



Contents:

- Introduction 1
- Presidents welcome 1
- New Regional Officer 2
- Cyberbullying policy support 2
- Policy update 3
- GTCW launch new code of conduct 3
- Dates for your diary 4
- Unions win pay rise 4

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Introduction

Welcome to the latest issue of *ATL Cymru news*. ATL continues to grow, and we are making a real difference for members in their everyday lives by organising, lobbying and through casework. This newsletter reflects some of ATL's activities in Wales but this is only the tip of the iceberg. ATL members are active in schools and colleges up and down the country. If you're not yet involved, this new term is the time to become so – you can make a difference.



Philip Dixon, Director, ATL Cymru



*Gareth Lewis, president,
ATL Cymru*

Welcome from ATL Cymru's president

After 30 years in the classroom I still look forward to the challenges and opportunities that a new school year brings. Maybe it is because of increasing age that I see more challenges than opportunities, this year in particular, or maybe it is because of the changing political and economic scene.

We know that we are likely to face even more cuts to education budgets, far more severe than those already seen in Wales. We have seen since devolution a widening of the funding gap for schools between Wales and England to over £500 per student. We have 22 local authorities (LAs) spending valuable resources on duplication of services and yet they have too little left in the pot to adequately fund schools and colleges and provide a comprehensive advisory service across Wales. Individual CPD

for the vast majority of teachers in Wales is a distant memory. When was the last time that you had CPD that focused on your needs as a teacher to improve your performance? Schools just don't have the resources to cope. The introduction of the Foundation Phase has transformed the education for children in their early years but I fear that as budgets are cut then the gains made in this area will be lost.

The UK government has announced the end of the GTCE, what of the future of GTCW? I congratulate David Healey, our former president in Wales, upon his election to the GTCW. The body can only benefit from David's knowledge and experience. There should be a valuable role for a teachers' professional body and now that ATL has a place at the table we can hopefully influence its future direction.

The Workload Agreement has made great progress in improving the work-life balance for teachers. The implementation of rarely cover and PPA have given most teachers time to carry out their professional duties but, it appears to be at the expense of support staff in schools. I am aware of cover supervisors covering the same classes for weeks and months. This is unacceptable. Every child deserves to be taught by a qualified teacher. For headteachers to say that a cover supervisor is a suitable person to be responsible for a class for more than a few days undermines the professionalism of their teachers and places their support staff in an intolerable position. We need to be vigilant; if a cover supervisor is thought to be capable of teaching then they should be paid as a teacher!

According to the statistics, educational standards are rising. Increasing numbers of students are achieving higher grade qualifications and more of them. They are achieving higher points scores but are they obtaining the qualifications they need, or are schools forcing students onto courses that boost the school's performance but are of little value to the student?

Next May we will have elections for the Welsh Assembly. In the coming months we will be formulating an ATL Cymru Manifesto that we will be calling on the political parties to endorse. We need your help too in formulating our Manifesto and we will let you know what the politicians have to say about it. Protecting the classroom must be the priority for us all.



Jane Lancaster, regional official for South Wales

New regional official for South Wales

Jane Lancaster, a job-share regional official for South Wales, writes this introduction about herself: 'I come to ATL after working for two years in the private sector as an HR Consultant. Previously, I worked for Caerphilly LA, supporting governing bodies. In Caerphilly, I gained my first taste in employment relations with Unison and became Chair of the branch. I know how important the role of the branch is in providing support for its members. I am an associate member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and I'm studying for a Masters degree at Newport University.'

'In my spare time I enjoy many activities, mostly involving exercise. Not because I enjoy it, but because I love food and wine; exercise is the only way that I could still fit through the doorway! So it's regular trips to the gym and lots of walking for me. I recently completed a 10K Race for Life in Cardiff and was so chuffed that not only did I run (I use the term loosely) all the way but I was able to hold a conversation/gossip with my friend for the entire distance!

