

# SHOUT UNION

YOUR VOICE, YOUR UNION, YOUR FUTURE

DECEMBER 2025

**UTU CHRISTMAS  
COMPETITION  
RETURNS!**

**SHOWCASE YOUR PUPILS'  
CREATIVITY WITH THIS  
YEAR'S MY FAVOURITE  
CHRISTMAS THEME.**

**ARTIFICIAL  
INTELLIGENCE IN  
EDUCATION**

Opportunity, Support  
and Sensible Caution

**AND MUCH MORE!**

**PAY AND WORKLOAD  
UPDATE**

WHERE NEGOTIATIONS STAND –  
AND WHAT THE 26 AGREED ACTIONS  
MEAN FOR YOU.



# TOGETHER WE MAKE OUR VOICES HEARD - A MESSAGE FROM THE UTU PRESIDENT

**Dear Colleagues,**

Welcome to the second edition of *'SHOUT Union'*. I hope you enjoy reading the articles as much as I have and will be entertained and enthused by our teachers and pupils and will consider entering the inaugural Members' Art Competition, as well as encouraging your pupils to take part in the UTU Christmas Art Competition.

As we approach Christmas, I hope you can take pride in what you have achieved in the face of challenge. Teaching has never been more demanding, but it has also never been more important. The stability, compassion and routine you provide are gifts which extend far beyond the classroom. For many children, it is their teacher who brings calm to anxiety, structure to chaos and hope to difficult circumstances.

The pace of change has been dizzying. Consultations have come one after another, often without clarity or the time needed for thoughtful consideration. It has often felt as though the sector is being asked to adapt faster than it can reasonably manage. And yet, despite the noise, teachers have remained the constant. While politicians debate, teachers deliver.

Your calmness has anchored your pupils; your resilience has been the quiet force keeping our education system upright. This has been so evident in every school which I have had the pleasure of visiting and I wish to thank you for your kindness and hospitality. I look forward to visiting more members in their schools.

The greatest weight has perhaps fallen on those working with SEN pupils. The mountain of paperwork, the endless forms and the constant battle to secure support have stretched colleagues beyond reasonable limits. And still you persevere. You continue to fight for every child, ensuring they are not defined by their needs but by their potential. You see what matters. You nurture what others might overlook.

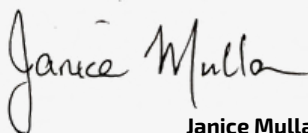
You have lifted spirits, stabilised anxious families and given children reasons to believe in themselves. These are not small acts. These acts have a vital impact, and model humanity and leadership.

I have been inspired by your enthusiasm for our profession at the branch and area meetings which I have had the privilege of attending. I am looking forward to debating these issues at our upcoming Conference. Conference will be held again at the Roe Valley Resort on 19-20 March 2026. I would encourage you to attend.

During this busy, Christmas season, may there be glitter and harmony on stage and beyond, may every soloist and choir sing in tune and every child shine a little brighter than they thought they could.

When the many to do lists have been checked and ticked off, may you find a quiet moment to rest and recharge and know that your union will continue to stand firmly beside you. UTU will continue to advocate strongly on your behalf in the year ahead.

**Wishing you and those you love peace, happiness and a well-deserved rest this Christmas.**



**Janice Mullan**  
President



*Credit: Paul Smyth Photography*

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**AND MUCH MORE!**

# DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY FOREWORD

## Colleagues,

Even though September—and indeed the summer—now feels like a distant memory, we find ourselves already approaching the end of Term 1. For many of you, it has been an exceptionally busy period: getting to know new classes, establishing routines, and managing the many tasks that accompany an ever-growing workload. This year once again brings significant change across our system—change that, while often necessary and welcome, must be carefully managed if it is to genuinely benefit you and the children you support each day.

One of the most substantial developments is the publication of TransformEd, which sets out a comprehensive strategy for transforming teaching and learning in Northern Ireland. Its focus on curriculum, assessment, qualifications, school improvement, tackling educational disadvantage and professional learning support is timely and very much welcomed. However, like many of you, we remain concerned about the pace of change, the volume of information landing simultaneously on schools, and the short timescales attached to many of these reforms. Real transformation requires clarity, realistic planning, and proper resourcing—and UTU will continue to insist on all three.

I also want to take a moment to pay warm and sincere tribute to Jacquie White, General Secretary, whose leadership continues to be recognised far beyond our own union. Her election in July as Vice President of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)—a position she will hold until the next Congress in July 2027—along with her role as Chair of ICTU Northern Ireland, speaks to the high regard in which she is held across the wider trade union movement. Her commitment, influence and unwavering support for the teaching profession remain invaluable to us all.

To our members, I want to extend heartfelt thanks. Every day you place children at the centre of your work, often in extremely challenging circumstances—whether that be in outdated or poorly maintained buildings, understaffed or challenging environments, or supporting pupils with increasingly complex needs. Your professionalism, compassion and resilience are seen, valued and deeply appreciated.



I also want to acknowledge those of you who have taken part in recent school representative training and leadership training sessions. Your engagement strengthens UTU at every level and ensures that we continue to support members effectively. Please keep an eye on our Events page for further opportunities to connect, develop and share expertise.

As always, our team in UTU Headquarters is here to support you. Whether you have a query, a concern, or simply need guidance navigating an issue or need a listening ear, please know that help is only ever a phone call or email away.

Although the Christmas break is beginning to appear on the horizon, I know that the next few weeks will be among the busiest of the entire year—assessments, internal examinations, Carol Services, concerts, Nativity Plays and countless school events. When the holidays finally arrive, I hope you are able to enjoy a well-deserved rest and precious time with family and friends.

On behalf of UTU, I extend my best wishes for a constructive and successful year ahead in 2026. You can be assured that we will continue to stand alongside you throughout this journey—supporting you through every challenge and celebrating every achievement.

STEPHEN MCCORD  
DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY

# PAY AND WORKLOAD UPDATE



## PAY AND WORKLOAD

We are almost a year from the beginning of the last battle regarding pay and workload which resulted in our pay rise, a programme of work to deliver on 26 areas of workload and the establishment of the Independent Panel to review workload more widely. You will recall that part of the last agreement framed pay negotiations for this year within a timeframe which is due to end in January and this was to take account of the allocation of the block grant to NI and the monitoring rounds on which we have relied to access the necessary funding for any deal. Our pay claim has been lodged and, in line with the agreement, meetings have been scheduled in December for negotiations to begin. News will follow!

