

Strike on 30th November

The Government's new proposals give you £1000s less not £1000s more

The Government remains determined to:

- Make you pay 50% more for your pension;
- Cut its value by 15% by changing the way it is indexed for inflation;
- Cut its value by basing it on your career average rather than your final salary;
- If you are under 50, make you work up to 8 years longer before you can get it.

All these things remain in place after the most recent 'concessions' you may have heard that the Government has made. These concessions amount to only a small proportion of the cost savings the Government is making at our expense.



All of the unions involved in the campaign agree that they are not enough. We are still being expected to pay yet again for the deficit, as we are through the pay freeze and job losses over the next 2 years.

For more details visit :

<http://www.teachers.org.uk/pensions>

Our decision to strike on 30th November is covered by our ballot earlier this year, and the Union is writing to headteachers and other employers giving notice of our action.

We gave a lead in June. Now many more teachers and hundreds of thousands of other public sector workers will be joining us.

What Can You Do on 30th November?

- Take strike action.
- Encourage your work colleagues to strike. Remember almost all the unions representing the school workforce are striking too.
- Attend the Nottingham Strike Rally organised by the TUC (Details below)
- Make sure you know your pension facts. There will be significant media interest. If you are approached to comment you need to know what to say! (Read the facts on the back page of this Newsletter).

See Strike Action FAQs and information about the Strike Hardship Fund on Page 3

PENSIONS JUSTICE

Nottingham 'Pensions Justice' Day of Action 30 November

March from the Forest Recreation Ground to the **Rally** at the **Albert Hall**

The march will assemble at the Forest Recreation Ground from 10:30 a.m. with the march commencing at 11:30 a.m. Further details will be posted on the Midlands TUC website:
www.tuc.org.uk/midlands

5 Term Year Update

Although Nottingham City Council has formally decided to move to the 5 Term Year from 2013 we are still optimistic that this decision can be reversed. Nottingham NUT officers have taken a number of steps towards this end.

1. Teacher's contracts only allow them to move from one post to another on 3 dates each year to fit the current 3 term structure. We raised this with the City Council and their own legal advice, presented to the City's Executive Board, states:

"There are potentially complex employment law implications arising from the proposals which will need to be considered in detail, derived from the Conditions of Service for Schoolteachers in England and Wales...consultation will need to be carried out with the affected parties and trade unions...if terms and conditions cannot be amended by agreement with the trade unions, the City Council will need to consider other options."

Negotiations on this contract are conducted at a national level and as Nottingham is the only local authority that has decided to move to a 5 term year it seems unlikely that the contract will be easily changed. The unions are unlikely to agree at a national or local level.

2. The Report presented to the Council's Executive Board examined the 'Risk Management Issues' of the change in holidays. This was restricted entirely to risks to school property through vandalism etc. Risks to the health of employees, through increased stress etc., was NOT included. We therefore wrote to the City asking for them to provide a Stress Risk Assessment, as required under Health and Safety Legislation. We have since received a very inadequate assessment ignoring many of the potential risks. For example, longer terms without a break may lead to increased levels of employee stress and consequential illness and absence towards the end of those terms. We sent a detailed response to the City on 31st October requesting a revised risk assessment together with the evidence collected to inform the assessment. The City Council have now requested further discussions on the risk assessment.

3. In order to collect our own evidence concerning the potential impact of the 5 term year, we have initiated an online survey which we would like as many members as possible to complete. So far, the responses are overwhelmingly opposed to the changes with many examples of the real hardship that may result from the changes for families where children/partners attend/work at schools outside the City. If you have not already completed the survey you can do so by visiting our website www.nottinghamcitynut.org

4. We have also been surveying our members attitude to possible industrial action should it become necessary, as a last resort, to resist the

changes. So far 72% of our members would be in favour of such action. Industrial action remains an option but we hope the matter can be resolved through negotiation. If you wish to take part in this survey you can do so by visiting our website: www.nottinghamcitynut.org

We will provide further updates on the website as and when we have more news.

