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New negotiating body goes before Parliament

Just before *ATL support* went to press, the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) published the draft Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill, which will, if agreed by Parliament, provide the new School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) for England with a formal statutory basis.

Whilst the bill has yet to be timetabled for debate, its timely publication should ensure that it will have been through all stages of the legislative process and be ready for Royal assent prior to the next general election, which must take place by no later than June 2010.

In the meantime, the interim joint negotiating body, chaired by Philip Ashmore, continues to work with a team of government-appointed HR consultants to develop a new pay and conditions framework for school support staff. This work will inform the negotiations in the body relating to any new pay and working arrangements for school support staff.

The position in Wales remains unclear, and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) appears to be monitoring developments in England before taking a view on arrangements for Welsh schools.

Among a whole raft of reforms, the bill also contains the first complete overhaul of apprenticeships legislation for nearly 200 years and gives all employees the right to request training during their working lives.

Children, Schools and Families Secretary Ed Balls said: *"There have been undeniable huge improvements in school standards over the last decade – but I have always been clear that we have more to do until we have a world-class education system. This bill delivers a clear package of measures to build on teachers' and pupils' achievements... ensuring that teachers and support staff get the recognition and support they need."*



Mary Bousted, ATL general secretary, said:

"The publication of the draft bill is another small but significant step on the road to a fair deal for school support staff, and we therefore welcome it. With both the main UK opposition parties opposed to any change in the current unfair practice of localised pay rates for schools support staff, ATL looks forward to the bill reaching the statute book in 2009."



We want your opinions

Following on from the success of the survey for support staff in the independent sector, a major survey on pay and working conditions has been sent out to all ATL support staff members in the maintained sector for whom we have email addresses. It is the most comprehensive survey we have ever undertaken of our support staff membership, containing sections on:

- ✓ Pay and hours
- ✓ Your job description
- ✓ Workload
- ✓ Cover supervision
- ✓ HLTAs
- ✓ CPD and training
- ✓ Performance management
- ✓ Getting involved in ATL

The aim is to make the survey an annual event, to give members a chance to have their say on their working lives, and also to provide valuable information for our ongoing programme of work for our support staff members.

Members for whom we do not have an email address will still be able to take part:

- 1 By visiting www.atl.org.uk and completing the survey in the 'Join the debate' section
- 2 By requesting that a hard copy is sent to you in the post, which can then be returned to us. Please email Su Chan at schan@atl.org.uk or ring her on **020 7782 1549** to request a copy
- 3 By alerting us (schan@atl.org.uk) to your current email address.

The closing date for completing the survey is **Monday 23 March**.

The results of the survey will be unveiled at the first ever support staff session of ATL's annual Conference, which is being held in Liverpool on 6 April, and a full round-up of the results will appear in the summer term edition of *ATL support*.



Pay in the maintained sector

Please see below, the new pay spine, as of 1 April 2008. Members should note that these new rates, which signify an increase of 2.45%, have been implemented on a without prejudice basis, as the unions and the local government employers have not yet reached final agreement, and are continuing their discussions through the offices of ACAS.

Spine point	April 2007	April 2008	Spine point	April 2007	April 2008
4	£11,577	£11,961	27	£22,122	£22,664
5	£11,737	£12,125	28	£22,845	£23,405
6	£11,907	£12,299	29	£23,749	£24,331
7	£12,291	£12,592	30	£24,545	£25,146
8	£12,678	£12,989	31	£25,320	£25,940
9	£13,062	£13,382	32	£26,067	£26,706
10	£13,336	£13,663	33	£26,835	£27,492
11	£14,197	£14,545	34	£27,594	£28,270
12	£14,492	£14,847	35	£28,172	£28,862
13	£14,882	£15,247	36	£28,919	£29,628
14	£15,153	£15,524	37	£29,728	£30,456
15	£15,470	£15,849	38	£30,598	£31,348
16	£15,842	£16,230	39	£31,606	£32,380
17	£16,217	£16,614	40	£32,436	£33,231
18	£16,536	£16,941	41	£33,291	£34,107
19	£17,154	£17,574	42	£34,140	£34,976
20	£17,781	£18,217	43	£34,991	£35,848
21	£18,430	£18,882	44	£35,852	£36,730
22	£18,907	£19,370	45	£36,657	£37,555
23	£19,463	£19,940	46	£37,543	£38,463
24	£20,099	£20,591	47	£38,404	£39,345
25	£20,736	£21,244	48	£39,258	£40,220
26	£21,412	£21,937	49	£40,101	£41,083