'I am delighted to be appointed to this position and hope to meet many of you soon'.

Teacher support cymru calls for adoption of cyberbullying policies

A survey of teaching staff earlier in the year by ATL in conjunction with teacher support network, in England, found that nearly a quarter of staff had been warned by an employer or colleague to remove information from a social networking profile. Ninety four of the 630 respondents reported that they knew of colleagues who'd had a group set up to discuss or post abusive messages about them. Furthermore, over 40% of respondents were concerned that information about them placed on social networking sites might be used in disciplinary action against them, and only 40% of respondents said their school had a policy in place to deal with it. "It is crucial that schools adopt meaningful and effective policies to root out cyberbullying," said Julian Stanley, Chief Executive of teacher support cymru. "In the meantime, teachers should follow the advice set out by the GTCW to protect themselves from potential abuse and/or disciplinary action."

Teacher support cymru has produced a range of factsheets to help you and your pupils to stay safe online when using social networking sites. These include:

- advice for teachers – dealing with cyberbullying
- Facebook – privacy settings
- Twittering for teachers – consider privacy settings
- the Rate my teacher website – an overview and how to deal with any problems.

For support with cyberbullying, call the teacher support cymru's free, confidential, bilingual support line on **0800 085 5800**, 24 hours a day, seven days per week, or download their factsheets from www.teachersupport.info. ATL's own policy and cyberbullying factsheet can be downloaded from www.atl.org.uk.

Stop press!

You can now follow us on Twitter!

<http://twitter.com/ATLCymru>

ACM merge with ATL

The Association of College Management (ACM) has voted to merge with ATL. In the ballot of 3,500 ACM members this summer, 88% of those who voted were in favour of the merger, which will take place on 1 January 2011. The Association of Managers in Education (AMiE), the joint venture set up while the two unions worked towards a merger, will form an independent section within the merged union and will be free to determine its own policies.

Around 3,000 ATL members in leadership positions in UK schools, sixth form colleges and further education colleges have already joined AMiE. Casework and support for leaders and managers in membership of the merged union will continue to be provided by permanent regional officials.



ATL Cymru policy update

ATL Cymru recently responded to the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) call for evidence regarding the Education Funding Review Initial Report.

ATL has welcomed the publication of this report. We do not advocate radical structural change in the way in which education is administered but we support the need for a fundamental and far-reaching change in culture. We agreed with the main findings of the report that:

- there is a need to simplify governance, funding and grant structures

- the WAG needs to prioritise its policy portfolio areas. Initiatives emanating from the WAG need to be drastically reduced so schools can effectively concentrate on the delivery of initiatives
- there is a need to standardise and share support with regional consortia. We agree with the Minister's recent comments that there needs to be a new debate on the role of LAs in education. At present there are a large number of LAs that work

autonomously. This is no longer an acceptable situation

- there is a need to integrate LA services, LA and further education and non-education support functions by geography
- schools need to collaborate more to deliver better support. This is current occurring and needs to be rolled out further in the future.

A copy of the WAG's report can be accessed via: <http://wales.gov.uk>. A full copy of ATL's response can be accessed via: www.atl.org.uk.

GTCW launch new code of conduct

The General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) has launched the new Code of Professional Conduct and Practice that will apply to nearly 40,000 registered teachers.

The new Code outlines, for the benefit of parents, pupils, the wider public and the teaching profession itself, the high standards to which teachers in Wales adhere. Explicit reference is made for the first time to the 'appropriate' use of social networking websites for communications between teachers and pupils. During the consultation, many teachers were concerned about this issue.

Commenting on the new Code, Philip Dixon, director of ATL Cymru, said: "Teaching is a profession with high standards and high expectations. Teachers are the ones who help to shape the next generation and make a better future for us all. This Code celebrates the good practice of the vast majority of teachers in Wales. Parents should view it as a sign of the commitment and generosity that teachers bring to their role, day in and day out. We should be proud of our teachers and this Code tells us why."

