

## We need to deal with the school funding crisis

SCHOOLS

UNISON has been campaigning about inadequate funding of education across the UK for many years. However, the government's spending plans have made the problem far worse.

Budgets have been frozen, so schools have no additional money to pay for increases in inflation, pensions or national insurance costs. From April many schools will also have to pay a new apprenticeship levy too, with no additional money to cover it. The National Audit Office has estimated that this will mean an 8% per pupil real terms cut to schools by 2020.

On top of this, the government is proposing a new funding formula in England that would redistribute funds from school to school, without putting any new money in the pot. Even schools set to gain from the formula could lose out overall, as they won't get enough to outweigh the impact of frozen budgets.

School support staff are already facing restructures and redundancies as a result of funding pressures and this will only get worse. You know too well the impact on pupils, such as increases in class sizes, fewer books and resources and cuts to special needs provision.

Dave Prentis, general secretary of UNISON, said: "Cash-strapped schools are struggling to give children a decent education. The funding crisis means overcrowded classrooms, support staff being sacked and parents having to pay towards the cost of lessons. Children, parents and staff deserve so much better."

Find out about the impact of the cuts on your school at: [www.schoolcuts.org.uk](http://www.schoolcuts.org.uk)

It's really important to put pressure on MPs about school funding and get involved with local campaigns. Head to the UNISON website for more information and to email your MP: <https://tinyurl.com/mcvrla4>

Find out more



UNISON in Schools



@UNISONinSchools  
#StarsInOurSchools

#backyourchampions



**Jake's teaching assistant has given him a future**

*Denise, mum of three*



**The future for our school is scary**

*Alli, teaching assistant*

I love seeing children's faces light up when they're inspired, especially the ones who need that extra support. But with all these cuts our workloads are getting ridiculous and class sizes just keep getting bigger! Kids like Jake struggle more than they should because we don't have the time or resource to give them the right support. Many of us work extra hours but we still can't give the children all the help they need. It breaks my heart.



Your public services are in crisis. Tweet, share, vote, say thanks – Get involved at [publicservicechampions.org](http://publicservicechampions.org) whatever you do, do it now.

## Free Learning opportunities for UNISON members

UNISON has some great new learning opportunities for members in schools – for both personal and professional development. Check out the latest information:

### Interested in getting learning started in your workplace?

UNISON's Learning and Organising Services has funding available to help you to get learning started in your workplace. 'Kickstart' can help you to fund the costs of rooms and refreshments to put on events and

taster sessions to staff and stimulate their interest in both UNISON's member learning programmes and other learning that they might be interested in. To find out more contact LAOS on **020 7121 5700** or email us on **kickstart@unison.co.uk**



### The Open University partnership

**www.PEARL.ac.uk** is a fabulous new resource, designed to help advise and guide you through your learning options. Developed with

Open University, there are inspirational case studies and an 'Advise me' tool which can give you personal advice and signpost the most the appropriate courses.

### OpenLearn

Take a look at OpenLearn: a free learning resources website with around 11,000 hours of learning materials, including 8,000 hours taken from OU undergraduate and post-graduate courses. Courses include subjects such as Health, Social Care and Early Years.

**www.open.edu/openlearn**

### Skills for Schools

Check out our school support staff training and development website at:

**www.skillsforschools.org.uk**

## New regulations for early years first aid training

New regulations will come in this April that require all newly qualified early years staff to hold a

Paediatric First Aid

(PFA) certificate in order to count in adult: child ratios. The certificate can be for full or emergency PFA. The requirement will only apply to staff that qualified from September 2016 onwards. There will be a three-month 'grace' period to enable staff to attend training.

UNISON has generally welcomed this proposal but is concerned about the availability and cost of first aid training. It is UNISON's view that the employer must take responsibility for paying for any compulsory training courses.

Exceptions to the requirements can be made for staff with a disability that prevents them from undertaking first aid duties.

