

REPORT OF THE ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE

TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 5TH MARCH, 2008

The NUT is the largest teachers' union in Gloucestershire representing members employed in all sectors of the education service. Local officers, together with the team in Regional Office, provide unrivalled support for members in what seem to be ever more stressful working conditions.

The pressure on schools and teachers from the government's target led agenda continues to mount, leading to increasing numbers of teachers in their 50's seeking to 'step-down', fewer younger teachers staying in the profession and increasing numbers of members suffering with stress-related ailments.

The employment prospects in the county for younger teachers are not looking good. For many years pupil numbers have been falling by around 1000 per year. This leads to disruption, unrest and uncertainty in those areas worst affected. In the past 10 years around 300 teaching posts have been lost in the county; equivalent to the closure of 6 medium-sized secondary schools. There has been an annual round of redundancies and, occasionally, schools have been closed or amalgamated. Last year was no different.

In the past, forced redundancies have been mostly avoided with many teachers in their mid- to late-50s gratefully accepting early retirement packages. However, with so many redundancies, the cost of that policy has become unsustainable for the Authority. For instance, an early retirement package for a 55-year old teacher on UPS3 with over 30 years service can cost the Authority around £150,000. As a consequence, redundancies through severance have increased while job and promotion opportunities for younger teachers have diminished. Last year there were a worrying number of forced redundancies of younger teachers. In an attempt to reduce the severance costs of redundancy, a redeployment procedure has become County policy. However, it cannot be imposed upon schools because the appointment of staff is the responsibility of school governing bodies and those schools appointing staff generally prefer to advertise and make competitive appointments. To date, no way has been found of overcoming this obstacle.

Against the background of reducing numbers of teachers in the county, the Union's membership has grown. This is due in part to previously non-unionised teachers seeing the need to be in a union as they feel more vulnerable to parental complaints, poorer pupil behaviour, increasingly judgemental and intrusive management methods, and diminished job security. However, that does not explain why so many choose the NUT.

The pressure being placed upon local lay officers of all unions to provide their members with support and other professional services has never been higher. Anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers are joining to the NUT because it is seen as active and effective at providing support when it is needed. Conversely, we have lost in-service members in schools where there is either no NUT representative (or an ineffective one) and there is an effective representative of another union. The importance of a good school representative in recruiting and retaining members cannot be overstated.

Thanks are owed to the Officers of this Association for all the work they do, and the time they give, on behalf of the members of the NUT in Gloucestershire. This report can only summarise what they have done over the last year.

Flooding, July 2007

This was a major disaster causing severe disruption and damage to the County. At its worst moments, close to half the County was without tap water. The areas where large costs have been incurred are:

- Care of vulnerable people
- Damage to buildings
- Damage to roads
- Retained fire-fighter costs
- Waste disposal (furniture)
- Distribution of bottled water
- Temporary toilet facilities
- Accommodation for staff from support agencies

While financial support was available to the County from a number of sources, the County's will have to find the money to meet major parts of the cost.

Impact of the floods on schools.

The local authority reported that 53 schools were affected. The closure of Shire Hall for two weeks had a major impact upon communications.

Approximately 490 children had to be re-located because their homes were uninhabitable. Many others faced daily disruption to their lives with the road network being severely affected in some parts of the county affecting normal movement (such as school buses) around the county.

The Authority had concerns about the affect of the floods and subsequent disruption upon pupil behaviour. Some children were traumatised when their homes flooded.

PAY CAMPAIGN

The Association has fully supported the decision of Annual Conference and the National Executive to mount a campaign over teachers' pay. Consideration has been given locally as to how best to support that campaign.

- Debates with colleagues in other unions have been encouraged;
- School representatives have organised petitions in school staff rooms;
- Colleagues in other unions have been encouraged to feedback through their associations to their own national executives and officers;
- The pay campaign is the dominant feature on the home page of the Association's website;
- The pay campaign has featured prominently in every edition of the Gloucestershire Teacher since last summer;
- Two batches of post cards are being sent to every in-service member reminding them to vote and calling upon them to vote 'Yes';
- Their have been press releases to local media which have elicited a positive response;
- Members have been encouraged to write to their MPs using the wizard on www.teachers.org.uk;
- Three local association general meetings have been held since September with the pay campaign as the main issue on the agenda. Sadly, all three have been inquorate.

