



Vote today Decide on pay NJC 2022

UNISON members in England, Wales and Northern Ireland working as school support staff on NJC pay are voting on whether to 'accept' or 'reject' the national pay offer.

The pay offer of £1,925 on all NJC pay points is much higher than members have seen in recent years and is very close to the £2,000 that UNISON branches and the NJC committee agreed should be a key part of the pay claim. It would also give members at the bottom end of the pay scale a 10.5% increase. However, it doesn't deliver a pay increase that keeps up with the rising cost of living - resulting in what is effectively a pay cut - and this issue only increases the further up the pay spine you are. Nor does it make up for the loss in the real value of wages since 2010.

What do I need to do?

You need to decide on whether you wish to accept or reject the pay offer and then vote in the consultation. This consultation is being coordinated by branches, so if you are eligible you will receive an email with your link to vote online - make sure to look out for this.

If you do not receive an email, make sure to check with your branch as they may not have your correct email address - you don't

want to miss out on this important decision because of outdated contact information!

Once you have voted, speak to colleagues about the pay offer and encourage them to vote as well.

Why should I vote?

This is your decision on your pay. It's vital that you add your voice to make sure we get an accurate picture of all members' views - if you don't vote, decisions on your pay will be made without your input.

You should be aware that if the majority vote to reject the offer, the next step would be an industrial action ballot to attempt to force the employers to make an improved offer. Make sure your voice is heard.

If a majority of UNISON members vote to accept the pay offer, UNISON's elected NJC committee will meet as soon as possible to decide the next steps. The pay award will be backdated to 1 April 2022.

Please note the only unions recognised with the employers to negotiate on support staff pay, terms and conditions are UNISON, GMB and Unite.

The consultation is now open and closed on Monday 19 September. UNISON's NJC Committee will meet soon after to consider the outcome and decide next steps.

Make sure you vote today to decide on pay!

For further information go to unison.org.uk/LGpay

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Find out more

 **UNISON in Schools**

 **@UNISONinSchools**
#StarsInOurSchools

UNISON wins important case in Supreme Court

UNISON has recently been involved in a case that went to the Supreme Court (Brazel vs Harpur Trust). The case established that all part year workers, including term time only workers, must receive at least 5.6 weeks of annual leave. This ruling will affect many term

time only staff. UNISON will be negotiating and making claims on behalf of members where we identify that an employer is paying less than 5.6 weeks leave. If you think that this affects you, then you should contact your branch in the first instance.

**Stars in our
Schools
celebration
day!
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25 November – Stars in our Schools celebration day!

Friday 25 November is this year's annual day dedicated to celebrating school staff: the Stars in our Schools. We know that school support staff are vital to help children learn, keep them safe & healthy and keep the school running smoothly. Yet you don't get the attention you deserve despite making up half the school workforce. That's why we're taking a day to celebrate your work and raise awareness of the impact it has on young people in our schools.

Over the past few years, primaries, secondaries, special schools, academies and faith schools have all taken part, holding special assemblies, coffee mornings or sports afternoons. Some have invited local MPs to pay them a visit to witness first-hand what support staff do. Others have held dressing up days, quizzes for the children or asked them to interview support staff to find out what they do.

We recognise that schools are under huge pressure in the current climate. But it remains more important than ever for UNISON to highlight the valuable and fantastic contributions of school support staff. We would love your school to get involved if possible. It can be any time in November if that works better

for your school. There are lots of ideas and free resources (including materials in Welsh) on the special Stars website: www.starsinourschools.uk. Please contact your local UNISON branch to find out more.

UNISON is also running a prize draw for school staff. The winning Stars and the person who nominates them both win a £25 voucher. You can make your nominations online at the Stars website from 17 October.



Early years adult to child ratios (England)

In July the Department for Education (England) announced plans to amend the regulations for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), increasing the maximum number of children per adult in early years settings. Specifically, they are proposing to increase the number of two year old children each adult can look after from 4 per adult to 5. They haven't ruled out future amendments in relation to ratios for looking after three and four year old children either.

UNISON is strongly opposed to these changes. We believe that it will increase workload and stress for staff, as well as increasing risks to the safety of children. We also believe that it will have little impact on reducing the cost of early years education for parents, which is the government's stated aim of the

proposals. The early years sector is already facing a recruitment and retention crisis. These proposals will only make matters worse.

UNISON is responding to the consultation but we are also asking as many people as possible to take part. The consultation can be found here: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/childcare-futures-unit/childcare-regulatory-changes/>

In particular, we are calling on members to answer 'no' to question 10 on the changes to ratios. It is helpful if staff in early years give their personal reasons why they oppose these changes. **The consultation closes on 16 September.**

School Libraries Association conference

Before the summer, UNISON attended the School Library Association weekend course in Kent which covered a wide range of topics affecting school librarians today.