## 26 ACTIONS ON WORKLOAD (HEADS OF AGREEMENT)

The 26 actions had timelines of three, six and twelve months depending on content and context. Those with three-month timeframes have been agreed, with those on six-month plans being almost ready for delivery.

A Joint Communication has been issued which outlines progress so far and indicates where directives and/or relevant information have been provided to schools.

Feedback from the communication from members pointed to the lack of clarity and, indeed, at this point, it will be those who were round the table who have a clear understanding of the way forward. We are well aware, then, that merely informing schools will not change the culture on workload on its own. It is imperative that the various actions are clearly understood and that we work together across unions and schools to implement what are currently higher level agreements.

It is therefore the intention of UTU – and, indeed all unions working together, - that we undertake a plan of action to fully inform members and deliver the changes both within and across schools. We see real change as being delivered through addressing the agreed actions, one at a time and at the same time, through information sharing and on-line engagement, to implement the agreed actions in the interests of your workload pressures and, so, the children in your care.

We will therefore be coming back to you, following the publication of the Panel Report, with a planned approach across all unions to deliver on the actions so that all teachers, regardless of union or school, can work together to bring about a change in culture which is long overdue.

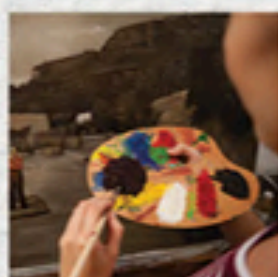
## INDEPENDENT PANEL ON WORKLOAD

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ULSTER TEACHERS' UNION



# COMPETITION



**OPEN EXCLUSIVELY TO UTU MEMBERS**, THIS INAUGURAL COMPETITION AIMS TO HIGHLIGHT THE REMARKABLE ARTISTIC SKILLS WHICH THRIVE WITHIN THE TEACHING PROFESSION.

**PAINTING**

**SCULPTURE**

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

**MIXED MEDIA**


WHETHER IT'S PAINTING, SCULPTURE, PHOTOGRAPHY OR MIXED MEDIA, MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO SUBMIT UP TO A MAXIMUM OF THREE PIECES **BY 5PM ON MONDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2026**.

**AN OVERALL WINNER WILL BE IDENTIFIED BY A PANEL.**

**FOR MORE INFO VISIT THE UTU WEBSITE.**



# CREATE, INSPIRE, SHARE: CELEBRATING THE ARTISTRY WITHIN OUR SCHOOLS



The Ulster Teachers' Union is delighted to unveil its inaugural UTU Art Competition, a new initiative designed to celebrate and showcase the creative talent that thrives within our teaching community.

Teachers are creators by nature. Every day, they inspire imagination, encourage expression, and nurture new ideas. Yet beyond the classroom, many of our members continue to explore creativity through the visual arts — from painting and sculpture to photography and mixed media.

This competition offers a dedicated space to share and celebrate that work.

**OPEN EXCLUSIVELY TO UTU MEMBERS, THE COMPETITION INVITES PARTICIPANTS TO SUBMIT UP TO THREE ORIGINAL PIECES IN ANY OF THE FOUR CATEGORIES:**

- **PAINTING**
- **SCULPTURE**
- **PHOTOGRAPHY**
- **MIXED MEDIA**

Entries will be judged by a panel of educators and arts professionals, who will identify an overall winner. The winning and shortlisted works will then be showcased by the Union, offering a platform to highlight the remarkable artistic abilities found within our membership.

This initiative is about far more than competition. It recognises the role of creativity in teacher wellbeing and professional life. Artistic practice can be a source of reflection, joy, expression, and connection — qualities that enrich both personal and professional experiences in education.

## KEY DETAILS:

### SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

5PM ON MONDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2026

### ENTRY LIMIT:

UP TO THREE PIECES PER MEMBER

### WHO CAN ENTER:

ALL CURRENT UTU MEMBERS

We encourage members of all experience levels — from seasoned artists to those who create simply for pleasure — to take part. Every contribution helps to celebrate the diversity of talent within our profession. Full submission details are available now on the UTU website.

We look forward to seeing the creativity, imagination, and artistry that our members bring to this exciting new venture.

# ULSTER TEACHERS' UNION SUPPORTS AIR AMBULANCE NI

The Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU) has reaffirmed its commitment to community wellbeing by making a generous donation to the Air Ambulance NI Charity, supporting the region's vital helicopter emergency medical service.

This contribution reflects the Union's ongoing dedication to helping safeguard lives across Northern Ireland and recognising the invaluable work carried out by the Air Ambulance service every day.

Damien McAnespie, Fundraising Manager, for Air Ambulance NI said, "Thank you to the Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU) and their President Janice Mullan, for their donation of £300 to the charity and for their ongoing support throughout the last number of years. Their continued support is greatly appreciated and will help to keep the helicopter flying and the medical team delivering critical care where and when it's needed most."

Janice Mullan, President of UTU said, "We value the work of Air Ambulance NI and are delighted to support this charity'.

Air Ambulance NI is a local charity that provides the Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) for Northern Ireland, working in partnership with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service. The service operates 365 days a year and can reach anywhere in Northern Ireland in approximately 25 minutes, bringing advanced medical care directly to the scene of serious incidents.

On average the medical team are called upon twice every day, whether that is as a result of a serious road traffic collision, farm or workplace accident, sport and leisure incident or a serious medical emergency.



**AIR AMBULANCE**  
NORTHERN IRELAND  
— ECG — CHARITY — ECG —



UTU President Janice Mullan presents the donation on behalf of Ulster Teachers' Union to Dr Ken Addley OBE Air Ambulance Northern Ireland

As a local charity, Air Ambulance NI aspires to raise £3 million each year to maintain and sustain this service so public donations are crucial. One of the simplest ways to support is by becoming a member of Club AANI and donating via a monthly or annual subscription.

You can contact the charity directly by emailing [info@airambulancenl.org](mailto:info@airambulancenl.org) or calling **028 9262 2677**.

# BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS WITH BEYOND BRICKS



MINDWISE'S PLAY-BASED EMOTIONAL WELLBEING PROGRAMME FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

In classrooms across Northern Ireland, children are learning important emotional and social skills in a fun and engaging way through Beyond Bricks, an innovative programme from MindWise. Using LEGO®-based activities, Beyond Bricks helps primary-age pupils explore emotions, develop resilience and strengthen their ability to work well with others.

Designed with both wellbeing and education in mind, the programme is delivered directly in schools and includes hands-on training and resources for teachers. This means the learning continues long after the initial workshops, supporting a lasting, school-wide approach to emotional development.



