

Contents:

News and advice

- Government pension myths exposed by ATL action (p1-2)
- FE pay (p2)
- Institute for Learning (p2)
- Workforce regulations consultation (p2)
- Professionalism seminar (p3)
- FE reps attend two-day training course (p3)
- It's Top of the FE Pops! (p3)
- If there is no ATL rep at your college (p4)
- New ULRs in FE (p4)
- More pressure on government to reassess decision to axe EMA (p4)
- Come and join us in the West Midlands (p4)
- Policy update from ATL's education, policy and research department (p4)

Autumn 2011



GOVERNMENT PENSION MYTHS EXPOSED BY ATL ACTION

ATL members' strike action on 30 June succeeded in exposing in the media the myth at the heart of the government's pensions proposals – that your pensions are already unaffordable. However, even as the *raison d'être* of their proposals went up in smoke the government pressed on with their proposals to make you pay more and work longer to receive less pension. Here we highlight developments since June 30 and outline plans for the next stage of our campaign.

As you know, ATL is committed to a negotiated solution, if at all possible. With help from reps, earlier this year we explored several ways of persuading the government to negotiate in good faith: a petition signed by thousands of members, letters to numerous MPs and a joint union statement distributed to tens of thousands of parents. However, in the face of continued government intransigence ATL members were forced to take industrial action on 30 June, alongside NUT and UCU members. Your action on 30 June successfully:

- made clear to the government the extent of anger within the profession
- impacted positively on public opinion
- exposed in the media attempts by the government to present public sector pensions as unaffordable.

In late July, the government announced that, alongside the TUC-led discussions, detailed talks will take place on each public sector scheme. This means talks will also include the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). While these talks currently only affect members in the Teachers' Pensions Scheme (TPS) and the LGPS in England and Wales, we anticipate that the pensions schemes in Scotland and Northern Ireland will shortly be faced with similar proposals.

Government proposes pensions tax



Nevertheless, in early August the government published a proposed contribution increase for TPS members despite their public failure to justify one. This is, in effect, a special public sector income tax. It will cut teachers' and lecturers' take-home pay by 1.4% from April 2012 and by 3.4% in total by April 2014, on top of a two-year pay freeze.

Although the government's argument that public sector pensions are unaffordable has been demolished, it is still refusing to retreat from its demand to cut costs over and above the £67 billion savings, which Lord Hutton estimates has already been made from public sector pensions. The government may also impose an arbitrary cost ceiling on each pension scheme, even while still refusing to provide a new valuation of the TPS.

ATL is taking part in the discussions on the TPS, which the government intends to complete by the end of October, but the talks will achieve nothing unless the government permits free negotiations on the whole package, including pension contributions and the retirement age.

Continued on page two

PAY MORE.

WORK LONGER.

GET LESS.

Continued from page one

October 26 lobby: A fair hearing for fair pensions



Fair Pensions for all

All seven education unions involved in negotiations over the TPS (ATL, the NASUWT, the NUT, the Welsh union UCAC, UCU, and the leader organisations ASCL and NAHT) are planning a variety of non-strike activities in the autumn term to persuade the government to negotiate in good faith. **On October 26, we aim for at least one member from the teacher and lecturer workforce in every school and college in England and Wales to lobby their MP in Parliament.**

However, if the government will not budge from its current position, the trade unions who have already taken action (ATL, the NUT and UCU), together with the UCAC (balloted over the summer) and the NAHT (balloting early this term) will, with regret, need to consider taking further industrial action.

The government has lost the confidence of the teaching profession over its handling of our pensions. It now has a final chance to listen to reason. ATL will do everything in its power to achieve a negotiated solution without further disruption in our schools, colleges and universities.

To keep up to date with the latest and for more details of the lobby, visit www.atl.org.uk/pensionscampaign.

FE pay

AoC recommendation to the trade unions of the National Joint Forum

The Association of Colleges (AoC) made the following final recommendation:

- a consolidated salary increase of £200 per annum for staff earning below £21,000 (equivalent to spine point 19 of the AoC harmonised pay scale)
- £125 per annum for staff earning £21,000 or above (equivalent to spine point 20 or above of the AoC harmonised pay scale)
- £309 per annum for those staff on spine point four of the AoC pay scale. This increases the salary on the lowest point of the AoC harmonised scale to £13,851 per annum and a recommended minimum hourly rate of £7.20.

All of the above are payable from 1 August 2011.

