

What's inside

Getting involved

- Recruiting members p2
- Independent sector induction recruitment p3
- Independent sector support staff recruitment p3
- ATL London-wide goes from strength to strength p3
- Education policy and you p3

Advice and guidance

- Hard times ahead, says Mary, be prepared continued... p4
- New posters, new factsheets p4
- Pay update p4
- Rarely cover p4
- Threshold p4
- Teachers' Pension Scheme p4
- Post-16 news update p5
- Help your members to get on p5
- Local government pay 2009-10 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) p5

Your Training

- Reps' courses: help yourself to get on p6
- Being an ATL rep p6
- Being an ATL rep in FE p6
- Being an ATL rep in the independent sector p6
- Union learning reps p6
- Health and safety p6
- Reps' training in Northern Ireland p6

Hard times ahead, says Mary, be prepared

As ATL General Secretary, for obvious reasons, engaging with politicians is at the top of my 'things to do' list at the moment. Times are febrile and one thing is paramount in everyone's minds; the impending general election. There is even talk of an election announcement at the Labour party Conference next month.

I am afraid that, whichever party is elected, there will be huge implications for the public services, of which education is a major spender. Some commentators predict a 16% cut in public spending across departments in order to cope with huge holes in the public finances.

So, where will the cuts be made? How will ATL respond? And where do you come in?

First in the firing line may well be **public sector pensions**. Labour has said that it will not re-open the settlement made with the public service unions. The Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats have made no such pledge; indeed, both parties have made much of the 'fat cat' pensions, which are abundant in the public sector. They see them as an easy target. They shouldn't be. As Polly Toynbee noted (The Guardian, 3 July 2009) the average public employee pension is £7,000. Classroom assistants, dinner ladies and school caretakers do not drain the state of its resources. Indeed, their immense contribution to the life and work of a school is poorly rewarded in

employment and lacks the dignity of financial security in retirement. The real problem, as Toynbee notes, is the devastation of private pensions, with companies more concerned with chasing share prices than with being good employers.

Another area to be targeted will be **public sector pay** which, under Labour has seen significant increases both in real and actual terms. To give one example, in 1997 the most experienced classroom teacher with no management responsibilities could expect to earn £21,318. From September 2008,

a similar teacher could have progressed to U3 and earn £35,121; a real terms increase of 26%.

It may well be the case that the period of 1997 to 2009 will be seen as a 'golden age' for public sector pay and we may not see its like again for some time. In a much tougher period unions will have

to fight hard to protect national terms and conditions for pay bargaining. The state education sector must not be allowed to go the way of colleges after incorporation, where FE lecturers suffered a decline in pay which has led to a 10% differential between their pay and that of their teacher colleagues.

The third area likely to be given the chop will be **capital expenditure**. If your school or college is not built (or, thanks to the LSC, half built) by 2011 then it is likely to remain so as the scale and amount of capital expenditure on schools and colleges will plummet post 2011.

So, we have to prepare for a Brave New World, and one in which there will not be much singing or dancing. But ATL is ahead of the curve.

ATL's policy-making structures are flexible and responsive. We have excellent ways of canvassing the views of members through our use of surveys, which invite members to identify their interest in becoming involved in ATL's policy-making. Over the course of the last year we received over 12,000 responses to member surveys on issues as diverse as school and class size, apprenticeships and rural poverty. We based our campaigns on these key areas, on the firm foundation of member views and experience.



Recruiting members

Almost one in two ATL joiners typically sign-up in September and October. Many are triggered to do so after speaking with reps like you. So we've been speaking to you about what works best and here's what you told us...

The most common reason given by non union members for not joining a union is that, 'they have never been asked'. So face-to-face communication, even if it is to just introduce yourself as the ATL rep, is very valuable. Face-to-face recruitment need not be a daunting prospect. **Tony Osborne, ATL rep at City of Bristol College**, recently recruited 10 new lecturer members, and said: "I did this by outlining the benefits of being an ATL member. Subs discounts are a big incentive. I tell people to think of the benefits compared to the cost; the legal cover benefits, if nothing else. The union offers other benefits people may not be aware of, such as voice coaching."

