

Teaching assistants are not an optional extra

The continued value of teaching assistants will depend on them being employed consistently, trained and managed well and paid appropriately.

UNISON has published the Evident Value of Teaching Assistants; a report of a survey of school leaders. It shows that generalisations about TAs ignore a complex mix of pastoral, teaching and administrative duties performed by TAs. Special schools in particular depend on their umbrella services, though all rely on them to support mainstreaming and inclusion. Leaders reported high levels of TAs providing cover (50%+) and delivering specified work, that is teaching (40%+), with most schools employing higher level teaching assistants. Leaders varied in their attitude to TA professionalism, with some recruiting graduates en route to teaching careers and others employing them in more traditional support roles. Similarly, some TAs went through the same performance management procedures as teachers, while others were judged on an informal, subjective basis.



Leaders were asked about the barriers that they face employing TAs. Funding, training and development opportunities and a range of other issues were identified, such as the attitude of teachers, class sizes and lack of time and facilities for TAs. Some felt that the poor pay and conditions on offer affected who they could recruit and retain and that there was need for a national framework and career structure.

Many leaders waxed lyrical about the dedication and particular skills that TAs bring to the job. One said that: "The creative use of TAs over the last 10 years has been the single biggest factor in the improvement of student attainment at my school".

Comment

In 2012, TAs came in for some negative publicity that questioned their value in schools. Generalisations about what they do and how they do it, have ignored the complex mix of roles and school-level variations. Policy on mainstreaming and workforce regulations has led to significant expansion of TA roles and numbers. Ensuring that they are employed consistently, trained and managed well and paid appropriately would benefit schools and pupil progress. Some schools have a clearer vision of TA deployment than others and all would benefit from national guidance from the Teaching Agency and the Department for Education. Together with employers, they need to accept that realising the potential of children and young people must go hand in hand with realising the potential of TAs.

TAs are not the only support staff that support learning in schools. We hear from technicians on page 2.

Keeping in touch... with technicians

- 74% earn less than £20,000
- 18% earn £20-£25,000
- 9% earn £25,000+

In the last newsletter, technicians were asked to complete an online survey with questions on their pay, conditions and working experience. There were 390 responses; nearly 53% work in academies and almost 27% in community schools. Over 95% of respondents were from secondary schools and the majority were science (62.7%) or information technology technicians (25.4%). Just over 35% have full-year contracts while the majority are term-time workers. Less than 9% earn more than £25,000 a year; just over 18% earn between £20,000 and £25,000 and the vast majority (nearly 74%) are paid less than £20,000. Very few were happy with their pay or had had a satisfactory review. When asked about the effect of their school becoming an academy, nearly 67% said that they had a heavier

workload and 60% said that work was more complex. Nearly 16% felt that they had more control, while just over 4% and 3% respectively, thought that there was less bureaucracy and less interference.

Technicians in our survey identified major issues at work as:

- pay
- workload (tension between quality and quantity of work)
- health & safety (lifting, ventilation, chemical substances, stress)
- lack of training and career development
- timing of holidays
- increased complexity
- poor resources
- bad management
- pupil behaviour
- attitude of colleagues
- lack of respect/recognition.

What you want

Technicians said UNISON should be fighting low pay and the pay freeze; campaigning for all-year or retainer-pay; raising the status and profile of technicians; facilitating training; surveying workload and stress levels and improving union communications (authority-based email networks, school visits, phone-calls and events) and organisation; more members and reps. These useful insights will help to develop the union's agenda for technicians, including talks on training with the TUC.



Safeguarding children – new regulations

Regulations on a vetting and barring scheme for staff working with vulnerable people, including children, have been chopped and changed in recent years.

After a government review aimed at reducing the scheme to commonsense levels, changes came into force last September which ended the need for registration and monitoring and redefined who warrants vetting.

An online system for disclosure checks should be launched in the spring. Employers now have duties to: ask for enhanced checks (where appropriate); bar ineligible staff; and to inform the Disclosure and Barring Service when staff are dismissed because they pose a risk. UNISON has produced a Disclosure and Barring Factsheet. It details the changes and provides advice to UNISON reps on negotiations with employers on costs, responsibilities, confidentiality and employee rights.

**The factsheet can be found by searching “disclosure” at:
unison.org.uk/bargaining/factsheets.asp**

Pupils' health needs – survey results

In the last newsletter, there was an article on the administration of medicines and medical support in schools.



