



EDUCATION DEMANDS BETTER

CONFERENCE REPORT 2023

REPORT OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR
THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023

SPONSORED BY:



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. WORK OF THE UTU	2-6
3. NORTHERN IRELAND TEACHERS' COUNCIL – (NITC)	7-8
4. TEACHERS' NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE	9-10
5. REPORTS FROM CEC SUB-COMMITTEES	11-13
6. OTHER MATTERS CONSIDERED BY CEC	14
7. LAW AND TENURE	15-16
8. NITPS SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD	17-18
9. IRISH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS	19-20
10. UTU BENEVOLENT FUND	21
11. TEACHER UNITY	22-24
12. UTU PARTNERS	25
13. CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (CEC)	26
14. SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE CEC	27-28
15. UTU REPRESENTATIVES ON EXTERNAL BODIES	29
16. HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENTS AND TRUSTEES	30
17. ATTENDANCES AT MEETINGS OF THE CEC	31
18. CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS 2022	32-33
19. THANKS AND APPRECIATION	34-35

1. INTRODUCTION



Colleagues

May I begin by welcoming you all to the Roe Park Resort in Limavady. Due to outside circumstances we are embracing a change of venue this year but we trust that your conference experience will remain rich, both in regards to information and networking.

It gives me great pleasure to present this report outlining the work of the Central Executive Committee and their representatives this year.

And what a year it has been!

The continued cuts to education and the derisory treatment of our profession in terms of pay served to consolidate and enhance our partnerships with our sister unions, both locally and beyond, and much of the work of CEC has focused on mobilising members and putting in place strategies to achieve resolution. The journey – and the battle – continues but we must keep the faith that by standing together we will achieve.

In parallel, the day-to-day work of UTU continues. NITC representatives have continued to engage with management regarding the outworkings of the last Pay and Workload Agreement whilst also moving forward on the regular Teachers' Negotiating Committee programme of work to review aspects of our Terms and Conditions of Service, and any other issues which have arisen. Details of progress can be found in this report and our thanks go to all of those who have given so freely of their time in the interests of members.

The sub-committees of the UTU have focused on internal responses, developments and improvements and their work is outlined in Section 14 of the report. Again, sincere appreciation goes to those activists whose commitment makes a difference for members.

The spectre of Covid continues to hang in the air as the Officials support schools and members in its aftermath. The extraordinary nature of the pandemic and the subsequent return to 'normal' school life has created difficulties for some and the impact of that is highlighted in Section 7 of the report.

It has, indeed, been a very busy and, in many ways, very unique year, and there is no doubt that you, in the schools and classrooms, have been enduring what has felt like a period of many-pronged assault on our profession.

We hope that you take comfort from this record of work and the evidence it provides that all in UTU, elected representatives, activists and staff, recognise the issues and continue to work towards resolution and improvement.

We deserve recognition as a profession, we deserve to be valued and appreciated, and we deserve to be given the space, time and trust to do what we trained to do – to deliver our best for the children in our care.

UTU continues that battle for you. We appreciate and value your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'J.E. White'.

Jacquie White
General Secretary

2. WORK OF THE UTU

During 2022/23 the Ulster Teachers' Union offered membership to qualified teachers in the Nursery, Primary, Post Primary (including Voluntary Grammar), Preparatory and Special school sectors. Student teachers are granted membership as Associate members, although they do not qualify for voting rights. Retired members may also opt to retain Associate status but may not be elected to posts within the UTU structures. Temporary teachers who are employed through NISTR are also in membership, and their membership fee depends on their earnings.

In terms of numbers, UTU membership has increased, and the significant interest in our virtual events and more options to accessing membership through online channels has certainly helped to facilitate this. There has also been an increase in new members seeking to join since the action moved into Phase 3 in January, and following the announcement of the half-day strike.

Student recruitment has taken place at all Teacher Training Colleges/Universities this year with a significant number joining the three union partnership (UTU/INTO/NEU). This has been a marked increase since the previous years due to the pandemic.

Numerous school visits have been taking place, with our Officials attending member meetings all over the province. The number of requests for school visits has been enhanced, in part, due to the need for a dissemination of information relating to the ballot and the subsequent industrial action.

In addition to ongoing recruitment strategies, a comprehensive programme of mapping and member engagement has taken place. This commenced with a small sample in two Area Associations and then expanded, with the full involvement of the CEC and their respective Associations. The programme involves an extensive phone banking strategy to: identify weak areas of membership to build on; know where our reps and activists are (developing those identified); improve communication streams between HQ/CEC and the wider membership. From this, four key priorities were established for future member engagement work. The key priorities being:

Priority 1 – Recruitment

Priority 2 – Retention

Priority 3 – Activist development (rep development/ training opportunities/ branch involvement etc.)

Priority 4 – Campaigning/promotion opportunities

A large proportion of members are in the younger age category and consequently, our Future in Teaching (FIT) Group has been at the forefront of liaising with and involving those members. Following the pandemic, engagement has started to move away from virtual platforms to face-to-face meetings. Younger members have been very engaged in these meetings while also remaining active in their local Branches and in their workplaces, taking on the role of School Representative in many cases as well as fulfilling Branch Officer roles. The current Chair of FIT, Ashton Shields has Observer status on our Central Executive Committee and Jillian Jones remains in her role as Vice-Chair.

The impact of the Future in Teaching (FIT) Group continues to be significant, due to the efforts of our Union Officers, Officials and staff who continue to work with, encourage and communicate with students, NQTs and RQTs to ensure the success and growth of this group.

Since September 2022, there have been three, very well attended, in-person FIT events organised.

These being:

- FIT Conference - October 14th and 15th - Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim
- FIT Christmas Event - December 20th - Hollywood Bowl, Belfast
- Annual FIT Conference - March 3rd and 4th - Ramada Hotel, Belfast

FIT events this year have included CPD seminars from (and including): Autism NI, Middletown Autism, Aspiring to Leadership & Subject Co-Ordinating, and Industrial Relations/Casework. Additionally, we have had speakers from the ETI address a FIT Conference and speakers from the EA focusing on EPD.

TRAINING/FORUMS

UTU ran a number of forums on issues as they emerged such as:

- Ukrainian Refugees – Intercultural Education Service
- FIT – application forms and interview skills
- NISTR – changes to system due to become live in August 2022

More recently, there have been a number of information events taking place via Zoom to address members' questions relating to industrial action and strike.

2. WORK OF THE UTU

A wider training programme was also made available to all members facilitated both by UTU /INTO /NEU and by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. Details can be found in Section 11.

CCEA ENGAGEMENT

The UTU Post-Primary Group continued to have regular virtual engagements with representatives from CCEA this year. The engagements were productive from both perspectives as UTU members had the opportunity to feed directly into decisions whilst CCEA gained a greater understanding of the practicalities from the perspective of the practitioners. It was also an opportunity to assess the clarity and levels of dissemination of relevant information. We trust that the relationships developed to date will continue to be of benefit to our post-primary members in the future.

PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE

UTU regularly provides support as follows:

- advice to individual members by phone or email
- regular meetings with school representatives/ members
- UTU Updates by email
- reports and comments on a wide variety of current topics posted on the UTU website
- individual advice on issues relating to employment
- advice to members on career progression, appointments, PRSD and salary
- advice on retirement options

The queries this year have moved beyond Covid and have reverted to a wide range of individual issues relating to employment and equality. If there is a theme at all, it is the fact that serious funding cuts have resulted in even less support for teachers than before in a range of different contexts. The out-workings of the 2020 Pay and Workload Agreement have continued to result in intensive engagement with Management Side as we near the close of the initial stage of the reviews and this has had an impact on the overall workload of Officials.

Procedures being invoked against teachers and principals have now recommenced. Some impact is still being felt at some levels due to backlogs from Covid, and the recent travel ban placed on HR Officers from EA, resulting in hybrid meetings, is not ideal. Nonetheless, UTU Officials continue to provide a high level of prompt and effective service to members facing a range of difficult circumstances. An outline of the types of issues faced this year can be found in Section 7.

We are ably assisted in advising members by our solicitors Shean Dickson Merrick and I would like to place on record our sincere appreciation to the team of experts there, including Senior Partner, Maura McKay and solicitors, Bernie McCloskey and Owen Hutchinson who accompany our members to interviews under caution with the PSNI or advise on available legal redress. UTU members can be assured that they are given the best possible legal advice from local solicitors with many years of specialized knowledge of the legal process and norms in this jurisdiction. From time to time we also employ barristers to provide Counsel's Opinion as to the merits of a case and I would like to put on record our thanks to those who advise on potential Industrial Tribunal cases.

The following are the reports from the Officials:

DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT – Mr Stephen McCord

This being my second year as DGS, I continue to find the role at headquarters very much like that of being a teacher; no matter how prepared you are, something unexpected and out of the ordinary can change all your laid plans in an instant. That is of course why the UTU is there, ready to support, assist and help our members. There continue to be many issues impacting the workplace. Although Covid queries have declined, it should be noted that the impact on our members is still being felt. There have been increased calls from members in the primary sector where pupils have gaps in their learning, often impacting others in the classroom. There continues to be a raft of meetings, from attendance at work, investigatory and disciplinary issues, as well as contractual issues around terms and conditions in the workplace. There have been many satisfying wins this year for members who have been awarded teaching allowances, increased working hours and more favourable time-budgets which will help with their workplace and family balance.

One of the only positives from the pandemic has been the ability to reach out to members using Zoom. We continue to use Zoom meetings and webinars for UTU members, from meeting individuals to discuss cases to meeting all the members in a school. The use of webinars with our teachers, school leaders and joint INTO and NEU training programmes also allows us to connect more effectively with our members.

It was great this year to get the opportunity to visit our members in their school. We have members in all sectors, nursery, primary, special and post-primary and in the controlled, integrated, voluntary grammar and maintained. The resumption of area planning

2. WORK OF THE UTU

has of course meant that some school visits have been at times when our members need our support the most. With school closures and amalgamations being announced we will continue to be with, and support and advise, our members experiencing this eviscerating issue.

I also continue to liaise with our trusted and valued partners of Cornmarket Insurance, Membership Plus and Platinum Financial Planning Ltd. Very much like being in a union, these three partners benefit our members, and their support of the UTU membership is very much appreciated.

I sit on the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council and deputise for Jackie White on committees and meetings when necessary. I am the UTU representative on several NIC ICTU sub committees; Health and Safety, Education Trade Union Group and Global Solidarity. I also completed and achieved my Certificate of Employment Law through the NIC ICTU training programme. It was also great to attend and fly the UTU flag & banner at both the May Day Parade in Belfast and also the Cost-of-Living Crisis Rally at Stormont in June.

I also represented the UTU on the Accountability Framework Review Group. Meeting on a regular basis from last March, the group have examined Teacher Professional Learning, School Development, School Improvement Support and Accountability Targets.

I continued as Secretary of the Joint Board (INTO, NEU and UTU). Together we continue to work for our members with joint training, school leadership conferences and the host of joint training webinars on offer. I have also been involved in School Rep. and health and safety training. This year we also hosted a 6-session course on dealing with difficult conversations, which was a great benefit to our principal members.

I also attended the ASTI and IFUT annual conferences and deputised for the GS at BIGTU. BIGTU also hosted a secondary qualifications seminar in London, and I attended and presented on behalf of the Northern Ireland jurisdiction. I had a chance to attend the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD Working Group on Education and Skills held in Paris. It was there that the work of teachers was presented using the TALIS and PISA evidence. The future of digitalisation, assessment, and artificial intelligence (AI) were also presented.

With the rejection of the pay deal offered to the Teachers' Unions in February last year, I was the

UTU representative on the Support Fair Pay in Education public campaign alongside our colleagues in INTO, NAHT and NEU. I attended the public rallies in Newry, Belfast and Omagh with other UTU representatives attending Londonderry and Ballymena. This morphed into the NITC Industrial Action group which has worked on the Strike Action which took place on 21 February. I co-ordinated and attended the Omagh rally on our morning of action.

