

UNISON gears up to fight for education workers



photo: Pascal Saez

UNISON Education activists and officers gather in Edinburgh for the Launch of the EOC report - *Valuable Assets*

UNISON is the largest union in Scotland's education service, and new developments in our structure are planned to ensure that we expand our effectiveness and our profile in the service.

UNISON represents members across virtually the whole of the education sector with the exception of teachers and lecturers. Latest figures put education support staff in Scottish local government at 35,000 and in addition there are staff in colleges and universities.

Whilst there are many examples of the union fighting for the rights of groups of members - nursery nurses, classroom assistants and others, it is time we co-ordinated our work in this area.

Carol Ball, Chair of the newly-formed Education Issues Group said "There

are a large number of issues that UNISON members in Education face. Equal pay, violence at work, and a misguided view that support staff are not important to children's education are all issues for UNISON to tackle."

As well as that, specific groups of UNISON members in education have specific problems. Classroom assistants, early years workers, clerical staff, librarians, janitors, catering workers, technicians, staff working in education offices and support staff of FE colleges will all be covered by the Group.

With a range of national developments including the Review of Early Years and Childcare Workforce, 3-18 Curriculum For Excellence, and the EOC's report into Classroom Assistants, 'Valuable Assets', there's a lot to be done.



UNISON's Scottish Secretary - Matt Smith welcomes the new publication.

As this is the first issue of UISE, I'd like to welcome you all to this new development, and encourage you to take part in the work of your union in education.

As well as this newsletter, we have a new grouping - our Education Issues Group - which has representatives from across Scotland, and across the wide occupational diversity that UNISON represents.

More than ever now, we intend to ensure that you are fairly paid, properly resourced and - above all - listened to by those who take the decisions about education. We are ideally placed to raise your concerns with head teachers, local councils and the Scottish Government

Education is essential to Scotland's children. You are essential to its delivery. Contact details are adjacent - let us know the issues important to you.

SCOTTISH EDUCATION



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Equal Pay—UNISON taking on the fight

UNISON has a strong track record in pursuing equal pay claims against Scottish councils and other employers, in a campaign to win equal pay for our members. The union is currently pursuing



claims to Employment Tribunal for many members, including those employed in education.

The union is also pushing councils to introduce new equality proofed pay and grading systems through collective agreement where possible.

Claims have been lodged for thousands of education-based staff including classroom assistants, learning support assistants, auxiliaries, admin and clerical, catering and cleaning, janitorial members, the list goes on!

Scottish councils know they have paid a range of jobs traditionally done by men,

more than comparable jobs done mostly by women. In an attempt to address this, many councils offered compensation packages and required those accepting payments to sign compromise agreements to reduce their liability.

However, many councils did not alter the pay of staff involved and the pay inequality continues. Members may therefore be entitled to a further claim for compensation against their council. UNISON is pursuing many such claims on behalf of members. Claims have also been lodged on behalf of members paid on the former APT&C grades.

If you believe you may have a valid equal pay claim, you should contact your local branch for assistance and support in lodging a claim. Members will be asked to complete an Equal Pay CASE Form and supported throughout the process.

You should be aware that strict timescales apply for submitting claims to the Employment Tribunal. If you change your job within the council, leave the council altogether or retire, you will need to meet the strict deadlines. Don't delay in contacting the union to pursue your claim.

UNISON gears up to back early years workers

The election of a new government has seen an invigorated campaign to extend the role of teachers in nursery education - worryingly for UNISON, often at the expense of nursery nurses.

Statements by new SNP ministers before and after the elections, and increased lobbying by teachers suggest that the increasing role of nursery nurses in delivering and managing nursery education is under threat.

UNISON has identified this as a key campaigning target with the new government, and has already made its presence felt.

In a key article as part of the TESS's summer debate series, Carol Ball, convener of

UNISONScotland's Educational Issues Group, highlighted the similarities between the work of a nursery nurse and a nursery teacher, their relative qualifications and pay, and the need to ensure that early years workers were not sidelined in pandering to teachers' status.

Carol said "Nursery nurses are fully-qualified, early years professionals whose job requires professional discussion and reflection, based on a shared vision of their aims for children."

An article from a nursery teacher was also published.

IMPACT

Indications that we may be having some impact

were seen in the recent Skills strategy outlined by Fiona Hyslop MSP

Further statements on the status of leaders/managers of early years facilities are



recently. The section that commits the Government to a long term early years strategy carefully avoids referring to teachers, but repeats the commitment from the Early Years Review, that **all** leaders of early years services will be qualified to SCQF Level 9.

due late next month, Carol Ball hopes that it will commit to publishing the planned strategy in early 2008!

