

**Strike timeline**  
How your resolve resulted in  
a fully funded pay deal.

**It's all thanks to you**  
Awards for hard-working  
officer and reps.

**A warm welcome**  
Refugee children learning  
Welsh in Anglesey.

# educate**in**wales

Issue 73 Summer term 2023



**CARDIFF  
DEMO**



PHOTOS BY  
ALED LLYWELYN

## SAVE **OUR** SCHOOLS

**THREE-quarters of members in Wales voted to accept an increased pay offer, which will be fully funded by the Welsh Government, after weeks of action that included two strike days across Wales and a huge rally outside the Senedd building in Cardiff Bay.**

All teacher members were consulted via an electronic ballot and of those who responded (61 per cent), 73 per cent voted to accept the offer and end the dispute.

NEU Cymru secretary David Evans said: "This has been a difficult time for everyone in education. Our members do not take decisions to go on strike lightly, but they had to make a

stand given the continuing impact of austerity, cost of living and spiraling inflation.

"We would like to thank all the parents who supported teachers and support staff in the action taken."

**TURN TO PAGES 2 AND 3  
FOR MORE STRIKE NEWS**

## £8m for FE digital learning

THE Welsh Government is to invest an extra £8 million to support digital learning in further education (FE) colleges over the next three years.

Minister for Education Jeremy Miles said the funding would help ensure that the FE sector in Wales was at the leading edge of innovation and creativity, and would give learners the technology and skills they needed to progress into fulfilling work. It takes the total investment in FE digital funding to more than £30m since 2019.

## Heart of the community

SCHOOLS are being supported to become central to their communities, offering their facilities for local use and tackling inequality and absences.

Welsh Government funding of more than £46 million will enable schools to offer community schemes such as food and gardening projects, use of school sports facilities, and outreach programmes – for example, skills classes and parent-and-child reading sessions.

Some of the funding – £6.5m – will be used to employ more education welfare service and family engagement officers to tackle inequality and absence.

Cardiff West Community High School has already benefited from funding to build new, state-of-the-art facilities, which are used by numerous sports groups as well as a Flying Start group supporting families with children under four.

Mr Evans said the union was disappointed that there had been no offer to teaching assistants “but at least the Minister for Education is now acknowledging the workload challenges there”.

He said the NEU national executive would be considering the next steps in the pay campaign for support staff.

NEU joint general secretary Kevin Courtney said that while the deal fell short of the union’s ambitions for pay restitution, members in Wales had made a clear decision to accept the offer and he thanked the Welsh Government for the “constructive” way they had conducted the negotiations.

“We look forward to a productive working relationship to ensure that the rest of the deal, focused on workload, continues to make good progress,” he said.

Mr Evans said talks will continue with the Welsh Government on issues including school funding and workload, in particular the pressures generated by Estyn inspections and the accountability requirements of the four regional school improvement consortia.

## STRIKE TIMELINE

■ **16 January** The NEU ballot closes in Wales. A 92.28 per cent majority vote in support of taking strike action on a turnout of 58.07 per cent. The ballot of support staff in schools in Wales results in an 88.26 per cent majority **Yes** vote on a turnout of 51.30 per cent.

■ **1 February** Members in Wales join national NEU strike action with picket lines outside schools across the country.



## Officer of the year Roxanne Beckles

FIVE years after moving to Wales on something of a whim, Roxanne Beckles has earned the Wales officer of the year award for her enthusiasm and energy as Black educators’ officer in the Vale of Glamorgan.

“It’s such an honour,” she said. “I’m just trying to raise the profile of Black staff and it feels exciting. It feels like I’m in a good place to try and forge ahead.”

Since last autumn, Roxanne has been contacting Black members from Wales and the south west of England to set up a group with whom she shares information about the union and news from the Black organising forum of which she is a member.

She joined the former NUT when she started teaching in London in 2005, becoming active in the union and elected president of the Brent branch.

However, she had her share of “awful heads” and bad management, and at one stage decided she would never teach again.

But after being told she was born to teach, Roxanne went back to the classroom and now works as a supply teacher part-time while also carrying out education work with the charity, Show Racism the Red Card.

And her message to Black NEU members: “Get in touch, I’m here to support people.”



PHOTO by Ben Broomfield





LLANISHEN  
HIGH SCHOOL  
CARDIFF

■ **14 February** A strike in Wales is postponed after the Welsh Government makes an offer.

■ **2 March** Government's offer is rejected by the union. Members are back on the picket lines, and hold a rally of hundreds of members and supporters outside the Senedd.

■ **March 15 & 16** A further two-day strike is suspended after the Welsh Government makes a revised offer. This is put to teacher members in an electronic ballot and they accept it.

