

Printout

into 
Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

January 2023

Teachers get ready to **STRIKE**

PAY

**SCHOOL
BUDGETS**

CUTS

WORKLOAD

**INVEST IN
EDUCATION**



**INTO members on verge
of taking strike action
for fair pay and greater
investment in education**

Prepare for School Gate Pickets

Now that January is upon us, we have moved to the third and final stage of our phased industrial action short of strike. And as INTO looks around we can see that we are not alone either in respect of other public service employees or our teaching colleagues. This final stage is in common with our colleagues from the NITC and indeed this unprecedented, concerted action by all of the teaching unions heralds a new approach for teacher unity and solidarity. Unfortunately, we are in the midst of the worst cost of living crisis in forty years which comes on top of a constant erosion of real terms pay that has dominated teachers' salaries for the last quarter of a century.

The joint union action short of strike is directed against the Department of Education and the employing authorities and while it may be a prolonged action it is drafted in such a way so as not to harm children and young people. INTO are mindful of the damage already visited upon the education of these children and young people during the Covid-19 pandemic and we will endeavour not to add to this unwelcome situation. INTO recognises that the parents of our pupils will naturally be concerned that their



Gerry Murphy
Northern Secretary

children may suffer further disruption to their education if the dispute is not resolved. INTO is determined that we will do everything in our power to avoid that.

INTO along with our NITC colleagues is eager to find a resolution to the current dispute and have continually demonstrated our willingness to speak with the Department of Education and the Employing Authorities in an effort to find a solution to the current pay impasse. The strength of the ballot result has highlighted the resolve of INTO members in respect of not only action short of strike but their willingness to withdraw their labour and come out on strike. Initially this was resisted due to the debacle around the Stormont executive but the unwelcome

intervention of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on Thursday 24th November 2022, throwing the most senior civil servants to the wolves, has now provided trade unions with a target for strike action.

Our cause is not solely about teachers' pay, but also about the horrendous cuts to education that will result from the Secretary of State's intervention. As we have highlighted previously, "Education Cuts Don't Heal", and for this reason

we must continue to work with our teaching union colleagues to ensure that education receives the financial resources necessary to provide every child with an education that meets their needs. We won't accept our children and young people being educated on the cheap.

The facility to resolve this dispute in a fair manner for our members lies squarely with the Department of Education and the Employing Authorities. We have told them exactly what is needed to resolve this issue and it is now up to them to come up with a meaningful pay offer that teachers can accept.

Along with colleagues in education, health and other public sector workers, we do not lack the motivation to take action and while this is the final stage of our action short of strike it isn't our final option. It now looks like we are quickly approaching the point where strike action will have to be used.

As I have previously pointed out, INTO's record over the course of the last decade and more, demonstrates we have both the capacity and the will to maintain a sustained and focused campaign of industrial action. Management Side need to know that INTO will not hesitate to escalate our action to strike action. While it is not something that we enter into lightly, the Department and the Education Authorities need to be fully aware that if needed, our members are quite prepared to down tools and take to the picket lines in the coming weeks and months.

NORTHERN COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Area/Region	Branches		Mobile	INTO Email
BFC		Patrick McAllister	BFC Rep 07828769034	pmcallister@into.ie
CEC	District 1	Seamus Hanna	CEC Rep 07720 775425	shanna@into.ie
NE Primary	North Antrim, South Antrim, Carrick/N'abbey/Larne, South Derry	Michelle McCrystal	INTO N.Cttee 07851460682	mmcrystal@into.ie
NE Post-Primary	North Antrim, South Antrim, Carrick/N'abbey/Larne, South Derry	Siobhan McElhinney	INTO N.Cttee 07915091871	smcelhinney@into.ie
SE Primary	Down & Lisburn	Rachel Poland	INTO N.Cttee 07743427483	rpoland@into.ie
SE Post-Primary	Down & Lisburn	John Kelly	INTO N.Cttee 07809694954	jkelly@into.ie
Belfast Primary A	Belfast West	Caroline McCarthy	INTO N.Cttee 07977935988	cmccarthy@into.ie
Belfast Primary B	Belfast	Geraldine McGowan	INTO N.Cttee 07717277565	gmcgowan@into.ie
Belfast Post-Primary	Belfast & Belfast West	Caoimhin MacColaim	INTO N.Cttee 07710234126	cmacolaim@into.ie
CEC	District 2	Annmarie Conway	CEC Rep 07701049789	amconway@into.ie
S Primary A	Cookstown, South Tyrone, North Armagh & Dungannon	Marty Lavery	INTO N.Cttee 07733207887	mlavery@into.ie
S Primary B	South Armagh, Armagh & Newry	Noreen Kelly	INTO N.Cttee 07846392235	nkelly@into.ie
S Post-Primary	Cookstown, North Armagh, Armagh, South Armagh, Newry & Dungannon, South Tyrone	David Nolan	INTO N.Cttee 07714322013	dnolan@into.ie
W Primary A	Lisnaskea, Enniskillen, Tyrone Central & Strabane	Marie O'Shea	INTO N.Cttee 07802891109	moshea@into.ie
W Primary B	Derry City, Limavady/Dungiven,	Moira O'Kane	INTO N.Cttee 07522937888	mokane@into.ie
W Post-Primary	South Tyrone, Lisnaskea, Enniskillen, Tyrone Central, Strabane, Derry City, Limavady/Dungiven	Dermot Gallagher	INTO N.Cttee 07746323288	dgallagher@into.ie

The need for a union

As Northern Chair, I have had the privilege of engaging with members across the North in recent months. I have seen the impact of the lack of investment in education, visiting school estates that are in need of an upgrade but waiting on the funding to proceed. I have met school leaders trying to stretch school budgets to ensure all pupils get access to a learning experience suitable to meet their needs. During meetings I have heard how members are funding so many classroom activities out of their own pocket. Yet still they have not been offered a meaningful pay rise.

The ballot for Industrial Action was supported overwhelmingly by our members. Teachers do not like taking industrial action but have been left with no other choice. We need to demand adequate investment in education, and this includes teachers being paid a fair wage for all the work they do. As Nelson Mandela said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” It is time the government invested in education to ensure our young people can be active citizens of the future.

