

Executive Motions to Special Conference 2020

Motion 1 Covid-19 and Safe Return

Mover: Niamh Sweeney

Seconder: Robin Head

Conference congratulates our community of workplace reps and officers for their tremendous work ensuring schools and colleges remained open for key worker and vulnerable children throughout lockdown and putting safety at the heart of phased wider opening during the summer term and full re-opening in September.

Conference notes that the focus on health and safety during lockdown has increased the number of reps and strengthened the union by giving us bargaining leverage at many more workplaces.

The Union wants schools and colleges to be open for as many pupils as possible but achieving this safely depends on how effectively wider public health measures keep virus infection and reproduction (R) rates low.

Conference calls on the government and public health authorities to:

1. Need to very carefully consider the closure of, or restrictions on, other activities and services before closing schools;
2. Boost the effectiveness of local Test, Track and Isolate (TTI), including comprehensive sample testing in schools/colleges to ascertain how re-opening impacts on the safety of parents, grandparents and staff, with all findings made public;
3. Prepare more detailed contingency plans for possible local or wider school closures by being clear about the infection/R rate thresholds at which schools/colleges in an area should close or move to smaller class sizes, including detailed guidance and resources for blended learning provision.

Conference instructs the executive to:

- a. Establish a members' working group to look at strategies to develop blended learning.
- b. Call on workplace reps and officers to regularly review the safety of full opening in their schools and colleges and proactively respond to local outbreaks by
 - I. Discussing safety concerns with members at every opportunity, utilizing digital tools to maximise member engagement
 - II. Collectively raising safety concerns with school/college leadership, establishing formal JCNC arrangements wherever possible
 - III. Negotiating appropriate control measures that maintain the safety of staff, students, their families and the wider community
 - IV. Sharing experiences and best practice, digitally when necessary, to spread wins and identify a bargaining calendar of wider concerns that can be addressed collectively across the academic year.

Motion 2

Winning in the Workplace after Covid-19

Mover: Heather McKenzie
Seconder: Phil Clarke

Conference affirms that the COVID-19 crisis demonstrates the importance and commitment of education staff. It has also highlighted problems caused by fragmentation of local strategic oversight, privatisation of services and supply staffing, imposition of PRP and a recruitment and retention crisis fuelled by unsustainable workload and poor pay.

Conference believes that the legacy of the COVID-19 crisis must be that conditions in schools and colleges become better not worse for all our members, from NQTs, classroom teachers, support staff and supply staff to school and college leaders.

Conference notes the huge success of Districts in recruiting workplace reps throughout the crisis. Conference reaffirms its desire for 'a rep in every school' and encourages all Districts and Regions to develop plans to maximise rep recruitment.

Conference reaffirms that winning at the workplace is fundamental to the Union's strategy, endorses the work to embed a bargaining calendar and reaffirms its commitment to developing means of supporting workplace reps, members and local officers to win victories at school and college level on matters of pay, workload and working conditions.

Conference further notes the success in achieving new advisory pay scales for schoolteachers as a step towards mandatory national pay scales without PRP and agrees work must continue in pursuit of our policies on pay, workload, privatisation and education funding.

Conference instructs the Executive to:

1. Build on recent success to help secure implementation of national pay increases and pay scales in all workplaces, ensuring all school teachers are paid at least on the new national advisory scales, secure pay progression for all eligible staff this year, and continue to work to remove PRP including through agreements with MATs and a new non-PRP progression system in Wales;
2. Campaign to secure reviews of workload by all employers ensuring that already excessive workload does not increase;
3. Analyse successes in rep recruitment and develop, collate, and publicise strategies to support Districts in prioritising rep recruitment and building union strength.

These key priorities, including developing greater professional unity, should be incorporated into an overall strategic plan, reviewed annually.

Motion 3

Building a Fair Education System After Covid-19

Mover: Alex Kenny

Seconder: Jess Edwards

Conference notes:

1. The effects of Covid-19 on education, public health, employment and social well-being are profound and uneven;
2. The impact of the pandemic is most strongly felt in working-class and minority ethnic communities.

Conference congratulates school and college staff across the UK, for their work to support families, and young people's education, during the pandemic.

Conference believes that:

- i. The crisis exposed weaknesses in our systems of assessment and accountability;
- ii. The government's response demonstrated that policy-making is based on data not pupil need, and highlighted its distrust of teachers and leaders.
- iii. The exams grading fiasco exposed the fragility of a qualifications system assessed solely through timed exams and revealed systemic faults in the awarding process;
- iv. The government's intention of restoring SATs and a largely unmodified examination system in 2021 will:
 - a. Prevent schools from meeting students' needs, following the long period of closure;
 - b. Further disadvantage social groups whose access to educational resources means that they will be less well prepared for statutory tests and examinations.

Conference welcomes the Union's campaigning alongside More Than A Score (MTAS) against Baseline, SATs and the phonics and times tables tests.

Conference instructs the Executive to:

- I. Continue working with MTAS in its campaign on primary assessment;
- II. Campaign for:
 - A. The replacement of SATs in 2021 by a system of moderated teacher assessment;
 - B. A mixed model for GCSE and A levels for 2021 including reduced content and moderated teacher assessment;
- III. Call on headteachers and governors to refuse to require preparation for SATs, instead concentrating all resources on recovery;
- IV. Call for a suspension of Ofsted inspections and performance tables for 2020/21 and develop a long-term alternative;
- V. Establish a high level commission into exams drawing on research and international evidence to make proposals for a fairer, more inclusive, national process which validates pupil achievement, supports teacher professionalism and raises education standards;
- VI. Seek to work with other education unions;
- VII. Seek the support of opposition parties for these demands;
- VIII. Develop further campaigning steps with members.