

Summary guide



Time to value School Support Staff



The case for a Wales Negotiating Body



**Labour Research
Department**

Time to value school support staff: the case for a Wales School Support Staff Negotiating Body

School support staff are essential to delivering children's education, but low pay and overwhelming working conditions are causing a crisis in schools. With a new negotiating body set to be created in England, UNISON Cymru is calling for Wales to create its own negotiating body to level up pay and conditions for school support staff.

School support staff are the glue in the school system, but they are overworked and underpaid.

- **School support staff are crucial for delivering a safe and inclusive learning environment for children.** There are more school support staff than teachers working in schools in Wales, mostly teaching assistants (TAs). Women make up more than 90% of the school support staff workforce.
- **Low pay, job insecurity and heavy workloads are putting immense pressure on school support staff.** The vast majority are anxious about paying bills and one in six have used foodbanks.
- **Support staff struggle to stay in the profession, even as the responsibilities placed on them increase year on year.** Fixed-term contracts are common, as underfunded schools cannot plan for the long term.
- **Job descriptions are not fit for purpose.** 65% of TAs believe they are employed at the wrong level given the work they usually do. Schools are relying on TAs for teaching on the cheap, even as TAs face barriers to training and development opportunities.

We know the solutions, but the current structures are not working to make them happen.

- **School support staff in Wales are currently part of the NJC collective agreement.** Pay negotiations for council employees in England and Wales, including school support staff, take place in the National Joint Council for local government services (NJC). UNISON and the other trade unions play a full role in the NJC. School support staff in England will move out of the NJC once the new negotiating body in England is established under the Employment Rights Bill.
- **NJC pay and grading structures are not devised with the needs of school support staff in mind.** The issue of term-time only contracts has not yet been properly addressed. Pay disparities of up to 35% have been identified between local authorities for similar roles in schools, because implementation of NJC pay scales is done at the council level. Role profiles are outdated and open the door to gender inequalities.
- **The regulator has struggled to make progress on professionalisation.** The Education Workforce Council has introduced a registration system, but school support staff face barriers to accessing training and development opportunities. 61% of teaching assistants surveyed by UNISON felt they had no progression opportunities within their school.
- **Many facilities and agency workers in schools are not covered by any collective agreement.** Some councils outsource facilities to third-party providers and their employees are not usually covered by the NJC.

- **Partnership working has identified solutions – but implementation has proved challenging.** The Schools Social Partnership brings together employers, trade unions and the Welsh Government. A working group created new job descriptions for teaching assistants, but there was no mechanism to ensure these were implemented by the 22 local authorities.

Wales has an opportunity to create a dedicated negotiating body that builds on work done through social partnership.

- **School support staff want a structure dedicated to improving their working lives.** School support staff want to see a dedicated structure to have their voices heard and address their concerns. UNISON members have backed a Wales School Support Staff Negotiating Body (WSSSNB) over joining the upcoming body in England or remaining in the NJC.
- **Wales has a proud tradition of delivering public services differently, with a focus on fairness, inclusion and partnership.** Establishing a WSSSNB offers a unique opportunity to co-design a structure rooted in social partnership and tailored to the needs of Welsh schools.
- **A WSSSNB can be a tool to deliver on established policy ambitions.** A negotiating body can help to deliver on fair work commitments, address gendered and social inequalities, align pay and conditions with ambitions to professionalise school support staff roles, and create safe and inclusive learning environments for children in schools.

A Wales School Support Staff Negotiating Body needs solid foundations to succeed.

- **Wales can create a negotiating body that is tailored to the national context and traditions of social partnership.** Wales has the legislative competence to establish its own SSSNB.
- **What would an effective negotiating body look like?**
 - » **Expansive and clear remit:** The issues facing school support staff – low pay, workloads, changing expectations, training access and progression – are connected. It is vitally important that the remit of a new negotiating body is both expansive and clearly defined.