## WHAT HAPPENS IN THE PROGRAMME?

Each participating school takes part in a series of six interactive sessions, co-delivered by a MindWise practitioner and teaching staff. Small group challenges encourage children to:

- Identify and name different emotions
- Practice self-regulation and calming strategies
- Collaborate and communicate positively
- Build confidence and problem-solving skills

LEGO® is used as a shared, playful language, helping children express ideas that may be difficult to put into words. This makes the programme especially inclusive for children who struggle with traditional verbal discussion.



## WHY IT MATTERS

Supporting emotional wellbeing early in childhood can make a meaningful difference to a young person's mental health, relationships and school experience. Beyond Bricks aims to equip children with practical skills they can use both in the classroom and beyond.

## GROWING IMPACT ACROSS NORTHERN IRELAND

To date, the programme has supported over 4,500 young people, with trained staff continuing to use the approach to reach even more children in their schools. The vision is to make Beyond Bricks available in every primary school in Northern Ireland.

## FIND OUT MORE

Schools interested in applying or learning more can contact MindWise:

**Amy Stothers:**

**E:** [amy.stothers@mindwisenv.org](mailto:amy.stothers@mindwisenv.org)

**T:** 07719 043925

# BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS ARE FOUNDATIONS TO REBUILDING LIVES

In the quiet classrooms and creative spaces of EOTAS centres, some of the most transformative work in education is taking place – not just in literacy and numeracy, but in relationships, resilience and hope.

My class sizes are smaller than most, and for my pupils who have been excluded, disengaged, or whose circumstances make mainstream schooling unbearable, our centre is a vital second chance, at whose heart lies the spirit of Sustainable Development Goal 4: **'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'**.

Education should reach every learner, whatever their background, challenge or story. I tell every student that their story is their 'superpower'; they are here, inspiring everyone around them. All arrive in my classroom carrying emotional trauma, fractured family relationships, or experiences of bullying and social isolation. All feel that, academically, life is over for them and that they will never be able to attend college or get a job. How sad is that at just 15 years old?

And so, relationship education, rooted in emotional literacy, is a central pillar of my teaching, as is the positive relationship that is necessary if the student is to not only survive but thrive. Confidence in spelling, grammar and vocabulary increases, as if by magic, with growth in self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

At the moment in Northern Ireland, we are having a review of assessment. I hope the aspirations of SDG 4 will form part of this. The psychological and emotional needs of our students must be addressed by teaching them to question, and thus understand, their feelings – and thereby themselves – in order to allow them to develop and carve a sustainable future. For these students, education is not just inclusive; it is truly transformative.

The ideal of inclusion is practised daily by advocating and modelling empathy, sensitivity, belief and compassion. When a young person with severe anxiety finds the courage to walk into a class again, when they begin to smile, trust and offer their ideas and opinions, that is progress of the highest kind.

One of the most successful learning activities was an integration programme with a small group of 15–16-year-old pupils from a neighbouring special school. These pupils had moderate learning difficulties, and we met once a week for an indoor games session, usually football or hockey.



“

*Mental health support must not be seen as an optional extra, but as central to education for all.*

”

Even the most cynical and battle-scarred teenager's emotional defences were broken down when they came into contact with pupils who were non-judgemental about designer clothes or iPhones. All pupils enjoyed learning and teaching how to dribble a ball and score a goal. This was true inclusion, built on sensitivity, empathy and fun interaction.

Like all teachers in EOTAS, we work miracles, but we need resources to meet effectively the needs of young people experiencing emotional distress and anxiety. We need counselling, therapeutic support and specialist staff on site. Mental health support must not be seen as an optional extra, but as central to education for all.

Education must be seen as teaching students to mature into caring, capable and connected individuals who value themselves and those around them. Assessment and data capture must acknowledge and value this.

Teaching unions will continue to lobby those in power to recognise that inclusion is not just a theory, but a valuable daily practice that travels far beyond its humble beginnings in the classroom.



## YOU CANNOT SEE DLD BUT YOU CAN SEE THE JOY

On Wednesday, October 15th, pupils from the Speech and Language Class at **Holy Trinity Primary School in Enniskillen** joined their peers from the two classes at **Enniskillen Model Primary School** for a special morning of celebration, connection and community spirit. This event was held to celebrate Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) Awareness Day, which is officially observed worldwide on **October 17th**.

Developmental Language Disorder is a hidden but common condition that affects approximately 1 in 14 individuals – meaning that, in every classroom, there may be two children facing challenges in understanding and using language, despite having no other diagnosed condition. DLD can impact learning, friendships and emotional well-being, yet it often goes unrecognised. This year's DLD Day theme, "You cannot see DLD...", is particularly important, reminding us that just because a difficulty is not visible it does not mean it is not real.

During the morning, children enjoyed a variety of indoor and outdoor play activities aimed at fostering communication, teamwork and fun. The atmosphere was filled with laughter, encouragement and the kind of inclusive joy that DLD Day aims to promote. After a shared snack, the children were joined by the Chair of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Mr Barry McElduff, and the UTU President, Mrs Mullan, who both took part in the planting of bulbs – a beautiful, living symbol of this year's theme. Just like DLD, the growth occurring beneath the surface is not always visible at first.

However, with the right support, patience and care, something wonderful can bloom. Mrs Mullan joined in with the children during the planting, sharing in their excitement and encouraging them to take pride in their efforts. Mr McElduff reminded the pupils to water their plants regularly and enjoy watching them grow. Both guests praised the children's hard work and urged them to keep giving their best in all they do.

As the bulbs were gently buried in the soil, a sense of hope and pride filled the air. The children, each with their own strengths, stories and potential, are growing in confidence and communication every day. Just like the bulbs they planted, they are capable of flourishing in their own time and in their own way.

Let us continue to raise awareness of DLD, celebrate every small step and ensure that no child feels unseen. You may not always see DLD, but you can certainly see the difference that understanding makes.

# PRE-RETIREMENT



# EVENTS

2026

Jan  
22

## PRE-RETIREMENT WEBINAR

ONLINE VIA TEAMS @ 3.45PM

[CLICK  
HERE TO  
REGISTER](#)

Feb  
05

## PHASED RETIREMENT WEBINAR

ONLINE VIA TEAMS @ 3.45PM

[CLICK  
HERE TO  
REGISTER](#)

Feb  
26

## MID-CAREER WEBINAR

ONLINE VIA TEAMS @ 3.45PM

[CLICK  
HERE TO  
REGISTER](#)

Mar  
10

## PRE-RETIREMENT WEBINAR

EBRINGTON HOTEL @ 3.45PM

[CLICK  
HERE TO  
REGISTER](#)

Mar  
24

## PRE-RETIREMENT WEBINAR

INTO HEADQUARTERS @ 3.45PM

[CLICK  
HERE TO  
REGISTER](#)

Apr  
02

## PRE-RETIREMENT WEBINAR

ONLINE VIA TEAMS @ 3.45PM

[CLICK  
HERE TO  
REGISTER](#)

FORECASTING FUN AT

# STEWARTSTOWN PRIMARY



**CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF QUESTIONS:  
PUPILS MEET BARRA BEST**

Pupils in Stewartstown Primary School were delighted when Barra Best agreed to participate in a zoom call with their class, giving them the opportunity to find out in depth how he fulfils his job as weather presenter. They had lots of prepared questions about his role, and even a few sneaky 'just for fun' questions to keep the mood light!

