

Interested in delivering Scottish education?

SO ARE WE!



A briefing for MSPs from UNISONScotland

UNISON
Scotland

Education in Scotland is delivered by a whole team of people, not just lecturers and teachers (see box overleaf). UNISONScotland represents the majority of these vital education staff. In this paper we want to lay out key strategies to help our members improve the delivery of education in Scotland.

Education staff

Improvements in public services are best delivered through consultation and in partnership with staff. Too often, politicians and the media focus on teachers and lecturers, and ignore the rest of the team. A whole range of professional, technical and administrative staff ensure that education in Scotland achieves a high standard. Support staff in education, like other parts of the public sector, tend to be the lowest paid and least valued, and many of them are women. These inequalities can be addressed.

UNISON and Education

UNISON Scotland is committed to the modern comprehensive principle rooted in our belief in a decent society. Every child should have a genuinely equal chance of the best education in their local school. The quality of education provision will be boosted by involving all staff in the process of change and by:

- Substantially improving the qualifications, career prospects and rewards of

early years and childcare workers.

- Establishing a task group – including trade unions and local authorities and reporting to Ministers - on the further steps needed to recognise and integrate the work of school support staff into the life of education establishments; the qualifications, career pathways and personal development of these staff; and to consider the potential implications of this work for pay and conditions.
- Addressing past discrimination on equal pay and ensuring local authorities make provision to meet their equal pay obligations. For example, developing a national framework of job roles to ensure proper recognition of the role and responsibilities of classroom assistants, revisiting the job evaluation of classroom assistant roles and carrying out equal pay audits using a

non-discriminatory job evaluation system

- Establishing a Scotland-wide training and qualifications framework for education support staff to ensure a path for career development and progression. The development of a new ‘Support for Learning’ Higher National Certificate, to develop and promote the role and progression of classroom assistants will support this aim
- Developing a system of registration for classroom assistants in Scotland to raise standards and promote their education and training. The General Teaching Council is not an appropriate body to carry out this work, as classroom assistants would not have representation on this body, and would tend to be an ‘aside’ to the Council’s main function.
- Develop stronger bonds between our careers service and our schools making the careers service an integral part of the school while retaining independent advice and a strong commitment to an all-age careers service.

Early years provision

Nursery nurses are the early years professionals. Their qualifications cover working with children from nought to eight years. It includes theory and principles of children as active learners and child development (physical, emotional and social). Many also embark on further qualifications such as a BA in early childhood studies or the SVQ Level 4. All are involved in continuing professional development.

Independent research commissioned by UNISON confirmed this, noting:

*Teachers and nursery nurses work to the same set of national regulations, including national curricula, and care standards... While teaching requires higher entry qualifications, teachers (unlike nursery nurses) receive little specific training in relation to pre-5 children... They only do a short endorsement course to work in nurseries... in sharp distinction to nursery nurses who do a two-year training with children in these age groups.**

The previous Executive announced plans for a new early years professional qualified to degree level or a work-based equivalent. All facilities will be led by someone with that level of qualification, not necessarily a teacher.

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. Their role and responsibilities are set by the 3-18 curriculum, the Child at the Centre guidance and the National Care Standards. They are inspected, registered and regulated on the basis of these professional criteria just like teachers.

We need an integrated service disposing of the illusion that those who provide education for early years children don't care, and those who care don't educate. This is a fallacy. It is impossible to do one without the other.

This is an excerpt from an article in the Times Educational Supplement Scotland

Full article available from http://www.tes.co.uk/search/story/?story_id=2414428

*Nursery Nurse report available from <http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/localgovt/nurserynurse/nurserynursereport.pdf>

Technicians in Education

Technicians provide vital technical support services within most educational establishments in Scotland. Many are involved in the more traditional roles supporting science and technical education. The increasing use of multimedia, and new Information and Communication Technology in schools, colleges and universities mean that technicians play a central role in delivering education at

all levels. UNISON, as the union that represents technicians, believes that including the technician's voice is crucial in developing new strategies and improving Scottish education.

Conclusion

A whole range of professional, technical and administrative staff deliver education in Scotland to high standard. Implementing policies to improve the qualifications, career prospects and rewards for all education staff is essential to recruit and retain high quality staff in the sector and to deliver improvements in education. UNISON Scotland believes working in partnership and consulting with all staff working in education will improve the delivery of education in Scotland.

UNISON members delivering education

Accountants, auditors and finance staff
Admissions staff
Careers staff
Classroom and learning assistants
Cleaners
Community education workers
Craftspeople
Drivers
Educational psychologists
Graphic and web designers
Handypersons and janitors
Library staff
Marketing and PR staff
Nursery nurses and early years workers
Personnel staff
Planning managers
Programme managers
Quality officers
Receptionists
School auxiliaries
School crossing patrollers
School liaison officers
School meals and catering staff
School managers
School secretaries, admin and clerical staff
Sports development officers
Security officers
Special needs staff
Student counsellors
Technicians
Technology transfer staff

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