It reported that a revised government policy, emerging from talks with the departments of education and health and other stakeholders, including UNISON, was awaited; and it still is. Joint work with UNISON and the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) was also reported. We carried out a survey and four major recommendations based on the findings were agreed. They cover:

Individual health and care plans

That every pupil with health needs should have an up-to-date health and care plan, drawn up in conjunction with the school nurse, community children's nurse or children's nurse specialist.

Training

Staff who support pupils with health needs should receive specific and accredited training, on a named-child basis, with access to ongoing updates and appropriate supervision. Training should be given by a registered health professional or accredited training provider, with refresher training at least once a year.

Staffing

Authorities and schools should match staffing requirements to deal adequately with the health care support required. There should be the right number of trained staff to match needs and pay and grading should reflect these responsibilities.

School policy

Every school should have a clear, agreed management of medicines and health care procedures policy; communicated and understood by staff, parents and pupils. It should cover health and safety issues, including the commitment to carry out risk assessments and details of insurance cover.

See the full documents

Survey and recommendations
unison.org.uk/acrobat/21163.pdf

Executive summary
unison.org.uk/acrobat/21242.pdf

Joint RCN and UNISON statement
(see also page 4)
unison.org.uk/acrobat/20539.pdf

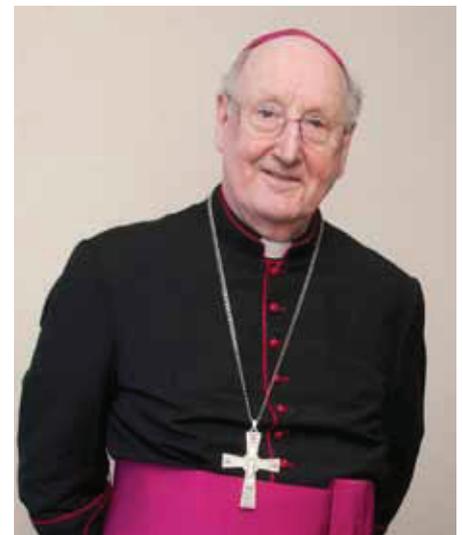
Bishop of Salford speaks out on academies

At the end of 2012, Terence Brain, the catholic bishop of Salford wrote to the Director of Education, Kevin Quigley, stating that he is not prepared to give permission for any school in his diocese to seek academy status.

While supporting raised standards of education, he suggested that "It is essential that the means by which this is attained is for "the common good" – which is understood as inclusive of all, not just a perceived majority". The bishop warned Mr Quigley that in our competition-riddled society, some schools would improve while others would 'fail' and that some pupils might be 'weeded out' as a risk to performance ranking. Catholic education principles, he said, "offer a clear alternative to the current dominant market culture and ideology in education" and quotes the pope, saying that those suffering most from competition are "the poor, vulnerable, powerless and defenceless". The bishop believes that these risks are higher in the academy system.

His second argument challenges the idea of academies as the only acceptable form of schooling and he

says that an academy-only policy is removing the opportunity for diversity in approach. The 1944 Education Act, he says, is better protection than contract law and the hands of a Secretary of State. This is tough talking from the Bishop of Salford.



Join us now!

We want potential members in schools to know what we can provide, whether it is help when you need it at work, our out-of-hours helpline, legal services, or membership services.

UNISON is launching a major recruitment campaign on 11 March to bring the tens of thousands of workers in schools who are currently non-members into the union.

The first phase of the recruitment campaign will be spearheaded by a national advertising campaign. This will include television ads, national and local press advertising, online and social media.

We need to make sure that our members and potential members know that UNISON is there for them.

To make those ads, leaflets and other tools as effective as possible, UNISON is talking to people who have not been in the union, to find out why they have not joined up, what they think about UNISON, and how we can persuade them to join.

We want to ensure that non-members know what we can provide, whether it is:

- help when you need it at work
- our out-of-hours helpline
- legal services
- debt advice
- discounts on holidays and cars

or one of the many, many more benefits UNISON membership brings.

UNISON knows that members turn to us to help when they most need it. And we've got to be there for them.

"We've got to be able to look after members who are facing redundancy; to be there for people who have been privatised, and we've got to understand the lives of people who have been subjected to a pay freeze," said UNISON general secretary, Dave Prentis.

