

# Durham Local Government UNISON Bulletin

7 February 2017



## Schools Edition

Dear UNISON Teaching Assistant,

I wanted to write to all of you to update you on the progress that's being made in negotiations with Durham County Council. As you all know, the Council suspended their plans to sack and re-engage Teaching Assistants, giving us an opportunity to engage in meaningful negotiations.

Our aim in those negotiations is to get the best possible resolution. Teaching Assistant reps are involved in the discussions and a Teaching Assistant work group has just been set up to ensure wide participation and influence from Teaching Assistants across different schools and range of experiences. This group will be meeting before February half-term to ensure momentum is kept.

Obviously there's still a lot of work to do. Negotiations like this are rarely simple, quick or straightforward. We expect to see a deal taking shape in the coming weeks and we are continuing to talk to politicians in Durham and convey the sense of urgency to resolve this dispute - but if there is not continued progress then UNISON will not hesitate to support Teaching Assistants taking further industrial action.

A resolution for Teaching Assistants is possible if we continue to negotiate in good faith – and the council do likewise.

Until this dispute is satisfactorily resolved, I'll be writing to you with updates on progress being made. I understand it can feel as though things have gone quiet, however I want to reassure you that UNISON is working tirelessly to find a satisfactory resolution to this dispute. And you have my personal commitment that UNISON stands behind you – from the General Secretary and throughout the organisation.

Thank you for your patience as negotiations continue, and best wishes.

**Clare Williams**  
Regional Secretary, UNISON Northern

Please see over for dates of update meetings taking place around the County next week.

The branch office is open:


Monday to Friday

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 Follow us on twitter  
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the public service union

Thinking of joining, contact us in the branch or you can  
join on line at [www.joinunison.org](http://www.joinunison.org)

We have arranged a number of meetings for UNISON Teaching Assistants in County Durham to update you on the current situation and answer questions around other issues in schools; such as Section 188 Notices and the use of apprentices in schools.

Please take this opportunity to have a chat with us about things that are affecting you and how UNISON can help.

Meetings will be held at the following locations:

- 13th February, 16:30-17:30, Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre (Pathways Room)
- 13th February, 16:30-17:30, County Hall, Durham (Council Chamber)
- 14th February, 16:30-17:30, Shotton Hall, Peterlee (Council Chamber)
- 14th February, 16:30-17:30, Council Chamber, Crook (Council Chamber)
- 15th February, 16:00-17:00, TCR Hub, Barnard Castle
- North Durham Academy (Venue, date and time to be confirmed by the end of this week)

Strike pay meetings have taken place throughout December and January. If you have any further queries, please contact the branch office on 03000 263300/301/302/303

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