I believe we have never needed to be part of a union as much as in the last few years. The support and advice the INTO have offered to members has been exceptional. The INTO team puts the member at the heart of their work. School reps are essential in getting information to the members in their school and we appreciate everything they do. We would ask any school without a rep to contact the office or attend your local branch meeting.

One of the first invitations I received as chair was to a Retired Teachers

Association Meeting. During this event I was able to meet people that helped shape teaching for my generation. When speaking to some of the members, I soon realised that the lack of investment was key in many of their campaigns too – I just hope the government will realise that investment in education should be a given, not something that has to be fought for. The only key difference through the generations is the use of technology and the constant speed of updates. As a result of this we need to encourage members to take time to disconnect and encourage a work/life balance.

During recent school visits, I have discussed the use of Individual Directed Time Budgets. These were designed to help create a work/life balance for teachers. Teachers have put many of their own family/ personal events on hold due to work commitments and use the phrase “not on a school night.” We need to learn that we do not have to reply to a seesaw/

google classroom post after school hours be it at 10pm or later. The right to disconnect from our work environment will help us to enjoy the hours we work more.

Finally, I would ask all members to attend a branch meeting this year. You will learn more during that hour engaging with colleagues than perhaps from any of the social media pages. All decisions made in the INTO come from discussions with members at branch meetings. We are member led and focused. It is through attending the branch meeting that you can be delegated to the various conferences. I do remember the first time stepping into a branch meeting and just how welcome I was

made and now look where I ended up. I certainly hope to see some new faces at the next set of branch meetings as well as the established faces. Remember the first step is the hardest. Hope to see you there.



Siobhan McElhinney
Northern Committee Chairperson

The ballot for Industrial Action was supported overwhelmingly by our members. Teachers do not like taking industrial action but have been left with no other choice.



📍 Northern Ireland
🔍
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Have you created your portal account on the INTO NI website?

Using “My Profile” members can update their contact details, log queries and sign up to INTO emails. For assistance with creating or logging in to My Profile please email infoni@into.ie with your name, TR number and up to date email address.



of Pupils with SEND

'Does equal access to 'teacher-time' exist for those most in need of it?'

Despite clear legal regulations, some pupils with SEND spend less time in whole-class teaching, less time with their teacher and consequently experience fewer opportunities for peer interaction compared with their non-SEND classmates.

The Legal Context

The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (Education (NI) Order 1996) further amended by *The Special Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005* is explicit when considering the provision of education for pupils with SEND – 'all schools must provide a broad and balanced curriculum that offers **equal access to all children** regardless of their SEN or disability'.

Furthermore, the inherent right of all children to have 'equal access' to effective teaching and full participation in the community of a school is set out in international agreements (*The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989*) and in education law (*The Equality Act, 2010* and *The Children and Families Act, 2014*).

Pupils with SEND who spend more time away from their teacher than their non-SEND peers could be in danger of experiencing a lower quality of teaching, especially if provided by a less-experienced or less-qualified member of staff. Past research has shown that this

approach is not beneficial, as it does not help to foster independence, promote inclusion, or offer agency support to the learner.

The net result of pupils with SEND experiencing a high degree of separation from their class, teacher, and peers can lead to classroom assistants adopting the status of 'primary educator' for those pupils in most need. Schools should avoid creating this 'separation' effect which can lead to the effective 'outsourcing' of learning from the teacher to someone less experienced and qualified. This practice can result in those with the most need spending the least time with the most qualified/skilled.

Furthermore, this approach could also leave schools susceptible to potential litigation. In a recent case a school was successfully sued by the parents of a pupil with Downs Syndrome whom the court established had been timetabled to be outside of the classroom for most of the learning day. In essence, it was ruled that the pupil's learning had

become the prime responsibility of the special needs assistant rather than the class teacher. Classroom assistants must supplement, not replace, the class teacher.

Undoubtedly, teachers and assistants working effectively together, providing high-quality, targeted support can be a powerful strategy in helping to meet the needs of learners with SEND. However, ensuring that classroom assistants have a positive impact, without separating those learners with the most need from the class teacher, requires careful consideration of how they are deployed. The SEND Code of Practice makes it clear - teachers ultimately are 'responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils in their class, including when pupils access support from teaching assistants'.

'In an inclusive school, pupils with SEND are not just in the school, they are part of the school - they have the same opportunity as their peers to benefit from the highest quality teaching the school can provide'.



Noreen Kelly
INTO Northern Committee Representative



Nurses Picket Line - Dec 2022

INTO and UTU joined the Royal College of Nursing official picket outside the City Hospital to show their support and solidarity to nurses and all Health Service staff on strike for a fair pay increase. The INTO supports all public service workers taking action over the coming weeks and months.

VERE FOSTER LECTURE

***What would an all-island education system look like?
What are the initial steps to it?***

Frank Connolly,
SIPTU Head of Communications,
will present the Vere Foster Lecture
on **Friday, 13th January 2023 at 6pm**
in The Malone Hotel, Belfast.

Frank Connolly is an
investigative journalist
who has written extensively on
current affairs and politics in
Ireland over the past 30 years.
He is currently Head of
Communications with SIPTU,
Ireland's largest trade union.



St Mary's University College 2022 Carol Service

Vere Foster Medal (for consistently high marks in School Experience) awarded to Helen Ann Kelly by Siobhan McElhinney (Chairperson),
and John Cull Award (top achieving mature student across the BEd degree programme) awarded to Beth Conlon by Liam Ó Manacháin (Newry Branch Secretary)



Restraint and seclusion

the six new recommendations broken down

With the intention of ensuring a consistent child centred approach and a recognition that change is required to ensure that children and their teachers are protected, the Department of Education has issued a review of the use of restraint and seclusion in educational settings. This report was commissioned by the then minister in 2020 to revisit the earlier DE guidance from 1999 and 2004 and the findings of the report finalised with six recommendations.

The first recommendation was that the department should have article 4 (1)(c) of the Education (NI) Order 1998 repealed. This will effectively remove the right for a teacher to use such force as is reasonable to prevent a pupil from engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at school.

The second recommendation is that the department should, within this academic school year, issue statutory guidance to school managements and Boards of Governors in respect of the use of restrictive practices in schools.

