



NUT Pensions Campaign Strike Action in London - 28 March Key Facts and FAQ Answers for NUT Representatives

This document will help NUT representatives answer members' questions about the NUT's pension campaign and about the strike action by London members on 28 March.

The Government has declared that negotiations on pensions are over and is intending to impose a settlement. Despite some concessions brought about because of strike action the Government's position on teachers' pensions remains unchanged. The Government still wants to make teachers pay more, work longer and get less.

The Union's national consultative survey has overwhelmingly endorsed the NUT's decision to reject the Government's pension proposals and supported further strike action. The NUT National Executive met on 14 March and decided that the campaign must continue. The Executive agreed that the next stage in the campaign should be a one day's strike action in London on 28 March. This action will then be reviewed with the intention of further action during the summer term on a regional/Wales basis or across England and Wales. The on-going campaign steps will be developed in conjunction with other unions. University and College Union (UCU) members will also be taking action on 28 March.

The NUT does not need to hold a further strike ballot - our ballot in June 2011 is still active and legally in force because we balloted members for 'discontinuous strike action'.

NUT representatives in London, supported by the Union regionally and nationally, will play a vital role in ensuring members' participation in the action. NUT representatives in schools and colleges in London should build support starting with workplace meetings using the powerpoint and speakers notes available on the NUT website at www.teachers.org.uk/pensions. Ask any non members to join the NUT!

Divisions and local associations outside London are supporting the action by:

- Sending messages of support to London members and sending representatives to the demonstration in London.
- Holding workplace meetings using the powerpoint and speakers notes available on the NUT website at www.teachers.org.uk/pensions;
- Showing members how to use the pensions calculator on the NUT website at www.teachers.org.uk/pensionscalc to find out how much they will lose;
- Publicising the attached e-petition which urges the Government to enter into genuine negotiations <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/29103>; and
- Recruiting any non members to the NUT

THE BACKGROUND TO THE CAMPAIGN

What's the issue?

The Government is planning to cut teachers' pensions. It wants us to pay more, work longer and get less in retirement. The NUT has been at the forefront of the trade union movement's campaign to defend public sector pensions. We can and must continue our campaign to change the Government's mind. If we can save public sector pensions, we will help private sector workers and help secure a decent basic State pension too.

The Government says that negotiations are now at an end and it intends to impose a settlement. The NUT has been fully involved in those negotiations alongside other unions. The aim of our

campaign remains to settle matters through negotiation. As a result of our strike action on 30 June and 30 November, the Government offered concessions. While these were welcome, they are not nearly enough. The Government is still asking teachers to pay a lot more and work a lot longer to get a lot less:

- All teachers will still pay 50 per cent more on average for their pensions;
- All teachers more than 10 years from their current pension age on 1 April 2012 will have to work longer for a full pension – for many, up to 68 or even more;
- The move to the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) indexation will cut all teachers' pensions and the move to career average will affect almost everyone not given protection.

The Government has no justification for its proposals. It has not carried out the valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme, required by law, which would demonstrate the actual costs of our pensions. With no negotiation whatsoever, it implemented its changes in pension indexation from April last year, so that retired teachers have already lost out.

NUT members have played a vital role in the campaign so far. We need your support to keep up the pressure and get more concessions from the Government so that a fair settlement can be achieved.

What are the Government's pension proposals?

The main points of the Government's proposals are as follows:

- a career average basis for the scheme;
- an increase in the normal pension age (the age at which pensions can be taken in full), so that for future accrual the normal pension age would be equal to state pension age of up to 68 or even higher;
- an accrual rate of 1/57th of pay per year of service (up from 1/60);
- accrued benefits for serving members of the scheme to be re-valued annually in line with CPI inflation plus 1.6 per cent (down from national average earnings);
- pensions in payment to be increased each year in line with CPI inflation;
- improved early retirement terms with pension reduction factors of 3 per cent per year for those with pension ages beyond 65 for the difference between their normal pension age and 65.

Visit the NUT pension campaign page www.teachers.org.uk/pensions for an NUT briefing. The NUT pension loss calculator www.teachers.org.uk/pensionscalc has also been updated to reflect these proposals.

How much more does the Government want to make me pay?

