



School workforce news

...nursery nurses, secretaries, bursars, learning support practitioners, sitekeepers, school meals staff, teaching assistants, learning mentors, administrators, midday supervisors, librarians, cleaners, personal care assistants, technicians ...

GMB your union in school in Yorkshire & North Derbyshire

Issue 33, March 2011:

This is the thirty-third in a series of bulletins for GMB reps and members working in schools. Our bulletins will keep you up-to-date on national policy developments and other news affecting the school workforce.

Government raises cost of pensions, while pay is frozen for a second year

The Coalition Government is trying to make school support staff pay up to **50%** more into their pension **every month**. GMB says this is unfair and must not happen.

Support staff currently pay 5.5–6.5% of their monthly salary into the Local Government Pension Scheme. The Tories and Lib Dems want to raise this amount significantly.

The details are yet to be confirmed and GMB is campaigning against the change. We need every GMB school support staff member to help.

The news comes as council leaders announced another pay freeze for council workers and school support staff.

Most councils say they won't even give the £250 to the low-paid that was promised by Tory Chancellor George Osborne.

The vast majority of councils are set to implement the pay freeze. Even schools not directly under local authority control will probably do the same thing.

GMB has warned the Government that raising the cost of the Local Government Pension Scheme will make the scheme unaffordable to many employees.

It could even put the future of the pension scheme in doubt if a lot of people decide to opt out.

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By making staff pay more into the pension scheme, the Government plans to raise £1bn. The extra cash won't be used to improve the pension scheme; it will go to the Treasury.

If that wasn't bad enough, the Government is planning to make other big changes. It wants to raise the retirement age to 68 and review the benefits that the scheme provides.

Pay freeze

As well as campaigning against the pension changes, GMB is asking the Government and local authorities what they intend to do about the ongoing pay freeze.

The Government promised to protect the low-paid from its pay freeze by giving them £250. The money is already in school budgets.

The Government has said that any **teachers** earning less than £21,000 should get the £250.

So GMB is asking why support staff don't get the same treatment. We have submitted a claim for the £250 through the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB).

The SSSNB is going to be abolished by the new Government. But until it actually is abolished, the body still has the ability to consider the pay of support staff in England.

That doesn't mean the Government or local authorities will agree to

cooperate with us through the SSSNB, but at least we can try to keep the pressure up.

What YOU can do

We need to be strong and organised to beat the Tory-Lib threat to pay and pensions.

Join the TUC demonstration against the cuts in London on 26 March. You can get more details from your GMB office or online at:

<http://marchforthealternative.org.uk>.

There will also be plenty of events locally and nationally on future occasions.

Make sure all support staff in your school know about the pensions hike and pay freeze. Urge them to join GMB. There is a membership form on the back, or support staff can join online at www.gmb.org.uk/join.

School Workforce News
is changing . . .

We'll be launching a revamped ***monthly*** edition with a fresh design . . .

So watch out for your ***new-look*** newsletter, coming soon!

Teachers and support staff given new powers to search pupils . . . but only teachers will have protection from false allegations

Tory Education Secretary Michael Gove is extending the list of "prohibited items" that pupils can be searched for.

New items include anything that staff "reasonably suspect" has or could be used to commit an offence or cause injury or damage.

At the same time, Gove is giving teachers more protection from false allegations.

The media won't be allowed to name a teacher accused of misconduct toward a pupil unless or until the teacher is actually charged with a criminal offence. Support staff won't be covered by this right to anonymity.

The Government's proposals are included in a new Education Bill which is currently being debated in Parliament.

GMB has called on Michael Gove to give equal protection to support staff.

GMB National Officer Sharon Holder said: "Support staff play a key role in classroom control and are often left in sole charge of a class. They are as vulnerable as teachers to false allegations.

"It is palpably unfair to expect support staff to exercise new powers around pupil searches, but only give protection to teachers."

Changes to SEN

The Department for Education has unveiled plans to reform the system for supporting pupils with SEN.

Its new consultation paper says that a TA should not be deployed as "a substitute for teaching from a qualified teacher". It adds that "children with SEN need more, not less, time with the school's most skilled and qualified teachers".

The Department says it will launch a scholarship fund "open to the

most able TAs and other support staff, to enable them to build on their SEN support roles and develop their careers further".

It asks: "What is the best way to identify and develop the potential of teachers and staff to best support disabled children or children with a wide range of SEN?"

GMB will be responding to the SEN consultation. Have your say on the future of SEN provision by emailing your views to tom.hazeldine@gmb.org.uk at GMB National Office.