## Save our nursery schools!

Government proposals to reform the funding of early years in England could put the future of many nursery schools at risk.

The government says that nursery schools should be paid the same amount of funding as private nurseries. UNISON believes that nursery schools need to be treated as a special case. Nursery schools are required to employ qualified teachers and early years staff, which results in unavoidable additional costs. Nursery

schools are widely recognised as centres of excellence in the early years sector and serve some the most deprived areas of the country.

UNISON believes they must be saved and is campaigning with early years groups to call on the government to reconsider its proposals.

Find out more and get involved at: campaign

**www.savenurseryschools.org**



# You are the Champions!

This spring is a busy time for UNISON's Public Service Champions campaign.

Launched last autumn, the campaign celebrates you – and everyone who works in public services.

The next phase of the UK-wide advertising campaign shows the 'two sides' of public services in our communities.

On one side are the stories of the general public, who value the jobs that our members do and the services that they provide. On the other side are the testimonies of our members, who are committed to doing their jobs to the highest possible standard, but find this increasingly difficult and stressful after nearly 10 years of cuts.

The public service workers covered in this round of advertising will include a teaching/classroom assistant, a youth worker, a library assistant, a homecare worker, a paramedic and a police community support officer.

The ads will be on poster sites across the UK rail network, in the press and on Facebook, as well as

#backyourchampions

**My library opened up my world**  
Gail, local resident

**Our libraries are being closed down**  
Beverly, library assistant

I love seeing the difference the library makes to people in my community like Gail. But I'm seriously worried about its future. Libraries like mine are being shut down all the time because of cuts. It's an essential service, not a luxury.

Your public services are in crisis. Tweet, share, vote, say thanks – whatever you do, do it now. Get involved at [publicservicechampions.org](http://publicservicechampions.org)

Based on personal testimonies. Funded by UNISON's General Political Fund. Posted by mobile.

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London's tube trains. The Facebook ads will include short films. You can see examples of the adverts in this newsletter.

This second phase of the campaign was timed to coincide with the elections on 4 May for the new city region mayors are being elected in the West Midlands, Greater Manchester, Liverpool, Tees Valley, Sheffield, Cambridge and Peterborough and West of England – as well as the local council elections.

You, our members, have a crucial part to play in the campaign over the coming months, by helping to tell the real story about what's happening to public services and to raise awareness among the general public that the services that they rely on are in crisis.

Members of the public and our own supporters will be urged to show their support for the public service champions and get involved in the campaign by visiting [publicservicechampions.org](http://publicservicechampions.org)

## Academy trust plans £1 million cuts in 33 schools

The David Ross Education Trust (DRET) has announced plans to cut nearly £1million pounds from its school budgets. The trust has 33 schools across the East Midlands and Yorkshire & Humberside regions.

As part of its 'shared services' plan the trust proposes to cut the overall number of school-based support roles and remove responsibility for some key budgets and staff from heads and principals.

Roles directly at risk include premises and site staff, admin, reception, PA & secretarial, business management, finance, HR and data management. Specialist roles are set to disappear, up to 40 staff face being made redundant and there is also a risk that some employees will find themselves

in a new role on a lower salary (though there will be a period of pay protection).

This announcement comes in the wake of massively increased spending by the trust on central and regional projects. In fact under the plan the trust is budgeting to spend nearly £800,000 a year on central-based and regional teams. The trust has also increased the total amount its schools are charged for central services. According to the trust's figures, this increased from £2 million to £3.4 million in 15/16. To UNISON this all looks like money being cut from schools to fund central trust and regional spending.

The trust will consult the unions on its cuts plans until the 12 May. UNISON will use this time to continue to try and convince the employer to think again.

UNISON has launched a joint campaign with the other support staff, teaching and headteachers unions.

UNISON head of education Jon Richards said: "The government insisted academies meant more control for head teachers in running their schools. Yet academy trusts are moving funds away from schools, and charging them more for administration provided by their own teams.