The third recommendation is basically a detailed explanation of the second recommendation which should be included in the new statutory guidance. The department feel that the new statutory guidance should be based on the underlying principles of the review of the use of restraint and seclusion in educational settings and will include among other things:

- Clear definitions of restrictive practices.
- An outline of the roles, responsibilities

and accountabilities of all school staff.

- Provision for the mandatory recording and reporting of all incidents of physical restraint or reasonable force in schools
- Detail of training and resource availability coupled with exemplars of positive, preventative and early intervention practices.
- A requirement for schools to immediately inform parents of any incident followed up with a formal report and an outline of a complaint's procedure with links to the DE's own safeguarding and child protection guidance.

The fourth proposal references the need for continuance for the Department of Education to work with Health colleagues to develop regional guidance on pupils' medication. The progress of this recommendation will be closely monitored by INTO as it does put health care plans in place which may involve not only medication needs but also use of equipment and required therapies.

The fifth recommendation seeks agreement from the Education and Training Inspectorate to benchmark the use of supportive and restrictive practices against the statutory guidance issued by

the department.

The final recommendation is that the department should commission a periodic review with a published report in respect of the use of restrictive and supportive practices in schools.

While the broader review does acknowledge the need to update the department's guidance on positive behaviour approaches in terms of supportive practices, the research undertaken for this report has highlighted that in some schools there did not seem to be any clear understanding in respect of access to guidance on the use of best practice. There was an acknowledgement of the request from teachers that policy makers should engage with teachers who have first-hand experience especially those from an

SEN background.

The department have also looked to other jurisdictions and met with officials from the republic and working closely with teachers and parents, hopes that the furtherance of these recommendations will provide compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

INTO will provide further updates in respect of this as it progresses.



Tommy McGlone
INTO Senior Official

Eamon McMahon, Agitator, Educator, Organiser – a tribute



It was with great sadness that the INTO, north and south, learned of the passing of our great friend and trade union comrade, Eamon McMahon.

Eamon was a long-standing trade union and human rights activist, well known across the union movement in Ireland and beyond and as such well known to many members of this union.

He is likely to be best known among INTO members for his leadership of the Trade Union Friends of Palestine (TUFPP). His influence on INTO, through TUFPP, culminated in our activists participating in local, national and European wide solidarity events in support of the Palestinian people.

This has included significant numbers of INTO members visiting the West Bank and East Jerusalem on TUFPP delegations, the development of resolutions passed at both Northern Conference and Congress giving the INTO a formal position in support of the Palestinian people and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

That is not to mention the numerous fringe events, meetings, protests and the inspirational 2019 Palestinian Children's Conference and subsequent development of a TUFPP, north/ south education group.

Anyone who spent time in Eamon's company could testify to his deep knowledge of the situations he cared about, to his commitment to justice and human rights but also to his ability to encourage this same commitment that he recognised in others. Seeing the bigger picture and the often under-utilised power of the trade union movement, he was also key to 'mainstreaming' the Palestinian cause across ICTU. This was achieved through developing policy motions to ICTU delegate conferences, broadening TUFPP delegations to include activists from across a range of unions and building on these successes by continually looking toward the next action.

Having spent a fair amount of time with Eamon over the last seven or eight years, it was apparent that Eamon's

solidarity work and activism was rooted firmly in his humanity and his basic decency and kindness toward people.

He was also the epitome of lifelong learning which is evidenced in his co-founding of Belfast based 'Reclaim the Enlightenment' group whose aim is the exploration of the radical and progressive ideas of the Enlightenment period, with some practical application of these in the modern era.

Of course, Eamon's first and most enduring love was for his family and INTO extends our sympathy and solidarity to them.

Eamon lived out his values and the core principles of the union movement. He agitated, he educated and he very much organised. As a result, Eamon's influence on INTO will continue on through our Palestine Ambassadors group, the broader education group in which we play a key role and the policy positions we have taken in recent years.

Submitted by **Kevin Daly**, Trade Union Official



Eamon speaking at a rally against the siege of Gaza, and with the TUFPP delegation in Tulkarem meeting the Palestinian Federation of New Unions.

Stormont Departmental budgets lead to real terms cuts for Schools

Maintained and Controlled Schools' budgets are determined through the Common Funding Scheme (CFS) which was initially developed in accordance with the following key principles:

- Sustainable schools should be funded according to the relative needs of their pupils, and in a manner which enables the effects of social disadvantage to be substantially reduced.
- Sustainable schools should be funded on a consistent and fair basis, taking full account of the needs of pupils.
- The formula should support schools in delivering the curriculum.
- The formula should underpin and reinforce wider education policy and objectives.
- The formula should be as transparent and as comprehensible as possible and predictable in its outcome.

The formula takes account of a number of factors including;

- age weighted pupil units (AWPU) factor
- premises factor
- targeting social need (TSN)
- primary principals' release time factor.

However, the formula does not take account of any increases in expenditure which are beyond a school's control meaning there is no meaningful adjustment to reflect wage and inflation increases.

The current financial climate in which schools are working means that the value of schools' budgets has reduced by more than 10% in real terms. On top of this reduction, the contradictory post-covid advice provided to schools by

the Education Authority (EA) in relation to ventilation is not consistent with the legal requirement to maintain a safe temperature for teachers, support staff and pupils to work in has led to an additional strain on school budgets.

Costs across the school estate have continued to rise and while a portion of this can be offset against an additional payment of 3.1%, this boost is dwarfed by the highest rate of inflation witnessed in over forty years.

In November, the British Secretary of State announced the Budget for Stormont departments.

In his announcement, he singled out the Department of Education (DE) for criticism, indicating that it needed to make a significant cut to its 'current spending trajectory'. This was against a background where the funding for pupils in the north of Ireland is already significantly below the funding for pupils in England, Scotland and Wales.

It is not just school budgets that will be reduced. The cuts in the wider Education budget have the potential to further damage the life chances of children and young people here. With the EA being asked to make savings of about £100 million from its block

grant, we face a prospect where Special Educational needs provision, already significantly underfunded, will again be reduced, placing greater pressures on schools to step into the breach to provide essential support to young people and their families.

