97th Annual Conference

Report of the Central Executive Committee

For the year ended 31st March 2016

10th-11th March 2016

at the

Slieve Donard Hotel, Newcastle, Co Down
Dear Colleagues

This has been a very unsettled year in the Education world. The new Education Authority came into being quietly on 1st April 2015 and while schools saw no immediate changes, since then they have seen some dramatic ones in terms of the personnel they deal with.

While the Chief Executive, Gavin Boyd has remained in place, it seems the existing post-holders at Senior Management level may have been replaced – though no announcement has been made yet as to whom the new team are to be. This has created uncertainty and concern about what the future holds, particularly if the new appointees do not have a background in the Education Service.

The most significant changes have been in the Curriculum Support and Advisory Service (CASS) which has all but disappeared. As this report goes to print there is an on-going consultation on the interim structure of a support service based on the personnel who remain in post following the voluntary exit of the majority of former CASS staff. The Regional Training Unit (RTU) is gone, subsumed into the new structures within EA and it would appear that Professional Development of staff has been down-graded into the future.

The most significant factor affecting the education service is undoubtedly the impact of the continuing Westminster government cuts which have already forced schools to cut back on staffing and resources. Schools are working on the bare minimum level at present, with valuable support staff posts having disappeared in many instances. The result has been that teachers are faced with almost impossible workload levels. If this is to continue then teachers’ health and well-being will suffer and long term this may have a negative impact on absence statistics, costing the system a lot more than it already does.

Ironically, the Management Side of the Teachers’ Negotiating Machinery has failed to date to make a significant response to the Report produced by the Teachers’ Health and Wellbeing Working Group, simply referring it on to a Health and Safety Working Group for further deliberation! Add to this the fact that every improvement the unions seek on behalf of teachers has to be subjected to the rigour of a business case which must meet the approval of the DFP. This over-bureaucratisation of the system simply adds to the frustration of those who genuinely want to see what is best for pupils. Pupils do not get the best from teachers who are over-worked, with no professional development available and without a good support structure!

While things appear bleak at present, you can be assured that UTU will continue to fight for improvements in the system and fight against further exploitation of teachers, who have managed to keep the worst of the effects of the education cuts away from the pupils, often at a personal cost to themselves and their families.

I hope you enjoy reading this Report and if you have any queries or would like to get more involved in the work of the UTU, please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Yours sincerely

Avril Hall-Callaghan
GENERAL SECRETARY
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1. Introduction

The 2015/16 year has seen major changes in the structure of educational administration within the controlled sector with the end of the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) which were subsumed into a new Education Authority (EA). The other education sectors remain unchanged with a separate Catholic Council for Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), the Irish Medium sector (CnaG) and the Voluntary Grammar sector continuing on unchanged. The original plan to amalgamate administration of all schools under the umbrella of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) fell due to lack of political agreement, despite the fact that a shadow ESA had been in place for nearly 8 years.

The new body (EA) came into being on 1st April 2015 and there was very little change initially apparent to schools. The administration during 2015/16 has largely been on a Regional basis, mirroring the five existing ELB areas, with the staff who had been provisionally appointed to ESA heading up the specific areas to which they had been appointed. The Board of EA was appointed and while Gavin Boyd remains as interim Chief Executive, plans are underway to appoint his successor. The Director posts within EA were appointed towards the end of 2015 but as yet the successful applicants have not been confirmed. It would seem that few of those originally appointed to ESA are to carry on in their posts and the unions have real concerns about the possible lack of continuity and destabilisation of EA at such an early stage in its development.

EA is facing early problems with a challenging budget and during 2015/16 invited applicants for voluntary severance. The regions of EA have allowed a great number of staff in senior positions to exit the Service and again this has led to instability, with schools no longer having access to the support services at the same level that they had with the ELBs. This is particularly of concern with respect to the Professional Support Services where the number of staff has been reduced down to about 1/6th of what it had once been. The CASS service and RTU have been disbanded and a new interim model for delivery of support services is out for consultation as this goes to print.

The UTU has major concerns about the kind of Education Service that is emerging, not least because of the serious challenges it faces in terms of finances. Given that we are facing into a further 5 year period of austerity measures from the Conservative Government the future looks bleak. We also have the uncertainty of the local Assembly elections in May which will almost certainly mean a change in Education Minister locally. Who knows what challenges that may bring?

Adding to this the fact that Industrial Relations between Management Side and Teachers’ Side are at an all-time low, this further exacerbates the difficult situation we find ourselves in. A perusal of the sections on the Teachers’ Negotiating Committee bodies at page 22 - the JWP and NITC – will confirm that negligible progress has been made in the past year and will give a flavour of the atmosphere of meetings. A new Management Side Secretary, Declan Marlow, has at last been appointed to replace Jenny Fryers who retired quite a number of years ago. Despite initial enthusiasm regarding a possible appointment of a Staff Side Secretary, nothing has emerged to confirm that this is to go ahead and indeed it would appear that Management Side may have reneged on the unconditional offer to fund such a post.

Despite the relentless pace of change within the administrative structures schools have managed to continue to provide an excellent service to their pupils. Many teachers would, however, confirm that they have serious issues regarding workload and lack of professional development. The workload issues have been alleviated to some degree by the Industrial Action which has been on-going for most of the year. Teachers feel very strongly about the inappropriateness of the current arrangements for Assessment and have been prepared to make a stand and claim back their professionalism in terms of the assessment of pupils’ work. The current system of levels does not have the confidence of the teaching profession and it will be one of the first things to be taken up with the new Minister, post-election.

Another major concern is the fact that the entire system seems to be caught up in an over-zealous accountability agenda. Schools are driven by what they need to do to survive an Inspection rather than what they need to do to ensure every child is educated to their full potential. The UTU, along with the other recognised unions, are continuing to articulate the need for change in this regard. These issues are catalogued at page 29 in the section on Inspections.

Relationships between the five NITC unions are good – one positive result of the difficult situation we are faced with due to the financial and industrial relations challenges. You can read about the relationships between the unions at page???

UTU continues to be an active member of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), as outlined at page 37. The General Secretary did not seek re-election to the
Executive Council of ICTU in July 2015 due to her decision to reduce her working week to part-time under phased retirement, but she continued to represent UTU on the Northern Committee and on the North-South Committee of Congress.

Through the Education Trade Union Group (ETUG) of ICTU the UTU interacts with the support unions representing workers in schools. This solidarity continues in the Strategic Forum, the work of which is outlined on page 37.

One of the most disappointing things during 2015 was the ending of the Signature Project on Literacy and Numeracy. This project was time-bound and unfortunately due to the financial situation was not funded beyond its original 2-year time-span. Those young teachers who were able to avail of it found it an excellent opportunity to start their careers in a stable position and with built in professional development. Before Christmas the Minister tried to fill the void that the Signature Project left by announcing a pilot scheme, “Investing in the Teaching Workforce”, which was based on suggestions made by the unions some time ago. Unfortunately the Scheme has attracted controversy because DE’s intention was that it would only be open to teachers who have qualified in the past three years. At time of going to print the Minister is considering whether he will widen the parameters and we are awaiting confirmation of when or if it will be offered during 2016.

The section on teachers’ pensions explains the new structures which have been set up following the major changes to teachers’ pensions brought in on 1st April 2015. It is of note that former President, Rosemary Barton is a member of the Pensions Board. UTU, in conjunction with INTO, continue to hold regular seminars on retirement which are extremely well-attended.

The section on Law & Tenure at page 44 is always one that generates interest from UTU members. The range of problems encountered provides ample reason for teachers to appreciate the protection membership of a teachers’ union provides. This section only contains details of those cases that were reported to CEC during the year and that is only the tip of the iceberg!

The work of the UTU Officials is outlined in Section 3 and as can be seen at section 2 the work of the UTU Officers, at CEC, Branch and Area level as well as the work of the Officials has ensured that UTU membership levels have increased at a time when the whole service is shrinking.

The work done by a wide range of teachers who are nominated by their Branch or Area to sit on the various sub-committees of the Unions can be read about in the section on Sub-Committee Reports at page 38. The work of the union could not continue without the very valuable contributions from grass-roots members to responses to EA, DE or Assembly Education Committee consultations. This democratic system ensures the authenticity of the UTU’s contribution to the development of policy based on the genuine views of those “at the chalk face”.

The FIT Group continues to be an integral and very important part of the UTU’s structure. The FIT Group has grown and flourished under the Chairmanship of Aaron Davidson who now sits as an observer on CEC and reports monthly to them on FIT progress. Aaron Davis and Andrew Scott, both members of the FIT group were also elected on to the CEC in 2015, which shows how valuable it has been in encouraging a flow of new, active members into the organisation in key positions. Many FIT group members have now taken on responsibilities as school representatives. Jacquie Reid, Deputy General Secretary, continues to be the driving force behind the success of the FIT Group with Leigh Cooper also taking on an increasing role.

Those of you who attended Conference last year will no doubt want to read about the outcome of the resolutions made in 2015. The penultimate sections hows the progress made in promoting the policies made last April. As you will see, any lack of progress was due partly to the financial climate but also due to the introduction of EA. We must continue to press forward and promote what we in the teaching profession believe will be in the best interests of the pupils in our care. Let us hope that the politicians elected to the new session of the Assembly will value Education enough to prioritise it in the new Programme for Government.
2. UTU Membership

During 2015/16 the Ulster Teachers’ Union offered membership to qualified teachers in the nursery, primary and post-primary sectors (including grammar) and temporary teachers, provided they were registered as teachers with the GTC (NI). Retired teachers may retain membership as Associates but may not be elected to posts within the UTU structures.

The Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) members are affiliated to UTU and receive help and support from UTU in all except salaries and conditions of service matters. Casework on behalf of AEP members is referred through the AEP office and carried out by a UTU Field Officer.

The UTU membership was approx. 6200 at the end of December 2015, including 118 Educational Psychologists. This figure has stayed stable over the past five years despite the huge number of teaching redundancies there have been. A large proportion of the UTU membership is in the younger age category which should mean growth into the future and the younger members are becoming increasingly active through the Future in Teaching (FIT) Group. The 2015/16 President, Julie Orr, was a founder member of the FIT Group and we have three active FIT Group members on the Union’s Executive Committee with many more now taking on positions as school representatives. The FIT Group has been nourished and encouraged by the Deputy General Secretary, Jacquie Reid, and she is to be congratulated for the way this group has now become such an integral part of the UTU Branch, Area and Executive structures.

The UTU is very concerned that the year on year cuts to the Education Budget accompanied by the raising of the Pension age has produced a situation where the opportunities for employment for young teachers are fewer each year. The temporary respite brought by the OFMDFM initiative on Literacy and Numeracy, which created 270 temporary two-year contracts from 2013 to 2015, has ended and UTU has been raising concerns on behalf of its younger members, some of whom have been out of college for up to 10 years without having managed to find a permanent job.

In December 2015 DE Officials summoned the teachers’ unions for a confidential meeting to discuss a possible scheme which would provide a way of offering up to 500 permanent jobs to recently qualified teachers by allowing teachers aged 55-60 out without actuarial reduction to their pension (teachers between 55 and 60 lose roughly 5% per year if they draw down their pension early). This scheme, which had originally been a suggestion from NITC in 2010, would allow older teachers to exit early (voluntarily) leaving an opportunity for recently qualified teachers to take their place, rebalancing the age profile of the teaching workforce. In order to make sufficient savings on the scheme the initial DE proposal was to limit this opportunity to teachers who had qualified up to 3 years ago but this met with an understandable backlash from teachers who had qualified over three years ago but had not yet found permanent employment. At the time of going to press no paperwork was available to define the parameters of the scheme and the Minister has stated that he is reconsidering the terms he will offer.

TRAINING

While priding itself on providing an excellent central support service to members, the UTU also provides training to up-skill members, focussed on different needs. The UTU team planned and delivered, in conjunction with our colleagues in INTO, a series of Pre-Retirement Seminars facilitated by Platinum Financial Services. Our thanks go to Jonny Scott and Alan Tolson of Platinum for sharing their expertise. In October 2015 a very successful joint UTU/INTO Annual Leadership Seminar took place at the Tullylagan Hotel, Cookstown. This time the focus was the Special Educational Needs sector and key-note speakers attended from the Education Authority, including its Chief Executive, Gavin Boyd. Dr Clare Mangan from the EA spoke to those in attendance about Managing Change in Education while Mr Boyd spoke on the Structure and Development of the Education Authority.

UTU again ran School Representative training separately from INTO this year and Jacquie Reid and Leigh Cooper planned a series of venues where UTU Reps came together to discuss recruitment, representation and the latest developments in terms and conditions of service.

PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE

The number of members approaching the UTU for advice and assistance steadily increased during the year, mainly because of the much reduced support available during the transfer of the Education & Library Boards (ELBs) to a single Education Authority (EA) which took place on 1st April 2015. Many of the senior personnel in the ELBs were permitted to exit as part of the plans to transform the Public Sector. The government’s continued austerity measures meant further cuts to already tightly stretched budgets resulting not only in increased pressures on
schools but budgetary difficulties for the administration of ELBs/EA and any of the support services provided from centre. This manifested itself in the cuts to Special Needs provision but even more so in the swathing cuts to provision of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to schools. The Curriculum and Advisory Support Service (CASS) Officers in the ELBs were decimated to the point where only 57 Advisory Officers remained to cover the entire EA area and the Regional Training Unit (RTU) went out of existence completely.