MARLING SCHOOL, INDUSTRIAL ACTION

After many meetings with the head teacher over a period of 6 months it became clear there was no willingness on the part of the Head and key members of the governing body to resolve the

problems created by the non-allocation of TLRs to 14 middle managers. 11 were members of the NUT facing significant cuts in pay. A ballot was held and a day's strike took place in the summer. There followed a further series of meetings with the Head and Governors. We finally extracted the signed agreement from the Chair of Governors in October.

Sadly, it has become evident the Head and Governing Body have not been honouring the agreement and further action may become necessary.

LAKERS SCHOOL, INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Members at the school were balloted in July 2007 and voted to refuse to teach or otherwise supervise a violent pupil who had been readmitted to the school by Governors after being permanently excluded by the head teacher. The issue has still not been resolved.

PRESS AND PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS

A number of press campaigns were launched during the year. The most recent has been the important pay campaign calling for a YES vote in the national ballot which has attracted local press interest on regional T.V. and radio as well as print media. This is ongoing at the time of writing and so far the coverage has been sympathetic and positive.

Less successful was an attempt in mid 2007 to warn of the logistical problems of the 14-19 vocational pathways which require secondary schools to offer access to a number of diplomas. The media preferred in that instance to accept the view of the local authority that everything was under control but months later it is clear that there are still problems in arranging for students to go out of their schools for part of the week to attend courses elsewhere. Even students remaining in school will be affected by timetable changes caused by the need to free certain days for vocational studies. This may mean double or triple periods in some cases. There are also unanswered questions about transport, registration and other arrangements for the vocational students.

There was some T.V. and newspaper coverage of the news that Gloucestershire has the highest number of exclusions for verbal and physical assaults by pupils on teachers in the region with interviews given by the Press Secretary and Divisional Secretary.

Significant coverage was obtained relating to the delegation sent to Conference in Easter 2007.

Contact was made with local MPs on several subjects including the Academies programme. In February we canvassed local MPs to support an Early Day Motion in favour of the teachers pay campaign and at the time of writing two local MPs (Martin Horwood and David Drew) have signed in support of this motion.

CASEWORK

In the last twelve months casework has continued to be the principal activity of the Divisional Secretary's work. It is no exaggeration to say it has become a full-time job. Throughout the year

there have been 25 to 30 “active” cases running at any moment in time. Many of the cases are stress-related and complex to resolve. Conduct cases leading to disciplinary hearings are extremely time-consuming. Phone calls made (not received), relating to casework, have been logged. In January and February there were 213.

The pattern of the work remains much the same, year-on-year. Below is a list of headings under which cases have been classified for ease of reporting (excluding redundancies which are being reported upon separately). A number of these cases have continued over more than a year.

Capability 5
 Conduct 9
 Contract issues 3
 Grievances 13
 Long-term sick leave 8
 Parent allegations/harassment 2
 Pupil allegations 4
 Reorganisation of Early Years Centres into Children’s Centres 5
 Reorganisation of the Reintegration Service 2
 Salary appeals 8
 Work-related stress 10

There have also been long-running **collective grievances** at:-

- Cam House Special School
- Gloucestershire Reintegration Service
- Haresfield school
- Marling school
- Westbury-on-Severn Primary School
- Whaddon Primary School

REDUNDANCIES

A total of 26 f.t.e. teaching posts were made redundant effective 31st August 2007. All were due to pupil numbers falling. This is considerably fewer than the previous year. In 2006 there were 43.3 f.t.e teaching posts lost, predominantly from primary schools whereas, in 2007, 26 teaching posts were lost with the impact falling more heavily upon secondary schools.

School	f.t.e. posts
Brockworth Enterprise	3.0
Cam House	1.0
Churchdown Parton Manor Infant School	2.0
Drybrook School	1.0
Gardners Lane Primary	1.0
Heywood School	5.0
Maidenhill School	2.0
Pittville	6.0
Sir William Romney's	3.0
Twigworth	2.0

Another feature of the redundancies in 2007 was the removal of added years enhancements for early retirement. The county will now only make up the actuarial reduction for the individual affected. This resulted in fewer volunteers and more forced redundancies of younger teachers, including NQTs.

