# Kirklees District Secretary’s Annual Report 2020-21

**Membership** as of March 2021

* *NQ1-3 354*
* *Support 380*
* *Retired /Associate 290*
* *Standard 1989*

*(Supply 216)*

* *Leadership 125*
* *Mat/students/ other 891*
* ***Total 3229***

**School Reps**

More than ever the role of school rep has been essential. Reps have been supporting and advising our members through an unprecedented crisis, while liaising with management, the Union, helping to manage sudden organisational changes, keeping up with frequent updates and ensuring risk assessments are drafted, reviewed and shared. We have had a significant rise in rep numbers with 24 new reps since March 2020 (19 new school reps and 5 interim covid reps). We now have a total of 78 workplace reps, many of our new reps signing up to the role in response to the pandemic.

The district has established a reps WhatsApp group for our reps where they can discuss and share issues and support each other. This has been very well used and has been a quick and efficient way to communicate during rapidly changing times

The work of a rep is at times challenging but always incredibly important for our members in the workplace – a big thank you to those who continue to represent members at work.

**Casework**

The past year has been exceptionally busy, however it is impossible to compare case rates against the previous year since much of the work has focussed on collective matters linked to Covid 19. Individual members continued to receive support with health-related absences, capability issues, disciplinaries, pay appeals, maternity matters and grievances.

There was a significant rise in collective casework relating to workload and health and safety; the Union has been successful in securing changes in many schools across the LA where members have raised concerns – often this has been through continued close working with the LA and the Learning Service.

**Covid 19**

School closures in March 2020 led to the immediate need for schools to prepare and deliver remote learning to the vast majority of our pupils. Despite the fact that these organisational changes had to be arranged at very short notice and without reference to established practice, schools and colleges rose to the challenge and have worked tirelessly to ensure children continue receiving the support and education they need. Throughout the past 12 months the local Union was in regular contact with schools and employers addressing concerns and seeking resolutions for both individuals and school groups. This has included weekly Trade Union meetings with senior LA personnel throughout the pandemic. The key areas were:

* Workload and long working hours and work-related stress
* Health and safety – including the monitoring and reviewing of workplace risk assessments, home working arrangements, ensuring sufficient support for CEV, CV, pregnant and ‘at risk’ groups, and the provision and use of PPI.
* Safeguarding – including concerns over the use of virtual platforms and data protection
* Supply, agency workers and self-employed teachers – many of whom were not furloughed and unable to access work in schools. In particular we continue to lobby hard for Kirklees Supply Service staff to be treated equitably with other council casual staff.
* Alternative Provision/Special Schools – with larger numbers of ‘vulnerable’ children, pupil numbers have been significantly higher in these schools, particularly since January
* Vaccinations – regular discussions were held from January onwards in an attempt to secure early vaccinations for the education workforce
* Health-related absences linked to covid, long-covid, and self-isolation, ensuring a consistent, supportive and fair approach between schools
* Funding – many schools have faced excessive and rising costs as a result of the pandemic, leading more recently to consultations on staffing restructures, reduction in contractual hours for support staff and redundancies

**Meetings**

The last meeting before March Lockdown was the AGM on the 5th March 2020. Since then, the District has held general meetings and briefings throughout the year, remotely via Zoom. Members have attended these meetings in much higher numbers than ever before. In response to the pandemic, Kirklees District agreed donations to the NEU Hardship Fund, and the Help a Child to Learn initiative and a local foodbank.

**Help a Child to Learn**

In response to the pressure many families are under, the NEU committed £1m to an initiative in collaboration with the Daily Mirror, in which schools in some of the most economically deprived areas of the country would receive vouchers to help purchase learning resources for their pupils. In Kirklees 71 schools have been offered a total of £68,500.

**Annual Conference**

This year’s Annual Conference was cancelled due to the pandemic. An online one-day conference was held in the Autumn term at which a number of Executive motions were passed linked to the Union’s Covid strategy.

**Negotiations and Consultations**

The NEU has met regularly LA throughout the year. We are represented in meetings with HR, the Learning Service, Education and Learning Partnership Board, Schools Forum and Health and Safety.

