

Northern Committee Report

An INTO publication

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153rd Annual Congress 2021

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Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

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153rd Annual Congress 2021



Table of Attendance at Northern Committee Meetings

The total number of meetings held was 10

Kevin Daly	Attended	10 meetings
Seamus Hanna	Attended	9 meetings
Dorothy McGinley	Attended	10 meetings
Anmarie Conway	Attended	10 meetings
Marie O'Shea	Attended	10 meetings
Geraldine McGowan	Attended	10 meetings
Noreen Kelly	Attended	10 meetings
Michelle McCrystal	Attended	10 meetings
Caoimhin MacColaim	Attended	10 meetings
Patrick McAllister	Attended	10 meetings
Caroline McCarthy	Attended	10 meetings
John Kelly	Attended	9 meetings
Rachel O'Hare	Attended	10 meetings
Martin Lavery	Attended	10 meetings
Moira O'Kane	Attended	10 meetings
Siobhan McElhinney	Attended	10 meetings
Gerry Murphy	attended	9 meetings
Mark McTaggart	attended	8 meetings
Tommy McGlone	attended	9 meetings
Nuala O'Donnell	attended	10 meetings
Paul Groogan	attended	5 meetings

SECTION: 1

SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Teachers' salaries and conditions of service in Northern Ireland are determined by the Teachers' Negotiating Committee [TNC], between two parties - Management Side and Teachers' Side. Up until February 2021, Management Side consisted of the Education Authority, CCMS, NICIE, Governing Bodies Association (GBA), Comhairle Na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) and the Department of Education (DE).

The Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) is the Teachers' Side of the TNC. NITC consists of the five recognised teachers' unions, INTO, NEU, NAHT, NASUWT and the UTU.

Discussions continued, via Zoom, in relation to the reconstitution of the TNC for 2021. Much of the previous TNC was simply re-established in 2020, however, one new aspect of a Joint Secretaries' Forum was agreed. This new group would effectively replace the Joint Working Parties (JWP). Each side of the new Committee will appoint a Joint Secretary. It is hoped that the Joint Secretaries will meet on a monthly basis to progress the strategic agenda and programme of work of the TNC and to establish sub-groups and working parties, where necessary, to both update and establish new policies and procedures. The Joint Secretaries have a shared responsibility to effectively support the work of the TNC and its sub-committees. It will establish joint working groups and commission research and investigations to serve whatsoever relevant purpose provided there is agreement to do so.

The 'ICTU 2009' mediated agreement for the NITC, continues to provide a basis for the operation of the negotiating arrangements. This agreement between the five constituent unions, provided for a revised NITC Constitution with decision making for the two-year period from April 2009 to April 2011 being on a consensual basis of the five NITC Interests. It was agreed that after April 2011 decision making within the NITC will be on the basis of agreement of four out of five of the teacher unions. In 2021 this agreement of 4/5 remains in place.

ICTU agreement (extract)

Having reflected on the discussions held during the above meeting I propose that the following clauses are adopted by all constituent members of the NITC in a spirit of solidarity and unity so necessary for meeting the challenges ahead in the current economic environment and in conformity with the NITC Constitution:

- 1) *All NITC constituents accept fully that the TNC is the sole negotiating forum for teachers in Northern Ireland.*
- 2) *Section 10 of the NITC Constitution sets out the procedure for constituents wishing to submit claims and as this Constitution has been accepted by all concerned then the agreed procedure MUST be adhered to.*
- 3) *Accepting the above any current industrial action should be suspended. The issue at the centre of this industrial action shall be pursued through the agreed procedures.*
- 4) *On the matter of issues other than terms and conditions of employment for teachers such as policy implications it is recommended that all constituents participate in the Strategic Forum initiative on the basis of the preamble to these clauses.*
- 5) *The inter-trade union transfer of members is being processed by apparently all constituents in contravention of Paragraph 46 of the ICTU Constitution. As this article is designed to promote harmonious relations between unions, I recommend all constituents implement forthwith.*
- 6) *Nothing in the above negates the autonomy of any constituent union to carry out its activities as endorsed by its membership. However, such action should only be engaged in following exhaustion of the procedures as contained in the NITC.*

Negotiating Arrangements 2020/21

INTO is represented at the meetings of the TNC by Gerry Murphy, Northern Secretary and Tommy McGlone, Senior Official. Work undertaken through Joint Working Party subgroups is also carried out during the year and INTO was represented by the relevant official or Northern Committee representatives.

During the past year, monthly meetings of the Joint Working Party (JWP) have been scheduled and have gone ahead since March 2020 via online platforms. While normally these meetings are primarily focused on the management and progression of agreed agenda items and claims, most of the business, since the last Northern Committee report, has been taken up with Covid-19 regulations and the now settled pay negotiations. Substantive work on a number of issues was carried out by NITC but has not been fully progressed to a conclusion through the JWP.

The primary focus of JWP, outside of pay negotiations, was based on a number of issues including:

- NISTR – payment of substitute teachers.
- EA Contracts
- Parental complaints
- TNC Reconstitution /Normalisation of negotiating Machinery through new Joint Secretaries group
- Ending Industrial Action
- Upfront asks/workload, Joint Consultative committees (JCCs) & new initiatives
- Transition group - nine review areas
- Teacher redeployment

Progress was made in some areas most notably the TNC reconstitution through a new Joint Secretaries Forum which had its first meeting via Zoom in November 2020. At this meeting, a programme of work was agreed which has resulted in proposed reviews of four family friendly TNCs and the Teacher Attendance procedure. The Secretaries Forum is attended on behalf of INTO by Gerry Murphy and the initial review groups by Caroline McCarthy and Tommy McGlone.

The group tasked with the Upfront Asks, which as part of the pay negotiations changed to a Transition Group, managed the transition from industrial action short of strike. This group primarily looked at the upfront asks which focused on three areas: Workload (directed time budgets), Joint Consultative Committees (JCCs) & new initiatives. The latter two are in the process of having terms of reference agreed however, the workload aspect particularly Directed Time-Budgets (DTBs) have now been fully agreed and bespoke remote training has been provided by both INTO and management side. A draft pilot scheme has been established to assess the feasibility of JCCs in schools to support positive industrial relations.

Other issues, inter alia, NISTR, Cycle to Work, Teacher Health and Well-being (THAW) and Parental Complaints largely remain ongoing: However, with the reinstatement of Peter Weir as Minister of Education at Stormont, INTO is hopeful of progress especially as NISTR and THAW are included within the nine review areas. NITC remains of the opinion that the parental complaints procedure is unfair.

From INTO's perspective much of the business of the 20/21 year, to this point, has been overshadowed by Covid-19 and, in the early months since conference 2020, the pay award and ending of industrial action short of strike.

A 1% increase was imposed for the 2016/17 year while 2015/16 saw a 0% uplift. This was the backdrop for the 2019/20 pay award which was for the two academic years of 2017/18 and 2018/19. The lack of any uplift to the 15/16 year resulted in the INTO balloting its members in December 2016. This ballot sanctioned further industrial action up to and including strike action which had been progressively escalated.

The Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC), in pursuance of its objective to improve the terms and conditions of its members in schools and colleges in Northern Ireland, submitted a claim a 5% uplift on all pay and allowances, including the leadership scale for the 2019/20 year.

Covid- 19 arrived at schools and the wider society in March 2020 resulting in schools temporarily closing. Many teachers had to quickly adapt to a new reality of teaching remotely from home. Some schools in coordination with Hub-schools remained open for vulnerable children of key workers.

Then in April 2020, in the middle of the covid-19 crisis and after two years of negotiation, the minister of Education, Peter Weir, announced a formal pay award. The formal offer had three different aspects to it and, INTO, after an historic online ballot, accepted the terms of an agreement which resolved the current industrial dispute.

The agreement addressed three key areas.

- Teachers' Pay
- Measures to be progressed urgently (Upfront asks)
- Reviews in nine areas.

Teachers' Pay

In addition to incremental progression within salary scales, which for teachers is payable by contractual entitlement, teacher salary scale points were revised as follows:

With effect from 1 September 2017:

- A 2.25% cost of living pay award were paid to all teachers; and
- Teaching allowances were be increased by 2.25%

With effect from 1 September 2018:

- A further 2% cost of living pay award were paid to all teachers; and
- Teaching allowances were increased by 2%

Both of these uplifts were backdated, and a working example was made available in a joint statement which was sent to all teaching staff via C2K.

Measures to be progressed urgently

This (Upfront asks) TNC group, initially consisted of Tommy McGlone INTO, Justin McCamphill NAS/UWT, Harry Greer NAHT, Eugene O'Neill CCMS, Patricia Cooney EA and Anne McConkey DE. The trade union side was joined later by Jacquie White (UTU) and Mark Langhammer (NEU). The group initially agreed a programme in respect of a number of interim measures regarding workload, new initiatives, industrial relations and inspection which were to be implemented, as soon as possible, from the date of ratification of the agreement. Much of the work was held up by Covid-19 especially in regard to ETI. They had agreed not to increase inspection activity and to limit inspections to that undertaken in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 business years. However, they have not engaged in any formal inspections since ratification of the pay agreement.

The Transition Group which was tasked with providing a 'slow dismount' from the industrial action that eased teachers back to life without industrial action.

As part of the pay agreement all teachers were to be given a directed time budget. This was tasked to the Transition group along with overseeing a pilot for joint consultation committees and an agreed formula in respect of the introduction of DE/EA new initiatives. Both management and INTO provided training via webinars around drawing up a time budget. INTO's webinar remains on the website.

Review in Nine Key Areas.

These key areas are either to be TNC led or DE led. The nine areas identified for review during negotiations, in no particular order, are:

Review of employment model of teachers.

This group will focus on a new, more flexible, redeployment of teachers from school to school. This is a TNC led review and management side will take the lead in this review.

Review of the use of temporary and substitute teachers.

This will result in a full review of the employment arrangements for substitute and temporary teachers. This is a TNC led review and management side will take the lead in this review.

Review of Workload Agreement.

A joint management/NITC review will examine the 2011 Workload Agreement and consider possible changes and amendments. Management and NITC agree relevant legal obligations, including working time, will be considered as part of this review. This is a TNC led review and the trade union side will take the lead in this review.

Review of workload impact on School Leaders

This is a review to examine current practices and the impact on the workload of principals and vice-principals. It is hoped that alternative approaches to workload will emanate from this group. This is a TNC led review and the trade union side will take the lead in this review.

Review of workload associated with Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision

This review will be a DE led review of the end-to-end administrative processes associated with special educational needs provision and in particular the statementing process. This will be led by DE in collaboration with trade union side and will have practitioner involvement.

Review of Accountability Framework

This will be a DE led review into the accountability and governance within the education sector. NITC views will be fully considered within this group. This will be led by DE in collaboration with trade union side and will have practitioner involvement.

Review of Consultation Arrangements

With the aim of promoting positive industrial relations, this joint management/NITC review will develop consultative arrangements in schools. This is a TNC led review and management side will take the lead in this review.

Review of Statutory Assessment at Key stages 1,2 and 3

This DE led group will make policy recommendations regarding the purpose, nature and design of key stage assessment in Northern Ireland. The group will hope to benchmark against best practice and produce proposals and recommendations to support the development of fit for purpose arrangements for key stage assessment. This will be led by DE in collaboration with trade union side and will have practitioner involvement.

Review of initiatives to promote and support Teacher Health and well-being

A joint Management/NITC review to promote recommendations for a new approach which actively promotes teacher health and well-being. This is a TNC led review and the trade union side will take the lead in this review.

A dedicated working group will be established to take forward the reviews with the first six beginning immediately and running concurrently. The membership of the working group will be seconded from their normal employment.

Additionally, in relation to Teachers' pay and conditions:

- Practical class sizes - This issue arose during the 2017/18 academic year and is ongoing. INTO in concord with the NITC have agreed a position on this and generally school managements have accepted the trade union advice. Because of Covid-19 most practical class teaching was halted.
- Work experience visits – INTO have advised its members that the new policy (2019) is totally unworkable and sees benefit in consulting with EA to highlight issues. Kevin Daly has taken the lead for INTO in this regard. However, all work in this area has, due to covid-19 been suspended.
- Code of Conduct – This document is still within the consultation period, however, INTO members have been instructed not to sign the document that was delivered to schools.
- NISTR – An agreed proposal whereby substitute teachers, employed in a fixed term capacity with an ending date, will be able to avail of both holiday and sick pay awaits Department of Education approval. This was agreed at JWP as needing particular attention with the normalisation of TNC and will form part of the review into substitute terms and conditions. Substitute teachers were hit hardest during the school closures because of Covid-19. INTO was successful in securing a furlough-hardship payment for substitute teachers based on previous earnings.

- EA contracts – Meetings led by Assistant Northern Secretary, Mark McTaggart, have taken place with EA officials in regard to hybrid contracts, essential car use, permanency delays and SEN allowances. An NITC sub-committee was established as follows:

Mark McTaggart (INTO)

Maxine Murphy-Higgins (NASUWT)

Alastair Donaghy (NEU)

Jacquie White (UTU)

Gerry Cameron (NAHT)

This group has been very successful in securing permanency for EA employees.

Much of the normal work of the TNC/JWP had initially been interrupted because of the pay negotiations. This is a concern for NITC and was raised and agreed by NITC as being possibly detrimental to the advancement of teachers' terms and conditions and has been highlighted by INTO with management. Sara Long, the newly appointed Chief Executive for education has welcomed the idea of re-establishing the full TNC and so with the reconstitution of the TNC, measures are now in place to upgrade policies and procedures using the joint Secretaries Forum. The first two areas, as already noted, that have been agreed as being priority are in regard to attendance and family friendly policies.

Teachers' terms and conditions continues to be a feature of the negotiating arrangements. INTO remains of the view that such a review should only commence when sufficient funding has been secured and an agreed process has been developed.

Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

In 2019 NITC tasked a sub-committee to review this Act and provide guidance to NITC. The members of the group were...