Barra was very obliging and responded to all their questions in a child friendly manner. He was very interested in how they've been studying the weather in school and how they'd planned a trip to visit a wind turbine nearby. Finding out secrets from behind the scenes in the tv industry along with the filming techniques used, inspired the pupils to experiment with green screen technology in class, using their newfound knowledge to enhance their ICT skills and bring their weather reports to life. Bringing the popular celebrity into their learning has kept the children motivated and excited in their topic. It has helped the children connect their learning within the classroom to real-life situations. Barra proved to be a real inspiration to the young weather enthusiasts. Predicting the weather in Stewartstown is now in safe hands, as they now have a full class of fabulous forecasters who are keen to fill Barra's boots should he decide to retire!





ULSTER TEACHERS' UNION

# CHRISTMAS COMPETITION

Get into the festive spirit and showcase your creativity by taking part in the Ulster Teachers' Union Christmas Competition.

Fantastic prizes are up for grabs, so don't miss your chance to shine this Christmas.



🍎 1st place: £30 | 🍎 2nd place: £25 | 🍎 3rd place: £15 | 🍎 4th place: £10

## FOUNDATION

Use the Bauble template to draw a picture of 'My Favourite Christmas' — it could be a memory, a decoration, a person, or something special you do.

## SPECIAL

Use the Bauble template to draw a picture of 'My Favourite Christmas' — it could be a memory, a decoration, a person, or something special you do.

## KEY STAGE 1

Use the Bauble template to draw a picture of 'My Favourite Christmas' — it could be a memory, a decoration, a person, or something special you do.

## KEY STAGE 2

Produce artwork capturing what 'My Favourite Christmas' means to you — a personal memory, cultural tradition, or moment that holds significance.

## POST-PRIMARY

Produce artwork capturing what 'My Favourite Christmas' means to you — a personal memory, cultural tradition, or moment that holds significance.

CLOSING DATE:

**19** DECEMBER  
5.00PM



## SUBMISSIONS:

Please submit entries via post to  
**UTU, 94 Malone Road, BT9 5HP**  
or email us at  
[competition@utu.edu](mailto:competition@utu.edu)

# BRING YOUR CHRISTMAS MEMORIES TO LIFE IN UTU'S "MY FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS" COMPETITION



[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE](#)

The festive season is officially underway, and the Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU) is inviting pupils from schools across Northern Ireland to showcase their creativity by taking part in this year's UTU Christmas Competition.

A template for **Foundation, Special and Key Stage 1** is available on the UTU website.

Open to Foundation, Key Stages 1 and 2, Special Schools, and Post-Primary students, the competition encourages young people to reflect on the theme "My Favourite Christmas". Whether it's a treasured memory, a meaningful tradition, a special decoration, or a loved one, pupils are asked to capture what makes Christmas unique to them. Younger entrants can submit drawings, while older pupils are welcome to produce artwork in a format of their choice. Fantastic prizes are on offer, with vouchers awarded for **1st place (£30), 2nd place (£25), 3rd place (£15), and 4th place (£10)** in each category. With creativity at the heart of the season, it's a wonderful opportunity for students to shine and for schools to celebrate the imagination and talent of their pupils.



The closing date for entries is **18 December at 5.00pm**, and submissions can be posted to **UTU, 94 Malone Road, Belfast, BT9 5HP**, or emailed to **competition@utu.edu**.

UTU encourages teachers and parents to get involved and support pupils in taking part. With the magic of Christmas as inspiration, this year's competition promises to be the most creative yet.

# MANAGING PUPIL BEHAVIOUR



YOUR QUESTIONS. THREE UNIONS. CLEAR ANSWERS.

This session will provide clear, evidence-based strategies to help you create calmer classrooms, strengthen relationships, and support positive behaviour for learning.

Whether you're new to the profession or an experienced educator looking for a fresh perspective, this short, focused session will leave you with practical tools you can apply immediately.



WEDNESDAY 14 JANUARY 2026



4.00PM



ONLINE

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION: OPPORTUNITY, SUPPORT AND SENSIBLE CAUTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly becoming part of everyday life, and the education sector is no exception. From automated marking tools to curriculum planning assistants and classroom-ready resources generated at the click of a button, AI has the potential to ease workloads and support teaching and learning in meaningful ways. As a union, we recognise both the opportunities and the concerns, and—like our members—we are actively exploring what this technology means for our profession.

For teachers facing increasing demands, AI offers some genuine advantages. It can assist with drafting lesson materials, differentiating content for pupils with diverse needs, and generating quizzes or worksheets in seconds. Some systems can help analyse pupil performance trends or suggest tailored interventions, reducing the administrative burden that too often eats into planning time and personal wellbeing. Used thoughtfully, these tools may help teachers focus more on what matters most: high-quality teaching and direct interaction with pupils.

However, we must also approach AI with sensible caution. Many popular AI platforms are “open” systems, meaning that anything typed into them may be stored, used to train future models, or shared in ways the user cannot fully control. This has particular implications for teachers.

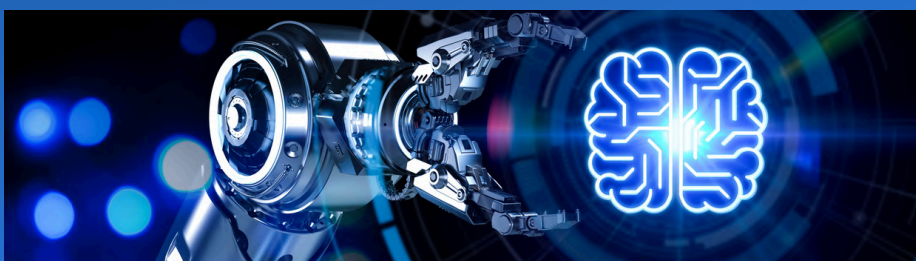
Inputting pupil data, assessment information, school documents or sensitive staff details could unintentionally place confidential information onto external servers, potentially anywhere in the world. Even seemingly harmless prompts may contain identifiers or context that compromise privacy.