UTU HQ is very much a team, and very much like a family. We had a new member, Joseph, who joined us in September as the Organising Officer. It was also great to finally work alongside Rebekka who returned from her maternity leave. The office staff work efficiently and effectively and are there to support the members, but also to support and help me each day. Their support over this past year is very much appreciated. We are also very lucky to have Jackie White as General Secretary, committed not only to the members of our union but also the children in our members' care. I must also note the sad passing of our former member of staff, Annette Morrow, during this past year. For many members, she was the first voice you heard or the name who replied to your email when contacting the Union. Her support to myself as a member needing advice or guidance, and then as a colleague during my Presidential year, will always be remembered fondly.

FIELD OFFICER REPORT - Mrs Rebekka Gilpin

Another year, another challenge one might say – but this would not do justice to the situation we find ourselves in. After Covid and lockdown, our members and their pupils are still catching up on missed learning, but teachers are now dealing with added challenges and pressures: the effect of the pandemic on mental health, exam arrangements and an ever-increasing deficit in the education budgets, all in the midst of a political stalemate in Northern Ireland. Given this situation, it is only understandable, yet at the same time a first in the history of the Ulster Teachers' Union, that our members voted in favour of strike action. Alongside colleagues from the other teaching unions in NITC, this sends a very strong message to the employers, who have been eroding teachers' pay for over a decade while increasing demands and pressure on our members and the entire education system. A society without a good education system is set up to fail – our members are educating the future generation and deserve a lot more respect and recognition by the government and, indeed, wider society. A fair pay increase would be a good start.

2. WORK OF THE UTU

For us as Trade Union Officials, the time of balloting, industrial action and now the strike day has also meant a shift in focus regarding a lot of the queries we receive. As traditionally our membership has always been happy to engage in action short of strike but not in strike action, there is of course an overwhelming need for reassurance, providing clarification and equipping our members with the necessary knowledge and skills regarding strike action. Remote meetings and social media have proven to be invaluable as a means of communicating with our membership.

Casework has been ongoing, and we are pleased to see that the backlog in the LRA has started to clear and that more face to face meetings are taking place again. Grievances, bullying and harassment cases and flexible working arrangements have been at the forefront of my casework. Unfortunately, the cuts in the education budgets are also visible in that regard as the lack of support from the EA can be challenging for schools.

UTU's work with students has also continued, and we successfully delivered introduction sessions, as well as question and answer sessions with some of our Principals, to students at Queen's University, Stranmillis University College, Ulster University and St Mary's University College. Our long-standing partnership with INTO and NEU has been of great benefit. Furthermore, the FIT Group has hosted a number of events, including two residential conferences, which were very successful and members were pleased to finally be able to meet in person again.

Alongside casework and providing general support for our members, I have also been involved in frequent meetings with the employing authorities, CYPS, NITC and ICTU, to name a few. The ongoing work on the reviews of policies and procedures has been our main focus, but discussions around budget deficits, reorganisation of services and casework-related issues have also been taking place on a regular basis. I look forward to continue working alongside colleagues from UTU and other Unions and stakeholders in achieving meaningful and positive change for our members and all teachers across Northern Ireland.

I would like to thank the President, the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary and all other Field Officers and staff for their continued work, support and advice. Especially after my return from maternity leave, the support and the ability to work as a strong team has been invaluable, on a personal and a professional level. Together we continue to strive to provide the best support for our membership.

Organising Officer Report - Mr Joseph Wyglendacz

The Ulster Teachers' Union has been so incredibly welcoming and comradely that I must, before anything else, thank all the CEC, Staff and members for their acceptance and support. It is an absolute privilege to work for the UTU, and since joining in September no day has ever been the same. A special mention of thanks needs to go to Jacque White, for her counsel and leadership over the past 6 months.

This year has seen an historic moment for the UTU, industrial action including strike action, which I've had the honour to work alongside colleagues on. It's been incredible to have helped from the beginning with organising members regarding the ballot in September right up to speaking on behalf of the UTU at the Newry Rally in February. Industrial Action has no doubt dominated workload to a significant degree, but it has also created a wonderful opportunity within my role as an Organising Officer. Through the guise of industrial action, we have taken advantage of the increased number of communication streams and engagement we've had with the wider membership.

Under the guise of industrial action, and additional to ongoing recruitment strategies, a comprehensive programme of mapping and member engagement has taken place. This commenced with a small sample in two Area Associations and then expanded, with the full involvement of the CEC and their respective Association. The programme involves an extensive phone banking strategy to: identify weak areas of membership to build on; know where our reps and activists are (developing those identified); improve communication streams between HQ/CEC and the wider membership. From this, four key priorities were established for future member engagement work (which can be found in the membership report).

I have organised and attended all student recruitment events at the Initial Teacher Training institutions this year, with a significant number of students joining the three union partnership (UTU/ INTO/NEU). Trends have shown a marked increase since the previous years (most likely due to the pandemic). The student recruitment campaigns from all unions have been fierce; our strategic response to this will need to be a particularly focused work stream going forward.

In my role as Organising Officer I also have the remit for 'Future In Teaching' (FIT) member organisation. Since September 2022, there have been three, very well attended, in-person FIT events organised.

2. WORK OF THE UTU

We have also seen an increase in the number of students engaging from the Ulster University this year in comparison to other years.

I have taken on some considerable casework in the past 6 months up to and including referrals to our partner Solicitors at SDM. This has been something I very much enjoy doing and continue to take on. My previous experience in dealing with casework has helped my transition into the Northern Irish setting considerably, but it has to be said, the support and advice from Jacquie, Stephen and Rebekka has been paramount to the successes we've had for our members.

Focusing on political lobbying, I have initiated regular contacts with key political parties in Northern Ireland. This has enabled us to develop new relationships with politicians, in order to promote our aims and seek support for our campaigns. Several lobbying meetings have now taken place in Stormont and I feel that continual communication with politicians embeds and sets the issues of teachers in the forefront of their mind. Lobbying will continue in every way it can, with the ultimate goal being to influence the educational policy of political groups.

Within the wider Trade Union movement, I have represented the UTU at numerous meetings including (and not limited to): ICTU Global Solidarity Meeting, NIC-ICTU H&S Sub Committee, CLA meetings, NISTR Working Group, NIC ICTU Biennial Conference, Equality Coalition, NIC-ICTU ETUG and many more. This has provided me with an amazing opportunity to network with other Trade Union groups and develop key relationships.

In conclusion of my report I wish to, once again, thank everyone for their help and support in my role at the UTU. I look forward to meeting many more of the membership and new faces (to me) at Annual Conference 2023.

3. NORTHERN IRELAND TEACHERS' COUNCIL - (NITC)

The Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) is the Teachers' Side of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee (TNC) in Northern Ireland. It comprises the five recognised teachers' unions – INTO, NAHT, NASUWT, NEU, UTU - who work together to represent the views and concerns of all teachers and school leaders in negotiations with Management Side regarding current issues in education.

The Constitution of the NITC allows a maximum of 5 representatives for every 1000 members or part of 1000 members. UTU qualifies for 5 seats, as do INTO and NASUWT, with NEU holding 2 seats and NAHT 1 with an agreed additional seat for an Observer. NITC aims to work on a consensus basis but, where a vote is taken, there must be four out of the five unions voting in favour.

The NITC Officers were re-elected in September 2019 and are:

- **Chair:** Gerry Murphy (INTO)
- **Vice-Chair:** Jacquie White (UTU)
- **Honorary Secretary:** Justin McCamphill (NASUWT)
- **Minutes Secretary:** Mark Langhammer (NEU)

Gerry Murphy was appointed as Assistant General Secretary of ICTU and took up his new position in March. Jacquie White, Vice-Chair, has stepped into the Chair until the Council is reconstituted in September.

UTU was represented on the NITC during the year by the President, Louise Creelman; the Vice-President, Lynelle Fenton; the Ex-President, Alison Steen; the General Secretary, Jacquie White; and the Deputy General Secretary, Stephen McCord.

Jon Bleakney and Leigh McKay who sit on CEC substituted where necessary.

The full NITC meets every other month from September onwards with NITC Interests (2 per union) meeting at least once in between.

THE WORK OF THE NITC

Negotiations on pay and terms and conditions of service for teachers form the work of the NITC. As Teachers' Side within negotiations, any consultation related to the Teachers' Negotiating Committee is considered and debated here in preparation for engagement with Management Side.

The five UTU representatives are informed by CEC and move the work forward by bringing the UTU position to the table and working closely with our colleagues in the INTO, NASUWT, NEU and NAHT to establish to as great a degree as possible a common approach.

Main areas of focus this year have been the pay negotiations, the reviews which were integral to the Pay and Workload Agreement and the current TNC programme of work. Information on progress in these areas can be found in the TNC Section of the report.

PAY

Members will not be unaware that a significant focus of the work of NITC this year was pay.

There was no further pay offer on the table for teachers with regard to 2021/22 when the NI Assembly collapsed on 28th March 2022.

At a meeting of NITC on 16th May 2022, constituent members discussed and agreed on a pay claim.

This claim was designed to take account of inflation rates, pay restoration and to reflect challenging Terms and Conditions of Service.

Management Side had expressed a keen interest at that time to reengage with NITC on the issue of teachers' pay and wished the process to be time-bound. NITC did continue to engage but progress was limited.

Based on the previous rejected pay offer, the fact that there had been no acceptable alternative offer for 2021/22 and nothing on the table for 2022/23, and the fact that teachers now had suffered a pay cut in real terms in the area of 20% over the last decade, initial discussion began on industrial action and what this should look like if taken in the autumn term.

The discussion reflected two lessons learned from the last period of action short of strike. Firstly, it was important to members that we stood together as a workforce and that action of individual unions was coordinated with the actions taken by colleagues in sister unions. Secondly, it had been an inadvertent fallout from the previous action that school leaders had felt somewhat alienated and it was important, as members both of the profession and the unions, that they were fully involved.

The teaching unions were at different points in their individual processes but much effort was put into streamlining positions and moving forward together.

This process commenced with a series of cross-union public meetings to engage with members and ascertain their views.

It was then agreed to seek the mandates from our individual unions to pursue a course of Action Short of Strike to escalate over three phases with strike action as a further option.

UTU, on the decision of CEC, notified the employers of its intention to ballot on 5th September and the ballot ran from 12th September to the 3rd October 2022. The members were balloted in relation to Action Short of Strike and Strike Action, with both receiving a mandate of 92% and 54% respectively.

This was an unprecedented result for UTU and indicated the strength of feeling of members.

Phase 1 of the ASOS commenced on 17th October 2022, with Phase 2 being implemented on 1st November 2022 and Phase 3 on 1st January 2023. A half day of Strike Action followed on 21st February 2023.

Tribute must be paid to both the members of the Central Executive Committee and the UTU Officials for their absolute commitment to informing and supporting members throughout this journey, whether

3. NORTHERN IRELAND TEACHERS' COUNCIL – (NITC)

by phone, email, physical and virtual meetings, distributing materials or anything else which may have been required. Members can be assured that your best interests have been at the centre of this process and there has been a firm desire to deliver for you, the profession and the children.