Justin McCamphill (NASUWT)

Paul Groogan (INTO)

Carney Cumper (UTU)

Gerry Cameron (NAHT)

Gordon White (NEU)

Objections to this Act were raised again in January 2021 at NITC and it was agreed that the detail of the act was, among other things, bureaucratic and not conducive to teacher/parent relations and NITC would formally raise these objections with DE.

While the review of TNC 2011/1 Teacher Health and Wellbeing Strategy (THAW) was finally completed in 2016, the revised and updated document still (2021) remains under consideration by Management Side. This document will be considered under the review of initiatives to promote and support Teacher Health and well-being.

Management of redundancies continues to be a subject of discussion at the negotiating machinery. The current redundancy compensation remains at last year's figure of up to a maximum of 52 weeks. However, because of covid-19, only redundancies as a result of school closures were processed in the 2019/2020 academic year. It is expected that this will remain in place for the 2020/21 academic year.

During the 2019/20 year, all of the five NITC affiliated unions formally ended their individual industrial actions short of strike, however, in agreement with Management Side, DE's decision to defer new Assessment Arrangements was welcomed.



Northern Ireland Teachers’ Council (NITC)

NITC has the following representation from the recognised teachers’ unions.

- NEU 3
- INTO 5
- NAHT 1 [with 1 observer]
- NASUWT 5
- UTU 5
- Total 19

INTO Representation on NITC

INTO representatives on the Northern Ireland Teachers’ Council in 2020 are:

- Caroline McCarthy (Chair)
- Marie O’Shea (Vice-Chair)
- Gerry Murphy
- Mark McTaggart
- Tommy McGlone

NITC Officers

The NITC Officers were re-elected in September 2020 and are:

- Chair: Gerry Murphy (INTO)
- Vice Chair: Jacquie White (UTU)
- Honorary Secretary: Justin McCamphill (NAS/UWT)
- Minutes Secretary: Mark Langhammer (ATL)
- Treasurer: NAHT nominee

Teachers’ Negotiating Committee (TNC)

Each NITC union has two representatives on the Teachers’ Side of the TNC. The INTO representatives in 2019/20 were Gerry Murphy and Tommy McGlone

NITC Side of the TNC

- NEU: Mark Langhammer, Gordon White
- INTO: Gerry Murphy, Tommy McGlone (Mark McTaggart)
- NAHT: Helena Macormac (Graham Gault)
- UTU: Jacquie White, Susan Thompson (Rebekka Gilpin)
- NASUWT: Justin McCamphill, Raymond Beggs (Annelies Taylor)

NITC Issues

DE Strategic Forum

INTO continues to engage in the Strategic Forum to promote education partnership and planning. INTO is represented at the forum by Gerry Murphy, Northern Secretary.

Education Authority (EA)

The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) were dissolved on 31 March 2015. The Education Authority was established under the Education Act Northern Ireland 2014 and became operational on 1st April 2015. EA is a non-departmental body sponsored by the Department of Education. It employs over 39,000 people across Northern Ireland in a wide variety of roles. This includes teachers in controlled schools, school-based support staff and staff in administrative headquarters. EA remains responsible for all of the operational functions previously carried out by the five ELBs in accordance with the Education Orders.

Chief Executive Gavin Boyd and Director of Education John Collings both retired and have since been replaced by Sara Long and Michelle Corkey respectively.

Department of Education

INTO held several meetings with Departmental officials in the past year. In particular INTO raised a number of ongoing concerns including:

- Investing in Education
- The governance of schools
- Teachers' pay
- School inspections
- Refreshing the teaching workforce

Education and Training Inspectorate [ETI]

The Northern Ireland Teachers' Council withdrawal from the previous regular termly meetings with the ETI, due to a lack of engagement by the ETI and the repeated side-stepping of the issues raised by the NITC, continues. The ETI maintain that they wish to resume these meetings and NITC are of the view that genuine engagement may be possible. The ETI leadership has changed and Fustina Graham has been appointed to the role of Chief Inspector. Because of a mix of issues including covid-19, school inspections have not, at time of press, been carried out.

Industrial Action

After an online ballot in the summer term of 2020, INTO members voted to accept a pay offer from management and in doing so ended their industrial action short of strike.

INTO has also continued to engage fully with NIC-ICTU in regard to the wider trade union movement and has been a keen partner and supporter of the NIC-ICTU ***Better Work Better Lives campaign*** which calls for...

- everyone to have a decent job at a fair wage
- properly funded public services that work for everyone

Internally within INTO, the Northern Committee has continued to meet to discuss all above and current issues and provide effective leadership and policy advice.

SECTION 2: PENSIONS

2.1 Northern Ireland Teachers’ Pension Scheme Pension Board (NITPSPB)

There were three NITPSPB meetings in 2020, 3 March, 15 September and 1 December 2020. The only face to face meeting took place in County Hall, Ballymena on 3 March 2020. The second meeting, scheduled for 2 June, did not take place and papers were issued in lieu of the meeting. The meetings in September and December were virtual meetings. Nuala O’Donnell, Senior Official INTO, is a member representative on this body and is now in her second term of 5 years on the pension board which will end in 2023.

For each meeting a quarterly report on performance and governance is produced to enable Board members to monitor the administration and management of the Teachers’ Pension scheme. Minutes of meetings are published on the DE website. Items discussed at the Pension Board meetings include;

2.1.1 Covid 19 Contingency Arrangements

Due to Covid 19 The Teachers’ Pay and Pensions Team (TPPT) moved to working in line with Business Continuity measures and was no longer fully staffed. A number of key staff worked remotely to take forward urgent and essential changes on Teachers’ Pay and Teachers’ Pensions databases. For the vast majority of teachers and pensioners, payments were maintained in line with the March 2020 payroll.

As TPPT staff did not for a significant period have access to telephones or to action post delivered to Waterside House, all schools, principals, teachers and pensioners were informed to contact DE through the email addresses listed on the DE website.

Substitute teachers continued to be paid in line with the service which was authorised on the NISTR system by principals.

Arrangements were put in place to submit electronic TP4 and TP5 applications (Application for Retirement). Supporting documentation could also be submitted electronically.

TP22/TP82- Application to continue Family Pension/Declaration of Entitlement could also be submitted electronically.

2.1.2 Pension Applications -

250 applications for August Retirement were received at 31 August 2020. Despite reminders detailed on January and March 2020 payslips, only 157 (62.8 %) of applications were received by the 31 May 2020 deadline. All Lump Sum payments were processed for payment on 1 September 2020.

Membership of the different schemes

Breakdown of the membership figures by scheme @ 31 March 2019.

Scheme	Protection status	Number of members
NPA60	Protected	1,552
	Tapered or unprotected	13,803
NPA65	Protected	19
	Tapered or unprotected	5,811
Mixed/FS	Protected	0
	Tapered or unprotected	314
2015	Unprotected	3,527
TOTAL		25,026

2.1.3 Quality of Information

The board were informed that the quality of information received from some Voluntary Grammar Schools continued to be a cause for concern. These should be received in TPPT by the 7th working day of the month. Any late returns may result in a financial penalty to the employer. The Board were informed of a number of schools which made late returns in the period, including one hitting the 3 strikes rule for the 2nd time. In this case the Chair of the Board and the DE Head of Education Workforce development met the school to inform them of the seriousness of the breach and the potential outcome of any future breaches.

2.1.4 Risk Register

A risk register is updated regularly to ensure that all risks to the teachers' pension scheme are identified, monitored and addressed in a timely manner.

2.1.5 Annual Benefit Statements (ABS)

The fifth Annual Benefit Statements were issued to all active members of the teachers' scheme in March 2020.

2.1.6 Annual Pension Increase

The Board were advised that the Annual Pension Increase (API) was run to apply the annual increase to all applicable members prior to the April 2020 payroll.

2.1.7 Dealing with queries from scheme members

Any queries regarding the content of ABS should be sent in writing to Teachers' Pensions Team, Waterside House, 75 Duke Street, Gobnascale, Derry, BT47 6FP or by email to nitpsabsqueries@education-ni.gov.uk

2.1.8 Scheme Finance

The auditors for the Teachers' Superannuation Scheme (TSS) accounts were changed in 2020. No audit adjustments were made to the financial statements, however minor suggestions were made to improve narrative disclosures. No unadjusted misstatements were identified during the audit.

2.1.9 Legislation

Premature Retirement Compensation Regulations / Miscellaneous Amendments to 1998/2014 Pensions Regulations / Additional Voluntary Contribution Regulations

Although the impact of the current pandemic is ongoing, work has recommenced on a number of areas of legislation and consultations will issue in due course. In the event of an emerging case in the interim period, which falls within the intended legislative updates, the Department will consider the application of the policy intent.

2.1.10 Major Initiatives - Replacement Pensions System

Following the completion of a competitive procurement process Civica were appointed as the new system provider on 17 May 2019. The new CIVICA UPM system went live on 12th November 2020. There were a number of issues identified prior to launch and a remediation plan was in place to improve this by January.

While further issues have been identified there are no "show stoppers" and all members were paid by 30th November as normal.

2.1.11 Training

All members of the NITPSAB are required under legislation to keep themselves up to date with developments in public sector pensions. This year due to Covid 19 restrictions the NI Public Service Pension Schemes Conference due to be held on 25 March 2020 had to be cancelled.

2.2 Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme Advisory Board (NITPSAB)

Three meetings of the NITPSAB took place in 2020 on 11 February, 11 June and 13 October 2020. The only face to face meeting took place in UTU Headquarters on 11 February 2020. The second meeting, scheduled for 2 June, did not take place and papers were issued in lieu of the meeting. The meeting in October was a virtual meeting.

INTO is represented on the NITPSAB by Nuala O'Donnell INTO Senior Official and Kevin Daly INTO Official.

The meetings dealt with the following issues:

2.2.1 Review of member contribution structure

An updated GAD prepared paper was presented to the Board, reflecting the proposed pay awards, on options for employee contribution structures. Members explored the impact of contribution band changes through the use of live modelling. Discussion took place around the paper and modelling results, with members concluding, given the uncertainties currently affecting the scheme, e.g. McCloud and Cost Cap rectification pause, it would be prudent not to recommend changes at this point but revisit in 12-18 months.

2.2.2 DE Circular 2020/01 CHANGES FROM 1 APRIL 2020 TO SALARY BANDS FOR CONTRIBUTION RATES FOR MEMBERS OF THE NI TEACHERS' PENSION SCHEME (NITPS)

This circular sets out changes from 1 April 2020 to salary bands for contribution rates for members.

- On 1 April 2020, the salary bands applicable to member contributions for the NITPS will change in line with an increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). • The appropriate percentage increase to salary bands from 1 April 2020 is the same percentage as the percentage increase in CPI in the year to September 2019.
- CPI rose by 1.7% in the year to September 2019, therefore, the salary bands for contribution rates for members will increase by 1.7% with effect from 1 April 2020.

These arrangements apply to all members i.e. both those who remain in final salary arrangements and those in career average arrangements.

Actual annual pensionable earnings* 1 April 2020- 31 March 2021

2.2.3 Member Contribution Rate

Actual annual pensionable earnings*	Member Contribution Rate
• Up to £28,168.99	7.4%
• £28,169 to £37,918.99	8.6%
• £37,919 to £44,960.99	9.6%
• £44,961 to £59,587.99	10.2%
• £59,588 to £81,254.99	11.3%
• £81,255 and above	11.7%

*contributions are based on a member's annual salary rate (actual earnings).

2.2.4 Opt out data

The number of teachers opting out of the Teachers' Pension scheme in Northern Ireland remains low and to date has given no cause for concern.

2.2.5 2016 Scheme Valuation

As a result of the outcome of the McCloud etc. cases in the Court of Appeal, HM Treasury confirmed in a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) that schemes should suspend activity on improving scheme benefits in order to address cost cap floor breaches.

Cost Cap Un-pause – In December 2020 the Board was informed that the pause from 2016 was to be lifted, however further Directions from Treasury/DoF will be required before progress can be made.

2.2.6 Internal Dispute Resolution

The Procedure for Internal Dispute Resolution in the Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme was agreed by the NITPS Advisory Board in February 2020 and ratified by the Pension Board and published on the DE website in April 2020.

2.3 Consultation on Transitional Protection Arrangements

The Department of Finance issued a Consultation on Public Sector Pension Schemes: Changes to the Transitional Arrangements to the 2015 Schemes, in August 2020. INTO responded to the consultation on behalf of members and also posted the response on the INTO website in advance of the closing date in November 2020 for members to view when preparing their own responses which INTO encouraged them to do.

The Department of Finance (DoF) was consulting on proposals to address age related discrimination identified in the transitional arrangements of the 2015 public service pension reforms arising from recent legal cases, McCloud and Sargeant Cases (Judicial and Fire Brigade).

The consultation explained that under both proposals affected individuals would receive a choice of which pension scheme they would prefer to be in for the period in which the discrimination took place; this is between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. The consultation was seeking views on when members should be given that choice.

The proposals set out that this will either be shortly after implementation (i.e. from 2022 onwards) stated as Immediate Choice Underpin or when individuals reach retirement, Deferred Choice Underpin. Further details of both options including the advantages and disadvantages of both were set out in the consultation.

Overall, INTO favoured the Deferred Choice Underpin (DCU) as this offered the potential for members to examine the differences between the two schemes at the point of retirement when it is most relevant to them. The DCU also ensures members will have access to the pertinent information from DE in relation to service/amount accrued in each scheme and time to access independent Financial advice which will be crucial at this stage. Independent Financial advice would simply not be available for all 130,000 public sector workers in the immediate choice.

There are many factors to be taken into account by members when making the choice of which pension scheme they would prefer to be in for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022 and clear accurate information on all aspects of the choices available are critical.

It was obvious that there will be administrative costs arising from the proposed changes whether in the Deferred or Immediate choice options. There may also be costs arising from the choice the member makes. INTO in its response made was adamant that no costs should apply to members or the NITPS as a result of remedying the mistake the Government made in introducing a scheme which has been found to be discriminatory.