As professionals bound by safeguarding, GDPR and high ethical standards, teachers must think carefully before using AI tools—especially free, consumer-level platforms.

Closed, education-specific systems with strong data protection policies are beginning to emerge, and these may offer safer pathways for classroom use. But for now, vigilance is essential.

The Ulster Teachers' Union is actively examining the implications of AI for teachers and pupils. We are engaging with experts, reviewing guidance, and listening closely to the experiences of our members who are already experimenting with these tools. Our aim is to ensure that teachers have clear, practical advice that protects them while enabling them to make informed choices. We also continue to press employers and policymakers to provide safe, well-regulated systems that support innovation without undermining professional responsibilities.

AI will undoubtedly shape the future of teaching, but how it does so is not yet fixed. With balanced discussion, shared learning and robust safeguards, it can become a helpful assistant rather than a source of risk. As always, our union will stand alongside members—asking the right questions, promoting good practice and ensuring that teachers' voices are central in shaping the digital tools of tomorrow.



# BRANCH AND AREA MEETINGS UNDERWAY AS UTU PREPARES FOR CONFERENCE 2026

*Local meetings are underway, with members discussing key issues and preparing resolutions for Conference 2026.*

Branch and Area Association meetings across the Ulster Teachers' Union are now underway, forming a key part of preparations for the 2026 Conference. These meetings are giving members the chance to:

- ✔ **Discuss the major issues currently affecting education in NI**
- ✔ **Receive updates on UTU campaigns and ongoing work**
- ✔ **Consider and agree potential resolutions for Conference**

Several meetings have already taken place, with strong attendance and thoughtful discussion. Common themes emerging include teacher workload, inspection and assessment pressures, the SEND transformation process, staff wellbeing, and continuing work on pay, terms and conditions. Members have also been sharing practical experiences from their own schools, helping to highlight emerging challenges and positive practice across different sectors.

These meetings are vital in ensuring that UTU's direction and priorities continue to be driven by members. They create space for local concerns to be heard, and they form the foundation for resolutions which shape debate and policy at Conference.

Further meetings will continue over the coming weeks and into the new year. Members are encouraged to attend, share their experiences, and help build strong, representative resolutions. For queries about your local meeting or support with drafting resolutions, please contact your branch officers, field officer, or UTU Headquarters.





# THE STORY BEHIND CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY

Launched in 2012 by Save the Children, Christmas Jumper Day has become a UK festive favourite. The simple idea –wear a fun jumper and donate–blends humour, generosity, and community spirit. Each December, schools and workplaces join in, turning ordinary days into colourful celebrations that raise funds for children worldwide.

Each December, offices, schools, and households across the UK turn into a cheerful sea of knitted reindeer, flashing fairy lights, and snowmen with crooked grins. Christmas Jumper Day feels like a long-standing festive tradition, but it's actually quite new.

It began in 2012, launched by Save the Children. The idea was simple: wear a Christmas jumper for one day and donate a small amount to support children around the world. It was designed to be easy and light-hearted, something anyone could join in with, regardless of age or environment.

Its success came from that simplicity. No bake sale, marathon, or planning needed – just put on a jumper. For offices, it broke up winter routine; for schools, it offered a fun, inclusive charity activity; and for everyone else,

it became a joyful excuse to wear something delightfully silly.

The rise of the “ugly Christmas jumper” helped too. Once considered an awkward gift, it gradually became a playful, nostalgic trend boosted by films and sitcoms. Shops soon filled with jumpers featuring LEDs, pom-poms, antlers, and more sequins than anyone really needs. Christmas Jumper Day arrived just as these jumpers became culturally beloved.

Despite the humour, the heart of the day is still charity. Funds raised support children’s health, education, and emergency aid worldwide. The date shifts each year but always lands on a Friday in December so workplaces and schools can easily take part.



## DONATE TO SAVE THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY

Spread some festive cheer and help children around the world! Simply wear your favourite Christmas jumper and donate £2 (or £1 for kids) to Save the Children. You can give online at [christmasjumperday.org](http://christmasjumperday.org), or text **JINGLE** to **70050** to donate £2.

**Every jumper saves lives!**



# INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION: TEACHER UNIONS UNITE AT STUDENT FAIRS

What an afternoon at Stranmillis University College and St Mary’s University College Belfast!

The Ulster Teachers’ Union (UTU), alongside colleagues from the Irish National Teachers’ Organisation (INTO) and the National Education Union (NEU), were thrilled to meet the next generation of educators at the vibrant student teacher fairs.

From the moment doors opened, the energy in both venues was unmistakable. Hundreds of aspiring teachers stopped by to learn more about the support, solidarity, and professional community offered by the three teaching unions. For many, it was their first step into the world of teaching—and their enthusiasm was infectious.

Representatives from UTU, INTO, and NEU spoke with students about navigating the early years of their careers, accessing professional advice, and the power of collective voice in education. Whether discussing classroom challenges, professional development, or the importance of wellbeing, a common theme emerged: these future teachers are passionate, committed, and ready to make a difference.

For those who couldn’t make it on the day, there’s still an opportunity to get involved. Student teachers can sign up to all three unions—gaining comprehensive support from placement to induction and beyond—by visiting the link below:

👉 Sign up here:  
<https://shorturl.at/zJjGI>

Events like this demonstrate that the teaching profession thrives when educators stand together. With UTU, INTO, and NEU welcoming the next wave of teachers, the future of education in Northern Ireland looks brighter than ever.





## A GARDEN OF HEALING: HOW LAKEWOOD STUDENTS TRANSFORMED NATURE— AND THEMSELVES

Our school garden, once neglected and underutilised, has undergone a remarkable transformation, reflecting the resilience of our students. Many young people at our school experience developmental trauma due to adverse childhood experiences, making this garden a vital space for healing. Students selected flowers with special meanings: nasturtiums symbolise victory over challenges; delphiniums bring joy and positivity; wallflowers represent strength and individual worth; and sunflowers embody loyalty and hope, inspiring students to seek joy in their healing journeys.

The garden's fruit and vegetable bed—growing lettuce, onions, broccoli, strawberries, tomatoes, raspberries, peas, potatoes, and carrots—teaches sustainable gardening and healthy eating. We are also promoting local wildlife by clearing our pond to create a habitat for frogs and dragonfly larvae. A new birdhouse with a camera allows students to observe nesting birds and connect further with nature. Students are additionally painting a mural of Bangor landmarks, including the iconic Pickie Fun Park swans.