In the dire circumstances schools and teachers found themselves in, UTU stepped in to provide support as follows:
- Advice to individual members by telephone, fax, email and mail
- Regular mailings to school representatives and “UTU Updates” emailed to all members
- Reports and comment on a wide variety of current topics posted on the UTU website
- Individual advice on issues such as salaries, conditions of service collective procedures, appeals procedures, legal claims and defences, and information on statutory entitlement
- Advice to members on career progression, appointments, PRSD and salary appeals
- Advice on retirement, pensions and severance packages

During the past year UTU Officials have continued to offer advice on the industrial action on Assessment and prepared for the ballot on action against the Education Cuts. This ballot took place in February 2015 and while there was no resulting mandate for strike action, there was an overwhelming mandate for action short of strike. Having discussed the type of action that might be instigated, members of the UTU Central Executive Committee had decided to choose action which would least impact on pupils’ education and be most helpful to teachers, who were increasingly reporting that their workload was unmanageable and that they were no longer able to achieve any measure of work/life balance.

The UTU engaged fully in the Redundancy process and with the assistance of the Transferred Redundancy Scheme found that those teachers who were declared redundant were placed in other posts. UTU would like to place on record its thanks to those officers of the EA, particularly Tony May of the Central management Support Unit, who worked tirelessly to ensure the transfer process was facilitated. Unlike the previous year schools were aware that decisions may be delayed, depending on DE accessing money from the Transformation Fund which was subject to political decisions.

During the process UTU Officials gave advice to members at each step of the process. Unfortunately the Appeals part of the Redundancy Procedure was not finished in the normal timescale in one school which ended up having to devise a timetable for the 2015/16 academic year that incorporated a number of members of staff who had been declared redundant but who were awaiting Appeals to be heard. Principal members have increasingly been turning to UTU for guidance on major issues from inspections to school rationalisation. It has been a year of uncertainty regarding the future and for much of the autumn term we were unsure if the Stormont Government would survive or whether Westminster would have to step in if political agreement could not be reached. The “Fresh Start” agreement allowed the devolved administration to continue and at the time of going to press an election in May is planned to take place.

The past year has seen a continuation of the high level of serious cases which UTU Officials have supported members through. The GS, DGS and Field Officers have all been involved in defending members who are involved in disciplinary procedures, with a number of those going to final Appeal against dismissal at the Labour Relations Agency. These cases can be examined in more detail in the Law and Tenure section of this report.

Most serious cases will involve the advice of the Union’s solicitors, Shean Dickson Merrick, who are experts on employment and criminal law, particularly in the area of Education. Their services have been utilised more than ever in advising on individual cases and accompanying members to police interviews. UTU members can be assured that they will receive the best advice possible, based on local knowledge, from local solicitors with many years of specialised knowledge of the legal process and norms in this jurisdiction.

UTU Officials not only take cases to Appeal at the Labour Relations Agency (LRA), they also sit as members of Appeal Panels. There has been a big increase in the number of cases that end up with the LRA, either for formal appeal or for possible resolution through mediation. The UTU values the expert advice they receive from the LRA. In the course of negotiating a revised Disciplinary Procedure it was agreed that formal training on Child Protection would be offered to both Chairpersons and Panel members and the majority of UTU Panel members attended a training session at Antrim Board Centre to update their knowledge of Child Protection.
procedures.

**PUBLICATIONS**

The following publications were updated where necessary and made available to members and prospective members on request:

- “Your First September” booklet
- UTU Services and Benefits leaflet
- 2015 Policy statement
- UTU Application Form
- UTU Membership Subscription leaflet
- Early Professional Development information
- Health & Safety booklet
- “Why Join the UTU” leaflet
- UTU Year Planner

Members receive a UTU Diary in the autumn term and this has been modernised and revised by Lindsay Osbourne under the supervision of Audrey Stewart, Field Officer, who meticulously checks that all the information is correct. The UTU Diary was issued to members free of charge in November 2015 and contains some very good information on salaries etc. as well as being a reference point for UTU Branch and Area Officers.

In the past couple of years UTU has extended its service to include the provision of Membership Plus cards which allow members to access discounts at a variety of venues throughout Ireland. Members who use the Membership Plus Card have reported that they save enough to pay for their UTU subscription through using it! The President and Organising Officer, supported by the Membership Officers and Clerical Officers, have attended recruitment events in the following venues:

- School of Education, QUB
- Stranmillis University College
- St Mary’s University College
- School of Education, Coleraine

UTU jointly recruits with INTO and the students are happy to see the two unions working together and providing joint recruitment materials and documentation. The joint branding has been a real success and the display area at student recruitment functions is extremely impressive.

UTU continued its very beneficial Partnership working arrangements linking the NUT in England and Wales, the EIS in Scotland, the INTO in RoI and UTU/INTO in Northern Ireland. Members moving from one jurisdiction to another are automatically accepted into the Partner organisation in their new location and this process is gaining momentum as more teachers avail of the transfer arrangements. The four unions meet on a regular basis to discuss common policy direction as well as recruitment.

The Reports of the Deputy General Secretary, the Field Officers and the Organising Officer follow:

**DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY’S REPORT – Jacquie Reid**

Annual Conference seems to come round more quickly with every passing year and I remain unclear as to whether this feeling is due to the diversity and volume of work at Headquarters, or whether it’s an age thing!! Regardless of the reason, much has happened in that time and I will try to give you a flavour of the range of issues under consideration.

Concerns and queries coming to the office are varied but a number of areas which cause widespread concern are worthy of mention. We continue to get that sense of the extreme pressure that teachers are under in terms of workload and this is reflected in many ways. Teachers nearing the end of their career have many queries about accessing voluntary or transferred redundancy, the terms around accessing pension, and, of course, more recently, questions about the impact on them of the new scheme to refresh the workforce. Teachers at an earlier stage in their career can also be enquiring about flexible working arrangements to try to balance work and family. Many workload issues can arise from issues around engagement with ETI and you, as members, will be well aware that we have been taking action in recent times to address this.

Special Educational Needs is another huge issue and we, as a union, deal with many cases where teachers are struggling under a lack of resources and training. Sadly there has also been an increase in the numbers of teachers who have been the subject of complaints and allegations and we are well aware of the trauma that can be attached to this. More teachers are encountering difficulties in working relationships in school. More teachers are being subjected to interviews by PSNI or ending up in situations where they have had to take their cases to the Labour Relations Agency for an independent appeal. I have represented three teachers in the LRA this year alone, all who have been involved in very individual situations, and
all who, I am glad to say, have been successful.

A union is not a union without members and recruitment remains a key item on the agenda. The recruitment events at Stranmillis College, Queen’s University and University of Ulster, Coleraine took place again this year and I continue to be heartened by the growing interest and awareness of students in what the UTU had to offer and what our role might be in their teaching career. We again hosted two students on Alternative Placement from Stranmillis College for two weeks in January who, as it turned out to be a busy time, had a baptism of fire into union life. Thanks to Hollie and Richard – we appreciated your help and support!

The FIT (Future in Teaching) Group is going from strength to strength and the residential seminar will be taking place in the Malone Lodge, Belfast at the beginning of February. A panel of teachers and Principals at various stages in their careers will be available to answer questions and give advice at the Friday evening session; Saturday morning will involve a session where we discuss resolutions coming to Annual Conference and determine the resolution which will come from the FIT group this year. FIT continues to be not only an excellent recruitment tool amongst young teachers but also an effective way of encouraging them to play an active role in UTU. It is increasingly the case that many of those who find permanent positions become School Reps and there is a real interest in attending Annual Conference and having a voice. Meetings this year have been lively and well-attended, as was the social event involving ten-pin bowling and crazy golf, and the FIT Group continue to organise and facilitate the UTU Golf Tournament. Those who attended, as was the social event involving ten-pin bowling and crazy golf, and the FIT Group continue to organise and facilitate the UTU Golf Tournament. Those who participated have been a mixture of more established members and those new to the group with a growing number of students taking part each year. We have already seen FIT members adding to Branch activity in certain areas and would wish to expand this. Congratulations and thanks to Aaron Davidson, Chair of FIT, and Matty Wright, Vice-Chair, for all of their continuing hard work and dedication.

School Reps continue to recruit and support members in schools and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their support. We are still seeking different ways to build capacity as reps are finding it increasingly difficult to attend training but I am encouraged by the number of reps actively seeking support and meetings on behalf of the members in their school. In these difficult employment times, I would encourage all of our members out there to take the opportunity to approach new and substitute teachers in your schools and check that they are in the UTU, not only to ensure they have information and protection, but also to have access to all of the benefits which membership brings, such as the Membership Plus cards, which continue to be popular, and a variety of insurance and travel deals.

I have continued this year to represent UTU in a number of capacities. As Deputy General Secretary I hold a seat on the Northern Ireland Teachers’ Council (NITC), have deputised for the General Secretary on any associated sub-groups when necessary. I continue to sit on the working group related to Social Media and was the UTU representative on the NITC Assessment Group which met with the Minister for Education and officials from the Department of Education on a regular basis to address the considerable issues our members have in this area. I am also a member of the UTU/INTO Joint Board and attend, where possible, meetings of the partnership group comprising EIS, INTO, NUT and UTU.

I continue to hold the Equality remit for UTU and am Convenor of the Political and Equality Sub-Committee. This role has related to, and extended, my involvement with committees of ICTU and this year I have represented UTU on the ICTU LGBT and Equality and Human Rights Committees. I am also Vice-Chair of the ICTU Women’s Committee and delivered a presentation on Childcare in Northern Ireland on their behalf at the Council of the Isles held in Glasgow in October. I will also be taking a UTU motion on Domestic Abuse to the Women’s Conference in Mullingar in March. I regularly attend training on equality and employment legislation at the Equality Commission and the Labour Relations Agency with topics this year including Redundancy and Employment Documentation.

On a wider stage, I represented the General Secretary at the NASUWT Conference in Cardiff and also attended the INTO Conference in Limavady; I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to both unions for their excellent hosting. I continue to represent UTU on the ETUCE Equality Committee held in Brussels. For personal reasons, I was unable to attend the Education International Conference in Ottawa and would like to thank Sandra Brown for stepping into the breach and keeping our President company!!

Another busy year indeed. I would like to thank all of my colleagues in UTU HQ for their unending help and support, and those on CEC and within the wider membership who have been there when I needed them. Much appreciated!

FIELD OFFICER’S REPORT – Lewis Love

The 2014/15 academic year saw an increase in members accessing advice directly from the officials at Headquarters. The Field Officer has supported and offered advice, on a significant number of occasions, to members experiencing stress at work that subsequently impacts on their mental health. Unfortunately this aspect
of Officials’ work seems to be on the increase.

The pecuniary pressures placed on schools also impact on the members resulting in the Field Officer offering advice and support, in the workplace and at home, on a range of issues such as; employment rights, grievance and bullying and harassment, attendance procedures, temporary variation of contracts, flexible working, job share, maternity and paternity leave, redundancies and transferred redundancies, directed time, ill health retirement and pension queries. I have supported teachers and school leaders in dealing with challenging pupils, unsupportive parents and children with special needs with behavioural and learning difficulties. The use of social media by pupils and parents is also an ever increasing aspect of the work of the officials. I have supported a number of teachers and schools experiencing the negative side of social media use by pupils and parents.

During the last year I have attended Boards of Governors meetings to discuss redundancy criteria, accompanied members to managing attendance meetings and contributed to conflict resolution. I have attended numerous courses at the Labour Relations Agency and Equality Commission relating to Redundancy Procedures, Bullying and Harassment, Equal Opportunity and Child Protection training organised by the newly constituted EA.

In conjunction with the INTO Audrey Stewart and I planned a Leadership Conference which was held in Tullylagan House Hotel, Cookstown – the main theme being constructing a Social Media Policy. Audrey and I also held a Principals seminar at Headquarters dealing with Special Needs. I attended joint INTO/UTU retirement seminars and a Pensions Road Show organised by DE in light of the new pension scheme. I am a member of the ICTU Health and Safety Committee and have attended numerous meetings during the year.

During the year I attended NITC meetings, the UCU Conference in Glasgow and I accompanied the President to an ATL sponsored visit to an Inner London school.

The Industrial Action relating to ETi Inspections was well supported and popular with members and I supported a number of school Principals in their meetings with visiting inspection teams.

FIELD OFFICER REPORT – Audrey Stewart

During the course of the year many phone calls from members are responded to immediately or if no officials are available a response is made as quickly as possible. Members seek advice on a range of issues which impact on their daily lives and cover issues such as workload and directed time, ways of reducing working hours through the temporary variation, flexible working, job share, career break schemes and leave of absence, which may also incorporate paternity or maternity leave.

Unfortunately, a large number of calls relate to teachers having to deal with pupils with behavioural problems, parental complaints and disciplinary or grievance procedures.

The Industrial Action undertaken by UTU with regard to over- load of work caused by Assessment arrangements has resulted in many enquiries from members, who needed reassurance that they are fully covered when supporting the action. There was a lot of concern over the non- co-operation with the school inspection process while it was part of the action up until the end of December 2015.

Throughout the past year the field officer has visited many members in their own schools or homes and this has been particularly necessary for members whose health has broken down and that are in need of help and support. Members were also accompanied to meetings with Boards of Governors when necessary.