NORTHERN IRELAND SUPPLY TEACHER REGISTER (NISTR)

In 2021 the Education Authority along with the NISTR Project Team began to have consultations with substitute teachers, school users, employing authorities and trade unions. This identified areas of and key features for the new NISTR system. The Education Information Solutions (EdIS) programme developed a new NISTR portal and app that was to be launched in August 2022. In summary the key areas of improvement would be

- A streamlined registration process to facilitate teachers to upload CVs and create their substitute teacher profile with minimal text input.
- An interactive and user-friendly interface designed to negate booking of substitute teachers outside the system.
- A simplified process that facilitates substitute teacher bookings in seconds.
- An integrated instant messaging and voice chat to enhance communication between schools and substitute teachers.
- An improved intelligent search function to quickly match schools with the right substitute teachers.
- An improved data and filtering for teacher positions for example, Irish Medium, Special Educational Needs and Nurseries.
- A new reporting function providing schools, employing authorities and the Department of Education with accurate and live data to better understand the use of substitute teachers and provide targeted support where needed.
- A seamless integration with current and future payroll systems to increase the timeliness and accuracy of payment for substitute teachers.
- An increased help and support function, with the provision of user guides, a Frequently Asked Question section, a chatbot for common queries as well as bitesize training videos.

The new NISTR system meant that teacher users would need to migrate information and details over to the new system. School users would also have to ensure that they were able to access and use the new system. In August there were some delays in the rollout but the new NISTR for teachers went live on 25 August with school users on 29 August.

It was on the October pay day for supply teachers that many of the serious issues were realised. Many UTU members started to contact the office with details of non-payment of their August and September salary. Principal members and other school users also contacted us regarding system issues. Problems for members were raised both at NITC and directly with EA. On 19 October 2022 the Education Minister stepped in to ensure that an interim payment could be made to those affected.

Over a period of around 8 weeks the issues were slowly resolved for members who were not initially paid. For a small number of members this was an extremely stressful and worrying time and the UTU did offer support financially to a number of members. The interim payments ceased in December 2022. Engagement with NITC and the NISTR team did resolve many of the serious issues impacting school leaders and supply teachers. Engagement continues at this time on a fortnightly basis.

OTHER ISSUES CONSIDERED

Other issues are brought to the table for consideration as they arise and are subsequently addressed with Management Side/Minister (when in post)/other bodies through meetings and/or communications.

This year, such issues included:

- Progress on reviews arising from The Pay and Workload Agreement 2020 and any emerging issues
- TNC Programme of Work
- Personal Learning Plans
- Nursery Principals and the pilot programme
- Nursery Principal Release Time
- Appointment of Governors process
- Contractual hours and payment of temporary/part-time teachers
- Indemnification of teachers in regard to internal procedures
- Outstanding issues from Covid
- GTCNI issues
- NISTR issues
- Parental leave for bereavement
- Electric Car Scheme
- EA Benefits Brochure
- Arrangements for Ukrainian pupils
- Expenses forms for teachers/travel and subsistence
- Sexual offences issue
- Fair Start
- Bullying and Harassment Procedure

CEC are kept fully updated on and feed into the work of NITC on a monthly basis.

4. TEACHERS' NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

Teachers' salaries and conditions of service in Northern Ireland are determined by the Teachers' Negotiating Committee (TNC) which comprises two parties - Management Side and Teachers' Side.

Management Side consists of the Education Authority, CCMS, NICIE, Governing Bodies Association (GBA), Comhairle Na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) and the Department of Education (DE).

The Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) is the Teachers' Side of the TNC. NITC consists of the five recognised teachers' unions, UTU, INTO, NEU, NAHT, and NASUWT. Each NITC union has two representatives on the Teachers' Side of the TNC.

The Chair of TNC rotates between Trade Union Side and Management Side and the Teachers' Negotiating Committee has been chaired this year by Gerry Murphy, previous Northern Secretary of INTO and now AGS of ICTU.

The TNC is scheduled to meet quarterly but, at time of writing, last met in June 2022.

The General Secretary, Jacquie White, and the President, Mrs Louise Creelman, represented UTU on the Teachers' Negotiating Committee (TNC) this year.

JOINT SECRETARIES FORUM

The constitution of TNC was reviewed in 2019 with the new constitution outlined in Circular TNC 2020/2. As a result of the review the Joint Secretaries' Forum was established which comprises three representatives from Teachers' Side and three representatives from Management Side. This group convenes between the meetings of the full TNC to establish agenda and monitor work progress. The General Secretary, Jacquie White, represents UTU and NITC on the Joint Secretaries' Forum.

Working groups comprising representatives of both teachers' side and employers' side are set up as necessary to feed into a range of areas contained within the work programme.

Reviews taking place currently of the suite of policies connected with flexible working, and also of TNC 2008/2 Teacher Attendance Procedure, are drawing to a conclusion, with the relevant working groups reporting back to JSF. Work has also taken place on TNC 2009/2 Equal Opportunities Policy for Teachers in Schools and TNC 2009/3 Joint Declaration of Protection. The determinations of the working groups are brought back regularly to

JSF for discussion after which they are taken back to the ruling bodies of each union. Final agreement on teachers' side is determined at NITC (Section 3).

When agreement is reached the revisions to the policies will be ratified at TNC and the revised Circulars will be available for schools as part of teachers' terms and conditions of employment.

Outside of the Programme of Work, other issues as they emerge are brought by NITC to JSF. This year these have included:

- TNC 2011/2 Policy Statement on Tackling Violence and Abusive Behaviour Against Teachers
- E-Vehicles
- Employment of part-time teachers
- Travel and subsistence costs
- Issues relating to Nursery Principals

These issues will also be brought to the full TNC in due course.

PAY

The Teachers' Negotiating Committee (TNC) is also the forum for the negotiation of teachers' pay. Following the offer rejected by UTU and sister unions in relation to 2021/22 there has been no further formal offer.

An account of the action taken in relation to the pay issue can be found in Section 3 NITC. NITC representatives have continued to engage with representatives from Management Side through the TNC Pay Sub-Group.

PAY AND WORKLOAD AGREEMENT

In April 2020 an agreement was reached in respect to the pay settlement for 2017-2019. The Agreement, encompassed in the TNC 2020/01 Circular, involved a pay uplift which members received and a commitment to carry out workload reviews in nine areas.

The Workforce Review Project is coordinated by Mark Bailey, Education Workforce Director and governed by an Oversight Group (a TNC sub-group) comprising five representatives from NITC and five Management representatives. The Oversight Group reviews progress across all reviews, ensures consistency, provides support and determines appropriate points of referral to TNC.

UTU is represented on the Oversight Group by Jacquie White, General Secretary.

4. TEACHERS' NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

The reviews fall into three categories:

TNC-LED: Chaired by Teachers' Side

- Workload Impact on School Leaders
- Workload Agreement 2011
- Initiatives to support THAW

TNC-LED: Chaired by Management Side

- Employment Model
- Consultation Arrangements
- Use of Substitute and Temporary Teachers

DE-LED:

- Workload associated with SEN provision
- Accountability Framework
- Statutory Assessment at KS 1-3

Although the groups are operating under boundaries of confidentiality, the Central Executive Committee receives regular updates on progress and considers these on behalf of members.

The Working groups established for the reviews have partaken in 197 meetings since inception and are due to deliver final reports by the end of March 2023.

Plans will then be put in place to establish processes of implementation.

The Agreement also committed to putting in place some interim arrangements, the out-workings and practicalities of which were addressed through the Transition Group. The Transition Group has paused but is in a position to reconvene when required. Its work included:

Directed Time Budgets

Support materials and training were developed, made available and the kept under review as issues arose. Awareness has been raised, not least through the industrial action, and most schools now have DTBs for teaching staff.

Additional support for individual schools and school leaders has also been provided to ensure that every teacher has their directed time budget in place. Commitments have been made by Management Side to continue with the training moving forward to consolidate.

Joint Consultative Committees

These committees have been designed with a view to embedding and improving industrial relations at school level. Twelve schools representing a cross-section of sectors and

geographical location have been identified for a pilot scheme and training took place on 10th March 2022 with a view to the pilot commencing after Easter. Work to build on these consultation processes forms part the Consultation Review group. Following evaluation of the pilot programme, the way forward will be established.

New Initiatives

One of the initial 'upfront asks' in relation to the Agreement was that new initiatives coming into schools from the Department of Education or the employing authorities be workload impact assessed, with a similar process to take place internally in schools.

Whilst Management Side has given a written commitment to workload impact assess new initiatives, Trade Union side has outstanding issues as to the procedures which will be used and the practical out-workings of this commitment. As non-engagement with new initiatives forms part of the ASOS this is not a current issue but will require revisiting when the industrial relations climate changes.

TNC INDUSTRIAL ACTION SUB-GROUP

A further TNC Sub-Group has recently been established to raise any issues or provide clarification around the out-workings of ASOS in schools.

5. **REPORTS FROM CEC SUB-COMMITTEES**

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES SUB- COMMITTEE

– Alison Steen, Ex-President, Convenor

The Finance and General Purposes Sub- Committee are responsible for setting the budget and ensuring the funds of the Union are used effectively.

We met on a regular basis on zoom over the past year.

The committee has an overview of finances on the agenda of every meeting and discuss the income and expenditure of the Union since we last met.

It has been the responsibility of the committee to closely monitor all conference expenditure and review this after each conference, and before booking the next one.

It was decided to send the £1000 raised at the 2022 Conference Dinner to the Samaritan's Purse Appeal for Ukraine, in lieu of donations to the Benevolent Fund at Conference.

The financial impact of several HR changes were discussed at length by this committee and these included replacement posts for a Cleaner, Office Administration (temporary) and Organising Officer (temporary).

We have also, as part of our continued cycle of updating IT equipment, purchased some new PCs and other hardware and software for staff.

The carpets in the entire property were replaced in June 2022.

We have also continued to have some minor repairs to the buildings and grounds and are indebted to Mr Mervin McClean for his expertise and knowledge in ensuring the costs are kept to a minimum yet to the highest of standards.

I would like to thank Mrs Gillian Dunlop who has diligently carried out her role as Honorary Treasurer for this her fourth, and sadly final, year. We wish her well for the future and thank her very much for the many hours she has given to the role.

The Union are also fortunate to have Mrs Heather Arrell as our Financial Executive Officer. I would like to thank Heather for her advice, wisdom, and her robust oversight of the finances of the Union.

Finally, thanks go to the members of the F&GP sub-committee for their attendance at meetings throughout the past year.

EDUCATION AND POLICY SUB-COMMITTEE -

Stephen McCord, Convenor

The Education and Policy Sub-Committee is comprised of members from CEC and elected members from each of the five Area Associations. The members of the committee represent a wide variety of settings, sectors and Key Stages. This has been a quiet year for the committee. This was partly due to the lack of a Stormont Executive with no Education Minister in post for the latter part of the year.

The committee did meet to discuss the Consultation on functions currently delivered by the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI). Our response examined in detail the importance of having a registration mechanism to enable qualified teachers to have a body which can be an effective professional body representative of the teaching workforce. We noted in our response that the composition of any Board should include elected teachers but also representatives from the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council.

The post-primary ad-hoc committee also continued to meet with CCEA Officials in June and November. The impact of the pandemic on the external examinations for pupils at GCSE, AS and A2 level continues to be considered by CCEA. We are extremely fortunate to have a wide range of subject areas represented on this ad-hoc committee as well as vocational subject areas. The input from an examinations officer is also very much appreciated.

I wish to place on record my thanks to those members on this sub-committee for their commitment, time, and input over the past year.

APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE – Louise Creelman, President, Convenor

The Appointments Sub-committee have met twice to discuss job role, setting criteria, setting questions and interviewing.

This was to appoint an Organising Officer for initially 1 year.

Interviews subsequently took place.

Joseph Wyglendacz was successfully appointed as the new Organising Officer and commenced his job on 1st September 2022.

POLITICAL AND EQUALITY SUB-COMMITTEE – Jacquie White, General Secretary, Convenor

Work has returned to normal for the Political and Equality Sub-Committee following the difficulties imposed on the consultation process by the pandemic,

5. REPORTS FROM CEC SUB-COMMITTEES

although the development of the virtual approach has made meetings more accessible.

The committee is convened by Jacquie White, General Secretary, and meets as and when required.

