed as a result of the new EA structures.

UNISON is the largest union for Support Workers

The current issues UNISON is negotiating include the following:

- There is an 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.
- Negotiations continue on school transport re-configuration.

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 <https://join.unison.org.uk>

Free School Meals 4 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;
- 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://chnq.it/ycDBDYHJ>

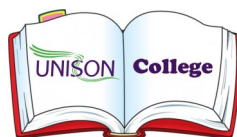
Response to Covid-19

As schools 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.

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 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.

UNISON College



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

Check out the full list of courses here:

<https://learning.unison.org.uk/2020/04/03/unison-skills-academy-free-online-learning/?fbclid=IwAR2t-IFU3XaV8jRvopBGfl6vyPY0ZKJQI4i-vSUNntWNXD3JkQXa4ZhpFCc>

Southern Education Branch Supporting our Members

Over the past year the Southern Education 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.
- Provided ongoing advice and representation to members during Covid 19 restrictions facing disciplinarys and workplace issues.
- Resolved a number of issues raised by both our classroom assistants and cleaning members
- 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’

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

Thompsons NI our specialist employment solicitors. For free legal advice and support on non employment matters, contact 0800 0857 857.

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

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



For branch news follow our Facebook Page. Search: **Unison Southern Education**

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