Reduction in real terms to school budgets have always historically led to a reduction in staffing, and both teaching and support staff jobs may now be under threat. Reduction in staffing will lead to larger class sizes coupled with a contraction of the subjects that post-primary schools will be able to offer. This will, no matter how the staff attempt to mitigate it,

reduce the experience of learning for all children and young people in our education system.

For an education system to be world class, those in authority must prioritise it and ensure it has the funding it needs. For too long this has not been the case.

INTO has always believed that the budget received by the school should meet the needs of the school, rather than the expectation that the school will meet the needs of the budget. The same is true for the whole education system.



Mark McTaggart
Assistant Northern Secretary



Training for INTO members from September 2022

Did you take part in any of the training/webinars for INTO members last term? Please check the INTO website, www.into.ie/ni for registration information and closing dates for each of the courses/seminars/webinars.

IT Training

Twenty-two INTO members registered for the BlendEd NI Training on Accessibility in October 2022, which with no additional apps required, enabled members to explore the built-in accessibility tools that their iPad has to make it a truly powerful personal learning device. Forty-eight members registered for the 7-week Apple Teacher training course that ran from October through to the end of November 2022 and twenty-six INTO members registered for the BlendEd NI Training on Collaboration where teachers Used iWork and Google for Education apps such as Pages, Keynote, Docs, Slides and Jamboard, whilst being shown different ways to use these tools to meet that somewhat tricky 'Exchange' heading of the five 'E's.

School Representative Training

Eighteen new INTO School Representatives attended the one-day Induction courses, either in Derry or Belfast and went back into their schools armed with the information on how to carry out this important union role and the knowledge on how to deal with issues as they arise in their schools.

Training for School Leaders

A new accredited course for school leaders began in November 2022 on 'Building Good Staff Relations'. Twenty-two school leaders are attending this 6-week course which continues in the new year and covers topics such as Effective communication, Managing difficult situations, Handling grievances and disciplinaries and Mediation/LRA.

Career learning Representatives

Seven new Branch Career Learning Reps (CLRs) were trained by an ICTU tutor in this new role for INTO branches in November 2022. These new CLRs will work with INTO members in their branch in examining their careers, analyse training needs of members, provide information to members on training matters, and promote the value of learning and training. They will support the INTO District Development Coordinators in identifying additional local briefing/training/development/networking needs that will support local membership development and devising a calendar of briefing/training/development/networking events in the District and branch areas.

Financial Planning

Thirty-two INTO members registered for the Mid-Career Financial Review with Platinum Financial in October 2022, and 118 members registered for the Pre-retirement webinar with Platinum Financial in November 2022.

Platinum financial continue to provide this very important service to INTO members to enable them to consider and plan for their financial futures.

Webinars

The series of webinars for INTO members continued last term covering Maternity leave and pay, Adoption leave and pay and paternity leave and pay.

The Shared Parental Leave webinar scheduled for November had to be postponed and will be rescheduled for the new term.

An additional webinar on 'Preparing for Inspection' was

very popular with sixty-five members registering to attend.

All of the webinars are recorded, and the PowerPoint slides and the recordings are available for members to view on the INTO website, www.into.ie/ni.



Nuala O'Donnell
INTO Senior Official



Northern Committee, Branch and District Officers



Clockwise from left:
Training for School Leaders,
Career Learning
Representatives Training,
Branch Officer IT Training,
and Branch Officer Training



Regional Officer Training

On Thurs 1 & Friday 2 December 22 INTO Branch and District Officers from across the North attended Regional Officer training in Monaghan.

The officers in the INTO Districts 1 and 2 were the last of the INTO Branch and District Officers to be trained.

There was a high level of engagement from the officers in attendance who received training and updating on the use of IT and the INTO database for branch and district purposes.

Thursday evening was a lively session with branch and district officers taking part in discussions with the General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary and Northern Secretary on current issues, consultation and communication with members and participation in Northern Conference and Congress.

On Friday the officers participated in further discussions on recruitment, retention and participation of members, and were trained on preparing motions for conference/congress, branch and district finances and social media.



Training for term two

This term we will be delivering more one-hour webinars for members on

- * Stress in Work
- * Safeguarding and Dealing with difficult pupil situations.

There will be webinars for those attending INTO Northern Conference/ Congress on writing motions and speaking at Conference.

A series of webinars, and one seminar,

will be run in conjunction with Platinum Financial on preparing for retirement and Phased retirement.

There will also be training for INTO school and Health and Safety representatives.

It is hoped that as many members as possible can avail of the INTO training throughout the year.

For further information and to register for any of the upcoming events please go to <https://www.into.ie/ni/2022/12/08/into-training-for-all-members-term-2/>



Above and right: Branch Officer Training

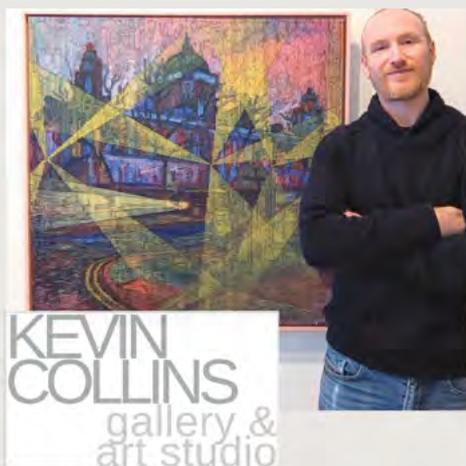
Northern Ireland Committee
Irish Congress of Trade Unions

WORKERS DEMAND Better!



Left: Gerry Murphy, INTO Northern Secretary, at Derry Trade Union Council event – Workers Demand Better Campaign, highlighting issues impacting on teachers during this cost of living crisis.

Right: Northern Committee Chair Siobhan McElhinney speaking on behalf of members at We Demand Better rally & march, Guildhall Square Derry.



Discover the artwork of Kevin Collins, an Irish landscape artist who creates paintings & Limited Edition Prints influenced by his handloom weaving background. His distinctive artwork can be found in many public & private collections around the world. To find out more visit www.kevincollinspaints.co.uk or visit his Gallery & Studio in Warrenpoint in County Down, Northern Ireland.

www.instagram.com/kevincollinsart
www.facebook.com/kevincollinsart



Printout

PRINTOUT is the Organisation's full colour magazine distributed to all members in the north.