In the summer term of 2015 Audrey and her colleague Lewis Love organised a seminar for UTU members in leadership roles. This was held at UTU Headquarters, which also provided an opportunity for members to see the UTU building. Rosemary Briggs from N. Eastern Region gave a very interesting presentation on how to help pupils who had recurring behavioural problems. This was followed by a presentation from Carecall, who provide a 24/7 confidential counselling service for teachers and also can provide other services for schools to access for inset days.

In October 2015, Tullylagan House, Cookstown, was the lovely setting for the annual joint Leadership Conference with INTO. Attendees enjoyed the opportunity to have the opportunity to talk to other members of the profession over lunch, tea and coffee. Guest speakers were Gavin Boyd and Dr. C. Mangan who brought members up to date about changes to education with the arrival of The Education Authority as well as a very interesting review of funding for the education service.

Members are welcome to provide further suggestions for topics to be considered for future Leadership Conferences.

ORGANISING OFFICER REPORT – Leigh Cooper

My second year with UTU as Organising Officer has once again opened many doors for me, affording me opportunities for which I am very grateful and am enjoying
immensely.

I have continued fulfilling my role as Organising Officer while visiting schools and meeting school reps and members. I am beginning to take on case work to prepare for my upcoming role as Field Officer which I will be commencing in January 2016.

Members’ issues range from needing advice and information on pension, parental leave, directed time, job share, temporary variation of contract, flexible working, temporary contracts and employment rights and many others. I have found that due to the very worrying aspect of increasing parental accusations and complaints, teachers feel vulnerable and are approaching the Union more often for advice. Teachers on the ground are dealing with an ever increasing workload, larger class sizes, reduced support and a lack of resources and this seems to be leading to stress related absences. This has been evident during my meetings and conversations with teachers in all sectors. Also there is a great deal of anxiety amongst teachers about the future of their profession, in particular, the effects that will be felt due to impending cuts to school budgets. I have also taken many phone calls at HQ on this issue. Our industrial action this year has highlighted the need for change and has been widely welcomed, as have the proposed changes it has brought about.

I have been involved with recruitment and also with the training of school representatives. I also took part in LRA Panel training. I found this very exciting and interesting and look forward to further involvement in the process.

ICTU training has enabled me to participate in seminars and courses, such as Employment and Equality Law, which will benefit me greatly in carrying out my work.

I am on the Organising and Membership Committee which has been involved in the reorganisation and restructuring of the branches.

In July 2015, along with the General Secretary, the President, the Ex-President and two serving UTU members, I attended the ICTU conference in Ennis. This was a very informative and interesting event attended by Trade Unionists from all over Ireland. In January 2016 I hope to attend an ETUCE event promoting decent workplaces in the education sector for a healthy working life which takes place in London.

I feel I am learning all the time and I have benefitted greatly in every aspect of the job with the help of the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, the President, both past and present and the other field officers and staff who are always willing to share their extensive knowledge and experience with me. I look forward to my new challenge as Field Officer however I also look forward to continuing to visit schools and meeting members on a regular basis.
3. Head Office Staff

STAFFING STRUCTURE
The UTU continues to benefit from a very committed and experienced staffing complement. During 2015 the UTU retained Tony McCabe as a temporary Clerical Officer to cover two days per week of a job share with Lindsay Osbourne, making use of his considerable IT expertise for the other three days. From 1st January 2015 the General Secretary, Avril Hall-Callaghan, took a phased retirement, reducing to three days a week with the Deputy General Secretary, Jacquie Reid, taking on the duties of General Secretary for two days a week.

The Financial Executive Officer, Heather Arrell, was replaced temporarily from January 2015 by Jemma Kitchen from the office of our auditors, Bridge Chartered Accountants, who did an excellent job while Heather was off on maternity leave. Heather returned in July 2015 and continues to provide us with a first-class service from her professional background as a qualified accountant.

Denise Allely continues in her shared post as Membership Officer. She is working closely with Tony McCabe in relation to all aspects of the IT requirements of the Union. UTU set up a new and improved website at the end of 2015 under the guidance of our President, Julie Orr, and Denise and Tony have been updating it and ensuring that all the relevant information is included. It allows members to join online which has been very beneficial.

Meriel Segal continues in her Membership Officer role and is responsible, along with Denise, for the monitoring and processing of redundancy paperwork. She and Denise also support the work of the Field Officers when required.

All five of the UTU’s Officials are qualified, experienced teachers with additional qualifications in relevant disciplines which assist them in giving appropriate and accurate information and advice to UTU members. Unfortunately Audrey Stewart, a valued colleague who has worked for the Union for over 8 years, decided to retire at the end of 2015. Audrey was a former Principal and as such was a great support for our principal members, many of whom she knew from her days in teaching or from her involvement in the world of music. She will be greatly missed by both colleagues in UTU who depended on her wise counsel and amongst the membership, many of whom she had supported through lengthy legal cases. Our best wishes go with Audrey, a former UTU President, as she moves to the next phase of her life which she will no doubt attack with same capability, enthusiasm and positive spirit as she has shown during her time working for UTU.

Audrey has been replaced in her Field Officer role by Leigh Cooper who transferred over from her post as Organising Officer through redeployment at the beginning of January 2016. This ensures a seamless continuity of service to members as Leigh, who is now in her third year of employment with UTU, has been gaining qualifications in Employment Law and gaining important practical experience in advising members. Leigh has visited many members in schools in her recruitment role and has worked in the nursery, primary and post-primary sectors.

Lewis Love, a former post-primary principal and also a former UTU President, offers continuing support to the Leadership Group in schools. As Lewis is from the west of the Province he is well-placed to service the needs of our membership in the Western Region and can be with a member in trouble in that geographical area very quickly. He has considerable knowledge of Health & Safety and advises teachers on all aspects of risk assessment and school trips, as well as supporting our Associate members in the Educational Psychology service.

Jacquie Reid holds a PQH qualification as well as a degree in Psychology and many years’ experience in the primary sector. This year Jacquie has stepped up to the post of Acting General Secretary 2 days per week. She has been responsible for negotiating within JWP, leading on the development of Social Media guidance and on the NITC Working Party which met with the Minister to work through UTU’s concerns about Assessment.

The UTU office is managed by Karen Taylor. Karen has huge expertise in Health and Safety matters, having obtained her Health & Safety Diploma in recent years. During 2015 she achieved a Management Diploma while continuing to ensure that the office systems run smoothly.

Members phoning the UTU Headquarters find that their first point of contact will normally be either Lindsay or Annette, who respond to members’ queries in a sympathetic, efficient and friendly manner. As Senior Clerical Officer Annette Morrow is responsible for membership database information and updates.

Telephone queries have steadily increased over the last decade and UTU prides itself on providing a professional support service to all members - that is something
that all our clerical and administrative staff members strive hard to achieve. When queries are passed on to the Officials this first-class service continues.

Officials often travel out to members' homes or schools, often outside office hours, in order to provide information or advice. No teacher's union provides a better service for members, and the big benefit is that the advice and guidance given is all based on the situation that pertains in Northern Ireland.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING
All the UTU staff members have received additional training to assist them in doing the best possible job in providing a service to members. The General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary and Field Officers have all undertaken training and/or qualifications in Employment Law. Their expertise is regularly updated through attendance at training courses provided either through ICTU or the Labour Relations Agency. In addition, the UTU avails of the opportunities provided through membership of Education International (EI) to send officials to seminars in all parts of Europe on specific areas of policy or practice relevant to their job remits. One of Lewis's specific areas of responsibility is Health & Safety and he has in the past attended European seminars. Jacquie sits on the European Equality Committee of ETUCE. The General Secretary is a member of the Trade Union Advisory Committee and attended a meeting of it held at the OECD in Paris in June 2015. This Committee is presented with overview and update on all the current educational research on-going in Europe and can shape the type of research that takes place.

All of this professional development prepares UTU Officials to be aware of the latest policy developments internationally and thus allows them to contribute more authoritatively to policy development locally.

Members of the administrative and clerical staff also avail of opportunities for training and professional development. Karen, our Office Manager, completed a course at Belfast Metropolitan College leading to a Management Diploma. Heather, as a qualified accountant, attends regular CPD as required by her professional body. The past year has been another busy one and while we normally aim to hold three whole-staff training days per year we have unfortunately only been able to accommodate one during 2015, during which the majority of staff were able to achieve their Level 2 Food Preparation Certificate. (Anyone visiting Headquarters can be sure any refreshments they are offered are safe!)
4. Teacher Employment

The GTC NI each year compiles a Digest of Statistics. The figures are live and count 'actual' teachers and not full-time equivalents and substitute teachers are only counted once. As of the end of January 2016 the total number of teachers registered with GTC NI was 26,695 (compared to 26,702 in February 2014). Of these, 20,157 (20,288 in February, 2014) were employed in a permanent or temporary (one or more terms) contract in grant-aided schools, which represented a slight decrease. These figures do not include peripatetic teachers or teachers working in a substitute capacity.

The age and gender profiles of teachers employed in grant-aided schools are as follows (with figures for Feb 2014 in brackets):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 &amp; under</td>
<td>274 (283)</td>
<td>75 (88)</td>
<td>349 (371)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 29</td>
<td>1562 (1625)</td>
<td>394 (405)</td>
<td>1956 (2030)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 34</td>
<td>2538 (2680)</td>
<td>650 (680)</td>
<td>3188 (3360)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 – 39</td>
<td>2873 (2750)</td>
<td>769 (763)</td>
<td>3642 (3513)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 44</td>
<td>2640 (2669)</td>
<td>738 (747)</td>
<td>3378 (3416)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 – 49</td>
<td>2338 (2041)</td>
<td>692 (667)</td>
<td>3030 (2903)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 54</td>
<td>1595 (1596)</td>
<td>631 (629)</td>
<td>2226 (2225)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 – 59</td>
<td>1319 (1387)</td>
<td>506 (551)</td>
<td>1825 (1938)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 64</td>
<td>355 (346)</td>
<td>150 (135)</td>
<td>505 (481)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 &amp; over</td>
<td>35 (31)</td>
<td>23 (20)</td>
<td>58 (51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>15,529 (15,593)</td>
<td>4628 (4,695)</td>
<td>20,157 (20,288)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unfortunately the number of teachers under the age of 30 has decreased probably due to the Signature Project having ended in June 2015. This Project to raise standards in Numeracy and Literacy was initiated and largely funded from the coffers of OFMDFM and has provided jobs of up to 2 years for recently qualified teachers.

The issue of employment for young teachers has already been raised with DE and before Christmas 2015 DE announced that they were considering introducing a pilot scheme to allow teachers at the other end of the age spectrum to exit the profession without actuarial reduction to their pensions in order to provide jobs for these more recently qualified teachers. At the time of going to print no details of the parameters of the scheme are available but many teachers who have been qualified for longer than the last three years are concerned that they may not be able to apply for these jobs.

The question of gender imbalance has not improved - the number of employed male teachers has decreased since Feb 2015 from 493 to 469 in January 2016. This is a significant decrease, again probably reflective of the end of the Signature Project. In fact, the ratio of employed males to females has decreased from 76.86% (f) to 23.14% (m) in 2015 to 77.04% (f) to 22.96% (m) by January 2016 showing that not only is there is still a long way to go to create a balanced profession, it is currently moving in the wrong direction!

The Education and Library Boards were merged in April 2015 into a single Education Authority but GTC NI has retained statistics to indicate the geographical spread by Regional basis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>February 2015</th>
<th>February 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belfast Region</td>
<td>3802</td>
<td>3786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE Region</td>
<td>4510</td>
<td>4435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Region</td>
<td>3895</td>
<td>3902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Region</td>
<td>4644</td>
<td>4648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Region</td>
<td>3437</td>
<td>3386</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The breakdown of teachers by school type at January 2016 is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nursery</td>
<td>211 (212)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>7612 (7572)</td>
<td>1352 (1338)</td>
<td>8964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>2823 (2789)</td>
<td>1418 (1427)</td>
<td>4241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-primary</td>
<td>4035 (4167)</td>
<td>1664 (1736)</td>
<td>5699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>737 (731)</td>
<td>171 (173)</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>15529 (15593)</td>
<td>4628 (4695)</td>
<td>20,157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The breakdown of the teaching workforce employed in the various sectors is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Maintained</td>
<td>5261 (5347)</td>
<td>1500 (1517)</td>
<td>6761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled Integrated</td>
<td>339 (331)</td>
<td>79 (7)</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled</td>
<td>6716 (6774)</td>
<td>1604 (1648)</td>
<td>8320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Maintained Integrated</td>
<td>770 (772)</td>
<td>247 (249)</td>
<td>1017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Maintained</td>
<td>210 (208)</td>
<td>64 (69)</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Grammar</td>
<td>2223 (2161)</td>
<td>1134 (1124)</td>
<td>3367</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that there has been an increase in the number of teachers registered as being employed in the Voluntary Grammar sector. This may reflect the fact that when a secondary school amalgamates with a voluntary grammar it seems to adopt Voluntary Grammar status.
5. Northern Ireland Teachers’ Council
– (NITC)

UTU was represented on the NITC during the year 2015/16 by the President, Julie Orr, the Vice President, Mark Creelman, the Ex-President, Sandra Brown, the General Secretary, Avril Hall-Callaghan and the Deputy General Secretary, Jacquie Reid.

