



# National Education Union Bradford

## 2021 Summer Newsletter

**Bradford**

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## Into the Summer Term

Congratulations on making it this far through the pandemic! Some of us are a bit more battle-scarred and wearier with a focus on surviving this term to get to a summer break. Others are delighted to have children back in classes and a touch of normality returning, despite the constant need for vigilance and the reminders "Hands, Face, Space". We are getting used to testing regimes and adjusting as we follow the road map to recovery. Rumours of catch-up classes for students over the summer will not have filled us with joy and we continue to be very concerned about workload. There is a special focus from the union this term on trying to ensure that the workload is manageable with a downloadable toolkit to look at Directed Time and plan for a great and successful 2021-2022 academic year. Let's spare a thought too for those in our schools who have put in extra effort to support us, the cleaners and caretakers, the IT team and the SLT who have had to adapt timetables and ways of working to keep the doors open. To those who are observing Ramadan, we offer you our encouragement and praise. Ramadan Mubarak and look forward to celebrating Eid soon. We hope that this term you will find strength, courage and light in the darkness. Let us all make plans that give us hope and look forward.

### Conference 2021: Brief Highlights

Just under a thousand delegates were online for the conference between the 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> April. Around 20 motions were debated reflecting the diversity of our membership sections and interests with some passionate speeches calling on the union to support our members on the issues that matter to us all. There were emergency debates on the police bill and on Violence against women as well as the published agenda. Denis White and Stuart Irving contributed to the debates on behalf of Bradford. The speech by the President Robin Bevan is well worth a watch. For a more detailed account, please attend our general meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> May. Next year's conference will be in Bournemouth!

### Next Meeting

**Tuesday the  
18<sup>th</sup> May via Zoom.  
From 5pm to 6pm.**

Other future meetings:  
29<sup>th</sup> June'20



### Bradford District AGM

The 2021 AGM will take place on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> May from 5pm to 6pm via Zoom. This is the meeting where we confirm the committee for the coming year and gives Bradford's members the opportunity to hear about the work that is being done on your behalf and to have your say on the direction that the Bradford District takes over the coming year. We will not have a guest speaker this year but would welcome suggestions on how to develop the meetings for the months ahead.

### NEU Advice Line

open Mon-Fri 9am-7pm.

Tel: 0345 811 8111

Or click on the link below:

<https://neu.org.uk/employment-advice>

### Qualifying this summer? – don't lose out

Membership as a trainee teacher does not automatically convert to membership. We hope you liked NEU and will choose us as your union for your education career. We have a young educator's section with CPD and network events to support NQTs and RQTs as you progress. NQT membership costs £1 for the year. For details visit <https://neu.org.uk/upgrade-now>

## We try to keep schools safe.

We Bradford NEU Officers know just how devastating an impact Covid-19 has had on education. As your Union local officers, we have tried to understand what the risks are of what the Government has done or proposed at each stage of the crisis in relation to schools. It has been important that we don't just assume that we know the answers, because we are not doctors or scientists or epidemiologists. What we do have that is important is a knowledge of how schools work and what the communities are like that they serve.

When we have had a concern over the past year that something risky or irresponsible or dangerous is being done or being proposed, we have tried to deal with it by:

1. Listening to you, our members, first and foremost about your direct experience of what is actually happening in schools
2. Discussing with you and with your School Reps what we can do together to make things safer.
3. Making our case to the public in general.
4. Making our case to parents.
5. Finding ways of getting into dialogue with people who make decisions at different levels that affect what happens in schools – Government, local authorities, academy trusts, schools, things new to us like Public Health, Outbreak Control Boards and so on
6. We have tried to engage with all of these bodies to make schools as safe and as effective as we think that they can be in the circumstances of the time.
7. When these things don't produce the results that we need, we try to organise our members to do things themselves, collectively where possible or individually if necessary, with our support. It might be to insist on a risk assessment where you work, insisting on the right to wear masks, refusing to attend school premises on grounds of safety – as an individual on grounds of personal health, or all together, like handing in Section 44 notices together saying the workplace is not safe and saying that we will work from home.

