

16<sup>th</sup> August 2022

## Press Release

### INTO announces September ballot for strike action

Thousands of teachers could, early in the autumn term, be either taking strike action or working to rule, in protest at the prolonged erosion of their pay coupled with increasing levels of unmanageable workload.

**Gerry Murphy, INTO's Northern Secretary speaking about the announcement of a ballot said:**

*"INTO has always been to the fore in both improving and protecting its members' contractual rights and their entitlement to fair pay and manageable workload. In this current cost of living crisis that we are facing we will once more not be found wanting. Our members rightly expect that their pay and conditions should not deteriorate but must reflect the professional nature of this highly skilled group. Therefore, in response to our members' requests, INTO will provide a forum, through a ballot, to sanction industrial action.*

*The real value of teachers' pay has been continually eroded since 2010, firstly with the disastrous austerity measures, and now in the guise of a 1% public pay policy which means our members are struggling to keep pace with a near double digit inflation rise. We are demanding a rise in pay that is in keeping with rise in inflation and reflects our members' contribution to society.*

*Since April INTO has, along with our colleagues on the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council, been campaigning and lobbying the different political parties in an effort to have the issue of teachers' pay placed firmly on their agendas. We have called upon the different employing authorities, and the Department of Education, to engage with the Department of Finance to achieve a fair resolution through joined-up thinking.*

*INTO has always sought dialogue and sees industrial action only as a last resort. However, we can no longer ignore the frustration and anger of our membership who are faced with escalating costs to both energy, food and National Insurance increases. They feel that their goodwill throughout the pandemic has been taken for granted and they are now at breaking point."*

**Mr Murphy explained that the upcoming vote in respect of taking industrial action is fully endorsed by the Central Executive Committee and Northern Committee of INTO and went on to say:**

*"INTO is left with no other choice but to seek a mandate from our members for action. DE (Department of Education) seems, through its mean-spirited pay offer, to have misread the mood of its teachers and not to have taken the feelings of our members seriously. Have they forgotten that our members were on the frontline during the pandemic enabling key services to continue to be provided? The teaching community's response to the pandemic only serves to confirm the importance*

*and worth of this group of professionals and confirms both the need to seriously consider a reduction of teacher workload alongside a fair increase in teachers' pay."*

**Concluding Mr Murphy said:**

*"Instead of penny-pinching education budgets and children's curriculum recovery needs, the proper finances to ensure that the needs of the pupils and our members are put in place. Surely the children and their educators deserve better."*

ENDS