We can now offer OCN Level 1 Horticultural modules, giving students practical skills and a deeper bond with the natural world.

Our garden is now a vibrant, multi-use space that unites staff and students, serving as a powerful symbol of growth, resilience, and healing.

Lakewood staff commented: "We are delighted to have won the Ards and North Down Borough Council 'In Bloom' Best School Garden Project. We are extremely proud of our students' creativity and hard work in transforming our garden into a vibrant space for healing and growth. This project reflects our students' resilience and now also supports qualifications and practical skills in horticulture and sustainability."

The judges noted: "Lakewood's garden has become a sanctuary of healing and growth—filled with meaningful flowers, fruit and vegetables, and a restored wildlife pond. The garden offers learning, therapeutic benefits, and horticultural qualifications. A truly inspiring project—congratulations, Lakewood School."



# EQUINE-ASSISTED LEARNING TRANSFORMS SUPPORT FOR PUPILS AT KNOCKEVIN SPECIAL SCHOOL



Since April 2024, pupils across the three sites of Knockevin Special School have been taking part in Equines in Education, an equine-assisted learning (EAL) programme developed by One Equine Trust and funded by the Denis Lynn Foundation at Finnebrogue Meats. This two-year project brings hands-on, experiential learning directly onto school grounds, removing transport and financial barriers for pupils with complex needs and offering consistent, tailored support.

Each week, around 70 pupils aged 6–19 participate in sessions adapted to their challenges, communication styles, and sensory needs. Activities include leading ponies, grooming routines, obstacle courses, and mindfulness exercises. Through these tasks, pupils build confidence, resilience, communication skills, emotional regulation, and peer connections – essential for learning and everyday life.

The programme supports pupils who face significant barriers, including social, emotional, behavioural, communication, physical, or medical needs. Because travelling off-site is often not possible, delivering sessions in school ensures full participation in a familiar, comfortable environment.

More than a year in, staff have observed increased confidence, focus, independence, and social engagement. Pupils who once avoided group activities are forming connections, and those with communication difficulties are finding new ways to express themselves through interactions with the ponies. Many arrive calmer and happier, with progress carrying over into classroom learning. As one colleague noted, “The pupils looked forward to every Thursday...their confidence grew and their relationship developed.”

Knockevin’s Speech and Language Therapy team is now collaborating with One Equine practitioners to integrate visual supports, communication prompts, and structured language activities, helping pupils understand routines, make choices, strengthen communication, and generalise skills back to class.

The programme’s success reflects the commitment of staff across all sites. Teachers and assistants identify pupils, support sessions, and provide feedback, while vice-principal Aaron Davis has been central in embedding the initiative into school life – and occasionally enjoys meeting the ponies himself. Staff report that the programme enhances inclusive learning, classroom practice, and the wider school community.

Equines in Education also aligns with priorities in emotional wellbeing, inclusive education, and early intervention within Northern Ireland’s SEN and mental health strategies. In a context of rising pupil needs, it offers meaningful support to learners and educators.

By providing consistent, accessible, on-site support, the programme helps children with complex needs build confidence, develop essential skills, and fulfil their potential. Its success demonstrates the transformative impact of equine-assisted learning and highlights the importance of continued funding to expand and sustain this inclusive model.





**PUPILS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITY COME TOGETHER FOR DRUMRANE'S HARVEST SERVICE**



Drumrane Primary School held its annual Harvest Service, a cherished tradition where the school community gathers to thank God for His goodness throughout the year. This year's celebration felt especially meaningful as everyone was grateful to be back in the school hall, freshly restored with a new roof and floor after Storm Eowyn.

A highlight of the event is always the P1 pupils, each bringing an item for the harvest table as the much-loved song "Someone's Brought a Loaf of Bread" is sung. These thoughtful gifts are later delivered to Bradagh Fold in Dungiven.

The Assembly also features a wonderful mix of musical items from the school choir, solos, readings, and prayers, with every P7 pupil given the chance to take part in the service. Some even arrive dressed as farmers, adding fun and colour to the occasion.

A familiar favourite, Coleraine legend Mrs Alice McAlary, returned once again to share with the children through an engaging and interactive talk. P1 parents and grandparents attended the event and were warmly welcomed with tea and scones. Donations for the Limavady Food Bank were also collected, and the school greatly appreciates the generosity shown at this time of year.





Macosquin



Primary School

# 'TEACH TO THE BEAT' HITS THE RIGHT NOTE AT MACOSQUIN PRIMARY SCHOOL



'Teach to the Beat' is an exciting new musical initiative which is taking Northern Ireland by storm. Just finished its Foundation stage pilot in 16 Primary Schools throughout the Province, Deborah Armstrong, TTTB's founder and developer is so excited about the potential ahead: "For too long, Music in NI Primary schools has been seen as the responsibility of 'someone else more musical.' With the help of TTTB, it is time that EVERY teacher sees themselves as capable of delivering this essential subject area. When EVERY teacher is involved, it means EVERY child will be too."

'Teach to the Beat' is the first musical resource of its kind in the NI Primary School due to the fact it is exclusively based on our own Northern Ireland Curriculum. With all its cross-curricular lessons available online, everything is there at the 'click of a button.' No stress, no running around, no extra personnel required- just music delivered by everyday teachers and integrated into the lessons of everyday classrooms. As one teacher commented:

*"The high-quality resources make sessions accessible and engaging for both children and teachers, even for those with no specialist musical background. Everything is ready to use, well-paced, and aligned with the Northern Ireland Curriculum, particularly in areas such as The Arts, Physical Development, and Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU). The sessions have significantly reduced teacher workload, as the clear guidance, lesson structures, and online support make planning effortless."* (Macosquin PS, Coleraine)

All too often, we feel the need to look beyond ourselves as practitioners when it comes to Music teaching. 'Teach to the Beat' begs to differ and is designed to prove that with the right resources, Music teaching is within everyone's reach. Interested teachers and schools are encouraged to follow along on the [TTTB facebook page](#) where you will soon see how this programme can cater for older classes too in its next pilot phase. Stay tuned. We cannot wait for YOU to get involved too!



# INCLUSION FUNDING WIDENS, BUT CUTS RAISE FEARS

**INCLUSION FUNDING EXTENDED TO ALL PRE-SCHOOLS—BUT TEACHERS WARN BUDGET CUTS COULD UNDERMINE SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN**

A major expansion of Northern Ireland’s Pre-School Inclusion Fund has sparked concern among teachers, who fear that reduced budgets may leave children with special educational needs (SEN) without adequate support.

