



Joint UNISON, GMB and Unite statement on the outcome of their complaint against the NEU

Earlier this year, the three recognised school support staff unions, GMB, UNISON and Unite, submitted a formal complaint to the TUC about the NEU's continued organising activities and recruitment of school support staff, and their publicly stated intention to continue with these activities.

Our three unions took this formal step reluctantly, but it was very clear to us that the NEU were repeatedly and deliberately breaching the 2017 agreement signed by the four unions, and a previous Award made by a TUC Disputes Committee in 2023. Both the agreement and the TUC Award made clear that there are only three recognised school support staff unions, and NEU should not organise that group of workers.

Despite having just signed a principles document which committed them to abiding by the previous TUC decision, at their conference in April the NEU made very clear they had no intention of sticking to what they had agreed, and would continue to organise school support staff.

In September 2025, the TUC issued its new judgement. Once again our complaint was upheld.

The judgement reaffirmed that the school support staff unions (GMB, UNISON and Unite) have exclusive bargaining rights for school support staff, and that the NEU will not be part of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body. It also explicitly stated that the NEU should not actively organise or recruit school support staff.

As a result, the NEU have been formally censured by the TUC and instructed to place a detailed report on this verdict – with specified wording – on their website. We call on the NEU to abide by this instruction immediately.

The TUC have also convened a summit of all four unions for late November, to agree final principles for joint working in the future. The three school support staff unions welcome this initiative, and we look forward to discussing how we can ensure there is no repeat of the NEU's breaches of agreements reached in good faith.

The three unions would have preferred not to have had to bring a second formal complaint in three years. We are pleased that our complaint has been upheld and note the formal censure of the NEU. Our hope now is that this puts an end to the matter, and all unions can return to their previous good relationships and get back to joint campaigns on wider, cross-cutting issues affecting all of our members.