Starting **this April** the Government will increase every teacher's pension contributions. By 2014 they will rise by more than 50 per cent – from 6.4 per cent to an average 9.6 per cent of pay. Exactly how much you will pay depends on how much you earn.

The increases for April 2012 have already been announced:

Salary Band	Contribution rate in 2012-13	Increase from current 6.4%
Up to £14,999	6.4%	0%
£15,000 - £25,999	7.0%	0.6%
£26,000 - £31,999	7.3%	0.9%
£32,000 - £39,999	7.6%	1.2%
£40,000 - £74,999	8.0%	1.6%
£75,000 - £111,999	8.4%	2.0%
Over £112,000	8.8%	2.4%

The Government has also said that it proposes a long-term employer 'cost cap' which would limit the extent to which the employer contribution could increase if scheme costs rise. Further

increases in longevity could therefore lead to higher employee contributions or an increase in pension age if the state pension age increases.

How much longer does the Government want me to work?

The Government wants to tie the normal pension age (the age at which you can get your teachers' pension in full) in the TPS to the State pension age. State pension ages are already due to rise to 68. All teachers aged under 34 would have to work until age 68 for a full pension. Anyone aged 34 to 50 would have to work to 67 and anyone aged 51 to 54 would have to work to 66. Retiring earlier would only be possible on a reduced pension. Teachers within 10 years of their current scheme pension age would have transitional protection, but they would still pay higher contributions and would have their pension increased by CPI in retirement.

How much less would I get in retirement due to the career average scheme?

Switching our scheme from pensions based on final salary to pensions based on your average salary throughout your whole career will cut pensions for most teachers. The Government's latest plan is for teachers to get 1/57 of their career average pay per year of service. However, each year's pension would be revalued every year until retirement by CPI inflation + 1.6 per cent which may not maintain its value relative to earnings.

How much less will I get due to the switch to CPI indexation?

The Government has already imposed one cut - from April 2011, pension increases for pensioners have been linked to the lower CPI rate of inflation. This change affects existing and future pensioners alike and will cut about 15 per cent from your income during retirement. A teacher retiring on a £10,000 pension would lose over £35,000 over the course of 25 years, in addition to any pension losses incurred through retiring at the current pension age.

How does the transitional protection work?

Transitional protection would allow all those within 10 years of their normal pension age as at 1 April 2012 to stay with their existing pension scheme until their eventual retirement. Further 'tapered' protection would apply to those up to 3.5 years younger than the qualifying age for full protection. This is not full protection against cuts to your pension. Even those teachers who stay on their existing scheme will have to pay higher pension contributions and will have lower pension increases in retirement.

How can I find out what I would lose from my pension?

Go to the NUT's updated pension loss calculator at www.teachers.org.uk/pensionscalc The calculator has been updated to include the Government's current proposals and tells you how much more you would pay through higher contributions, how much longer you might have to work for a full pension and how much you might lose over the course of your retirement.

What about the Government's argument that teachers' pensions are too expensive?

The NUT's 2006 agreement with the Government made changes to the Teachers' Pension Scheme that have made it sustainable for the long term. The National Audit Office confirmed that the cost of public sector pensions will fall as planned. Lord Hutton's report says that public sector pensions if unchanged from now would fall from 1.9 per cent of GDP now to 1.4 per cent of GDP in 2060.

Teachers have accepted we may have to pay more for our pensions or accept other changes if necessary. We are willing to accept our share of any increasing costs – but only if that is justified. The Government wants to abandon our 2006 agreement and impose changes without any justification or proper negotiation.

And what about the argument that teachers' pensions are "gold-plated"?

The average pension in payment from the Teachers' Pension Scheme is just £10,000 a year. Only 5 per cent of pensions are for £20,000 or more. Your pension is your recompense for a lifetime in teaching. The decision to attack your pension is political not economic.

The real pensions problem is in the private sector. Two-thirds of private sector employees aren't in any employer-backed scheme, compared to just over half ten years ago. Almost 90% of private sector final salary pension schemes are now closed to new members. Employer contributions to newer "defined contribution" schemes are less than half those for final salary schemes. Too many employers are simply seeking to abandon their responsibilities to their employees. The cost of supporting them in retirement is simply passed back to the State and future taxpayers. Cutting public sector pensions won't help private sector workers – it will just make everyone poorer in retirement. We need decent pensions for all!