Sixth form college pay negotiations 2011-12

Representatives from the staff side unions met representatives from the Sixth Form Colleges' Forum (SFCF), the colleges' national body, in July to discuss sixth form college teachers' pay for September 2011. At the meeting, SFCF representatives refused to offer any pay increase at all to sixth form college teachers for September 2011 and they have also now refused to offer any pay increase to support staff, even the £250 which the government believes should be paid to the lowest paid public sector workers. ATL reps are being consulted on both pay negotiations.

Institute for Learning



ATL, UCU and Unison, have met with the Institute for Learning (IfL) and the AoC, under the chairing of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), to forge a way forward after UCU members voted against the settlement put to them by UCU negotiators. The move follows ATL's representations to the IfL and BIS that the negotiating parties had to reconvene in order to find a way forward.

To recap, the settlement secured by your negotiators included:

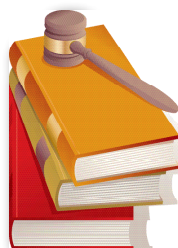
- a 50% reduction in the IfL fee to £38
- concessionary levels of fees for members
- a review of IfL 'root and branch'
- clarification around the associated teacher role and visiting speakers
- a focus on evidencing the 'impact' of professionalism for members, pressed for by ATL.

ATL and Unison did not contest any legal ground in this area, as it is our belief that the FE Workforce Regulations (2007), which established IfL membership and rules as part of the 'licence to practice' in FE, are not subject to legal or industrial dispute. Therefore, we could not ballot members to vote to break the law or confuse members by suggesting that they had a 'right' not to join IfL as individuals or groups, or that we held any more power at national negotiation level than we actually do. UCU took a different view and balloted their members, who voted to reject. ATL is aware of how angry and frustrated members are presently with the IfL. We published our survey findings openly, but ATL's FE steering group (FESAG) did not want to see FE members and staff lose an independent professional body, no matter how poorly it had performed for members up to now.

The review of the IfL, which was a key part of the settlement and demonstrated that lessons had been learnt by all parties, holds the promise that, in future, IfL members would receive the support, benefits and opportunities that would enable the autonomy, trust and respect, proper to a professional body, to be seen in the FE sector.

We know there is a long way to go and that there may not be much of an appetite for change from colleges, but we believe that professionalism is a jewel worth fighting for. We will not get autonomy, trust and respect without that agenda. We must be realistic and take the opportunity while it is there.

ATL wants to hear your views on how the IfL has worked, or failed to work, in practice for you. We also want to know what continuing professional development, resources or support you would like to enable you to develop your professional career, skills or college role. Please email us at post16@atl.org.uk with 'IfL review' in the subject heading.



Workforce regulations consultation

A consultation on the Workforce Regulations is underway (the consultation will run from July and October) with the relevant stakeholders to help address the weaknesses around the qualifications suite (DTLLS/CTLLS/PTLLS) and the role of the associate teacher.

Professionalism seminar



ATL is leading the way on the debate about professionalism with a path-beating seminar, to be held in conjunction with the Economic and Social Research Council Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE), in London on **Monday 10 October 2011**. The seminar is entitled, 'FE Professionalism: Shaping the Debate, Informing Practice' and will be presented by members of SKOPE (Jonathan Payne and Caroline Lloyd), the Department for Education (DfE) and the University of Oxford (Hubert Ertl). They will be joined by David James from the University of West England who has researched the culture of teaching and learning in FE with Giert Biesta. We also have the honour of Emeritus Professor, Frank Coffield, the leading expert in FE, chairing the seminar.

All speakers on the day will be bringing their expertise to bear on ATL's view of professionalism in the post-16 sector. Following the seminar, a PDF publication will be sent to ATL reps and college principals to help guide practice around professional lectures in the FE sector, in particular. However, ATL would imagine that other areas of the lifelong learning sector, as well as school teachers and university lecturers, may well benefit in the long term from our initiative. Let's hope so.

FE reps attend two-day training course



FE reps hard at work on the day, planning the next increase in membership!

ATL FE reps from across the country attended ATL's **Being an ATL FE rep** course in London, back in July, making it the largest rep event ever! Reps deemed the training a great success by saying:

"I enjoyed every minute of the training. It was a learning curve in itself."

"An excellent course and venue with good training materials. Inspiring tuition, very well organised."

These sentiments were echoed amongst all 21 reps who attended the training. Many commented that meeting and spending time with each other was an invaluable experience as they were able to share stories and learn from each other about how to work effectively in their role. It was also a great opportunity for reps newer to the role to speak to more experienced reps and gain confidence in the varied aspects of their new role.