2.4 Recent Legal Cases – Public Sector Pensions

2.4.1. McCloud and Sargeant Cases (Judicial and Fire Brigade)

The consultation closed at the end of November and the response from Treasury is expected at the end of January. It was confirmed to the board that approval had been received for extra policy staff to assist with McCloud but that while approval had been given, budget was still an issue. The Board agreed to support any additional funding request for staff to complete the McCloud judgement.

2.4.2. McCloud related litigation

There are approximately 1672 McCloud related cases lodged in NI all of which are stayed pending further developments in the remedy process and tribunals in GB.

2.4.3. Survivor Benefits

Following the Walker v Innospec Supreme Court ruling, the government decided that in public service pension schemes, surviving male same-sex and female same-sex spouses and civil partners of public service pension scheme members will, in certain cases, receive benefits equivalent to those received by widows of opposite sex marriages. To give effect to the changes, government introduced legislation on 13 January 2020, in the form of the Marriage (Same-sex Couples) and Civil Partnership (Opposite-sex Couples) (NI) Regulations 2019, which amended primary and secondary legislation for all NI Public Service Pension Schemes.

A case brought in the Employment Tribunal against the Secretary of State for Education in GB highlighted that these changes may lead to direct sexual orientation discrimination within the Teachers' Pension Scheme England & Wales, where male survivors of female scheme members remain entitled to a lower survivor benefit than a comparable same-sex survivor.

In a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) made on 20 July 2020, by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the government concluded that changes are required to the Teachers' Pension Scheme England & Wales to address the discrimination. The government believes that this difference in treatment will also need to be remedied in other public service pension schemes.

It is recognised that the case will have an impact on the NIPSPs and it is expected that, where necessary, provisions to remedy potential discrimination will be introduced. DE is currently assessing what actions are required for NITPS.

2.5 ICTU Pensions

INTO along with other public sector trade unions, through NIC ICTU, continue to meet with the Department for Finance and Personnel and the other public sector government department officials. Nuala O'Donnell continues to represent INTO, and the NITC, on the NIC ICTU/DFP Public Services Pensions Bill Collective Consultative Working Group. (CCWG). This group met regularly during the year to address issues of concern in relation to the implementation of the Public Sector Pensions Act NI.

2.5.1 CCWG

HMT Consultation on Public Service Pensions -- Addressing unjustified age discrimination in transitional arrangements to the 2015 pension schemes – working proposals: Deferred choice and Immediate choice'

INTO and NIC ICTU responded to the Treasury consultation paper on 2015 Addressing Age Discrimination Transitional Protections working proposals and copied the responses to the Department of Finance in advance of a similar exercise in Northern Ireland.

2.5.2 Public Service Pensions Increase 2020

The Department of Finance has made the Pensions Increase (Review) Order (Northern Ireland) (2020 No. 47) The order provides for public service pensions in payment and deferred pensions to be increased by 1.7% (or the appropriate partial amount) from 6 April 2020. All schemes have implemented the increases.

2.5.3 Pension Dashboard

The Pensions Bill which will deal with some of the legislative changes for the establishment of pensions dashboards was re-introduced at Westminster on 7 January 2020 - the previous bill fell upon dissolution of the preceding Westminster mandate in November 2019. This bill will carry the initial changes required to the Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 to allow for the establishment of pensions boards. A legislative consent motion for this purpose, brought by the Minister for Communities, was agreed by the NI Assembly on 1 June 2020. More work is needed on dashboard specifications as they may relate to public service schemes. The Bill provides for this specific detail to be prescribed in due course in additional regulations and directions following the passage of the bill.

2.5.4 GMP Issues

All of the main public service schemes have now written-off the outstanding GMP overpayment amounts. In terms of a long-term solution on the GMP issue, due to contracted timescales and additional priority issues, (including McCloud and the impact of COVID-19), the introduction of a 'conversion' solution by April 2021 is now unrealistic. To ensure NI public servants reaching SPA after April 2021 will continue to receive full indexation of their GMP entitlements from their public service pension scheme the 'interim solution' currently in place will need to be extended. This will require a renewed DoF direction under the Social Security Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 1975. CCWG will be kept updated on progress for this.

2.5.5 COLLECTIVE CONSULTATION WORKING GROUP (CCWG)

SUBGROUP ON REMEDY IN TRANSITIONAL PROTECTIONS TO 2015 THE SCHEMES

A subgroup of the CCWG was set up in August 2020 to consider technical detail and deliverability of proposals to remedy unlawful age discrimination in transitional protections to the 2015 public service pension schemes.



Membership of the subgroup:

Employer representatives

Grace Nesbitt (Co-chair) - DoF
Margaret Coyle – Civil Service
Brian Quinn - Teachers
Phil McCusker – Health Service
Rebecca Morgan – Fire and Rescue Service

Member representatives

Bumper Graham (Co-chair) – NIC-ICTU
Alison Millar – Civil Service
Nuala O'Donnell - Teachers
Dessie Lowry – Health Service
Jim Quinn – Fire and Rescue Service

The subgroup discussed:

- Consultation options
- Taxation
- Cost issues

Information to scheme members and met with Government Actuary Department Advisors in relation to remedy costings. All of this discussion and information informed the responses to the DoF consultation on Transitional Protection Arrangements as detailed at section 2.3 above.

SECTION 3: EDUCATION

3.1 SEN

3.1.1 DE consultations on the new draft SEN regulations and Code of Practice

30 September 2020 - Peter Weir MLA, Minister of Education launched two formal public consultations, one on the new special educational needs (SEN) Regulations and one on the new SEN Code of Practice. Responses to both consultations were to be submitted by 22 December 2020. 8 December 2020 - the Minister of Education extended the consultations until 19 January 2021. At the time of writing this report a further extension to the deadline for responses has been announced by the minister to 2 March 2021.

18 December 2020 - Peter Weir announced New measures to support children with Special Educational Needs, introducing a section of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Act 2016 which requires the Education Authority to seek and have regard to the views of the child into operation. The Minister stated that "The new draft SEN Regulations and Code of Practice are currently out for consultation but I decided rather than wait until that process concluded, that it was in the best interests of children to implement this provision as soon as possible. I have asked the Education Authority to put the necessary arrangements in place to implement this change from today."

The INTO Education sub committee of the Northern Committee met on a number of occasions to draft the INTO response to the Consultation documents. At the time of writing this report the INTO responses have been submitted to DE and posted on the INTO website to encourage and assist members to respond also.

3.1.2 EA consultations on a Draft Framework for Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools and a Draft Special Schools Area Planning Framework

16 October 2020. - The Education Authority launched a consultation on a Draft Framework for Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools and a Draft Special Schools Area Planning Framework. 1 December 2020 - EA announced that it had received a number of requests for an extension to these draft consultations. To ensure that there is meaningful engagement and consultation between the EA and all interested stakeholders, EA extended both consultations to 11 February 2021. At the time of writing this report EA announced a further extension to 12 April 2021.

3.1.3 CYPS

During the year the CYPS Director, Clare Mangan, and Assistant Director, Ruth Bell left their posts and Una Turbitt was appointed Acting Director with Cynthia Currie being appointed Acting Assistant Director. The quarterly CYPS/ Teacher Trade Union Consultation meetings in March, June and September 2020 were cancelled, with the first meeting since Dec 2019 taking place on 1 December 2020.

Issues discussed included:

- Elective Home Education Guidelines
- EOTAS review
- SEN helpline
- Enniskillen Accommodation
- Update on Education Restart - Education Through Covid / Pupil Wellbeing
- SEN Improvement Plan
- Education Welfare Service Review
- Dates of meetings for March, June and September 2021 were agreed.

Additional meetings with CYPS PSS and Teaching Unions on 26 August 2020, 11 September 2020 and teacher unions invited to attend an EEA Literacy Service Engagement Day on 16 September 2020. INTO is currently seeking further meetings. 18 Sept 2020 – INTO informed members that following consultation with INTO and teachers the EA conceded that Literacy Support Teachers would now be contacting their schools to schedule school visits in so far as it is possible to do so. 30 September 2020 EA Literacy support teachers returned to schools.

3.2 ETI

Inspections;

18 March 2020 – ETI announced that due to the fast moving and challenging circumstances related to COVID-19, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) were taking the unprecedented action of pausing all inspections with immediate effect until further notice. The position would be reviewed as and when circumstances change. At the time of writing this report inspections remain paused.

31 March 2020 – The chief Inspector, Noelle Buick resigned.

23 April 2020 – Notice on ETI website, 'Direct Support for school staff continues while remote working' which stated: 'When schools and providers re-open to all children and young people, inspections will continue to be paused for a period of time (subject to review).'

The INTO industrial action in relation to non-co-operation with inspections ceased on 28 April 2020 with the formal ratification by the NITC and the Management Side of an agreement to resolve the long running industrial dispute of teachers' pay and workload. Following this the NITC agreed to return to meetings with ETI and the first meeting took place on 4 June 2020. At this meeting ETI gave an assurance that they would consult with NITC in advance of any proposed changes in the present inspection arrangements.

Discussions included:

- Update on ETI's work during the Covid-19 crisis
- ETI web statements and assurances
- Principles of recovery
- Discussion on initial thinking about transition and recovery
- ETI's commitments and agreements associated with an end to ASoS

30 September 2020 – New Chief Inspector appointed, Faustina Graham.

Faustina was previously an assistant chief inspector with extensive experience of leading teams within various divisions of the Inspectorate including the primary and post primary school sectors and further education. Prior to her appointment as Chief Inspector she was seconded to DE leading policy work in the School Improvement Division in the Department of Education.

3.3 Remote learning

On 20 March 2020 Schools in the North closed following an announcement from the First and Deputy First Minister and on 23 March schools reopened for the children of Key workers. For all other pupils remote learning commenced.

3.3.1 DE publications:

20 May 2020 – Minister, Peter Weir, issues letter to schools agreeing to significantly reduce the prescribed reporting requirements and provide a temporary legislative basis that enabled principals to decide the content and format of reports.

INTO followed up with advice to members clarifying that they were not required to report on remote learning. The main focus of assessment activity during the current period of entirely remote learning should be on levels of engagement and well-being and formative assessment for learning.

5 June 2020 – DE Circular 2020/05 Guidance For Schools On Supporting Remote Learning To Provide Educational Continuity is issued to schools providing initial advice and guidance to schools on supporting remote learning on the basis of what schools have reported over the first period of remote learning. The circular stated that one key learning point that has emerged worldwide during the current school closures is that schools should not expect to make similar progress to taught lessons in any given period of remote learning. This was welcomed by INTO.

The circular also introduced the synchronous and asynchronous approaches to online learning and ‘Flipped learning’ as a pedagogical approach.

3.3.2 INTO survey on remote learning:

1331 INTO members responded to the INTO survey on Remote Teaching and Learning which was issued to members by email on Thursday 11 June 2020. This very important survey enabled INTO to get a broader understanding of teachers’ very real experiences of remote teaching and learning, which were subsequently shared by INTO with DE to increase their understanding of the reality facing teachers and to shape developments going forward. Issues highlighted included:

- Access to devices, including printers, for teachers and pupils.
- Access to high speed, reliable broadband, for teachers and pupils.
- Lack of training
- ICT skills
- Lack of confidence, sense of isolation
- Increased workload and home/family circumstances
- Insecurity in delivering/recording lessons/sessions online, safeguarding

3.4. School Development Planning

3 June 2020 - The Department of Education provided guidance to Boards of Governors and schools on school development planning for 2020/21, in the context of the Covid-19. It stated that the Department and the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) recognised the need for a flexible approach to school development planning in the coming academic year.

They advised Boards of Governors and schools to continue to take a pragmatic approach to school development planning, ensuring that the process is useful in supporting the work of the school and that it is manageable which included the option for a transitional plan for 2020/21, to amend or extend their current SDP.

3.5 Curriculum

23 June 2020 – DE Circular 2020/06 Curriculum Planning 2020/21. The key message across the system was that the aim for 2020/21 was to support pupils to be motivated to learn and towards becoming skilled and independent learners through a curriculum that gives equal emphasis to knowledge, understanding and skills rather than catching up missed knowledge content. There was an emphasis that schools have the flexibility and authority to make decisions to best suit the needs of their pupils.

3.6 Examinations

In March 2020, the Minister announced that, in line with other jurisdictions of the UK, GCSE, A/S and A level exams would not proceed in Northern Ireland in summer 2020.

16 April 2020 - Minister announced arrangements for summer examinations.

Education Minister Peter Weir outlined the process for students completing CCEA GCSE and A level qualifications in 2020. The Key points included:

- Calculated grades to be issued for those completing their A level, A/S level and GCSE qualifications based on a combination of information provided by schools and colleges and statistical information.
- A/S level grades to count as a stand-alone qualification; they will not contribute to a final A level grade in 2021.

- Grades to be awarded for GCSEs due to complete in 2020 (mostly year 12s), but not for GCSE units where GCSEs are due to complete in 2021 (mostly year 11s). In the latter case, pupils will have the option to take any outstanding units in 2021 and have missing components calculated using statistical modelling and/or to sit all units in 2021 and be awarded the higher grade from either option.

INTO responded to the Consultation on Proposed Changes to CCEA GCSE AS and A-Level Qualifications for Summer 2021. INTO was first and foremost concerned with the impact of changes to assessment arrangements on the workload of our members. This in turn has implications for industrial relations in centres, health and wellbeing of our members and so on. The chaos caused to the present suite of qualifications offered by CCEA by the lockdown has exposed a fragile and outdated mode of assessment in this jurisdiction and should result in a root and branch review of qualifications aimed at producing a fit for purpose, modern and robust system that meets the human and economic needs of learners and society and which opens more career pathways, not fewer, as students progress through it.

11 November 2020 - INTO welcomed and supported the comments and views of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, Koulla Yiasouma, calling for an alternative to academic selection and summer examinations in this academic year, acknowledging that the disruption to schools was likely to continue and thus the vicious cycle of uncertainty, additional worry and lost classroom contact time would lead to further detriment to the mental health, wellbeing and workload demands on pupils, teachers and school leaders. INTO called on the Minister to take decisive, timely and clear action to move toward an alternative to traditional examinations.