Why is the strike action on 28 March only taking place in London?

The London action is just the start. The NUT is planning to take action in other parts of England and Wales and is seeking to bring other unions into this work, and these next steps will be discussed at our conference over Easter.

How can I support the action if I don't live in London?

You can support the strike by sending a message of support to London members via your local NUT officers. NUT associations outside London have been asked to send representatives to the demonstration in London on 28 March - you can attend as long as you do so in your own time. If you are working on 28 March, you can donate some of your salary to your local association towards hardship funds.

Why should I go on strike again?

If we want a future with a decent and affordable pension, we must be ready to take strike action again. The Government now says that negotiations are at an end, so the only way to improve the offer is by taking action.

Taking strike action has achieved results. The Government's improved offer on 2 November was 8 per cent better than the initial proposals – for example a teacher who would have received a £12,000 pension would now get £13,000 instead. Taking action has already delivered £1,000 a year for life in return for two days' loss of pay. But even this improvement is way off what the current final salary pension scheme delivers for teachers.

The NUT survey of members has proven continuing support for action. The NUT does not need to hold a further strike ballot - our ballot in June 2011 covers members for further action.

Why hasn't the NUT held a further strike action ballot?

The NUT does not need to hold a further strike ballot again before calling further strike action - our ballot in June 2011 is still active and legally in force because we balloted members for 'discontinuous strike action' (i.e. a series of separate occasions of strike action). This means that the NUT Executive can call further action if it believes it will further the dispute and it has the support of members.

The NUT has just completed a national consultative survey of all members that has shown that members continue to support the campaign. Members who have joined the Union since the ballot can also take part in further action.

Does the NUT plan to take further strike action?

Despite concessions the Government has still not made an acceptable offer. Initially, the Executive has called a day's strike action in London on 28 March. Further strike action will depend upon the attitude of the Government - it can end the dispute at any point by withdrawing its proposals and reaching a negotiated outcome.

What happens if the Government makes more concessions?

The Government has said negotiations are at an end. If the Government changes its position and we think we can reach an agreement, then we can call off our strike action. But we don't expect the Government to make concessions without the continuing threat of action by union members.

Can't we take legal action instead?

The NUT, along with other unions, has challenged the Government's decision to index teachers' pensions to the CPI in a High Court judicial review action. The High Court judgement in October agreed that the Government's decision was intended to save money but it found, by a majority, that this was still permissible. An appeal was heard in the Court of Appeal on 20-21 February and the outcome is expected by Easter. Legal action can't stop the other changes; we need support for industrial action to do that.

THE STRIKE AND YOU

Who is being called on to take strike action?

The strike cohort will be members in posts and educational establishments in London where the Teachers' Pension Scheme operates, as follows:

- teachers in local authority maintained schools, whether community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided or foundation schools;
- teachers in local authority central services, paid as teachers and eligible for the TPS;
- teachers in academies;
- teachers in sixth form colleges, FE colleges and post-1992 universities, which are all part of the TPS; and
- teachers in independent schools which have been admitted to the TPS.

It excludes supply teacher members, members in independent schools which are not part of the TPS, and members employed in schools in non teaching roles e.g. administrators, learning assistants and cover supervisors and members in the Local Government Pension Scheme.

What does it mean when you go on strike?

Strike action means you do not go into work on the day the action is taking place. You do not have to phone your school on the day to tell them you are not coming in.

What should I do on the strike day?

On the day of a strike, you can join thousands of other teachers in demonstrating your support for our cause and for the principles and values which brought you into teaching. On 28 March, there will be a national demonstration in central London that you can join - further details will be available at www.teachers.org.uk/pensions On future strike days, activities organised by the NUT will take place all over England and Wales. Information will be distributed locally but will also be placed on the Union's website at www.teachers.org.uk - please find out and join in.

Will I lose money when I go on strike?

