

# Academy pension protection secured

UNISON helps secure pension protection for members working in academy schools.

Under new government guidance academy schools will have to offer continued access to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) to any member of school support staff transferred from an academy to another employer. These rules are referred to as 'Fair Deal'.



*Jon Richards,  
national secretary  
for education and  
children's services*

UNISON took up the fight for this protection after it became apparent that some academy schools were exploiting a legal loophole and looking to outsource services in an attempt to get round their responsibility to offer membership of the LGPS.

Jon Richards, national secretary for education and children's services said:

"We made a strong case to the government that academies needed to be included in the new policy. We are pleased we have helped win this important pension protection for our school support staff. With over 50% of secondary schools now converted to academy status

*This success demonstrates the difference that unions make to working people's lives.*

it was vital that we closed the legal loophole allowing academies to sign up to cut price deals with contractors to deny our members' access to the LGPS."

This success demonstrates the difference that unions make to working people's lives. The more school support staff that join UNISON the stronger our negotiating position will be with government and employers.



Under the new Fair Deal guidance if, for example, an academy school outsources or re-tenders its catering or cleaning service to a private company then the contractor will have to guarantee staff access to the LGPS. Transfers between academies will also be covered.

## Three simple ways to join UNISON today:



Join online at  
[joinunison.org](http://joinunison.org)



Call us on  
**0800 171 2193**



Ask your UNISON rep  
for an application form



On 29 November, let's show our support and respect for the important work TAs and CAs do.



# UNISON celebrates teaching assistants



Friday 29 November is a date for your diary to celebrate teaching and classroom assistants. The celebration day is part of UNISON's campaign to speak up for teaching assistants (TAs), following newspaper stories that some people in the government and right-wing pressure groups have been looking to cut their jobs. Head teachers tell us they couldn't run their schools without their TAs,

so UNISON will be using the day to highlight the difference they make. Dave Prentis, general secretary, said: "Parents, carers, governors, teachers and head teachers know that schools would crumble without the hard work and dedication of teaching and classroom assistants. On 29 November, let's show our support and respect for the important work they do". Activities and events will be held all over the UK from features in local papers to high street stalls

to celebration assemblies in schools. Talk to your colleagues about marking the occasion in your school. Check the UNISON website and speak to your local branch to find out more. This is a great chance to help defend teaching and classroom assistants and show how popular and valued they are. For more information visit: [unison.org.uk/](http://unison.org.uk/) and become a campaign supporter, and 'like' our UNISON in Schools Facebook page. Resources are available from UNISON's online catalogue.

## Schools survey reveals shocking poverty

A survey of nearly 3,000 school support staff has revealed the shocking impact of poverty on the children in their schools.

The UNISON survey covered all areas of the UK and shows that:

- 85% say children are coming to school hungry
- 80% see children coming to school without proper uniforms or in worn out clothes
- 73% believe that poverty has a negative impact on the education of the children in their school
- 57% see the children in their school in poor physical health
- 55% believe that some children at their school appear to be suffering mental health issues as a result of rising poverty levels
- 55% have seen an increase in the number of children who rely on breakfast clubs in this school year.

UNISON will be using the results of our survey to highlight the devastating impact of the government's cuts on families and our school children.

UNISON members can help by raising their concerns with their MP and asking them to raise them in parliament.

Details of your local MP can be found at: [theyworkforyou.com](http://theyworkforyou.com).



## UNISON welcomes free school meals for England's infants

UNISON has welcomed the government's intention to introduce free school meals for all infant school children in England from September 2014.

This move follows a long campaign by UNISON and local authorities such as Islington and Southwark in London that have led the way by introducing free school meals for all pupils in their primary schools.

Christine Lewis, UNISON national officer for education and children's services, said: "UNISON has long argued that providing children with hot, healthy and nutritious meals is vital to giving them the best start in life – helping to improve their behaviour as well as boost attainment.

"We see this as real progress and a vital first step in the campaign to win free school meals for all school children."

A recent review of school food by two founders of the Leon restaurant chain, for the Department for Education,



concluded that packed lunches were nearly always less nutritious than a cooked meal, and that giving all children free lunches would raise academic standards.

UNISON, which represents the majority of school meals workers, had a seat on the review's expert panel and backed its findings.

"School food staff also need recognition, more pay and better training to help them deliver a top quality service that will improve children's health, wellbeing and educational attainment," said Christine Lewis.

"They are often asked to quickly produce nutritious food with limited paid hours, budgets and equipment," she added.

## UNISON members get a better deal with UIA



Times are hard for most people, including school support staff. So it's important to save money where we can.

This is why, currently 50,000 UNISON members already trust UIA to insure their homes. UIA is a mutual company which has been serving UNISON members – including school support staff – and the trade union community for over 120 years.

We have a policy of putting people before profits and making value for money and quality service our top priority.