Debbie Polwarth, union learning rep at Kenton High School in Newcastle, says of her experiences so far: "I always tell a positive story to new members about ATL, which goes a long way to challenging any negative preconceptions they might have. With so many opportunities for new members to get involved, especially around learning, I have found it very easy to stress the positive aspects of ATL membership when I talk to staff and make sure that they are kept up-to-date with new developments and opportunities."

Recruitment does not have to be an onerous activity, so if you are busy you may want to think of key times to contact potential members. **Pat Wheatley, at Norton Knatchbull School** in Kent, explains how she efficiently communicates with members and potential members: "Each September INSET day I ask new members of staff to let me know if they would like to join ATL. I always put posters up and put *Report* magazine in the staffroom and sometimes send all staff emails."

Workplace issues may also be an opportunity to raise ATL's profile within the school or college and to recruit new members. Earlier this year **Sam Meadows, ATL rep at Doncaster College**, and Brian Ward, ATL Doncaster branch secretary, were able to boost ATL membership at the college by communicating well with members over potential redundancies. Brian commented: "Sam was extremely adept at maintaining contact with members via email, meetings and by being visible during the difficulties and this raised ATL's profile, which meant we could represent members effectively and increase ATL's membership."

The threat of Maltby Community School, Rotherham, becoming an academy brought unions together at the school thus enabling them to approach non members, to listen to their concerns over the proposed changes and to talk to them about what could be done; this helped to boost union membership at the school, including an increase in ATL membership, by more than 50%.

A slightly different tack was taken by **Elizabeth Bussey, ATL rep at RGS AO School**, an independent school in Worcester. Elizabeth contacted ATL Regional Official, Amanda Swift, to discuss what ATL could do about the increasing number of false allegations made against staff. Following this, Amanda, and



ATL rep, Charlotte Osborne, with an ATL member at Hayesfield School.

branch secretary, Stephen Baker, worked together to write and deliver three workshops to staff at the school on how they could take steps to protect themselves against false accusations. The workshops were very well received and resulted in several new members joining ATL.

If you have not yet undertaken ATL's reps' training, you may find this particularly helpful. **Diane Brown, ATL rep at Mayfield School**, Birmingham, said: "Attending the reps' training has given me the confidence and enthusiasm to approach members and talk about the benefits of being part of the union. Following the training, I went back to school and made sure the noticeboard contained ATL posters and recruitment material for potential members."

Furthermore, **Charlotte Osborne, Hayesfield School** in Bath, found that ATL's reps' training helped her to recruit a replacement: "I decided to become an ATL rep at my school as there had not been a rep there before and I felt we needed one, so I signed up to do the accredited training. It was a brilliant course where I learned everything I needed to know about the role and duties of an ATL rep and also got to meet other reps and share experiences. Subsequently, I took the opportunity to work in Canada so I spoke to the ATL members at my school and one of my colleagues was very glad to take over the role that I had begun."

As these comments show, face-to-face communication between you and potential members is at the heart of effective recruitment. If you are not doing so already, we hope you can try putting some of the examples above into practice this term to ensure our recruitment gets off to another flying start for the new academic year.

! What you can do:

- speak to new staff early in the new term, and refresh your noticeboard with the latest ATL posters and flyers;
- order the full range of membership forms so you can familiarise yourself with ATL membership subscription rates, incentives and benefits, either online at: www.atl.org.uk or by contacting ATL Despatch by email at: despatch@atl.org.uk or by phone on: **0845 4500 009** (refer to the flyer, *The right tools for the job*, enclosed for details of recruitment materials).



Independent sector induction recruitment

The induction of new staff in September is a key time to talk to new colleagues face-to-face and to encourage them to join ATL. While in the state sector a slot on the induction programme is a given, our independent school reps often have to work that bit harder to secure this opportunity. It obviously helps if ATL is recognised for collective bargaining, as we are in approximately 80 independent schools, but there are plenty of other enlightened independent school management teams who are happy to incorporate the ATL rep into the induction programme. To ensure that this happens where we have collective bargaining rights, ATL is currently supporting our school reps in the recognised independent schools, with our organisers following up earlier advice.

Independent sector support staff recruitment

With an estimated 40,000+ support staff employed in UK's independent schools, there is plenty of opportunity to recruit into ATL. ATL is the only union with a sizeable presence in the sector. The following aids are available for reps to use when approaching potential members:

- independent sector support staff application forms, recruitment posters and ATL mugs;
- a model letter for reps and branches to use when approaching support staff to join ATL;
- a letter outlining ATL's membership eligibility criteria, explaining that all members of the school team can now join ATL.