A day's pay will be deducted – 1/365 of your annual pay minus taxes etc for school teachers (some other members may have different deductions specified in their contracts). You can work out the deduction by dividing your monthly take home pay by 30 if you are full time. Then compare it to the amount you'd lose every month using the NUT pension loss calculator. For example if your salary is £36,000 you'd lose around £68 by taking one day of strike action whereas by April 2014 your contributions will have gone up by £73 a month. Taking action on 30 June and the threat of further action has delivered £1,000 a year for life in return for two days' loss of pay for many members. Taking action does achieve results but we need to keep up the pressure.

Where can I find more information on the NUT's pension campaign?

Go to www.teachers.org.uk/pensions to find more information and a range of resources including the NUT's pension loss calculator.

Do I have to join in the strike as an NUT member?

The NUT always uses industrial action as a last resort but in this case the Union believes it is essential to take strike action if the Government is to understand the determination of the Union to defend the teachers' pension scheme and persuade the Government to enter into constructive negotiations. Whilst individual members have a legal right to decline any call from their union to take industrial action, the collective decision of the Union's members in our ballot and survey was to support the strike and we hope you will now join in the action. We are a collective organisation and by acting together we are more effective.

Can I strike if I didn't vote in the ballot or if I voted against?

Yes, you certainly can. The majority of members who voted in the ballot to support the action gives legal authority for all members whom the Union calls on to take part to do so. We would like the strike itself to be supported by all those who are authorised by the ballot to take action. That includes members who did not vote and indeed members who voted against but who are prepared to accept the democratic majority decision.

Can new members of the NUT take part in the action?

Any new members joining the NUT before or on the day of the strike can participate in the strike action with the same protection as all other NUT members.

Can lapsed members, as opposed to new members, join the action?

Only if they rejoin the NUT first. Any lapsed members rejoining the NUT before or on the day of the strike can participate in the strike action with the same protection as all other NUT members. They should contact the Records & Subscriptions Helpline on 0845 300 1666 before the day of the strike in order to restore their membership status and make good their subscriptions. They should be prepared to enter into direct debit or pay their subscriptions by credit or debit card over the telephone. We would not be willing to accept cheque payment in such cases.

I am an NUT head teacher. Can I take strike action?

A very definite YES. The NUT recognises the special position of its head teacher members but believes that it is in all members' interests for action to be effective and secure protection for our pensions.

Can supply teacher members join in the action?

NUT members recorded as supply teachers were not automatically included in the ballot. The industrial dispute does not apply to those employed by agencies, as they do not have access to the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Although those employed directly by local authorities, schools or colleges as teachers do have access to the Teachers Pensions Scheme, they were not automatically included in the ballot because the NUT could not demonstrate that it knew which employer they would be working for on the strike day.

The NUT wrote to all supply teachers to ask them to request a ballot form if they knew they would be working on the first planned strike day (30 June) and knew which employer they would be working for. Those supply teachers are therefore covered by the ballot.

If you are not in this group the NUT would still welcome your support for the strike and participation in local activities on the strike day instead of accepting work. Although (as with all members) the NUT won't pay anything towards your lost wages, the advice on hardship payments set out in the section on Impact on Pay and Pensions at the end of this document would apply to you as well.

I am an NUT member and I contribute to the Local Government Pension Scheme. Am I included in the action?

Negotiations in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) are separate to those for the Teachers Pension Scheme. Those negotiations are continuing and therefore there is no action involving LGPS members on this occasion.

I'm a teacher in an independent school - what's happening to my pension?

The Government has now confirmed that teachers working in independent schools will continue to be eligible for the Teachers' Pension Scheme. The NUT has welcomed this decision. Independent school members will still be affected by the Government's planned scheme changes however, so teachers in independent schools which participate in the TPS are still encouraged to participate in this strike action.

Is there any reason why NQTs should not join in the strike?

NUT members who are NQTs are in the same position as any other member. They are not prevented by any term of their contracts from going on strike. The Induction Regulations provide that teachers may have up to 30 days absence in the induction year without any effect upon the induction process.

I am an NUT student member – should I attend school placements on the day of the strike or go into college if I am due to do so?

As an NUT student member, you cannot be balloted and cannot be on strike yourself. If your school is open and you are scheduled to be there on the day of a strike, the head teacher may ask you to come in and carry on your teaching practice. However, you should not be expected to cover classes or be teaching classes where the teacher is on strike. If you are due to be at college or have some other college commitment, we are not asking you to boycott lectures or miss those commitments. If your school is closed on a strike day and you have no other college commitments that day or your college term has finished, you can join in with any locally organised NUT activities. The NUT website will have information about events up and down the country or you can ask your NUT school representative for details.

