

Unions slam 'untenable' progress on school support staff pay



Unions representing more than 500,000 school workers have slammed the Education Secretary's 'untenable' lack of progress on school staff pay.

GMB, Unison and Unite have [today penned a joint letter](#) to Bridget Phillipson MP expressing 'profound concern regarding the current direction and lack of meaningful progress within the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB).'

General Secretaries Gary Smith, Andrea Egan and Sharon Graham warn against the 'continued expansion of academisation' and say unless things change 'we will have no option but to escalate our response publicly and industrially'.



The letter says:

"The joint trade unions campaigned extensively over many years to reestablish the SSSNB.

"We did so in good faith because we knew it was our best and long overdue opportunity to address the deep-rooted inequalities, fragmentation, and inconsistency experienced by school support staff across England.

"However, the pace and substance of negotiations to date are now placing that confidence at serious risk.

"At the recent SSSNB Working Group meeting on 20 May 2026, it was extremely disappointing to be informed that the remit for the SSSNB in its first year would be very limited.

"The continued expansion of academy trust structures, in the absence of a coherent national framework for school support staff, risks accelerating workforce fragmentation.

"GMB, UNISON and UNITE remain committed to constructive engagement and would strongly prefer to resolve these issues through meaningful progress and genuine partnership with Government.

"However, the current trajectory is rapidly exhausting the goodwill that existed when the SSSNB was re-established.

"Should meaningful progress continue to be absent, we will have no option but to escalate our response publicly and industrially, including at upcoming conferences over the summer period.

"We are therefore urging Government to treat this moment with the seriousness it requires and to work with us urgently to restore confidence in the process before further damage is done."

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