This year so far, the situation looks as though it will be worse than last year with 19.2 f.t.e posts already identified to be cut from 31st August 2008.

School	f.t.e. posts
Ampney Crucis CE School	1.0
Churchdown Parton Manor Junior School	1.0
Innsworth Junior School	1.5
Offa's Mead Primary School	1.0
Primrose Hill School	0.7
Yorkley Primary School	1.0
Heywood Community School	2.5
Cheltenham Kingsmead School	?
Brockworth Enterprise School	8.0
Watermoor School	1.0
Andoversford School	3.0

PAY POLICY

A working Pay Policy was developed and adopted in conjunction with two local secondary schools. It was placed on the Association's website and recommended to school representatives for adoption in their own schools.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Divisional Secretary and John Pemberthy attended the training day on Performance Management provided by the Local Authority for Head teachers.

Following that training, the two officers worked together on developing a Model Performance Management Policy consistent with both NUT and Local Authority guidance to schools. The model policy was adopted at their own schools where it has been used successfully.

A powerpoint presentation was prepared for general use and the model policy was circulated to School Representatives and placed on the Association's website from where it can be downloaded.

UNION LEARNING

Firstly, we are pleased to reflect on the very satisfactory situation regarding the training and deployment of three fully operational union learning representatives in the Association. The membership can rely on the availability of learning support, both professional and personal throughout the Gloucestershire area. We welcome Mr. Mike Davis, Stroud District Secretary as our third trained ULR.

Disseminating information about Union training and professional development courses plays an obvious part in our work and encouraging members to be active in lifelong learning gives us much satisfaction.

Advising teachers about appropriate courses and sources of funding is probably where our skills are most tested. Workload issues often mean that members are very often not able to exploit learning opportunities but are still grateful for the individual attention afforded to them in their decision making and their search for access to suitable course and venues suitable to their specific learning needs.

Our links to the General Teaching Council's Teacher Learning Academy (TLA) continue to develop. Our membership can now directly benefit from having a trained verifier for the TLA in their association. Any serving teacher member wishing to plan classroom based research can now receive first hand support in their learning journey and national recognition for their research across a four stage programme suitable for the needs of an NQT through to an aspiring headteacher and beyond.

Our members then can access learning support from trained officials able to help with a pamphlet to a Ph.D.

SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES TRAINING

11 School Representatives attended a day of training in February. It was held at the Hucclecote Training Centre and led by the Divisional Secretary ably assisted the Regional Secretary, Andy Woolley and the Regional Casework Officer, Jan Lockwood.

Items covered included the Pay Campaign, Burgundy book issues, the Role of the School Representative, the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and Performance Management.

MEMBERSHIP

The association continues to experience a small net growth in in-service membership.

The effects of the very competitive recruitment environment for newly qualified teachers are hard to measure. The figures do not give much evidence one way or the other and there are always so many variables that only a two or even three year trend will tell a meaningful story.

The number of members on fixed-term contracts is down and numbers paying by direct-debit are up. These two trends should help to stabilise membership.

New members are sent letters of welcome and some union materials. Contacting lapsed members is an on-going process.

The association was active at induction events at local colleges and had a large presence at the local authority's gathering of new teachers to the county.

Our optimism, following discussions with Membership Department officials at Conference, that developments in 'Hearth' would take the place of maintaining the membership database, proved premature. Therefore, membership updates continue to be sent to District Secretaries.

Welcome function for NQTs

A joint unions/Local Authority welcome function was held in October. Approximately 90 newly qualified teachers attended. The event was held at Hucclecote as an after-school event. NQTs were given Union mugs and invited to enter a free raffle for 6 bottles of wine.

On December 14th Bill Hicks and the Divisional Secretary visited Linden Primary School and presented Caroline Hatton with 6 bottles of white wine. A photograph of the event was placed the Gloucestershire Teacher.