What about teachers on the Graduate, Overseas, Registered Training and Teach First Programmes?

Yes, they can take part in the action because they are employed in schools on posts which are pensionable under the TPS.

What about fixed term or part time teachers?

Yes, they can take part if they are working in institutions where they are eligible for membership of the Teachers Pension Scheme.

I am employed on a fixed term contract for a year and worried I may not get a renewed contract. Should I go on strike?

It is not lawful for your employer to select you for dismissal or to decide not to renew your contract because you have taken part in industrial action, so you should not be victimised for taking part in the strike. You can participate in the industrial action in the same way as your colleagues. If there were to be any suggestion that your contract is not to be renewed because of this you should contact your NUT Division or Association Secretary. The NUT would take any such move by an employer very seriously.

I am pregnant. If I go on strike, will there be any impact on my entitlement to maternity leave and pay?

Most pregnant teachers will be able to join the strike with no impact on their maternity entitlements. Your continuity of employment isn't broken by taking strike action. The week of the action will not be included in your total length of service for the purpose of the qualifying period but this will not affect the vast majority of pregnant teachers. More detailed information on Statutory and Occupational Maternity Leave and Pay and Maternity Allowance is available on the NUT website in the school teachers' conditions section.

Will going on strike affect Statutory Paternity and Adoption Pay or qualification for Statutory Paternity and Adoption Pay?

Again, the answer is no for the majority. More detailed information is available on the NUT website in the school teachers' conditions section.

I am on long term sick leave. How will the strike affect me?

If you are on long term sick leave that covers the strike day you will be treated as if on sick leave. If you are off sick on just the day of the strike it is likely that your head teacher may ask you some further questions about this. Any NUT member who is treated as being off sick on the day of the strike is encouraged to support the NUT by donating their pay to the local NUT association or its hardship fund or to the Teacher Support Network.

THE STRIKE AND YOUR WORKPLACE**Will my workplace close on the day of the strike?**

That's up to head teachers or whoever else is responsible – they will be deciding whether they can safely remain open and the decision will be based in particular on whether the health, safety and satisfactory education of students can be guaranteed in the absence of teachers taking strike action, having conducted proper risk assessments. They will also need to take into account that members of other TUC-affiliated unions will be asked not to undermine the NUT's action (if they are not on strike themselves) by undertaking work which would otherwise have been undertaken by an NUT member.

Will there be picket lines outside my school on the day of action?

The question of holding a picket line is entirely a tactical one not a matter of principle. The NUT does not have a fixed position on holding picket lines. If your head teacher intends to close your school on a strike day, there is no point in holding a picket line. However, if your head teacher intends to keep the school open it may be the case that you and your members would like to hold a picket line.

Remember only those employees who are members of unions which have balloted for action can safely take part in the strike action. Members of other unions or non union members who refuse to cross a picket line could be subject to disciplinary action by their employer. Anyone who wants to participate as an NUT member can legitimately do so if they join the NUT before or on the day of the strike - so have some membership forms with you if you are holding a picket. Whether you hold a picket line or not, encourage all members to attend any local march or rally on the day.

Will the NUT tell the head teacher that I'm going on strike?

The NUT is required by law to give employers 7 days' notice of the number of members it is calling upon to take action in each workplace. NUT headquarters sends this information to the employer (local authority or governing body) as required by law and also sends a copy to each head teacher or principal.

Individual NUT members do not have to tell their employer whether they personally intend to go on strike. The NUT will not be providing the names of NUT members to the employer or the head teacher. If the head teacher approaches individual teachers, the NUT representative should advise the head teacher that information will be provided by the NUT nationally. If there is no NUT representative, this is an ideal time to consider electing one!

Can our classes be covered by teacher colleagues?

The NUT expects that non-NUT teachers will not be asked to undertake the work of NUT members taking strike action. Other teacher unions' advice to members follows the usual convention that their members (if they are not themselves being called on to take action) should not undertake work normally undertaken by those who are taking strike action.

