



**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- **Remodelling has changed the landscape in schools.**
- **Unpaid overtime is a reality for more than two thirds of support staff just to get the job done.**

Harrow UNISON Education Network

ISSUE 1

SPRING 2008

School Remodelling - NEW SURVEY

UNISON commissioned the Labour Research Department (LRD) to do a survey on the impact of school remodelling on support staff (in November 2007). They have produced an extensive report on roles, deployment, pay and training.

The report is based on a survey of over 1,000 UNISON members working in schools. Teaching assistants and their equivalents were the main group who responded to the survey, accounting for about two-thirds of the responses. Administrative staff make up about 15% of the survey and technical staff around 7%, while there are a sprinkling of other's including pupil support, welfare, site and facilities staff. Most of the schools involved were primary schools (59%), but 30% were secondary and 11% were special schools.

LRD also surveyed school leaders and 198 schools responded. The results of this survey are also included in the overall report. The positive message of the report is that remodelling has changed the landscape in schools. For the vast majority of our members

the content of their job has changed, work has become more varied and interesting and pay has increased to some extent to reflect the heightened responsibilities. A fair number of classroom-based staff have been promoted and almost half of the admin staff taking part in the survey have moved into managerial positions.

However, the report also shows that too often our members are losing out because they are not being paid for the job they actually do. This is due to a widespread blurring of two very different activities in the classroom: overseeing a whole class during a teacher's absence (cover supervision) and teaching a whole class during a teacher's planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time. Both activities are frequently called 'cover'. The result is that the skills and responsibilities in the classroom are not fully acknowledged and too often rewarded at a lower level. The report also highlights the fact that split contracts are widely used in schools, where

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BRANCH NEWS - Lynne Ahmad, Education Convenor

Train to Gain

Harrow Branch in partnership with 'North West London Online Ltd' are planning to offer training courses to our members. There will be a range of NVQ level 2 courses fully funded for those eligible. I hope also to offer an NVQ 3 qualification in management for women. The courses will be held at our Branch Office. If you are interested and would like any further information please contact me at the Branch Office.

Workplace Representatives

There is an under representation of Women stewards/representatives in the Workplace. UNISON and the LA is predominantly women. The branch is working to empower women members to stand for election. The branch is offering training in-house to support women activists.

Key Message – Participation is the most important message to get across to the membership. It is the only way forward.

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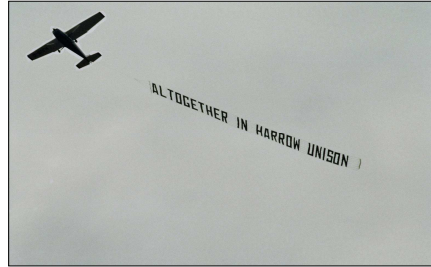
HLTA's work in the school alongside the teacher, providing valuable support for teaching and learning activities

" UNISON has raised this issue as a matter of urgency with WAMG and is demanding stronger directions to schools regarding cover supervision ".

the higher level of pay is only applied for the hours a Teaching assistant (TA) or a High Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) provides a whole class work. Of the 198 schools taking part in the survey as many as 50% say they are using this practice. Whilst some schools are giving their HLTAs sufficient time for preparation and liaising with teachers quite a number of teaching assistants in HLTA roles do much of the necessary planning, preparing resources and writing reports in unpaid time. In fact, the report shows that unpaid overtime is a reality for more than two thirds of support staff just to get the job done.

UNISON has raised this issue as a matter of urgency with WAMG and is demanding stronger directions to schools regarding cover supervision. The other issues regarding contracts and hours are raised in the Support Staff Working Group which is working towards a new

national contract for school support staff.



Education Convenors Report - Lynne Ahmad

Continued Professional Development: opportunities for school support staff.

I attended the half day event on 13th November at the Teachers Centre. There were very few support staff at the event, I was only aware of the event through a copy of the 'gold bulletin for Head teachers'. How was the event publicised at your school? How could it be improved?

Ofstead

'Reforming and Developing the school workforce 2007', recommends that schools provide relevant training, performance management, and professional and career development for the wider workforce'. Is this happening? Carolyn Rogers stressed that "staff CPD must be justified by the school development plan" and "funds are limited and it is not known how long they will be available".