! What you can do:

- order these materials and download the letters from ATL's website at: www.atl.org.uk;
- email ATL National Official, Peter Morris at: pmorris@atl.org.uk if you have any queries or would like to request a school visit.



ATL London-wide goes from strength to strength

Over 70 Greater London ATL members came together for London Wide on Saturday 13 June to take part in two different, but complementary, sessions on classroom management. The first session focused on practical behaviour management strategies while the second focused on stress management and how it can help members maintain a calm atmosphere in the classroom.

ATL Solicitor, Philip Lott, ran a workshop examining common legal issues faced by ATL members and, ATL member, Alison Brett, ran a workshop on making the most of available resources and how to plan lessons using the Librarians and Information Services in your school.

In its third year, London Wide continues to flourish. First conceived as a termly day of learning in order to bring ATL members in London together, it has grown to encompass CPD training and various workshops related to issues faced by members in their workplaces. Events are organised by Diana Manville, Bromley branch secretary, union learning rep and London Wide joint secretary, who is supported by members of the London Wide Committee.

More members are attending, and the range of sessions on offer has similarly grown. ATL members are a talented and diverse bunch, with a wide range of skills and knowledge; many of the sessions are now delivered by ATL members themselves, sharing their expertise and knowledge with their colleagues.

! What you can do:

- to get involved in London Wide, or to make a suggestion for a future session, contact Diana Manville by email at: dmanville@atl.org.uk.

Education policy and you

Would you like to help develop ATL's education policy? ATL's education policy is well-respected because it is based on the experiences and views of actual members.

Following on from ATL's 2009 Conference, ATL will develop its policy on the 14-19 curriculum and its assessment and on extended services. In order to do this, ATL has set up Specialist Task Groups (STGs), who will meet a couple of times over the next few months, and, with the support of ATL's professional staff, will develop new policy guidelines. ATL also needs a wider email group to comment on questions of policy, and to feed in as much expertise as possible.

The Executive Committee member for your region will be able to advise you of the role of each STG. The STGs will be set up early in the autumn term, so you'll need to be quick if you'd like to be involved.

Finally, ATL has set up a number of email networks across the early years, primary and secondary sectors, with some specific networks including SEN and assessment, which enable us to contact members at short notice for information and views.

! What you can do:

- email Monique Lowe at: milowe@atl.org.uk if you would like to know more about getting involved with an STG, or joining an email network.

Hard times ahead

Continued from the front page...

But this is not the only way we communicate with members. ATL now has a range of e-networks; members who have expressed an interest in a particular topic (for example, pensions or pay, or educational issues such as special needs or assessment, or sectors, such as early years or FE). These members can be consulted at a moment's notice, which means that we can base our negotiations with government on real evidence of member opinion.

ATL's involvement in social partnership also stands us in very good stead. Close to the heart of policy-making, and centrally involved in policy implementation, we know the pressures and the pitfalls of political engagement. We will use this knowledge with whatever government is elected to pursue our members' interests and our collective campaigns.

Then, of course, there is you – our network of workplace reps. You are our eyes and ears; the vital link between members and their branches, their Executive Committee members and myself. Whatever the government, your contribution will remain critical. More and more of the detail that affects our members' working lives is now decided at school and college level. It's your eyes, ears and voice that ensure there is no devil in that detail.

This is what being member led involves. Listening and acting upon the opinions and experiences of ATL members, at whatever stage and level of their career, and their level of involvement in the union. It means that when I, as General Secretary, go in to talk to politicians of whatever persuasion, I can do so with real authority, because I am speaking confidently on behalf of my members. Thank you for helping to make this possible.

New posters, new factsheets

Following on from the successful Books poster, ATL has produced a new poster to promote ATL's unrivalled training and CPD opportunities. This poster will be sent to all branch secretaries and reps and contacts in the September *Report* mailing. If you would like to order more, please contact ATL Despatch by email at:

despatch@atl.org.uk

or by phone on:

0845 4500 009

(local rates apply) and quote product code PS079.



Pay update

Teachers in the maintained sector in England and Wales received a 2.3% increase from September 2009 and will receive a further 2.3% increase from September 2010. These increases will be applied to all pay scales including SEN allowances and TLR payments whether or not they have yet been put into payment.

