

Pensions update

April 2011

speaking
out for
pensions
ATL

Dear member,



Following an emergency debate at ATL's Annual Conference, your Executive Committee voted to ballot members on strike action next term against the government's proposals on teachers' pensions.

This unprecedented action is more in sorrow than in anger and demonstrates the strength of feeling among ATL members over plans to make you pay more, work longer, get less. ATL will be joined by NUT in balloting its members as the NUT took a similar decision at its annual conference.

I ask you to study this leaflet, as well as information in *Report* and on ATL's website, to understand the issues leading up to this significant decision. ATL believes, above all, in the power of reason, but in our discussions with the government on pensions, reason has failed.

My advice is that only a substantial display of opposition from you all will persuade the government to negotiate more flexibly.

In the coming weeks, you will receive much more information. Some of the most pressing questions are answered below.

I know you will be discussing this in your staffrooms. You, the members of ATL, will decide democratically during the summer term whether a strike is the only way forward.

Yours sincerely,

Mary W. Boustead.

Dr Mary Boustead

ATL general secretary

SAY NO TO
FURTHER CHANGE!

When will the ballot be held?

ATL will work with NUT on ballot arrangements and more details will be available later. The ballot will open in May and close in June.

Who will be voting?

You will have a vote if you're **a teacher or lecturer in England and Wales** who is in, or is eligible to be in, the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), and you work in a maintained school (including an academy, foundation or trust school) or an FE or sixth form college.

You will have a vote if you work as **a teacher in an independent school** which offers the TPS.

You will have a vote if you're a member of ATL's leadership section, the Association of Managers in Education (AMiE) and you work in a maintained school or a college in England and Wales and you're in, or eligible to be in, the TPS. **AMiE is currently the only leadership union to be balloting its members.**

When would we strike?

If the government offers no concessions, action could take place later in the summer term. External exams would be protected. Depending upon which unions vote for action, virtually every maintained school in England and Wales could be closed.

Can't we discuss this with the government?

Represented by the TUC, we have been talking to Danny Alexander, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and Francis Maude, Cabinet Office Minister, all last term about the principles of public sector pension reform. The government has repeatedly failed to show flexibility on any of our concerns.

What about other means of persuasion?

ATL has:

- delivered a 15,000-signature petition to Downing Street
- encouraged members to write to MPs
- explained to Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, the seriousness of the situation.

PAY MORE:

An increase in your contributions from 6.4% to 9.8% means a teacher will pay on average £1,145 a year more while a headteacher will pay £1,965.

WORK LONGER:

Your normal retirement age will rise to 66 and then to 68.

GET LESS:

The replacement of the final salary scheme by a career average scheme means 15% less in retirement, while changes in the way pension increases are calculated – a move from RPI to CPI – mean a £10,000 a year pension has already lost £150 this year.

EXCLUDED:

Teachers in independent schools are to be excluded from the TPS.

Surely the country can't afford the present pension arrangements?

Not so. In 2007 changes to the TPS were agreed precisely to deal with increased life expectancy and to keep the scheme viable in the long term. There has been no new evidence to suggest further change is necessary.

The National Audit Office estimates that the cost of public sector pensions will reduce from 1.9% of GDP to between 1.2% and 1.5% over the next 50 years.

Then why is the government asking for £2.8 billion more in public sector pension contributions?

The Chancellor first announced in his October Comprehensive Spending Review that the increased pension contributions were to reduce the budget deficit – not because of any calculation about the health of the pension schemes. Ministers have repeated this consistently. We now know that this amount will fall disproportionately on teachers.



Support ATL's pensions campaign

- read more on ATL's campaign webpage at www.atl.org.uk/pensionscampaign
- come to an ATL roadshow
- download or order materials to share with colleagues
- write to your MP demanding a halt to changes
- back ATL in all its efforts to secure the best pension for you.



ATL - the education union
7 Northumberland Street
London WC2N 5RD

Tel: 020 7930 6441
Fax: 020 7930 1359

Email: info@atl.org.uk
Website: www.atl.org.uk

Cardiff
Tel: 029 2046 5000
Email: cymru@atl.org.uk

Belfast
Tel: 028 9078 2020
Email: ni@atl.org.uk

Edinburgh
Tel: 0131 272 2748
Email: scotland@atl.org.uk



AMiE
35 The Point
Market Harborough
Leicestershire
LE16 7QU