Can our classes be covered by support staff?

The same policy applies to support staff. For example, UNISON has issued advice to its members as follows:

“School support staff should not be expected to provide cover for or take classes, where this would normally be done by teachers who are on strike. In particular, Higher Level Teaching Assistants or cover supervisors should only be taking classes or providing cover where they are contracted to do so, it is timetabled or part of their normal duties. Staff should not be moved from the duties they would normally have carried out in order to cover classes and frustrate the industrial action of colleagues. Members who are under pressure to cover should contact their UNISON rep, branch or region for further advice and support. Members should not be pressured to provide cover on health and safety grounds to avoid closure of a workplace. Employers should be reviewing any risks and health and safety procedures, including evacuation of workplaces taking account of the impact of staff taking strike action.”

My head teacher says they will bring in supply teachers to cover my work on the strike day – can they do that?

The same principle applies to supply teachers accepting work to substitute for striking teachers. “Employment businesses” (eg supply agencies) which supply teachers they employ are forbidden by law from supplying teachers to cover the work of regular employees taking industrial action. Any infringement should be reported to your NUT Division or Association Secretary.

Under Regulation 7 of the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003, it is unlawful for an employment business to supply or introduce a worker to cover the duties of someone who is on strike, or even to cover the duties of another worker who has been moved to fill a gap when someone else is on strike. You should tell your head teacher that the NUT will press for action to be taken against those agencies, which could include criminal proceedings and their licence to operate being suspended, if they breach the regulations.

I am a supply teacher – what should I do if I am sent to a school to cover strike action on a strike day?

See above. If your agency is asking you to cover work that is related to covering strike action they are likely to be in breach of the above regulations. If you are asked to cover work for anyone on strike you should refuse to do so. If you realise you have been covering work of a striking colleague without knowing then you should request to be given other work.

If you have been working at the school on a longer term basis for reasons not related to the strike action, the situation is different. In those circumstances, you are not being engaged to cover the duties of a teacher who is on strike, so that the provisions would not apply in the same way.

The head intends to cover for striking teachers by aggregating classes for sports activities and / or large groups in the hall. Is there anything we can do about this?

Head teachers must make their own judgments having conducted proper risk assessments. It would be very unwise for any head to be influenced in this judgment by a desire to try to minimise the effect of the strike. The safety of children on the premises must be the deciding factor. This is certainly how NUT head teacher members will be advised and we expect other teachers' organisations to advise their members similarly.

Can the head teacher take action against me for striking?

This action is being called by the NUT in accordance with all the relevant laws. Strike action is accepted as a legitimate means for members of a workforce collectively to express their feelings. The NUT calls strikes only very rarely and as a last resort in a dispute.

In any strike some people will always try to lay blame on the strikers. From the NUT's point of view, the blame lies clearly with those whose decisions have provoked teachers to take action. Head teachers who, in these circumstances, attempt to penalise striking NUT members can only be seen to be using their authority to impose their personal opinions without respect for the differing opinions of their colleagues.

We do not expect such problems, therefore, but if they do happen the Union will give very strong support to members affected. Your best protection is the fact that hundreds of thousands of colleagues will be acting with you, but you also have legal protection against action being taken against you selectively and the NUT is very well equipped to assert your legal rights. If any members feel they are being put under pressure by a head teacher or Governing Body, contact the NUT Division or Association Secretary.

What if I come under pressure from colleagues to work on the day of the strike?

The NUT does not instruct members to strike, and we resist members being put under pressure not to strike. The decision is yours and you should be able to make it freely.

We want to tell you why in our view there are good reasons why you should join the strike. We urge you to read the literature explaining what has happened and to join your colleagues who have democratically decided what should be done through the ballot. Success in the Union's campaign of which this strike forms part will benefit all teachers, and the education service which depends on them, including those who take no part in the campaign which achieves it. Every teacher's pay and

pension has to a large extent been gained through the campaigns of the NUT which when necessary have included strikes.

If any attempt is made to victimise, threaten, intimidate or otherwise bully members in respect of their following the Union's call, contact the NUT Division or Association Secretary.

THE DAY OF THE STRIKE

What should I do on the strike day?