There was an inspiring talk from the outgoing children's laureate Cressida Cowell MBE about her flagship campaign, 'Life-changing Libraries', launched in April 2021 with BookTrust. Six primary schools - where at least 25% of pupils were eligible for free school meals - were created a dedicated library space stocked with 1000 books chosen to develop a culture of reading for pleasure. Staff were also given access to training and mentoring from the School Library Association.



The project found a transformation in attitudes towards reading, with passion for books ignited among the students and a considerable uptake in the time spent engaged in reading for pleasure both at school and at home. Staff reported increased attention, engagement and motivation to learn among students in the classroom, alongside a significant improvement in the wellbeing of both children and staff, as well as a boosted sense of pride, confidence and self-worth.

As a result Cressida Cowell renewed her call for the government to invest £100m a year in primary school libraries to help reverse the spiralling inequality in education, as her final act in the role of children's laureate. Whilst every prison has a statutory library, research shows one in eight primary schools have no library space at all - a statistic that doubles in schools with a higher proportion of children on free school meals. This lack of provision means

millions of children – particularly those from the poorest communities worst hit by the pandemic – are missing out on the vital benefits of reading for pleasure. Decades of research shows the importance this has on a child's educational development, health and well-being, personal growth and future prospects no matter their starting point in life, and how pivotal this is in not only determining a child's later economic success, but also the economy.

“The conference was great. Networking and sharing best practice works!”

Jen Linsey, UNISON member, Yorkshire & Humberside



“Good to see UNISON representing us when we are experiencing tough issues”.

Fiona Byers, UNISON member, Greater London

Find out more about the School Libraries Association here - <https://www.sla.org.uk/>

Covid update - England

Before the end of the summer term, UNISON wrote to the new Education Secretary in England urging him to use the school holidays to improve ventilation in school, reissue public health guidance about vaccinations and bring back free testing. We have not yet had a response to this letter and are disappointed that the government has taken no further action to mitigate the effects of a winter wave on educational disruption and ill health. UNISON will continue to campaign for the government to do more to protect staff and pupils.

School business professionals

UNISON represents school business managers in all types of schools from small primary schools to large multi-academy trusts and they are an important part of our membership. Members tell us that this can sometimes be an isolating role poorly understood by others, with a huge workload. The Department for Education (England) hosts an online directory which allows you to find professional network groups in your local area and get peer-to-peer support. Search 'networks for school business professionals' in your usual search engine to find out more.

UNISON calls for expansion of free school meals provision

UNISON has joined other education unions, and campaign organisations such as Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), to publicly call on the government in England to urgently expand the free school meals programme to all families receiving universal credit or an equivalent benefit.

A letter, signed by UNISON general secretary Christina McAnea and others, was also recently sent to the Chancellor and Secretary of State for Education. It highlighted the profound benefits that free school meals provide to those who are entitled to them, in terms of concentration, behaviour and academic performance in schools. But it warned that “the intensifying cost of living crisis means many more are now struggling to afford school lunches.”

Citing the Food Foundation’s latest figures that 2.6 million children live in households that missed meals or struggled to access healthy food during April, the letter called on the government to provide “a nutritional

safety net that supports all children to learn and achieve.”

As an interim step it suggested that the eligibility criteria of the scheme be extended to all those families receiving universal credit or an equivalent benefit.

However, it added that “the clear solution to ensuring fairness and equity across our schools is to extend universal provision”, as has been committed to in Wales and Scotland.

Mike Short, UNISON’s national secretary for education, said: “As the largest union representing school meals workers, UNISON supports the campaign for universal free school meals. But given the cost of living crisis, we implore the Westminster government to immediately expand the eligibility for free school meals as an interim step. It is shocking that thousands of families are living below the poverty line yet are currently ineligible. A move by the government would provide a lifeline at this critical time.”

It’s Checktember! Find out how your number skills measure up

National Numeracy, an independent charity, is calling on the nation to check their maths skills this September. They have renamed the month ‘Checktember’ and are encouraging everyone to go online and check that they have the number skills needed for everyday life and work. By spending just 10 minutes a day on the National Numeracy Challenge (NNC) – a free and easy-to-use online tool – you can check your confidence and skills with the numbers you use in everyday life. And for those of you who would like to gain a Functional Skills qualification in maths, the NNC is the perfect way to build your confidence and skills with numbers to prepare you for the course.

Do you need a maths MOT this Checktember? Try the National Numeracy Challenge here:
<https://www.nnchallenge.org.uk/unionsch>

Follow the conversation on social media at #Checktember2022



UNISON Year of Disabled Workers

UNISON declared 2022 the year of disabled workers. UNISON has over 200,000 disabled members and is using the year to highlight the contribution of disabled workers to the workplace and to our union. Your branch can help by:

- Electing a disabled members officer or contact and signing them up for the national online training
- Negotiating a Reasonable Adjustment Passport with your school
- Getting a new Disability Leave policy agreed with your employer



Do contact your local branch if you’d like to get involved. Also if you are a disabled member and would be interested in talking to us about your role in school for a future newsletter, please email education@unison.co.uk mentioning this article.

