



Teachers Falling Behind

ATL's analysis of the failings of the Northern Ireland negotiating machinery for teachers

Statement to
ATL members in
Northern Ireland
from the Northern
Ireland Branch
Committee.

New System of Allowances – ATL supports legal action

At the Northern Ireland Teachers Council meeting of 20th November 2006, a paper on a new Management Allowances scheme ("Teaching Allowances") was tabled on the day, with no prior warning, by the Department of Education (DE). This paper was summarily rejected by all parties except for the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT). Over the course of the next two days and following a series of phone 'soundings' the Secretary to the NITC felt able to advise the Department that the NITC 'interests' now backed the document with the Ulster Teachers Union (UTU), Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) and NAHT in favour and NASUWT and ATL against.

As a consequence, DE have implemented a new system of **Teaching Allowances** based on the English TLR system, without any negotiation in terms. The ATL position is that:

- the DE document lists identical criteria to the Teaching & Learning Responsibilities (TLR) scheme in England/Wales, but **without** the same level of funding. What INTO, NAHT and UTU has 'accepted' is, *de facto*, a "Low Paid TLR" with the 1st level award in England of £2306 significantly outstripping the 1st level award in Northern Ireland of £1679.
- the new "low paid" TLR has been accepted **without** the provisions of the *National Agreement on Raising Standards and Tackling Workload*, agreed in 2003 in England/Wales, which provided a significant increase in funding for teaching assistants to take up the administrative and other duties, allowing the TLR system to function.

ATL **does not** accept that the actions of the NITC Chairperson and Secretary were valid. ATL, with NASUWT, have supported moves to seek a legal "declaration" that the Chair and Secretary of NITC have acted "*ultra vires*" (ie beyond their remit or powers).

The long term effect of the dispute on the NITC remains an open question. The Department of Education, having cheaply gained a new system of Teacher Allowances without negotiation, will undoubtedly be very content.

Who's for Parity? What is clear is that there is now a sharp division amongst teacher unions between those (ATL and NASUWT) who would seek full parity with teachers in England and Wales, and those (UTU, INTO and NAHT) content with a Northern Ireland specific pay and conditions which ensures that our teachers will fall further behind.

Teachers Falling behind: ATL supported the broad thrust of the Curran (Independent Inquiry) Reports, 2004, as a means of moving towards parity, but considers that Curran fell short of recommending the measures agreed within the *2003 National Agreement on Raising Standards and Tackling Workload* in England and Wales.

In addition, the local employers insistence that any Curran recommendations can only be met in a "cost neutral" manner has effectively killed Curran as a live agenda. ATL's view is that significant gains in teachers conditions cannot be achieved through "efficiencies". They require investment. "Cost Neutrality" will not work.

Since the National Agreement (and through a Social Partnership bargaining framework) a range of contractual changes have been introduced in England and Wales between September 2003 and September 2005, as follows

From 1 September 2003

- Removal of all **clerical and administrative tasks** from teachers
- Entitlement to a reasonable **work/life balance**
- Provision of **leadership/management time**

From 1 September 2004

- introduction of a finite **limits on cover** for absence, with a commitment to **phase out cover**
- recognition that cover for absence is not an effective use of teachers' time

From 1 September 2005

- Implementation of **PPA time** (Planning Preparation and Assessment), with a minimum of 10% timetabled time set aside, not to be used for other activities, including cover
- Removal of the requirement for teachers to **invigilate**
- Introduction of **headship time** for Heads with substantial teaching commitments

The situation in England and Wales

Teachers in England and Wales work in very different ways to those in Northern Ireland. Teachers in England and Wales do not undertake administrative tasks, have an upper limit of 38 hours on cover (and the majority do far less cover than this upper limit) and have 10% of their timetable designated for planning, preparation and assessment.

These changes to teachers' working lives have resulted in schools in England and Wales "*remodelling*" their workforce so that teachers are able to concentrate on their professional role of raising standards of teaching and learning.

The remodelling of the teachers' workloads in England and Wales has been made possible by the recruitment of over 150,000 support staff since 1997. Support staff in England and Wales undertake a variety of roles including classroom support, cover supervision, administrative support, parent – school liaison and financial planning and operations.