Student recruitment at the University of Gloucestershire

There were three recruitment sessions at the Francis Close Hall campus:

3rd September – 130 Primary PGCE students

10th September – 200 Secondary PGCE students

18th September – 160 B. Ed. students.

Thanks to Colin O'Hare, Claire Price and Wendy Hollingworth for all their help.

A TRIBUTE TO FRANK STEPHENSON

Frank Stephenson, one of the founder members of the Gloucestershire Division and its first Divisional Secretary, died in the Autumn. His pioneering work with the LA is still benefiting Gloucestershire teachers.

Executive Committee Life Member John Passey coined an apt epitaph "he lived for the rising generation". The Association made a donation of £100 to the nominated charity, Save the Children, in Frank's memory.

REPRESENTATION WORK OF THE ASSOCIATION

The Gloucestershire Association is a Single Association Division and represents NUT members on the following bodies:

1. Children and Young People's Directorate Joint Consultative Forum (CYPDJCF) – the County Council's consultative and negotiating body with unions having members employed in the Education Sector. The NUT has two representatives on this body – the Divisional Secretary, Andy Johnson, and the Assistant Divisional Secretary, Cathy Canham.
2. Commissioning Children's Centres – The Assistant Divisional Secretary (Representation) has represented all the teaching unions on the Commissioning Team.
3. Workforce Remodelling Monitoring Group – the NUT has one representative, the Divisional Secretary.
4. Local Authority Children and Young Peoples Directorate Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) Panel – the Association's Health and Safety Adviser, Colin O'Hare, represents the NUT.
5. County Council SHE Panel - the Association's Health and Safety Adviser, Colin O'Hare, represents the NUT.
6. Learning and Skills Council consultative group – the NUT has two representatives, the Further and Higher Education Secretary, Ian Hartnell and the Divisional Secretary.
7. Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE) – The NUT has one representative, Alice Davies-Godsell;
8. The Gloucestershire Public Service Alliance - an alliance of public sector unions, Garry Wheeler is the NUT representative;
9. Equality South West – the Division has one representative, Pearl Harris-Clarke
10. South West TUC Pensioners Advisory Committee – the Division has one representative, Pearl Harris-Clarke who is the Chair of the Committee.
11. South West Federation – the Division is entitled to 4 representatives, the Divisional Secretary plus three others.

Members of the Association have also served on national bodies:

- ❖ John Pemberthy has served as one of the two South West Region representatives on the Faith Schools' National Task Group;
- ❖ Claire Price, our County Teacher Support Network Organiser, is a member of the TSN National Council and a trustee of the TSN;
- ❖ Pearl Harris-Clarke has served on the Retired Teachers' National Advisory committee.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DIRECTORATE
JOINT CONSULTATIVE FORUM, CYPDJCF

This body includes County Council Cabinet members, representatives Human Resources and all the recognised unions and is usually chaired by the Group Director of the Children and Young People's Services, Jo Davidson.

Issues discussed at the CYPDJCF since March 2007 are summarised below (in no particular order).

Teachers' Pensions statements

Erroneous statements have been issued to members from the Teachers' Pensions Agency. The Local Authority reiterated its statement that it has the situation under control and that improvements could be expected when computer systems are better synchronised.

New Schools:-

A 420-place primary school in Quedgely has been agreed and should open September 2009. The Authority is also initiating consultation over a 420-place primary school in Cooper's Edge.

GUS:- Gloucestershire Unified System has become a source of irritation and much frustration. Staff are now having to access their payslips on selected computers in their designated place of work. This has raised all sorts of issues over staff payslips:-

- Training for staff in using the system has been patchy and inadequate;
- There are concerns over privacy – screens can be seen by other staff;
- Why is it not possible for people to access their pay details from home similarly to banking online?
- There have been a number of reports of staff being paid incorrectly;
- It is impossible for supply teachers to tally their claims for hours worked against their payslips;
- There is no facility for staff to claim for working on Saturdays and Sundays;
- Access to the website is limited to selected terminals in places of work. This is causing major problems for staff wishing to access their payslips outside of working hours and for peripatetic staff.
- There are anxieties over security of information such as NI numbers, bank account details. This has been exacerbated by staff having their passwords changed by the GUS team leaving them temporarily unable to access the system.
- Staff are experiencing problems providing payslips when applying for mortgages;
- What would happen in the event of a member of staff dying in service - how would the executor(s) access their pay details?
- Staff have not been given the option of retaining the old paper payslip;
- there has been no attempt to pilot the scheme - should it not have been run alongside the old system for providing payslips while these problems were being sorted out?