The committee has formulated and submitted responses to the following consultations:

- EA Equality Scheme Five Year Review
- Draft Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan
- Response on matters relating to the services and supports provided by the RoI for autistic people.
- Article 60 Consultation re the structure of funding in special schools

Due to timings around school holiday periods, etc, some of the work was carried out by smaller interested - and available - groups.

Meetings also took place with Alliance and DUP regarding the current concerns within the education system, with further meetings to follow.

The Convenor extends thanks and appreciation to the members of the committee, and to those co-opted for their expertise, for their work.

Responses to the consultations are available on the UTU website for members' information.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND GLOBAL SOLIDARITY SUB-COMMITTEE – Louise Creelman, President, Convenor

The International Relations and Global Solidarity Sub-Committee is the sub-committee that raises awareness of education and its needs across the globe. The sub-committee organises competitions each year to enable children from all sectors to enter.

This year the competition was to design a page for a calendar. We were delighted to receive so many entries from so many schools and it definitely was a difficult job for our panel judging them all. Winners were congratulated from Foyle College, Windmill Integrated Primary School, Drumrane Primary School, Edenderry Primary School, Academy Primary School, Clare Primary School, Braidside Integrated Primary School and Aughnacloy Primary School. The President visited each of these schools before Christmas to present certificates for taking part, selection boxes, Amazon gift cards and also a copy of the calendar with their winning picture displayed. Each school who sent in entries received a lovely certificate for taking part.

The charities that we supported this year were World Vision, UNESCO, A Ray of Hope, Jengana – NI Charity helping in Kenya -, PCI Overseas, Air Ambulance NI, Women's Aid, RNLI NI, Water Aid UK, Hope 365 Ethiopia, ADDNI, Colin Tinsley, Willowfield Parish / 10th Old

Boys, Goshen Ministries, Noel Moore and Belfast City Sanctuary.

We trust that the donations given by UTU help with the needs that there are in many areas of life, throughout the World today.

This year the International Relations Sub-committee have met on 2 occasions; the first meeting was on Zoom, and the other was in person at St Lurach's Parish Church Rectory, Maghera. These were held on 5th October 2022 and 18th November 2022.

PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE – Louise Creelman, President, Convenor

The Property Sub-Committee meets regularly to discuss and make decisions to maintain the structure, furnishings, grounds and the upkeep of our lovely Headquarters building on Cleaver Avenue.

Mr Mervin McClean, one of the building trustees, attends the meetings. We are extremely appreciative of his knowledge, insight and expertise that he shares with us; he has such a care for the premises and we thank him greatly for the many hours he spends to ensure that our building is safe, secure and maintained well in all areas.

The Property Sub-committee have met on a number of occasions. All meetings have been hybrid, with some people at UTU Headquarters and others on Zoom.

At these meetings we discussed current tenant licence and extending it, general maintenance of the building to include carpets, electric and gas meters, grounds – tree planting, floor cleaning, gutter cleaning and insulation.

The meters are being monitored and photographed regularly, and the licence has been extended to May 2023 with the view to moving to a lease. The trees are being ordered to replace the ones removed, the floors have been cleaned and are looking great. Carpets have all been replaced and look well. Gutter cleaning has been done and insulation is being priced.

CONFERENCE SUB-COMMITTEE – Alison Steen, Ex-President, Convenor

The Conference Sub-Committee has met regularly over the past year to plan for Conference 2023 - the first conference that has been held away from the Slieve Donard for many years. We trust that the Roe Park Resort and the plans that we have in place provide a valuable, worthwhile, and enjoyable experience for delegates and guests.

We have a range of exhibitors and sponsors and are very grateful for their support. The committee decided to keep all costs the same for 2023.

5. REPORTS FROM CEC SUB-COMMITTEES

A full programme over the Thursday and Friday is planned and is being finalised as we go to press.

We are fortunate that Karen Taylor, our Executive Officer, arranges and plans for every detail of Conference. Her knowledge and expertise with exhibitors and all the finer arrangements are so important in making the two days of Conference a success for our members.

I wish to express my thanks to all the members of the Conference Sub-Committee for their input, advice and planning for Conference 2023.

EDITORIAL PANEL UTU NEWS – Louise Creelman, President, Convenor

A copy of UTU News was emailed out to all members in June 2022 and another in January 2023.

Members were asked to submit photographs and articles.

Another UTU News will hopefully be ready for the end of March just before conference.

HEALTH & SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE – Louise Creelman, President, Convenor

The Health and Safety Sub-committee have had one meeting. It was on 6th December 2022 via Zoom.

The meeting was held to discuss a Response to the following Consultation Document:

Proposals for Amendments to the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993.

Notes were taken and a draft response was written, circulated to the Sub-Committee and then forwarded on as appropriate.

ORGANISATION AND MEMBERSHIP SUB-COMMITTEE – Rebekka Gilpin, Convenor

The Organisation and Membership sub-committee has met twice since Conference 2022 to discuss current membership, recruitment and communication. During a meeting in May 2022, which was kindly convened by Louise Creelman while I was on leave, the focus was on establishing a series of webinars for school leaders, beginning teachers and the wider membership. This has since been achieved and UTU is very pleased with the number and quality of webinars developed and held together with INTO and NEU.

The meeting in November, coinciding with industrial action, had its focus on membership numbers and figures. It was decided that a review of fees and membership schemes was not needed at that stage. New UTU merchandise options were also presented by the President, Louise Creelman, and this has since been successfully implemented to the benefit of our membership.

As in every year, the FIT group has played a major role in reaching out to our members at the beginning of their career. This year, two residential conferences as well as various engagement sessions and events were held and members and organisers hope to continue on this path in the future.

SALARIES AND CONDITIONS SUB-COMMITTEE – Jacque White, General Secretary, Convenor

There were no scheduled meetings for this Committee.

ICT SUB-COMMITTEE - Stephen McCord, Deputy General Secretary, Convenor

The ICT committee have met a number of times this year. We continue to examine the many aspects of ICT. It is essential that we have reliable, highly efficient, and secure structures in place for our members.

The ICT committee discuss the hardware, software, internet provision, website as well as the different methods of communicating and reaching out to our members. It is essential that we communicate in a professional and effective manner either via social media, website, SMS, bulk email or by personal email. We continue to replace and refresh hardware in a cyclical manner. We have started to explore incorporating new technology to share data and information with members both in the room or those who may be joining a hybrid meeting. Social media continues to be used as a method to communicate with members. The database now holds almost 99.8% of all members' email addresses and contact numbers. We have also introduced a mobile texting SMS service this year as an added way to communicate quickly with members.

I must place on record my thanks to Tony for his graphical work and also to Meriel and Denise who continue to ensure that our database is up-to-date. I also want to thank those on the sub committee for their advice and guidance over the past year.

6. **OTHER MATTERS CONSIDERED BY CEC**

- Campaign leaflet and messaging ahead of Assembly elections
- General Teaching Council NI
- School Restart following Covid
- Time Budget training
- Retired Teachers' Association invitations
- Arrangements for child refugees and asylum seekers, in particular Ukrainian children
- The impact of rising energy costs in schools
- One Million Trees Project
- GDPR
- Charitable donations
- Staff welfare
- UTU News
- Communication with members
- Internal protocols and arrangements for on-line events
- Member benefits and UTU partners
- Internal elections
- UTU Competition judging
- Increase in Group A streptococcus bacterial infections in schools
- Cyber security and internal processes
- Selection of Independent Scrutineer
- Vere Foster lecture
- Proposed changes to the independent appeals system
- Membership Plus cards

7. LAW AND TENURE

Ongoing casework is reported by the Officials to the Central Executive Committee at each of its monthly meetings. Most of the work is internal to schools but, where required, the Officials are closely advised by the Union Solicitors, Shean, Dickson, Merrick. The Union Solicitors engage the services of barristers on behalf of members, after consultation with the General Secretary.

Legal casework is the most important and demanding aspect of the Union's work on behalf of its members. Members who suddenly face police, social services or other investigations following allegations are very appreciative when a practiced and able team take up the case on their behalf.

UTU Officials also take advice from other outside agencies, including the Labour Relations Agency and the Equality Commission, as and when necessary. They also work closely with HR Officers from the Education Authority, where required, to seek resolution.

Members of the Central Executive Committee hear the facts of the cases, but the identity of members concerned are not disclosed. CEC advises the Officials, as required.

The following reflects some recurring themes with which UTU has dealt this year.

The pandemic led to a rise in virtual meetings and this has been a double-edged sword in relation to law and tenure issues. On the one hand, it has allowed quick and easy access to consultations with the solicitor and/or Officials if that is deemed to be appropriate in the circumstance. On the other hand, though, it has allowed a means of saving through not travelling to meetings on the part of the Education Authority, which results in virtual/hybrid meetings in circumstances where it may not be the most appropriate for the member(s) involved.

SCHOOL CLOSURES AND AMALGAMATIONS

One such negative impact has been with regard to the pre-consultations relating to proposed school closures or amalgamations. As the rest of the world returned to the option of physical meetings, the Area Planning Team policy is now to carry out the initial meetings with staff/Governors/parents remotely.

UTU has serious concerns about this approach, as the first point at which a member is facing the life-changing prospect of their school closing, with the anxieties around future employment at their height, is surely a time when the greatest level of support possible should be offered. UTU Officials, whilst offered a virtual option, continue to attend these meetings in the school to offer support, and continue to voice their dismay at each and every meeting.

The Area Planning Programme has clearly gained momentum recently with the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary having attended a number of such meetings in recent months.

SALARY/CONTRACTS

It is unclear as to whether the exceptional working patterns of the pandemic have caused confusion, or whether the cost of living crisis has focused thinking, but a growing number of members are realising that they are not being paid the correct salary. These range from those who have not automatically progressed on the Upper Pay Scale, those who have not passed through Threshold (although the onus is on the teacher to engage with this), changes in school size which have impacted positively – although not actually – on school leader salary scales, and inaccuracies in payment, or failure to pay, correct Teaching Allowances or Special Educational Needs points. Some of these cases are being addressed by schools; in others UTU is seeking legal redress.

One further major area of concern in this regard is failure to address permanency requests. Teachers have the right, under certain conditions, to request permanent contracts after a period of four years' continuous service. Whilst teachers may be receiving appropriate payment, they cannot rely on that payment to secure mortgages, etc, without the underlying benefit of a permanent contract. Numbers of teachers awaiting consideration are growing but, due to the fact that EA at time of writing have no dedicated staff dealing with this issue, progress is unlikely to happen soon.

The changing nature of contracts and roles for teachers in the Children and Young People's Service (CYPs) and Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) have long caused concern and progress has been very slow in addressing issues and achieving resolution. Thanks go to Rebekka and colleagues across other teaching unions for their dogged determination and time given to tackling these difficulties for members.

ILL-HEALTH/SICKNESS ABSENCE/PERFORMANCE

The fallout of Covid continues for teachers and school leaders as many are now suffering the impacts of the illness itself, the management of schools and classrooms during the pandemic, and the efforts to return to physical school life in its aftermath.

It could be argued that the numbers of members who are suffering from Long Covid as diagnosed are relatively low but the impact of the virus on the ability to return to work, and sustain the return, is proving problematic.

Many of the ill-health issues we are encountering, it could be argued, are directly related to the aftermath of the pandemic, if not as a direct result of the virus itself. Many members are suffering in terms of emotional health and well-being and this is manifesting in long-term sickness absence, which then initiates the attendance procedure and the anxieties related to same, and, indeed, teachers who have just decided they cannot continue and have resigned from their posts. There is a concerning impact on the health of school leaders in this regard.

7. LAW AND TENURE

Adapting back to full school life has also raised issues for a few members who are being supported in school at various levels under the Supporting Effective Teaching procedures.