"Much work has already been done on this." - she said. "I hope that budgetary constraints don't delay much needed developments."

Classroom Assistants come together

UNISON has organised a conference for classroom assistants across Scotland. The aim is to consider the findings of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) in their report - *Valuable Assets* - and will take place on

Saturday 29 September 2007 at the STUC in Glasgow.

Each UNISON local government branch in Scotland is being invited to send two classroom assistants as delegates, along with a branch officer to the conference.



The EOC published *Valuable Assets*, earlier this year, following an investigation into the role and duties of Classroom Assistants in Scotland. The findings highlighted the breadth and the valuable role of Classroom Assistants in schools and made recommendations on tackling the undervaluing of staff, the need to develop a national job description, address under pay and to establish career development, training and qualifications.

Why not put yourself forward?

Jackie Gilchrist, EIG member and classroom assistant said "This is a great opportunity. The EOC's report is an important document. UNISON wants to improve the pay and conditions of classroom assistants. We've a lot to do and this conference gives our members the chance to influence the priorities for the union. Classroom assistants should make sure that their branch sends delegates to the conference. Why not put yourself forward?".

Delegates will take part in workshops on; developing a national framework of job roles, qualifications, career development, and job evaluation as well as policy and campaigning issues. A crèche will be provided and your branch should support you with transport and accommodation costs.

Full details and a registration form have been sent to local government branches. If you are interested, please contact your local branch secretary.

Pathways into Equal Pay
for classroom staff
November 10-11 2007
Stirling Highland Hotel

Pathways is a two day free course for UNISON members. It brings together classroom assistants to tackle issues, help you find out why you have an equal pay case and how you can get involved in UNISON's campaign for pay equality. It builds confidence and it's fun!

This is a weekend residential course, a crèche can be provided. All meals travel and accommodation will be included.

For more information on attending this course or arranging one in your UNISON branch email j.mccarey@unison.co.uk or call Jennifer McCarey on 0141 342 2822.

Kitchen staff - itching for improvement

Do you work in a school kitchen? Do you suffer from work related dermatitis? If so the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) - and UNISON want to hear from you.



Occupational dermatitis is a widespread disease, that can be either caused or made worse by people's work. The workers most at risk are cooks, kitchen and catering assistants, and UNISON and the HSE are working together to design a tool kit for those staff and for safety reps in catering.

The aim is to raise awareness and develop changes to the way people work that will reduce the incidence of work-related dermatitis

As part of this campaign we want to identify activists and members, who work in school kitchens and who have this problem. We would like them to be a case study for the toolkit.

Next year, the HSE will also be hosting half day seminars around the UK. They want UNISON members participation.

If you are willing to be interviewed, featured in a case study or take an active part in the seminar, please forward your details to Shelley Cole at UNISON, 1, Mabledon Place, London WC1 9AJ or email your contact details to s.cole@unison.co.uk. Please also send to details to UNISONScotland at - n.morris@unison.co.uk

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EDUCATION ISSUES GROUP, UNISON SCOTLAND, FREEPOST NW 486, GLASGOW G2 6BR

1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Please tick or fill in the

boxes below

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

2. YOUR EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Employer's name

Your job title/occupation

Department/section

Workplace name and address

Postcode

Payroll number (from your payslip)

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

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
Up to £38.47	Up to £2,000	£0.30	£1.30	A
£38.48–£96.16	£2,001–£5,000	£0.81	£3.50	B
£96.17–£153.84	£5,001–£8,000	£1.22	£5.30	C
£153.85–£211.53	£8,001–£11,000	£1.52	£6.60	D
£211.54–£269.23	£11,001–£14,000	£1.81	£7.85	E
£269.24–£326.92	£14,001–£17,000	£2.24	£9.70	F
£326.93–£384.61	£17,001–£20,000	£2.65	£11.50	G
£384.62–£480.76	£20,001–£25,000	£3.23	£14.00	H
£480.77–£576.92	£25,001–£30,000	£3.98	£17.25	I
£576.93–£673.08	£30,001–£35,000	£4.68	£20.30	J
£673.08+	over £35,000	£5.19	£22.50	K

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid

Weekly
 Fortnightly
 Four Weekly
 Monthly

Please tick this box if you are a student member in full-time education (including student nurses or Modern Apprentices). Your subscription is £10 per year.

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

If you have been a member of a trade union before, please state which one:

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.

If you do not wish to receive such information please tick this box.