PRINTOUT is also distributed to our education partners and students in our teacher training colleges.

PRINTOUT has a readership of approximately 8,000 members and is available on the INTO website.

PRINTOUT provides up-to-date information on professional and trade union issues.

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The views expressed in this journal

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While every care has been taken to ensure that the information contained in this publication is up to date and correct, no responsibility will be taken by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation for

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INTO members can place an advert in Printout at a reduced rate.

For all publications please visit our website at www.into.ie/NI.

NISTR Update

Every school across the country will know by now that there has been a launch of the new NISTR solution to Schools/EA Service Users and Supply Teachers in August 2022.

There are currently 8,557 live Supply Teachers within the NISTR solution, and since the NISTR launch, INTO have continued to work in collaboration with the solution developers and the NISTR working group which includes Supply Teachers, Schools, Employing Authorities and other Trade Unions, to bring more user-friendly features to the system, in addition to addressing any areas of functionality that are not working as expected.

The NISTR development team are keen to hear feedback throughout the next stages of development and will be actively seeking users' thoughts on what is working well and what could be improved. If users are interested, please share your constructive feedback via the NISTR Contact Form (Please select the option 'Feedback – compliment, comment or Suggestion'.)

There are many schools and teachers that have contacted NISTR to provide feedback on the system to date, and this has significantly informed the approach to future technical releases.

NISTR FUNCTIONALITY UPDATES & TRAINING

In Mid-November new functionality focused on the booking sign-off process and was built around feedback provided by users. Improvements include:

- Ability to sign-off individual days on the day the work is complete
- Visibility of booking sign-off details including by whom, when, coding, etc.
- Ability to amend signed-off bookings prior to the 5pm cut-off on the third working day of month for payroll reporting to DE.
- Ability to export full booking sign-off detail.

These changes, INTO hope, will address the many concerns teachers in the system had regarding bookings in the first few months of use and which are continuing to be worked through at present with DE Payroll section.

Training videos are available on the NISTR website pages on the 'Quick Reference Guides- schools' section.

Other updates due in January and February will include:

- Automatic withdrawal of offer after a period of no response

- Allow teacher to accept or decline an offer
- Schools to see previously booked supply teachers
- Additional reporting facilities

Retrospective bookings

Since the NISTR launch, schools have had the facility to make use of retrospective bookings when functions were not working as they were expected to.

We need now, moving forward, to be conscious that the NISTR system relies on up-to-date, accurate data to allow an efficient end to end booking process for Schools and Teachers. It is therefore critically important that bookings are input in advance and not retrospectively. The NISTR booking creation system should be the first step in sourcing and contacting a teacher to seek cover. This ensures:

- compliance with TNC circular 2016/01 and specifically reduces risk to schools by providing assurance that the teacher has complied with all pre-employment checks; and
- avoidance of unnecessary workload contacting teachers who have already been engaged by another school

It is vital a booking is created immediately and no later than 23:59 on the first day of engagement, at which point, the school will no longer be able to input the booking.

As communicated to all Schools on the 12th October, the NISTR Support Team will no longer be accepting retrospective booking requests unless in the most exceptional circumstances.

If you require a retrospective booking to be added, this can be completed through a NISTR Contact Form.

NISTR HOUSEKEEPING

The NISTR system has now been live for over 6 months. It is recommended that both schools and supply teachers regularly complete some key housekeeping tasks to ensure the system is kept up to date. Please review:

- Any bookings that have been 'offered' to teachers but were not accepted or worked - If these are no longer

required, please 'withdraw the booking' as soon as possible.

- Please refer to the NISTR Managing Bookings quick reference guide on how to withdraw/ cancel a booking.
- Some School Users are reporting that they are unable to locate teachers in NISTR they had previously booked.

This is likely because the teacher has not set their availability far enough in advance (as teachers initially set their availability for 90 days), and therefore cannot be found in searches in the future. If you are unable to locate a teacher, please remind them to update their availability every 90 days. Once they have done this, refresh your booking search and they should appear.

- Teachers need to update their profile to ensure all their details are accurate and up to date, especially relating to key stages and subjects which

they can teach. This allows for a more accurate picture for schools when they apply filters in the search for a specific need at the school.



Marie O'Shea
INTO Trade Union Official

Contacting NISTR

If, however, you experience an ongoing or new issue, or you require additional support to effectively use NISTR going forward, please contact the NISTR Helpdesk on 028 9056 6256. Alternatively, you may wish to submit a NISTR contact form.

If you are making contact via phone, please ensure you have all the necessary details to hand to assist your enquiry. The NISTR phone line opening hours are Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm.

Before contacting the NISTR team, please ensure you have referred to the support resources that can be found on the NISTR website including Frequently Asked Questions, Quick Reference Guides and Bitesize Videos. These helpful resources have been developed to ensure your query is resolved easily and quickly.

INTO continue to engage with the NISTR team on behalf of our members. If you need support in resolving an issue, please contact the office using the email infoni@into.ie.



“We’ll Get Back to You During School Hours”

Teachers Have Personal Lives Too

The field of teaching is in crisis with more and more teachers burning out and leaving the profession or seeking more flexible working conditions each year. Many teachers consider their workplace to be negatively impacting their lives. A common complaint for many is the extreme workload. In particular, the inability to clock out at the end of the school day is a huge stress factor.

Advances in technology make teaching easier in many ways. We can research any topic, find material, crowdsource solutions and ideas, get lesson ideas and more by simply typing a few keywords into our phone, tablet or computer. Electronic lesson plans are much easier than lugging around handwritten logs. Google docs, slides, sheets and classrooms make sharing notes, presentations, and assignments a breeze. There’s no argument that technology is a crucial component of education that isn’t going away.

But there’s also a downside. All of the websites, apps, and devices mean teachers are always connected. There’s no clocking out at the end of the day and going on to enjoy the rest of life outside of the classroom. Our phones are constant reminders of all the responsibilities associated with our jobs.