RELATIONSHIP ISSUES IN SCHOOL

The emotional impact of the pandemic may also have a part to play in terms of relationships between colleagues in schools. Personal cases have been taken on the grounds of allegations such as unwanted behavior, bullying and harassment, alleged assault, defamatory comments, poor communication and poor treatment. Efforts are made in such situations to resolve informally but this is not always possible and, increasingly, formal procedures are being invoked. Sadly, a few of these situations have also led to members resigning their posts.

Parental complaints continue to arise which, whilst parents, like teachers, have the absolute right to raise these and have them investigated, are always distressing for members. We have had some particularly concerning cases in recent times where parents have, for example, recorded interviews with teachers without their knowledge or consent, or have requested CCTV footage. As ever, due to the conduct of teachers being in the public interest, some members are still required to attend PSNI interview in the first instance if there is any allegation with a child protection element.

Issues which arise between line managers/school leaders and teachers regarding workload, whilst they continue, have been somewhat ameliorated and rendered easier to address by the development of time budgets and, indeed, the industrial action. The implementation of the reports from the workload reviews should deliver some improvement here in the coming months.

HANDLING OF PROCEDURES

Members are experiencing what may be considered unnecessary additional stress and anxiety due to the mishandling of issues and procedures by Boards of Governors. As you will already be aware, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Governors – and, indeed, school leaders – to access the proper and appropriate advice from the Education Authority regarding how to proceed. Governors, therefore, are increasingly moving forward in a manner which does not adhere to the procedures in place and causes avoidable conflict between employers and those representing the members.

Such conduct has occurred in the areas of handling parental complaints, dealing with issues raised under agreed procedures such as Grievance or Bullying and Harassment, internal appointments, redundancy procedures and health concerns.

This is augmented by the fact that a growing number of members, particularly school leaders, have been

subjected to unacceptable conduct from governors with no immediate and obvious path and right to redress. UTU has placed this issue on the agenda to ensure that, as in other workplaces, robust measures are in place to address unacceptable conduct of employers towards employees. The Bullying and Harassment procedures, including those dealing with third parties, are no longer fit for purpose and work is on-going with EA to address these in the short term before they are officially revisited.

CHANGES TO WORKING PATTERNS

The current cost of living crisis is having a particularly detrimental effect on those members with young families or other caring responsibilities. There has been a rise in the number of members seeking flexible working patterns, many of whom are citing the exorbitant costs of childcare as a key element of their decision-making. There has also been a significant number of members exploring individual options under the Shared Parental Leave Scheme as the maternity benefits for teachers are not adequate.

A number of members have also chosen to embark on career breaks this year.

LEGAL CASES

Whilst much of our work on law and tenure takes place informally, or within agreed procedures at school level, some cases move to an external process.

Independent Appeals are carried out at the Labour Relations Agency and are handled by Officials. The LRA is currently working through the inevitable backlog of cases which built up during the pandemic but we have a small number of members whose cases will be reaching an independent hearing stage in the near future.

Potential tribunal or other court cases are dealt with by the solicitor with King's Counsel advice and representation being sought where required. If these cases settle out of court we are bound by confidentiality regarding the details but we can report that we have had one very successful settlement this year. The cases which have been brought forward this year at this level, many of which are still on-going, have focused on topics such as:

- Age/religious discrimination
- Injuries at work
- Pay
- SEN allowances
- Member assault

Such cases require a huge amount of work on the part of UTU Officials, the legal team and, indeed, the members themselves and the appreciation of CEC goes to all involved.

8. NITPS SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD

UTU is represented on the Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme Advisory Board by the General Secretary, Jackie White. Joseph Wyglendacz, Organising Officer, substitutes for the General Secretary when required.

Meetings took place on 14th June 2022, 11 October 2022 and 14th February 2023.

Meetings have recently been taking place virtually but are due to revert to physical meetings in UTU HQ in June 2023.

The SAB meetings dealt with the following issues:

Opt out Statistics

The number of teachers opting out of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) remains low. The vast majority of those 'opting out' do so because they are auto enrolled into receipt of pension. The remaining teachers equally cite financial and contractual reasons.

Legislation/legal updates

- McCloud – transitional arrangements

The Regulations pertaining to prospective remedy passed in March 2022 at the first stage. As of 1st April 2022 all members transferred into the career average scheme. Members who have service in the final salary scheme will have that portion calculated on their final salary at time of retirement.

Arrangements will be in place to enable members at time of retirement to opt for whichever scheme is more beneficial for them in relation to their contributions between 2015 and 2022. Teachers' Pensions Department will learn from developments in England and Wales and will consult the Department of Finance regarding tax implications. Regulations are pending and will be in place for Autumn 2023 or before if possible. The Draft Regulations in England, Scotland and Wales will be considered to establish any issues. A consultation on the McCloud regulations is due to be issued in March 2023.

Those who retired between 2015 and 2022 will be contacted and addressed retrospectively. Those who retire after 2022 will have the deferred choice option. Retrospective claims relating to ill health retirement are proving to be a more difficult issue; the Department of Finance are currently working example scenarios to address the issues.

Remediable service statements will be in law as of April 2025 but may be available sooner.

- Survivor benefits equalisation

DE intends to launch a consultation, at the earliest opportunity, regarding legislation to equalise survivor benefits within NITPS. The consultation process will determine the appropriate date of retrospection for the provisions. In the interim period, DE will consider application of the policy intent if a priority case should arise, which is the case within the other public sector services.

- Pensions Dashboard

The Pensions Dashboards Programme (PDP) launched a consultation on the mandatory standards for how pensions dashboards data will be presented to ensure consumer protection. The consultation sought views on design standards outlining how pensions information must be clearly presented to the user in a comprehensible manner that is accessible and inclusive. The consultation closed on 16 February 2023 and outcomes will issue in due course.

- Public Service Pensions (Exercise of Powers, Compensation and Information) Directions (Northern Ireland) 2023

The Department of Finance (DoF) made the Public Service Pensions (Exercise of Powers, Compensation and Information) Directions (Northern Ireland) 2023 on 09 February 2023. The Directions specify how powers under the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022 are to be used by public service pension schemes in Northern Ireland in their scheme regulations. The Directions allow scheme responsible Departments, including the

8. NITPS SCHEME ADVISORY BOARD

Department of Education, to proceed to consult stakeholders ahead of making scheme regulations by 01 October 2023 to remedy the discrimination that arose when reforms were introduced in 2015 (McCloud – transitional arrangements).

General Communications

Teachers' Pay and Pensions have issued communications to members.

- Guidance on the Ill-Health Retirement process
- Launch of NI Teachers' Pension Scheme online portals

A new teachers' pension system successfully went live in November 2020. The final phase of the new system is due to go live shortly and will provide online portal access for NI Teachers' Pension Scheme (NITPS) Employers and Members.

The on-line portal will allow members to access their NITPS information online, including pension advice slips and P60s (for pensioner members) and Annual Benefit Statements (for current active members/teachers) and make changes to personal details such as address and bank details. A number of information sheets (in draft form) have been released for communication, to be agreed before going live onto the portal.

Employers will be able to submit electronic returns to Teachers' Pay and Pensions Team (TPPT) each month in a standard format, which will result in a more secure, accurate and timely return of data with less manual intervention required.

Correspondence issued to all pensioner members providing details on how to create an on-line account and how to access and use the system. Information to current teachers and employers followed in February. The Departmental website has also been updated with information and guidance on this launch.

9. IRISH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions is the largest civil society organisation on the island of Ireland, representing and campaigning on behalf of some 800,000 working people. There are currently 44 unions affiliated to Congress, north and south of the border.

ICTU has an Executive Committee which meets in Dublin once a month. Owen Reidy, previously the Assistant General Secretary, has recently replaced Patricia King as General Secretary of ICTU. UTU wishes Patricia a long and happy retirement. The President is currently Kevin Callinan of SIPTU. ICTU has a Northern Ireland Committee (NIC/ICTU) which also meets monthly and focuses on Northern Ireland issues. NIC/ICTU is led by the recently-appointed Assistant General Secretary, Gerry Murphy, previously of INTO, and is chaired currently by Paddy Mackle of UCU.

Jacquie White, General Secretary of UTU, is the current Vice-Chair of the Northern Ireland Committee.

ICTU and NIC/ICTU hold conferences in alternate years but, due to the pandemic, are only beginning to move back into the regular cycle.

The Northern Ireland BDC was held in the Killyhevlin Hotel, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh on the 22nd and 23rd November 2022. The Conference was held under the ICTU banner Workers Demand Better on which our President has based this year's UTU Annual Conference theme in solidarity with the current plight of all workers. UTU was represented by Louise Creelman, President, Alison Steen, Ex-President, Lynelle Fenton, Vice-President, Joseph Wyglendacz, Organising Officer, Emma Loughridge, Heather Milligan and Eileen McKee from CEC and Jacquie White, General Secretary.

UTU presented a motion on Domestic Abuse and RSE, which was proposed by the President and seconded by the Ex-President. The Vice-President spoke to a NIPSA motion on working together in solidarity across unions.

The General Secretary was the NITC speaker at a fringe meeting on industrial action.

The ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference will be held from 4th to 6th July 2023 in Kilkenny. Delegates will be proposed by the incoming CEC.

The ICTU Executive meetings have a range of areas of focus each month. Affiliates receive a full report from the Assistant General Secretary on issues faced by unions and their members in Northern Ireland. There are further reports on economic and social policy, industrial and organising issues, administration and the international context including reports on public and private sector issues and industrial disputes.

Affiliates offer support and advice where possible and work together on moving forward areas of general concern.

NIC/ICTU, which represents unions which recruit in Northern Ireland, also has a full agenda every month. Reports are given on industrial and pay issues in both

the public and private sector and unions update the committee on on-going activity and campaigns. NIC/ICTU has a range of sub-committees which deal with different areas of equality and international relations and information on their work this year can be found in Section 8 of the report.

The key function of NIC/ICTU is to engage with external bodies and political parties to progress the needs of workers.

The General Secretary of ICTU, Owen Reidy, also has regular engagement with politicians and others in the Republic of Ireland and NIC is kept informed on issues which may be relevant to Northern Ireland.

SUB-COMMITTEES OF NIC/ICTU

The following members of UTU represented the Union on NIC/ICTU sub-committees during 2022/23:

ICTU WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Ms J White, General Secretary

ICTU HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Mr Stephen McCord, Deputy General Secretary
Mrs L Cooper, Field Officer

ICTU EQUALITY COMMITTEE

Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary
Mrs R Gilpin, Field Officer

ICTU EDUCATION TRADE UNION GROUP

Mr Stephen McCord, Deputy General Secretary
Ms J White, General Secretary

ICTU LGBT+ COMMITTEE

Ms J White, General Secretary
Mrs L McKay, CEC

ICTU ETHNIC MINORITY COMMITTEE

Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary
Ms J White, General Secretary

ICTU DISABILITY COMMITTEE

Mrs S McKee
Mrs P Hurst

ICTU GLOBAL SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

Stephen McCord, Deputy General Secretary
Mrs R Gilpin, Field Officer

UTU, both staff and members, also benefits from a range of excellent training courses provided by ICTU throughout the year, details of which can be found in the report.

ICTU EDUCATION TRADE UNION GROUP

The Education Trade Union Group (ETUG), which represents Teacher and Support Unions* within the Northern Ireland Education Sector, has worked on two key areas this year: the cost of living crisis and education funding cuts. The cross Union work has also been valuable in sharing information surrounding the industrial action and ensuring that our action is not

9. IRISH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

undermined by those in other Unions.

In response to the announcement from the Education Authority of severe budgetary cuts, the ETUG issued a damning statement and led on the campaign against cuts to Education services. The ETUG has also linked directly into the NIC-ICTU Workers Demand Better campaign with a particular focus from the education sector.