## THE DEAL

■ An **additional three per cent** pay award for the current academic year, 2022/23 –

1.5 per cent consolidated and a 1.5 per cent non-consolidated lump sum. This is in addition to the **five per cent** that was initially awarded. This additional award is backdated to September 2022 and is **fully funded** by the Welsh Government.

■ An increased pay rise of **five per cent** from September 2023.

■ A **no-detriment principle** so that should there be a higher pay settlement in England, Wales would match that pay award.

■ Taken over two years for teachers on all spine points, the pay deal is worth **11.8 per cent, plus the 1.5 per cent lump sum** payment.



CARDIFF  
DEMO

## Rep of the year Bethan Jones & Ian Stewart

TWO members share the Wales rep of the year award for their fantastic efforts in giving up their own time to assist the union and their fellow members.

Bethan Jones and Ian Stewart have worked hard at building membership numbers and ensuring a strong union presence at their schools.

As rep at Gladstone Primary in Barry, Vale of Glamorgan, Bethan has recruited many new members, and supports them in the workplace. She became a rep three years ago after attending an NEU course on mental health first aid, on which she spoke at the Welsh conference last year.

She is in the process of helping to set up a support staff rep at Gladstone

Primary, the first in the branch.

Of her award, Bethan said she was "over the moon": "I love my role and all the work I do with the union."

Ian has been a rep for six years at Olchfa School in Swansea where he is proud to have built up the membership to almost 100, the largest in the county. He said: "You support people through some dark times, you're just somebody they can speak to. In those moments I feel I am able to make a difference."

Ian joined the ATL in 2004 and was a rep in Swindon where he worked. After moving to Swansea, he was elected ATL county secretary, and last month was elected joint NEU branch secretary.



PHOTO by Ben Broomfield



## Here to help

AS part of the largest education union in Europe, NEU Cymru can offer members an unrivalled service.

Our professional team is here to provide expertise to our network of workplace representatives and district and branch secretaries.

If you have a problem at work or want to know more about member services, contact:

- your workplace representative
- your branch secretary
- Adviceline
- NEU Cymru office.

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(From left) Eira Owen with teaching colleagues Delyth Gwyn and Alison Edwards

## A warm welcome to Wales for refugees

AT the start of every new term in Anglesey, 16 children from different schools and often different countries join together for their lessons at a centre on the island – and 12 weeks later they will be heading back to their own classrooms fluent in Welsh.

The centre – Canolfan Iaith Moelfre – is one of two on Anglesey attended by newcomers to the area and local children who need a boost to their language skills, where they can become immersed in the language. Eira Owen, one of the teachers at the centre in Moelfre, says children come from all over the world, often refugees fleeing war-torn countries such as Syria. Three youngsters from Ukraine recently stole the teachers' hearts with their enthusiasm as they quickly picked up their new language.

Sofiia, 8, Daylo, 11, and Natalia, 9, had moved to the island after their families had fled Ukraine in the aftermath of the Russian invasion last year. Within a term they were able to express themselves in Welsh, describing where they had come from, family and friends they missed but also how their new language would help them make new friends.

Staff at the language centre invest huge amounts of energy and innovation to make lessons as fun as possible for their young pupils, with singing, movement and gestures an important part of their learning.

"It can be very moving hearing children speaking about what they have left behind but we try and make their experience here as fun as possible," Eira said.

## Learning dates for your diary

### TRAINING FOR REPS

Three-day foundation and advanced reps courses can be attended in one block or modularly over three separate days. We also continue to deliver courses virtually with six, weekly sessions running from 4-6pm for all attendees. Courses have been arranged subject to numbers and Welsh Government guidelines, on the following dates.

#### Foundation courses

17-19 May – three-day course – Bangor

#### Advanced courses

14-16 June – three-day course – Newport

If you're interested in becoming a workplace rep and attending one

of the courses, email [cymru.wales@neu.org.uk](mailto:cymru.wales@neu.org.uk) – reps are legally entitled to attend this training and the NEU will support any rep who has difficulty getting time off work to attend.

### MORE COURSES THROUGH WULF

Courses are also available through the Wales Union Learning Fund (WULF) project and a regularly updated list of topics can be found at [bit.ly/42cae4R](http://bit.ly/42cae4R)

Check your email inbox for information on the latest training opportunities. Like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/neucymrutraining](https://facebook.com/neucymrutraining), follow us on Twitter at [@neucymrutrain](https://twitter.com/neucymrutrain) and visit [neu.org.uk/learning-and-events](http://neu.org.uk/learning-and-events)