Some of the downsides of accessibility through technology

1. *The work is always just a few clicks away*

When our email, lesson plans and more are all accessible within seconds it’s easy to say, “I’ll just check this one thing…” and then fall into a rabbit hole that has us working for hours. It’s easy to say, “Leave work at work,” but that’s hard to do when so much of our work is accessible electronically and with us all the time.

2. *There’s no sense of emotional safety.*

When parents, school leadership and even students can reach us 24/7 there’s no safe place to rest. Many teachers report complaints coming in from school late in the evening and irate calls from parents at all hours.

3. *There’s pressure to always be available and to always be the best.*

Sometimes it seems teachers are expected to be in competition for a cape with “Super Teacher” printed in glittery gold letters

on the back. There’s constant pressure to answer every message immediately and to scour Pinterest for the perfect templates for all projects big and small.

4. *There’s no balance between work and your personal life.*

This often causes a strain with romantic partners, friendships and family members. Our kids see us working from our phones instead of watching them at a football game. Our dates, friends, and family get frustrated when we take work calls during dinner. Being in constant teacher mode isn’t fair to us nor the people who care about us.

5. *It contributes to chronic stress.*

Going in and out of work mode means you’re never really relaxing. There’s no chance to rest and recharge.

All of this means teachers become even more burned out. This isn’t good for anyone – the teachers, their families, school leaders or students.

Teachers need to set boundaries when it comes to technology devices. Here’s how –

Teachers have the right to set boundaries about how and when they work outside of the school day. We all have a right to disconnect. Here are some ways to do that:

1. *Only answer parent calls and emails during school hours.*

Nothing with a pupil is so crucial that we need to handle it in our personal time. If there is an emergency with the pupil, they need medical or mental health professionals, not a teacher. Caring about our pupils shouldn’t take away from caring about ourselves and our own families.

2. *Don’t open school email after hours.*

The first step to achieving this is to not even have it installed on your phone. It can wait.

3. *Tell school to only call or text in case of emergency.*

Anything else can wait until the school day. Setting boundaries with school leaders is terrifying for many people, but it gets easier with practice.

4. *Don’t give parents or pupils personal contact information.*

Parents and pupils shouldn’t be able to

call or text our personal phones! That’s a violation of our personal space. Just say no to giving out that info.

5. *Do not accept friend or follow requests from parents or pupils on social media.*

Many teachers use a different name or email address to limit the chances they can even be found on social media.

6. *Make sure your social media settings are private.*

We don’t need parents, colleagues, and pupils knowing the details of our weekend before we get to school Monday morning. Use the privacy settings to lock down social media accounts.

7. *Don’t engage in school conversations outside of school.*

Living and working in your local area can mean, as a teacher, you frequently run into parents who want to chat about a pupil’s progress outside of school. Running into people who want to talk at restaurants, supermarkets, etc. is inevitable. It’s okay to say, “It was great to see you! I’ll be in touch during school hours.” And move on.

8. *Have separate devices for personal and work use.*

If you can afford it, use separate devices designated for work and personal use. Refrain from installing work-related apps and programs on your personal devices.

9. *Turn off all work-related notifications.*

If separate devices aren’t an option, turn all work-related notifications off.

10. *Commit to not working outside of school.*

The best course of action is to simply commit to not working outside of school as often as possible. (And it’s usually possible more often than we think.)

It’s important to protect ourselves from burnout. The best way to do that is to be proactive in reducing our workloads and our accessibility after hours. Setting boundaries is hard but so important and beneficial to our quality of life. If we all take steps towards changing what is expected for teachers, we can slowly create a workplace that is healthier for all of us. #TEACHERSAREHUMAN

Making the most of Shared Parental Leave

The Shared Parental Leave scheme was introduced under the Work and Families Act (NI) 2015 and offers working parents the opportunity to vary their maternity/parental leave entitlements, allowing for a more flexible approach to caring for their newly born/adopted child.

The scheme offers particular benefits to teachers on maternity who, unlike those in other professions, are unable to accrue paid holiday leave whilst on maternity leave. Statutory Maternity Leave (SML) is normally one continuous period of leave, however Shared Parental Leave (SPL) can be taken in up to three separate blocks, with breaks in between in which the teacher can return to work and get paid in full.

For teachers who are taking or are planning to take SML, this article intends to outline to members how to gain the most from what SPL has to offer.

SPL can be a complicated scheme where both parents must meet different eligibility criteria for one of the parents to take SPL.

Eligibility

Any teacher wishing to take SPL must satisfy each of the following conditions:

1. The child's mother/adopter must have been entitled to statutory maternity leave and/or statutory maternity pay (SMP) or statutory adoption pay (SAP) or maternity allowance (MA) and must have curtailed (ended or given notice to end) any maternity/adoption entitlements.

2. The teacher must have a minimum of 26 weeks service by the end of the 15th week before the child's expected due / matching date (the 'continuity of employment test').
3. The teacher's partner is required to have, in the 66 weeks prior to the child's expected due date have worked for a minimum of 26 weeks and in addition, earned an average of at least £30 a week in any 13 of those weeks.
4. The teacher must correctly notify the school (at least 8 weeks before) of their entitlement and provide the required evidence.

Given the complexities of this criteria, an online eligibility service to see if both partners satisfy the 'continuity of employment' and the 'employment and earnings' tests can be accessed at GOV.UK at the following website address. <https://www.check-shared-parental-leave.service.gov.uk>

Notification

The eligibility conditions require the teacher to provide the principal with the correct notification in writing and all of the following must be provided:

- Teacher's and partner's full name;
- the start and end dates of any maternity leave or pay and
- the total amount of SPL available;
- the date on which the child is expected to be born;
- the amount of SPL the teacher and

their partner intend to take;

- an indication of when the teacher expects to take the leave

Notification forms can be accessed at <https://www.acas.org.uk/shared-parental-leave-forms> which should accompany a short letter stating your intention to curtail SML, indicating the time periods of blocks of SPL.

One member reported to us how delighted she was to make use of the SPL scheme, commenting,

"I took 21 weeks of teachers' maternity leave (Feb to June) which left a maximum of 31 weeks of Shared Parental Leave of which 18 weeks would be paid ShPP. We found it was great because I was back to work in July and August when school was closed and getting full pay and my husband was off with me. I did the Staff Development Days at the end of August to keep in the loop."

