





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 Region

Minutes of the school support staff meeting – 24th June 2010

-  The minutes of the last meeting were approved.
-  There were over forty people present including a number of new delegates.

School Support Staff National Negotiating Body

A report on the progress of the School Support Staff National Negotiating Body (SSSNB) was given by Bill Chard and further information was supplied by the two national representatives, Kath Robinson and Neil Sawyer. It was reported that the new ConDem government had written to the Chair of the SSSNB telling him to place the process on halt as the government was not sure if they wanted a national negotiating body for school support staff. Given that Michael Gove, the new Secretary of State for Education, wrote to all heads inviting them to apply for academy status it is absolutely certain that the alliances direction is in completely the opposite direction.

A full discussion ensued where delegates unanimously condemned the new government's approach, which on the face of it has whipped the rug from under the feet of thousands of school support workers who had pinned their hopes on the SSSNB to give them fair and transparent national terms and conditions.

Delegates stated that many of those present and their colleagues at school worked over and above their contractual duties so, therefore, worked over and above their hourly rate. It was also raised that many worked far more hours than they were paid for. It was hoped that the SSSNB would continue and that the government's policy of privatising schools would fail.





Election of a National Representative

The meeting was informed that Ali Rickets was standing down as a national representative through ill health. The meeting acknowledged the tremendous amount of hard work that Ali had given over a number of years and thanked her whole heartedly for her commitment and wished her well and hoped to see her at future regional meetings.

Following a contested election Karen Oates was chosen as the new national representative joining Kath Robinson and Neil Sawyer on the national body. Karen works at Brents Green School in Sheffield.

Academy Schools

Bill Chard stated that Michael Gove had written to every school in the country offering them the opportunity to apply for academy status; outstanding schools could become academies by September this year. Gove offered schools:

-  The freedom from local authority control
-  Ability to set their pay and conditions for staff
-  Ability to change the length of terms and school days
-  Head teachers only answerable to the Secretary of State for Education.

Delegates feared that these proposals would lead to a weakening of their terms and conditions, a reversal of the much needed policy of national bargaining, instead turning schools into small to medium sized businesses answerable only to a Tory minister who has already stated that he would have no objection to academies making a profit.

It was confirmed that the GMB was opposed to academies in principle and delegates agreed to organise and be pro-active in campaigning to defend our members' pay and conditions.

Delegates were given step by step organising plans to help fight any moves in their school or neighbourhood for academy status. It was stressed that every non union employee at a school should be approached and asked to join the GMB as some schools would go for academy status in the first phase and others would sit back to see what happens and go later. Neil Derrick went into detail in relation to the ConDems proposed cuts of up to 40% in local authorities and the devastation this would cause for working people. **"Never has there been such a time when workers needed to organise and use their collective strength to defend their jobs and working conditions."**

Pensions

Neil Derrick reported that the Local Government Pension Scheme was under attack, even before this new government were elected, they had been trailing in the media the cuts to come, stating that the scheme was unaffordable. The figures they were quoting were obviously in relation to high earning executives on huge salaries as most local authority pensions were in the low thousands, with women workers receiving even less. A debate followed with delegates stating that they would not see their futures wrecked without a fight.

Trade Union Facilities Attack

The right wing Tax Payers Alliance has been writing to local authorities under the freedom of information act demanding to know the details of facility time for trade union activities and as they are working hand in glove with the new government we expect to see an attack on those facilities.

This would be an attack on working people and their right to be represented in one of the most difficult periods in living memory and again we will have to fight to defend our members.

School Representatives Report Back

Delegates reported back on issues affecting members in their schools. One issue of concern highlighted was the issue of false allegations. **A recent survey has shown that nearly one in three of all staff working in schools has had a false allegation made against them.**

Staff affected said their lives have been shattered by these false claims. The GMB provide a special service to deal with these situations, members should contact their local representative or authority convenor. If the police are involved they should contact their local GMB office on **0845 337 7777** or if that is not possible contact **Thompsons Solicitors Criminal Department Hotline direct on 0808 100 2976** or email bill.chard@gmb.org.uk. There is no charge to members for this service; it is included in the GMB membership fee.

Delegates were advised to inform members to never attend a police station under these circumstances unless accompanied by one of our solicitors and never to accept a caution, as under law this is an acceptance of guilt; this caution would be added to members' CRB's and would lead to their dismissal.

