



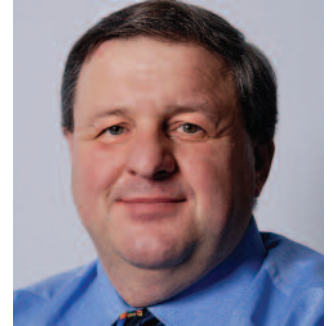
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Issue 11, March 2011

Welcome from ATL Cymru's president

This term is probably the busiest term for teachers, particularly in the secondary and tertiary sectors as we prepare our students for exams but it will also be a crucial period for the future of education in Wales. We have produced an ATL manifesto for the forthcoming Welsh Assembly elections and have asked politicians of all parties to sign up for what we believe is the best for education in Wales. Please seek the views of your local candidates and above all please vote in the election!



*Gareth Lewis, president,
ATL Cymru*

Once again our pension scheme is under attack as teachers are asked to pay for the financial mistakes of others. The government has not released any evidence of a shortfall in the Teachers' Pension Scheme and yet is proposing to raise our contributions by almost 50% and receive less benefit when we retire. The proposed rises in contributions for lesser benefits upon retirement are little more than an extra tax for being a teacher. Take the time and trouble to read the literature supplied by ATL and support your union in fighting to preserve our pension.

They're coming after your pension!

The Westminster coalition government has announced its latest attack on hard working public sector employees, a proposed increase in teachers' pension contributions from 6.4% to 9.8%.

This attack on the pension rights of teachers means that scheme members could end up paying up to an extra £1,700 a year. This is as well as changing from the retail price index to the consumer price index, increasing the retirement age and changing from to a 'career average' rather than 'final salary' pension. Combined this would result in teachers and support staff receiving 25% less during retirement. All on top of a two-year public sector pay freeze.

The government has proposed all of this without waiting for the outcome of Lord Hutton's report into public sector pensions, which was commissioned by them, and without having any evidence to support these changes. Nor have they

carried out a proper valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Perhaps even more galling, though, is all of this is to pay for a crisis caused by reckless banks who have now returned to profit. These same banks are paying millions of pounds in bonuses while vast swathes of people in the UK are facing the biggest attack on their quality of life for decades.

ATL has already responded by joining with the other teaching unions and successfully requesting that the proposals are withdrawn and no further action taken by the Department for Education at least until the outcome of the full Hutton report is known. The government has committed to enter into negotiations with the teaching unions and we expect there to be a decision in the summer time. We must use this reprieve wisely and speak to fellow ATL members in our workplaces to find out what they think of the issue and what action they would be prepared to take.



ATL Cymru has organised a pension's event for all members which will take place at the Future Inn in Cardiff Bay on Thursday 10 March 2011 from 6.30pm to 8pm. This will be an opportunity for you to put questions to a pension's expert and find out more about how you can get involved in the campaign to protect your pension. See page x for more information on this event.

You can also visit ATL's website at www.atl.org.uk/pensionscampaign for more information on the campaign and the proposed changes.

Director's column

Welcome to the spring term edition of *ATL Cymru news*. After a restful festive break it was back to Earth with a bang in January when the coalition government in Westminster announced proposals attacking the pension rights of teachers. In a nutshell the Westminster government is proposing that you pay more, work longer and get less. We will fight this unfair nonsense at every level.

In Cardiff Bay, largely in response to disappointing PISA results, the Welsh Assembly Government have announced a series of changes which aim to promote and protect a world class education system in Wales. We are obviously willing to cooperate in this and bring members' experiences and concerns to the debate but we remain concerned about the lack of funding facing Welsh schools.



Philip Dixon, Director, ATL Cymru

By the time you receive this newsletter the referendum on further powers will be over and campaigning will have started for the Assembly elections in May. Keep an eye out for how you can get involved in the ATL Cymru campaign to get candidates from all parties to pledge their commitment to our priorities for education in Wales. Make your voice heard.

Get involved

ATL Cymru is asking all candidates standing in this May's Assembly elections to pledge their commitment to our priorities for education in Wales.

We have developed six key pledges and you can get involved by contacting candidates in your area and asking them to commit to actively campaigning for each pledge if elected. Let us know what response you get by contacting us by email at cymru@atl.org.uk.

If elected I will actively campaign to:

- narrow the funding gap
- ensure a fair deal for support staff
- insist on a national contract for FE staff
- enforce greater collaboration between local authorities in Wales
- ensure adequate CPD for school staff
- eradicate child poverty

Development opportunity

Estyn is currently running a recruitment exercise for Schools' Peer Inspectors. This role gives you the opportunity to:

- take part in school inspections in Wales
- receive valuable professional development
- help Estyn to achieve their mission of excellence for all learners in Wales
- share your passion for raising standards in education and training in Wales.

For more information about the role and an application pack visit the Estyn website at www.estyn.gov.uk.