Some Key points to consider

Both parents must be under a contract of employment and must share the responsibility for the child.

SPL is available to both parents who are adopting. Same criteria apply.

ShPP will be paid in accordance with the statutory minimum, a rate of £156.66 a week or 90% of an employee's average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

SPL ends no later than one year after the birth/placement of the child. Any SPL

not taken in advance of this date will be lost.

It is best practice to take at least 18 weeks SMP before curtailing in order to maximise the financial benefits gained from SMP.

A period of shared parental leave shall

count for the purposes of the award of any points awarded for the experience to which the teacher may be entitled.

Teachers are protected from suffering unfair treatment or dismissal for taking or seeking to take shared parental leave.

Teachers who believe they have been

treated unfairly may invoke the Grievance Procedure.

If any member needs further advice and guidance, please contact the INTO at infoni@into.ie or phone 02890381455

Paul Kerr , INTO Intern

The following example outlines how SPL can be taken and explains what benefits teachers can gain from it

Teacher A is due to give birth week beginning 12th of February 2023. She begins her Statutory Maternity Leave (SML) w/b 13th of January 2023 and stays on maternity for 24 weeks until the end of June 2023. While on SML, Teacher A receives the normal SMP rate of 4 weeks full pay, two weeks 90% pay, 12 weeks half pay plus SMP and six weeks SMP.

Teacher A will then curtail her SML and return to work on the 1st of July and receive full pay for the duration of the summer holidays.

Teacher A can then begin Shared Parental Leave at the end of the summer holidays, provided she and her partner meet the criteria outlined above

and has given at least 8 weeks' notice to her principal.

As she has used 24 weeks SMP she is entitled to 15 weeks Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) which can be taken in three blocks of leave. For example;

- * Block One – 4th September 2023 until 27th of October 2023 (8 weeks) and returns to work 30th October 2023 and will get paid in full for Halloween midterm break.
- * Block Two - 6th November 2023 until 22nd December 2023 (7 weeks) and returns to work 25th December 2023 until 8th of January 2024 and will get full pay for Christmas holidays.

At this point Teacher A has exhausted her 39 weeks SMP/ShPP but can still

take her third block of SPL up until her child's first birthday at which point SPL comes to an end. (These weeks will be unpaid as she has exhausted her 39 weeks paid leave but is still entitled to the full 52 weeks leave).

Therefore, by curtailing her maternity leave for shared parental leave, Teacher A has gained potentially at least eight weeks full pay that otherwise would not have been available to her under the maternity scheme.

Teacher A can also take up to 20 Shared Parental Leave In Touch Days (full pay) which can be taken to attend staff development / training days etc. In the case of Teacher A, this would best be used at the end of August.



Step into HomePlace Education Programme

Primary, Post Primary and Shared Education Programme 2023 dates now available to book. For more information email seamusheaneyhome@midulstercouncil.org

Call 028 7938 7444
www.seamusheaneyhome.com/education

The hands up project



INTO members were recently involved in a very successful visit to Belfast by pupils & teachers from the Czech Republic and Palestine through the Hands Up Project (HUP). The HUP is ...“a charity trust which, through its network of volunteers, connects children around the world with young people in Palestine. By means of online interaction, drama, and storytelling activities, it enables the use of creativity and self-expression to promote mutual understanding, personal growth, and the development of English language skills”.

The charity works with teachers & pupils in United Nations run schools in Palestine and has the backing not only of the UN, but also of the British Council. Its mission statement states that...

The Hands Up Project is committed to social justice, global citizenship, and freedom of expression, and upholds the belief that language learning is enhanced through creativity, performance, and collaborative interaction. To these ends, the project affords opportunities for

children in difficult circumstances, such as Palestine, to use English to communicate with one another across borders in a “spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity.” (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

Members of Belfast West branch of the INTO as well as INTO-TUFP, were involved in organising the visit, hosting the pupils & teachers, arranging & supervising activities, excursions and meals. Generous donations from INTO branches and other unions also helped ensure that the visit was a huge success and will hopefully prove to be the beginning of a positive engagement between the HUP INTO teachers throughout the island of Ireland.

The visit was covered locally by the Andersonstown News as well as internationally by UNWRA (United

Nation Relief & Works Agency).

The children from Gaza and the Czech Republic had flown to Belfast for a week-long visit with The Hands Up Project, a charity that connects Palestinian children with classes all over the world.

For the first time they shared a stage to perform two plays, gave a dance recital and sang, communicating with one voice the importance of taking care of the environment.

The Hands Up Project specialises in ‘remote theatre’ – performing plays through Zoom – and encourages students to write and act in their own plays in English, connecting with students from 30 countries online.

Rahaf Alkafarna, 15, Malak Alkafarna, 14 and Yara Al Sabe, 13, from Gaza and Magdalena Zrostlikova, 12, and Julie Linderova, 13, from the Czech Republic had the chance to perform their play ‘Welcome to Earth’ to a real audience in a packed hall of 100 students, teachers and school governors.

For Rahaf, Malak and Yara, this was their first time away from Gaza. The ongoing siege of the 25-mile-long strip of land by the Israeli authorities means strict restrictions on the right to freedom of movement for Palestinians.

Speaking after the performance of their self-penned play Rahaf said: “Today is the best day in my life because today I sent my message to the whole world. I am Palestinian. I can achieve my dream. Nobody can stop me. Nobody!”



PAUL WOODS, School Representative, in St Louise's Comprehensive College, Belfast

Plant The Planet Games' - Kenya 2022

This event, organised by the charities 'Self Help Africa' and 'Brighter Communities', in partnership with 'Warriors for Humanity' involved 50 G.A.A players throughout Ireland - I was honoured when selected to represent Co-Down. The aim of the project was to address and highlight the important role which trees play in sustainable development and the livelihoods of people and their environment both in Ireland and Africa. The charity trip which set out to raise sufficient funds to plant 1 million trees also made history as top Irish and Kenyan sports stars took part in the very first International Gaelic Games played in Africa as well as hosting the first ever combined male and female game.

The experience gained from participating in the 'Plant the Planet Games' will be forever etched in my heart. The people I travelled with from every corner of Ireland are now friends for life and have left a lasting impression on me as a person.