"The jobs under threat are key to the smooth and safe running of schools. If they disappear, it will be down to teaching and learning support staff to fill in the gaps. Then there'll be less valuable time spent in the classroom educating and supporting children. Meanwhile forking out more for trust services will leave even less cash in already struggling school budgets."

"We are absolutely determined to do all we can to try and protect DRET pupils, schools and jobs."

For more information on UNISON's campaign against schools cuts talk to your branch and visit the campaigns section of UNISON's website.

## Scotland's schools feel the strain

The impact of Scotland's council budget cuts – £300 million in education over the last five years – is put into sharp relief by UNISON Scotland's 2017 report *Hard lessons* – a survey of Scotland's school support staff. Hundreds of UNISON members working in education responded:

- 54% of support staff say budgets have been cut
- 40% carry out unpaid work to meet workloads
- 60% say morale is low
- 80% say workloads are heavier.

These figures are not surprising because there are 6,707 more pupils since 2010 in Scottish schools, but 1,841 fewer support staff and 1,389 fewer teachers.

The report also highlights a high level of anxiety from classroom assistants who are expected to undertake a range of personal care and medical interventions. Many staff feel they have not been given adequate training and risk assessment that these tasks involve. Members also report increased levels of challenging behaviour – and in some cases, violence – in schools.

## Consultation on guidance for healthcare needs

The Scottish Government is consulting on new guidance about supporting children and young people in education with healthcare needs, which we hope will provide staff and employers with clarity on the rights and obligations of staff administering medicine in schools and undertaking personal care. UNISON Scotland was involved in drafting the guidance and we have welcomed the general principles laid out, particularly the clear statement that school staff providing healthcare should receive appropriate training from a health professional or accredited source. We also want 'appropriate equipment', for example, hoists and/or showers, available in all education settings to deal with healthcare needs, and clear guidance on chaperones. We hope that the final guidance will be issued to all councils and schools soon. UNISON branches can support members in ensuring that the new, better guidance is followed.

## \*\*Stop press\*\*

### Derby

Derby support staff have voted overwhelmingly to accept the Council's latest offer, ending a long running dispute which had cut wages by thousands of pounds. UNISON's general secretary Dave Prentis said *'From the outset there's been tremendous support from parents and local residents. School support staff can go into work with heads held high, knowing that the value of the work they do for children and schools has been recognised.'*

### Durham

In Durham, the council and trade unions are reviewing job descriptions for teaching assistants. All TAs will be consulted on the outcome. Go to [www.unison.co.uk](http://www.unison.co.uk) for the latest information.

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**PCSOs make me feel safe in my neighbourhood**  
Melanie, local resident

**Neighbourhood policing is in danger**  
David, police community support officer

I take pride in my patch, and I'm so glad my presence in the neighbourhood reassures people like Melanie. But I'm worried about the future. With cost cutting there just aren't enough of us patrolling the streets. People deserve to feel safe in their community, but I worry that the reassurance we provide is at risk.

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your public service champions

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# Stars in our Schools – date for your diaries

UNISON's annual day to highlight the vital roles of school support staff – Stars in our Schools – is set for Friday 24 November. Of course, schools are encouraged to get involved any time that suits around this date. Contact your local UNISON branch to find out more or visit [www.starsinourschools.uk](http://www.starsinourschools.uk)



