

SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF NEGOTIATING BODY FAQs



Q. Is the SSSNB established yet?

Yes, the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) is contained within the Employment Rights Act and received Royal Assent on the 18 December 2025. However, **the formal launch will be later this year.**

Q. How is the body made up?

The body has both employer and employee representatives who will be negotiating minimum pay, terms, and conditions for school support staff at a national level. There will also be an independent chair of the body and government representatives' officials from the Department of Education.

Q. Who are the employer representatives?

The employer representatives are the Confederation of School Trusts (CST), Local Government Association (LGA), Catholic Education Service (CES) and Church of England (CofE).

Q. Who are the employee representatives?

The **employee representatives are GMB, Unison and Unite** as they are the only unions who are recognised to negotiate support staff pay.



Q. What will happen to my current pay, terms, and conditions when I move into the body?

The government put forward a motion (amendment) in June 2025 to amend a part of the primary legislation following lobbying from employer representatives. The amendment created regulations that means the Secretary of State for Education cannot worsen any existing terms of employment when transferred into the body and cannot prevent more favourable terms being offered to school support staff.

Q. Will all school support staff be in the body?

There are around 800,000 school support staff employed by local authorities, academy trusts and governing bodies employed in England. The government launched a consultation in June 2025 in relation to staff in scope and job roles, which GMB engaged with. The government responded to the consultation in July and GMB have shared their views on the response.

Scan the QR code to read GMB's consultation submission and the government's response.



Q. What is the main purpose of the body?

The **SSSNB negotiates minimum standards for pay, conditions, and training**. Any agreements made must be ratified by the Secretary of State, who can also refer matters for consideration and approval by the body. The employer representatives and employee representatives can also refer matters to the body. When agreements are reached contracts of employment will be updated to reflect any changes. The Secretary of State is also able to issue statutory guidance following recommendations and advice from the body on training and career progression for school support staff.

Q. How is my pay currently negotiated and what will the difference be with the SSSNB?

The majority of school support staff have their pay negotiated by the National Joint Council (NJC). Even most academies follow the NJC with a few exceptions. The NJC also includes other local government workers; for example, highways, refuse and adult social care.



The SSSNB will for the first time focus solely on school support staff with no opt out for any employers so all support staff will have the same minimum terms and conditions.

GMB National School Committee Members at Parliament

Q. If the body is now established in law, why isn't it currently negotiating on my pay?

There is still work to do in ensuring that the body is ready to commence negotiations. There will be a public appointment of a chair of the body, and the government are still to determine the final list of staff in scope following their public consultation. GMB members will need to be consulted on all those aspects of the body prior to its establishment. **The body is expected to negotiate pay in time for April 2027.**

Q. Who are the employee representatives for GMB currently?

Stacey Booth, GMB National Officer for Schools and Academies, sits on the body, and two lay representatives were appointed by the GMB's National Schools Committee in 2024. **Barbara Plant and Joy Lapsley were selected for their experience on the previous SSSNB in 2009.**

The previous body was scrapped before it was ever legislated for following the election of the Conservative government; Michael Gove, the then Secretary of State, determined that there was no need for the body.

Joy and Barbara bring a wealth of knowledge and have both worked in schools for many years, Barbara as a teaching assistant and now proudly the GMB National President, and Joy works in a school office on finance and admin.



Barbara Plant & Joy Lapsley

Q. Will there be more seats on the body for GMB representatives?

When finalised, the Trade Union side constitution will determine the number of seats for GMB representatives and the filling of any further seats will be agreed by the National Schools Committee, who are appointed by regions of the GMB to represent school support staff.



Not a GMB member?
Scan to join!

Q. Will there be a new pay structure?

GMB are fighting to ensure there is a fair and transparent pay structure and Job Evaluation process, however; the government have introduced a “floors and no ceilings” approach. This means that the body will negotiate a minimum pay rate for each role and unions can also negotiate on your pay and conditions locally. Employers cannot pay below the minimums agreed but can pay beyond the minimums, allowing them to “innovate” and offer higher pay to aid recruitment and retention.



Scan to read GMB's letter to government

There has been no agreement on a Job Evaluation scheme which concerns GMB, and we have written to the Secretary of State to raise our concerns and will keep members updated.

There has been a change in government since the initial FAQs were produced and we have now written to the new Secretary of State Lucy Powell, jointly with Unison and Unite to ask for a response to our concerns.

Q. How can I help with the transition into the SSSNB?

All school support staff contracts differ from employer to employer and school to school. This means it will be hard for us to know what your particular contractual entitlements were prior to the transition in the event we are asked to represent you on contractual issues. **It is vital you request a copy of your contract, job description and personal specification now so that you know what your current contractual entitlements are in order to ensure that any changes are agreed.**

Scan the QR code to watch a video from Allison Simon, National Schools Committee member, on why it's so important to request these documents.



If you have a question that has not been covered in this fact sheet, please email us at schools@gmb.org.uk