London weighting and fringe area allowances

Area	01/04/07	01/04/08
Inner London	£3,179	£3,257
Outer London	£1,691	£1,732

2009/10: The local government unions have submitted a claim for “an increase of at least the level of retail price inflation, with additional salary increases for the lowest paid”, to be payable from **1 April 2009**.

The unions were informed that the employers would not be making a formal response to the claim until both the arbitration process (see above) and regional pay briefings for local authorities were concluded, which would be the end of March at the earliest.



All change for SENCOs

As many of you will know, 2009 will see new regulations come into force relating to the role of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). These regulations apply to community, foundation and voluntary schools and maintained nursery schools in England.

Two of the regulations relate to the place of the SENCO within the school structure, one defining the SENCO role in relation to the leadership and management of the school and the other placing a requirement on governing bodies to monitor actions of the SENCO in relation to key areas of the role, derived from the SEN Code of Practice.

Support staff who are currently fulfilling the role of SENCO in schools will be most concerned about the regulation around the qualifications now required of those in a SENCO role. Regulation 3 requires the SENCO to be either a qualified teacher, the headteacher or a person carrying out the role for at least six months prior to the regulations coming into force who demonstrates a reasonable prospect of fulfilling the qualified teacher status (QTS) condition within a period of two years from that date.

The regulations come into force in September 2009. The two-year transitional period, for SENCOs not currently teachers, but who have been in post for at least six months as at 31 August 2009, to gain QTS ends in September 2011.

ATL's consultation response to the regulations can be found on the ATL website at: www.atl.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/responses/responses-england.asp, following consultation with our SEN network and approval by ATL's Executive Committee. Our response included a strong call for those who need and wish to gain QTS to have access to good quality advice and guidance. Indeed, our own network of branch secretaries and regional officials have already been supporting non-QTS SENCO members by providing advice about local training provision, negotiating with senior leadership teams regarding school support and also, where appropriate, negotiating with providers about recognition of other qualifications, if relevant, towards the achievement of QTS.

If you have any questions about this, please contact Peter Morris, ATL's national official for support staff. If you wish to join any of ATL's policy networks, please contact mlowe@atl.org.uk, stating the area(s) in which you are most interested or experienced.

Calling all maintained sector support staff

Are you losing out on money that is rightfully yours?

The Green Book clearly states that after five years' unbroken service employees are entitled to an extra five days' annual leave. Due to the fact that you cannot take these days off in term time then you have to be compensated financially. We have found evidence that not all councils are putting this in to effect. Has yours? If not, download a copy of the draft letter to be found here: www.atl.org.uk/help-and-advice/rights-and-conditions/support-staff-rights-England.asp and send it off to County Hall now!

Notwithstanding this, it is also important to remember that 20 days' annual leave, plus Bank Holidays and two days' extra statutory holidays, is the minimum laid down for school support staff. Your local authority may have a more generous leave entitlement, which you again may not be receiving compensation for. If that is the case, you should pursue the matter by sending an amended copy of the draft letter to the local authority.

If you have any queries about your annual leave entitlement, please email Peter Morris, national official for support staff, at pmorris@atl.org.uk.



Calling all independent support staff

ATL is about to launch a new campaign to encourage more support staff in the independent sector to join the union.

ATL membership is open to the whole school workforce – teachers, librarians and technicians, teaching assistants, catering, maintenance and office staff are all now eligible to join the ATL whole school family.

As a member working in an independent school, you will already be aware of the many benefits of belonging to ATL. These include:

- independent sector and support staff newsletters sent out each term
- publications specifically for members in the independent sector; eg *Guide to working in the independent sector* (available free to all members)
- independent and support staff members working groups, which advise the national Executive on important issues
- bespoke CPD training courses.