Education Minister Paul Givan confirmed that the fund—designed to help settings support children undergoing statutory assessment—will be rolled out to all 670 Department of Education pre-school providers in 2025–26. The move follows what the Minister described as the “success” of last year’s pilot programme, which operated across 213 settings and is now backed by a £4.5 million investment for the year ahead.

But despite the wider reach, teachers say the funding levels do not match those that made the pilot work.

Jacquie White, General Secretary of the Ulster Teachers’ Union (UTU), welcomed the intention behind the initiative but warned that the new funding model risks diluting support where it is needed most.

“The Minister says it’s the success of last year’s pilot programme run in 213 settings to meet the needs of children undergoing statutory assessment of their education requirements which has led to this announcement,” she said.

However, she noted that under the pilot each pre-school class received £750 per month, funding that could be used flexibly—

“**Reducing the funding will only short-change our most vulnerable children, leaving teachers once again struggling to meet their pupils’ needs.**”

*Jacquie White, UTU*

for hiring additional staff, providing therapeutic interventions, purchasing specialist equipment, or offering staff training. “Now though that amount has been revised to what is described as being a ‘more equitable and streamlined approach’ which sees full-time classes set to receive a standardised amount of £5,300—considerably less than in the pilot,” Ms White said. According to the UTU, this cut risks undermining the very outcomes the pilot was praised for.

“Our fear is that the success of the pilot scheme was based on pre-school settings having a bigger budget and that reducing that will only short-change our most vulnerable children, leaving teachers once again struggling to meet their pupils’ needs,” Ms White warned. She added that while the Minister can claim to be honouring his commitment to invest in SEN provision, the reduced per-class funding raises questions over how meaningful that investment will be in practice.

“So while the Minister is being seen to fulfil his undertaking to invest in the SEN sector, we fear the amounts he’s set aside may not be enough to play a meaningful role in the children’s and teachers’ day-to-day experiences.” With pre-schools expecting to welcome increasing numbers of children requiring additional support, many educators say the success of the inclusion programme will depend not on how many settings receive funding, but on whether that funding is sufficient to meet rising needs.

# Supporting Every Teacher: UTU's Disability and SEN Initiatives Grow



As the demands on educators continue to grow, UTU is strengthening its support for members navigating disability-related needs and the complex landscape of Special Educational Needs. From expanding accessible resources and securing practical workplace adjustments, to launching a new cross-union SEN working group, this article highlights the ongoing work to ensure teachers and school leaders receive the guidance, rights, and advocacy they deserve.

**Pauline Hurst**, UTU Central Executive member and Disability Champion, has been working over the past two years to improve access to rights and support for members with disabilities.

## **DISABILITY**

The UTU website now has a range of easily accessible information, targeted fact sheets and tips to support members in accessing reasonable adjustments, disability passports and addressing the range of other issues which may be encountered by teachers and school leaders when managing health impacts in the workplace.

Those of you who have been recent delegates to Annual Conference will have had access to the disability panel events where there has been input from the employers, the Equality Commission and the Labour Relations Agency regarding related rights and expectations.

Pauline has also taken the work to the employing authorities and has built robust working relationships with the EA Disability Employment Support Service (DESS). Work has taken place to ensure that teachers are supported in accessing relevant and necessary equipment which they may require in classrooms and a procedure has been developed to facilitate redeployment to a more appropriate setting where medical evidence advises.

Our first successful redeployment on the grounds of disability is in the process of being finalised.

We would encourage members to visit the materials on the website if you feel that you or a colleague may require some support and our Officials are available should you wish to discuss further.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

There is no area more challenging at this time in schools than that of addressing the needs of our children with SEN.

Whilst negotiations continue in a range of arenas about specific aspects of the issues before us, it is also very much the case that members in schools need more support in the here and now.

To that end, UTU has joined forces with our colleagues in INTO and established a working group consisting of practitioners in Special Schools, Special Provision classrooms and support services, and SENCos, with a view to providing you with practical guidance and help with navigating the system as it stands, making sense of the administrative tasks and accessing strategies.

The group have engaged initially to formulate a plan and materials and advice will be with you in the coming weeks.

We also believe it is helpful to engage with and learn from the experiences of others facing the same challenges and we will be asking members of the group to share their thoughts in the coming publications. We will begin with *Noreen Kelly*, SENCo in St Dallen's Primary School in Warrenpoint.

# SEND TRANSFORMATION: TEACHERS SPEAK OUT FROM THE FRONT LINES

Frustration is mounting among Northern teachers navigating the changes and challenges of the SEND Transformation Programme Launched by the Education Authority (EA) in 2022 with the ambitious promise of delivering “the right support, from the right people, at the right time and in the right place,” the initiative remains in its early stages with key difficulties still being ironed out. Yet in classrooms where support is most urgently needed, many teachers report that the programme has yet to make a meaningful impact, leaving them grappling with escalating needs and limited, inconsistent support.

**By Noreen Kelly** [*SENCo in St Dallan's Primary School*]

The Northern Ireland SEND Transformation Programme was launched with bold promises—streamlined support, improved access, and better outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. Yet, it could be argued that for teachers on the ground, the reality has been far less transformative—and far more exhausting! Many report that instead of seeing meaningful change, they’re facing increased pressure, unclear processes, and a growing gap between policy and practice.

## THE REALITY IN SCHOOLS

Despite the introduction of newly established SEND Local IMPACT Teams and a five-year delivery plan aimed at addressing the rising number of children and young people with additional needs, many schools report that access to specialist support remains patchy and inconsistent. The single-point access system—designed to streamline referrals and simplify processes—has instead introduced new layers of bureaucracy for schools to navigate. Delays in assessments, a shortage of educational psychologists, and inconsistent access to meaningful support continue to leave schools struggling to meet the needs of pupils with additional needs.

## A SYSTEM UNDER STRAIN

Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENcos) are reporting rising stress levels, burnout, and a growing sense of frustration driven by relentless bureaucracy. Already overwhelmed, many are now facing even greater workloads as they navigate new referral systems—often without sufficient support or adequate funding. The emotional toll of watching children struggle without the help they need is compounded by mounting pressure to meet academic targets in increasingly large and complex classrooms.

## A ROLE AT BREAKING POINT

The current levels of SENCo burnout point to a looming crisis in recruitment and retention of professionals to the role. Schools are increasingly expected to do more with less, leaving teachers feeling like they’re firefighting rather than teaching. Even experienced SENcos are struggling to navigate the new referral systems and access appropriate support pathways, as rising workloads, limited resources, and relentless administrative demands continue to stretch the role beyond sustainable limits.

