

News Release

Association of Teachers and Lecturers

Annual Conference • 21 - 24 March 2005 • Torquay



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For education correspondents / newsdesks

ATL Conference to call for national pay framework for support staff

Delegates at the Association of Teachers and Lecturers' (ATL) annual conference will hear of the deplorable and arbitrary levels of pay and conditions for support staff that vary from school to school and from LEA to LEA. Conference will call for the establishment of a binding national framework of pay and conditions of employment for teaching assistants, higher level teaching assistants and cover supervisors.

ATL member, Robin Bevan, pointed to the differences in pay between regions:

“If you simply ask people if they can put a TA in Kent, a TA in Nottingham and an HLTA in Kent in the correct order for their pay, you will find that they cannot do it because the TA and HLTA in Kent are both on the same pay – both outdone by the TA in Nottingham.”

The lack of professional and career development opportunities is affecting the employment of teaching assistants and their method of deployment in schools. They are unsure about their employment status and the pay structures set by local authorities. Teaching assistants in primary schools, for example, work mainly on all-year contracts while teaching assistants in secondary schools tend to work on term-time contracts.

The government initiative to reduce the hours that teachers work has also impacted the way teaching assistants are utilised. ATL member Jennifer Caola gave an example of the situation:

“In Bristol we have just had an instance under Remodelling the Workforce that could not have happened if teaching assistants had National Pay and Conditions like teachers. The head teacher decided that he no longer needed as many Level 3 TAs and could make use of more Level 2 TAs so that he had more money in his budget to employ cover”.

Conference will call for the introduction of salaries commensurate with the much wider range of professional duties teaching assistants now fulfill as a result of the Workload Agreement.

Teaching assistants have positive effects on pupil learning through the concentrated levels of support they provide to specific individuals and small groups. The majority of schools do not have a policy on the responsibilities of teaching assistants, who need clearly defined roles and a career structure with a potential for promotion and an increase in salary if they are to be effective in their work.

Ends

For further information please contact the ATL Conference press office on 01803 299 910

Notes to Editors

1. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers' Annual Conference is taking place at the Riviera International Conference Centre, in Torquay, from Monday 21 March to Thursday 24 March 2005.
2. The ATL Annual Conference will be broadcast live on the internet at: www.atl.org.uk
3. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) is an independent, registered trade union and professional association, representing approximately 160,000 teachers, lecturers and support staff in maintained and independent schools, sixth form, tertiary and further education colleges in the United Kingdom.
4. ATL exists to protect and improve the status of teachers, lecturers and other professionals involved in delivering education and to further their legitimate professional interests.
5. ATL is affiliated to the Trades Union Congress (TUC). It is unaffiliated to any political party and seeks to work constructively with all the main political parties.
6. ATL members receive a regular magazine *Report* reflecting ATL policy and other issues affecting the education sector. If you would like to receive a copy please call 020 7782 1589.
7. Further information and all press releases are available on ATL's website: www.atl.org.uk