- » **Inclusive definition of school support staff:** Agency workers and outsourced workers generally have lower pay, fewer rights and less job security. Agency and outsourced workers must be included to challenge the two-tier system in schools and recognise the whole schools workforce.
- » **Meaningful negotiations between the parties:** The negotiating body needs to deliver improved pay and employment conditions for school support staff, and to do that the new structure must enable meaningful negotiations between the employer, UNISON and the other recognised unions, to reach concrete and enforceable outcomes.

A WSSSNB could make strides on improving the pay and conditions of school support staff, delivering for workers and communities.

- **What priorities would a negotiating body have?**
 - » **Develop national job descriptions and evaluation schemes** specific to schools, to replace outdated NJC role profiles. Ensure that child-centred working, Additional Learning Needs responsibilities, and Welsh-medium duties are properly valued.
 - » **Introduce a national pay floor** for school support staff, with spine points linked to role requirements to remove postcode lotteries in pay.
 - » **Publish a School Support Staff Handbook** setting out minimum conditions of service, working time arrangements, and clear career progression pathways.
- **Raising pay delivers benefits that extend well beyond the workforce itself.** International evidence, economic research and Welsh data all show that better pay for undervalued, low-paid staff improves educational outcomes, narrows gender inequality, reduces in-work poverty, strengthens local economies, and provides a framework for efficient governance. Key benefits include:
 - » Stronger **recruitment and retention** of support staff, reducing turnover and staffing shortages. Improved **pupil outcomes**, particularly for disadvantaged and ALN learners, through more effective use of support staff.
 - » Narrowing of the **gender pay gap**, as 90% of support staff are women.

- » Reduction in risk of costly equal pay claims against councils.
 - » Lower levels of **in-work poverty** among school support staff households.
 - » Local **economic multipliers**, as additional income is spent in Welsh communities.
 - » Greater predictability in **school workforce costs**, avoiding unmanaged pay drift.
 - » Alignment with teachers' pay system, creating a **coherent and fair framework** across the school workforce.
- **The time is now.** As rapid progress is made in Westminster towards establishing a SSSNB covering school support staff in England, this is the moment to move forward and establish a new solution in Wales.

For a full report on the pay and conditions of school support staff in Wales, an outline of how a negotiating body could be implemented, and a perspective on what it could achieve, please see the full UNISON report compiled by the Labour Research Department, *Time to value School Support Staff: The case for a Wales Negotiating Body*.

Canllaw cryno



Amser i werthfawrogi Staff Cymorth Ysgolion



Yr achos dros Gorff Negodi ar gyfer Cymru



**Labour Research
Department**

Amser i werthfawrogi staff cymorth ysgolion: yr achos dros Gorff Negodi ar gyfer Staff Cymorth Ysgolion yng Nghymru

Mae staff cymorth ysgolion yn hanfodol i ddarparu addysg plant, ond mae cyflog isel ac amodau gwaith llethol yn achosi argyfwng mewn ysgolion. Gyda chorff negodi newydd i'w greu yn Lloegr, mae UNISON yn galw ar Gymru i greu ei chorff negodi ei hun i wella cyflog ac amodau gwaith staff cymorth ysgolion.

Staff cymorth ysgolion yw'r glud sy'n cadw'r system ysgolion ynghyd, ond maen nhw'n cael eu gorweithio ac nid ydynt yn cael eu talu'n ddigonol.

- **Mae staff cymorth ysgolion yn hanfodol ar gyfer darparu amgylchedd dysgu diogel a chynhwysol i blant.** Mae yna fwy o staff cymorth nag athrawon yn gweithio mewn ysgolion yng Nghymru; cynorthwywyr addysgu yw'r rhan fwyaf ohonynt. Menywod yw mwy na 90% o weithlu staff cymorth ysgolion.
- **Mae cyflog isel, ansicrwydd swyddi a llwythi gwaith trwm yn rhoi pwysau aruthrol ar staff cymorth ysgolion.** Mae'r mwyafrif helaeth yn bryderus ynglŷn â thalu biliau, ac mae un o bob chwech wedi defnyddio banciau bwyd.
- **Mae staff cymorth yn ei chael hi'n anodd aros yn y proffesiwn, hyd yn oed wrth i'r cyfrifoldebau a roddir arnynt gynyddu o flwyddyn i flwyddyn.** Mae contractau tymor penodol yn gyffredin, gan na all ysgolion sydd wedi'u tan-ariannu gynllunio ar gyfer y tymor hir.
- **Nid yw swydd-ddisgrifiadau'n addas at y diben.** Mae 65% o gynorthwywyr addysgu'n credu eu bod yn cael eu cyflogi ar y lefel anghywir o ystyried y gwaith maen nhw fel arfer yn ei wneud. Mae ysgolion yn dibynnu ar gynorthwywyr am addysgu am bris is, er gwaethaf y ffaith bod cynorthwywyr addysgu'n wynebu rhwystrau i gyfleoedd ar gyfer hyfforddiant a datblygu.

Rydyn ni'n gwybod sut i ddatrys hyn, ond nid yw'r strwythurau presennol yn gweithio er mwyn i hyn ddigwydd.

- **Mae staff cymorth ysgolion yng Nghymru ar hyn o bryd yn rhan o gytundeb cyfunol y Cyd-gyngor Cenedlaethol (CGC).** Mae cyd-drafodaethau cyflog ar gyfer gweithwyr cynghorau yng Nghymru a Lloegr, gan gynnwys staff cymorth ysgolion, yn digwydd yn y Cyd-gyngor Cenedlaethol ar gyfer gwasanaethau llywodraeth leol. Mae UNISON a'r undebau llafur eraill yn chwarae rhan lawn yn y CGC. Bydd staff cymorth ysgolion yn Lloegr yn symud allan o'r CGC unwaith y bydd y corff negodi newydd yn Lloegr wedi'i sefydlu o dan y Bil Hawliau Cyflogaeth.
- **Nid yw strwythurau cyflog a graddio'r CGC wedi'u llunio gydag anghenion staff cymorth ysgolion mewn golwg.** Nid yw'r broblem ynghylch contractau tymor-yn-unig wedi cael sylw priodol eto. Mae anghydraddoldebau cyflog o hyd at 35% wedi'u nodi rhwng awdurdodau lleol ar gyfer rolau cyffelyb mewn ysgolion, oherwydd bod graddfeydd cyflog y Cyd-gyngor Cenedlaethol yn cael eu gweithredu ar lefel awdurdodau lleol. Mae proffiliau rôl yn hen-ffasiwn ac yn agor y drws i anghydraddoldeb rhywedd.
- **Mae'r rheoleiddiwr wedi'i chael yn anodd gwneud cynnydd ar broffesiynoli.** Mae Cyngor y Gweithlu Addysg wedi cyflwyno system gofrestru, ond mae staff cymorth ysgolion yn wynebu rhwystrau i gael mynediad at gyfleoedd ar gyfer hyfforddiant a datblygu. Roedd 61% o gynorthwywyr addysgu a holwyd gan UNISON yn teimlo nad oedd ganddynt unrhyw gyfleoedd i symud ymlaen yn eu hysgol.

- **Nid yw llawer o weithwyr cyfleusterau ac asiantaeth mewn ysgolion wedi'u cynnwys o dan unrhyw gytundeb cyfunol.** Mae rhai cynghorau'n mynd at ddarparwyr trydydd parti ar gyfer cyfleusterau, ac nid yw eu gweithwyr fel arfer wedi'u cynnwys o dan y CGC.
- **Mae gweithio mewn partneriaeth wedi nodi datrysiadau – ond mae eu gweithredu wedi bod yn heriol.** Mae Partneriaeth Gymdeithasol Ysgolion yn dwyn ynghyd gyflogwyr, undebau llafur a Llywodraeth Cymru. Aeth gweithgor ati i greu swydd-ddisgrifiadau newydd ar gyfer cynorthwyyr addysgu, ond nid oedd unrhyw fecanwaith i sicrhau bod y rhain yn cael eu gweithredu gan y 22 awdurdod lleol.