UTU is represented by Jacquie White, General Secretary, and Stephen McCord, Deputy General Secretary. Louise Creelman, President, and Rebekka Gilpin and Joseph Wyglendacz, UTU Officials, have also been involved in meetings this year.

Maxine Murphy-Higgins (NASUWT) is currently the Chair of the ETUG and **Alan Law** (UNISON) is Vice-Chair.

* Unions on ETUG are: UTU; GMB; INTO; NAHT; NIPSA; UNISON; NASUWT; Unite; Prospect.

ICTU WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

The ICTU Women's Committee is an all-Ireland committee with members meeting in each jurisdiction and jointly as appropriate. The Northern Ireland Committee has recently been reconstituted with the long-standing Chair, Geraldine Alexander of NIPSA, who led us admirably through the pandemic, being replaced by Maxine Murphy-Higgins of NASUWT. Our thanks go to Geraldine for her outstanding service. The committee is supported by Clare Moore, Equality Officer for NIC/ICTU, and UTU was represented this year by Jacquie White, GS, and Alison Steen, Ex-President.

The biennial Action Plan of the Women's Committee seeks to carry forward policy established at the Women's Conference. The full committee meets on a bi-monthly basis with the intervening time being used by working groups for meetings and related events and activities.

ICTU Women's Conference

The ICTU Women's Conference took place on 29/30 September 2022 in the Slieve Donard Hotel in Newcastle. UTU was represented by the President, Louise Creelman, and the Ex-President, Alison Steen, who proposed and seconded respectively a motion on Domestic Abuse and RSE. As this conference is advisory, and the BDC makes policy, they took the same motion to BDC, as referenced above.

The conference had a strong gender-based agenda and dealt with a range of motions such as Shaping the Future of Work, Childcare, The Cost of Living Crisis and the Impact on Women and Families, and Menstrual Health Policy.

Appreciation goes to Clare Moore, Equality Officer, ICTU and the members of the Committee for the organisation of this event, but also for their on-going solidarity and support.

WOMEN'S COUNCIL OF THE ISLES

The Women's Council of the Isles, which brings together the Congress Women's Committees from all five jurisdictions, took place on the 13/14 October 2022, in the new STUC Offices in Glasgow. The theme was Tackling Sexual Harassment at Work and, unlike in other years, all five committees presented and focused on the same topic, building ways of sharing information and working together. The event was attended by Alison Steen and Jacquie White, and was informative, stimulating and thought-provoking.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

It was once again possible to mark International Women's Day with a physical event, and the rally took place on 5th March. Participants gathered at Writers Square in Belfast and walked to the City Hall where there were a number of powerful speakers.

An online webinar "Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence – how unions are tackling it", also took place at lunchtime on Monday 7th March to mark the occasion. It was chaired by Geraldine Alexander (NI Chair) and Margaret Coghlan (ROI chair). Speakers for this event were Patricia King, ICTU, and a representative from ITUC who addressed ILO 190 and ratification in Ireland. Several members of the committee shared the work they have done on the issue within their own unions and workplaces.

CONGRESS WOMEN'S SEMINAR

The Congress Women's Seminar took place on 23rd and 24th March 2023 in Dundalk. The theme was Demanding a Fair Deal for Women Workers and UTU was represented by the Vice-President, Lynelle Fenton, and the General Secretary, Jacquie White.

The Committee continues to meet bi-monthly and the following represents some of the work covered.

- Violence against women and girls and domestic and sexual abuse strategy consultation response
- Project with the LRA looking at 2 areas of work: Domestic & Sexual Abuse in the workplace and Sexual Harassment in the workplace. The hope is to produce joint guidance dealing with these issues
- Report on the British council event on Menopause in January at which Clare Moore of ICTU, Una Wilson from the Equality Commission, Helen Smith of the Labour Relations Agency and Emma Patterson Bennett from the Education Authority gave presentations.
- Updates on the work that Raise Your Voice have been doing on Sexual Harassment including the training of MLAs.
- The outstanding Gender Pay Gap Regulations
- The Equality Commission NI draft corporate plan
- Economy Committee evidence hearings on zero-hour contracts legislation

10. **BENEVOLENT FUND**

The UTU Benevolent Fund exists to provide assistance to the spouse, partner or other relative of a member who dies in service. Occasionally, it provides assistance to members who experience financial hardship on a case-by-case basis.

There have been no death grants since our last conference. We have paid small amounts to members who due to various circumstances applied to the Union for financial support. We also had to use the fund a number of times from September to November to give emergency assistance to members impacted with non-payment of salary due to the NISTR issues. In each case the amount was repaid in full by the member.



11. TEACHER UNITY

UTU continues to engage in a range of fora with other teaching unions, both across the islands and further afield.

Some of these engagements allow us to ascertain and learn from the high levels of similarity in the issues faced by teachers, regardless of jurisdiction, whilst others provide opportunities to work together on practical campaigns and issues.

Meetings and conferences were mainly restored to physical gatherings this year and the opportunity to once again meet face-to-face was welcomed by many.

TEACHING UNION CONFERENCES

The Annual Conferences of sister teaching unions took place throughout the various jurisdictions this year as Covid restrictions relaxed. They were highly informative and indicated clearly that teachers throughout the islands were facing circumstances to which we could all relate.

The President, Ex-President, General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary attended the following teaching union conferences:

- Irish National Teachers' Organisation (NI and All Ireland)
- National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (Northern Ireland and National)
- National Education Union (National Conference and NI events)
- Education Institute of Scotland
- Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association
- Teachers' Union of Ireland
- Irish Federation of University Teachers
- Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland
- National Association of Head Teachers

JOINT INTO, NEU AND UTU BOARD

The Ulster Teachers' Union, Irish National Teachers' Organisation and National Education Union continue to forge strong links and work together for members.

The UTU is represented on the Joint Board by the President, Vice-President, Ex-President, General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary. The Joint Board meets on a bi-monthly basis.

Much of the work this year has centred on the development and coordination of industrial action with a series of 5 public meetings taking place in the summer term. Moving forward, joint communications, posters and virtual sessions were agreed.

Coordination also took place around the logistics of action such as dates, information to employers and information to members which, whilst issuing from individual unions, allowed all of our members to be moving forward together.

More recent work also centred around the arrangements for the half-day of strike action on 21st February where the unions worked together to distribute materials and organise rallies. This work then fed into the wider NITC plans.

The Joint Board also organised the Joint Leadership Forum, a very successful event which incorporated a presentation and Q&A with the Education and Training Inspectorate.

Student Recruitment continued to take place jointly with events being held in Ulster University, Coleraine, Queen's University, Belfast and Stranmillis and St Mary's Teacher Training Colleges.

There is also a raft of training events organised by the three unions in partnership. This year these have included:

TRAINING FOR REPRESENTATIVES

- 'Your Union working with you!' – pre-rep information sessions
- School Rep Induction
- School Rep 2 day follow up course
- Health and Safety Rep Induction
- Career Learning Reps for INTO Branches and UTU/NEU Officials/Presidents

TRAINING FOR MEMBERS

- BlendEd NI Training - Accessibility
- BlendEd NI Training – Apple Teacher Course (7 weeks)
- BlendEd NI Training – Collaboration

WEBINARS

- Protecting your professional identity
- Maternity/ Adoption Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Shared Parental leave
- Assault & Restraint
- 'Preparing for Inspection'
- Stress in work (HSE NI)
- Safeguarding
- Dealing with difficult pupil situations

A joint course also took place for School Leaders on Managing Difficult Conversations.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

Training and information sessions also included the very successful programme of financial planning seminars, which continues to attract large numbers. Those seminars are run on a joint basis with INTO, and are provided free through Platinum Financial Services, who will also provide individual advice to UTU and INTO members as a membership benefit.

The courses were well attended and well received, and thanks go to all colleagues both from UTU and from across sister unions who facilitated.

11. TEACHER UNITY

BRITISH AND IRISH GROUP OF TEACHING UNIONS (BIGTU)

A meeting of the General Secretaries of the Teacher Unions in the UK and Ireland usually takes place once a year to discuss issues which affect teachers throughout the two islands. It is normally the case that a further agenda is planned for a meeting of the wider group which includes the Presidents of the unions in addition to the General Secretaries.

The unions involved are:

- Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI)
- Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)
- Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT)
- Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO)
- National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)
- National Education Union (NEU)
- Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association (SSTA)
- Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI)
- Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU)
- University and College Union (UCU)

The General Secretaries keep in regular contact throughout the year by telephone/email/zoom as required and also meet up, outside of Covid restrictions, at teaching union, European and international conferences. The group is currently chaired by Larry Flanagan, previous General Secretary of EIS and current President of ETUCE.

A meeting of General Secretaries and Presidents was held in Glasgow on 29th April 2022 and was attended by Jacquie White and Louise Creelman.

NITC were already involved in a pay campaign and the EIS announced their intention to ballot in October.

Due to the issues facing the teaching profession which were moving us towards industrial action, it was agreed to issue a joint press release across all jurisdictions about workload, teacher health and well-being and teacher retention.

The meeting was also informed of the impending retirement of Larry Flanagan, General Secretary of EIS.

A meeting of General Secretaries was then held on Wednesday 23 November 2022 at TUI, Rathgar, Dublin. Due to diary clashes, the Deputy General Secretary, Stephen McCord, attended on the General Secretary's behalf.

The following matters were addressed in relation to Education International (EI) and European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE). UTU is affiliated to both organisations.

BIGTU - SECONDARY QUALIFICATIONS SEMINAR

The UTU were represented by Jacquie White, General Secretary and Stephen McCord, Deputy General Secretary at the BIGTU Secondary Qualifications

Seminar hosted by NEU in London. This seminar allowed the BIGTU representatives to share the historical and traditional background of exam systems and the experiences and current positions regarding the myriad of different qualifications in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland. The political fear to change the current exam system and the failure to listen to the teachers spreads across all the jurisdictions. Teachers do not want to assess their own children due to the lack of trust in teacher professional judgement. Concerns around the lack of time and "toxic" bureaucracy for teachers are also shared by most. Very often exams remain high stake for the pupils and often are seen as a right of passage to transition into further and higher education.

It should be noted that although some reform is happening in some jurisdictions it can often be too rapid, with too much change and not enough thought for the pupil or the teacher. It would be agreed that the outcomes of reform must place the child at the centre, with the current reforms often taking into account what the parent sees as necessary and not what the child ultimately will get out of their learning that can enhance their skills necessary for the world of work. It should also be noted that breaking the academic and vocational differences in the mindsets of children, parents, employers, and politicians will be difficult. Change is necessary, but it must happen to benefit the child with continued input from teachers. Working together BIGTU can learn from one another, sharing the good, the bad and the ugly of each jurisdiction's qualifications with the shared aim of making the future qualification (spread) better for our next generation.

EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL (EI)

A comprehensive report of EI activities and proceedings at the EI World Board emphasised the important protections that EI provides to education unions operating in oppressive regimes. The meeting was informed that the future cycle of EI Congresses would be discussed at the next board meeting following the decision to hold an online conference from 11-13 July 2023 and an in-person conference in Buenos Aires from 25 July to 2 August 2024.

EI were complimented for their campaign against low cost privatisation of education in Global South schools after which the world bank withdrew funding for the Bridge project. EI also played a significant part at the recent UN Summit on Education in New York.

Concern was raised about the disproportionate cost of World Congresses against other EI activities and it was agreed that this issue would be placed on the agenda for the meeting of Presidents and General Secretaries in May 2023. That meeting should also open consideration of BIGTU's approach to the next cycle of elections at both EI and ETUCE with unions being invited to express their interest in various EI and ETUCE positions at that time.

11. TEACHER UNITY

EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION (ETUCE).

The ETUCE Committee also met in November and presentations and reports were made available on the ETUCE website. The importance of solidarity work within ETUCE was highlighted and it was noted that some unions are more dependent than others on ETUCE for critical support.