We have had some successes. The most spectacular one was on the day schools were due to return in full on January 3<sup>rd</sup> when the virus

was raging. Very many members handed in S44 notices and refused to go to work on school premises. That same day the Government had to return schools to the lockdown that they remained in until Easter.

We have had many less high profile but successful initiatives to alleviate risk, mostly working with school leaders (some of the most stressed people in this whole situation). We have kept more clinically vulnerable staff out of school than the Government has intended. We have kept pupil numbers down in some schools through rota systems because they cannot all be accommodated and taught safely. We have stopped some school managements from bringing all staff into school when there is no

good  
reason  
for them  
to be  
there.

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We have  
tried to  
get staff

vaccinated. This not only reduces the risk to those staff, it also brings less virus into school to circulate there in rooms with 30 people in them; it means that fewer staff are off ill so that education is less disrupted.

We helped to make sure that most special school staff were vaccinated – there had been some very bad outbreaks in special schools that we deal with. Good work to get what we perceive to be good sense in delivering vaccination to more teachers is going on in places right now.

We can be proud of what members of our Union and our profession have done in the pandemic. But we all recognise that it is only firefighting. It doesn't save every life that could be saved. It doesn't lift the stress for staff or pupils of working and living in inhumane conditions. And so much of that has been caused by locking down too late, reopening too early, ignoring scientific advice on lots of issues - masks, PPE in general, social distancing, getting extra space to work in when a second lockdown was bound to come, and many other things.

Better learning for all children, better end of course assessments could both have been achieved if laptops had been ordered and

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delivered when they should have been, if competent and sensible people at the top had looked at and prepared for managing remote learning for the length of time that it has had to last.

‘As always in a disaster in this country, it is the poorest and the most disadvantaged who have suffered the most. School staff can see that particularly clearly’.

Schools are not yet completely safe places. Everyone knows that the return itself will drive up the spread of the virus and we are left anxiously looking, in Bradford particularly, at how many cases will be caused by the latest easing of restrictions.

Communities have to do their best to protect themselves and we as the NEU will carry on being a part of that. Have a look at the Coronavirus section on our national website - <https://neu.org.uk/coronavirus> - to see how much work has been done and how much useful material is there.

Ian Murch,  
President, Bradford District NEU

## The National Tutoring Programme (NTP)

In June last year, Boris Johnson announced a £1bn catch-up fund to help pupils in England. The package included £350m for the NTP to help the most disadvantaged pupils, and £650m for schools to help children from all backgrounds catch up.

With the pandemic impacting on at least two academic years thus far, the Government pledged a ‘massive catch-up operation’ to help pupils affected by the lost learning during lock-down.

The plan is the NTP will provide with high-quality, subsidised tuition through carefully selected organisations that work with highly-trained tutors. It is expected these tutors who have all been subject to robust high-quality training and safeguarding checks are able to provide additional capacity to schools to support disadvantaged pupils who have been impacted by disruption to their education.

Studies show there is a substantial attainment gap between students based on their socio-economic background. It is feared that the closure of schools has exacerbated the situation even further. In an effort to tackle these issues, the Government has followed research which shows the positive impact of tutoring to support pupils who have fallen behind. Therefore, participating schools can access subsidised tutoring from approved tuition partners.

However, in more recent times there have been concerns raised about the quality of tutoring being delivered by some of the ‘approved providers’ and whether the scheme is reaching the intended group it was set up for i.e. the most disadvantaged children – for a summary of the National Audit follow [this link:](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/17/schools-covid-catch-up-programme-not-reaching-disadvantaged-pupils?scrllybrkr=bd90dff8)

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Furthermore, concerns are being raised by educational psychologists about the significant pressures being placed on children and their wellbeing with emphasis on the ‘catch-up’ language.