3.7 Transfer at 11

19 May 2020 – INTO welcomed the call from Archbishop Eamon Martin, to suspend the use of academic selection as an entrance criterion for entry to post-primary school.

Earlier in the summer, the Assembly Committee for Education launched an on-line survey into post-primary transfer. The survey was targeted initially at parents and guardians with children in Primary 6 or Primary 7. Around 7 thousand respondents completed the survey – 80% of which were parents from the target group. Many different views were expressed and these are currently being analysed. A young persons' version of the survey was circulated.

The Committee strongly felt that the opinions of teachers were of critical importance in the evaluation of education and Departmental policy. The Committee therefore agreed to target the final phase of the on-line survey towards teachers and in particular those with responsibility for children in Primary 6 and Primary 7.

November 2020 - The Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) responded to the debate on how the transfer process should be administered if AQE and PPTC tests cannot proceed as planned in January.

The NITC were increasingly concerned at the apparent lack of contingency planning for the transfer process, in light of the debate at the Assembly on Monday 2nd November 2020. It remained the case that AQE and PPTC assessments were going to be administered in January of 2021. Given the current context and the predicted trajectory of Covid-19, NITC stressed the urgency of planning for the potential eventuality that these unregulated assessments cannot take place.

18 December 2020 - INTO reacted to the statement from Minister Weir, where the Minister had expressed his preferred option that unregulated selection tests be hosted by the candidate's primary school. INTO are totally opposed to this suggestion and instructed members to ignore any request from the Department of Education to facilitate this non-statutory testing on behalf of private companies.

5th January 2021, both of the providers of the unregulated tests appeared to announce that this year's tests would be cancelled. By the time of the BBC's 6:30 evening news broadcast, the AQE group had reneged on this decision and announced that there will be a single test for pupils on Saturday 27 February 2021.

12th January 2021 INTO welcomed the decision yesterday by the Association of Quality Education to finally cancel the proposed selection test on 27 February 2021.

It is now more urgent than ever, given the debacle around this year's procedure, that the use of academic selection as a criteria for transfer from primary to post-primary school be reviewed, as part of the major review of education that was announced last term. It is important that there is clarity for all in relation to this, as the continued uncertainty serves only to heighten the levels of stress and emotional wellbeing of the pupils, parents, teachers and principals involved.



3.8 Assessment

Members were reminded not to engage with the New Assessment Arrangements. It has been agreed they are not fit for purpose and they are to be reviewed as part of the pay award.

3.9 INTO National Education Conference 2020

The annual Consultative Conference on Education was due to be held in the Mullingar Park Hotel, 13-14 November 2020 but due to Covid 19 restrictions, it was decided that the Education Conference would be postponed until 2021. The Conference was replaced by an online panel discussion held on Saturday, 14th of November 2020 from 11–12:15pm, on the theme of ‘distance learning in primary school’. Despite being held on a Saturday morning, the event was very well attended. The different perspectives led to very interesting and lively discussions reflecting the excellent practice in schools North and South and the difficulties experienced also.

The panel was chaired by INTO President Mary Magner. The panel participants were Paul Moroney, a teaching principal in Co. Kerry with a keen interest in technology and a member of the Education Committee; Loretta Dunphy, an administrative principal in a DEIS school in Dublin and a member of the Principals and Deputies’ Committee; Caroline McCarthy, Chairperson INTO Northern Committee and a teacher in a Special school in the North; Ciara Reilly, Lecturer in ICT and Digital Education, Marino Institute of Education; Ciara O’Donnell, National Director, PDST; and Clíona Ní Chiosáin, primary school teacher also known as ‘Múinteoir Cliona’ of RTÉ School Hub.

3.10 School Closures/Amalgamations.

CCMS continued its consultations with governors, teachers, ancillary staff and parents about the closure/ amalgamation of a number of small primary schools and post-primary schools. Due to Covid 19 the number of school closures/amalgamations was reduced and consultations were delayed as consultations were unable to take place. The Northern Secretary continues to have overall responsibility in INTO for issues pertaining to closures, amalgamations and mergers. Further work remains to be done regarding a review of the School Closure Agreement to address the issues of phased closures.

SECTION 4:

GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL NI REPORT 2020 (GTCNI)

As the professional body for the teaching profession in Northern Ireland, the General Teaching Council is dedicated to promoting teacher professionalism. It aims to enhance the status of teaching by ensuring that all members of the profession here are registered and that they uphold the highest standards of professional conduct and practice. The GTC is designated as a Non-Departmental Public Body which is sponsored by DE.

GTC's core business is focused on the establishment and maintenance of a register of teachers. It also evaluates and approves qualifications for the purpose of teacher registration. The GTC has regulation function relating to the misconduct of teachers.

The work of the GTCNI to date:

4.1 Leadership Competencies.

The GTCNI council has agreed on documents on Leadership Competencies, these will be agreed by the new council this year. If accepted by all stakeholders these should frame the professional learning of all teachers from beginning teacher education to school leaders at all levels for the foreseeable future.

GTCNI sub panel have verified the B.Ed., Initial teacher Education Programmes for St Mary's and Stranmillis to ensure they meet the GTCNI teacher competences.

Three members of the GTCNI council met with the Minister's Expert Panel on Educational underachievement to discuss issues impacting on education at present.

The registration team ensured that all teachers who needed to be registered were in good time for the beginning of the school year last September and also took forward work relating to approval of qualifications for registration.

4.2 GTCNI Regulatory Function

GTCNI has currently limited regulatory powers which transferred to the GTC from DE. This means that the GTCNI, after full investigation can remove a teacher from the GTC register and therefore effectively remove their entitlement to teach in a grant aided school in Northern Ireland.

GTCNI will only investigate if the issue has already been dealt by the employers. Employers now have the duty to report any teacher who has been dismissed or teachers who were likely to have been dismissed if they had not first resigned. A three-stage process has been established and there is an ultimate right of appeal by a teacher who is about to be de-registered to the High Court.

4.3 GTCNI Council Members

Teachers make up 14 of the 33 Council places.

- 5 Primary Teachers
- 5 Post-Primary Teachers
- 1 Nursery Teacher
- 1 Special School Teacher
- 1 Primary Principal
- 1 Post-Primary Principal

A further 5 teacher representatives are nominated by the five teacher unions through the NITC.

Currently four INTO members sit on the GTCNI council. John Kelly is the INTO nominated NITC Representative and is the chair of the HR committee. The current Vice-Chairperson is Siobhan McElhinney a member of Northern Committee.

GTCNI website: <http://www.gtcni.org.uk>

SECTION 5:

IRISH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS (ICTU)

Introduction

The INTO is affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions which is based in Dublin and like the INTO, has a northern section, located in Belfast. It is led by the Assistant General Secretary, Owen Reidy. Mrs Patricia King, General Secretary, provides leadership across the whole of the island. The current President of ICTU is Gerry Murphy INTO Northern Secretary. He has held the position since July of 2020 and succeeded former INTO General Secretary, Sheila Nunan in the role. Mr Murphy will vacate this role in October of 2021, a slightly longer period in the role than normal that has come about on the back of the Covid-19 pandemic. The NIC-ICTU has a number of subcommittees, in areas such as Global Solidarity, Disability, LGBT Rights and Education, dedicated to working on advancing the ICTU's trade union and social-economic policies on which a number of INTO nominees. Elections are held every two years to the NIC-ICTU and currently INTO is represented on this body by the Northern Secretary who is also the current chairperson of the NIC-ICTU. The Northern Secretary's term as Chairperson of the NIC will end at the NI-BDC which will be held in March of 2021. This will be an online event.

5.1 Congress Officers

Gerry Murphy	INTO (Chair)
Alison Millar	NIPSA (Vice Chairperson)
Owen Reidy	ICTU (Assistant General Secretary commenced November 2016)
Elected INTO Representative	Gerry Murphy (INTO Northern Secretary)

5.2 Key Issues:

Economy

The local economy which was already in some distress has been further directly impacted negatively in this year by two primary factors: Brexit; and the continuing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The NIC-ICTU continues to be active in seeking to represent the interests of workers effectively in these circumstances. It is doing so by continuing to meet regularly and engaging in meetings with various Executive departments, Executive Forum, arms-length bodies and political parties. The NIC-ICTU has also taken the initiative and contributed a major policy document to the public discourse on the shape of a post pandemic economy. Our shrinking manufacturing sector continues to suffer from the absence of any meaningful industrial policy and NIC-ICTU is encouraged to see this policy deficit is one of the areas to be targeted in the New Decade New Approach Deal but is disappointed that the Department of the Economy appears not yet at a point where it has developed an initial discussion or policy paper on this issue. NIC-ICTU sees this as a priority area for engagement with the trade union movement if the NI economy is to recover. The out workings of Brexit have not yet fully become clear and the initial difficulties which have arisen around the application of NI Protocol were to be expected and there is a requirement on the part of all parties to the Protocol to employ all the mechanisms it encompasses to mitigate the obvious and expected consequences of Brexit. The limited foreign direct investment which was previously a brief feature of our economy has dried up whilst the continuing uncertainty in the post Brexit era alongside under investment in developing and promoting local enterprises is increasing the vulnerability of local manufacturing businesses. The large retail sector is experiencing a severe downturn as a consequence of Brexit along with the restrictions arising from efforts to control the Covid-19 pandemic. The workers in this sector already the victims of low wages and poor hours are continuing to experience increased employment instability. Austerity continues to be the underlying economic doctrine underpinning the approach of the Conservative government in London. This approach is redundant and the ICTUs policy document "No Going Back" provides a detailed and considered alternative economic strategy.

NIC-ICTU continues to work to promote the positive, progressive policy approach contained in the document and to seek to persuade the Executive and the other key economic and social stakeholders of the value of moving away from the failed austerity doctrine. The expectation following the New Decade New Approach Deal that additional funds were to be made available to support public services remain to be met due in large part to the

pandemic and also because the Executive has yet to layout even a draft economic strategy. Jobs across both public and private sectors and services continue to be pared back as Stormont Departments attempt to balance shrinking budgets against demand. The NI economy is clearly in serious trouble having regressed to 2008 levels and with almost 150,000 workers currently in receipt of various employment subsidy schemes the fear is we are storing up an employment crisis and further economic problems. NIC- ICTU will continue to challenge the decision makers to bring forward more progressive policy solutions that place workers and societies needs ahead of the demands of an economic elite.

Brexit

The leaving of the European Union by the United Kingdom Government on January 31st, 2020 against the democratic will of the people of Northern Ireland continues to be a matter of deep concern for NIC-ICTU. In recent times the ill-informed political agitation regarding the application of the NI Protocol has further exacerbated an already complex situation. It is NIC-ICTU's view that all the parties to the Protocol need to be careful to ensure they do not make the situation worse by creating unreasonable expectations with regard to the application of the Protocol which was central to achieving the Withdrawal Agreement. It is clear at this moment that more can be done to exploit the flexibilities contained within the Protocol on the part of the British Government which will go some way to mitigating the worst aspects of the disastrous effects Brexit is having on the local economy.

As the largest civil society grouping on the island, the ICTU remains deeply concerned that much of current EU law will cease to be enforceable in the post Brexit era. While the majority of EU legislation has been transposed to UK law, there is a distinct possibility that key rights and obligations, derived from EU directives, will be removed indeed recent media speculation on this issue appears to be informed by policy work underway in London by right wing and conservative think tanks. NIC-ICTU remains strongly of the view that Brexit must not be used as a pretext to dismantle hard won rights and protections or to drive down employment standards generally. The NIC-ICTU with the support of our trade union comrades across the island will continue to campaign and lobby to prevent this happening.

The implications for employment and the labour market generally remain as yet unclear, dependent on the form of trading relationship that finally emerges between the UK and the EU now that an Agreement on withdrawal has been reached. The Irish government provides one of a number of conduits for the trade unions to have their views on Brexit heard and a number of meetings have taken place with the present, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney TD and the leadership of the ICTU. The NI Protocol also allows for direct input from the trade union movement to the Joint Committee established to monitor the Protocol and NIC-ICTU will seek to use this mechanism as appropriate.

In the run up to the deadline for the UK exit of the EU, the business, agriculture, voluntary and community sectors together with the NIC-ICTU, had largely been speaking with one voice. NIC-ICTU will continue to seek to maintain this unity and to make the case that any Brexit is bad for the North and now that it has happened workers and their families need to be protected from the inevitable economic fall-out. To this end the ICTU in the north have developed and continue to adapt our policy positions which in addition to describing the negative consequences of Brexit, outline practical proposals both for the short and longer terms which will enable the necessary protections for workers and their families not only to be maintained but to continue to be allowed to evolve in line with EU policy developments in these areas.

The trade unions in the north led by Owen Reidy continue to work hard with the business, agricultural and community sectors to make sure that the Irish government, the current NI Secretary of State, the political parties and civic society generally are all fully aware of the challenges the aftermath of Brexit poses. INTO has been involved in all these interactions and will continue to support the efforts of the trade union movement in attempting to protect our society from the effects of Brexit now that it is a reality. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions will continue to campaign and lobby to ensure that workers and society more broadly are protected in the post Brexit era.

ICTU has a crucial role to play in ensuring that the Brexit disaster is mitigated in so far as is possible for working people. One way in which this can be achieved is to see the proposals in No Going Back concerning the public finances and taxation policy mainstreamed and eventually implemented by the Executive and the government in Dublin. The other significant steps NIC-ICTU can take is to continue lobbying the politicians and parties in NI to fully exploit the flexibilities incorporated in the NI Protocol to minimise the impact on the economy of Brexit. INTO will continue to be central to ICTU's efforts to achieve these objectives.

Campaigns

Throughout the year NIC-ICTU has continued with the help of the affiliated unions to campaign in respect of;

- Welfare Cuts, being presented as “reform” whose negative consequences for ordinary people are beginning to be felt across the north. Dooley Harte of NIPSA has carried on with the task of keeping this issue alive and in the public eye. The issue of mitigations remains a central concern for the trade union movement and is even more pressing now as the pandemic impacts on livelihoods and employment opportunities.
- Austerity previously generated the most comprehensive and carefully engineered NIC-ICTU campaign entitled “Better Lives Better Work” which was launched in November of 2017. That campaign has run its course now. It has been replaced by the “No Going Back” campaign which represents the next logical steps.