Kateryna Maliuta-Osaulova, International Secretary Trade Union of Education and Science Workers in Ukraine, had joined the Committee by video link and had thanked ETUCE for their solidarity and asked for support to purchase generators as online teaching has been disrupted.

The Committee has developed a 10-point action plan on Raising the Status and Improving the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession which was commended to affiliates. The campaigning model of the ETUCE campaign on trade union renewal, which had been successful, was being adopted around this latest initiative. It was recommended that the points most pertinent to our jurisdictions be chosen and that affiliates would give consideration to BIGTU issuing a joint statement on the matter.

The Federation of Nordic Unions had expressed a wish to strengthen links with BIGTU. The meeting agreed that the Chair would approach its General Secretary with a view to organising a joint meeting.

TUAC (TRADE UNION ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE OECD

The TUAC Working Group on Education and Skills took place in Paris, OECD Conference Centre, on 28th and 29th November 2022.

UTU was represented by the Deputy General Secretary, Stephen McCord, and the President, Louise Creelman. Matters dealt with included:

Education at a Glance 2022: key takeaways from EAG 2022 in the context of trends in education and skills provision over the last decade and the impact of Covid on those trends.

- The OECD's Education and Skills Work Plan for the Medium Term
- Key trends in teacher policy over the last years and implications for the future
- Digitalisation, Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Education (ECT to Tertiary)
- Digitalisation, Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Skills Development
- PIAAC - The OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
- The OECD's International Assessment of VET (Vocational Education and Training) - What is it hoping to achieve?
- Developments in Higher Education

Further information and papers are available from the General Secretary on request.

ETUCE (EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION)

The ETUCE conference took place in Liege on 5 and 6 July 2022 and was attended by Alison Steen, Ex-President, and Jacquie White, General Secretary.

The theme of the Conference was *Trade union engagement and activity in Europe: mobilising for quality public education, for the benefit of students, and an improved status for teachers and all education personnel*, and this was debated as a motion.

The conference was addressed by the Belgian Ministers for Education; Stefan Hermans, Director of Policy Strategy and Evaluation in the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture at the European Commission; David Edwards, General Secretary of Education International; Dr Kristen Vanlommel, Professor in the Research Group Learning and Innovation; and Dr Catherine Lowry-O'Neill, lecturer in the School of Education and Lifelong Learning in Waterford Institute of Technology.

Further debate focused on The Draft Policy Paper on Raising the Status and Improving the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession

- Peace Resolution on Ukraine
- Digitalisation and Education
- Citizenship and Inclusion
- Impact and recovery from the pandemic
- Panel discussions also took place on:
 - Addressing social change in and through education with environmental sustainability
 - Boosting social dialogue for quality education

The conference was highly informative and thought-provoking.

Related papers are available from the General Secretary on request.

12. UTU PARTNERS

Mandi Millar

UTU continued to work closely with Mandi Millar last year who ensured that the voice of UTU was represented regularly in the media. The President, Louise Creelman, the General Secretary, Jacquie White, and Deputy General Secretary, Stephen McCord, contributed to debates on local radio stations including Radio Ulster, Radio Foyle, U105, Downtown and Cool FM. We have also had coverage on BBC Newsline and UTV lunchtime and evening news reports. We also had excellent coverage in the press, both local and regional, throughout the year. On the day of our strike we had members interviewed at various rally points; this allowed the voice of the UTU to be heard on all the media channels during that day. The social media aspect of keeping members up-to-date with issues remains very relevant. Mandi also ensures that podcasts and short videos are used to that end, particularly in relation to key issues and concerns debated by members at Annual Conference. Mandi works tirelessly to keep UTU at the forefront of educational debate throughout the year and we would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her continuing support.

Cornmarket Insurance Service

UTU members benefit from our long standing relationship with Cornmarket. As an official insurance provider, they offer members great value car, home, motorbike, GAP, pet, travel and temporary car insurance that comes with a range of benefits that are tailored to you, the member. Over the past year Cornmarket have provided two opportunities for members to win prizes at the Leadership Conference in Dungannon and the FIT Conference held in Dunsilly. We are also extremely grateful for their support of our Annual Conference. Cornmarket recently carried out a survey with the members regarding the services provided and will be considering those results in moving forward.

Platinum Financial Planning Ltd.

Platinum Financial Planning has been working with UTU members for many years. The team has extensive experience in advising our members in relation to all aspects of their financial planning needs. Their expertise on the teacher pension scheme is second to none. Over the past year we have worked together with INTO in providing webinars for pre-retirement and for members in mid-career. Feedback from members continues to be very positive as they are guided through the complexities of pension decisions.

Membership Plus

The Membership Plus cards are an excellent perk for UTU members. The cards were last distributed directly to members by mail in September 2022. UTU members can use the plastic card or the electronic app to avail of savings across a range of venues, travel and activities. We continue to work in partnership with Membership Plus and it is pleasing to see an increase in members registering and using the card on a regular basis.

13. CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OFFICERS

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex- President
Ms J White, General Secretary

HONORARY TREASURER

Mrs G Dunlop

BELFAST AREA ASSOCIATION

Mrs N Billington
Mr J Bleakney
Mrs J Brown

NORTH-EASTERN AREA ASSOCIATION

Mrs E Loughridge
Mr M Creelman
Mrs L McKay
Mr P Smith

SOUTHERN AREA ASSOCIATION

Mr D Thompson
Mrs J Ravey
Mr S Savage
Mr A Davidson

WESTERN AREA ASSOCIATION

Mrs A Dempsey
Mrs J Carrothers
Mrs J Mullan

SOUTH-EASTERN AREA ASSOCIATION

Mr A Davis
Mrs H Milligan
Mrs E McKee

OBSERVERS

Mr A Shields



14. SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE C.E.C.

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Ms J White, General Secretary
Mrs G Dunlop, Honorary Treasurer
Mrs A Dempsey
Mr D Thompson
Mrs E McKee
Mrs J Brown
Mrs E Loughridge

Convenor: Mrs A Steen, Ex-President

EDUCATION AND POLICY

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Ms J White, General Secretary
Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary
Mrs G Dunlop, Honorary Treasurer
Mrs J Mullan
Mr J Bleakney
Mr D Thompson
Mr A Davis
Mr M Ceelman
Mr P Smith
Mr A Orr
Mrs J Burke
Mr G Savage
Mrs L Campbell
Mrs J Wilson
Mrs J Little
Mrs A Knox
Mrs J Sturgeon

Convenor: Mr S McCord

SALARIES AND CONDITIONS

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Ms J White, General Secretary
Mrs G Dunlop, Honorary Treasurer

Convenor: Ms J White, General Secretary

POLITICAL AND EQUALITY

Ms J White, General Secretary
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Mrs N Billington
Mrs J Ravey
Mr A Davis
Mr P Smith
Mr A Orr
Mrs P Hurst
Mrs J Wilson
Mr A Scott
Mrs G Ward

Convenor: Ms J White, General Secretary

ORGANISATION AND MEMBERSHIP

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Ms J White, General Secretary
Mrs G Dunlop, Honorary Treasurer
Mrs R Gilpin, Field Officer
Mrs J Carrothers
Mrs N Billington
Mr S Savage
Mrs H Milligan
Mrs L McKay
Mrs S Brown
Mrs P Hurst
Mr A Scott
Ms L Taylor
Mrs A Sawyers
Mr T Shields
Mr S Cumper
Mrs C Friel
Mrs S McNeill

Convenor: Mrs R Gilpin, Field Officer

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Ms J White, General Secretary
Mrs G Dunlop, Honorary Treasurer
Mrs R Gilpin, Field Officer
Mrs J Carrothers
Mrs J Brown
Mr A Davidson
Mrs H Milligan
Mrs L McKay
Mrs A Orr
Mrs P Hurst
Mrs J Gargin
Mrs J Little
Mrs H Wilson
Mrs C Price
Mrs J Jones
Mrs C Phelan

Convenor: Mrs L Creelman, President

CONFERENCE

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Ms J White, General Secretary
Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary
Mrs G Dunlop, Honorary Treasurer
Mrs K Taylor, Executive Officer
Mrs A Dempsey
Mrs N Billington
Mrs E McKee
Mr A Davidson
Mrs L McKay

Convenor: Mrs A Steen, Ex-President

14. SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE C.E.C.

EDITORIAL PANEL – UTU NEWS

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Ms J White, General Secretary
Mrs G Dunlop, Honorary Treasurer
Mrs L McKay

Convenor: Mrs L Creelman, President/Editor

PROPERTY

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Ms J White, General Secretary
Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary
Mrs G Dunlop, Honorary Treasurer
Mrs K Taylor, Executive Officer
Mrs H Arrell, Financial Executive Officer
Mr M McClean, Building Trustee
Mrs J Mullan
Mr J Bleakney
Mr D Thompson
Mrs H Milligan
Mrs E Loughridge

Convenor: Mrs L Creelman, President

RULES AND CONSTITUTION

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Ms J White, General Secretary
Mrs G Dunlop, Honorary Treasurer

Convenor: Ms J White, General Secretary

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mrs L Creelman President
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Ms J White, General Secretary
Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary
Mrs R Gilpin, Field Officer
Mrs A Dempsey
Mrs N Billington
Mrs J Ravey
Mrs E McKee
Mr E Loughridge
Mrs K Atchison
Mr A Shields
Mr B Bovis
Mrs J Murphy
Mr D Gault
Mrs L Brown
Ms A Gault

Convenor: Mrs A Steen, President

APPOINTMENTS

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Ms J White, General Secretary
Mrs G Dunlop, Honorary Treasurer
Mrs A Dempsey
Mr J Bleakney
Mr S Savage
Mrs L McKay
Mrs H Milligan

Convenor: Mrs A Steen, President

ICT

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary
Mr T McCabe, Communications Officer
Mr A Davis
Mr A Davidson
Mr M Creelman
Mrs N Billington
Mr P Smith

Convenor: Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary

15. UTU REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL BODIES

NORTHERN IRELAND TEACHERS' COUNCIL

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Ms J White, General Secretary
Mr J Bleakney
Mr A Davis
Mrs L McKay

UTU/INTO/NEU JOINT SERVICES

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Ms J White, General Secretary
Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary
Mrs G Dunlop, Honorary Treasurer
Mrs L Cooper, Field Officer
Mrs R Gilpin, Field Officer

ICTU WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Mrs L Creelman, President
Ms J White, General Secretary

ICTU HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary
Ms L Cooper, Field Officer

ICTU EQUALITY COMMITTEE

Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary
Mrs R Gilpin, Field Officer

ICTU EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Ms J White, General Secretary
Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary

ICTU LGBT COMMITTEE

Ms J White, General Secretary
Mrs L McKay

ICTU ETHNIC MINORITY COMMITTEE

Ms J White, General Secretary
Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary

ICTU DISABILITY COMMITTEE

Mrs S McKee, Past-President
Mrs P Hurst

ICTU GLOBAL SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary
Mrs R Gilpin, Field Officer

ICTU YOUTH COMMITTEE

Mr A Shields
Mr A Davis
Mrs N Billington

ICTU EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary
Ms L Cooper, Field Officer

ICTU CULTURE AND ARTS

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mrs A Sawyers

16. HON. VICE-PRESIDENTS AND TRUSTEES

HONORARY VICE PRESIDENTS

Mrs EH Kerr
Mrs M Alexander, MBE.
Mr J Carr
Mr R Smith
Mr A Orr
Mr TGA Scott
Ms A Hall-Callaghan
Mrs A Allen

UNION BUILDING TRUSTEES

Ms H Beattie
Mr M McClean
Mrs S McKee
Mr A Orr
Mr L Love

PENSION TRUSTEES

Ms J White, General Secretary
Mrs R Barton
Mr L Scott
Mrs S McKee
Mr G McVeigh
Mr A Orr

UNION FUND TRUSTEES

Mrs L Creelman, President
Mr L Fenton, Vice-President
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President
Mrs G Dunlop, Honorary Treasurer



17. ATTENDANCES AT CEC MEETINGS

POSSIBLE ATTENDANCES: Thirteen Meetings – (unless otherwise stated in brackets)

OFFICERS

Mrs L Creelman, President	13
Mrs L Fenton, Vice-President	13
Mrs A Steen, Ex-President	11

OFFICIAL/CLERICAL STAFF – in attendance

Ms J White, General Secretary	12
Mr S McCord, Deputy General Secretary	13
Mrs R Gilpin	10
Mr J Wyglendacz	8 (8)
Mr T McCabe	8
Miss L Osborne	10

HONORARY TREASURER

Mrs G Dunlop	8
--------------	---

NORTH-EASTERN AREA

Mr P Smith	10
Mrs E Loughridge	11
Mr M Creelman	12
Mrs L McKay	8

SOUTHERN AREA

Mr S Savage	7
Mr D Thompson	8
Mrs J Ravey	9
Mr A Davidson	8

WESTERN AREA

Mrs A Dempsey	11
Mrs J Carrothers	9
Mrs J Mullan	12

SOUTH-EASTERN AREA

Mr A Davis	11
Mrs H Milligan	12
Mrs E McKee	11

BELFAST AREA

Mrs N Billington	0 (5)
Mr J Bleakney	12
Mrs J Brown	10

OBSERVERS

Mr A Shields	4 (9)
--------------	-------

18. 2022 CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

Annual Conference determines policy and determines part of the work programme for CEC.