There are large pockets of people who have never joined a union, yet who more than ever need the kind of support that UNISON can offer.

We want to simplify the way in which people join our union, to make it easy for them, and to strengthen our branches through doing that.

A range of new recruitment materials will be provided for branches to use in local activity, and the union is reviewing how it processes applications to make sure that new joiners have a smooth and swift entry into UNISON. The ads will run for four weeks initially, but further waves of advertising and recruitment will be planned throughout the year.

UNISON/RCN statement on pupils' health needs in schools

Providing support for children and young people with health needs in schools is a joint statement from the Royal College of Nursing and UNISON. It is intended to help employers, local authorities, health professionals, trade union reps and schools to work in partnership to ensure that pupils' health needs are met. It aims to improve understanding of the roles, responsibilities, training and governance required to enable children and young people with health needs to safely access mainstream education. The statement is available at unison.org.uk/acrobat/20539.pdf



October 20th

Hundreds of thousands of ordinary people took to the streets last autumn to tell the government they weren't impressed with their austerity policies, which attack hard-working families while leaving the bankers to get away with murder.

Academies update

The latest academy data shows that there are now 2,619 open academies (12% of all schools).

There are 1,584 secondary academies (48%) and 974 open primary academies (6%). There are also academies 'in the pipeline', raising the number to 3,167 (15% of all schools). In almost all authorities (129), at least 20% of secondary schools are academies and in 10 authorities at least 20% of primaries. There are local differences and in Darlington, Rutland and Bexley, every secondary school

is an academy. The authorities with the highest proportion of academies are: Darlington (66% of schools); North East Lincolnshire (50%); Swindon (37%); and Thurrock and Torbay (both 36%). Regionally, the most are in the south and the least in the north of England. The Department for Education has said that it wants to go 'further and faster' and find sponsors to support 400 more of the weakest primary schools.

By the end of 2013, there will also be around 120 free schools. These are primary, secondary, all-through, 14-19 and 16-19 schools.

For comments from the catholic Bishop of Salford on academies see page 3.

The campaign for a **Living Wage**



UNISON has been campaigning for a Living Wage (£7.45 per hour; £8.55 per hour in London) across public services and with particular success in education, in some colleges and universities.

There are 11 local authorities in the UK that are fully accredited as Living Wage employers, mostly in London. This means that they must pay all of their staff at least the Living Wage; commit to upgrade annually within six months; and demonstrate a plan for moving towards requiring contractors to do the same. Local government has been hit hard by budget cuts, but improving the lives of low-paid staff brings many benefits. It will show leadership in the community and can be part of a council's anti-poverty strategy.

UNISON is also negotiating the Living Wage with academy chains and is in talks with the Catholic Education Service.

For more information, visit the Living Wage website at: alivingwage.co.uk

Sign up to UNISON Schools Update email

Receive updates on issues that affect you at work, including pay, health and safety, and the latest government policies that impact on schools. Sign up at:
unison.org.uk/news/maillinglist.asp

CONTACT

Telephone 0845 355 0845
Email education@unison.co.uk
unison.org.uk/education/schools

Why the Living Wage matters

UNISON members tell us what difference the Living Wage has made to them already in the first phase of the Living Wage campaign, which has been running across colleges.



Fran Massey, caterer

"It's made it easier as a family. When you get home from work you can relax – not worry about robbing Peter to pay Paul," says Fran.

Fran's children are both keen basketball players who, before she received the living wage, had to take it in turns to play. One week one would play and the other had to watch. Since we've had the pay rise, they can both play together."



Ashley Williams, sports attendant
with (left) UNISON's Liz Orr and Marie Gilluley, principal, Bolton College

"I used to be on the minimum wage, it changed in my October pay, backdated to September. It means instead of just trying to get by I am now a bit more comfortable.

"I don't have to budget as much and it has meant I can join the union, which makes me feel more secure at work. I've been able to go out more with friends; I now feel if they're going out for a meal I can go too without worrying about it."

Marie Gilluley, principal

"Bolton College was pleased to be able to support UNISON's campaign for a Living Wage. We believe that all of our staff hold equal importance when it comes to contributing to the overall success of the college. [We] believe that this will have a positive impact on morale, customer service and turnover levels."



Sue Parry, UNISON branch secretary
Hugh Baird College, Merseyside.

"The Living Wage had a big impact, no question. A lot of the members told me about the difference it was making in their lives.