England-Wales pupil funding gap marks a low point in education spending

Earlier this year we saw the Welsh Assembly Government release figures which show the England-Wales pupil funding gap has risen to a staggering £604 per pupil. This is up from an average of £527 per pupil in 2009-10.

There was general condemnation of the figures and ATL Cymru director, Philip Dixon, emphasised that politicians in Cardiff Bay, 'must now focus its energies on ensuring that much more money gets to the front line and we see, year on year, that gap closing.'

However, he also issued a word of warning, 'proposals by the Welsh Conservatives would see the gap increase quite considerably.'

As we approach the National Assembly elections in May we must ensure that the new realism over the funding gap is maintained and candidates are held to account at election time. The future of Welsh education depends upon it.

Members say no to bullying

In December 2010, ATL members at Danescourt Primary School in Cardiff took strike action, along with their colleagues in the NUT and the NASUWT, over the bullying behaviour of the headteacher.

Whilst matters are still ongoing, the campaign that has been built by the members has been extremely successful gaining extensive support from the local community including parents and pupils, with two ex-headteachers of the school visiting the picket line to show their solidarity.



Members at Danescourt Primary School take strike action.
Credit: Photography by Paul and Jacs.



March for the alternative

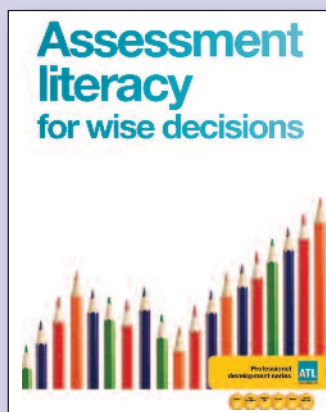
The Trades Union Congress (TUC) has called a march and rally on **Saturday 26 March 2011** in protest at the government's cuts programme.

If the cuts go ahead they will set us back decades and cause serious harm to some of the most vulnerable people in society. That is why the march and rally need to be as big and vibrant as possible to show the coalition government we will not take their cuts lying down.

ATL will help arrange transport or pay receipted travel expenses for any member who wants to go on the day. Please contact Robert Goddard, ATL Cymru organiser, at rgoddard@atl.org.uk or 07587 633237 if you would like to go.

For more information about the march and rally and the TUC campaign to protect public services visit www.marchforthealternative.org.uk.

New resources from ATL!



ATL will be publishing its newly updated publication entitled, *Redundancy* in March this year. ATL also recently published new editions of *Achievement for all* and *Assessment literacy for wise decisions*, both from its popular professional development series. *Achievement for all* is packed with practical information and ideas on teaching pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools and colleges and *Assessment literacy for wise decisions* explains the language of assessment and assessment processes. All three publications are available for download from ATL's website at www.atl.org.uk and can be ordered in hardcopy

Please let us know if you have...

'Moved house? Changed jobs? Please update your details at www.atl.org.uk/update or email membership@atl.org.uk.

Stop press!

You can now follow us on Twitter!
<http://twitter.com/ATLCymru>

Dates for your diary

Branch meetings

North Wales

Cherry Pie Inn, Melin-y-Wern
Spring term: 15 March 2011
Summer term: 17 May 2011

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

Mid and South Glamorgan

Village Hotel, Coryton, Cardiff CF14 7EF
Summer term: 17 May 2011
The meeting will start at 6.30pm with

members meeting for a meal (which will be reimbursed along with travel costs) at 5.15pm in the Victory restaurant located in the hotel.

For further details 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.

Pension's campaign meeting

Future Inn, Hemingway Road, Cardiff Bay CF10 4AU
Thursday 10 March 2011
6.30pm to 8pm

This meeting is open to all members of ATL and will give you an opportunity to put questions to a pension's expert about the proposed changes to the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Contact Robert Goddard, ATL Cymru organiser, at rgoddard@atl.org.uk or **07587 633237** to book a place or for more information.

Policy update

In December 2010 ATL Cymru was asked to give evidence to the Structure of Education Services Task and Finish Group, which is part of the Front Line Resource Review, established in the aftermath of the WAG's report into the cost of administering education in Wales.

The Task and Finish Group have been asked to consider the case for change to existing education service structures (excluding higher education) across Wales. The Group is looking at a long-term, whole system view on whether current education structures enable and support the delivery of best value education services. The Group has been asked to look specifically at services that:

- should be provided at national level
- should be provided at regional consortia level
- should be provided at local authority (LA) level
- should be devolved to providers, including schools or clusters of schools
- should be provided on another organisational basis.

ATL Cymru responded to this call for evidence and broadly supported (in many cases) the transfer of education services from LA to a more regionally based approach, represented by a consortia. We highlighted the fact that many members have communicated to us that they feel the current structure of local government in Wales is too burdensome and not cost effective. The 22 LAs in Wales need to work together to share provision and reduce overhead costs. In our response we highlighted which services we believe could be delivered best at a national, regional, local and school setting. ATL Cymru's response can be viewed in full at <http://tinyurl.com/6x8ames>.

Future editions

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