The success of the NTP remains to be seen.

You can find out more about the NTP here <https://nationaltutoring.org.uk/>

## Pay freeze for overworked and undervalued staff in 2021?

Rishi Sunak has announced that most public sector workers will have a pay freeze this year. Many school staff including head teachers and support staff have been in school throughout the current lockdown, supporting vulnerable children and young people. Teachers adapted to working from home, grappling with new technology and delivering online lessons. Yet they will be rewarded with a real-terms pay cut.

A DFE document submitted to the School teachers’ review body, if accepted, would mean that apart from a small number of teachers earning less than £24000 getting a rise of at least £250, teachers’ pay will be frozen from September 21. The NEU together with 3 other unions have issued a joint statement where they demanded a “fully-funded restoration of the real terms pay cuts since 2010”, and called on the STRB to recommend “a significant and undifferentiated pay increase for September 2021”.

We need fair pay for all school staff who as key workers have contributed greatly to the covid response in the past year.

## Public Sector Pensions' Consultation Outcome

**DCU or Deferred Choice Underpin** is an acronym that doesn't immediately set the pulse racing but Steve Barclay, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, must have trembled a little when he confirmed, in February 2021, that this will be applied to Public Sector Pensions, including the Teacher's Pensions Scheme and the LGPS as a result of the pensions' consultation carried out because of the McCloud judgement.

The cost to the Treasury of compensating for the **age discrimination** which occurred with the arrangements for the transition of affected members to their career average pension schemes is reputed to be £17 billion.

**Will you be affected by DCU?** The outcome **only** affects those of you **who were in service on or before 31 March 2012** and have continuous service on or after 1 April 2015, including if you have a qualifying break in service of no more than five years, **and you were moved to the career average scheme in 2015 or later** if you had **tapered** protection.

This means that those of you affected will receive a choice of which pension scheme benefits you would prefer for the period between 2015 and 2022 (known as the remedy period). The choice will be between your legacy (final salary) or career average (reformed) scheme benefits. The choice will be made at the point in time when benefits are put into payment, which for the majority of members will be at retirement. **Until you make your choice, you'll be in the final salary (legacy) scheme for the relevant period.**

The government states that **by deferring the choice** you'll have more certainty over your benefit entitlements when making your decision. This means you'll be able to choose the scheme benefits that are most likely to be best for you.

The response **also** confirms that **the final salary (legacy) scheme will end on 31 March 2022**. Any pension you have built up in the final salary (legacy) scheme up to that date, and the Normal Pension Age at which your benefits can be taken in full, are protected.

It is not clear what impact this will have on the future of public service pension schemes going forward, given that the payment of compensation is an obvious additional cost.

## TPS changes

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (E&W) was due to implement improvements in member benefits from April 2019 following its four-yearly actuarial valuation, but this was paused by the Government until the outcome of the compensation issue was known. As this can now be assessed, the cost control element of the 2016 valuation can now be finalized. HM Treasury will set out the technical detail in directions and the valuation process for 2016 will be completed. Other public sector pension schemes are in a similar position. The NEU and other unions are continuing to press the Government to implement the improvements which were due. Given the Government's undertaking at the time of the 2015 changes that the schemes would not be subject to further political changes for a 25 year period, the NEU will not accept any attempt to worsen the schemes in order to recoup the cost of compensation or for any other reason.

If members have any questions about whether and how the revised arrangements will affect them, get in touch with Bradford NEU on [contact@bradfordneu.org](mailto:contact@bradfordneu.org)

### **Keep your contact details up to date!**

It is important to check that we have the correct contact details for you, such as your school and personal email address. If you go to [www.neu.org.uk](http://www.neu.org.uk) and click 'myNEU' in the top right corner, you can update your details.

**Check out our Bradford District web pages at [www.bradfordneu.org](http://www.bradfordneu.org)**

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