Progress on resolutions to date is as follows.

The Pay and Workload Agreement 2020 identified nine reviews relating to school leader/teacher workload, details of which can be found in Section 4. The reports are due to emerge from each review at the end of March and much of the work tasked to CEC through last year's resolutions have fed into that process.

Issues around the commitment to delivering on these reviews, addressed in Resolution 13, was revisited where necessary in a range of engagement forums relating to the processes.

Resolution 1 addressed raising the profile of mental health in terms of training and Occupational Health and that has formed part of the review on Teacher Health and Wellbeing. The TNC work around the Teachers' Attendance Procedure, due to issue shortly, has also provided greater clarity in dealing with these issues at school level.

The same review has also incorporated the content of Resolution 17, relating to Continuous Professional Development – reframed as Teacher Professional Learning – as access to same has a positive impact on value and development, and so health. Resolution 18, relating to robust professional development for newly- and recently-qualified teachers, also forms part of that programme.

Resolution 22, dealing with Leadership salary scales and related responsibility, forms part of the considerations in the School Leaders Review. Whilst not directly related to salary, examination of workload will lead to fresh scrutiny of the balance between responsibility and pay.

Resolutions 16 and 19 called for a revisiting of the procedures, support, training and school placement related to Special Educational Needs. The review group considering SEN is particularly robust and the report due to issue will focus attention on many of the areas covered in these resolutions. Resolution 5 called for examination of the role of the Educational Psychologist which is also being considered in this review but the combination of shortages of both personnel and funding in the service is causing extreme difficulty here. These issues further continue to be brought to engagements with the Children and Young People's Service.

Support and solidarity was offered in cross-union engagement to our colleagues in Education Welfare, in line with Resolution 20.

Resolution 8 called for the message to go out from

UTU that all children should be educated together. This position has been represented in the reviews where appropriate but was also put forward in the UTU responses to the Panel conducting the Independent Review of Education.

Up until the recent swathing cuts we were hopeful of the outcome related to Resolution 2 which dealt with the provision of counselling services for children in our schools. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Team sought our support, in the context of Action Short of Strike, to move forward with data collection processes to provide a basis to secure this funding. The teaching unions were content to participate but there has been a pause related to the savings demanded of the Education Authority.

Resolution 3 considered a 'Zero Tolerance' policy in relation to the abuse of teachers on social media. A working group has now been established with NITC representation to formulate policy not only around abuse on social media but also to revisit and develop procedures and protections in relation to physical and sexual abuse. The work is at its early stages but is moving forward.

Resolution 4 related to the extension of funding for Engage, Healthy Happy Minds, summer schemes, etc, to support our children post-Covid. The funding was extended with the suggestion that this would be taken even further but the absence of an Education Minister will impact here beyond March.

Resolution 14 sought to build on the new positive approaches in relation to the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). The Chief Inspector and her senior team attended Annual Conference and the Joint Leadership Forum to further build on relationships and respond to concerns. Regular engagement with NITC has continued, both within the Review of Accountability and in the discrete regular meetings where issues are discussed and solutions are sought. ETI has also been working with in excess of 100 schools to develop prototypes for the inspection model moving forward with feedback from the profession being integral to the process.

Resolution 21 called for work to be done to clarify and promote the Shared Parental Leave Scheme as it relates to teachers. This has been put forward for the work programme for TNC and UTU in conjunction with INTO and NEU have carried out training sessions.

A few of the resolutions from last year will take longer in terms of embarking on a process or achieving resolution. Resolution 7 called for a vote of no confidence in the leadership of EA but, sadly, the recent swingeing cuts have made it even less likely that that confidence will be restored in the near future.

18. 2022 CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

A change to the Area Planning process - Resolution 12 - is an issue which is raised in any appropriate forum, sadly to little avail. UTU did, however, draw attention to the difficulties here with the Panel for the Independent Review of Education and any impact remains to be seen. Similarly, the concerns around a replacement for GTCNI - Resolution 9 - whilst under consultation has much work to be done at various levels before progress can be made.

Finally, the Emergency Resolution related to teachers' pay, which called for a joint campaign to place the issue at the top of the political agenda, is well underway and the details can be found in Section 3.



19. THANKS AND APPRECIATION

The President and Central Executive Committee wish to place on record their thanks to the Conveners of Sub-Committees, the Officers of Branches, Area Associations, the Fit Group and School Representatives, all of whom play a vital role in the organisation and without whose efforts the union would be unable to operate as well as it does.

Overwhelming workload coupled with a demoralising failure on the part of management to address fair pay has placed onus on all of our members and we would like to thank you for the incredible efforts you made to make the functioning of education as effective as it has been. We further thank you for the trust you have placed in us as, at the time of writing, we continue to pursue delivery on the workload reviews and a pay uplift which shows any recognition of the contribution of teachers during the years of the pandemic and this time of the cost of living crisis. We understand the frustrations this has caused, we appreciate your patience, and can assure you that we are doing all in our power to move this situation to the next stage.

The General Secretary would like to record her thanks to this year's President, Louise Creelman. Louise has thrown herself into every task with great enthusiasm and is the first to step outside her comfort zone to tackle something new which has been a lesson for all of us. She has taken a fresh approach to being a voice for school leaders, teachers and children, and has played an important role in raising the public profile of UTU. Louise's support this year has been greatly appreciated and we wish her every success for the future.

Gillian Dunlop, a Past President of UTU, continued with the responsibility of the post of Honorary Treasurer this year, over-seeing the work of the Financial Executive Officer, a qualified accountant. Gillian has been committed and conscientious in her duties in restructuring the finances of the union in the light of the cost of living crisis to deliver optimum service for members and improving the pension benefits for staff. We thank her for her dedication.

The General Secretary would also wish to place on record her sincere thanks to the Central Executive Committee for their work and support this year. UTU broke new ground by delivering a mandate for strike action and, whilst this is not the natural position for many of our members, whether in elected positions or not, the members of CEC dedicated themselves to delivering on their instruction. From hitting the phones to making direct contact in their own areas to organising rallies – and, in one case, a bus!! –, speaking at rallies, speaking to media – print, radio and television – and contributing to social media, the members of CEC could not have done more not only to make the day a resounding success, but to put the message loudly and clearly that our teachers, and our

children, deserve better than this. They continued to respond to many calls for emergency meetings, often at very short notice, and were unflagging in their commitment to giving of their time in the interests of others whilst facing huge issues in their own schools. The President led this process capably and was always available at any hour to contribute and resolve issues. We can assure all members that the work put in by those they have elected to represent them is second to none. I have no doubt it is greatly appreciated.

None of this would be possible without the day-to-day support of the excellent Officials in our employ and the highest levels of appreciation and thanks must go to Stephen McCord, Deputy General Secretary; Rebekka Gilpin, Field Officer; Leigh Cooper, Field Officer; Audrey Stewart, Field Officer; and, more recently, Joseph Wyglendacz, Organising Officer, for their unfailing support and dedication to members' interests. The high level of service they provide is greatly acknowledged by members and makes the UTU the excellent teaching union that it is.

The President, GS and CEC appreciate the huge amount of work put in by Tony McCabe regarding the production of UTU News in-house. The magazine is now available in a range of media to facilitate a range of audiences in staff rooms throughout Northern Ireland. Alison edits the UTU News and has worked hard to engage many schools in its production, bringing good news stories which serve to remind us in these challenging times of why we do what we do. Thanks also go to Tony and our Deputy General Secretary, Stephen McCord, for their collaboration on the excellent social media campaigns across a range of issues which are attracting great attention and accolade.

The CEC and Officials wish to record their thanks to the Union's Solicitors. Shean Dickson Merrick, for the first class services they provide to UTU members. Their expertise in the sphere of Education is second to none and our members feel reassured after they have spoken to Maura, Owen, Bernie or any of the other professional staff to whom they have been referred. We would also like to thank the barristers employed through Shean Dickson Merrick who are all experts in their specific fields and who give excellent advice to our members.

The CEC would like to thank Building Trustee, Mervin McClean, for his continued support and excellent advice to the Property Sub-Committee. He is always on hand when issues arise and continues to provide robust and informed advice on any matters which need to be dealt with to ensure the building is maintained to the highest standard. He gives more than generously of his time and we are endlessly grateful. He liaises with Karen Taylor, Executive

19. THANKS AND APPRECIATION

Officer, to make sure any work is carried out swiftly and efficiently.

Thanks must also be recorded to Liam Lynch who provides Computer Support on an on-going basis and has ensured that our communication with members is delivered in a timely manner. He also provides day-to-day support to Denise, Tony and Meriel when required.

Thanks also to Martin Goodfellow who continues to provide his services in maintaining the grounds of Headquarters to a very high standard. There are a number of other suppliers with whom we have excellent relationships and we thank them all for their assistance in keeping Headquarters running on a day-to-day basis.

Throughout the course of the pandemic we developed sound working relationships with representatives of the Department of Education and the Employing Authorities which have continued to be constructive and professional even through the latest lack of resolution on pay which has led to the current industrial action. It is hoped that the new dynamic forged, when various representatives of Management Side have been working closely with representatives of the teaching unions to deliver on the Reviews, will extend beyond this period to continue to deliver what teachers deserve in the future, particularly in the context of political instability. We place on record our thanks for their efforts and support.

The CEC would wish to record their thanks to the UTU Officials, Jacquie, Stephen, Leigh, Rebekka and Joseph, who joined us in September. Further, thanks goes to the members of CEC and invited guests who contributed their expertise throughout the year to providing support for student teachers, NQTs and RQTs through the FIT group activities. It is great news that the FIT Conference has resumed, providing the opportunity to once again bring fresh eyes and hard-earned experience together.

Finally, the General Secretary would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the success of the Ulster Teachers' Union during the past year. She would particularly like to thank the staff for their dedication and commitment in maintaining an excellent service to members in challenging times. The membership of UTU has grown this year, and much of that can be attributed to the hard work of the CEC, Branch and Area officers and the staff, who always provide members with support when it is required, be that legal advice, representation, counselling or just standing with them when their individual situation is difficult and demanding. It is appreciated.



ULSTER TEACHERS UNION

94 MALONE ROAD
BELFAST
BT9 5HP

T: 02890 662216
E: OFFICE@UTU.EDU
W: WWW.UTU.EDU

SPONSORED BY:

