



Why UNISON Teaching Assistants are taking strike action today

Durham County Council wants to move teaching assistants onto term time only contracts – they asked teaching assistants to agree to a pay cut of up to 23%.

When teaching assistants refused to accept this, the Council then moved to dismiss them from their current contracts and re-engage them on the new contracts with the pay cut. Not surprisingly, UNISON teaching assistants, predominantly women, who form the majority of teaching assistants throughout the County, said 'NO' and rejected the Council's offer of compensation, because this would still mean a vastly reduced salary in 2 years' time.

Could **you** afford to lose between 10-23% of **your** salary?

As a further insult, the Council then offered the better 2 year deal to any teaching assistants who are NOT members of UNISON.

Is this how you expect to be treated by your elected Councillors?

UNISON members have **not** taken the decision to strike lightly. We are not highly paid, and yet in the face of these pay cuts we are prepared to fight - not to get anything more, but simply to keep what we already have, our current contracts which we signed up for.

Please be assured, our fight is not with the school, the children, or parents – we simply have no other option to make our voices heard.

If this goes ahead, many of us will be forced to leave the jobs we love in the next 1-2 years, and County Durham schools will lose dedicated, highly skilled and experienced staff.

Please support us in our fight, and call on Durham County Council to reopen negotiations with UNISON to find an alternative to this drastic pay cut.

What can you do?

Contact Durham County Council's leaders and voice your support
Ask to see risk assessments for schools that stay open – who is providing first aid cover for your child?

Thank you