You can find out more here: <https://www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/fairness-equality/disabled-members/year-of-disabled-workers-2022/>

News from Wales

New curriculum for Wales

As we begin the new school year, many of you will be adapting to the introduction of the new curriculum and introducing new ways of responding to the Areas of Learning Experience. Hopefully you will have received some training, feel equipped for this major change and be able to realise new ways of sharing your skills and experience. If you feel that you are unprepared or that there is additional training that would assist you, please get in touch by emailing cymruwalelesschools@unison.co.uk

Update on teaching assistants

UNISON has been working in social partnership with the Welsh Government to improve the role of TAs in Wales and made recommendations in relation to pay, deployment, access to training & professional development and the standardisation of roles.

A working group is being set up in the Autumn to look at developing job descriptions for all levels of TA to properly reflect their role, taking into account differences in Wales, namely the new curriculum and the Additional Learning Needs Bill.

Information on the new 'Champion for TAs Governor' is to be sent out by the Welsh Local Government Association to the 22 local authorities, encouraging governing bodies to identify and appoint an individual

to this role during their business meetings, usually held in September.

Exploring reform of the school year

Welsh Government has announced they are exploring potential changes to the dates the school terms operate. UNISON considers that research presented did not provide substantial evidence to suggest a preferred model. We continue to press Welsh Government for a rationale for reform and any evidence to demonstrate that any changes are of benefit to pupils their families and the education workforce.

We have been assured that a full consultation will be conducted in the Autumn.

Cymru Wales schools support staff seminar

Save the date! A UNISON seminar for support staff in Wales is taking place on Friday 20 January 2023 at The Radisson Blu Hotel in Cardiff. More details to follow but please make a note and request time off to attend what will be a very informative and lively seminar offering an opportunity to discover more about how UNISON is responding to changes for the education workforce in Wales and to share your experiences and ideas.

Are your details correct?

It's really important that you keep your details up to date, so we can send you relevant information and key updates. Log into MyUNISON if you need to check and update your details:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/my-unison/>

Getting help as a member of UNISON

Need help at work? The first step is contacting your branch. If you don't know the details, you can use our online enquiry form, or call the UNISONdirect call centre on

0800 0 857 857.

UNISONdirect's hours are: Monday to Friday 7am to 11 pm and Saturday 9am to 4pm.

Not in UNISON?

Join today at **joinunison.org** or call **0800 171 2193**

JOIN UNISON
ESSENTIAL COVER WHEREVER YOU WORK

We use this address to send you information core to your membership such as your membership pack, UNISON election information and any information relating to ballots if relevant

We use this to contact you about trade union activities and services

This information helps us to see if you were previously a member

**This information helps us
find the best UNISON branch
to support you and represent
your needs**

Your subscription rate is determined by how much you earn

1 Tell us about you

Title	First name
Last name	
Home address	
Postcode	
Email	
Phone number (indicate home, work or mobile)	

☐ Email ☐ Text ☐ Phone

By ticking these boxes, you are giving your consent for UNISON to contact you by these means about how we campaign on your behalf.

National insurance number										Date of birth			

2 Tell us about your job

Employer's name
Your job title or occupation
Workplace name and address
Postcode

3 What you will pay each month

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions

Annual pay	Core subscription	£14,001 – £17,000	£9.70
£0,000 – £2,000	£1.30	£17,001 – £20,000	£11.50
£2,001 – £5,000	£3.50	£20,001 – £25,000	£14.00
£5,001 – £8,000	£5.30	£25,001 – £30,000	£17.25
£8,001 – £11,000	£6.60	£30,001 – £35,000	£20.30
£11,001 – £14,000	£7.85	£35,001 – and over	£22.50

This information tells us whether you wish to contribute an additional 5% towards UNISON's campaign fund

This information is standard Direct Debit mandate information

Please go to
unison.org.uk/privacy-policy
to see how we will protect
and use your personal
information

We are legally required to keep your information up to date. You can amend your details via My UNISON at www.unison.org.uk/my-unison

Help UNISON make a difference

Will you help UNISON stand up for its members, and speak out publicly on the issues that affect you? You can do this by giving an additional 5% voluntary contribution a month to our campaign fund. Please tick your preference below:

- ☐ **Campaign Fund** The campaign fund promotes better public services, enables the union to talk with politicians of any party about the work our members do and supports the union's equalities work.
- ☐ **UNISON Labour Link** Labour Link campaigns within the Labour Party locally and in Parliament for UNISON policy the NHS, your employment rights and for quality public services.

☐ No thank you

I do not wish to contribute to campaigning at the moment. (Those who choose not to tell me more.

☐ I don't wish to contribute at the moment, but you may contact me to

opt in will not be disadvantaged in any way as compared with members who do opt in.)

**Instruction to your bank or building society
to pay by Direct Debit**



✔ Please complete the form and send it to:
UNISON Freepost (no other address needed)

Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

To the manager bank / building society

Address

Postcode	Name(s) of account holder(s)

[illegible]

Please pay UNISON Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with UNISON and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Signature _____ Date _____