The NITC is the Teacher’s Side of the Teachers’ Negotiating Machinery (TNC) in Northern Ireland and the Constitution of NITC allows a maximum of 5 representatives on the basis of 1 representative for every 1000 members or part of 1000 members. UTU qualifies for 5 seats, as do INTO and NASUWT, ATL holds 3 seats and NAHT1 seat with an agreed additional seat for an Observer. In accrual fact the number of seats is irrelevant as NITC tries to work by consensus or where a vote is taken it must be 4 out of the 5 recognised unions voting in favour.

There was a re-election of Officers in September 2015 and the following positions were filled:

Chairperson: Avril Hall-Callaghan, UTU
Vice-Chairperson Gerry Murphy, INTO
Secretary: Tony Carlin, INTO (substituted by Gerry Murphy, INTO)
Minutes Secretary: Mark Langhammer, ATL
Treasurer: Fern Turner, NAHT

The full NITC meets every other month from September onwards, with meetings of the Interests (2 per Union)) in the intervening months. Occasionally there are additional meetings of the Interests where urgent business dictates.

NITC has operated reasonably smoothly during 2015/16 with all unions pulling together in the face of austerity measures, changes in key personnel as the new Education Authority (EA) came into being and the pressures of a difficult negotiating atmosphere.

The following is a record of the NITC meetings during 2015/16:

16th March 2015
Correspondence from the EA setting out the new Senior management structure was noted, and it was agreed that letters from NASUWT and the Minister would be discussed under the Pay Claim.

There was concern that Post-Primary schools would be unable to invoke some redundancies under the new rules as they are not in a deficit situation, e.g. curricular redundancies would be impossible under current guidelines. Concerns were raised about the loss of language teachers without consultation and the fact that some schools were not including all staff redundancies in consultation. It was suggested that NITC should re-open talks to allow older teachers to leave “with dignity”. It was agreed that earlier papers on reinvesting in the teaching workforce would be re-circulated.

It was noted that funding for the Efficient Discharge Scheme would not be available until the November Monitoring round.

Concerns were raised regarding the Management Side view that the Teachers’ Health and Wellbeing Report was “aspirational” and it was agreed to press Management Side to approve the Report and set up an implementation working group.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Social Media Working Group would be held on 27th April in CCMS.

It was agreed to nominate one representative per union to attend the Conciliation meeting at the LRA regarding the failure to agree the wording of Appeal outcomes in the Disciplinary Procedure.

There was a full and frank discussion on the position in regard to the pay claim for 2014/15. It was noted that the increments for 2014/15 had been paid to teachers and that Management Side was not proposing the removal of incremental credit but were proposing the end of “time served” or automatic progression. They suggested this could be done through PRSD. It was suggested that this could be done through verified CPD. A discussion ensued regarding a letter from NITC to the Chair of Management Side and the fact that entering into negotiations would not necessarily lead to an end to automatic progression.

It was reported that the working group on Precautionary Suspension was to consider the final draft report with a view to a DE Circular being published shortly thereafter.
It was agreed a working group be set up to consider the position of temporary teachers.
Each of the Interests indicated its current position on Industrial Action, with ATL, INTO and UTU to commence industrial action following their ballots and NASUWT continuing their action without a further ballot. NAHT were not taking action. It was agreed to set up a meeting with Gavin Boyd, Acting Chief Executive of the new EA to consider how systems within the 5 ELBs were to be harmonised.

It was noted that DE no longer wished representatives of the five unions to be nominated to a professional panel to consider a Dashboard of Measures. It was agreed to nevertheless forward five names to DE despite the fact they only wanted one.

Concerns were raised regarding the employment of teachers as examiners and moderators. It was reported that some schools are no longer allowing staff to fulfil the role. It was noted that teachers only receive payment on non-school days. It was further noted that the work associated with moderation and examining was often the only form of Continuous Professional Development teachers could access.

20th April 2015 (Interests)
It was agreed to write to the Deputy Permanent Secretary, Katrina Godfrey, expressing exasperation at the breach of understandings around the panel to consider the Dashboard of Measures and requesting a meeting.

It was reported that Northern Ireland Youth Forum (NIYF) “pupil voice” meeting had outlined several potential pitfalls such as pupil involvement in staff interviews. It was agreed that a meeting should be sought with NIYF and the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY).

An update was given on the Pay talks to outline the acknowledgement given by Management that the talks were “without prejudice”.

A discussion took place on Industrial Action focusing on possible escalation of action against ETI which UTU had currently commenced and ATL had partially commenced. NASUWT and NAHT reported that they were not currently mandated to take such action.

It was noted that a Social Media working group had been set up and was due to meet soon, with a pre-meeting of Teachers’ Side beforehand. It was noted that the support unions had not been circulated with a draft policy. Concerns were raised that online abuse was increasingly prevalent and that while the parental complaints procedure provides an avenue for parents, no similar avenue exists for teachers’ complaints.

It was reported that there were approximately 500 volunteers for Transferred Redundancy but only 235-260 redundancies had been declared.

Efficient Discharge was discussed with concerns raised as to whether it was a viable or humane exit route.

It was noted that the Precautionary Suspensions document was now available. It was agreed that the Secretary should write to the Officer in charge of NISTR to seek resolution of the concerns about NISTR teachers who face suspension.

It was reported that there had been no further movement from Management Side on the THAW Report, nor was there any update on EA apart from the issuing of a Health & Safety Policy. It was proposed that NITC should request an Independent Chair for TNC.

18th May 2015
Under correspondence it was noted that the project on Shared Education required those signing up to agree to forward levels as part of the assessment process. This was considered as an attempt to undermine Industrial Action and it was thought that it was barely credible that the levels could be taken as a measure of reconciliation. The Secretary was mandated to draft a suitable reply.

It was further noted that the Deputy Permanent Secretary, Katrina Godfrey, was upset by the unions’ view on assessment and a meeting is to be sought to clarify the situation.

It was noted that only 102 redundancies were predicted at this stage. It was noted that there may be a potential move to “in-year” redundancies. A discussion took place on the possible implications of DE not achieving the savings required and it was agreed that the Secretary would write to DE to seek clarification on the consequences.

It was noted that the progress on the THAW Report had stalled and it was decided to attempt to progress it under the guise of Health & Safety. Concerns were noted regarding the danger of the Jordanstown Agreement being raised.

It was indicated that the Social Media group had met and revised a document which was then circulated to all parties. A further meeting was scheduled for June. It was pointed out that schools had a duty of care and could withdraw access to schools and it was agreed that this would be raised at JWP.
The Registrar of GTC NI and a colleague addressed the meeting regarding the legislative changes that had been made to the registration of teachers, including the powers conferred on them from 1st April 2015, including the power to deal with cases of serious teacher misconduct. GTC informed NITC that their Professional Code of Values and Practice (2003) were to be reviewed.

There was a report-back on the outcome of the engagement with Management Side at the LRA about the insertion of the term “final and binding” into the Appeals process. It was reported that the main concerns of Management Side centred on child protection and NITC had no objection to panel members and Chairs having Child Protection Training. It was noted that talks were continuing on the 14/15 and 15/16 pay claims. A meeting on the “mechanics” of the pay claim was agreed for early June.

A meeting was set up to discuss co-ordination of Industrial Action. It was noted that there had been some hard-line letters from principals to DE with some conciliatory responses and there was evidence that DE was short of data.

It was noted that a revised Budget is anticipated in the second week of July, with more cuts likely.

Concerns were also raised about the practices relating to Special Schools where the delegated element of school budgets was being controlled from centre. It was agreed that an election of officers would take place at the September meeting along with a consideration of the TNC Constitution.

22nd June, 2015 (Interests)
A discussion took place on how the THAW Report could be moved on within the Health & Safety structures.

The issue of fixed term contract workers was raised and it was agreed that the Secretary would raise this with Management Side.

The current pay claim which asked for a 3% uplift on all salaries, principals to move up 2 further points, to remove M1, to add UPS 4 and UPS 5 and a review of the Maternity, Paternity, Adoptive and Assisted Pregnancy Schemes, was supported by UTU, INTO, ATL and NAHT. NASUWT also agreed to support but wished to submit additional paperwork at a later stage. It was noted that the pay claim had to be with DE by the first week in July.

INTO said they were considering a series of half-day rolling strikes dependant on the support of both teaching and support staff unions. It was agreed that a further meeting to discuss Industrial Action be held over the summer. NAHT offered support although they are not on Industrial Action. NASUWT agreed to put a proposal to their committee about possible strike action.

A discussion took place on the lack of progress within JWP/TNC and it was agreed that there was a need to look at the functionality of JWP. There was further discussion on the threat made by Management Side to deduct salary from teachers for work that was not being done.

It was reported that to date 226 teachers had applied for redundancy and 71 have been approved. It was noted that the Minister does not favour compulsory redundancies. It was agreed that a meeting of the redundancy group should be requested.

Concerns were raised as to the current state of Special Education Needs policy and the fact that there was a failure to fill leadership and other positions. It was suggested that a working group be set up to look at the needs of SEN teachers and that a meeting be set up with Dr Clare Mangan.

21st September, 2015
Lewis Love took the Chair for the election of Officers for a term to run alongside the EA. Avril Hall-Callaghan was elected unopposed as Chairperson. Justin McCamphill was proposed as Vice Chairperson but declined the position, following which Gerry Murphy was elected unopposed as Vice Chairperson. Tony Carlin was elected unopposed as Secretary. Mark Langhammer was elected unopposed as Minutes Secretary and Fern Turner as Treasurer.

Avril Hall-Callaghan was elected unopposed as Salaries Spokesperson and Gerry Murphy was elected unopposed as Terms & Conditions Spokesperson. Avril Hall-Callaghan resumed the Chair.

It was agreed that the TNC Constitution should continue as it is with Management Side to take account of the new EA. It was agreed to raise again the case for an Independent Chair, the efficiency of negotiating arrangements and the case for a Management Side Support Officer to be appointed. UTU, INTO and ATL all supported the pursuance of a Teachers’ Side Support Officer on a paid/seconded arrangement. NASUWT and NAHT said they would consider their positions on this.

It was noted that a meeting had taken place about the Cycle to Work Scheme and
that some Voluntary Grammar Schools had implemented the Scheme already. There was a report on a meeting between representatives of NITC and Gavin Boyd, EA, in relation to the future of the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) and the Regional Training Unit (RTU). EA had indicated that CASS would be envisaged as a light, facilitative, central service that incorporated signposting and phone advice but with much budget devolved to schools. It was reported that ETU had written to the EA and that a paper was being prepared in respect of the schools support service which could open the door to private provision. It was noted that two further papers existed - one on CPD for teachers, led by DE and one drawn up on CPD for all education workers, through a working group of the Strategic Forum. It was suggested that a meeting be sought with EA Officers. It was noted that one of the key recommendations of the Education Committee in its report on Raising Standards was that an integrated support service similar to Education Scotland be set up and this was supported by UTU, ATL and INTO. NAHT and NASUWT said they would consider their position on this.

It was noted that the 2015 redundancy releases went further than Priority 4 and it was remarked upon that the intensification of workload in schools was apparent, even early in the term. This was to be raised at the “Lessons Learned” meeting to be held the following week at DE.

Concerns were expressed about the lack of engagement with EA which it was felt had reduced, as had general engagement with Management Side. It was reported that in schools the expectation was that they were being expected to do more with less resources and that brought attendant stresses and strains.

It was agreed that a commitment of intent with relation to the final THAW document was required. Since it was felt that there may be prevarication on Management Side’s part it was agreed to write to the Minister on this matter.

The Social Media policy document was discussed and while it was agreed that it was not objectionable nevertheless it did not have balance in terms of parental commitments/sanctions. It was agreed that Articles 6 and 8 of the Human Rights Act should be studied and that the employer’s duty of care should not be left out. It was agreed that more work must be done to take the matter forward.

The revised Disciplinary Procedure had been circulated but it was noted that several clauses had been amended unilaterally. It was agreed that a meeting on the Disciplinary Procedure should be arranged.

It was noted that negotiations on the Pay Claim were continuing. A draft document on Shared Parental Leave had been provided by Management Side and this was to be considered by the Interests.

Each union outlined its current position concerning Industrial Action. The meetings to be held at the request of the Permanent Secretary were discussed and it was agreed each union would attend individually and respond robustly if challenged regarding their Action. It was noted that Management Side had sought a meeting to discuss Industrial Action.

It was reported that there would be NITC representative on the Regional Health and Safety Committees as well as a Health and Safety Working Group as part of JWP. It was stressed that all representatives on these bodies should be qualified and/or experienced in Health & Safety.

It was noted that the Minister’s letter to Governors had not been well-received. It was agreed that a meeting would be sought with the Minister in an attempt to get the matter moved on. DE had contacted NITC to ask for nominees for the “Dashboard” group.

It was reported that the NISTR sub-group had met and discussed the rights of substitute teachers. There was discussion on taking individual test cases to establish rights.

It was noted that a survey had been jointly produced by Rainbow and INTO to assess the experience of members of the LGBT community within the Education service. It was noted that ICTU was working on a “Tool Kit” for schools and that the ICTU LGBT group within ICTU had welcomed the interest shown in this work.