"Of course, as prices go up, the living wage needs to keep pace, but I'm absolutely certain that we're better off with it than without it."

Yana Williams, Hugh Baird College principal

Yana Williams, the college principal, explains: "All staff across the college have at least a Living Wage and we are looking at paying the same to apprentices. We're trying to set a trend for reasonably big organisations to follow.

Join UNISON – your friend at work

PLEASE FILL IN THIS FORM IN BLOCK CAPITALS USING BLACK INK AND GIVE IT TO YOUR UNISON REP OR SEND TO THE ADDRESS BELOW.

FREEPOST RSKU-RRCA-HHS, EDUCATION, UNISONCENTRE, 130 ELUSTON ROAD, LONDON NW1 2AY.

1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Please tick or fill in the boxes below

Mrs Ms Miss Mr Other

First name Other initial(s)

Surname/Family name Date of birth / /

Home address

Postcode

National insurance number (from your payslip)

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Bangladeshi Asian Other Black UK
 Chinese Black Black Other
 Indian African White UK
 Pakistani Black White
 Asian UK Caribbean Irish White Other

Please tick this box if you require materials in a different format (eg large print or Braille) – be sure to supply contact details below

Please give a telephone number/voice/text/email address for UNISON to contact you – indicate if work or home

Contact tel/voice/text/email

2. YOUR EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Employer's name

Your job title/occupation

Department/section

Workplace name and address

Postcode

Payroll number (from your payslip)

3. WHAT YOU WILL PAY – FROM 1 October 2003

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions.

Weekly pay	Annual pay	YOUR SUBSCRIPTION—WHAT YOU PAY		per week	per month	Band	Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid
		per week	per month				
Up to £38.47	Up to £2,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	£0.30	£1.30	A	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£38.48–£96.16	£2,001–£5,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	£0.81	£3.50	B	<input type="checkbox"/>
£96.17–£153.84	£5,001–£8,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	£1.22	£5.30	C	<input type="checkbox"/>
£153.85–£211.53	£8,001–£11,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	£1.52	£6.60	D	<input type="checkbox"/>
£211.54–£269.23	£11,001–£14,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	£1.81	£7.85	E	<input type="checkbox"/>
£269.24–£326.92	£14,001–£17,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	£2.24	£9.70	F	<input type="checkbox"/> Please tick this box if you are a student member in full-time education (including student nurses or Modern Apprentices).
£326.93–£384.61	£17,001–£20,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	£2.65	£11.50	G	<input type="checkbox"/>
£384.62–£480.76	£20,001–£25,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	£3.23	£14.00	H	<input type="checkbox"/>
£480.77–£576.92	£25,001–£30,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	£3.98	£17.25	I	<input type="checkbox"/>
£576.93–£673.08	£30,001–£35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	£4.68	£20.30	J	<input type="checkbox"/>
£673.08+	over £35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	£5.19	£22.50	K	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. POLITICAL FUND

UNISON's Affiliated Political Fund (APF) is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliates to the Labour Party.

UNISON's General Political Fund (GPF) is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union and for research and lobbying in Parliament and Europe. It is independent of support for any political party.

It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes below. Your subscription shown above includes a political fund payment so you do not pay any more by being in one of the funds.

5. YOUR AUTHORISATION

- I wish to join UNISON and accept its rules and constitution.
- I authorise deduction of UNISON subscriptions from my salary/wages at the rate determined by UNISON in accordance with its rules to be paid over to them on my behalf and I authorise my employer to provide information to UNISON to keep my records up to date
- I authorise deduction of the following Political Fund payment as part of my subscription: Tick one box only
 Affiliated Political Fund General Political Fund

Now please sign and date below

Signature

Date

OTHER WAYS TO PAY

direct debit cheque
(please tick if appropriate)

DATA PROTECTION

UNISON will process your membership information together with other information for administration, statistical analysis, conducting ballots and other statutory requirement purposes.

We may also send you newsletters, journals and surveys and let you know about educational and campaigning matters. We will disclose your information to our service providers and agents for these purposes.

If you do not want any mailings from UNISON besides those required by statute as shown in bold above, please tick this box.

We may share your information with organisations with whom we have a business relationship for your benefit. We, or they, may contact you by mail, telephone, SMS, fax or e-mail to let you know about goods, services or promotions which we think may be of interest to you.

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