

Almost 1 in 4 school staff work in asbestos buildings



Almost a quarter of school staff work in buildings with asbestos, a shocking new survey has revealed.

GMB Union polled more than 4,500 school support staff in September 2026, including teaching assistants, catering staff, caretakers and admin workers.

More than a quarter (23 per cent) said they worked in schools which had problems with asbestos.

Other results include:

- More than half (50.5 per cent) work in buildings with a leaky roof



- More than a quarter (27 per cent) work in buildings with damp and mould
- 44 per cent work in buildings with cracked walls
- 28 per cent lack pens
- 17 per cent lack books for children of all ages
- 20 per cent have no sports field
- 35 per cent lack access to core PE facilities
- 16 per cent lack access to textbooks
- 18 per cent lack access to paper

The findings will be discussed at TUC's annual conference in Brighton today [Monday], where GMB is moving a motion around school support staff pay.

Stacey Booth, GMB National Officer, said:

"School support staff have been repugnantly underpaid for years as the educate and care for our children.

"Meanwhile they are force to work in unsafe, leaky building – riddled with asbestos and mould.

"GMB members will today call on the TUC to back their fight to for fair pay and an end to academisation.

"But we call on Ministers to invest in our school buildings and our children's futures like the last Labour Government did."

Emma Fair, School Worker, said:

"I've worked in schools for years and they simply have no money.



"In one school we went two months without hot water – it's completely unsafe and unhygienic. Kids need to be able to get clean.

Damp and mould is everywhere. Normally they just put notice boards in front of it because they can't fix it.

"One school had so many leaks in the classroom roof there were buckets next to every desk.

"One day the entire roof collapsed. It was carnage."

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