Mae gan Gymru gyfle i greu corff negodi pwrpasol sy'n adeiladu ar waith a wnaed trwy bartneriaeth gymdeithasol.

- **Mae staff cymorth ysgolion eisiau strwythur sydd â'r nod o wella eu bywydau yn y gwaith.** Mae staff cymorth ysgolion eisiau gweld strwythur pwrpasol i leisio eu barn a mynd i'r afael â'u pryderon. Mae aelodau UNISON wedi cefnogi'r syniad o Gorff Negodi Staff Cymorth Ysgolion ar gyfer Cymru yn hytrach nag ymuno â'r corff sydd ar ddod yn Lloegr neu aros yn y CGC.
- **Mae gan Gymru draddodiad balch o ddarparu gwasanaethau cyhoeddus mewn ffordd wahanol, gyda ffocws ar degwch, cynhwysiant a phartneriaeth.** Mae sefydlu Corff Negodi Staff Cymorth Ysgolion ar gyfer Cymru'n cynnig cyfle unigryw i gyd-ddylunio strwythur sydd wedi'i wreiddio mewn partneriaeth gymdeithasol ac wedi'i deilwra i anghenion ysgolion Cymru.
- **Gall Corff Negodi Staff Cymorth Ysgolion ar gyfer Cymru fod yn arf i gyflawni uchelgeisiau polisi sefydledig.** Gall corff negodi helpu i gyflawni ymrwymadau gwaith teg, mynd i'r afael ag anghydraddoldebau rhywedd a chymdeithasol, alinio cyflog ac amodau ag uchelgeisiau i broffesiynoli rolau staff cymorth ysgolion, yn ogystal â chreu amgylcheddau dysgu diogel a chynhwysol i blant mewn ysgolion.

Mae angen seiliau cadarn ar Gorff Negodi Staff Cymorth Ysgolion ar gyfer Cymru os yw'n mynd i lwyddo.

- **Gall Cymru greu corff negodi sydd wedi'i deilwra i'r cyd-destun cenedlaethol a thraddodiadau**

partneriaeth gymdeithasol. Mae gan Gymru'r cymhwysedd deddfwriaethol i sefydlu ei Chorff Negodi Staff Cymorth Ysgolion ei hun.

- **Sut olwg fyddai ar gorff negodi effeithiol?**
 - » **Cylch gwaith eang a chlir:** Mae'r problemau sy'n wynebu staff cymorth ysgolion – cyflog isel, llwythi gwaith, disgwyliadau sy'n newid, cyfleoedd ar gyfer hyfforddiant a dilyniant – yn gysylltiedig. Mae'n hanfodol bwysig bod cylch gwaith unrhyw gorff negodi newydd yn eang ac wedi'i ddiffinio'n glir.
 - » **Diffiniad cynhwysol o staff cymorth ysgol:** Ar y cyfan, mae gweithwyr asiantaeth a gweithwyr allanol yn ennill llai o gyflog; mae ganddynt lai o hawliau a llai o ddiogelwch yn eu swydd. Rhaid cynnwys gweithwyr asiantaeth a gweithwyr allanol i herio'r system ddwy-haen mewn ysgolion a chydabod holl weithlu ysgolion.
 - » **Trafodaethau ystyrlon rhwng y partïon:** Mae angen i'r corff negodi ddarparu gwell cyflog ac amodau gwaith i staff cymorth ysgolion, ac i wneud hynny rhaid i'r strwythur newydd alluogi trafodaethau ystyrlon rhwng y cyflogwr, UNISON a'r undebau cydnabyddedig eraill, er mwyn cyrraedd deilliannau pendant y gellir eu gorfodi.

