

Defend Pensions

LET'S MAKE JUNE 30

A MASSIVE SHOW OF STRENGTH

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF NUT AND ATL MEMBERS have been voting to support a programme of discontinuous action to defend teachers' pensions. Positive responses from schools around the country give every indication that the ballots will be won. That will allow unions to call a first national strike on Thursday June 30, joined in action by civil servants in PCS and UCU members in many colleges as well.

We have no alternative but to take action. Leaked reports have confirmed that the Government has made no attempt to reach any genuine agreement in their supposed 'negotiations'. Instead, they have tabled plans for career-average schemes that are worse than anything that even Lord Hutton suggested. Further details are outlined overpage - but they could mean slashing teachers' pensions in half!

It's clear that this Government of millionaires wants to destroy our pensions scheme - and smash the public sector unions that stand in the way of their plans to slash jobs and cut and privatise education, health and all our public services.

Make no mistake, we are in for a serious battle that may well require a series of escalating actions, hopefully bringing others on board who have mistakenly stood aside like the NASUWT as well. But, together we are strong. It is the Con-Dems that are divided. We can force them to retreat. **That's why June 30 needs to be a massive show of our strength and determination to stand firm until we win!**

Get ready for action:

1. Chase up the last strike votes

We're going to get a big YES vote - but let's make sure we get as big a turnout as we can too. Talk to your colleagues, give a reminder at staff briefing. Ballot papers have to be returned by June 14 at the latest.

2. Talk to NASUWT members

The NASUWT's failure to ballot this term could be used by some Heads to keep schools open on June 30. Rather than go into work, NASUWT members can join the NUT for free up until June 30 and join the strike.

3. Encourage other schools too

Some school groups - perhaps where there is no active rep or in Academies with bullying managers - may not be confident about taking action. Local Associations need to make contact with all schools and reassure members that - once action is sanctioned by our legal ballots - they have every right to take part in this national strike.

4. Organise a hardship fund

A day's pay is a small loss compared to what we stand to lose from our pensions. However, a hardship fund can avoid any colleague feeling they can't strike because their finances are already too tight.

5. Ask Heads to close schools

NAHT and ASCL Headteacher unions have supported the joint "Save our Pensions - Now is the Time" poster. We hope that most Heads will agree that schools will need to close if NUT & ATL members are on strike. Staff in other unions cannot be asked to do any work that would have been done by their striking colleagues.

6. Get everyone involved on 30/6

June 30th will be a day for everyone to stand together in action - not stay at home to catch up on your marking! Even if your school is closed to pupils, a morning picket line is a good way to get everyone together - and to make an impact locally - at the start of the day's activities.

7. Join your local strike rally

Striking unions - NUT, ATL, PCS and UCU - will be putting plans together for local marches and rallies. Just like March 26, these will hit the headlines and raise everyone's confidence for the ongoing battle. Parents, anti-cuts campaigners and representatives of other unions should be invited to take part too.

8. Get our message to parents

We need to leaflet parents to say sorry for disruption but to explain:

* **Our fight is your fight** - forcing the Con-Dems back on pensions helps defeat the rest of their cuts too.

* **A fight for education** - should classes be taught by a 68-year old?

* **A fight for jobs** - young workers will have no jobs but grandparents will be forced to stay in work.

**Action and
Change for
Teachers**

ACTION ...

While teachers around the country are preparing for

national action on pensions, school union groups are also taking action in a number of different disputes.

Many determined campaigns are taking place to oppose the spread of Academies. The NUT's latest 'privatisation update' reports ongoing battles in Lambeth, Islington, Barnet, Sefton and Calderdale. Go to: www.teachers.org.uk/node/13251

Classroom Teacher has been contacted about the vigorous campaign at Warden Park School, West Sussex, to oppose plans to form an academy. The plans, which involve the 'take over' of a local primary, have generated huge opposition from staff of both schools. All three teaching unions are currently holding in an indicative ballot for strike action, the first of its kind in the county.

In Coventry, UNISON staff also joined NASUWT and NUT teachers taking action against academy plans at Tile Hill Wood school. School students joined the picket lines and have set up a Facebook page, Coventry Youth Against Academies. There will be further strikes at both Tile Hill and neighbouring Woodlands School in June.



These battles follow a successful campaign in Coventry to stop public fields being handed over to Blue Coats academy.

In Liverpool, NUT and NASUWT action closed Shorefields school for the second time in a month on 11 May. The school is in one of the city's most deprived areas but campaigners fear that, as an academy, it will stop providing education based on the community's needs and will bus in pupils from around the city. Parents successfully lobbied the city council on 24 May, with the council leader pledging his support.

Other stories on the Classroom Teacher blog include a strike against bullying management at Selwyn Primary School in Waltham Forest and two victories in Lewisham where the threat of strike action has helped defend an Art teacher at Deptford Green School and protect posts threatened with cuts in the Lewisham Early Years Advice & Resource Network.

Pride of place must go to the NUT members at Rawmarsh School, Rotherham.

After over 10 days of strike action, they have won their battle against mass redundancies.

... BRINGS RESULTS

You thought the pensions plans were bad? You ain't seen nothing yet..

Many teachers have been shocked into voting YES for strike action by using the NUT 'pensions-loss calculator' to see just how many tens of thousands of pounds they stand to lose from their pensions. But - outrageous as these losses are - it now seems they should be a whole lot worse.

The NUT calculator included the effect of higher pension contributions, changes from RPI to CPI and increases in pension age - all bad enough. But, in May, the Guardian reported on a leaked Government paper from the national negotiations which also adds in plans for 'career-average' pensions.

There are two parts to this new attack. Firstly, switching to a 'career-average' salary as the basis for calculating pensions is always likely to give a lower pension than a 'final salary'. But secondly, and worse of all, the leaked papers suggest that you would only get 1/100 of your career average pay for every year in the pension scheme. This compares to 1/60 of final pay, or 1/80 of final pay plus a retirement lump-sum for existing members of the teachers' scheme.

In summary - if the Government aren't defeated by our action - teachers might end up with only HALF the pension they would expect under the existing scheme.

These reports make the NASUWT's claim that strike ballots should wait for the result of negotiations look, at best, naïve. We need to be putting maximum pressure on the Government immediately - or see them gain confidence to go even further in their attacks. Unfortunately, they also confirm that we're engaged in a serious battle. June 30th cannot be a one-off protest strike. We need to be ready to extend and escalate our action - until we win.

Classroom Teacher

... is an initiative ...
by, and for, classroom teachers
... voicing the concerns and
experiences of classroom teachers
... so we can build action to win
change for classroom teachers

If you want :

... help organising a strong Union group in your school
... to share your views about the pressures teachers face
... to take action to defend teachers and education ...

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