Assaults on School Support Staff

Ray Alderman, GMB convenor in the Bradford local authority, provided copies of a report that he had compiled on assaults on school support staff in Bradford. Delegates confirmed that assaults, whether verbal or physical, were increasing. They reported that they did not always feel that they received the necessary support from their head teachers when these assaults were reported. Delegates were advised to always report assaults of any kind and if they did not feel that appropriate action was taken they should contact their GMB rep and consider a personal injury claim against the school/local authority if necessary. Ray was thanked for producing the report and for stimulating the conversation.

Presentation By Thompsons Solicitors

Julie Blackburn and Gemma Taylor outlined the many services provided by Thompsons. Gemma started with an authority by authority update on equal pay claims. Hundreds of thousands of pounds have already been recovered in equal pay claims for mainly lower paid women members of the GMB. Some authorities were still negotiating settlements and others were now settling secondary claims for members who had received a negotiated settlement some years ago but now had a secondary claim either because the introduction of a new pay system went beyond the date of the signed compromise agreement or because groups of mainly male workers had salaries protected beyond that date.

She advised support staff to complete a GMB equal pay questionnaire obtainable from GMB offices if they had not already done so. It was confirmed by the meeting that the service had improved considerably since the equal pay unit moved from Newcastle to Leeds.

Julie Blackburn expanded on the extensive range of legal services provided, from the free will service for members and their partners, personal injury cover for members at work and personal injury cover for members and their families outside of work. Julie gave examples of children suffering accidents but having their cases pursued because their mothers or fathers were members of the GMB. Again there were no charge for this service and nothing deducted from the compensation.

She spoke about the initial free half hour consultation on non-work related issues and also the discounted family law and matrimonial advice (divorce), probate and tax law and conveyancing services. Julie expanded further on the criminal law service referred to earlier and promised to supply a criminal lawyer for the next regional meeting. Thompsons also provide legal representation in employment tribunals for members if referred by the GMB legal officer.

The meeting thanked Julie and Gemma for their informative presentation.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING
WEDNESDAY, 20TH OCTOBER 2010
AT 10.30AM**

SAY YES TO SECURITY AT WORK

As a GMB member you are much more **secure** at work because you are part of an **effective** union of 600,000 members. Whether you work full-time or part-time – whatever job you do – the GMB can **help** you.



HOW DO I JOIN?

Just fill in parts 1, 2 and 3 in the form below and hand it to your local GMB representative or post it to GMB Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region, FREEPOST NEA524, Grove Hall, 60 College Grove Road, Wakefield WF1 3SY (you do not need a stamp).

CONTRIBUTIONS:

£2.55 weekly (21 hrs and above)

£1.43 weekly (term-time) or 80p weekly (less than 10 hrs)

If you have any questions call GMB on

01924 882255

or visit our website

www.gmb.org.uk

FOR UNION USE ONLY	Section <input type="text"/>	Branch No <input type="text"/>	Membership No <input type="text"/>	Date of joining <input type="text"/>
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GMB membership application form PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

1 TELL US ABOUT YOU

Surname <input type="text"/>	First name <input type="text"/>	Title <input type="text"/>	Mrs/Miss/Ms/Mr	Date of birth <input type="text"/>
Home address <input type="text"/>	Home Tel <input type="text"/>	Email <input type="text"/>		
Postcode <input type="text"/>	Mobile <input type="text"/>	I agree to abide by GMB rules Signature <input type="text"/>		
Date <input type="text"/>	We ask for your ethnic origins as part of our equal opportunities policy of improving services to all members			<input type="text"/>
Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> / Black African <input type="checkbox"/> / Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> / Black British <input type="checkbox"/> / Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> / Indian <input type="checkbox"/> / Irish <input type="checkbox"/> / Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> / White <input type="checkbox"/> / Other: <input type="text"/>				

2 TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOB

Employer <input type="text"/>	Your job <input type="text"/>
Address where you work <input type="text"/>	How many hours a week do you work? <input type="text"/>
Postcode <input type="text"/>	Pay No <input type="text"/>
	Work Tel <input type="text"/>
	Pay Date <input type="text"/>

3 INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT



Please fill in the form and send to **GMB Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region**, Grove Hall, 60 College Grove Road, Wakefield WF1 3RN

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society branch

To the Manager of <input type="text"/>	Bank/Building Society <input type="text"/>
Address <input type="text"/>	
Postcode <input type="text"/>	

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Bank/Building Society Account Number

Bank/Building Society Sort Code

Reference number (Office use only)

Originator's Identification Number

9 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 0

For GMB official use only. This is not part of the instruction to your Bank/Building Society. If your A/C number is not available fill in your address below.

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.
Please pay GMB Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with GMB and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks or Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account