Our home insurance has been designed to give UNISON members the flexibility they need, offering a free instalment facility and making it easy to add extra cover if members should

need it. And this has allowed UIA to maintain a high level of customer service. Why not call UIA free on 0800 66 88 55 for a Home Insurance quote, or visit [www.unisoninsurance.co.uk](http://www.unisoninsurance.co.uk)

*Lines are open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 8pm and Saturday 9am to 1pm. For quality and protection purposes your call will be recorded. UIA exchanges information with other insurance companies and the police to prevent fraud*

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# Union to work with church on Living Wage

UNISON and the Catholic Education Service (CES) for England and Wales have agreed to work together to help over 2,100 Catholic schools implement the living wage.

In London, the living wage is £8.80 per hour, and £7.65 per hour in the rest of the UK.

The schools are being given a step-by-step implementation plan produced by the union to help them introduce the Living Wage

This plan sets out the practical steps that Catholic schools will need to take to become fully accredited living wage employers with the Living Wage Foundation.

To gain accreditation schools must both pay the Living Wage as minimum to their lowest paid employees and also have a system

in place to ensure all its contractors such as catering and cleaning also pay the Living Wage by an agreed deadline.

Paul Barber, Director of the Catholic Education Service said:

“The Living Wage is an inherently Catholic concept and the importance of paying a just wage to the worker and their family can be found in Catholic Social Teaching for over a century.

Our online resources examine the Catholic Social Teaching behind this family wage as well as providing practical steps to becoming a Living Wage employer.

“I congratulate those Catholic schools, colleges and universities who are already Living Wage employers and thank them for the great example

they set us in their work for the Common Good.”

Dave Prentis, General Secretary of UNISON said:

“I am delighted that UNISON is working so closely with the Catholic Education Service to encourage schools to pay the living wage. Times are tough and low paid workers are struggling under the burden of rising prices for basics like food and fuel.

“Schools and heads are under a lot of pressure and that is why UNISON wants to make it easier for them to win Living Wage accreditation by producing a step-by-step guide. Having that accreditation sends out a strong message that this school is one that takes its responsibilities to its staff and the wider community seriously.”

## UNISON and Co-operative Schools Society reach Living Wage agreement

The Schools Co-operative Society, the national body representing Co-operative Schools, is urging all its 600 member schools to implement the Living Wage, following a joint agreement with UNISON.

## UNISON launches credit union network

UNISON has unveiled a unique network of credit unions to help low-paid UNISON members tackle debt and provide a moral alternative against the abuse of payday loan companies.



General secretary Dave Prentis announced that, with one in five turning to pay-day lenders, the union has formed a network of 40 credit

unions across England, Scotland and Wales, with more to come in the coming weeks.

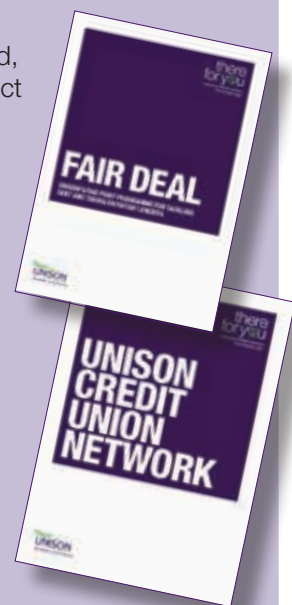
The union's own charity, There for You, already offers a range of services, including financial assistance and the UNISON debtline. This will be a new component in the development of a wraparound and holistic welfare service.

Mr Prentis said that UNISON will be working with the community and a wide range of interested parties, including talking to the Archbishop of Canterbury in coming weeks.

Martin Groombridge of the London Capital Credit Union described it as “an enormous step forward” and was about “bringing morality back into banking.”

Debt, he explained, does not only affect the low paid: his group has been contacted by people working in the City of London and for national newspapers.

UNISON assistant general secretary Liz Snape said that the intention was to help people “get their finances back on track – and get their lives back on track.”



# School Meals – a tough job, requiring many talents

A tough job, requiring many talents is what Leon restaurant owners Henry Dimpleby and John Vincent say about school meals work in their government-commissioned School Food Plan, published recently. In the chapter on the workforce, they speak of the school kitchen skills that many in the restaurant trade would envy and of their vision of “school cooks who are happy, confident, skilled and motivated”. They acknowledge that they do a complex job on a tight budget, requiring a wide range of skills, but are often overlooked or a poor relation to the catering trade.

Dimpleby and Vincent suggest that excellent training is not the norm,

*Action points cover training, professional standards, status and recognition*

is patchy and is focused on legally required courses, like hygiene and safety. The problems of time off, cover and course costs are recognised and high calibre on-site training is recommended.

The plan says that if headteachers and other managers are committed to the service they must be supportive of staff, including midday supervisors who should also be trained and developed. Action points cover training, professional standards, status and recognition. UNISON is advising a sub-group on workforce matters and will keep members up to speed with developments.

The school food plan covers most aspects of pupils and nutrition. There are too many to report in this newsletter but they include cooking in the curriculum; increasing take-up; sharing good practice; training headteachers; revising standards; supporting small schools; and measuring success.

