

# Durham Local Government UNISON Bulletin

3 May 2017



## **Schools Edition** **Cluster Meetings: Frequently Asked Questions**

Thank you to everyone who attended the cluster meetings that have been held over the last few days. We would like to provide answers on some frequently asked questions:

### **What is the assimilation process?**

*This is to understand the future aligning of the new job descriptions and proposed grade structure. It will consist of meetings between Head Teachers, HR and UNISON on a school-by-school basis. UNISON is attending every meeting in order to ensure the process is followed consistently and we can pick up any issues that arise.*

### **How will we be informed of the outcome?**

*This needs to be dealt with in a consistent manner and will require further discussions with the Council and our UNISON Teaching Assistant Workgroup. The proposed new grades are part of an overall package that will need to be offered to all Teaching Assistants on an individual basis, likely consisting of the grade, hours and weeks. Any financial implications will also be fully explained so you can make an informed decision.*

### **Will the assimilation process be used as an opportunity to downgrade us by Head Teachers?**

*No. This process is about aligning job descriptions and is based on your current grade; it is not an opportunity to seek to downgrade staff. A Head Teacher workgroup have also had input and agreed the new job descriptions.*

### **Are the differences between the grades clear in terms of responsibilities?**

*All job descriptions have had a great deal of input from UNISON Teaching Assistant representatives. All our requested amendments were included in the new job descriptions, which*

**The branch office is open:**

Monday to Friday

**Telephone :**  
03000 263300 / 263301

**Email:**  
unison@durham.gov.uk

**Website**  
www.durhamunison.info



Follow us on twitter  
@DurhamUNISON



Follow our Facebook  
group: Durham Unison



**UNISON**  
*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)

*means that there is a much clearer difference in responsibility between the relevant grades.*

**Will the dispute (and UNISON ballot) be completed before we break up for the summer?**

*Yes that is what we are working towards. The process around the job descriptions and assimilation should be the most time consuming aspect of the 'whole package', which will be put to you via a ballot. These assimilation meetings are being rolled out across all schools within a relatively short period of time in order to ensure we reach a resolution as quickly as possible.*

**What happens if our role changes in the future?**

*If in the future if you feel there have been substantial changes to your role, the Council's Regrading procedure is still available on an individual basis and UNISON can provide advice and guidance on the process.*

UNISON will keep our teaching assistant members up to date with further details and events — please pass this on to your colleagues.



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