Some Good News for Supply Teachers

The new Agency Worker Regulations 2010 came into force on 1st October this year.

These provide additional employment rights for any supply teachers employed by an agency.

Who benefits?

The term 'agency worker' will cover supply teachers who are provided to schools by an 'agency' through an arrangement, whereby they are engaged and paid by the agency and do not become an employee of the school. This is not the same as a teacher who is introduced to a school through an agency, but is then directly employed by the school.

What are the new rights?

From day 1 of the assignment, agency teachers will get the right of **equal access to collective facilities and amenities** such as childcare provision, canteen, etc. They will also have the right to receive information on vacancies. To show a breach of these rights, a claimant would need to show they had been treated less favourably than a directly employed teacher, doing the same type of work at the same school.

After 12 continuous weeks in the **same 'role' with the 'same hirer'**, agency teachers will get the right to the **same 'basic' pay and conditions** as they would have got if they had been directly employed. 'Basic' only covers rates of pay, hours of work, rest breaks and annual leave. Unfortunately it doesn't extend to all other benefits such as pension, occupational sick pay, maternity pay, etc. To show a breach of this right, a claimant needs to show s/he has received less favourable terms in comparison with those s/he 'would' have received if s/he had been employed direct.

The 12 weeks must be continuous although certain breaks only 'pause the clock and don't stop it.' (e.g. school holidays, some sickness absence etc.)

You can find further advice at:

www.nottinghamcitynut.org



Workplace Parking Levy

Nottingham NUT officers are still engaged in negotiations with the City Council about the Workplace Parking Levy

The City's decision to classify schools as 'businesses' means that the cost of the parking levy will fall against the school and may, or may not, be passed on to employees through a charge of some kind.

It is already clear that different schools are likely to make different decisions and individual Governing Bodies will be make the final decision.

The NUT's position is clear. Although we regret the burden that will fall on school budgets as a result of the WPL we do not believe it should be passed on to employees who are facing a long pay freeze, high price inflation, and threatened increases in pension contributions. This was an entirely avoidable situation and the City Council should not have decided to class schools as businesses.

It is already clear that different schools are making different decisions. Some intend to pay the levy and will not pass on charges, some will pass on the full cost and others are looking at variable charging schemes.

The NUT and other unions are writing to all schools to find out what their intentions are.

We intend to use this information to produce a 'green' list of schools who are not passing on the charge. This will be published on our website. We will press other schools to give the same undertaking. Where schools impose a charge on employees we will consult members on potential industrial action to resist the charges in those schools.

Our on-line survey of members so far shows that 78% of our members would consider action if necessary. If you wish to take part in the survey please visit www.nottinghamcitynut.org

Strike Action FAQs

I can't afford to lose a day's pay?

Most teachers will be deducted 1/365th of their annual pay for a day's strike. If the pension proposals go ahead **all** teachers will lose tens of thousands, most will lose over £100,000 and many over £200,000. The proposed 3.2% of salary increase in contributions mean that **EVERY month you would lose the around the same as a day's strike deduction.** (See information about our strike hardship fund below)

I work in a new academy that converted since June.

Can I strike?

Yes. All NUT members who make contributions to the Teachers Pension Scheme can strike regardless of what kind of school they work in.

I didn't vote in the June ballot can I strike? You do not have to have voted in the June ballot as long as you are a member on 30th Nov. Members who voted 'No' can also strike.

What good will striking do?

Throughout the long talks between the unions and Government they have consistently refused to negotiate seriously. They have deliberately refused a valuation of the teachers pension scheme, or to justify the need for the draconian attack on our pensions. They have wilfully misled the public. Our strike action on 30th June generated the first serious media interest and forced ministers to attempt to justify the changes. Without the threat of strikes on 30th Nov we would have made no further progress. Sadly this Government will not listen without the pressure of strike action.