As we said earlier, on the day of the strike you can join thousands of other teachers in demonstrating your support for our cause and for the principles and values which brought you into teaching. Activities organised by the NUT will be taking place all over England and Wales. Information will be distributed locally but will also be placed on the Union's website at www.teachers.org.uk in advance of the day. Please find out about local activities and join in.

Can members of other unions show their support by going on strike too?

Only those employees who are members of the NUT or another union taking strike action on the same day should join the strike. Members of other unions or non union members who strike could be subject to disciplinary action by their employer. Anyone who wants to participate as an NUT member can legitimately do so if they join the NUT before or on the day of the strike - so have some membership forms to hand.

Can non-union members take part in the action?

No - but they can participate as NUT members if they join before or on the day of the strike.

What if I am due to be on a training course / at a job interview / at a governors' meeting on a strike day?

Taking strike action means refusing to carry out your employment duties. Attending a job interview won't fall within that, but you should check what arrangements are being made with regard to the interview - it may well be rearranged if other applicants would be in the same position as you or the establishment may be closed. Attendance at training which is related to your job will be covered by the call to take action, so you should ask for it to be rearranged. Attendance at a governors' meeting to report to governors would be covered by the action but attendance as a teacher governor would not, although you will probably not wish to attend in either capacity.

What if we have an off-site trip / school event organised for a strike day?

The NUT accepts that, in some exceptional circumstances, disruption to planned events would be undesirable. For some off-site trips or events on school premises, schools may have entered into contracts which cannot be cancelled without substantial costs. Where NUT members who are due to be involved wish to take strike action, they should inform the head teacher of their intention to take strike action. The NUT will expect any school to consider rearranging the date of the event and, if it wishes the event to go ahead as planned, to make every effort to secure alternative staffing permitting minimum requirements to be maintained without those NUT members' involvement. Only if this has not proved possible – and substantial costs would be incurred by cancellation - should those NUT members agree to forgo their right to take strike action. If the date is changed, it should be recognised that this may mean some members may not be able to attend on the re-arranged date.

Any NUT member who does as a consequence work on the day of the strike is encouraged to support the NUT by donating their pay to the local NUT association or its hardship fund or to the Teacher Support Network.

What happens if there are OFSTED or ESTYN inspections on a strike day?

The Union writes to both organisations asking that no inspections take place on that day. Should this be ignored, members are free to take action and this should not adversely affect any inspection report.

What if we have a parents' evening already arranged for a strike day?

All activities on the day of the strike action are covered by the action. If it goes ahead, NUT members who are on strike would be advised not to attend. Schools cannot expect members to undertake work that was refused that day by simply changing the date. However, if members feel that it would be appropriate to agree to an alternative date, then providing that the date is acceptable and it is recognised that some members may not be able to attend on the re-arranged date owing to other commitments, then the union believes that should be a matter for discussion at school level. If there are particular difficulties please seek guidance from the NUT locally.

What if there are public examinations due to take place on a strike day?

The Union does not wish to disturb pupils' examinations and timetables for strike action are drawn up with the intention of avoiding any risk of doing so. Members should therefore co-operate with the exams calendar.

I have Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time timetabled for a strike day - will I lose this time or can I take it on a non strike day instead?

There is no requirement for your head teacher to allow you to postpone your PPA time if you withdraw your labour on the day that it was timetabled. However, your head teacher may choose to exercise his/her discretion to allow you to take your PPA on a different day if it can be re-arranged to fit around other timetable commitments.

IMPACT ON PAY, PENSIONS AND EMPLOYMENT

Will the NUT pay me anything towards my lost wages?

You won't be paid by your employer for a day on which you withdraw your labour. Your contract of employment anticipates that you may at some time be on strike and the Burgundy Book national agreement provides that for a strike day your normal pay will be reduced by $1/365^{\text{th}}$, one calendar day, of your annual salary for full or part time teachers. Part time teachers should not expect their employer to make deductions for any day they are not contracted to work.

The Union cannot compensate members for loss of pay in a national strike. A $1/365^{\text{th}}$ deduction in respect of the strike day is a sacrifice. For teachers on UPS3, the loss in take home pay would be around £70 after tax and other deductions. For NQTs on M1, the loss in take home pay would be some £35 to £40. Some members including those in FE and sixth form colleges may find that their contracts include provision for a higher deduction at $1/260^{\text{th}}$ of annual salary for each strike day.

