

# Staffroom Conversations

Let's Talk

21 February 2024



# **In this session we will discuss...**



- Key responsibilities, our branch structure & contacting your CEC Rep
- How to encourage recruitment & participation
- Exploring scenarios – Where to seek advice on queries
- How to stay in touch and keep up to date with your union
- What are the best things about being in the INTO



# 10 Reasons to Join Leaflet

- Join the INTO and let your voice be heard where it matters.
- Contribute to the improvement of teaching conditions and education standards.
- Be part of the union that has secured every significant improvement for teachers since its foundation.
- To join, visit [www.into.ie](http://www.into.ie).

**into**   
Irish National Teachers' Organisation  
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

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10  
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INTO



*\*Tá an bhileog seo  
le fáil as Gaeilge*

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## Have your voice heard

The INTO, from the ground up, organises on democratic principles. Our representative structures are equitable, inclusive, participatory, transparent and accountable. The structures have been effective in delivering for members. Annual Congress is the governing body. We ballot members on major decisions, hold elections to key roles and run a range of consultative events (e.g. Youth Conference, Equality Conference, Special Education Conference).

## Advice, support and legal backing

We provide advice, assistance and support to members on a range of matters including conditions of employment, legal and industrial relations, trade union issues and professional matters. We have a wide range of expertise in dealing with stakeholders including the Department of Education, Teaching Council and managerial authorities. The INTO has a strong reputation for representing members at a range of forums including before the employer, Teaching Council, the Child and Family Agency and the Workplace Relations Commission.

## Pay and conditions

INTO holds a negotiating licence as a trade union and works for improvements in teachers' salaries and conditions of service. Over the years, the INTO has won greater job security for fixed-term teachers, brought about reductions in class sizes, negotiated pay equalization and secured the implementation of outstanding allowances for school leaders.

## Advice and financial support in hard times

The INTO's benevolent fund supports members or their families in cases of bereavement or financial hardship. The Benefits Funds Committee (BFC) members are available to advise in these situations.

## Better together

Joining the INTO means you are part of Ireland's largest and longest-established teachers' union, representing over 50,000 teachers across the island. INTO subscription rates are competitive and offer great value for money. As an INTO substitute member you only pay for the days you work and all newly qualified teachers (NQTs) get their first six months of membership for free!

## Financial benefits

You can protect earnings against the risk of serious illness through the INTO Salary Protection Scheme. The INTO also has a credit union (Comhar Linn), approved AVC and car insurance schemes and a money-saving discount card, Membership Plus.

## Successful campaigns

Member campaigns such as *Invest for the Best* and *Stand up for Primary Education* have secured thousands of additional teaching jobs despite tight budget conditions.

## INTO networks

Our LGBT+ Teachers Group provides support for LGBT+ teachers. The INTO Global Solidarity Network links teachers interested in global education and union issues.

## Supporting you as a professional

The INTO is a progressive organisation that supports members through CPD programmes including seminars and webinars, *Teaching Matters* in *InTouch* magazine, the *Irish Teachers' Journal*, annual Education Conference and provision of study bursaries. The INTO leads on education issues through representatives on bodies such as the Curriculum Council (NCCA), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and the Teaching Council. The INTO has made detailed submissions on issues such as the provision of special classes in mainstream schools, substitute shortage/teacher supply, and the primary mathematics curriculum. For more information, visit our website.

## Up to date information

You have access to reliable and accurate information via the INTO website, weekly ezines, *InTouch* magazine and through local branches and representatives like the INTO's elected Central Executive Committee (CEC) members, who are full-time teachers. Members can also log a query with the Queryline via telephone, email or the online portal.

10 reasons to be part of the INTO

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# Importance of Recruitment

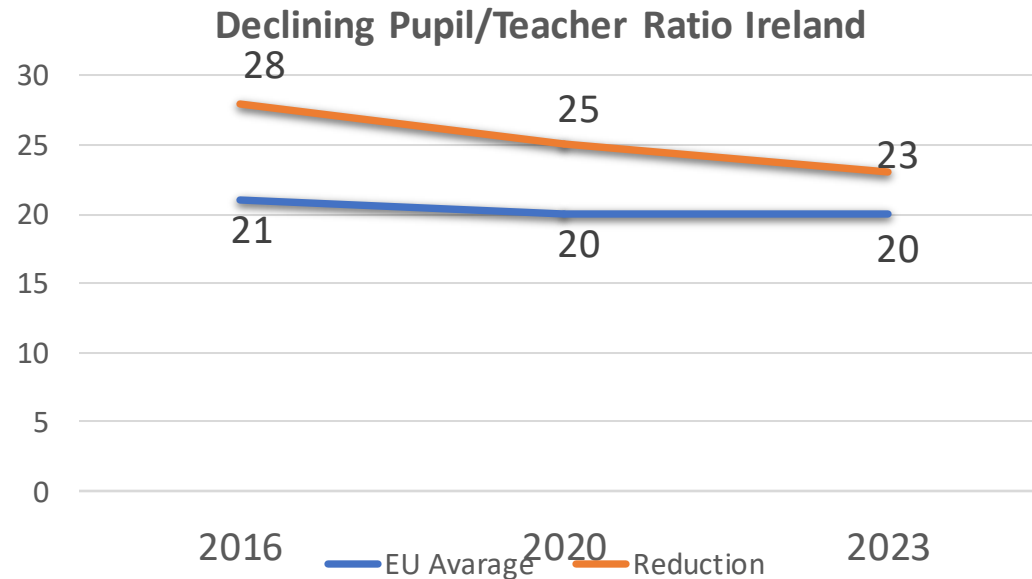
- Unity in the profession
- Promotes solidarity amongst staff
- Strength in numbers
- Collective bargaining power
- Benefit from the negotiations
- More diverse range of views and opinions





# The Impact of Participation

A simple, but highly effective, example of member participation/lobbying has been the INTO campaigns relating to the reduction of class sizes.