All these points have been put to the Directorate. We await a response.

School Term dates for 2009/10

Common Assessment Framework

Feedback from schools is not positive. The CAF forms can take up to 17 hours to complete for each pupil and then the support identified is not forthcoming.

Early Years and Children's Centres

Staff employed in those Early Years Centres chosen to become Children's Centres are to be put through an allocation process. Many of the centres are to be 'clustered' under one manager which has led to high levels of staff anxiety and the fear of redundancy. Many Early Years Centre managers are on teacher's contracts. Children's Centre managers will not be.

Clawback

The Government intends to take further action on unused school balances, to follow up the clawback mechanism for excessive balances introduced earlier this year. Their aim is to reduce the £1.6 billion currently in school balances substantially and use the money to support the education of today's children. The Authority informed us that Gloucestershire's schools have about £25 million of balances sitting in bank accounts. Schools will be required to justify any surplus balances – there may be sound reasons for them, such as saving for capital expenditure. However, as a minimum the Authority will be required to redistribute a small percentage (5%) of all surplus school balances through the funding formula.

Having discussed this at some length, and gained our agreement in principle, we were later informed the government had yielded to lobby pressure from some schools and parents and decided to shelve this initiative.

Fixed Term Contracts. I have tabled the Dorset Model Policy passed to us by Regional Office as an example of good practice for consideration for adoption by the Gloucestershire Authority. John Davies of Human Resources is going through the document and will find out from schools if there is a demand there for a policy.

Human Resources reorganisation. Sue Scrivens (HR, Head of Service) gave reassurances that expertise of individual staff regarding teachers' conditions of service will not be lost.

Academy – Christ's College Cheltenham (ex Kingsmead and St. Benedict's). The partners are Catholic and C of E dioceses, Ullenwood (Star College), University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham Ladies College and Pates Grammar School. The intake will be 35% Catholic, 35% C of E and 30% Local Children. The Local Authority is the client. There will be a project group, perhaps chaired by Bishop of Gloucester. Unions have been assured they will be recognised by the Governing Body and that pay and conditions will be as per the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

Cheltenham Kingsmead School is now out of special measures. From January AFECTO (?) will provide leadership for the School. Mark Davies (current head teacher) is off to be an Executive Head in Bristol.

Review of procedures: A working party is to be convened by Human Resources to review the Authority's performance management and absence procedures. To quote the document presented by HR:

There is a perception by managers that the current procedures and guidelines fail to meet their needs in managing absence and tackling under performance. Current procedures are not considered user friendly and therefore do not support managers in tackling key issues. In some parts of the council, core guidance does not exist and different procedures are currently used for different staff groups.

The intention is that the procedures for all staff groups (including those used within schools.....) are included in the review, unless the scoping and research identifies otherwise.

1. Absence Management: review of management guidelines for dealing with sickness absence, including consideration of whether this procedure should stand alone from the capability procedure. Consideration to be given to links with the absence procedures and training associated with the introduction of GUS;

2. Disciplinary (conduct): review of the current procedures and accompanying guidance;
3. Capability – performance: review of the current procedures and accompanying guidance;
4. Grievance: review of the current procedures and accompanying guidance.

The Divisional Secretary concurred with the view that the current procedures are less than helpful and asked to be included on the working party. Supporting members through the above procedures is a major part of his work and it's in everyone's interest for the procedures to be workable.

LA policies on Redundancy, Redeployment and Early Retirement

Most of the cost of early retirements and redundancies are in the school sector (a function of falling rolls). In the face of spiralling costs the Authority has felt it necessary to impose 'business discipline' upon schools and require them to burden part of the costs.

The Authority will

- continue to protect redundant staff taking a retirement package from actuarial reduction;
- encourage schemes such as 'phased retirements' and 'stepping down'.

