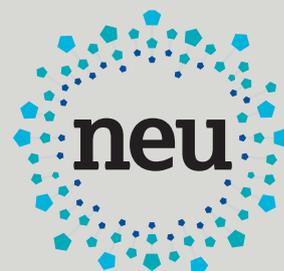


# Reps Bulletin

September 2019



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## Industrial Action Continues

### Teachers' pay 'long-fingered' – so Industrial Action continues!

Agreement was reached in the summer term on a pay deal of 4.25% for all teachers at all grades, including Allowances. This is now subject to a business case proposal from the Department of Education to the Department of Finance.

The pay deal came with a series of nine reviews, some of which would provide savings from elsewhere in the system.

In short, with regret, the teachers' pay claim has been 'diverted' into the inter-party Stormont talks, effectively 'long-fingering' the teachers' pay increase.

We, at NEU, feel this is a "bad faith" stroke by the Department of Education.

We have also learnt that the Chief Inspector of ETI appears intent, at this sensitive time, to issue guidance to inspectors to implement a much more invasive form of inspection designed to break the industrial action.

As such, industrial action on inspections, assessment and "needless tasks" continues.

All NEU teacher members will be issued with fresh industrial action guidance.

We are writing directly to School Principals to advise them that the Agreement, and the funding package to support it, has been diverted or referred to the inter-party talks process at Stormont. This was undertaken unilaterally without reference to NEU or other teachers' unions. The effect of it, as such, is that the 'timeline' for putting into effect the agreement reached has been 'long-fingered' indefinitely. As such, industrial action will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

**Welcome back to the new term!**



# Summary of Draft Pay Settlement

**The deal is for an overall pay settlement of 4.25%, made up of 2.25% for 2017-18 and 2% for 2018-19.**

A settlement of 2.25% on 2017-18 would represent the best public sector settlement in that year. The 2% for 2018-19 would represent the equal best in the public sector, with PSNI. That said, inflation rates for the same period ran ahead of the settlement so it is, at best, only a 'stand-still' pay settlement. If inflation is calculated by the Retail Price Index (RPI) as opposed to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) it's below inflation, but it's the best deal available through negotiation.

The major problem is that someone (we think DE) has now referred the teachers' pay settlement to the inter-party talks at Stormont. Since there's no serious prospect of agreement in the inter-party talks, and given that teachers' pay is hardly a priority area ahead of Brexit, RHI, language acts, historical inquiries, legacy issues and all the rest, it appears that teacher's pay is like "waiting for Godot". The short answer is that with no resolution to payment, **there's no deal, no co-operation with inspections and industrial action continues.** Teachers will be angry, and understandably 'let-down' at this turn of events. They may well be sufficiently angry to wish to ballot for further action, and if so, we'll liaise with other unions on increased action.

There are a range of nine review areas to be undertaken, in part at least, to seek savings to pay teachers a modest increase. That approach has been dumped unilaterally by DE, without discussion or consultation, for the prize of getting a 'lump' from any inter-party deal package. However, the 9 reviews will cover:

- **Accountability Framework (including inspection)**
- **Employment model for Teachers**
- **Temporary and Substitute Teachers**
- **Consultation Arrangements**
- **Workload Agreement**
- **Special Educational Needs**
- **Workload impact on School Leaders**
- **Statutory assessment at Key-stages 1, 2 and 3**
- **Initiatives to promote and support Teacher's Health and Well-Being.**

NEU will nominate representatives to take care of our interests in each and every one of these reviews. The reviews are important. In the review of the Accountability framework, for instance, we have secured a fundamental review of an accountability regime which we've argued for years is 'low-trust' and overwrought. However, we have not agreed as to how this review will be conducted. We say that it should be led by an independent person of educational standing.

In other Review areas, like Key-Stage assessment and the Model for Teacher employment, we can see a 'route-map' to agreement. Some, like the review of consultation arrangements, should be uncontentious. Other areas, like the Review of Substitute Teaching, could be described as contentious.

The Review of the Workload Agreement, and the reviews on SEN workload and Leadership workload will all be really important, gritty, 'nuts and bolts', 'line-by-line' pieces of work. Overall the Teacher Negotiating Committee's agenda will be a full and busy one in the next 18 months – let the work commence.

A big 'win' is the inclusion of a timetabled 10% allocation of PPA (Planning, Preparation & Assessment) within the teacher's "Time Budgets". Achieving 10% of the 1265 contractual hours as protected "teachers' time" is important.

In Assessment, the agreement is that – pending the review – there will be "no change". "No change" means that if you are not co-operating with the current system of assessment, you will continue not co-operating until the review is complete and a new system is agreed. NEU and other teaching unions will work closely with CCEA within the review on a new, acceptable, system of key-stage assessment, most likely based sampling.