The shortage of educational psychologists and classroom assistants is compounding an already deepening crisis. Many SENcos describe the current system as “unsustainable,” raising doubts about whether meaningful transformation is truly achievable. For some, the long-awaited support—when it finally arrives—leaves them questioning whether the effort is worth the outcome.

## NEXT STEPS FOR REAL IMPACT

For our most vulnerable learners, the promise of transformation must translate into real, timely, and measurable change within our classrooms. Without this, the SEND Transformation Programme risks becoming yet another administrative burden—adding pressure to already stretched teachers—rather than delivering the meaningful support it was designed to provide.

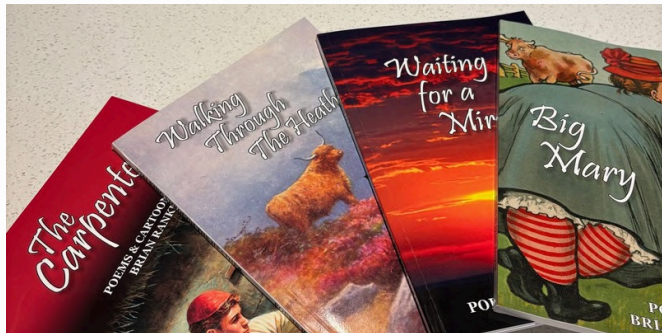
To truly make a difference, the focus must shift from process to impact and from bureaucracy to meaningful intervention, ensuring every child receives the support they need, when they need it, and where it matters most.

# RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION NI HOSTS 83RD AGM IN COOKSTOWN



The Retired Teachers Association Northern Ireland (RTANI) held its 83rd Annual General Meeting in October at the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown. A highlight of the event was a conversation between Rev. Dr. Harold Good OBE, former President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, and journalist Martin O'Brien, co-author of Dr. Good's recent book *In Good Time*.

Founded in 1943, the RTANI brings together retired teachers from every part of the education sector, including Controlled, Maintained, Integrated, Nursery, Primary, Special, Secondary, Grammar and Further Education settings, as well as universities. The association continues to play an important role in helping members stay connected through a varied programme of social events across the province.



## From Uganda to Home: How Your Support Transforms Children's Futures

BY BRIAN RANKIN



I wanted to thank your union for the generous donation to the AFRICARE charity. Twenty years ago, I travelled to Uganda with a 17-man team to help improve a small medical unit funded by AFRICARE. As a farmer, I wasn't sure how useful my skills would be, but I soon found myself doing joinery, painting, welding, vehicle maintenance, and helping with the children whenever we weren't working. One child with club foot stayed for about six months, receiving monthly plaster changes that gradually straightened their foot. Crutches were needed for a time, but eventually the child went home with a light splint—and a huge smile. Education was also part of their daily routine. The classroom was simple, but full of joy and a real hunger for learning. Before-and-after photos showed the remarkable transformation these children experienced. I returned home deeply moved and wanted to support the work. I'd always made homemade cards with little poems, and soon I gathered them into a book. Twenty years and four books later, I now spend winter evenings reciting poems at events, armed with a suitcase of hats, wigs and props. With luck, by the end of the night someone might buy a book to help the cause. Please reassure your members that every penny of your donation will reach disabled children in Uganda—no deductions at all. My daughter Rosy, now in her second year at Stranmillis studying Early Childhood Studies, will soon join your ranks. It's hard to believe she's grown up, but I'm proud that she has found her vocation. If anyone would like one of my poetry books please give me a call on **07961486401**.

# END FOSSIL POWER

On November 15th, communities around the world took part in a global day of action calling for an end to fossil fuels. Marches and rallies were held in major cities ahead of COP30 in Brazil, which campaigners described as a crucial turning point ten years after the Paris Agreement.

In the Amazon, Indigenous leaders renewed their call to protect vital ecosystems from fossil-fuelled destruction. In response, thousands joined a large demonstration in Dublin, marching in solidarity and urging the Irish Government to deliver faster and fairer climate action.

Participants highlighted that renewable energy offered cleaner, cheaper and safer alternatives, yet society remained tied to costly fossil fuels due to industry influence. Protesters called for action that is both internationally responsible and socially fair,



delivering benefits such as warmer homes, lower bills, cleaner air and better public transport.

Concerns were raised about Government plans for new gas infrastructure and the continued expansion of energy-intensive data centres, which campaigners said risked slowing the transition away from fossil fuels. Demonstrators also pointed to human rights and environmental issues linked to global fossil fuel operations, stressing the need for a just transition that includes disadvantaged communities and those historically excluded from climate policy.

The day concluded with a clear message: people power remains essential, and collective action will continue to drive momentum for a sustainable, equitable future.

## A SONG FOR A CAUSE: LOCAL PUPILS TAKE CENTRE STAGE IN BBC BROADCAST

A group of talented pupils from Omagh County Primary School, Arvalee School and Resource Centre, Omagh Integrated Primary and Holy Family Primary School came together to form a special choir for this year's BBC Children in Need appeal.

The schools collaborated in the lead-up to the event, taking part in joint rehearsals and receiving specialist guidance from BBC vocal coach Anne McCambridge. Pupils also had the chance to work with the BBC production team and experience a professional broadcast setting.

Over two days, the choir filmed at two iconic local venues—the Ulster American Folk Park and Glenpark Estate—recording performances for the BBC broadcast. A highlight for many was singing alongside Irish country star Claudia Buckley.

*“This project has been an incredible experience,”* said Miss Jill Funston, Principal of Omagh County Primary School. *“Working with the other schools and the BBC team has given the children confidence, joy and a real sense of achievement.”*

Pupils were equally thrilled. *“It was really fun to meet different schools and be on camera,”* said one choir member. *“Claudia Buckley even gave me a friendship bracelet and her autograph—it was the best day ever!”*

The project provided a memorable, inspiring experience for all involved, uniting local schools in support of an important cause.

**BBC Children in Need NI** – Broadcast Sunday 16 November, 4.05pm



# Transformation Grants

**ief** integrated education fund

For information on Transformation grants contact the IEF by emailing [transformation@ief.org.uk](mailto:transformation@ief.org.uk) or visit our website:

**ief.org.uk**

Scan the QR code for more details



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Have you ever wondered what becoming Integrated would mean for your school, but aren't sure where to start?

The Integrated Education Fund can help, we can provide Transformation grants to help schools learn more about Integrated education.



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**SHOUT UNION** is shaped by the voices of our members, and we're always keen to hear fresh perspectives.

If you have an article, story, or topic you'd like to see featured in a future issue, please get in touch.

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We look forward to hearing from you!