The Code, which is available to view online at www.gtcw.org.uk, will be sent out to all of Wales' registered teachers before the end of the year.

Exciting rep opportunity in Neath Port-Talbot

An exciting opportunity has arisen for members in the Neath Port-Talbot area. We currently have a vacancy for an ATL member in Neath Port-Talbot to become the local area representative. This role would involve attending local meetings, such as joint teaching and support staff meetings, and the joint consultative meetings with the LA. This would be an ideal way for someone who is interested to become more involved in the decision-making processes within their area. In

addition, it would also provide excellent CPD opportunities. In order to attend the meetings required by this role, the rep would be given facilities time, which is cover for any lessons missed at no cost to your school.

Gary Forster's experience as ATL rep at Ysgol Aberconwy, Conwy, North Wales, gives you some idea of what to expect: "I have been a member of ATL for 11 years now and have been school rep for approximately 18 months. I was asked to become a rep after the previous school rep resigned due to relocation. At first I was a little reluctant due to the time involved, seeing the work of the previous post holder, and the perceived 'hassle';

however, I can't remember how, but he eventually sold the role to me!

"I believe the role to be vital in the link between the national union/senior management and teaching/non-teaching staff within the school.

"I enjoy the role, dealing with people and knowing that with ATL there is support available, which ultimately is what a union is about and how it will be judged by its members."

If you are interested in finding out more about this opportunity please contact ATL Cymru on 02920 465 000 or email cymru@atl.org.uk.

Dates for your diary

Branch meetings

North Wales

Cherry Pie Inn, Melin-y-Wern

9 November 2010

15 March 2011

17 May 2011

For further details please contact David Hÿtch, branch secretary for North Wales at dhÿtch@n-wales.atl.org.uk.

Mid and South Glamorgan

Village Hotel, Coryton, Cardiff CF14 7EF

19 October 2010

15 February 2011

17 May 2011

Meetings start at 6:30pm but members meet for a meal (which will be

reimbursed along with travel costs) at 5:15pm at the Victory restaurant located in the hotel. For further information please contact Julia Ellis or Ken Farrar (Mid Glamorgan branch secretaries) at jellis@m-glamorgan.atl.org.uk or kfarrar@m-glamorgan.atl.org.uk. Or Richard Baker (South Glamorgan branch secretary) at rbaker@s-glamorgan.atl.org.uk.

Gwent

Best Western Hotel, Parkway Hotel,

Cwmbran NP44 3UW

25 November 2010

For further details please contact the Cardiff office on 02920 465 000 or email cymru@atl.org.uk.

West Glamorgan

Marriott Hotel, Swansea SA1 3SS

9 November 2010

For further information please contact David Bishop, branch secretary for West Glamorgan, at dbishop@swansea.atl.org.uk.

North Wales branch dinner for reps and contacts

A dinner for reps and contacts in North Wales was held at the Talardy Hotel, St. Asaph, on 28 June. Designed to foster links between our reps and the branch Committee, both to improve communication and with an eye to succession planning, it was a very pleasant occasion enjoyed by all. It was also an excellent opportunity to offer a 'thank you' to colleagues who have taken on the reps' role (almost all schools and colleges in the branch now have a rep thanks to the efforts of Roz Benney). A similar event is planned for next summer.

Unions win 2.3% pay rise for all FE staff in Wales

Unions representing staff in FE colleges have unanimously accepted an offer of a 2.3% pay increase for the next year. The new offer means that FE pay maintains parity with that of school teachers, a key principle for the unions. Although the pay element has been settled the unions are still in negotiations with Colegau Cymru about other key demands, including a better deal for low paid workers and a commitment to tackle the continued scandal of unequal pay in the sector.

Future editions

If you would like to submit any articles or details of events for a future edition of this newsletter, please email them to cymru@atl.org.uk.