**As regards ETI** the nature, type and culture of inspections will be at the heart of the Review of the Accountability Review. It is clear that the 'low-trust' nature of inspections has impacted negatively on teachers and this battle remains 'in play'. We understand that the Chief Inspector has sought senior legal counsel with a view to instructing inspectors to adopt an even more invasive style of inspection. Many inspectors are ill-at-ease with this and could even be in dispute with the Chief Inspector themselves.

The agreement makes clear that there will be no tsunami of inspections, post- industrial action but – to be honest – we'll have to play this one by ear – and respond accordingly.



## Did you know that you are entitled to 'Time Off' as NEU School Rep?

As an 'accredited representative' you are entitled to:

- paid time off for training associated with your role,
- paid time off for union duties, including meetings with members and management to consult, negotiate or represent on any matters relating to terms and conditions of employment
- somewhere in your workplace to display NEU materials (i.e. noticeboard in your staff room)
- use of school/college facilities, such as a photocopier to enable you to share documents with members, email, telephone, etc.

### How much time off?

Time off for union duties is determined within the parameters of "what is reasonable". Provided reasonable notice is given, adequate leave should be granted for exceptional meetings.

### Timetabled periods for Union Business:

Representatives at school level "shall be entitled to leave with pay for union business on the following scale:

- 5-30 members - 1 period per week
- 31-60 members - 2 periods per week
- Over 60 members - 3 periods per week

NEU interprets a period as normally being 40 minutes.

## NEU School Reps Training

NEU Northern Ireland (in partnership with INTO & UTU) also offer a series of training courses each year:

### Induction Course for New School Reps (SR1)

Wed 23 October 2019 9.30-3.30

This is a one-day induction course for all new NEU School representatives and will provide initial training on the role and responsibilities of the rep as well as an update on current issues.

### Induction Course for New Health & Safety Reps (HS1)

Tues 5 November 2019 9.30-3.30

This is a one-day induction course for all new NEU H&S representatives and will provide initial training on the role and responsibilities of the rep as well as an update on current issues.

### School Reps Training x 2 Days (SR2) Date TBC in Spring term

This course is suitable for NEU reps who have completed the induction training for school reps. The 2-day course covers union structures, recruitment, dealing with members' queries and Representation, Negotiation and Casework Skills.

### Health & Safety Rep Training 2 days (HS2)

Date TBC in Spring term

This 2-day course is suitable for NEU H&S Reps who have completed the Induction course. It will cover the role and responsibilities of the H&S Rep, an understanding of health and safety legislation and how this can be interpreted in the workplace.

In Early 2020 we will also be holding sessions on:

### Aspiring School Leaders: Applying for Your First VP or Principal Post

This course will be suitable for all NEU members applying for their first vice-principal or principal post. It will assist you in filling in the application form and interview techniques – date TBC.

### School Leaders Conference

This event will be aimed at NEU Principals, Vice-Principals, Senior Teachers, and Leaders and will be open to NEU, INTO, and UTU school leaders – date TBC

## NEU CPD Opportunities for members & colleagues in your school

**We are keen to build on our training sessions for reps, and to do all we can to provide training for members as well. We are working in partnership with colleagues in INTO and UTU to deliver reps training during the academic year – details to follow.**

NEU Northern Ireland has developed a 'menu' of CPD sessions that can be offered to schools – as NEU members meetings or as part of whole school INSET training. We know that school budgets are being stretched and there may not be any funding available to 'buy in' training – NEU are happy to do all we can to support our member through free CPD.

We have already delivered a range of sessions in a number of schools. The materials are being updated regularly to ensure the information is up to date and is relevant to our members.

We are also exploring ways of working closer with other teaching unions on delivering training to our network of reps and contacts across Northern Ireland.

Interested? email  
Simon.Salter@neu.org.uk



## NEU Northern Ireland 'School Cuts' website



NEU will shortly launch the [www.schoolcuts.org](http://www.schoolcuts.org) site for Northern Ireland, allowing teachers, parents, journalists and other interested parties an overview of school funding cuts as well as the ability to 'drill down' into their own school to assess the damage done at individual school level, as well as systemically.

## Have we got your up-to-date details?

If there are developments with the ongoing pay dispute we may need to conduct an electronic indicative ballot on a pay settlement, with the potential for a full postal ballot if any settlement is rejected.

It is really important that NEU have your current contact details including email address, and current home address to enable you to vote, along with telephone number, and up-to-date employment details.

We also need you, as our NEU Workplace Rep to ensure that we have up-to-date contact details for all members in your school.

We will be sending you a list of members in your school for review – details to follow.

To update your details, please email:  
Alastair.Donaghy@neu.org.uk

## Diary Date

Full Branch Members Meeting  
Wednesday 13 November 2019 6.30pm  
at NEU Office

This is your opportunity to come along and meet your Regional Officials and Senior Branch and District officers to discuss the industrial action campaign and what we can do to assist reps and members



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