

## *UNISON continues to engage with the Five Directorates in the Education Authority*

Children and young people

Operational services

Finance

Education (Curriculum and services)

Human Resources

Much of the discussion and negotiations underway are focussed on the restructuring of EAB Headquarters and the transformation of five former ELBs into a single structure with a regional mandate.

The main issues to emerge on a regional basis are around pension and pay.

The EA failed to auto enrol a large number of EA staff into the NILGOSC pension scheme UNISON has challenged this and demanded a remedy to lessen the burden on staff who have to face bills for retrospective pension payments if they want to reclaim lost years. So far the EA have refused to offer any remedy. We have brought this to the attention of the Equality Commission and are now referring the matter to the Pension Regulator (have rules been broken?) and the Pension Ombudsman (has an injustice been done and fair treatment denied?).

We are also active on pay. On the back page of this bulletin you will see the pay claim lodged by education and local council based trade unions across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. covered by the NJC pay scheme. Negotiations are underway. The EA here have offered a pay and grading review to address issues which arose from the concluding pay round 2018/2019 where some assimilation of pay bands was implemented. The issues include dilution of pay differentials.

UNISON will engage with this review but only on the basis that it does not interfere with the new pay claim and adherence to the NJC Pay scheme.

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# Stars in our schools

celebration day **29 November 2019**

Friday 29 November is this year's annual day dedicated to celebrating school staff: the Stars in our Schools.

We know that school support staff are vital to help children learn, keep them safe & healthy and keep the school running smoothly. Yet you don't get the attention you deserve despite making up half the school workforce. That's why we're taking a day to celebrate your work and raise awareness of the impact it has on young people in our schools.

Over the past few years, primaries, secondaries, special schools, academies and faith schools have all taken part, holding special assemblies, coffee mornings or sports afternoons. Some have invited local MPs to pay them a visit to witness first-hand what support

staff do.

Others have held dressing up days, quizzes for the children or asked them to interview support staff to find out what they do.

We recognise that schools are under huge pressure in the current climate.

It remains more important than ever for UNISON to highlight the valuable and fantastic contributions of school support staff. We would love your school to get involved if possible.

It can be any time in November if that works better for your school.

There are lots of ideas and free resources on the special Stars website:

[www.starsinourschools.uk](http://www.starsinourschools.uk).

Please contact your local UNISON branch to find out more.

UNISON is also running a competition for school staff who go the extra mile.

The winning Stars and the person who nominates them both win a £25 voucher. You can make your nominations online at the Stars website.



**CELEBRATION DAY**  
**29 November 2019**



## *Classroom Assistants and Contract Issues*

UNISON has raised developments for discussion at school level where Classroom Assistants contracted hours are allocated across two job descriptions. In simple terms, classroom assistants hours are now split between the classroom and the lunchtime playground activities which are offered on a general assistant pay band. UNISON has insisted that this issue be addressed and agreed to engage in a working group to iron out a lot of difficulties. EA has advised that they are writing to all schools reminding them that classroom assistant posts and hours have to be offered in line with the full job description for Classroom Assistants.

What this will lead to in practice for the current school year remains to be seen.

As part of the work being carried out on classroom Assistants, UNISON has also raised the issue of the number of workers on temporary contracts for a considerable amount of time, many of whom are on temporary status more than four years.

UNISON will keep our classroom assistant membership updated on any developments.

*UNISON's membership is strong in schools and we have also been working on a number of areas affecting the school workforce.*

## *Transport Staff*

Reviews have been taking place around the organisation of school transport. Management have put some changes in place and these will be kept under scrutiny and their effectiveness assessed. UNISON is committed to ensuring retention of direct provision of transport by the Educational Authority and protecting our members jobs. The Department of Education has asked the EA to further review and we are keeping a close eye on this. Issues to do with accountability for care when dealing with special needs pupils are being resolved

## *School Meals and School Meals Workers*

Our hard working school catering staff are awaiting details of a review by the Department of Education on the nutritional value of the meals service. UNISON has welcomed the recent activity by the Education Authority to increase the uptake of school meals, but we also want the allocation of free school meals to be increased and will continue to pursue this, and the systems used in schools to facilitate children who need free school meals.

## *School Cleaners*

The EA conducted an initial review of their school cleaning service with the help of APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence). While there was some opportunity for input from local school staff, the review findings, which have not yet been published, are to be shared and fully discussed with UNISON and other trade unions. It is very important that we protect and ensure retention of an EA provided school cleaning service.

## *Employment Rights for Temporary Workers*

Temporary Workers obtain legal employment rights from day one of employment.

Temporary Workers cannot be treated less favourably than a permanent worker.

This means Workers on temporary contracts have rights:

- Not to have unlawful deductions made from their wages
- Not to be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Are entitled to paid holidays and rest breaks.
- Are entitled to protection under health & safety laws.



# NJC PAY CLAIM 2020–2021

***This NJC pay claim for 2020/21 and accompanying submission is made by the Joint Trade Union Side (UNISON, GMB and UNITE) to the Local Government Association.***

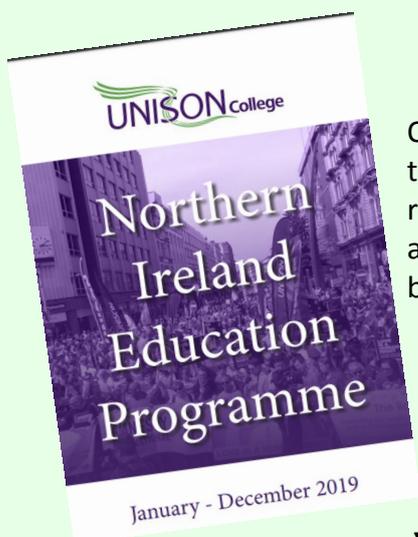
After ten years of real terms pay cuts, you deserve a decent pay rise. If you're a council or school worker, make sure you have your say on pay.

UNISON submitted a pay claim for all council and school workers, employed on NJC pay in England, Wales and Northern Ireland on 24 July 2019. UNISON, GMB and UNITE's joint claim is asking the Local Government Association for:

- A real living wage of £10 per hour for the lowest paid (NJC scp 1)
- A 10% increase for everyone else
- A one day increase to the minimum paid annual leave entitlement
- A two hour reduction in the standard working week
- A comprehensive joint national review of the workplace causes of stress and mental health



## Did you know?



Our UNISON college offers over 180 workshops FREE for all members across 90 topics such as autism, dementia, palliative care, mindfulness, supporting staff, resilience, bereavement, communicating effectively, interview skills, drugs and alcohol, Epilepsy, Parkinson's, suicide awareness, dealing with stress and bullying.

**You can view and print the full Education Programme on the UNISON Northern Ireland website:**

<https://www.unison-ni.org.uk/education-and-training>

**You can now download our brand new Education Course web based app at <https://unisoncollegeni.org.uk> which will make it much easier for members to book courses. Just register and once approved - away you go from the convenience of your phone, tablet or computer.**