Following an incident regarding complaints made by students on placement it was agreed that the issue of a student protocol be raised at JWP.
19th October, 2015 (Interests)
The Health & Safety Working Group representatives were confirmed for all except NAHT.

It was noted that the Minister was committed to the THAW policy but that no resource commitments had been made. It was agreed to prioritise an implementation plan within JWP.

The Interests were asked to make nominations to the Dashboard of Measures group.

It was agreed that the Secretary would write to request a Cycle to Work meeting previously promised for mid-September.

It was reported that the Chief Executive of EA had not yet responded with a date for a meeting to discuss budget cuts. It was reported that the Chief Executive post was likely to be advertised after Christmas.

An update was given by the Secretary on the issue of a Teachers’ Side Support Officer (TSSO). He indicated that the Minister may press for a degree of “single table bargaining” where commonalities arose, but it was agreed to protect the Teachers’ negotiating procedures as they were. It was noted that the TSSO would largely be an administrative post but that knowledge of the Union environment would be important. It was noted that the authority of the 5 unions would not be usurped. It was agreed that the Chair and Secretary would meet DE to discuss the post and report back.

A CPD paper was considered and it was stressed that any process linked with PRSD should be “light touch”. Concerns were raised about the practicalities of EPD where a newly-qualified teacher’s early work might be episodic, part-time or irregular. It was agreed that the paper should not be tabled at this stage but may be introduced at a later stage.

The concerns regarding the future Education Budget were discussed and it was agreed to form an Action Group of one per Interest to organise a campaign. A discussion of the bilateral meetings with DE Officials took place and the position of Interests on what might resolve the Industrial Action was set out.

It was noted that developments in SEN should be noted carefully and any future consultation should be responded to by all.

The nominations to GTC NI were noted and it was agreed that all the NITC representatives should be brought together for a meeting at some stage.

16th November, 2015
An exchange of letters to and from the Minister were noted and Mary Dorman, INTO, was reserve.

It was noted that Management Side had undertaken to send on a job description for the MSSO and it was to be circulated to all unions.

The Cycle to Work Scheme was discussed including the fact that teachers’ pensions may be affected by it as it is a salary sacrifice scheme. Advice on implications will need to be conveyed to members.

Beirut and Palestine.
After this Carmel Gallagher, the Registrar of GTC NI, and her colleague, Gerry Devlin, were welcomed to the meeting to outline the timetable for elections to GTC. It was noted that the elections would be based on the 2010 scheme and that the Electoral Reform Society would act as independent Scrutineer. The categories were outlined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>To be elected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statutory Nursery sector</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Primary Principals</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Principals</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Primary teachers</td>
<td>13,024</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary teachers</td>
<td>10,867</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special school teachers</td>
<td>1,001</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was noted that candidates could submit election addresses of 100 words with a photograph to be published in the GTC election brochure.

The Registrar advised that she would wish to address NITC in the future about the revised teacher competencies. She stated that the proposal is to reduce them from 27 to 5 with a system of “provisional”, “full” and “advanced” designations.

It was agreed that a group of one per Interest would meet with GTC in the New Year to discuss the former RTU middle, senior and leadership competencies. The GTC representatives left the meeting.

A discussion took place on concerns about the timing of redundancies and appeals.
and on whether a redundancy could be effected beyond 31st September. An update was given on Industrial Action.

It was agreed to await the Chancellor’s statement on 25th November before considering any future campaign.

It was agreed that NITC would support an ILiAD seminar to be held in Antrim Board Centre in December.
### 6. Teachers’ Negotiating Committee – Salaries and Conditions

The Teachers’ Negotiating Committee (TNC) meets on request to ratify the business conducted through the Joint Working Party (JWP). Its meetings are made up of 10 from the Teachers’ Side (2 per Interest) and 19 from Management Side (DE and all employing authorities).

Since the retirement of the Independent Chairperson the Chair of Management Side, Barry Mulholland, has chaired TNC meetings and this will now alternate with the Teachers’ Side Chair. Members who have participated in the meetings of TNC during 2015/16 were:

Teachers’ Side: Avril Hall-Callaghan, UTU; Julie Orr, UTU; Fern Turner, NAHT; Harry Greer, NAHT; Justin McCamphill, NASUWT; Ngaire McCann, NASUWT; Gerry Murphy, INTO; Tony Carlin, INTO; Mark Langhammer, ATL; Colin Kinney, ATL.

During 2015/16 there were two meetings of the TNC. There was very little business emanating from the JWP as there was very little agreed during the year.

Management Side were reluctant to move forward, continuing to insist that they wanted to re-open the Jordanstown Agreement. Teachers’ Side was vehemently opposed to entering into any such negotiations, given that the current economic climate is so poor. Teachers are already snowed under with workload and the Jordanstown Agreement is one of the few protections they have.

Several important matters were “put on the long finger” in an attempt to persuade Teachers’ Side to soften their stance but Teachers’ Side stood firm. As a result joint work ceased in a number of very important areas, for example the development of joint guidance on the use of Social Media. Teachers’ Side attempted to circumvent the impasse by attaching the long-standing claim on Maternity/Paternity/Adoptive and Assisted Pregnancy Leave to the Pay Claim but when it was presented in the estimates of the cost of the pay claim it was decided that Teachers’ Side would withdraw it and negotiate on it separately.

Despite the attempts by Management Side to stand in the way of progress nevertheless there were a number of revised documents presented to TNC for ratification, as follows:

#### Tuesday 15th December, 2015

In accordance with paragraph 6.4 of the Constitution Avril Hall-Callaghan was proposed as Chair. The minutes of the previous TNC meeting on Tuesday 1st April 2014 were agreed. There was no Chair’s business so the meeting went on to ratify the following TNC Circulars:

- TNC 2015/2 – Teachers’ Maternity Leave Scheme
- TNC 2015/4 – Teachers’ Adoption Scheme.
- TNC 2015/5 – Shared Parental Leave Scheme.

Teachers’ Side reminded Management Side that these documents had been accepted to ensure that they were statutorily compliant and to allow teachers to avail of Shared Parental leave, and reminded those present that the Teachers’ Side Claim on Maternity/Paternity/Adoption and Assisted Pregnancy had been presented to Management Side as part of the Pay Claim.

There was no further business and it was agreed that the next meeting of the TNC would take place directly after the next JWP meeting in January.

#### Tuesday 19th January, 2016

In the absence of Barry Mulholland, who had tendered his apologies as he had been called to another meeting, Avril Hall-Callaghan, UTU, took the Chair. The minutes of the meeting of 15th December were agreed.

There was a single item of business for consideration:

- TNC 2016/1 – The Appropriate Use of the Northern Ireland Substitute Register (NISTR) and Engagement of Substitute Teachers in all Schools.

This document was ratified on the understanding that further work was outstanding in terms of the rights of teachers employed under the NISTR Scheme.

There was no other business.
7. Teachers’ Negotiating Committee – JWP

The General Secretary, Avril Hall-Callaghan, represents the UTU on the Joint Working Party (JWP) of the Teachers’ Negotiating Committee (TNC). The JWP does all the preparatory negotiating in drawing up new or revised procedures prior to their ratification by TNC. Usually working groups are set up, containing both teacher representatives and employer representatives (not necessarily members of either JWP or TNC, but with expertise in the area under discussion). The JWP meetings are held in UTU Headquarters monthly and Julie Orr, UTU President, has attended both the pre-meetings and meetings this year. A short pre-meeting of both sides of JWP takes place immediately prior to the meeting to agree the minutes, who is to speak on each item and to consider Any Other Business items.

Once new or revised procedures are drawn up by the working groups they are submitted to JWP and then passed to each Side for consideration. Each union within NITC discusses the document separately and then comes together, usually at the next NITC or Interests meeting to come to a decision on whether to accept the document or to suggest amendments. Under the current NITC Constitution, provided 4 of the 5 unions agree to accept a TNC agreement, then it is put in place and issued to schools through the Employing Authorities.

The chairing of JWP is done on a joint basis with the Chair of Management Side (Barry Mulholland) and the Chair of Teachers’ Side (Avril Hall-Callaghan) chairing alternate meetings.

Teachers’ Side of JWP during 2014/15 included:
Avril Hall-Callaghan, UTU, Chair; Julie Orr, UTU; Tony Carlin, INTO; Gerry Murphy, INTO; Tommy McGlone, INTO [Observer]; Mark McTaggart, INTO; Mark Langhammer, ATL; Theresa Devenny, ATL; Fern Turner, NAHT; Jonathan Gray, NAHT; Harry Greer, NAHT; Colin Kinney, ATL; Justin McCamphill, NASUWT; Sean McElhinney, NASUWT; Peter Scott, NASUWT; Ngaire McCann, NASUWT.

Management Side of JWP during 2014/15 included:
Barry Mulholland, WELB & EA, Chair; Jim Clarke, CCMS; John Mason, SEEELB & RA; Shane McCurdy, NEELB & EA; Laverne Montgomery, DE; Suzette Bracken, CCMS; Eugene O’Neill, CCMS; Geraldine Quinn, DE; Robbie McGreavy, EA; Maria Morgan, EA; N.O’Neill, GBA; Gavin Boyd, EA; Declan Marlow, EA.

In attendance:
Jill Loughridge, EA; Jackie Palmer, DE; Tony McCabe, UTU.

6th March 2015

• The Chair advised that a joint redundancy meeting was scheduled for 25th March and that Management Side were working on the mechanics of the process for curricular redundancy and would share documentation with Teachers’ Side in the near future.
• The position of language tutors was raised and a Management Side representative advised that JWP was not the proper forum for consultation as these tutors were not employed under teachers’ terms and conditions. The Chair agreed that Management Side would consider this position.
• Teachers’ Side raised the issue of non-standard letters being issued regarding redundancy.
• It was confirmed that the TNC circular on E-learning had been issued to employers on 2nd March for circulation to schools.
• Both sides agreed the documentation which had been provided from the Area Learning Partnerships Working Group.
• It was noted that the work of the Social Media Policy sub-group was ongoing.
• It was further noted that an informal review of the School Reorganisation Agreement was also underway.
• Management Side confirmed that they are in agreement that another Health & Wellbeing survey would be useful but were unable to give any further response regarding the THAW report. Teachers’ Side expressed its frustration regarding this further delay.
• Management Side confirmed that the conciliation meeting regarding the Disciplinary Procedure had been arranged.
• The Chair confirmed that a letter had now issued to employers regarding the use of HR Consultants.
• The Chair confirmed that a meeting was scheduled to take place to discuss the 2014/15 pay award. NASUWT stated that they would not be taking part in this meeting.
• The Chair advised that a single NISTR group was being set up and asked for Teacher’s Side nominations. It was noted that the recently agreed circular on Precautionary Suspensions made reference to temporary teachers and advised that the NISTR group should consider the position of temporary teachers as a priority.
• The NITC Secretary asked that the regulations pertaining to teachers with over 4 years’ service should be considered as a matter of urgency.
• The Chair advised that the statistics on stress-related illness supplied by DE had been shared with Teachers’ Side. Teachers’ Side suggested that implementation of the THAW strategy would offer a solution.
• The Chair advised that revised Drugs Guidance for schools had been updated and would be circulated to both sides.
• The Chair advised that the TNC Constitution had been amended to reflect the establishment of EA.
• The Chair advised that the Minister was issuing a note to employers reminding schools to implement the Workload Agreement.
• It was noted that all staff transferring to EA, including teaching staff, must be supplied with a letter informing them of this. Principals have been asked to deliver them to staff.
• It was confirmed that only teachers moving to a new place of work should be required to undergo a vetting procedure.
• The NITC Secretary requested that Management Side give consideration to issuing correspondence to post-primary schools to ensure individuals are granted the necessary leave to undertake their roles as external assessors.

27th April 2015

• A problem regarding the wording of a letter which outlined the conditions for teachers accessing curricular redundancy was highlighted.
• It was confirmed that a compulsory curricular redundancy would attract the same terms regarding compensatory payment but that the school budget would have to fund it.
• It was agreed that a joint group would be established in the autumn to evaluate the e-learning pilot.
• It was noted that work was still on-going in relation to the Social Media Working Group.
• The informal review of the School Reorganisation Agreement had resulted in identification of the matters for consideration within the Formal Review.
• Management Side confirmed that there were a number of amendments which they wished to propose to the strategy.
• A conciliation meeting on the Disciplinary Procedure had taken place and Teachers’ Side expressed their disappointment that parity with the non-teaching unions had not been reached.
• A “brainstorming” meeting on the Teachers Pay Award 2014/15 was set up to develop proposals on a joint basis.

19th May 2015

• Concerns were expressed that the NISTR group had not made any progress to date.
• Teachers’ Side made three suggestions regarding the TNC Constitution:
  [1] There should be an independent Chair.
  [2] All references to ELBs should be amended.
  [3] Representation from GBA and EA is out of proportion.
• Management Side agreed to consider these matters. Teachers’ Side also expressed concerns about the lack of progress made through TNC.
• Management Side confirmed that a letter had issued from the Minister in relation to Workload and agreed that employers would issue a reminder to schools as soon as possible.
• Management Side advised that they were currently considering issuing guidance to schools regarding the release of teachers to perform their duties as external advisors.
• It was confirmed that the Efficient Discharge Scheme had been launched and a request for Panel members from Teachers’ Side was made.
• Teachers’ Side requested clarification on the position of teachers regarding exclusion from jury service.
• Management Side stated that they wished to engage with Teachers’ Side in order to identify any relevant issues to assist in bringing an end to the action. Teachers’ Side they would consider engaging when the request is received in writing and when they had received confirmation that the employers had issued the reminder about the Workload Agreement.