INTO continues to play a full part on the various sub committees of the NIC-ICTU. INTO is represented on the Education Trade Union Group [ETUG] by the Northern Chairperson of INTO’s Northern Committee, Caroline McCarthy and the Assistant Northern Secretary, Mark McTaggart. This group has dealt with a range of issues affecting the education sector and is made up of trade unions representing all the workers employed in the education sector.

ICTU’s Equality and Human Rights programme is ensuring that these issues remain central to workers, despite the official neglect by government of the Bill of Rights and a Shared Future.

INTO Representation on ICTU Committees

ICTU Women’s Committee	Annmarie Conway and Caroline McCarthy
ICTU Health and Safety Committee	Paul Groogan
ICTU Black and Minority Ethnic Committee	John Kelly
ICTU Global Solidarity Committee	Dorothy McGinley / John Kelly
ICTU Global Solidarity Committee	Kevin Daly
ICTU LGB & T Committee	Brian Adams (South Antrim Branch) Sean Kelly (Belfast West)

Congress Youth Committee continues to be particularly active, informing young workers about the many issues facing them. They are adept at using social media and they have made essential links with a range of youth organisations and students’ unions, many of whom could be seen participating in various Congress events over the course of the year.

NIC-ICTU is redoubling its efforts in co-operation with Belfast Trades Council, in 2021 to ensure the May Day celebrations are more family friendly in a weeklong programme of events. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic these events will be located online.

5.3 Training

Senior Official, Nuala O’Donnell, continues to work closely with the ICTU Officials in Belfast, on the improved INTO Trade Union Representative training and additional courses designed to promote trade union effectiveness and address professional and other issues. INTO continues to support the extension of these opportunities to our colleagues in the other teaching unions.

Further courses, the majority of which come with accreditation, continue to come on stream for members. We will hold another Principals Conference with our UTU and NEU colleagues over the course of the 2021 year either online or should the Covid-19 circumstances change face to face. INTO training opportunities continue to be organised and run by the Northern Office under the direction of Nuala O’Donnell, Senior Official. Attendance at these accredited courses is being hampered by the overall lack of financing across the education system and in this year Covid but nevertheless the training and courses on offer continue to be popular with members. Should the financial climate improve then INTO is placed to become a major player in providing professional development to members and our colleagues in the UTU and NEU.

SECTION 6: INTERNAL

6.1 Query Management

Northern Office receives telephone queries from members from 9am to 5pm (Monday to Thursday) and until 4pm on a Friday, with an answering machine service available between 1pm to 2pm each day and at weekends. In addition, officials, through the mail and email systems, receive queries and requests for advice and support from members.

General queries relating to issues concerning membership, training courses, the supply of information leaflets and seminars are dealt with separately by administrative staff. A new method for contacting Northern Office with a query was introduced in September 2020. Queries are also received by the Northern Office through emails to the infoli@into.ie email address.

Members can now submit queries through the portal on the INTO website. Members need to be registered on the portal to use this facility, they then click on 'Raise a Query' and complete the details of their query in the box provided. Once submitted this will automatically update the query section on the INTO database and the members' own record and the query will be allocated to an official to respond to.

Active cases continue to be managed by officials in the Northern Office. These may relate to individual members or indeed in some cases the entire membership of a school. Each case is different and the level of complexity and professional skills to manage these is demanding on time and resources. The officials aim to ensure that members are advised of developments relating to cases and are apprised of the opportunities / developments at each stage. In addition, Northern Committee and CEC members are apprised of developments pertaining to casework in their area.

Members receive advice on a range of professional and employee relations issues, including representation at grievance, disciplinary, bullying or harassment investigations and in preparing and taking industrial tribunal cases. With the increasing cost of legal cases, guidance has been produced by INTO to assist members who are considering referring their case for legal support and advice. Support for legal cases is the subject of consideration by a Prima Facie Committee. The Prima Facie committee has expressed the view that generally more effort at a local level should be pursued to resolve disputes, before they become legal issues.

Where appropriate, and after consideration by a Prima Facie Committee, consideration may be given to potential legal support to progress cases. This however would only be considered where all other industrial relations or negotiation avenues have either failed or been exhausted. Members who engage their own legal representatives do so at their own cost. In addition, a failure to disclose the use of independent legal advisors to INTO may have an influence or impact on the decision of INTO to support a case for referral to our own legal advisors.

INTO relies on rota of officials to respond to members' queries. Kevin Daly has been seconded to Northern Office since 1st September 2020, in the role of Trade Union Official. He joins Paul Groogan, Tommy McGlone, Nuala O'Donnell and Mark McTaggart who manages the query and casework load of the Northern Office.

6.2 Representation

Members continue to be supported to pursue legitimate grievances and in response to all disciplinary and contractual matters, through the agreed procedures.

Representations, while made more challenging during lockdown have, where possible continued either by virtual meeting, or using social distancing protocols.

In assisting individuals to resolve grievances INTO has supported members through mediation, conciliation and arbitration stages of the agreed procedures. INTO continues to recommend to our members that mediation and conciliation should be undertaken by independent practitioners, selected from the LRA.

6.3 Mediation

There has been considerable emphasis on the use of mediation to resolve personal difficulties in schools. Where appropriate, INTO has encouraged members to engage in such a process.

INTO has concerns about the independence of Employing Authority mediators, selected from panels but has agreed with CCMS that the teacher will be advised of an available internal mediation service. The choice of mediator rests solely with the claimant. INTO supports the use of independent mediators from the LRA.

6.4 Conciliation

Members continue to avail of the use of conciliation services provided by the LRA, as part of the agreed procedures.

6.5 Arbitration

Members are supported to an independent appeal panel where other mechanisms have failed to resolve the grievances. Members have been supported to this stage on:

- Grievances
- Redundancy / Dismissal
- Bullying / Harassment
- Disciplinary matters

In 2019/20, INTO brought a number of cases to Independent Appeal. INTO continues to pursue more cases than any other teaching union and has a significant high level of success at these appeals. INTO however is concerned that there is a significant delay in implementing arbitration decisions which can lead to further frustrations by the member and potentially create further claims. Cases were presented to Independent Appeal Hearings in respect of redundancy appeals, grievances, bullying and harassment claims and unfair dismissal issues.

6.6 Industrial Tribunals

INTO continues to support members taking cases to industrial tribunals following a positive recommendation by a Prima Facie committee and a supportive legal opinion. Representation of members is provided by a Senior Official and the relevant Northern Committee member. In all cases legal assistance is sought.

6.7 Equality

INTO prioritises equality of opportunity and responds to equality consultations from a variety of education providers. INTO has worked with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and other statutory agencies to promote equality of opportunity.

Regular Reports of on-going equality matters are presented to the Northern Committee and the INTO Equality Committee. INTO is represented by Sean Kelly and Grainne McAleer on the INTO National Equality Committee.

6.8 Bullying / Harassment

Members continue to report increasing cases of bullying/harassment in schools. This remains of serious concern. Members who wish to raise formal complaints against other members of staff or who are accused of bullying behaviour are supported. INTO also raises concerns that in a number of cases involving only INTO members at a school, employers have a view that the responsibility for resolving disputes can be ceded to INTO.

It remains of concern to INTO that despite the workload agreement the issue of excessive workload remains a significant feature of members calls to the Northern Office. The reprioritisation of individual teacher time budgets through the 2018/19 pay settlement should alleviate many of the "issues". INTO will continue to monitor the issue.

6.9 Health and Safety

Since agreement was reached in 2015 on NITC representation on a range of health and safety committees, Tommy McGlone has coordinated these committees on behalf of NITC. The group have also been charged with the implementation of a revised THAW strategy. The lack of genuine progress in this area remains of concern to INTO. It is hoped that progress will be made in this very important area as it sits firmly within the realm of the upcoming nine reviews.

6.10 Violence at Work

INTO is concerned at the rising number of assaults and battery upon teachers by pupils, parents and other adults involved in schools. INTO raises individual issues with schools and has supported teachers who are the victims of violence.

INTO has also raised the issue of violence in schools through a range of articles in Printout, local press and appearances on local television and radio. Members who are the victims of assaults remain a priority for INTO.

The importance of appropriate risk assessments is a factor and is also a frequent topic of calls to the Northern Office. The All-Ireland dimension of the issue has been highlighted, and an advice leaflet has been developed and published for INTO members who are a victim of assault, which can be adapted to satisfy the needs in each jurisdiction. The leaflet, 'Advice on Dealing with Assaults and Violence at School,' was published in September 2017, and is available from Northern Office and on the INTO website.

6.11 Risk Assessment

The need to develop the practice of a risk assessment process, as part of good management practice, has been highlighted by INTO and remains a priority. The need for effective, setting specific Risk Assessments has been highlighted by the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is the use of such Risk Assessments that will inform the decision-making process regarding a school's fitness to remain open.

6.12 Administration of Medicines in Schools

This guidance is available on the INTO website and reaffirms that teachers cannot be directed to administer medicines to pupils. The move towards mainstream schooling of children with specific medical needs has also highlighted the importance of support for teachers who are faced with children who have complex medical requirements.

6.13 Health and Safety Committees

INTO is concerned at the lack of strategic structures for the negotiation of health and safety issues, relating to teachers in Northern Ireland. INTO has been successful in agreeing that the overseeing body for implementing the Teacher Health and Wellbeing report (THAW) will now be designated as a Health and Safety Committee, responsible to the Teachers Negotiating Committee (TNC).

The Health and Well-being Subcommittee has been tasked with commissioning a report in relation to stress at work and its causes, which will be informed by a survey of teachers through the C2K system. Training of INTO and UTU and NEU Health and Safety School Representatives into current legislation, risk assessments and the role of the representative was successfully carried out by Tommy McGlone Senior Official.

6.14 Recruitment

6.14.1 Students

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic the usual fresher's fairs in St Mary's University College, Stranmillis University College, Queen's University, and University of Ulster at Coleraine in September and October were unable to take place. In response, INTO, UTU and NEU worked collectively to produce an online student application process hosted on the INTO website, together with a joint student recruitment video and prize draw initiative to encourage student members to sign up. The student membership figure on 31 December 2020 was 851.

INTO instigated a new online student membership acknowledgement process with student membership packs being issued by post, lockdown permitting.

INTO continued to support student members via sponsorship of student handbooks in St Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College and by participation in online seminars hosted by the Colleges.

6.14.2 NQTs

Due to lockdown limitations, INTO initiated an online recruitment process for NQTs inviting them to join as full members using young INTO member testimonies and prize draw incentives to encourage uptake. NQTs were contacted in May, June and again in October 2020.

The INTO Vere Foster medal is awarded each year to the graduating student who achieves the highest standard of practical teaching in their final year in St Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College. The 2020 winners were Miss Amy McAlpine and Mr Andrew Irvine in Stranmillis. At the time of going to print Northern Office had not been notified of the winner of the Vere Foster medal in St Mary's University College, Belfast.

6.14.3 Membership

All INTO school representatives were circulated with recruitment materials in April and August. Despite a large number of redundancies and fewer jobs for NQTs the INTO membership is continuing to grow. The membership figure at the end of December 2020 was 6916.

Members no longer need to apply in hard copy via post. There is now a quick and easy on line application system. Once registered members can also update their details via their account on the website, and access the member's only content on the website.

6.14.4 Online poll and updating Database

The first ever INTO Online Poll was conducted in April 2020. On 30 March 2020, there were 6913 members in INTO in the North of which only 5347 members had email addresses on the database. It was suspected that many of these email addresses were outdated and possibly invalid.

To update the emails on the INTO database emails were sent to INTO school reps, branch secretaries, Northern Committee to send on to their INTO member contacts and via an ebulletin to individual members through the e-newsletter. Regular updates were also issued through the INTO website and social media platforms.

INTO Northern Office was closed from Saturday 11 – Tuesday 14 April 2020 inclusive for the Easter holidays. By 18.39pm on Wednesday 15 April 1,000 email queries had been received over the Easter break and 619 of them had been answered and processed in that one day.

From 6 April 2020 when INTO issued information to members about updating their contact details on the database to participate in the poll, until the close of the poll on 22 April, **3290** email queries were received, into the info@into.ie and INTOPoll2020@into.ie email inboxes, and processed by the officials and staff in Northern Office, and the Chair and Vice-chair of Northern Committee.

At the cut-off point at 10.30am on Monday 20 April 2020, there were 6971 active members on the INTO NI database, an increase of 54 members, of which 6942 were eligible to participate in the poll. (Honorary and Associate members are excluded by Rule). Of those 686 members had they neither an email address nor mobile number on the INTO database and could therefore not receive the link to the online poll.

6258 links to the online poll were sent to individual INTO members on Monday 20 April 2020 from 13.00 by email and SMS. 5599 emails and 5544 SMS text messages were sent that day. The last SMS messages were sent by 19.00pm that evening.

By the close of the poll at 5pm on Wednesday 22 April, 4620 INTO members had participated in the online poll, 74% of those eligible and able to participate.

3099 (67%) members answered YES to accept the pay and workload offer

1521 (33%) members answered NO

1638 members who were sent a link did not participate in the online poll.

On Thursday 23 April 2020 an email was sent to all members with a valid email address on the INTO database informing them of the outcome of the poll. 5784 emails were sent, 185 more than had been sent on Monday with a link for the Poll. INTO Northern Office staff had updated hundreds of email addresses and mobile numbers that morning after the poll had closed.

Since then, INTO staff in Northern Office have contacted all members without an email or mobile number on the database by post and followed up by text, for those with mobile numbers. Out of the current 6916 members in the North only 305, only 4%, do not have an email address on the INTO database. All of these members have been contacted and asked to supply an email address but have not responded to date.

