

# Durham Local Government UNISON Bulletin

22nd June 2017

## Schools Edition

### Teaching Assistants Consultative Ballot

Thanks to your campaigning, your industrial action and months of negotiations with UNISON, Durham County Council has now agreed a revised offer to Teaching Assistants. If you've been affected by this dispute you'll be getting a letter from the council soon, setting out in detail how your terms and conditions of employment will change if the offer is accepted. TAs should receive this letter in the next couple of days.

This offer represents a significantly different position to that which we faced last year.

Through standing together, campaigning together and delivering solid UNISON action the Council has agreed to:

- **A complete withdrawal of the threat to dismiss and re-engage teaching assistants, which was originally planned to take place on 31 December 2016.**
- **A new grading structure for teaching assistants - 87% of UNISON teaching assistants will be positively regraded.**
- **No teaching assistant facing any potential reduction in their salary before September 2019 – and commitment from the Council to work with UNISON to help the minority of TA's facing a potential post-2019 pay reduction.**
- **New job descriptions - developed by TA's - that more accurately reflect the valuable role performed by teaching assistants in our education system.**
- **An additional week to the standard number of weeks worked by teaching assistants to 40 (originally proposed as 39).**
- **A flexible approach to the standard 37 hours / 40 weeks contract.**

Whilst this offer is not perfect, it is a significant improvement on the Council's previous offer – especially for the majority of TA's who stand to receive a positive regrading. On that basis, it's UNISON's responsibility to make sure you have your say on your dispute and the resolution the Council has proposed.



The branch office is open:


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UNISON will now conduct a consultative ballot of our teaching assistant members affected by the revised offer from the Council to determine whether it should be accepted. You should receive your ballot paper through the post early next week and the ballot will close on Monday 10 July 2017.

Meetings for UNISON members have now been arranged in all schools. It is vitally important we have the opportunity to discuss the Council's offer in detail with you collectively and individually if necessary so that you are fully informed when taking part in the ballot.

If any teaching assistant believes their proposed assimilation to the new grading structure is incorrect, please contact us in the first instance.

Together we have achieved a great deal during what has been a very stressful and difficult time. We are now urging you to use your vote in UNISON's consultative ballot and have your say.

**UNISON teaching assistants have led this dispute – please use your vote and return your ballot paper to make sure your voice is heard.**

**Thank you for supporting your union. It's important that we continue to stand together.**

**Durham UNISON**  
**Working for you**