The people of Kenya welcomed us with open arms, and I will be forever grateful to them for teaching me and reminding me how life should be enjoyed every day by smiling, by being the best version of ourselves and living a life of simplicity. They haven't got the perks that we enjoy, and we witnessed at a human level how people struggle to provide the very basics required to survive in life. They showed gratitude and smiled in each and every village we visited, and their resilience and happiness was a privilege and a joy to behold.

The charity trip made a deep and lasting impact on the communities that we visited and worked with:

- In Keringet dairy farms and villages and the Londani area, including Sitian Primary and Secondary schools, trees were planted with the help of the children that will provide fruit for lunches and excess produce will be sold to help with school resources and fees.
- At Chebara Girls' Secondary School over 100 trees were planted - these trees will be watered and looked after by the pupils and will provide a fantastic resource for nourishment and learning.
- In Emb Trahwa Springs, bamboo trees were planted to help with drainage and landslide prevention. This means that the water, which is relied upon for a village of 350 people, can be accessed in the future.
- The Baringo Resilience Initiative, where the effects of climate change are so



severe due to four failed rainy seasons, received trees that are drought tolerant and will provide food supplies for families in the area.

There were moments of great sadness and shock throughout the project, but the smiles and gratitude shown to us in the many moments of joy highlighted faith in humanity and the need and responsibility we have to help each other in this world each and every day.



we met will be immeasurable - a source of life. My involvement in the project was a tremendous experience and taught me many

things. Every day be thankful for all that you have in your life, tell those close to you that you love them and live life with energy and thanks for all you have. The Kenyan people showed me this in every human contact I had on what was a trip of a lifetime.

*Trip footage will be made available through a future TG4 documentary which will demonstrate the profile and impact of the event

I will be forever grateful to every person that donated to this project. The lasting impact on the daily lives of the people

By KEVIN MCKERNAN (Newry Branch) – St Ronan's PS, Newry





Creating Experiencing Connecting

INTO Art Competition 2023

The answer to the age old question, how long is a piece of string could well have a similar answer to the question, how long does it take to produce a piece of art? As a busy, new school years begins and the INTO Art Competition opens for another year, all we ask of the artists amongst you out there, is to keep some time for your creative side in the coming months and note down this year's submission deadline of noon on Friday 28 April 2023.

To enter simply complete an application form and provide a clear digital photograph/s of your piece/s. Members may submit up to a maximum of three original paintings and these need not be framed. We hope the following themes

may prove inspiring or lend a focus to your work: People, Animals, Landscape, Seascape, Cityscape, Abstract, Still Life.

The Art Competition is open to all active INTO members in the north. As in previous years, an overall winner for 2023

will be identified by a panel of judges and, if appropriate, also a highly commended piece. While each year produces a winning entry the competition is not just about "the prize", it really is intended to offer budding and experienced artists

alike a chance to share their work and participate in a collective experience through their union. Do not be daunted, as Henri Matisse put it, "Creativity takes courage!" Your courage and creativity means that the art work hanging in Northern Office has the priceless provenance of being produced entirely by INTO members.

Northern Office will endeavour to remind members about the competition during the year through INTO social media and Printout.



Your form and photographs of your paintings must be with INTO by 12 noon, Friday 28 April 2023

Name:		TR No:
Email:		Mobile:
Address:		Postcode:
Painting 1	Painting 2	Painting 3
Title:	Title:	Title:
Medium:	Medium:	Medium:
Measurements (cms/ins):	Measurements (cms/ins)::	Measurements (cms/ins)::
Please identify your theme: People – Animals – Landscape – Seascape – Cityscape – Abstract – Still Life	Please identify your theme: People – Animals – Landscape – Seascape – Cityscape – Abstract – Still Life	Please identify your theme: People – Animals – Landscape – Seascape – Cityscape – Abstract – Still Life
Tell us about your painting:	Tell us about your painting:	Tell us about your painting:

Conditions of Entry: The Competition is open to active INTO members in NI. Pieces submitted for consideration by the panel should be original works by the artist named, and should have been completed within the past 5 years. All entries are subject to selection. Winners will receive a cash prize but no additional monies. Winning entry will become the exclusive property of INTO. INTO retains its discretion to reject works considered objectionable or contrary to the aims and objectives of INTO. INTO will take all due care with entries but INTO accepts no responsibility for the damage, loss, theft, or accident, of any kind, from any cause. INTO reserves the right to make any further adjustments deemed necessary. The panel's decisions are final. All entries will be included in a future Printout feature.

INTO Data Privacy Policy: We refer you to the INTO Data Privacy Policy ('Privacy Policy'). This Privacy Policy explains how the INTO processes personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation ('Data Protection Law'). This privacy policy may be amended and updated from time to time and can be accessed on the INTO website at www.into.ie/ni

Please confirm that you have read the Conditions of Entry and Data Privacy Policy

New Discounts

with your INTO Membership Plus Card



It's the start of a brand new year, and the Membership Plus team have been busy adding NEW discounts to the website and app - many of which have been suggested by INTO members.

Below are some of the offers recently added... For the full list of savings, visit the Membership Plus website or app today!

Days Out Offers

Forest Fitness Axe Throwing	25% Discount	Carrickfergus
G.O.T. Studio Tour	20% Discount	Banbridge
NI Speed Quizzing	Up to 15% off	various locations
Share Discovery Village	15% Discount	Lisnaskea

Eating Out Offers

Eddie Rockets NI	20% Discount	4 locations
Parisien	20% Discount	Belfast
Red Pepper Restaurant	10% Discount	Castlederg
The Old Inn Restaurant	10% Discount	Crawfordsburn

Hotels & Travel Offers

Finn Lough Hideaway	10% Discount	Enniskillen
Iona Inn Rentals	10% Discount	North West
Me & Mrs Jones	20% Discount	Portstewart

Shopping Offers

BPerfect Cosmetics	Up to 20% off	9 stores + Online
John A Shannon	10% Discount	Kilkeel
VisionExpress	Up to 30% off	12 locations



G.O.T. Studio Tour



Eddie Rockets NI



John A Shannon

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Trustpilot excellent score correct as at 12/12/2022. Terms, conditions and acceptance criteria apply.

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