6.15 INTO Training

Health and Safety Training

INTO, recognising the significant and increased Health and safety issues for teachers returning to schools in August 2020, worked with the ICTU to provide two OCN level 2 accredited online courses on Managing H&S during Covid-19, one for INTO Health and Safety Reps and a second course for School Leaders.

Stress Management Webinar

INTO also provided members with a webinar on stress management in recognition of the stresses in teaching generally and the increased stresses for all in the current climate. This webinar, delivered by ICTU tutor Roisin Graham, is available on the INTO website.

INTO School Representatives

An animation to encourage members to take up the role of INTO school rep was produced and posted on the INTO website in August 2020. School rep training scheduled to take place during the year was cancelled due to Covid 19.

6.15.2 Union Learning Fund (ULF)

In 2020 INTO successfully bid for funding to develop learning opportunities for members. Union Learning Reps (ULRs) are union representatives trained to support learning at work and to work with course providers and employers for the benefit of all. They can provide initial advice and guidance to individuals and signpost them to educational organisations for additional support. Union Learning Representatives have statutory rights to carry out their roles. And they work to identify learning and skills needs in the workplace. They provide learning advice and guidance on the latest training initiatives and programmes and they can work to secure equal opportunities in learning and training.

A workshop on Mid Career Review was scheduled to take place in March 2020 but had to be cancelled due to Covid 19 restrictions. Further training which was scheduled for later in the year also had to be cancelled due to Covid 19 restrictions.

6. 16 INTO / NEU / UTU

6. 16.1 INTO/ NEU / UTU Board

Representatives

INTO	UTU	NEU
John Boyle	Stephen McCord	Mark Langhammer
Gerry Murphy	Jacque White	Allister Donaghy
Caroline McCarthy	Alison Steen	Bronagh Wright
Marie O'Shea	Leigh Cooper	
Mark McTaggart	Rebekka Gilpin	

The INTO / NEU / UTU relationship continues to develop. The Board has decided to prioritise integration at CEC/NC level. A range of events is organised, including retirement courses, an annual Leadership Conference and general benefits for members.

6.16.2 Partnership Agreement

The partnership, established in June 2011, with the Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU), National Education Union, (NEU) and the Educational Institute of Scotland, (EIS), continues to develop. The four unions are working together in partnership, to the benefit of teachers in their respective countries.

6.16.3 Joint Training

There were several joint training courses during the year with NEU and UTU. These courses were all well attended

6.16.4 Retirement Planning Seminars

The INTO-UTU retirement planning seminars, in conjunction with Platinum Financial, were once again very well attended. Due to Covid-19 restrictions these seminars have taken place as virtual events. The information and advice provided are very useful for all members considering retirement within the next five years and not just those in their retirement year.

6. 16.5 Annual Leadership Conference

The 2020 joint INTO/ UTU / NEU Principals and Vice-principals Annual Conference took place in, Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown 30 January 2020. The conference continued the trend of previous years in attracting a large group of principals and vice-principals to hear and discuss issues pertinent to them in their daily roles. The attendees received presentations from Ricky Irwin, the recently appointed Director of Well-being and Inclusion and Sharon Lawler, Head of Special Education and Inclusion at the Department of Education, Ciaran Trainor, Equality Commission N Ireland and Miriam Bacon, Disability Action.

The presentations were well received and provided an excellent insight into some challenges currently facing principals and vice-principals and an opportunity for direct engagement with DE Officials.

6.16.6 Membership Plus

All members received their new Membership Plus cards in August 2020, the next date for issuing cards will be August 2022. The Membership Plus card entitles members to over 600 offers and discounts on many different products and services. Members can use the search facility on the membership plus website to look for a specific offer, or to look up offers by category or area, with more offers being added all the time. An app was developed, which enables members to search for offers on the go.

6.17 National Committees

The two representatives on the INTO National PDC from the North of Ireland, Henry Duffin District 1 and Brian McGrath District 2, attended six meetings of the PDC during 2020, along with Mark McTaggart, Assistant Northern Secretary.

The two representatives on the INTO National Education Committee from the North of Ireland, Lisa Magennis District 1 and Mary Dorman District 2, attended meetings of the EDC during 2020 along with Nuala O'Donnell, Senior Official.

The two representatives on the INTO National Equality Committee from the North of Ireland, Sean Kelly District 1 and Grainne McAleer District 2, attended six meetings of the EQC during 2020 along with Tommy McGlone, Senior Official.

6.18 Communication

The INTO website has been operating for well over a year now and it is fully responsive, making it easy to navigate on a wide range of web browsers, mobiles and tablets and once you have logged in you should be able to: 1 Check and update your member record (My INTO page). 2 Register for INTO courses and events (Events – Seminars & Workshops). 3 Update your preferences for communication from the INTO (My Contact Methods) and 4. Access all the INTO information and services in the members' portal (information Area).

A new feature in the members' portal means that once you log in you can now email in your query and it will be registered with Northern Office and an official will get back to you within 48 hours.

During the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the website has been and continues to be invaluable in the provision of important facts and guidance to members with constant updates and the dedicated Covid-19 page and FAQs. In order for members to get the full use of the website you need to be registered on the new database. If you are not registered on the new database with up-to-date details, then you will have limited access to the website. For access email infolni@into.ie.

The NI Facebook account Irish National Teachers' Organisation NI and the twitter account NI_INTO have also been providing members with facts and up-to-date guidance on Covid-19 and relevant issues. Members are encouraged to follow the accounts for daily posts and up-to-date news.

GDPR

Following Brexit, the UK is no longer regulated domestically by the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which governs processing of personal data from individuals inside the EU. Instead, the UK now has its own version known as the UK-GDPR (United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation). The new UK-GDPR took effect on January 31, 2020 and it is almost word for word completely identical to the EU's GDPR.

Following on from this all members should note that from now on there will be a notice displayed regarding the use of photographs and videos at all INTO events. Any member who does not wish to give permission for the use of their image will be asked to inform INTO staff at the event.

6.19 Annual Vere Foster Lecture

This year's lecture was delivered by Paul MacFlynn, Co-Director NERI and is entitled "Mind the Gap – Education and the Economic Divide on the Island of Ireland": Paul Mac Flynn is Co-Director of the Nevin Economic Research Institute and is based in the Belfast office. Over the last 40 years, the economic dynamic on the island of Ireland has changed dramatically. Now Brexit has brought into sharp focus the fate of the all-island economy and the differing fortunes of both economies. Education is a key driver of economic growth and is fundamental to understanding

the scale of the gap in outcomes that now exists on the island of Ireland. How we invest in education and how we reward education are two key questions that need to be examined.

Learning lessons from the experience of both economies can lead to a more equitable and sustainable economy and society on the island of Ireland. In addition to managing the Belfast office Paul Mac Flynn has co-responsibility for the NERI's research programme and for its strategic direction. He leads on NERI's analysis of the Northern Ireland economy along with all research into the impact of the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union. Other research areas include regional productivity, the all-island economy and the future of work. He is a graduate of University College Dublin with a BA in Economics and Politics and the University of Bristol with an MSc in Economics and Public Policy, specialising in the economic impacts of political devolution in the UK. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this year's lecture was pre-recorded with social distancing measures in place and is available to view on the INTO website www.into.ie/ni.

6.20 Annual INTO Art Competition

The 2020 winner of the INTO Art Competition was Paula McEvoy a member of Dungannon Branch.

All of the competition entries were published in Printout and on the INTO website.

Appendix INTO Success:

Throughout this period the INTO website and FAQs have been updated on a regular basis for the benefit of members.

INTO SUCCESSES SINCE MARCH 2020

DATE	ISSUE	COMMUNICATION/NEGOTIATION	OUTCOME/SUCCESS
13 March 2020	PAYMENT OF SUB TEACHERS:	INTO went into discussions/negotiations with management with a view to ensuring that subs would be paid for days that they were booked through NISTR if they could not attend school because of COVID-19.	20 March 2020 NISTR confirm that substitute teachers will receive their normal pay for the period of time that they have been engaged to work. This included any engagements currently registered on the NISTR system AND any engagements which were verbally agreed between the school and the substitute teacher.
17 March 2020	CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS	Letter to FM&DFM from NITC under INTO pressure calling for a date for school closures in light of the public health advice to stay at home.	The First Minister and deputy First Minister announced that schools would close to pupils at the end of the school day on Friday 20 March.
18 March 2020	ADVICE TO MEMBERS (Prior to closure)	INTO gives guidance to members who are vulnerable to remain at home and lists categories of members who should stop attending school. Principals are advised to follow protocols regarding safety and complete risk assessments if open. (Risk assessment template provided by EA)	Evening statement from the Joint First Minister ends the uncertainty for teachers and school leaders as announcement to close schools from Friday 20 March. Members receive up to date advice on attendance at school. Dedicated Covid-19 Advice page established.

INTO SUCCESSES SINCE MARCH 2020

DATE	ISSUE	COMMUNICATION/NEGOTIATION	OUTCOME/SUCCESS
19 March 2020	NITC LETTER TO MINISTER RE SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS OUT OF WORK	INTO through NITC request that the Department of Education establish a hardship fund to support these teachers who no longer have work due to Covid-19.	INTO through NITC issued another letter on same subject to Permanent Secretary Derek Baker on 23/03/2020 Letter from Sara Long confirming consideration 31/03/2020 07/05/2020 INTO initiate email campaign to MLAs to get support for subs agreed by Executive. 19/05/2020 Success - INTO welcomes the introduction of the COVID-19 Income Protection Scheme designed to support those essential members of the teaching workforce not in full-time employment.
22 March 2020	INTO ADVICE & GUIDANCE TO ALL MEMBERS ON ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL	INTO issue comprehensive guidance to all members re attending schools. Also produce Exceptional Times Exceptional Advice document FAQs established.	INTO focus on following PHA guidance and need for schools to be safe for both pupils and teachers. Focus on risk assessments and relevant FAQs all of which continue to present day to protect & inform members.
26 March 2020	INTO ADVICE & GUIDANCE TO ALL MEMBERS ON WORKING AT HOME	Following Permanent Secretary's letter to principals re opening of schools, INTO provided comprehensive advice to members on working from home. FAQs also updated.	Members have clear guidance with regard to working from home and the possible measures needed to be taken to protect their Health and Wellbeing.

INTO SUCCESSES SINCE MARCH 2020

DATE	ISSUE	COMMUNICATION/NEGOTIATION	OUTCOME/SUCCESS
1 April 2020	COVID_19 TESTING & PPE SUPPLY	INTO calls on the Stormont Executive, as a matter of urgency, to ensure that adequate testing and adequate levels of PPE is provided for teachers and other staff who are currently in schools facilitating supervised learning to children of key workers.	As well as ongoing updates on Covid-19 page and constantly updated FAQs INTO welcomed the EA letter informing schools they would each be assigned a link officer to support them with Covid-19 pressures in their schools. INTO continues to pressure MS to make schools safe for members.
8 April 2020	PAY & WORKLOAD OFFER MADE BY MS	MS made Pay & Workload offer. Due to Covid-19 information was disseminated via website and intensive social media campaign. Ballot of members to accept or reject offer facilitated on-line.	Campaign with membership to ensure email addresses/mobile numbers to maximise ballot involvement (<77% contact details to 89.7% accurate) 74% of Members voted 67% to accept the Pay & Workload offer - ratified on 28 April 2020. Members received pay uplift in June 2020 and agreement to proceed with 9 Reviews as soon as possible in line with Covid-19 restrictions. After over 2 years of industrial action INTO succeeded in securing a Pay & Workload agreement with MS which improved members pay & secured reviews on workload issues.
17 April 2020	CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS	INTO letter to Education Minister strongly advising against the opening of schools prior to September 2020 and urging the Department to publicly clarify what the Department's position is in regard to this issue. 4 May 2020 Supporting letter to DE from BIGTU	28 April 2020 Letter from DE confirming that, "no decisions have been taken by the Executive on relaxation of the current lockdown, and when decisions are made, they will be based on expert scientific and public health advice. Schools will reopen when it is safe to do so." Schools remained closed though to 17 August 2020

INTO SUCCESSES SINCE MARCH 2020

DATE	ISSUE	COMMUNICATION/NEGOTIATION	OUTCOME/SUCCESS
30 April 2020	ISSUES REGARDING PRSD, INDUCTION & EARLY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.	INTO through NITC raise the concerns associated with Covid-19 and the completion of PRSD, Induction & Early Professional Development for members with MS.	15 May 2020 Success - INTO welcomes the letter from MS regarding Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) and Pay Progression, which stated that for the academic year 2020/21, threshold and pay progression decisions would be based on one successful PRSD statement in the past two years. PRSD for the academic year 2019/20 would be discounted.
1 May 2020	ISSUES REGARDING SCHOOL REPORTS	INTO members raise the concerns associated with Covid-19 and the completion of School Reports considering school closure and the impact on delivery of the curriculum.	Following INTO & NITC lobbying of Management Side - 20/05/2020 – Minister Peter Weir letter issued confirming guidance on school reports clarifies members concerns. 21/05/2020 – INTO response to Ministers letter instructs members not to report on on-line learning and clarifies members concerns.
5 May 2020	OFQUAL CONSULTATION ON ASSESSMENT AND GRADING OF VOCATIONAL, TECHNICAL AND OTHER GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS	INTO issue a response to the OFQUAL consultation which among other things raises the concern of appeals which can be made against teacher judgements.	Following INTO consultation feedback and pressure from NITC, the Education Minister Peter Weir declares that teachers will be indemnified from litigation regarding the grading of pupils.