In remodelled schools in England and Wales, it is right that teachers should not be paid for administrative responsibilities – their focus must be on raising standards of teaching and learning. Administrative staff are appointed for the wide range of important roles, which all schools must undertake. These are not focused on teaching and learning. It is for this reason that management allowances in England and Wales, which included payment for administrative jobs, have been replaced by teaching and learning responsibility payments (TLRs) TLRs are only paid for additional responsibilities not required of all classroom teachers; focused primarily on teaching and learning and require the exercise of a teachers' professional skills and judgement.

The situation in Northern Ireland

Teachers in Northern Ireland have no national agreement to raise standards and tackle workload. The school workforce in Northern Ireland is not remodelled. There has not been an influx of support staff in schools in Northern Ireland to enable teachers to focus all their professional efforts on teaching and learning. Teachers in Northern Ireland are still required to undertake a range of important administrative roles for which they are currently paid management allowances.

As a result of this capitulation to ill judged Department of Education proposals, UTU, INTO and NAHT, have accepted criteria to award Teaching Allowances which are not compatible with teachers' responsibilities in Northern Ireland, where the workforce is not remodelled.

The criteria for 'Teaching Allowances' have been lifted directly – 'cut 'n pasted' - from the TLR criteria. When the current postholders of management allowances leave their posts the new TA criteria will come into play. This means that teachers will not, in the future, be awarded responsibility for a wide range of current management roles, including:

- Exam administration (exam officer posts)
- Work experience coordination
- School trips coordination – including health and safety
- Pupil – parent administration, including checking on and chasing absence

Who will do these important jobs in Northern Ireland? Teachers will not be paid for these significant responsibilities, and there is no funding to support the recruitment of qualified support staff to

fill the gap. **ATL is at a loss to understand why the UTU, INTO and NAHT agreed to this situation which is untenable in the medium to longer term future.**

If this were not bad enough, there is worse. The UTU, INTO and NAHT have accepted TA allowance payments which are derisory, and far below those awarded for TLRs in England and Wales. Remember that the criteria for the TAs are the same as those for TLRs; that the 'job weight' is the same – all that is different is the level of payment:

Time for Change: The mess created over "Teaching Allowances" highlights a wider problem. ATL now considers the time right for a different Negotiating Machinery for Teachers.

The Northern Ireland Teachers Council (NITC) is the 'teacher side' of the negotiating machinery. It meets to adopt agreed union positions to take into the Teachers Negotiating Council (TNC) and Joint Working Party (JWP). The main advantage of the TNC is that it is an established system for tabling claims, for negotiation and bargaining

However, it assumes an adversarial imperative – that there are two sides, with commitment to potential "win, win" bargaining not regularly self evident.

The machinery is slow and laborious lacking nimble or creative engagement. Notwithstanding rapid changes in education policy, the "tempo", pace and intensity of the current negotiating machinery reveals a lack of dynamism and high level commitment.

STRB and Social Partnership: ATL supports parity for Northern Ireland teachers. We are seeking two main changes. First, that Northern Irish

teachers pay be determined by the **School Teachers Review Body**, which should take on Northern Ireland representation. Second, ATL would support the introduction of a **social partnership** in education in Northern Ireland similar to that which has delivered tangible benefits in England and Wales. With authority draining from the Education & Library Boards there is a strong case to be made from a Governmental perspective arguing for "industrial peace" and stability in the years ahead. In view of the lack of progress within (and apparent commitment to) the TNC as a viable negotiating framework, the time has come to explore whether a more constructive framework for engagement can deliver for teachers

The main significant drivers for a Northern Ireland social partnership in education are:

- A projected and unparalleled educational change within the Review of Public Administration
- Very significant educational change within the Post Primary review, including additional primary school burdens.
- Significant change in funding, estate and institutional partnerships – all central to the findings of the George Bain Review.

Teachers pay and service conditions in N. Ireland are **falling behind** teachers in England/Wales. Consider these differences

England & Wales	Northern Ireland
10% of timetable set aside for Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA)	No " PPA time "
Teaching and Learning Allowances (TLRs) starting at £2306 per annum	Teaching Allowances starting at just £1679 per annum
Teachers do not undertake Administrative tasks (24 Tasks)	Teachers bogged down in administrative bureaucracy
No requirement to invigilate	Teachers required to invigilate
Cover limited to 38 hours per annum (most do much less), & commitment to phase out cover	No similar limits or commitments in place
Headship time for Heads with substantial teaching commitments	No Headship time in place
Entitlement to work life balance	No entitlement in place
Access to Independent Teacher Welfare Service through the Teacher Support Network	Teacher Support Network closed down in 2006