

Derby School Strikers speak at Sandwell UNISON AGM

UNISON School Staff members in Derby have been taking strike action against pay cuts of up to 25%! Sandwell UNISON members attending the AGM heard the impact of such huge pay cuts on workers and the subsequent impact on the service provided to children as experienced staff leave.

UNISON members are still fighting these pay cuts and another round of strike action had been announced from 6 March to 13 March.

Members at the AGM called on the Branch to donate £500 to their strike fund, with a further £128 being collected on the night.

UNISON has called upon ACAS to try and resolve this dispute. Parents in Derby have been supportive of UNISON's strikes and demand that Derby City Council resolve the dispute.



Craig Iceton and Jane Daniels, Derby school strikers speaking at the AGM.

UNISON Elections

Elections for national UNISON representatives will take place between 3 April to 20 April. Your Branch has nominated a number of candidates. The 3 candidates we have nominated for the West Midlands seats are listed below and includes Sandwell's Shazziah Rock.

Shazziah Rock for West Mids Low Paid Seat

Rose Brown West Mids Female Seat

Dave Auger West Mids Male Seat

For a full list of candidates supported by please check www.sandwellunison.co.uk

Children's Services Ballot for Strike Action

In November consultative ballot against being TUPE transferred into the Children's Trust 97% of UNISON members voted for a formal strike ballot on a 51% turnout.

In December the Council reluctantly agreed to TUPE transfer staff but with ten pledges, which included guarantees around pensions and continuity of length of service.

During February UNISON ran the formal ballot and although there was a good 90% vote for strike action, the turnout, at just 22%, was insufficient for the union to call strike action.

We will endeavour to negotiate to turn the pledges into reality. We have also requested two additional pledges –

1. A trade union seat on the Trust Board
2. To agree a caseload management system with the trade unions.

If the pledges don't become real we will hold further members meetings.

Plans to let Councils opt out of legal duties to children dropped

The Government has been forced into dropping 'opt out' clauses on some duties to protect children in their Children and Social Work Bill.

"This is really welcome news," commented UNISON national officer Matt Egan.

The 'opt out' clauses would have allowed the Education Secretary to exempt councils from a range of legal duties currently required. Children's Trusts could have received such exemptions, raising fears about the legal standards required to protect children.

UNISON had submitted evidence to the Government and raised concerns directly with civil servants and politicians. UNISON was part of the Together for Children coalition to oppose the original plans. Locally we approached Tom Watson MP who was supportive of UNISON's position.

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