New food-based standards are being developed and tested for nutritional content. A 12-week consultation period will run early next year with a view to enforcement by September 2014. Guidance on changes will be sent to branches. One of the five measures of success of the plan will be the ‘morale of the workforce’. How this is assessed and whether it improves will be of great interest. The 149-page report, films and more can be found at [education.gov.uk/schoolfoodplan](http://education.gov.uk/schoolfoodplan)

## Wales school support staff conference success

UNISON Cymru Wales held a summer seminar for school support staff in Cardiff. Kim Russell, schools forum chair welcomed guest speakers and delegates and noted how pleasing it was to see so many in attendance.

Speakers included regional secretary Margaret Thomas, UNISON national secretary for education Jon Richards, UNISON national officer Kathie Dickson, civil servant for the Welsh government Helen Arthur and project manager for Connecting Learners Richard Speight.

An enjoyable and informative day was had by all with a focus on Wales schools members’ priorities.

A live twitter feed was set up at the beginning of conference, which allowed everyone to provide regular updates and share the experience with a wider audience.

We now look forward to conference 2014.



Pics - Sharon Sunderland, Wales schools forum secretary and Kim Russell, Wales schools forum chair, Margaret Thomas regional secretary, Neath Port Talbot delegates

## National Support Staff Awards 2013

The National Association of School Business Managers held its annual School Support Staff Awards on 5 October 2013.

These awards provide schools with the opportunity to recognise the contributions that support staff individuals and teams make to the success and achievements of the overall school environment and the delivery of teaching and learning.

UNISON sponsored the award for Pupil Development which was won by Nina Bregazzi-Hall from Merrill Academy.

A big congratulations to Nina and all the other winners of awards.



Centre is Nina Bregazzi-Hall Merrill Academy winner of the Pupil Development Award and to her left is UNISON senior national officer Donna Rowe-Merriman.

# Admin of medicines dispute in Glasgow

Over 1,000 UNISON members who work as pupil support assistants (PSAs), instructors and care staff at Glasgow City Council schools took strike action on Thursday 31 October 2013. Members stood on picket lines outside school premises and then hundreds turned up with supportive parents to lobby a full council meeting in the City Chambers.

The strike was in response to education services trying to force staff to carry out the supervision and administration of medicines and health care tasks.

The council describe asthma, diabetes,

epilepsy and anaphylactic shock as 'low level' tasks and expect the lowest graded workers to undertake them. UNISON believes that the lowest grade of workers should not be involved in the very responsible task of administering medicines. The annual salary of PSAs is £11,800.

The council also expects some staff to deliver 'higher level tasks'. These tasks include Gastronomy tube/peg feeding, tracheostomy care, catheterisation, blood glucose monitoring and injections. UNISON believes that these tasks should be carried out by healthcare professionals.

Glasgow's children deserve a skilled workforce appropriately trained and graded to deliver quality support for all who need it.

The action will continue with selective city area one-day strikes until the council sees sense and negotiates a just solution to this dispute.

UNISON has clear policy and advice on the administration of health needs. Guidance for branches and a joint statement with the Royal College of Nursing are available to download from the UNISON online catalogue.

## Epilepsy & schools

There are 112,000 children and young people living with epilepsy in the UK. On average there is at least one child in every primary school and around five in every secondary school diagnosed with the condition. Although seizures may be well controlled with medication, epilepsy can still have a major impact on a child's ability to learn, as well as having a devastating effect on their emotional and mental wellbeing.

In a recent survey conducted by national charity, Young Epilepsy, it was found that 79% of people with epilepsy across all ages are the victims of discrimination. There is particular concern about the ability of young people to cope with negative reactions. Young people with epilepsy are four times more likely than their peers to suffer from anxiety or depression.

The challenges presented by epilepsy are complex and diverse. It is vital that specialist training and resources are available to education professionals to enable them to support pupils in their care. Young Epilepsy's programme 'Epilepsy Education for Schools', provides a range of free resources. See <http://youngepilepsy.org.uk/>

'Young Epilepsy is interested in the views of support staff on how epilepsy is managed in schools. Please help by taking part in the following survey: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/youngepilepsyunison](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/youngepilepsyunison)

## UNISON issues advice on dealing with health needs

School staff are facing increased pressure to administer medicines and provide medical care for children at school. That's enough to keep anyone awake at night.



A UNISON/RCN Survey in 2012 found that up to one in five school support staff feel pressurised into administering medication to pupils, and one in four don't feel comfortable doing so. UNISON **doesn't** think that's acceptable and is supporting members who find themselves in that position.

For most school support staff, administering medical procedures is not part of your contract. Your employer can't change your contract to include medical procedures without your agreement.

UNISON's advice is to only administer medication and provide support to pupils with health needs if:

- You've agreed and the specific tasks are clearly defined in your

existing contract.

- Generic references to 'medical support' or 'as required' are not acceptable and could put children and staff at risk.
- You feel competent and confident to undertake the task and are clear about the limits of your responsibilities.
- You've completed approved training and continue to have access to updated and specific training at least once a year.
- You're fully indemnified by your employer for tasks you're undertaking (check that you are adequately covered by your employer's insurance policy). If you're supporting children with health needs at school, make sure you know who to contact and what to do if a named child becomes unwell or if there is an emergency.

UNISON members should contact their branch to access help and support if they have any concerns over their schools practices on this vital issue.