The central themes of the two-day course focussed on how reps can:

- build ATL communities in the workplace
- ensure that college staff have access to joining ATL if they want to
- understand where to access support and information
- learn how the role of union learning rep (ULR) can be a positive and welcome role within the ATL college structure.

Reps were put through their paces with formal training, workshops and role-play in a relaxed and friendly setting.

All in all, the course was successful in ensuring that ATL's FE reps felt valued and supported by their union. If you are new to the rep role, or are considering becoming a rep or would just like to brush up on your organising skills and are interested in training please do not hesitate to contact Norman Crowther, ATL's national official in post-16 education, by email at ncrowther@atl.org.uk.

It's



ATL's top 10 college memberships

Cambridge Regional College

Rep, Wally Valentine, with over **200** members

Gower College Swansea

Rep, David Hunt, with over **100** members

City of Bristol College

Rep, Tony Osborne, with over **100** members

Leeds City College – Leeds College of Technology

Rep, Alvin Wood, with over **100** members

Halesowen College

Rep, George Kasper

Birmingham Metropolitan

Rep, Simon Cox

Yale College, Wrexham

Rep, Neil Roberts

Blackburn College

Rep, Tony Fort

Middlesbrough College

Rep, Ian Smith

Worcester College of Technology

Rep, Gary Moses

Not only have Wally (along with Niamh Sweeney), David, Tony and Alvin got the top college memberships, they also represent the largest workplace memberships within ATL! This shows the massive potential ATL has for growth within the sector. We have seen an eight percent increase in membership in all colleges for the second year running.

ATL's top five sixth form memberships

Blackpool Sixth Form College

Rep, Matthew Jones

Alton College

Rep, Janet Foster

King George V College

No rep

Bilborough Sixth Form College

Rep, Simon Holland

Hills Road Sixth Form College

No rep

Well done to Matthew, Janet and Simon who have increased membership and maintained a viable and sustainable workplace organisation.

Great work all of you and a BIG thank you from ATL!





If there is no ATL rep at your college

To: post16@atl.org.uk

Subject: **Rep role**

If your college has no rep then why not find out what this important role entails? Please email us at post16@atl.org.uk for more information and how you can play a part. Please put 'Rep role' in the subject heading of your email.

SEND

Do you work in the FE sector? ▶

Is stress at work causing you concern? ▶

Are your basic rights at work a mystery to you? ▶

If you answer **YES** to any of the above questions then the West Midlands' ULR group would like to invite you to join us on **Saturday 22 October** in Central Birmingham from 10am to 1.30pm for a session on **You and your wellbeing**. The session is free to ATL and AMiE members in the FE sector and will look at your rights at work and ATL training and development. For more details contact Vicki Lang by email at vlang@atl.org.uk.

New ULRs in FE



According to Tom Wilson, head of Unionlearn, "More than 11,000 FE college students in the past year took up courses through the union learning route." Since the summer issue of *Post-16* news, new ATL ULRs have started in the role in Leeds, Bradford, Rotherham, London and Cambridge! ULRs focus their activity on creating learning and development opportunities for ATL members, and staff in general. If you are interested in becoming a ULR or would like to know more about the role and what you can do, please email Laura Boyd at lboyd@atl.org.uk.

More pressure on government to reassess decision to axe EMA

Margaret Hodge, chair of the public accounts committee, said the DfE had not assessed the potential impact axing the education maintenance allowance (EMA) would have on participation in education and training by students from disadvantaged backgrounds. As well as criticising the axing of the EMA, the report questions the effectiveness of 16-19 education being covered by two different government departments.



Policy update from ATL's education, policy and research department

The big focus for ATL at the moment is our forthcoming seminar on professionalism in the FE sector. We will have expert academics presenting their work, along with think tanks, the TUC, other unions and ATL members in attendance. ATL has a long-standing policy on teacher professionalism and we are looking to develop it to include the specific circumstances of working in FE today.

Meanwhile, the government is working its way through its timetable for implementing the recommendations of the Wolf Review of vocational education. And it continues to announce that there are to be more apprenticeships made available. But will they be enough and will they be of sufficiently high educational quality?

ATL's education, policy and research department is keen to hear from you with your thoughts on the new financial support system for post-16 students and whether the absence of the EMA is being felt where you work. ATL has strongly articulated that the government's replacement for EMA is not good enough. Do you think we should continue to campaign for EMA's reinstatement? Please contact Adrian Prandle with your thoughts and concerns on these or any other aspects of education policy by email at aprandle@atl.org.uk.



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