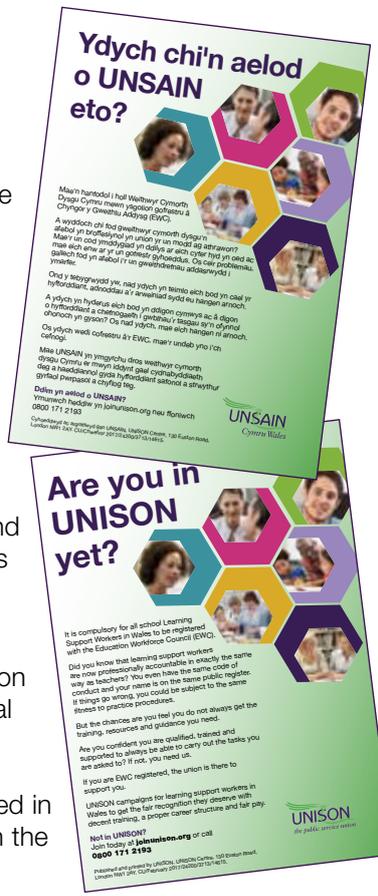
## Wales goes professional

As professional registration enters its second year, UNISON Cymru Wales is stepping up the campaign for better treatment of all support staff in Wales.

31,404 Learning Support Workers in Wales are now professionally registered with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) as we see classroom-based staff numbers in Wales come close to mirroring that of teachers.

Support staff from the classroom to the kitchen continue to join in record numbers, and we now have 11 active support staff networks running across Wales in the different council areas.

UNISON is clear that if you are going to take on the responsibilities that come with professional registration then you need the backing of a union. We have already provided vital representation to members who have appeared in front of the EWC, helping to tip the balance in the support worker's favour.



## Meet Wales' new schools forum chair

Newly elected Wales schools forum chair, Michelle Reeve, who is a teaching assistant, can't wait to get on with the job. There's a lot happening just now and her message is:



"Support staff in Wales, look out for some exciting developments! We have a survey on working time, a campaign to end the use of the term 'non-teacher', work on professional standards, new advice for supply support staff and an event in the summer term looking at the role and future of support staff in Wales. To say we're busy is an understatement!

"I'd also encourage all EWC registered staff to go on the website and use their Professional Learning Passport (PLP) – it's free, confidential, and all about your development".

**Sign up!** If you are in an education setting in Wales, why not sign up to get email updates? Email [cymruwales@unison.co.uk](mailto:cymruwales@unison.co.uk) and type **SCHOOLS** in the subject line.

# Early years workforce strategy

The Department for Education (DfE) has recently published its early years workforce strategy setting out its plans to develop the early years workforce in England. Proposals contained in the strategy include:

- Allowing staff with an Early Years Educator (EYE) qualification who also hold level 2 English and mathematics qualifications, including Functional Skills, to count in the level 3 staff:child ratios.
- Consulting on allowing those with Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS), and its predecessor Early Years Professional Status (EYPS), to lead nursery and reception classes in maintained schools.



- Developing new level 2 childcare qualification criteria.
- Improving the quality of early years training and access to continuous professional development (CPD).

UNISON believes that the strategy is flawed in that it says nothing about the pay and conditions of early years staff and we are disappointed that it does not guarantee early years staff the same right to CPD as other professionals. However, we hope to work with the DfE in producing standards for early years staff and in developing the level 2 qualification.

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your public champions



**My youth worker was the only one I could turn to**  
Daniel, catering student



**We're forced to turn our backs on kids**  
Ben, youth worker

I had it pretty tough growing up, so it means the world that I can help young people like Daniel get a better start than I did. But like hundreds of youth clubs and centres, cuts mean we're being threatened with closure. The streets are no place for kids – yet now, that's exactly where they will end up.

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**I couldn't cope without my care worker**  
Margaret, recovering from hip operation



**I can't cope with being a care worker**  
Alysha, home care worker

Making a difference to lives like Margaret's is so rewarding, it's why I got into this job. But because of cost cutting, care visits are often restricted to 15 minutes – there's not even time for us to chat. I'm sometimes the only person she sees all day! Social care is in crisis and vulnerable people are suffering the most.

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**The NHS saved my life**  
Sara, road accident survivor



**The NHS needs saving**  
Julia, paramedic

I'm immensely proud that me and my team save lives like Sara's. But due to cuts, we've got impossible workloads. People are leaving because the stress is just too much. Meanwhile, emergency calls continue to come in thick and fast. This isn't just my problem, this is a matter of life and death for all of us.

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