For teachers working in Inner London, point M1 of the main pay scale has been increased from £25,000 to £26,000 (£27,000 from September 2010). Commensurate increases will also be added to the remainder of the main and upper pay scale.

Excellent Teachers will now be paid on a spot salary within a range. There are separate ranges for Inner London, Outer London, London Fringe Area and the rest of England and Wales.

Existing Excellent Teachers should be reassessed onto the appropriate salary within the range based on their experience and the nature of their role. Safeguarding is applicable in the event that the subsequent salary is lower than currently being paid.

You can download the 2009-10 pay scales from ATL's website at: www.atl.org.uk.

Rarely cover

Teachers in England and Wales can only be required to cover rarely for absent colleagues. Each state school must develop a robust cover policy developed in accordance with the guidance issued by WAMG. This contractual change has been introduced to maintain the downward pressure on teachers' working hours. The guidance can be found on WAMG's website at: www.socialpartnership.org.uk. Look out for ATL's Rarely cover poster in with this mailing.

Threshold

From September, the process of crossing the threshold in England will change. Teachers on M6 can ask to be assessed against the post-threshold standards using their last two performance management review statements. Teachers have until 31 October 2010 to request assessment to enable those wanting to use the current year's performance management review to do so. There is no change to the application process in Wales. Full details can be found on the Teachernet website at: www.teachernet.gov.uk.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

ATL is fully supporting the recently launched TUC campaign defending public sector pension schemes, including the Teachers' Pension Scheme, following recent attacks by politicians and the media. More details can be found on the TUC website at: www.tuc.org.uk.

Post-16 news update

Pay in the FE sector is now at a delicate point in the negotiations. The Association of Colleges (AoC) has proposed 1.5%, which the unions are considering.

In sixth form colleges, the employers' offer of a staged pay award of 2.3% is also being considered by the unions. In addition to this, the unions are pressing for pay protection for staff in cases of reorganisation or restructuring, equity for part-time staff and the development of guidance on part-time working in colleges. They are also pressing for a joint working party to be set up to focus on workload issues.

ATL is currently developing renewal plans for college workplaces. This will take the form of helping reps seek recognition in the workplace, negotiating local pay and conditions, working with colleges and other trade unions in the workplace, developing Committees and, where members want them, form ATL college 'sub-branches'. This will bring ATL structures into line with the FE sector where negotiations around pay and conditions are determined locally. An ATL survey on pay, conditions, and member activity in colleges will be sent out in September to ensure up-to-date intelligence in the sector and to further the renewal of college activity.

! What you can do:

- contact National Official, Norman Crowther, by email at: **ncrowther@atl.org.uk** if you have questions or information about redundancies (less than 20), restructuring, recognition discussions or mergers at your college.



Local government pay 2009-10 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

The Local Government Employers (LGE) have made their final offer for the year 2009-10, which if agreed will be implemented as of 1 April 2009.

Pay:

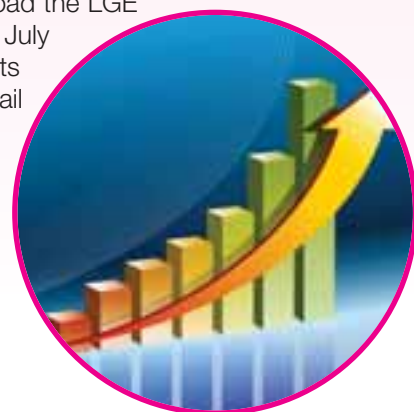
- an increase of 1.25% on salary points four to 10 inclusive;
- an increase of one percent on salary points 11 to 49 inclusive.

Annual Leave:

- an increase from 20 to 21 days minimum annual leave for employees with less than five years' service.

The three recognised local government unions (Unison, GMB and Unite) are consulting their respective memberships and will respond by Friday 11 September 2009. The three unions are recommending to their members that they accept the offer as the best achievable by negotiation.

The LGE has stated that this improved offer represents their final position and that they are not prepared to negotiate further. They have also said that if the offer is rejected, councils will not implement it unilaterally, so there would be no pay increase for 2009-10. For more information, visit ATL's website at: **www.atl.org.uk**, where you can download the LGE letter, dated 22 July 2009, which sets out in more detail the terms of the offer.