**INTO SUCCESSES SINCE MARCH 2020**

DATE	ISSUE	COMMUNICATION/NEGOTIATION	OUTCOME/SUCCESS
15 May 2020	MEMBERS OUT OF WORK & UNDER FINANCIAL PRESSURE DUE TO COVID>	Calls highlight an increasingly worrying concern for members who have been left with no work due to Covid-19 and the closure of schools. INTO reminds members that should they require they can contact their Benefit Funds Committee representative.	INTO members contact their Benefit Funds Committee representative and many members are relieved to be given support in a difficult time. - INTO welcomes the introduction of the COVID-19 Income Protection Scheme on 19/05/2020
21 May 2020	EDUCATION MINISTER MAKES STATEMENT TO AD HOC COMMITTEE	Education Minister addresses Ad Hoc Committee on way forward for education in pandemic but fails to address Transfer issue.	22/05/2020 – INTO responds to Minister’s letter and expresses disappointment that the issue of transfer to post primary schools was not addressed. INTO promises to campaign to have current system changed. 13-01-2021 - AQE cancel Transfer tests. INTO call for academic selection to be “ <i>consigned to the dustbin of history.</i> ”
2 June 2020	EDUCATION RESTART LETTER FROM DE	Education Restart Programme, which, working alongside a wide range of stakeholders, puts in place the detailed measures and guidance which should enable a safe phased reopening of schools.	INTO through NITC and working with management side, reiterates its focus on the safety of all our members and families and produces Contingency Planning for a Wider Re-opening of Schools in the Academic Year 2020/21: May 2020 (PDF) INTO Letter to Members 5/06/2020

INTO SUCCESSES SINCE MARCH 2020

DATE	ISSUE	COMMUNICATION/NEGOTIATION	OUTCOME
12 June 2020	MINISTER WEIR MAKING DECISIONS WITHOUT CONSULTING TEACHER UNIONS	INTO Request members email Education Minister & provide template to encourage dialogue through proper channels. Suggestions of summer schools & return of pupils without scientific evidence or consultation.	Following INTO emails from members and pressure from NITC, the Education Minister Peter Weir agrees to emergency meeting with NITC to discuss recent plans for a wider re-opening of schools and proposals being developed by the Department of Education to have principals and teachers run summer schools in July and August. Summer schools were run on a voluntary basis & frank discussions were had on making school a safe place. Response to INTO Members’ Email Correspondence: 23 June 2020 (PDF)
18 June 2020	MINISTER WEIR ANNOUNCES EARLY OPENING OF SCHOOLS IN AUGUST.	INTO issued a press release in response to Minister’s announcement stating teachers only contracted 195 days and if required to return from summer break early will reclaim days later in year. Issue with teachers not back from holidays on suggested return date.	INTO through NITC pressurise/lobby Management Side on clarification on reopening of schools & especially those who have already committed to holidays. 23/06/2020 - Letter of Agreement re: Teachers’ Conditions of Service addressed days to work 195 and teachers on holidays.
23 June 2020	MEMBERS CONCERNED ABOUT RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER SUMMER	INTO members raise concerns through volume of calls with the confusing and conflicting information regarding the schools opening. INTO focus on developing factual and up to date information for members. INTO with NITC negotiate through TNC confirmation of protections for Summer holiday ↓	Letter received: TNC Exceptional circumstances COVID 19 1. Directed time not more than 195days or 1265hrs 2. Pre-existing Holiday arrangements or commitments 3. Quarantine Arrangements INTO Guidance: COVID SAFER SCHOOLS is published as helpful guidance based on the most up to date information available. ↓

INTO SUCCESSES SINCE MARCH 2020

		teachers' arrangements and protections for 2020-21 directed time	FAQs and information on the INTO Website is constantly being up dated too. 2/07/2020 - Risk Assessments are posted on Covid-19 website page for individuals and schools to access.
August 2020	MEMBERS CONCERNED ABOUT SCHOOL REOPENING	INTO response after publishing sent to DE re: Re-opening school Guidance highlighting concerns.	INTO Bulletin 1 produced for members https://www.into.ie/app/uploads/2020/08/INTO-BULLETIN-1-Aug-2020-return-to-work.pdf All future drafts of DE reopening/restart guidance are responded to by INTO despite short deadlines.
August/Sept 2020	PRINCIPALS RECEIVE EMAIL REGARDING HOME TEST KITS & THEIR DISTRIBUTION	INTO letter of 4 September 2020 highlights concerns around the proposed distribution of home testing kits from school and the manner in which the additional funding to support the school restart has been calculated and distributed.	15/09/2020 Education Minister's Response to INTO Letter clarifies that DHSC apologised for mistake re Home Kits. Letter also explained that funding was to support the safety of schools and EA would distribute funds to those schools that need it.
7 September 2020	INTO WRITE TO EMPLOYERS ON BEHALF OF PRINCIPAL MEMBERS & PRESSURES THEY ARE FACING.	INTO write concerning the increasing pressure that INTO principal members are being subjected to & poor communication. Significant gaps are emerging in the guidance and support available	01/10/2020 – Employers Response Letter which identifies a need to further review and modify their approach, in order to continue to provide support and deliver essential services at this time.

INTO SUCCESSES SINCE MARCH 2020

March-Oct 2020	STAFF CONCERNED ABOUT ABSENCE DUE TO COVID	INTO communicate directly with DE on advice for staff impacted by COVID INTO respond to all guidance when received in draft form or in final form. INTO suggestions taken on board and significant amendments included.	March 2020 INTO pushes for verbal contracts to be binding including for absence due to COVID and teachers who need work from home receiving full pay. 20 March 2020 Absence guidance produced by DE 10 August 2020 updated guidance recognises work from home for identified groups in line with risk assessments 18 Sept 2020 updated guidance specifies for all teachers permanent and substitute & recognises need for teachers with child care needs due to Covid-19– on normal pay working from home or exceptional dependent leave.
Sep 2020	REALISATION OF PAY AWARD OUT-WORKINGS	Transition group reports in respect of directed time-budgets, joint consultative committees and new initiatives.	Negotiations on-going.

INTO SUCCESSES SINCE MARCH 2020

		teachers’ arrangements and protections for 2020-21 directed time	FAQs and information on the INTO Website is constantly being up dated too. 2/07/2020 - Risk Assessments are posted on Covid-19 website page for individuals and schools to access.
August 2020	MEMBERS CONCERNED ABOUT SCHOOL REOPENING	INTO response after publishing sent to DE re: Re-opening school Guidance highlighting concerns.	INTO Bulletin 1 produced for members https://www.into.ie/app/uploads/2020/08/INTO-BULLETIN-1-Aug-2020-return-to-work.pdf All future drafts of DE reopening/restart guidance are responded to by INTO despite short deadlines.
August/Sept 2020	PRINCIPALS RECEIVE EMAIL REGARDING HOME TEST KITS & THEIR DISTRIBUTION	INTO letter of 4 September 2020 highlights concerns around the proposed distribution of home testing kits from school and the manner in which the additional funding to support the school restart has been calculated and distributed.	15/09/2020 Education Minister’s Response to INTO Letter clarifies that DHSC apologised for mistake re Home Kits. Letter also explained that funding was to support the safety of schools and EA would distribute funds to those schools that need it.
7 September 2020	INTO WRITE TO EMPLOYERS ON BEHALF OF PRINCIPAL MEMBERS & PRESSURES THEY ARE FACING.	INTO write concerning the increasing pressure that INTO principal members are being subjected to & poor communication. Significant gaps are emerging in the guidance and support available	01/10/2020 – Employers Response Letter which identifies a need to further review and modify their approach, in order to continue to provide support and deliver essential services at this time.

INTO SUCCESSES SINCE MARCH 2020

March-Oct 2020	STAFF CONCERNED ABOUT ABSENCE DUE TO COVID	INTO communicate directly with DE on advice for staff impacted by COVID INTO respond to all guidance when received in draft form or in final form. INTO suggestions taken on board and significant amendments included.	March 2020 INTO pushes for verbal contracts to be binding including for absence due to COVID and teachers who need work from home receiving full pay. 20 March 2020 Absence guidance produced by DE 10 August 2020 updated guidance recognises work from home for identified groups in line with risk assessments 18 Sept 2020 updated guidance specifies for all teachers permanent and substitute & recognises need for teachers with child care needs due to Covid-19– on normal pay working from home or exceptional dependent leave.
Sep 2020	REALISATION OF PAY AWARD OUT-WORKINGS	Transition group reports in respect of directed time-budgets, joint consultative committees and new initiatives.	Negotiations on-going.

INTO SUCCESSES SINCE MARCH 2020

DATE	ISSUE	COMMUNICATION/NEGOTIATION	OUTCOME
22 September 2020	CONCERNS ARISING FROM INCONSISTENT ADVICE FROM PHA ON COVID-19 CASES	INTO members raise concerns regarding confusing and conflicting from PHA. INTO focus on developing factual and up to date information for members. 22/09/2020 – Letter to PHA on the level of consistency regarding the responses to positive cases.	At last – 22/10/2020 – PHA respond to INTO letter of 22/09/2020 and there are assurances all is being done to support schools safely and provide the correct advice. INTO letter ensures PHA deliver the proper advice and support going forward.
March/Sep 2020	ONGOING CONCERNS FOR CHILDREN WHO MISSED OUT MOST DURING LOCKDOWNS	INTO & fellow unions through NITC continually raise concerns for those children who don't have the support or technology at home during lockdown and who have missed out through lockdown period.	23/09/2020 - Launch of the "Engage Programme" to support children and young people as they return to school. INTO welcomes programme which will employ up to 300 teachers to provide high quality one to one, small group or team teaching support in every school in Northern Ireland.
May/Sep 2020	ONGOING CONCERNS REGARDING ABSENCES DUE TO COVID-19 & AFFECT ON SICK LEAVE	As pandemic has progressed INTO has been concerned with the impact on members sick leave and the isolation requirements in relation to absence from work. INTO raises concerns and seeks clarification from MS. No member should lose sick leave due to Covid-19.	28 September 2020 Guidance on Absence Relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19): Advice for Principals, Managers and Staff published. The guidance was produced so employers and employees were aware of arrangements regarding absences in relation to COVID-19. Covid-19 leave does not impact on members' sick leave.

INTO SUCCESSES SINCE MARCH 2020

DATE	ISSUE	COMMUNICATION/NEGOTIATION	OUTCOME
Oct 2020	NEW LOCKDOWN ANNOUNCED AND CONCERNS WITH DAYS TAKEN & BLENDED LEARNING	INTO members confused with days to take over October break & impact of working from home and also supporting vulnerable and key workers children in school.	INTO issue INTO Bulletin 2: Prioritising Safe Schools (PDF) INTO Bulletin 3: School Closure (PDF) and INTO Advice on Working from Home: Getting the Balance and Making it Sustainable (Docx) to support members. Comprehensive advice from INTO help to ease members concerns in light of a lack of support from Management Side.
Nov 2020	SCHOOLS DUE TO REOPEN BUT CONCERNS ARE RAISED BY INTO OVER THE SAFETY OF SCHOOLS.	INTO urgently call for a commitment by the Minister of Education to a review of safety in schools and a review of risk assessments must take place. The issue of mask wearing, the safety and practicality of a full return in all schools and an honest appraisal of the exams situation is required, including Transfer Test.	30/10/2020 – INTO press release - Revised Plan is Crucial for Schools to Remain Open 21/12/2020 – Face Coverings to become compulsory in post primary classrooms and increased enforcement on school transport. 06/01/2021 – Minister's Statement - all GCSE, AS and A2 exams due to take place in January, February, May and June will be cancelled. 12/01/2021 – Following PPT cancellation of transfer test, AQE eventually follow suit.
Nov 2020	REALISATION OF PAY AWARD OUT-WORKINGS	Training by both DE and INTO regarding drawing up DTBs provided via webinar.	All teachers should have now have a directed time budget and if not then management has agreed that teachers without agreed time-budget are not required to work for more than 6 ½ hours per day equating to 32 ½ hours per working week.



INTO SUCCESSES SINCE MARCH 2020

Dec 2020	REALISATION OF PAY AWARD OUT-WORKINGS	Joint consultative Committee draft Terms of Reference under review. The expected outcome will be that a consultative role for trade unions will be formally recognised	The pilot is expected to roll out at the beginning of the new 2021/22 term.
Dec 2020	REALISATION OF PAY AWARD OUT-WORKINGS	New Joint Secretaries Forum identifies attendance and family friendly TNCs to be reviewed by Joint Working Parties.	The outcome will hopefully be both the restoration of normal industrial relations and INTO proofed TNCs.
Jan 2021	REALISATION OF PAY AWARD OUT-WORKINGS	Transition Group produce early draft Terms of reference for New Initiatives.	The outcome of this is expected to limit new initiates to school to those that have had INTO consultation.

INTO SUCCESSES SINCE MARCH 2020

DATE	ISSUE	COMMUNICATION/NEGOTIATION	OUTCOME
Dec/Jan 2020/21	SCHOOLS CLOSE AGAIN AND ANOTHER LOCKDOWN BEGINS FOR ALL EXCEPT SPECIAL SCHOOLS.	INTO & fellow unions through NITC continually raise concerns for those working in Special Schools with concerns for safety as risks cannot be properly mitigated. INTO call for vaccinations for teachers in Special schools.	12&13/01/2021 - INTO updates documents – INTO Advice and Guidance to all Members on Attendance at School During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Docx) and INTO Advice on Working From Home: Getting The Balance and Making It Sustainable (Docx) 1/02/2021 – Executive agree to prioritise the vaccination of staff in Special Schools
JAN 2021	FINANCIAL HARDSHIP FUND FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS UNABLE TO WORK	INTO lobbies DE for fund similar to agreed for Substitute teachers available in school year 2019-20	22 January 2021 Announcement by DE of INCOME SUPPORT SCHEME FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS based on average earnings Sept-Dec
20 JAN 2021	VACCINATION OF TEACHERS IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND THOSE SUPPORTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN MAINSTREAM	INTO represents members at the Education Committee calling for their support in early vaccination for special school staff	Jan 2021 DE announcement of roll out of testing in special schools of staff and pupils (roll out mid Feb 2021) 1 Feb 2021 DE announcement of plan for vaccination of special school staff.
27 JAN 2021	SUPPORTING YOUNG MEMBERS	Communication with members on the benefits of INTO	INTO hold the first virtual conference for young members. Topics covered include: importance of the union, DTB, substitute teachers, temporary contracts and accessing information.

Throughout this period the INTO website and FAQs have been updated on a regular basis for the benefit of members.