Gallai Corff Negodi Staff Cymorth Ysgolion ar gyfer Cymru wneud camau breision i wella cyflog ac amodau gwaith staff cymorth ysgolion, gan gyflawni ar gyfer gweithwyr a chymunedau.

- **Pa flaenoriaethau fyddai gan gorff negodi?**
 - » **Datblygu swydd-ddisgrifiadau cenedlaethol a chynlluniau gwerthuso** sy'n benodol i ysgolion, gan ddisodli proffiliau rôl y CGC sy'n hen-ffasiwn. Sicrhau bod gwaith sy'n canolbwyntio ar y plentyn, cyfrifoldebau Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol, a dyletswyddau cyfrwng Cymraeg yn cael eu gwerthfawrogi'n briodol.
 - » **Cyflwyno sylfaen gyflog genedlaethol** ar gyfer staff cymorth ysgolion, gyda phwyntiau cyflog wedi'u cysylltu â gofynion rôl i gael gwared ar y loteri côd-post o ran cyflogau.
 - » **Cyhoeddi Llawlyfr Staff Cymorth Ysgolion** sy'n nodi amodau gwasanaeth gofynnol, trefniadau amser gweithio, a llwybrau dilyniant gyrfa clir.

- **Mae cynyddu cyflogau'n darparu manteision sy'n ymestyn ymhell y tu hwnt i'r gweithlu ei hun.** Mae tystiolaeth ryngwladol, ymchwil economaidd a data Cymru i gyd yn dangos bod gwell tâl i staff ar gyflogau isel yn gwella canlyniadau addysgol, yn lleihau anghydraddoldeb rhwng y rhyweddau a thlodi ymhlith y rhai sy'n gweithio, yn cryfhau economïau lleol, ac yn darparu fframwaith ar gyfer llywodraethiant effeithlon. Mae'r manteision allweddol yn cynnwys:
 - » Cryfhau **recrwtio a dargadwedd** staff cymorth, gan leihau trosiant a phrinder staff.
 - » Gwell **canlyniadau i ddisgyblion**, yn enwedig i ddysgwyr difreintiedig a'r rhai sydd ag ADY, trwy ddefnydd mwy effeithiol o staff cymorth.
 - » Lleihau'r **bwllch cyflog rhwng y rhyweddau**, gan fod 90% o staff cymorth yn fenywod.
 - » Lleihau'r risg o hawliadau cyflog cyfartal costus yn erbyn cynghorau.
- » Lefelau is o **dlodi ymysg teuluoedd** y rhai sy'n gweithio fel staff cymorth ysgolion.
- » **Cryfhau'r economi leol**, wrth i incwm ychwanegol gael ei wario mewn cymunedau yng Nghymru.
- » Ei gwneud yn haws rhagweld beth fydd **costau gweithlu ysgolion**, ac felly'n haws eu rheoli.
- » Aliniad â system gyflogau athrawon, gan greu **fframwaith cydlynol a theg** ar draws gweithlu'r ysgol.
- **Nawr yw'r amser** Wrth i gynnydd cyflym gael ei wneud yn San Steffan tuag at sefydlu Corff Negodi Staff Cymorth Ysgolion sy'n cwmpasu staff cymorth ysgolion yn Lloegr, dyma'r adeg i symud ymlaen a sefydlu datrysiad newydd yng Nghymru.

Am adroddiad llawn ar gyflog ac amodau staff cymorth ysgolion yng Nghymru, amlinelliad o sut y gellid gweithredu corff negodi, a chipolwg ar yr hyn y gallai ei gyflawni, gweler adroddiad llawn UNISON a luniwyd gan yr Adran Ymchwil Llafur, *Amser i werthfawrogi Staff Cymorth Ysgolion: Yr achos dros Gorff Negodi ar gyfer Cymru*