# Encouraging Participation

- Ask members to attend meetings to encourage participation at local branch level.
- Explain to non-members how they can join.
- Promote supports and services provided by the INTO.
- Inform colleagues about INTO events.
- Include members with particular interests in lobbying politicians.
- Assist local and national media coordinators in achieving positive coverage for issues promoted by the INTO.



# Report Of The Task Force On Participation

**Local task force members - Staff Survey said -**

- Being asked by a colleague or staff representative to attend
- Being interested in an issue being discussed
- Their own volition







# Report Of The Task Force On Participation

**Young INTO activists said**

**Being asked to attend the local branch meeting**

**Having meeting procedures, acronyms, general INTO structure and culture explained to them.**

**Being encouraged by officers and other members to speak out, be active and undertake a role.**



# Overheard In The Staffroom

You are chatting about the INTO and the next branch meeting, a member of staff says to you. **“The INTO, I’m not going to waste money subscribing to them, sure they do nothing for you”**  
**How do you respond?**





# Handling Queries

**The role of the Staff Representative is**

- To **listen** to the problem.
- To **give** relevant **information**.
- To **refer** the member to where the information may be found.





# School Scenarios

We are going to circulate some possible school scenarios.

We are asking you to consider the best way to engage with each. Confer with those around you.

Members of the training team will engage with you during this process.

Constructive debate is encouraged.





# **School Scenarios**

1. A colleague in SET comes to you, they are frustrated as they have been asked to cover different classes for substitution reasons and haven't been available to teach any of their own groups or pupils. What can they do?
2. Two teachers have requested a job-sharing split-week working pattern. They would like to work; Teacher 1. Monday Tuesday, Teacher 2. Thursday and Friday and every other Wednesday. The principal has refused these working arrangements, they must each work Monday to Friday and alternate. What can they do?
3. During Covid-19 restrictions all teachers agreed to supervise for an additional 10 mins every morning to allow parents to drop off children without congregating. This was a good will gesture from staff but now that Covid-19 restrictions are lifted there is no sign of it changing. They come to you for advice.
4. The temperature in a colleague's class has been less than 12 degrees Celsius at the start of school every day this week. They are freezing and fed up.
5. An LGBTQ member of staff who has been open about their sexuality comes to you, they feel that other staff members are not being inclusive in their language/behaviour towards them on staff. What can you do?

6. There has been a recent AP1 post of responsibility appointment at school. A member of staff comes to you aggrieved. They feel that procedures were not followed as the notification of the appointment was not posted in the staff room following selection. They were an unsuccessful candidate. What do you do?

7. An NQT chats to you regarding remuneration for items bought for their class. Your principal is unwilling to engage with the NQT on the matter. They are concerned about what they should do moving forward.

8. Your School has placed a bank of PC/Tablets/Laptops in all classrooms. A member approaches you as they feel they have a large knowledge gap around the use of ICT. They are unsure about their position if students access inappropriate material. Will they be held responsible if an incident like this arises?

9. In a member's opinion the health and safety of the children in the school is being put at risk. A rodent/mould infestation is not being handled correctly by school management. Your colleague is worried about a situation where a child contracts an infestation related illness. They ask you what level of responsibility they have in this situation.



# Handling Queries



**To help members with queries, do the following:**

- Listen to the problem and assure the member that their query will be dealt with in confidence.
- Provide advice only if you are certain that it is completely reliable, and if in doubt consult.
- If it is an urgent matter, direct the member to Head Office or their local CEC representative.
- Direct the member to further sources of information, for example, the INTO website, their CEC representative or INTO Head Office Handling members' queries.





# Members' Query-Line

- The fastest way to get an answer to a question is to visit [the INTO website](#).
- You can also ring the query line on 01 804 7700 or email [info@into.ie](mailto:info@into.ie)
  - The query line is operational from 9 am to 5 pm daily. However, a team member may call you back up to 6 pm.
  - Calls to the query line are logged by our reception staff, who will need to verify you are an INTO member.
  - Your query is then assigned to a team member with the relevant expertise to deal with the specifics of the enquiry.



# Staying Informed



- Go to your branch meetings. Check dates with your branch secretary or look at the events calendar on the INTO website.
- Read the Eolas. Whenever we have exceptional news, an Eolas is issued to members and posted online.
- Read the INTO e-newsletter. *It is emailed on Tuesdays during term-time.*
- Visit the INTO website.
- INTO's social media channels: *Facebook, Twitter, Instagram*



# *Mile Buióchas*