If you have a question that isn't answered above, you can download '**NUT Pensions Campaign Key Facts for NUT Members at**': www.teachers.org.uk/pensions

Strike Hardship Fund

Nottingham City NUT has now established a **strike hardship fund** to support members with genuine and severe financial hardship. If this applies to you please contact: secretary@nottinghamcitynut.org

Some members may be unable to strike. For example:

- Those who are job-shares or part-time and who don't work on 30 Nov;
- Retired teachers;
- Those with other exceptional reasons.

In these cases, please share the burden by making a donation to our Strike Hardship Fund.

Cheques should be sent to Jen Illingworth, Nottingham NUT Treasurer at 17, Park Avenue, Woodthorpe, Nottingham. NG5 4HS made payable to:

"City of Nottingham NUT—Hardship Fund"

Important Pension Facts

VALUATION. Teachers should not agree to pay more, work longer and get less until an independent actuary's valuation proves they need to. Unions negotiated and agreed the changes to pensions that were introduced in 2007. The changes were properly costed - but this Government refuses to do a valuation. Why are they scared of the facts? Probably because if a valuation was done, it would show that Ministers are wrong to claim our pensions are 'unaffordable'. Instead, it would confirm that the cost of pensions is set to fall - just as the Government's own National Audit Office suggests: "The 2007-08 changes are likely to reduce costs to taxpayers of the pension schemes by £67 billion over 50 years"

Teachers have paid £46bn more money into the Pension Scheme than has been paid out. Far from being a burden to the taxpayer, NUT researchers suggest that over the years Teachers Pension Scheme has actually helped to fund Government expenditure. Adjusting for today's prices, they estimate that a staggering £46 billion has been paid into the scheme than has been paid out (since 1923 when our records start).

The Prime Minister's claims in Parliament exaggerate their pensions 'offer' and mislead the public. Ministers gave an example in Parliament that suggested that a teacher would be better off under their proposals. But they were comparing what a teacher would get at 68 under their scheme with what they would get at 60 now. "That teacher retiring at age 60 under the new arrangements would receive a pension of £13,800 - a loss of £5,300 per year compared with £19,100 under the current scheme" (NUT)

They want to raise retirement ages to OVER 68. Most teachers will face an impossible choice - retire 'early' and give up £1000s of hard-earned pension or try to work on in an exhausting school environment until 67 or 68. They might have to work on even longer. The Government wants to raise state pension ages even further than that.

Changing the pension inflation measure from RPI to CPI is just a crude cut - it isn't supported by statisticians. The Government wants to switch to CPI for just one simple reason - it costs less. They can save money at the expense of all those needing to live on pensions and benefits. The only justification Danny Alexander (Chief Secretary to the Treasury) would give for the change was that it was "more appropriate". On the other hand, The Royal Statistical Society says, "We do not feel CPI serves the purpose of being a sufficiently good measure of price inflation as experienced by households."

There's a real pensions scandal in the UK - but cutting teachers' pensions won't solve it. Only one in three private sector workers is now a member of an employer-sponsored pension scheme; in Europe, only Cyprus, Latvia and Estonia have higher levels of pensioner poverty. But the Government aren't cutting public sector pensions to pay for increased state pensions. No, they want a 'race to the bottom' for all of us.

There is enough money in society to have fair pensions for all - that's what we need. A quarter of all tax relief on pensions, over £10bn a year, goes to the richest 1% in the country. These are the same individuals who have seen their bonuses and incomes rocket while the rest of us are told to accept cuts. Teachers and other public-sector workers don't need lectures from a government of millionaires about 'pensions justice'. We will strike to defend our pensions - and strengthen the campaign for fair pensions for all.

Things you can do to help your union:

- ◆ Come to Union meetings and tell us what you think by completing our on-line surveys.
- ◆ Make sure we have an up to date email address for you and that our emails are not being directed to your junk mail!
- ◆ Read the emails we send you.
- ◆ Visit the Nottingham City NUT website regularly.

www.nottinghamcitynut.org

Follow us on  @NottinghamNUT &

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