The Union believes it is a sacrifice worth making. There is a lot at stake. For example if your salary is £36,000 you'd lose around £68 by taking one day of strike action whereas by April 2014 your contributions would have gone up by £73 a month. The proposals to make you work longer and get less would cut tens or even hundreds of thousands of pounds from your income in retirement. You can see how much you could lose via the updated NUT pensions calculator at

www.teachers.org.uk/pensions The public sector pay freeze this year and next will mean you suffer actual cuts - not just real terms cuts - in your pay.

Your NUT Association can consider arrangements to assist any member who will suffer particular hardship as a result of losing a day's pay. You should contact your local NUT secretary (whose details are on your membership card) should you wish to seek assistance.

What impact will the strike have on my teachers' pension?

Very little – any loss would probably be between £1 and £2 a year at most. Your pension is based on your pensionable salary at retirement and your total length, in years and days, of reckonable service. So for most teachers the impact of going on strike will be negligible - you will simply lose the pension you would accrue on the day you take strike action.

For example, if your pensionable salary is £36,000:

- If you joined the TPS on or before 31 December 2006, each day of strike action will reduce your annual pension by just £1.23 a year and reduce your lump sum payment by £3.70;
- If you joined the TPS on or after 1 January 2007, each day of strike action will reduce your annual pension by just £1.64 a year (there is no automatic lump sum payment).

Teachers with higher or lower salaries will be affected proportionately.

I'm in the Teachers' Pension Scheme and in my last years of teaching before I retire - if I strike, will there be any extra effect on my pension?

Under the pension changes introduced in 2007, your pension when you retire is calculated according to the better of the following two calculations:

- your total pay received over the last 365 days of reckonable service; or
- your best three consecutive years in the last ten years re-valued in line with inflation.

If you go on strike, the day of the strike is disregarded from the periods in questions and the calculations are simply worked out by going back one day further. For teachers who are within ten years of retirement, therefore, going on strike will add only a further negligible cut in pension - in most cases as little as 10p a year or even less – and if their pension is based on the second calculation there may be no effect at all. Since the new rules for calculating pensions came into effect in 2007, the NUT has been able to withdraw its previous advice that teachers in their final years of service should not go on strike.

Will my continuous service be broken by taking strike action? How will any future redundancy payment be affected?

Continuous service is not broken by strike action, but days of strike action are not counted towards your final length of service. This means that there can be an impact on redundancy payments if the loss of those days of strike action reduces the number of full years of service that you have completed at the time that you are dismissed for redundancy. If you have worked as a teacher for exactly 20 years, for example, your length of continuous service for redundancy pay purposes would be reduced to below 20 years and your payment would be based on 19 full years not 20 full years of service.

Some employers are happy to extend service for one or more days to take account of this problem. This will be particularly important for those who know they will be dismissed on redundancy grounds from the end of the academic year. It is also possible for your employer to give you 'notice of extension' requiring you to extend your service to replace the day of strike action. If you fail to comply with this, your employer can reduce or even fail to pay you a redundancy payment. In both cases, it is in your interests to work the extra days which protect your redundancy payment, but if you are given a notice of extension you should seek advice from your NUT Division or Association Secretary.

AND FINALLY

Where can I find more information on the NUT's pensions campaign?

Go to www.teachers.org.uk/pensions to find more information and a range of resources including the NUT's pension loss calculator.

Won't striking simply damage the NUT?

The NUT's campaign, including the two days of action on 30 June and 30 November, has seen many more young teachers, female teachers and teachers from ethnic communities become involved in their Union. Our campaign is revitalising the NUT. Play your part by joining in!

We don't have an NUT representative – what should we do?

This is an ideal time to elect an NUT representative and get yourselves better organised to secure a stronger voice at your workplace. The role of NUT representative is not onerous – although it can be shared - and is very rewarding. You can rely on the full support of the Union at all levels to assist you.

What else can I do to assist the campaign?

You can find a range of suggestions and help (eg for writing to or lobbying your local MP, writing letters to your local paper, attending NUT meetings etc) at www.teachers.org.uk/pensions