The advice being offered by HR on the evidence used to apply the selection matrix will be to include successful teaching practices for NQTs and to place no time limit on experience. Relevant CPD will be from the last three years, and qualifications should include 2nd subjects.

Advice on seeking alternatives to redundancy will be brought up to date and reinforced. Schools will be reminded of the redeployment scheme.

The Authority continues to claim that the redeployment policy will be pursued vigorously to avoid redundancies. However, the Union remains unconvinced. There is not sufficient incentive being provided by the Authority for schools recruiting staff to accept staff from schools where there is a risk of redundancy.

Closure of Cheltenham Kingsmead School

The current favoured option being considered by the Authority is to close the school on 31st August 2009. There will be no intake of Y7 pupils; on 1st September 2009 the current Y7s will be entering Y11 and will have been taught on site for the duration. The Y11 pupils will complete their education on the Kingsmead site but will be on the register of a partner school.

A new Academy, Christ's College, to be opened on the Cheltenham Kingsmead site 1st September 2011. The Academy in Cheltenham will replace Cheltenham Kingsmead and St. Benedict's RC School (soon to be Christ's College) and will be jointly sponsored by the C of E and the RC Church with the Governing Body including representation from the Local Authority and the University of Gloucestershire.. Pupil admissions will be on the basis of 35% RC, 35% C of E and 30% other for the local community. The Secretary advised the Exec. Committee that apart from opposition to the Academy, the first step for the Union must be to seek recognition from the new Governing Body and acquire collective bargaining rights in order to protect the pay and conditions of members working in the school.

A new primary school at Kingsway, in the south of Gloucester City, is to be opened in September 2008. It will eventually be for 420 pupils but initially it will open with 1 form of entry.

Reintegration Service Reorganisation

Reorganisation into a regional service continued through the year. The Union was actively involved in the process supporting and representing members through all the levels of the allocation process.

FAITH SCHOOL'S NATIONAL TASK GROUP

This task group has met a large number of times in London and has now fulfilled its mandate to convene a consultative conference and produce a report for national conference on faith schools. We have considered much evidence on the relative success of faith schools and the extent to which this affects neighbouring schools. The union is seeking to renew policy based on the outcomes of the task group which has taken evidence from invited representatives of the Faith community and secular groups.

Historically, the NUT position is that every school should be equally able to offer access to a good education for every child regardless of their background or ability. The best place for this is the comprehensive system. On the other hand, in rural areas existing faith schools are often the only school and therefore are effectively the same as state schools. In urban areas, there is some evidence that they succeed at the expense of other local schools. Many of the teaching staff at Faith Schools are NUT members. The NUT continues to oppose strongly the new class of Academy and Trust school including those sponsored by Faith groups. The consensus view of the task group was that there should be a gradual convergence of all state schools using reasonable accommodation to satisfy all stakeholders. The report to conference will be tabled and debated at Manchester this Easter.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

There has been little in the way of casework but the Adviser received regular enquiries from members asking for advice on issues such as risk assessment, minibus driving, asbestos and heating standards.

The Health and Safety Adviser represents the NUT on the County's CYPD Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) Panel, which meets four times a year at Shire Hall. He is Vice Chairman of the Committee and the leader of the employees' side. The Committee provides a forum for the Professional Associations to meet the employers to discuss matters of current concern and to review long-term issues. Current concerns are traffic on school sites and dangerous weapons. A high profile case stimulated much discussion on hygiene standards in school swimming pools.

The Health and Safety Adviser is also a member of the County Council's SHE Panel. This group, consisting of trade union representatives, County Councillors and senior managers of the Authority also meets four times a year. The Panel are about to receive training on Corporate Manslaughter

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Association was represented at Conference by Geoff Davies, Andy Johnson, Ian Morgan, John Pemberthy, Dave Sutherland and Garry Wheeler.

SOUTH WEST FEDERATION

The Union sent delegates to the May and November meetings of South West Federation.

Coda:- 4 General Meetings have been called; 5 Association Executive meetings; 4 editions of the Gloucestershire Teacher have been published. Thanks to all who made them possible.