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PRESS RELEASE

Teachers' unions come together to launch a pay campaign

The members of the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC), the representative body for the teachers' unions, have agreed to act jointly to make finding an acceptable resolution to the question of teachers' pay an election issue.

The campaign was prompted by the rejection by the teachers' unions of an inadequate pay offer from the Department of Education and the employing authorities.

Jacquie White, General Secretary of the Ulster Teachers' Union said:

"Teachers deserve a pay offer which recognises their value to society and acknowledges the contribution they have made in recent years to keep our ailing education system functioning in the face of a pandemic and continued underfunding. The offer we received was not that."

Mark Langhammer, the Senior Regional Official of the NEU agreed with Ms White and added:

"With inflation running at 6.2% and projected by the Bank of England to rise to over 8% in the time ahead teachers are right to have rejected the pay offer made to them. What we need is for our politicians to take this issue seriously and recognise that teachers are essential workers who are key to the future well being of not only our society but our economy. Making them a pay offer which in effect amounts to a pay cut is a recipe for trouble."

The NITC campaign will feature a series of public meetings across Northern Ireland. These meetings will be addressed by senior leadership figures from the teachers' unions. It will be supported by media campaigns in the traditional outlets and the unions' social media platforms.

This will be a co-ordinated and focused campaign. The public meetings and the campaign as a whole will give the public and teachers a forum to air their views and for local politicians to see and hear first-hand the anger the profession is feeling right now.

Mr Graham Gault, NAHT [Acting] Regional Official spoke with exasperation when he said:

“NAHT members along with our colleagues in the other unions feel let down and disappointed by a pay offer which makes a mockery of the work and efforts all our members have made over the pandemic. School leaders, leadership teams and every other member of the teaching profession have made huge sacrifices to keep the schools open for the children and young people. The offer made to our members reflects none of this work, effort, or sacrifice. This is unacceptable and we demand the Department and the Employers do better for school leaders and teachers.”

The Chairperson of the NITC and INTO, Gerry Murphy was forthright in his view on what needs to happen next, he said:

“The strength of feeling across the profession is evident from the coming together of the NITC to campaign as one body speaking with one voice on this issue. The politicians and civil servants along with the employing bodies need to understand that teachers deserve better. Our members are worth more and are determined to see a decent cost of living increase.

There are five weeks to go until we cast our votes, there’s an awful lot of teachers’ votes and even more when you count their family members - votes that can change things. We are urging our members to engage, to attend the public meetings and make their views known and use their votes.

The NITC can be successful on this issue and in so doing achieve a pay rise acceptable to teachers.”

ENDS



Gerry Murphy - Chairperson of the NITC and Northern Secretary Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO)



Jacquie White - General Secretary Ulster Teachers Union (UTU)



Mark Langhammer - Regional Secretary National Education Union (NEU)



Graham Gault - Interim NI Director National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)