There was no discussion about pay and grading should support staff attain qualifications and the recommendation is that it is decided locally!

UNISON, the UK's largest public sector union, wants head teachers to end the exploitation of school support staff after

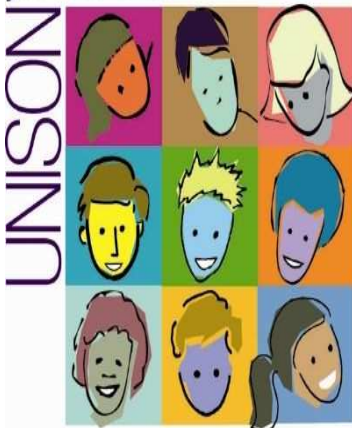
official government figures reveal low pay and unpaid overtime is becoming the norm.

Age of Transfer to High Schools

At the Education Consultative Forum it was stated that age of transfer was not linked to amalgamation of schools and that school governors would decide on amalgamation. However it would result in some smaller schools moving to amalgamation as they would not be sustainable with smaller numbers. It was decided at Cabinet to implement a change in the age of transfer from 12 to 11. This has implications for the level of staffing currently working in year 7, in middle schools and to the capacity issues for High schools who have already absorbed the new sixth form provision.

If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact me at the Branch Office or via email: info@harrow-unison.org.uk

your friend at work



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how does it affect
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What are your
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Negotiating Body for School Staff

On 26th September 2007 the Minister for Schools Jim Knight announced that a new negotiation Body for school support staff will be in place in England by September 2008. It will develop a national pay and grading structure for schools staff which reflects the key roles they play across all schools.

UNISON welcomed this announcement because we have campaigned long and hard for fair pay and recognition for our members in schools.

The joint working group have already identified areas of work that will need to be developed;

- Standardised job descriptions reflecting different roles and levels of responsibilities in schools with pay levels.
- A common contract with core terms and conditions.
- A national framework for training and career progression.
- A fair and transparent way of determining pay needs to be developed. National role profiles would be given a range of pay levels depending on responsibilities skills etc. Salaries in schools could then be determined by a matching process.

(Source UNISON Autumn 2007)

Your Comments!

School Nurses

‘What’s happening to the school nurses that are currently working within Harrow Schools?’ **UNISON is concerned over this issue. School Nurses are a an important support for staff who have to assist pupils with medical procedures. If this support is withdrawn it will leave staff vulnerable. Not only are school support staff expected to be Teachers**

but now seem to be expected to be Nurses Too! Harrow UNISON is interested to know what professional medical support is provided to your school and what responsibilities you are expected to undertake.

HT Gold Bulletin

‘Information that is intended for support staff is not getting passed on’ **The weekly bulletin for HT’s is available on www.lgfl.net**

BRANCH NEWS Lynne Ahmad Education Convenor

CON'D FROM PAGE 1

SCHOOL VISITS

I have written to all Headteachers to request a time to visit and speak to support staff. I have already been welcomed into several settings.

Workplace Reps

There are seventy Education settings with the Borough and there were only four workplace representatives when I first took up the post of Convenor. I have managed to more than double that number but Harrow need many more. It is

important to have a representative in each workplace. The Branch needs you to keep us informed of what’s happening in your workplace, so that we can be proactive in helping you.

Amalgamation

There are 53 mainstream primary schools (following the amalgamation of Cedars First and Cedars Middle Schools to form Cedars Manor School in September 2007.) The process of consultation for amalgamation has not been an easy one for First and Middle schools. It has caused distress to parents, children and staff. UNISON has highlighted these problems to the Borough.

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**Harrow Unison Network
Education Edition**

Central Depot, Forward Drive
Harrow, Middlesex
HA3 8NT

Phone: 020 8424 1795
Fax: 0208 8424 1835
E-mail: info@harrow-

WOW!

**Harrow UNISON member-
ship in schools is continuing
to grow.**

**If you are already a member,
get involved and become the
union rep for your school.
If not then join the largest**



Dates For Your Diary

Women's Conference: 14-16 February 2008 at Harrogate

Harrow UNISON AGM: 25th March 7-9pm at the Civic Centre, Council Chambers.

Regional Support Staff Conference 5th March 2008 at Euston



Last years Conference

For more information about the above events please contact the Branch Office.