ATL also offers an unparalleled package of support and advice for all members:

- Through our network of local reps and branches, you'll have professional advice and legal expertise at your fingertips. Whether it is support in negotiating your contract with your headteacher, or help with problems such as assaults or false accusations at work, we can help.
- All members benefit from free comprehensive insurance protection.
- You will receive our members' magazine – *Report* – and will also be able to order copies of ATL's wide range of well-regarded publications.
- We have legal, members and out of hours helplines, which ensure that there is always someone available to offer support and advice.

The poster pictured is now available to be displayed on noticeboards and in staff and common rooms. You can download this from: www.atl.org.uk/publications-and-resources/posters-and-flyers/support-staff-eoa-affiliates.asp or order copies by calling **0845 4500 009** and quoting reference PS076.

For a supply of membership application forms to distribute to your colleagues, please go to www.atl.org.uk/publications-and-resources/posters-and-flyers/support-staff-eoa-affiliates.asp or contact Su Chan at schan@atl.org.uk.

And if you would like an ATL official to visit your school to talk to your colleagues who have not yet joined us, please contact Peter Morris, national official for support staff, at pmorris@atl.org.uk.





Performance management explained

What is performance management?

Performance management schemes for support staff should provide a framework for:

- an annual appraisal of overall performance against an individual's job description
- assessment against objectives agreed at the start of the year.

It is important to remember that performance management is an ongoing cycle and not a one-off annual discussion. It comprises of three elements – planning, monitoring and review. Planning and reviewing will normally take place during the annual discussion: Monitoring continues throughout the year, either informally, or via regular one-to-one meetings.

What should happen at the annual performance management discussion?

The meeting should review:

- the main scope and purpose of your job, with particular reference to your job description
- how effective you have been in your role, including celebrating any notable achievements
- areas for further development, including your training and development requirements
- plans for the coming year.

Should all support staff be 'performance managed'?

Yes. In the maintained sector, the Workload Agreement of 2003 spells out the obligation on schools to establish processes for the performance management of support staff. The appendix 'Training & development

of support staff in schools' states that "for training and development policies to be effective, every member of staff must receive a rigorous, constructive annual appraisal leading to the development of an individual plan for development."

But since then, progress has been slow. The Ofsted report *Reforming and developing the school workforce* (October 2007) recommended that schools should "provide relevant... performance management, and professional and career development for the wider workforce", having previously reported that "just over half of the schools visited had introduced an appraisal or performance management system for the wider workforce."

Ofsted also noted that, while the situation for teaching assistants was slowly improving, for other support staff, particularly administrators and ancillary staff, performance management was more unevenly applied.

Who should instigate a performance management policy?

In the maintained sector, performance management policies can be negotiated and agreed at local authority (LA) level. The process may cover all authority staff, or there may be a distinct policy for school staff.

Where the LA has not implemented its own performance management process, then it is a matter for each school. Where no process is in place, schools should be referred to the Training and Development Agency's *Career development framework for school support staff – guidance handbook* in the first instance. This can be downloaded from the website at www.tda.gov.uk.

What about colleges, independent, academy and other schools?

In sixth form and FE colleges, performance management agreements covering all grades are in operation. To access copies of the agreements, please visit our website: www.atl.org.uk/help-and-advice/performance-management/how-pm-works.asp.

In the independent sector, many schools continue to operate without a clear system of assessment for support staff. Such an approach flies in the face of best practice: Investors in People accreditation, for example, stipulates that every member of staff in an organisation must be covered by a performance management process.

In ex-maintained academies, trust, foundation and voluntary aided and funded schools, any performance management scheme previously established by the LA for its schools should still apply.

In brand new schools, operating outside of the LA aegis, every effort should be made to establish an agreed system of appraisal at the earliest opportunity.



7 Northumberland Street, London WC2N 5RD
Tel: 020 7930 6441 Fax: 020 7930 1359
Email: info@atl.org.uk Website: www.atl.org.uk

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Training for support staff

Supporting yourself: **9 May, London**
Cracking behaviour: **11/12 June, Leeds**
Managing challenging behaviour: **19/20 June, Durham**
Using your voice: **11 July, Exeter**

For more information or to book a course, visit www.atl.org.uk/training or email training@atl.org.uk.

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