THE IRISH NATIONAL TEACHERS' ORGANISATION

NORTHERN CONFERENCE 2020

CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS Resolutions Passed: Remitted

Following Covid-19 restrictions, business critical has dominated practice at the employing bodies and Department of Education. Progress in relation to the Conference Resolutions has, where possible continued.

RESOLUTION 1

Conference:

1. Welcomes the restoration of the Executive and the commitment contained in the deal 'New Decade, New Approach' to 'urgently resolve the current teachers' industrial dispute'.
2. Calls on Northern Committee to demand, through the NITC, that the Minister for Education delivers on this commitment without delay.
3. Reaffirms its resolve to continue with industrial action (up to and including strike) until a resolution has been reached.

Actions:

Northern Secretary remained in pay negotiations through NITC.

Following our ongoing Industrial Action Campaign, Management Side made a formal Pay & Workload Offer in April 2020.

INTO conducted an online poll in which our members voted to accept this offer:

Turnout was 74%

Those in favour of accepting the offer: 67%

Those against accepting the offer: 33%

NITC accepted offer.

cooperation with ETI until the current industrial dispute is settled;

2. Seek to establish a professional working relationship with the new Chief Inspector and their team of inspectors for the good of the entire education service;

3. Continue to work through NITC to pursue an agreed pre-inspection document detailing the minimum required documentation to support the inspection process;

4. Continue to work through NITC to pursue an agreed 'myth-busting' document clarifying the requirements of inspection;

5. Continue, through NITC, to pursue meaningful engagement with the ETI to reduce the excessive workload attributed directly or indirectly to, or as an unintended consequence of, inspection;

6. Work to ensure that normal inspection notifications will be maintained on cessation of industrial action and that schools will not be inspected 'without further notice' as threatened in ETI reports; and

7. Continue to work towards an independent complaints process.

Actions:

INTO continued on industrial action until pay settlement.

INTO continue to work, through NITC, with regard to continuing meaningful engagement with ETI.

INTO have started a media awareness campaign that will continue

RESOLUTION 2

Conference commends INTO members for their continued support in relation to non-cooperation in relation to ETI.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to:

1. Reaffirm its commitment to continue non-



Learning the lessons from the ongoing campaign in the south

1. Chief inspector informed of Conference resolution
2. Members remain on industrial action in relation to ETI
3. NITC position in relation to inspection practice and outcome communicated to management side
4. Negotiation continuing through NITC

RESOLUTION 3

Conference calls on the Northern Committee to continue pursuing a pay strategy formulated to:

1. Deliver pay restoration;
2. Protect the single incremental scale;
3. Resist attempts by the Government in London, or the Executive at Stormont, to introduce regional pay by whatever name;
4. Campaign to have the salary uplifts referred to colloquially as “points of responsibility” increased to reflect the increased demands faced by post holders; and
5. Begin a campaign to have the main scale and the leadership scales extended to reflect teachers’ long service.

Actions:

INTO continue, through TNC, to engage with Management Side with regard to pay uplifts that would reflect the members aims of delivering pay restoration.

Parts of resolution will be addressed through the reviews agreed as part of the 2020 pay deal.

RESOLUTION 4

Conference deplores the increase in class sizes across all sectors of education in Northern Ireland.

Conference recognises the detrimental impact this has on pupils and staff.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to engage with DE, EA and other stakeholders through the NITC to develop and implement a strategy to reverse this trend.

Actions :

Media awareness campaign has been started in relation to class size.

RESOLUTION 5

Conference notes with concern:

1. A sharp rise in serious mental health problems of young people.
2. The continued high rate of school aged suicide.
3. The inadequate resources available to teachers to support young people with mental health issues.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to lobby the Education Minister, EA and all relevant bodies for:

- a) An increase of funding for mental health services in schools.
- b) To urgently address these inadequacies and to prioritise early intervention strategies and meaningful support services for pupils.

Actions:

NITC continue to engage with Management Side in relation to Mental Health concerns in school.

RESOLUTION 6

Conference condemns the lack of resources for Special Educational Needs across the Education Sector in the North and the undue stress this is causing staff in school and the support services.

Conference further condemns the implementation of further significant changes to the provision of SEN education without proper and meaningful consultation with all education partners.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to support teachers and all pupils including the most vulnerable in education by:

1. Instructing members clearly not to comply with any SEN changes until a review has been carried out and a way forward agreed with the teacher unions;
2. Demanding DE and EA publish all research, rationale and process which has informed their proposed changes in relation to all SEN changes in the last 5 years, in particular regarding statementing and inclusion;



3. Working with the other education unions and appropriate interested bodies on a joint campaign relating to Special Education Provision; and

4. Opposing the use of Private Sector Education Psychologists in the Education Service in the North.

Actions:

INTO, along with NITC, continue to engage with the Management Side with regard to SEN.

INTO Northern Education Committee has submitted consultation responses to EA and DE. These have been shared with members.

INTO continues to advise members not to comply with any changes in SEN until consultation outcomes have been agreed.

RESOLUTION 7

Conference notes with concern the increasing pressures being faced daily by Principals and Vice-Principals in relation to workload.

Conference further notes that whilst a maximum of 1265 working hours exists for teachers within the Jordanstown Agreement, no such limit exists for Principals and Vice-Principals.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to work through the NITC with the employing authorities to ensure that a limit of 1265 hours is applicable to all school teaching staff.

Actions:

These will be actioned through the Review of Workload Impact on School Leaders strand of TNC 2020/1 pay and workload agreement.

RESOLUTION 8

Conference acknowledges that a significant majority of the teaching profession are female and are therefore likely to go through the menopause at some stage in their teaching career.

Conference calls on Northern Committee:

1. To negotiate with management on a range of measures, including an agreed policy on supporting menopause in the workplace; and

2. To undertake a campaign on menopause in the workplace which focuses on supporting teachers.

Actions

INTO to work with ICTU in engaging in a campaign on menopause in the workplace across all public sectors.

RESOLUTION 9

Conference notes the important role and work carried out by school Governors on a voluntary basis, to assist in the effective running of schools and the education of young people.

Conference notes with concern the lack of accountability and abuse of position exercised by a small minority of Governors.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to work with the relevant authorities to develop robust and enforceable guidelines in relation to all aspects of governance of schools.

Actions:

INTO is seeking a meeting with the Director of Corporate Services and Governance at DE and Employing Authorities to outline concerns with regard to School Governance.

RESOLUTION 10

Conference notes with concern the lack of support and care afforded to teachers who experience miscarriage prior to 24 weeks of pregnancy through the current teachers' maternity scheme.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to work through the NITC and JWP to address special status for leave for teachers in relation to miscarriage before 24 weeks of pregnancy, through the maternity scheme.

Actions:

INTO continues to work through NITC to revise the Maternity Scheme to reflect the concerns of members.

**RESOLUTION 11**

Conference notes with concern, the pressure that current procurement practice is putting on already strained budgets in the present economic climate.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to engage, through NITC, with the Education Authority to seek an urgent review of the procurement process in schools.

Actions:

INTO will request that this issue be raised as part of the review of Education announced by the Education Minister.

RESOLUTION 12

Conference notes the success of the Investing in the Teacher Workforce Scheme for those who availed of it.

Conference instructs Northern Committee to campaign through the NITC and JWP for the reintroduction of the Investing in the Teacher Workforce Scheme or the introduction of a similar scheme.

Actions:

INTO will request that this issue be raised as part of the review of Education announced by the Education Minister.

RESOLUTION 13

Conference notes with concern the increase in schools using and promoting work-related social media platforms.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to:

1. Investigate the extent of such social media usage in Nursery, Primary and Post-Primary schools in Districts 1 and 2.
2. Issue advice to members about engaging with work-related social media platforms.

Actions:

INTO provided advice for all members through the website relating to remote learning

Survey sent to all members, included this issue, in Sept 2020.

Further advice will continue to be issued which reflects the lessons learnt.

RESOLUTION 14

Conference:

1. Commends the work carried out by INTO School Representatives in schools.
2. Notes the number of schools with no INTO School Representative.
3. Calls on Northern Committee to develop a strategy to raise awareness of the importance of the role and to recruit new school representatives.

Actions:

This was to be discussed at Branch Officer training however Covid-19 restrictions have limited progress on this resolution.

RESOLUTION 15

Conference commends the efforts of 'Youth Strike 4 Climate' in organising protests to highlight the need to act on the climate emergency.

Conference notes that the concept of environmental sustainability should be central to every relevant area of any future negotiation and/or review of education.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to:

1. Encourage a culture of environmentally sustainable practices throughout the INTO in the North of Ireland.
2. Engage with Youth Strike 4 Climate organisers locally with a view to supporting their future actions where these actions are consistent with INTO policy.
3. Produce guidance for INTO members in the North of Ireland in regard to dealing with future climate strikes by school pupils.

Actions:

More communication with members is carried out electronically.

Covid-19 restrictions have limited progress on this resolution.

RESOLUTION 16

Conference notes with concern the continued presence of the 'teacher exception' in the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order (FETO) 1998. Conference further notes that this legislation allows for discrimination on the grounds of religious belief in the recruitment of teachers.



Conference calls on Northern Committee to work with the relevant bodies to seek an end to the ‘teacher exception’ in the FETO legislation.

Actions:

Covid-19 restrictions have limited progress on this resolution.

RESOLUTION 17

Conference notes with concern the changes to the education service provision for schools due to imposed changes to members’ working conditions and roles through the Children and Young Peoples Services.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to work to ensure that any proposed changes to the terms and conditions of its members within the service are workload proofed and are properly negotiated through approved management/teacher’s union channels, and accepted by members before they are communicated to schools and outside agencies.

Conference further calls on Northern Committee to inform the Education Authority Chief Executive, that the Director of Children and Young Peoples Services no longer enjoys the confidence of the Irish National Teachers’ Organisation.

Actions:

Regular engagement has been established between EA and NITC to review contractual issues within the sector.

INTO informed the Chief Executive of EA of its lack of confidence in the Director of CYPs.

RESOLUTION 18

Conference notes the growing number of pastoral and child protection issues that are being dealt with in schools.

Conference further notes with concern that teachers who are on the child protection team are not always given additional time to deal with these issues nor are they compensated financially for this responsibility.

Conference calls on Northern Committee,

through the NITC, to work with the relevant authorities to ensure points of responsibility, funded centrally outside the normal school budget, are available to the Designated Teachers and Deputy Designated Teacher in every school.

Actions:

Covid-19 restrictions have limited progress on this resolution.

RESOLUTION 19

Conference condemns the inequalities in funding of schools due to the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) element of the Common Funding Formula (CFF).

Conference calls on Northern Committee to work with the appropriate agencies to review the CFF and the AWPU to ensure greater fairness in the funding of schools which would not negatively impact a school’s current level of funding.

Actions:

INTO will request that this issue forms part of the review of Education announced by the Education Minister.

RESOLUTION 20

Conference notes with concern:

1. The introduction by the Education Authority of new arrangements for work experience placements without proper consultation.
2. The significant increase in the workload of teachers responsible for the organisation of work experience that these arrangements create.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to work with other relevant bodies to reduce the excessive workload caused, and to seek assurances from the Education Authority, with regard to areas of concern, including safeguarding and indemnification.

Actions:

Covid-19 restrictions have limited progress on this resolution.

**RESOLUTION 21**

Conference calls on Northern Committee to work with the employing authorities, through the NITC to:

1. Establish the concerns and worries teachers are facing through a Well-being survey.
2. Use the results of the Well-being survey to develop new approaches/strategies, which promote teacher health and well-being.

Actions:

These will be actioned through the Review of Workload Agreement strand of TNC 2020/1.

RESOLUTION 22

Conference notes the potential impact on pupils' health and well-being through the on-going rationalisation of the school estate.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to call on the Education Authority to carry out a study into the impact Area Planning has had on pupil attendance and their health and well-being in schools.

Actions:

Covid-19 restrictions have limited progress on this resolution.

RESOLUTION 23

Conference notes that teachers who are on the first aid team are often, unlike their support staff colleagues, not remunerated financially for accepting this responsibility.

Conference calls on Northern Committee, through the NITC, to lobby the Education Authority to ensure that financial recompense is made available for teachers who are trained members of the first aid team in schools, to the same rate as their support staff colleagues.

Actions:

Covid-19 restrictions have limited progress on this resolution.

RESOLUTION 24

Conference notes with concern the lack of adequate cover available to schools when support staff are absent due to illness or other reasons.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to work through the NIC ICTU Education Trade Union Group, to lobby the Education Authority to create a database, similar to that used to employ substitute teaching staff on a daily basis (NISTR), that would facilitate the appointment of support staff on a temporary/daily basis to cover staffing absences, to ensure the safe running of schools and that the needs of pupils are fully catered for.

Actions:

Covid-19 restrictions have limited progress on this resolution. However, as a result of ongoing Covid-19 lockdown, a form of this has evolved on an adhoc basis. INTO will work through ETUG to formalise this procedure.

RESOLUTION 25

Molann an Chomhdháil an obair atá déanta go dtí seo ag Coiste Thuaidh feasacháin a chur ar fáil go dátheangach. Iarann an Chomhdháil ar Coiste Thuaidh an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn ar dhóigh níos éifeachtaí sa cheardchumann, mar shampla ar fhoilsiúcháin, ar chomhfhreagras oifigiúil agus i láthair oibre an cheardchumainn.

Conference commends the work that Northern Committee has done until now publishing bulletins bilingually. Conference asks Northern Committee to make Irish more visible in the trade union, for example, in publications, official correspondence and in the organisation's workplace.

Actions:

Northern Office is working to extend the use of bilingual communications from the office to the broader membership.



REMITTED TO NORTHERN COMMITTEE

MOTION 22

Conference notes with concern the continued negative impact that some aspects of social media are having on our young people. The effects can be particularly evident around mental health, resilience, well-being and dependency.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to lobby the Stormont Executive to acknowledge the severity of this issue, to create a multi-agency task force to report on this issue and to fund the recommendations of the report.

Carrickfergus-Newtonabbey-Larne Branch

Actions:

Covid-19 restrictions have limited progress on this resolution.