The DE representative stated that the applicants had been divided into 4 priority groups as follows:
Priority 1 65
Priority 2 37
Priority 3 46
Priority 4 13

and all applicants had been advised which Priority Group they were in.

• UTU, ATL and INTO agreed that they were willing to meet with Management Side to discuss Industrial Action but it was made clear that there would be no suspension of the Action at this time.

16th June 2015

• An update on Voluntary Redundancy was given, confirming that out of the 226 applications received, 71 had been confirmed as sufficient funds had been set aside for School reorganisations. The remaining applications are subject to DE gaining access to the Public Sector Transformation Fund and applicants have been informed accordingly.

• Teachers’ Side noted that the number of redundancies fell short of the 500 predicted by DE.

• Teachers’ Side also expressed disappointment that the employers had not arranged meetings to keep the unions informed of position regarding redundancies.

• Management Side had still not responded to Teachers’ Side about the amendments they wished to make to the THAW document. They were not in a position to agree a Health & Safety Working Group either.

• Management Side agreed to the amendment to the Disciplinary Procedure to reflect the term included in the support unions’ procedure to affirm that LRA Appeal decisions are “final and binding”.

• A DE representative advised that the 2014 Teachers’ Pay remit had been submitted to DFP for their consideration.

• Management Side advised that a draft Terms of Reference for the NISTR group had been drawn up by Helen Duffy and would be shared with NITC.

• Teachers’ Side expressed their concerns that decisions on the permanency of Fixed Term Workers who had been employed for over 4 years were not being processed. Management Side asked that they be supplied with details of any outstanding cases.

• Management Side advised that they would not be accepting Teachers’ Side’s suggestions about the composition of Management Side nor the suggestion that there be an Independent Chair, and asked Teachers’ Side to reconsider.

15th September 2015

• It was noted that in addition to the 71 redundancies approved in June, a further 128 voluntary redundancies had been approved in July, at a cost of £5m. A “lessons learnt” meeting is scheduled for the end of September.

• Management Side advised that the long-awaited amended THAW document should be issued by mid-September.

• It was reported that the newly-appointed Management Side Support Officer, Declan Marlow (ex-WELB) was to take up his post on 1st October 2015.

• An amended Disciplinary Procedure, to include “final and binding” along with some other changes was to be issued soon. The Chair of Teachers’ Side requested that the document would show tracked changes.

• Management Side indicated that they would like to meet in the first two weeks of October to discuss the Pay Claim.

• It was noted that a meeting of the NISTR Group was to take place soon and it was agreed that consideration of the terms and conditions of temporary teachers employed under NISTR would be discussed.

• Following discussion regarding the necessity of an Independent Chair and the position of DE within the Negotiating Machinery, Teachers’ Side undertook to write to Management Side with further proposals.

• It was noted that Area Learning Co-ordinators have to be employed by a school in the Partnership, not the EA.

• Management Side confirmed that Teachers’ Side was welcome to attend Regional Health and Safety Committees and that in addition the JWP would establish a Health and Safety Working Group.

• Teachers’ Side reported that the revised maternity, Paternity and Adoptive Leave Schemes and the Shared Parental Leave Scheme would be considered at the next NITC meeting.

• A schedule of meetings for 2015/16 was agreed, with meetings continuing to take place in UTU Headquarters.

• The issue of funding for split-site schools was raised and Management Side advised that the matter was still under consideration and correspondence was about to be issued.

• Concerns about the criteria to access Shared Education Funding were raised, with suggestions that this may be of interest to the media.

• The dress-code for teachers attending Prize-giving functions was discussed and it was agreed that this was a school matter and not part of a teacher’s terms and conditions of employment.
13th October 2015

- It was noted that “lessons learned” meetings had taken place in September and as a result advice is being put to the Minister.
- It was confirmed that monthly meetings would be scheduled to discuss progress on redundancies.
- It was noted that a bid would be made to the Public Sector Transformation Fund by the end of November 2015.
- It was confirmed that there had been 3 successful applications to the Efficient Discharge Scheme in 2015.
- Management Side confirmed that the Health & Safety Working Group would be led by the Management Side Support Officer. Teachers’ Side requested an agenda and timeframe.
- A sub-group was set up to finalise the Disciplinary Procedure with the final document to come back for ratification by JWP.
- Management Side informed the meeting that Child Protection Training would be provided by the EA and would be open to all.
- Sub-groups were set up to discuss various aspects of the Pay Claim.
- Concerns about the difficulty of using NISTR were raised by Teachers’ Side and it was agreed these would be passed on to the NISTR team.
- It was suggested that a meeting be set up between the two Chairs, the Secretary of NITC and one other union representative to discuss the issues.
- It was agreed that a meeting to discuss Industrial Action would be held with Management Side following the next meeting of JWP.
- It was noted that Teachers’ Side still had some concerns about the Shared Parental Leave Policy.
- It was suggested that the Social Media Policy should be re-drafted and issued as “guidance”.
- It was noted that the issue of split-site funding should be raised directly with the EA.
- Concerns regarding development proposal criteria were to be raised directly with DE.
- An amended version of the Supporting Effective Leadership document to include provision for Vice Principals undertaking Leadership roles was to be drafted for the November JWP meeting.

10th November 2015

- Management Side confirmed that the Minister had made his decision regarding terms for the 2016 redundancies which would be offered at the “double redundancy” rate of up to 60 weeks.
- A discussion took place about whether redundancies could be declared for dates other than 31st August. Teachers’ Side disputed this matter.
- The meeting was informed that the Efficient Discharge Scheme was still under consideration by the Minister.
- It was noted that three sub-groups relating to the Pay Claim as well as the NISTR sub-group were scheduled to meet during November.
- It was noted that invitations to Regional Health & Safety Committees would be issued in the near future.
- Policies on Maternity, Paternity, Adoptive and Shared Parental Leave were agreed, effective immediately. It was noted that a claim for a revised maternity/paternity/adoption scheme is on-going as part of the salary claim.
- Management Side stated that it was their priority to resolve the Industrial Action and that they would have to prioritise it and suspend further work on Social Media guidelines. Teachers’ Side emphasised the urgent need for guidance regarding Social Media.
- It was noted that Management Side would produce a tracked changes document on Supporting Effective Leadership.
- It was stated that the review of the School Reorganisation Agreement would have to be put on hold due to prioritisation of the meetings to resolve the Industrial Action.
- It was advised that the LRA would be facilitating a seminar on TUPE to both Management Side and Teachers’ Side in January.
- It was agreed that a TNC meeting would be held immediately after JWP in December.

15th December 2015

- Management Side confirmed that it was hoped to hold a redundancy update meeting after every JWP from January onwards. It was confirmed that a letter would be issued to schools in December stating the terms of release of redundant teachers.
- Further discussion took place on the effective date of a redundancy and it was confirmed that terms no less favourable would be offered to a teacher who was declared redundant at a date other than 31st August.
- It was confirmed that the Minister had agreed to run the Efficient Discharge Scheme again in 2016 with terms of up to 52 weeks.
- It was advised that Management Side would issue the revised Disciplinary Procedure in the next few days.
- Teachers’ Side raised concerns regarding the standard of the Child Protection training that had been delivered recently. An assurance was given that further training would be arranged.
• Clarification was sought regarding the wording of the NISTR contract and the consequences for schools that did not follow correct procedures. The document is to be issued as guidance and schools challenged if procedures are not followed. Further work on entitlement was to be done in January.

• Teachers' Side was asked to supply a job specification for a Trade Union Side Officer.

• It was noted that the exploratory talks on resolving the Industrial Action had been useful. Teachers' Side enquired if the suggested action had been carried out and it was confirmed that the Minister had been advised of the concerns. It was agreed that a copy of correspondence would be shared prior to issue.

• It was reported that the revised Maternity/Paternity/Adoption and Shared Parental Leave documents had been agreed and would be ratified at a TNC meeting immediately after the JWP meeting. It was agreed that an Equality Screening exercise would be carried out by EA.

• The draft document on teachers employed as Examiners and Moderators is to go to the next NITC meeting and will then be issued as guidance.

• It was advised that concerns regarding Governance of schools should be raised with the EA.

• A meeting had been set up to further discuss the Cycle to Work Scheme.
8. Pensions & Teachers’ Superannuation Consultative Committee (TSCC)

The Union’s General Secretary, Avril Hall-Callaghan, represented the Union at the final meeting of the Teachers Superannuation Consultative Committee (TSCC) on 19th March. From April 2015 the new government rules on pensions came in, with the oversight of Pensions becoming the responsibility of a Pensions Board. The Pensions Board is made up of publically appointed representatives and Rosemary Barton, a former President of UTU, was appointed to this Public Body.

As the NI Pensions no longer relate to the Pensions Body for England and Wales, our long-standing membership of the Teachers’ Panel of the Teachers’ Superannuation Working Party (hosted in the offices of NUT in London) came to an end. The UTU would wish to place on record its sincere thanks to Andrew Morris, NUT, Secretary to the Teachers’ Panel and his predecessor, Barry Fawcett, NUT, for all their help and advice over many years and for their excellent stewardship of their role in representing teachers’ interests in the Pensions negotiating arena.

In Northern Ireland a body similar to the TSCC was set up, known as the Teachers’ Pension Scheme Advisory Board (SAB), where any issues relating to Teachers’ Pensions are discussed. The organisations invited to be members of the SAB were as follows:

DE, DEL, ATL, NAHT, NASUWT, INTO, UTU, UCU, EA, CCMS, ANIC, NICIE, CnaG and GBA.

The first meeting of this body was scheduled for 7th May, 2015 but as that coincided with the General Election it was postponed until 16th June, 2015.

16th June 2015

It was agreed that the monthly meetings which took place in the lead up to the Pension Reform were no longer necessary and that this body would meet on a quarterly basis. Mr Seamus Gallagher, DE, stated that he would act as Chairperson of the SAB and that each organisation would determine who represents them at each meeting. He distributed Conflict of Interest forms to be signed by the end of June.

Mr Gallagher gave an overview of the Pensions Board (PB) and confirmed that the first meeting had been held on 3rd June. The recruitment of an Independent Chair was nearing completion and DE would announce the appointment through a press release.

The role of DE Officials on the Pensions Board was queried and it was confirmed that they had voting rights. It was suggested that this should be kept under review and it was noted that a formal review had been built in after one year of operation. It was indicated that Opt Out data had been a standing item on the TSCC agenda and it was agreed that this would continue on into the SAB. Statistics were supplied for May 2015 which indicated that there had been 35 opt-outs during April and May. This was compared to an annual total of 285 for 2014/15.

It was stated that the current AVC regulation amendments were out for consultation for a 4 week period. As the regulations introduce improvements rather than any detriment to members it was proposed that they would be retrospective to 6th April 2015.

An enquiry was made about the availability of scheme factors and Mr Gallagher confirmed that GAD had supplied the Department with a number of scheme factors which he would share with members.

It was confirmed that any organisation could request an issue to be included on the agenda by notifying the Pension Policy Team.

It was agreed that the packs of information provided for Pension Board members would be issued electronically to SAB members.

Mr Gallagher confirmed that it is a legal requirement that Annual Benefit Statements be issued to members from September 2016. A request was made that the statements include the best 3 year’s salary in the last 10 years to help members plan for their retirement.

It was confirmed that while nothing was written down about flexibility of time limits the Minister had acknowledged there would be some flexibility on the floor of the Assembly. There is to be consultation in the autumn about amendments to the premature retirement regulations to bring them up to date with the career-average changes.

The next quarterly SAB meeting was to be held on 17th November 2015, again in UTU Headquarters.
17th November 2016
The NIC/ICTU group co-ordinated by John O’Farrell of ICTU and chaired by Bumper Graham of NIPSA has continued to meet on a regular basis with Nuala O’Donnell of INTO, the elected representative of teachers, to represent the sector in meetings with government. The group met with a wider constituency of union representatives regularly during the year to report back on their meetings with DFP and to ensure transfer of information between the various public sector schemes.
9. Inspections

The Assembly Education Committee produced its Report on the ETI and Raising Standards in May 2013 and the Executive Summary is reproduced below:

Following consideration of: Departmental proposals to enhance the powers of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI); concerns raised in respect of the reported high stakes nature of school inspection; and the reported absence of consistency in the measurement of the value added by schools, the Committee undertook an inquiry into ETI and the school improvement process.

The Committee’s scrutiny was informed by: numerous written and oral submissions; Stakeholder events involving District Inspectors and Associate Assessors; a school visit and the OECD report on evaluation and assessment frameworks in Northern Ireland.

The Committee agreed that professional, independent, broadly-based, balanced inspection of schools is and should continue to be an essential component of the school improvement process. The Committee also found that although inspection is essential, it is neither reasonable nor sensible to expect schools to improve outcomes for pupils by simply repeatedly inspecting their effectiveness. The Committee agreed that the other essential component of the school improvement process was support for schools and that in order to ensure equitable provision, this should be better aligned with the inspection function as is the case in other jurisdictions.