Help your members to get on

ATL's Edge Hill University partnership continues to provide members with professional development opportunities. Those new to teaching this term are encouraged to enrol in the CEDP module at Edge Hill University; an excellent opportunity for NQs to gain academic credit for the work they undertake as part of their induction year, and to earn a £35 rebate on their first ATL subs payable in their second year of teaching.

ATL has produced a guide for all ULRs and branch secretaries, entitled *The ATL and Edge Hill partnership*, which offers ideas and guidance on how to inform members of the opportunities available through the partnership. We are also pleased to have published the *Guide to Union Learning*, showcasing the achievements of ATL ULRs, for both members and schools or college employers.

Like all members, you will have received with the June issue of *Report* magazine, ATL's *Professional development programme* for members for the new academic year. There are new courses in coaching and mentoring, online leadership skills and behaviour management for support staff. The courses are popular and fill up quickly. As part of your own performance management you could attend an ATL course.

! What you can do:

- email Becky Wright at: **bwright@atl.org.uk** to order copies of any of the above publications and signpost your members to these resources so they can see how ATL can help take forward their professional development.

Your training

Reps' courses: help yourself to get on

If you are an ATL rep who hasn't been on an ATL reps' course yet why not sign up for one of the autumn 2009 or spring 2010 courses below? Summer 2010 courses will be advertised in the next edition of *Being a rep*. All courses will provide you with the knowledge and skills that you need to get the most out of your role, whether you are a union learning rep, health and safety rep or workplace rep. If you work at an independent school, or in a post-16 setting, there are bespoke courses for you too.

As a rep you are entitled to paid time off to attend any of these courses. Travel expenses are paid to reps wishing to attend the course. More information about all of the reps' roles can be found on ATL's website at: www.atl.org.uk.

! What you can do:

- book your place on a course by emailing training@atl.org.uk.

Reps' training in Northern Ireland

There will be a one-day Being an ATL rep course in Northern Ireland on 9 October 2009, which will equip you with the knowledge and skills that you require to be a rep. This is also a great opportunity to meet other reps and learn about ATL in Northern Ireland. If you are unable to attend the course or would like more information on current issues and challenges facing education staff you may wish to attend a reps' briefing event in your area. A one-day Health and safety course will also be held on 15 January 2010.

For more information, or to book your place at any of these events, please contact Alastair Donaghy by email at: adonaghy@atl.org.uk or phone: **028 9078 2026**.

Help and advice

If you need help with matters related to your role as a school or college rep your first point of contact should be your local branch. If they are unable to help, contact ATL using the details below. If your status has changed and you are either the new ATL rep at your school or you are no longer the rep, please inform us by emailing: membership@atl.org.uk.

General enquiries

Tel: 020 7930 6441
Email: info@atl.org.uk
Website: www.atl.org.uk

ATL Wales

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

ATL Northern Ireland

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

ATL Scotland

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



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You receive the reps' mailing because you are listed on the database as the rep or contact at your school or college. If you are no longer the rep/contact, or if your details have changed, please contact the ATL Membership department on 020 7782 1602 or email membership@atl.org.uk

Being an ATL rep

Autumn 2009

10-11 November, London
19-20 November, Newcastle
26-27 November, Shrewsbury

Spring 2010

25-26 January, Leeds
27-28 January, Nottingham
4-5 February, London
11-12 March, Manchester
18-19 March, Swindon

Being an ATL rep in FE

Spring 2010

18-19 March, London

Being an ATL rep in the independent sector

Autumn 2010

27-28 November, Manchester

Spring 2010

5-6 March, London

Union learning reps

Union learning reps are reps who support and help others with their personal and professional development. They help members to access quality learning activities. For more information on the role visit ATL's website at: www.atl.org.uk. Reps must attend all three days' training.

Autumn 2009

19-20 November and 22 January, London

Spring 2010

21-22 January and 19 March, Solihull

Summer 2010

3-4 June and 9 July, Leeds

Health and safety

As a health and safety rep you can make your workplace a better, safer and healthier place to work. Reps must attend all three stages of the course; a total of six days.

Solihull

Stage I: 8-9 October
Stage II: 4-5 February
Stage III: 10-11 June

London

Stage I: 12-13 November
Stage II: 11-12 March
Stage III: 17-18 June

Manchester

Stage I: 28-29 January
Stage II: 13-14 May
Stage III: 8-9 July