In July/September the Union negotiated an updated Teachers’ Pay Policy for LA maintained schools which was in line with Union policy, with differentiated uplifts on the main pay scale, and uniform increase of 2.75% on all points from M6.

The Union continues to seek to negotiate pay and conditions with employers at a number of MATs. We have established negotiating structures with ETHOS, Focus Trust, BMAT and have informal relationships with all other MATs within Kirklees.

**Branch Facilities Time**

Trade union facility time is the paid time off work that the unions negotiate with the LA to enable the representation of members in negotiations, in grievance and disciplinary hearings, and in the provision of professional advice. Currently Kirklees NEU Branch receives 13 days facilities time to carry out union duties.

Hazel Danson – Secretary 5 days

Saleh Rahman – Assistant Secretary 3 days

Richard Woffenden – Branch Casework Officer 3 days

Allison Whitely – Health & Safety Officer/ Branch Casework 1 day

Melanie Griffiths – Branch Casework/Supply 1 day thanks to the

Gill Goodswen – VOLUNTEER Branch Casework Officer

I would like to put on record my thanks to the office team. Working remotely for most of the year, we have had to adapt how we do things to best support members in what has been an unprecedented year. I am very privileged to work with such a great team of people who always give over and above to support of our members. I would like to pay particular tribute to Gill Goodswen who, as always, has given her time generously to support other officers and many members. She’s an absolute star and a massive asset to our District.

**Branch Officers 20-21**

Chair, Duane Laverick; Secretary: H Danson, Assistant Sec: Saleh Rahman, Health and Safety: Allison Whiteley

**District Officers 2020-21**

* President: Duane Laverick
* Vice. President: Louise Lewis
* Past President: Richard Woffenden
* Secretary: Hazel Danson
* Assistant Secretary: Saleh Rahman
* Treasurer: Richard Woffenden
* Membership Secretary: Gill Goodswen & Melanie Griffiths
* H&Safety Advisor: Allison Whitely
* Equalities Officer: Saffiya Patel
* Young and New Professionals Officer: Nadiah Kazzan
* Supply Teacher Officer: Melanie Griffiths
* International Solidarity Officer Nadiah Kazzan and Richard Woffenden
* Support Staff Officer: Vacant
* Post 16 Officer: Duane Laverick
* Union Learning Officer Fiaz Rashid
* Independent Sector Officer: Vacant
* Retired Members’ Officer: Vacant
* Committee members: Claire Woffenden, Gill Collins,

Allison Barnes, Roger Keely, Rachel Gregg, Jonathan Hood

A huge debt of thanks is owed to the local executive committee and officers who have continued to ensure the smooth running of the District and for their continued support for the Union and our members locally.

I want to pay tribute to Gill Collins, who has decided to step down from the committee next year. Gill was the ATL secretary who I worked closely with over many years before the amalgamation. We then worked together as Joint Secretaries of the NEU until her retirement in 2019. Thank you, Gill, for all your work and support and for your friendship over the years.

A special thanks also to Allison Whitely who is retiring. Allison was the Assistant ATL Branch secretary for a number of years and brought a wealth of casework and Health and Safety experience as an NEU officer. She has been a great part of team Kirklees and we wish her well in her retirement. We’re pleased that Allison will continue as a member of the committee.

Thanks too to our executive members, Allison Barnes, Patrick Murphy, Sally Kincaid and Simon Murch who have attended meetings and supported Kirklees members.

And enormous thanks go to past treasurer, John Fox and to our new treasurer Richard Woffenden without their work the district couldn’t function! Thanks also to the auditors of accounts, Richard Goodswen and Jenny Chamberlain

We have all done our best to ensure our members, their families and the pupils we teach are as safe as possible during a crisis that none of us had any understanding of this time last year. I am proud of the whole Education workforce who have truly stepped up to the challenge. With a return to how things used to be in sight, but still some way off, we all need to continue to look after each other, be kind and remember there is strength in the Union.

Hazel Danson

Secretary Kirklees District NEU 2020-21