The Committee found it difficult to reconcile the very different reported experiences and perceptions of the school inspection process. The Committee felt that this was in some part owing to poor or unforeseen inspection outcomes and a high stakes environment created by concerns relating to school sustainability. However, the Committee also felt that schools had reasonable concerns that would be addressed by providing: improved communication; more transparent practices in respect of inspection moderation; and a more independent complaints procedure coupled with more reliable school feedback channels.

In respect of school inspections, the Committee agreed that a more collaborative approach between ETI and schools was preferable and that this would be facilitated by: greater use of 3rd party questionnaires; revised inspection reports (written in plain English for parents while providing more detail for schools); use of less pejorative descriptors; a consistent role for District Inspectors on inspection teams with more time for pastoral support; and a revised approach to the inspection of immersion settings in line with other jurisdictions.

The Committee considered at some length the issues and the sensitivities associated with the measurement of the value added by schools both in terms of a formative pupil based measure and as a summative indicator of school or system effectiveness. The Committee agreed with GTCNI that to inform the assessment of the value added by schools, a standardised attainment baseline was required. The Committee also agreed with OECD that further work was needed by the Department to engage teachers and win their trust for the development of a measure of the value added by schools which properly recognises school context.

The Committee recognised the significant potential benefit of enhanced parental engagement with school improvement and the self-evaluation process. The Committee therefore strongly supported – in line with OECD suggestions – the establishment of a platform for representative parental consultation. The Committee felt that this was essential to address sometimes limited parental understanding and involvement in the school improvement process.

The Committee felt that its recommendations would go some way to address adverse or ill-informed perceptions of school inspection and school improvement. In order to mark the significant changes that are proposed and as part of the process of persuading stakeholders that a more collaborative and conciliatory approach is to be adopted to school inspection for improvement in future, the Committee felt that the realigned school inspection and Improvement service should be rebranded as the Northern Ireland Education Improvement Service (NIEIS). Additionally and to permit the NIEIS the freedom to: highlight good practice; identify improvement actions; set its own agenda for school improvement through inspection; undertake longitudinal studies and comment on Departmental policies, the Committee felt that the NIEIS should be established in statute as independent of the Department of Education.

The recommendations of the Assembly Education Committee were as follows:

1. The Committee recommends that in line with Every School a Good School, the Department should adequately resource school improvement services so as to equitably support improving outcomes in all schools across Northern Ireland not just for those in or near Formal Intervention.DE ACCEPTED THIS RECOMMENDATION
2. The Committee recommends that school improvement services should be aligned with school inspection in a single organisation in line with the practice in Scotland. The governance arrangements for the new inspection and improvement service must ensure the professional independence of inspection with an appropriate separation between this and the improvement function – as is the case in Education Scotland. DE CURRENTLY HAS NO PLANS TO MAKE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES WHICH REQUIRE LEGISLATIVE CHANGES.

3. The Committee recommends that ETI better communicates its inspection methodology and clearly sets out the process of external moderation for school inspections – indicating how the latter has been applied in each individual inspection report and that it desists forthwith in sharing draft inspection reports with DE or maintaining anything other than transparent communication channels with all stakeholders. DE ACCEPTS THIS RECOMMENDATION IN PART. ETI IS PILOTING PAIRED INSPECTIONS WITH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS. DE DISPUTES THAT DRAFT REPORTS ARE SHARED.

4. The Committee recommends that the school inspection complaints procedure should explicitly allow for the possibility of a revision to an inspection finding and that consideration should be given to a reformed school inspection complaints procedure which would allow for investigation by personnel outside of the inspectorate or the Department of Education. DE ACCEPTS THIS RECOMMENDATION AND COMMITS TO PUBLICATION IN SEPTEMBER 2015.

5. The Committee recommends that the inspectorate co-operates with GTCNI in the redesigning of post-inspection surveys and customer service assessments so as to ensure independent and robust assessment of the school inspection and improvement service. DE AGREES IN PRINCIPLE AND WILL REQUEST THAT NISRA SHOULD ENGAGE WITH APPROPRIATE STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING GTC.

6. The Committee recommends that anonymous questionnaires should only be included in a school inspection when the need for such a measure has been identified by inspectors and in the absence of a reliable, independent (parent, pupil, staff and governor) survey which has been undertaken by the school as part of the School Development Plan process. DE "NOTES" THIS RECOMMENDATION.

7. The Committee recommends that in line with the practice in other jurisdictions, alternative inspection report publication measures should be adopted – specifically two school inspection reports should be produced – the first should be a detailed, formative inspection report which would be made available to the school only; the second should be a plain English, high level, public domain summative report which informs parental understanding of a school’s strengths and weaknesses. DE NOTES THAT THIS RECOMMENDATION "WILL REMAIN UNDER CONSIDERATION".

8. The Committee recommends that in line with the practice in other jurisdictions, less pejorative descriptors be adopted for public domain summative inspection reports and accompanied by plain English statements of a school’s strengths and weaknesses. DE NOTES THAT THIS RECOMMENDATION "WILL REMAIN UNDER CONSIDERATION".

9. The Committee recommends that in order to fully exploit the unique good practice experience and understanding of school context of District Inspectors, they should always have a role in the inspection of schools in their districts and should be allocated sufficient District Time to allow adequate provision of pastoral support for schools. DE NOTED THIS RECOMMENDATION AND QUOTES THAT "WHERE POSSIBLE THE DI SHOULD BE A MEMBER OF THE INSPECTION TEAM".

10. The Committee recommends that the Department should review its inspection practices for the IME sector and bring them into line with the inspection of immersion education provision in other jurisdictions – specifically the requirement to undertake inspections of IME schools and units in the Irish language. DE HAS NEITHER ACCEPTED NOR REJECTED THIS RECOMMENDATION STATING "IT HAS CONSIDERED THIS RECOMMENDATION VERY CAREFULLY AND ACCEPTS THE NEED FOR INSPECTIONS IN IRISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS SHOULD BE "DESIGNED TO REFLECT THE LEVEL OF IMMERSSION" "!

11. The Committee recommends that a reliable standardised baseline of attainment at key pupil junctures be introduced in order to provide a common objective formative measure of pupil value added by schools in all educational phases. The Committee further recommends that the Department engage a broad and representative cross-section of teachers to determine the best use of the baseline and the selection of other factors
12. The Committee recommends that in line with the OECD findings, measures should be adopted to more effectively promote a self-evaluation culture supported by training and guidance for school staff and governors; advice from District Inspectors; and including greater engagement with parents. **DE NOTES THE RECOMMENDATION, ACCEPTS THE POINT ON MEASUREMENT OF PUPIL VALUE ADDED** BUT **REMAINS OF THE VIEW THAT MODERATED TEACHER ASSESSMENT AT THE ENDS OF KEY STAGES 1, 2 AND 3 OF THE CROSS-CURRICULAR SKILLS OF COMMUNICATION AND USING MATHEMATICS REPRESENTS THE BEST MEANS OF INTRODUCING A COMMON OBJECTIVE MEASURE**.

13. The Committee recommends that District Inspectors should take a greater role in the mentoring, auditing and quality assuring of self-evaluation in schools. The Committee further recommends that in the longer term, when self-evaluation is effectively embedded in schools, consideration should be given to a revised inspection regime. **DE ACCEPTS THIS IN PRINCIPLE AND CITES ITS RISK BASED APPROACH TO INSPECTION AS HAVING BEEN ENDORSED BY THE OECD.**

14. The Committee recommends that, in line with OECD recommendations, the Department should establish a parental consultation platform and that this should be used to inform the development of understandable and accessible information on school inspection and school improvement for parents and should also be used to explore enhanced engagement options for parents relating to school and education policy. **DE ACCEPTS THAT IT WOULD BE MORE BENEFICIAL TO HAVE A STRUCTURED MEANS THROUGH WHICH TO INVOLVE AND CONSULT WITH PARENTS AT SYSTEM LEVEL AND WILL “GIVE CONSIDERATION” AS TO HOW THIS COULD BE BEST ACHIEVED.**

15. The Committee recommends that the Education and Training Inspectorate should be renamed as the “Northern Ireland Education Improvement Service (NIEIS)”. The explicit focus of the rebranded organisation would be improvement through inspection. **DE HAS NO PLANS TO RENAME THE INSPECTORATE.**

16. The Committee recommends that the new “Northern Ireland Education Improvement Service” be statutorily independent from the Department of Education and that research be undertaken to establish the most appropriate governance model for the new organisation. The new model should allow the independent organisation to inspect school effectiveness; advise impartially on DE policy and undertake supporting longitudinal data analysis studies of the effectiveness of education policy in all phases. **DE HAS “NO PLANS” TO ESTABLISH A NEW ORGANISATION.**

The Minister made his response to the Inquiry on 17th June, 2014 and this is summarised below each recommendation in capitals. Despite the Chief Inspector’s protestations that she was working on a number of changes anyway, irrespective of the Education Committee Report, nevertheless it would seem that much has been learnt and the UTU is happier that the direction of travel of ETI has been somewhat moderated.

The new scheme whereby a representative of the school being inspected has the option to sit in on the ETI meetings has been implemented, and seems to be relatively successful.

There were only two meetings between the ETI and NITC, the April and June meetings both being postponed, as follows.

**Monday 18th May, 2015**

Julie Orr, President attended on behalf of UTU. ETI provided an overview of SEN provision, drawing on the most recent findings in the Chief Inspector’s Report 2012-2014. Reference was also made to a dissemination event being held in Newry on 29th May for Special Schools and Units which would provide an opportunity to share best practice. An update was also provided on the establishment of hubs, clusters and the capacity building pilot. Other on-going work includes a review of Nurture Unit provision and an evaluation of SEN Literacy in Stranmillis and St Mary’s. A discussion took place on the perception within the education system of diminishing numbers of Special Schools and the impact this could have on mainstream schools. ETI confirmed that numbers are in fact rising in Special Schools and an increasing amount is being spent on SEN overall.

ETI provided an update on the recent consultation on performance levels. The majority of the responses were in favour of the current 6 performance levels being replaced by 4 and in providing evaluations of the three key areas [Achievement and Standards, Quality of Provision and Leadership and Management] with 6
descriptors – outstanding, very good, good, important areas for improvement, significant areas for improvement and requires urgent improvement. NITC indicated that they supported these changes.

ETI outlined further developments and indicated that the sustaining improvement is planned for September to provide detail on the process of inspection and to launch an inspection handbook. It was stated that this was being taken forward in response to the Education Committee’s recommendations on transparency. ETI also said it would be revising its quality assurance processes, Independent School guidance and Development Proposal guidance. NITC expressed reservations about the familiarisation event and its potential impact on the system. Issues were also raised about the quality assurance process.

21st September, 2015
NITC sought an update on each of the Education Committee’s recommendations and received the following response:

Rec 2: ETI expressed concerns about the lack of resources, ETI stated that inspection itself promotes improvement and ETI makes a significant contribution to building capacity.

Rec 3 & 4: NITC acknowledged the work ETI has done recently in communicating inspection methodology and requested information on ‘external moderation’. ETI interprets this as ETI quality assurance and went on to say that the Complaints Procedure had been reviewed in 2015 and no changes were made. NITC is to revert to the Education Committee on this matter.

Rec 5: NITC accepted that ETI had co-operated with GTC in the redesign of post inspection surveys. NITC requested further clarification on elements of the presentation to principals on 14th September, particularly around Freedom of Information and the Data Protection Act. ETI said they would present a more detailed reply on this at the next meeting.

Rec 7: ETI advised that this recommendation will remain under consideration while work continues on the embedding of the Role of the Representative and improving the quality of inspection reports. ETI is considering introducing a parents’ panel to further gather feedback.

Rec 9: ETI confirmed that where resources permit District Inspectors are always members of Inspection Teams.

Rec 10: ETI confirmed that its capacity for Irish Medium had improved. ETI confirmed that all inspectors recruited to their roles are subject to a robust selection process and all inspection teams are balanced. They stated that they would not be opposed to recruiting on the basis of seconded posts in future to build up further capacity in the system.

NITC gave positive feedback on the conference held on 14th September. ETI provided a brief update on the development of inspections planned for the current academic year. New conclusions for overall effectiveness and performance levels have been introduced from September 2015 and these are to be monitored. Sustaining improvement inspections are to continue to be piloted and ETI also plans to begin trialling post primary questionnaires with a view to a fuller roll-out after Christmas, in addition to the proposed introduction of a parents’ panel.

On 2nd October UTU received an invitation from the Education Committee of the Assembly asking for their comments on the ETI. The following is the response drawn up by the Education and Policy sub-committee of the UTU Central Executive Committee:

UTU Response: Changes to School Inspections
The Ulster Teachers’ Union (UTU) welcomes the opportunity to furnish you with our views on the effectiveness of the changes made to the school inspection process. UTU represents approximately 6,500 members of the teaching profession including principals, vice-principals, teachers and trainee teachers. UTU members are employed in all five area regions, across all the sectors in nursery, primary, post-primary (including grammar schools) and special schools.

