

## Schools Newsletter – Autumn 2021

### Thank you!

We would like to start UNISON's Autumn Schools Newsletter with a **big thank you** to all our members.

Throughout this dreadful pandemic you have been, and continue to be, the backbone of the education system. You were the ones providing face to face support to the most vulnerable pupils; teaching, feeding and nurturing. Support staff delivered meals and took on the almighty task of ensuring schools maintained the high standards of cleanliness Covid19 required. This was all in addition to usual and demanding requirements of the "day job".

School support staff have been on the frontline throughout the Covid19 crisis and we cannot praise or thank you enough.



As you are aware UNISON hold a celebration day for school support staff annually. This year's national day of celebration will be on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November.

Please join us in celebrating the positive role all school support staff play in making schools safe and happy places for children to learn.

We are acutely aware of how difficult the last 18 months have been. Stars in Our Schools provides an opportunity to positively reflect and celebrate the vital contribution support staff made during the pandemic.

It would be fantastic if your school supported the day by holding dedicated events such as; a special assembly, coffee morning, red carpet event and/or teachers covering breaks for the day! UNISON has already written to your Headteacher and local M.P asking them to actively support the celebration. We have also included in this mailing a Stars in Our Schools poster and goody bag including chocolates, pens, stickers keyrings and bookmarks. We fully expect the chocolates to be distributed on a first come, first served basis!

- A full list of ideas for schools is available on the Resources page of the Star in Our Schools website – [www.starsinourschools.uk](http://www.starsinourschools.uk)

# **MEET YOUR REPRESENTATIVES**



## **DAVID PADLEY**

I am an elected Convenor and I presently work in the education portfolio, I have previously been a shop steward for many years. I am very committed to the Convenor role and have always been an activist, with the best interest of members and colleagues being paramount in everything I do. I am very approachable, please contact me with any concerns or issues at any time, I will always endeavour to answer all calls, if not, I will get back to you in a timely manner.

You can contact me on 07825025640 or

**[d.padley@sheffunison.org.uk](mailto:d.padley@sheffunison.org.uk)**



## **ROD PADLEY**

I am an elected Convenor for Education. I have worked in Sheffield City Council for over 41 years. I have 32 years' experience in representing members in all areas of the Council. I have dedicated the last 17 years to representing members in Education. I am also the Branch Secretary for the City of Sheffield Branch.

If you have any issues or queries, you can contact me on the above number or alternatively send me a direct email at

**[r.padley@sheffunison.org.uk](mailto:r.padley@sheffunison.org.uk)**



## **LISA SMITH**

My name is Lisa Smith and I have worked as a Nursery Nurse then UNISON Convenor for the past 31 years. I am also a delegate on UNISON's National Schools committee.

Campaigning to improve terms & conditions as well as representing support staff who find themselves in vulnerable situation is a role I take very seriously.

If you have any individual concerns, general queries or would like a workplace visit, please do not hesitate to contact me on 07881847044 or by email at **[l.smith@sheffunison.org.uk](mailto:l.smith@sheffunison.org.uk)**

# Council and School Pay Result

UNISON members voted overwhelmingly to reject the government's 1.75% pay offer i.e. 79% of those who voted rejected the offer.

The next stage will be to ballot members to **ask if they are willing to take industrial action** in an effort to improve the offer by sending a clear message – **Council and school workers deserve a fair and proper pay rise.**

It is therefore vital we get a high turnout in the vote.

We need to hear from everyone – every role, every workplace and every pay grade, including those in schools.

You will start receiving ballot papers in November or early December. Given this is a busy time of year, please ensure you complete the ballot paper as soon as possible and return in the SAE.

In the meantime please speak to your colleagues. If they aren't a member of UNISON they won't be able to vote. **New members can join online via [joinunison.org.uk](http://joinunison.org.uk)** Jon Richards, UNISON's Assistant general secretary for bargaining and negotiation, as well as National Secretary for Education says:-

*"Thank you for your dedication over the last 18 months. Your union is proud of you and we're fighting to get you what we know you deserve".*

This is why it is vitally important that once the ballot paper drops through the letterbox you complete and return it as soon as possible!

## **The Recruit a Friend or Colleague Scheme**

The Branch initiative that rewards members who encourage colleagues to join UNISON will be continuing for the foreseeable future. The Branch will make a payment of £10 for each new member recruited (subject to a 3 month qualifying period). All that is required is that your details (name and membership number) to be put on the application form of the person you have recruited, or if your colleague joins online they can inform Branch Office who has recruited them.



## **Keeping in contact with members**

It is vital that the details UNISON hold for its members are up to date.

If you have changed employer, work address or home address recently we need to know, this can be done by one of the following methods; contacting the Branch Office or visiting [unison.org.uk](http://unison.org.uk) and accessing 'my UNISON'.

Whilst updating your details please take a minute to check that we hold a correct email address for you on our system, this is the most effective way for us to keep in contact with members.

# WHY ARE STEWARDS SO IMPORTANT?

Stewards are the backbone of UNISON. Without stewards there would be no one there to act as the link between members and the union and to organise and support people in the workplace.

## What does a UNISON steward do?

As a steward you can:

- Talk to, recruit and organise members around workplace issues
- Talk to members about workplace problems, advise them and keep them informed of latest developments
- Represent members in your workplace
- Be involved in how your branch and union is run.

## What if I am worried I cannot do everything?

Different stewards get involved in different activities depending on experience, skills and time factors.

UNISON is very much in favour of job sharing for stewards. This way you can spread the load, work together and support each other. Job sharing should be agreed with your branch. You could also consider becoming a workplace contact and see how much you are willing and able to do.

## What rights do I get as a steward?

In workplaces where UNISON is recognised by the employer, stewards have rights to time off for training and to carry out their work. This includes:

- Meetings with members and management
- Preparation and research
- Keeping members informed.

## Do I get any training?

All new stewards receive comprehensive training which is facilitated by our Regional Office.

## How many stewards are needed?

UNISON aims to have a steward in every school. This is particularly important in light of budget cuts and an increase in schools moving to academy status.

***If you are interested in becoming a school steward or worksite contact, please ring UNISON on 0114 2736307 or [lgbranch@sheffunison.org.uk](mailto:lgbranch@sheffunison.org.uk)***

***If you require additional information, please contact UNISON's Education Convenors, Lisa Smith, David Padley or Rod Padley.***