1. Changes to descriptors
   - UTU agrees that moving away from a one-word synopsis of overall effectiveness affords some sensitivity in ETI’s feedback, particularly to those schools in receipt of less than pleasing reviews. Despite this, UTU is concerned that there are still opportunities for a one-size-fits-all style of commentary in the inspection report.
   - We note some inconsistency in ETI’s approach to evaluating schools. The use of four new conclusive statements for overall effectiveness stands at odds with six performance level descriptors. UTU is uncertain as to how far the conclusive comments for overall effectiveness, in their currently revised form, are adequately differentiated to celebrate the success of those schools attaining ‘Outstanding’ as opposed to ‘Very Good’; or, likewise, to distinguish the extent of underperformance for those schools attaining
UTU would also like to draw attention to the unmeasured use of language in the revised performance levels. The former ‘Satisfactory’ descriptor has been replaced with “important area(s) for improvement” which makes it almost indistinguishable from “significant improvement” that has replaced the former ‘Inadequate’ descriptor. We would strongly urge ETI to rethink the phrasing of this statement to acknowledge the existence of some good practice despite some areas for development as was encapsulated by ‘Satisfactory’. We would suggest ‘specific’ or ‘defined area(s) for improvement’ as an appropriate improvement.

UTU recommends that streamlining of the evaluative statements needs to go further. UTU fully supports a reduction of performance levels from the current six level descriptors to four or less descriptors. A reduction on this scale would be more consistent with the number of conclusive statements and would avoid the clumsy clumping of ‘Outstanding’ and ‘Very Good’ in the conclusive statement; the same would apply to ‘Inadequate’ and ‘Unsatisfactory’.

UTU also believes that, as a body charged with the responsibility of providing a public service, that ETI ought to be ensuring that the information it provides ought to be easily transferrable, comparable and, above all, comprehensive. While there are significant steps towards improvement, UTU does not believe, for many of the afore-mentioned reasons, that ETI has made access to information easier for educational professionals or parents.

2. Changes to formal intervention

UTU notes that ESaGS characterises the identification of areas of improvement coupled with external support as being the key elements to school improvement. While ETI(NI) continues to hold fast to its role of observing, reporting and assessing, only part of an incomplete process, within the context of school improvement, will ever be taking place.

At a budget of around £5,000,000, ETI needs to develop value-added within the Formal Intervention Process by moving away from a journalistic review of what is going well/wrong in the educational setting and, instead, towards sign-posting and supporting schools on how to move forward.

UTU notes, with dismay, that ETI has been irresponsible in its handling of resources by omitting to take steps towards aligning school inspections with school improvement services as was recommended by the Education Committee. ETI makes the following statement on its website that undercuts any claim that it is truly committed to providing a supportive school improvement service: “It is not the duty of the Education and Training Inspectorate to provide extended support for teachers and schools”. This further contravenes the recommendations from the Education Committee that urge ETI to rebrand itself as the “Northern Ireland Education Improvement Service” (NIEIS) when support is not believed to be part of ETI’s own role. Nonetheless, UTU is in full agreement with the Education Committee’s recommendations with regards to the formation of an organisation such as the proposed NIEIS; school improvement and inspections should ultimately be accommodated under a single organisation.

With the cessation of CASS, except where formal intervention is required, and coupled with ETI’s refusal to get actively involved in supporting schools, schools in the ‘Good’ category will have little assurance or support to take the necessary steps towards the “Very good” or “Outstanding” grades. The closure of RTU’s Summer School courses has only served to place CPD further out of reach from a committed and dedicated teaching workforce that values such training.

UTU is concerned that the FIP revisions do not take into account the progressive erosion of a funding-deprived CASS over an extended period of several years. The time-scale revisions and reduction in follow-up inspections will afford affected schools less time to take steps towards quality, long-term improvement. While CASS remains, at best, skeletal, the reduction in time between the first and follow-up inspection will only serve to add stress to an already-stretched teaching workforce. UTU supports self-evaluation but would underline that such a process is resource-driven; the value of and access to CASS cannot be under-estimated.

3. Development of a parents’ panel

UTU agrees that input from parents should be retained as part of the inspection process so it is not surprising that OECD have included this in its recommendations for ETI’s service provision. In the absence of any guidance or directive as to the formation and facilitation of such a panel, UTU is concerned by the level of risk.

UTU, therefore, calls on ETI to provide guidance on procedures that would ensure prevention of potential abuse of the forum. Such a panel must not be allowed to become an opportunity for parents to merely air personal resentments or to attack the work of the school under the guise of evaluation. More information is urgently required from ETI as to how the
parents’ panel will function, specifically as to how it will be managed so that the breadth of perspectives and the focus of meaningful discussions are protected and how the confidentiality of teaching professionals will be preserved.

4. Joint lesson observation

- UTU appreciates attempts made by the inspectorate to be transparent in the inspection process; however, what the inspectorate does will not serve to empower or inform a principal how to go about improving the educational setting. This specialist ‘coaching’ for inspections will not promote quality school improvement any more than ‘coaching’ children for post-primary transfer assessments promoted quality learning.
- The joint lesson observation does not go far enough in providing quality support to schools. UTU would, however, welcome the creation of additional guidance material from ETI that would complement the joint lesson observation service. Teachers would undoubtedly have more confidence in the inspection process were they to be assured that inspectors had recent, relevant and successful experience within their field. Too many times, this has not been the case.
- For the purpose of school improvement, demonstrations of outstanding practice and models of excellence, drawing on the professionalism of its inspection team, would be a more purposeful, collegial and effective approach to school improvement.

5. Inclusion of all school leaders in inspection and moderation meetings

- UTU welcomes efforts currently being made by ETI to promote transparency and openness, into the inspection process, by its current pilot of the school “representative” role.
- UTU is concerned that the outcome of the Representative pilots are premature. UTU recalls how the outcomes from pilots appear to have been trialled in schools with ‘Good’ or better outcomes. We would urgently call on ETI to pilot these in schools where the outcomes are less favourable in order to gauge a balanced outcome from the pilot.

Further comments

- UTU observes the absence of an independent appeal process places ETI’s current Complaints Procedure out of kilter with other public services. The lack of such an appeal process contradicts the value that ETI places upon external review as part of corporate improvement. This is a vital omission that must be corrected.

- UTU concurs completely with the Education Committee in its recommendations for two school inspection reports – a detailed inspection report exclusively for school improvement and evaluative purpose and another streamlined version for parents.
- UTU is also concerned that the use of Sustainability Inspections, also affectionately referred to as ‘health checks’, squanders financial and human resourcing during austere times. ETI’s resources would be better placed into supporting (and not merely inspecting) schools that need it most. The ethos behind these so-called ‘health checks’ only undermines and puts into question the integrity and capability of teaching professionals to consistently and ably deliver quality teaching unsupervised. This method of merely checking up on teaching professionals must not be allowed to continue at the expense of vital, yet finite, departmental funding.
- UTU also welcomes a revision of attitudes on the part of ETI towards the supportive role of the district inspector. While the level of support is not in-line with the requirements of our members, this role is nonetheless a welcome asset.

There are two significant areas for improvement which UTU (and NITC) believes need to be altered:
(a) The amount of data requested prior to an inspection, much of which is already available for download.
(b) An amendment to the Complaints Procedure to include an Independent Appeal on the outcome of an Inspection.

As a result of the lack of progress on the above, and the feeling that the meetings between NITC and ETI were not having any meaningful effect, the NITC wrote to the Minister, John O’Dowd on 2nd December requesting an urgent meeting.

A response was received from the Permanent Secretary on 13th January but it was far from satisfactory. It is in the hands of NITC where this matter will go next.
10. Strategic Forum

The Strategic Policy and Planning Forum was set up as a vehicle for the Department of Education, the employing authorities and the teacher unions to come together to help to shape policy and future planning within the Education Service. The Education Minister has endorsed the work of the Strategic Forum and has attended in the past. The UTU is represented on this body by Avril Hall-Callaghan and DE provides the Secretariat.

3rd March, 2015 (Forestview, Belfast)

The Chair confirmed that DE had received three nominations to participate in a meeting to discuss Academic Selection, namely Micheal O’Dubh (CnaG), Avril Hall-Callaghan (UTU) and Noreen Campbell (NICIE). Jim Clarke (CCMS) and Gerry Murphy (INTO) indicated a wish to be involved in the initial meeting.

It was agreed the first meeting would extend the remit to discuss the points made by the NICIE representative in the December meeting. NASUWT, ASPECT and GMB also agreed to nominate representatives to attend the meeting.

There was a Budget update as follows:
• The 2015/16 Budget had been finalised
• The minister is to appear before the Education Committee in March
• DE’s Savings Delivery Plan was to be published on the DE website on 4th March
• Education had received an additional £64.9m made up of £63 million in additional allocation in recognition of the pressures facing education and in response to the consultation, £1.6 million Executive Change Fund allocation for Nurture Units and £0.3 million European Peace IV match funding allocation.
• The Minister had announced the allocation of an additional £80 million to the Aggregated Schools Budget for 2015/16
• The outworking of the Final Budget is that the Resource Budget still faces a funding gap of £97.6 million whilst the Capital Budget still faces a reduction of £136.1 million
• With 77% of the Budget going directly to staff costs it was acknowledged that the Education Sector still faced a considerable challenge in 2015/16 and will need to make redundancies in order to address the funding gap.
• Schools received their budget allocations on 25th February 2015 and it would be March/April before figures regarding redundancies come in. It was estimated that 500 teaching and 1000 support staff jobs may be lost.

The need to know what was being made available for ear-marked funding was highlighted and concerns were raised about teachers perhaps not putting their names forward for redundancy due to last year’s limited funding restricting the process and the fact that Boards of Governors had, as a result, been involved in unnecessary work. It was confirmed that the processes to be followed had been issued to schools and agreed correspondence was to be used. Managing expectations was to be key.

It was reported that a useful meeting between Faustina Graham, DE, and the Future of School Staff Work Stream had taken place. It was noted that the Work Stream was considering the entire Education workforce, not just teachers, while the DE’s work focussed on teachers only. Avril Hall-Callaghan, UTU, highlighted the need for CPD to be at the top of the agenda. It was reported that one further meeting of the Work Stream was to take place in April with a view to bringing a final report to the Strategic Forum at the June meeting. It was confirmed that the Minister had already been sent the draft Report.

The Chair paid tribute to the Chief Executives of the ELBs and the Board members for the work they had done and said that the Minister would be hosting an event to celebrate their work. It was reported that the EA Board was to have 21 members and the Chair will be a Public Appointment. It was confirmed that the full Business Case for EA has been approved by DFP. The senior management group in EA will reduce from 55 to 22. Gavin Boyd confirmed that he was leading work on the Staff Transfer Scheme and an intranet site had been set up to keep staff informed. He said the focus was on Day 1 issues with the same people in the same locations dealing with business straight away.

The Chair advised that the DE budget is to reduce by 10% and as a result a sub-group needed to be set up to consider what changes to the Strategic Forum were required. It was agreed that the Academic Selection sub-group would look at this.

2nd June 2015 (UNISON)

Avril Hall-Callaghan (UTU) reported that following a review of the founding documents it had been suggested that the Forum would reduce its number of meetings to three a year (one per term). The representation discussed would be: DE (2); EA (2); CCMS (1); CnaG (1); GBA (1); Controlled Sector Support Body (1)
and 1 from each of the unions: UTU, ATL, NAHT, NASUWT, NIPSA, ASPECT, UNISON, UNITE and GMB. The suggestion to include GBA and the Controlled Sector Support Body did not attract unanimous approval and it was agreed to revisit this and EA representation at the next meeting.

Jim Clarke (CCMS) reported that there had been a further meeting of the sub-group to discuss Academic Selection and the transfer to post-primary education at the end of April. The following matters had been discussed:

- It was recognised that legislation on academic selection would not be changed without political agreement.
- It was agreed that it was important to begin now to set out evidence and proposals that might inform the development of the Programme for Government.
- The view was expressed that the public debate needed to change, with a greater focus on what our economy and society need from our education system.
- Some concern was expressed about the current disconnect between some DE policies e.g. area planning, collaboration v competition.
- The evidence from the best international systems was not given the focus it merited.
- There may be merit in considering the recent OECD Report detailing 10 key steps in the design and delivery of education.

Reference was made to the data available regarding students leaving NI for third level education and the number who return.

It was agreed that Jim Clarke (CCMS) and Gerry Murphy (INTO) would co-chair the group and draft a background paper for a future Work Stream, with Scott Harbinson, DE, providing support. The need for the process to be time-bounded with a view to a paper going to the Minister by October/November was highlighted.

It was confirmed that the Budget Work Stream Report had been submitted to the Minister on 3rd March 2015. It was also confirmed that the Minister had requested a meeting with DE Officials to discuss the Report of the Development of School Staff Work Stream Report.

Stormont House Agreement. It was noted that EA was successfully established on 1st April 2015 and that its Chief Executive, Gavin Boyd, had written to staff seeking expressions of interest in voluntary severance.
11. Irish Congress of Trade Unions

The UTU General Secretary was re-elected to the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Union (NIC/ICTU) at the Northern Conference in the City Hotel, Derry, in April 2014 to serve for a further 2-year term. NIC/ICTU holds monthly meetings in the ICTU office in Belfast. Avril was also elected to the ICTU Executive Committee in July 2013 for a 2-year term of office and travels to monthly meetings of the Executive Committee in either Dublin or Belfast. She did not seek re-election for a further term. She is a member of the North/South Committee which was involved in meetings with the political parties during the lead up to The Stormont Agreement.

The Education Trade Union Group (ETUG) of NIC/ICTU meets monthly and is chaired by Paddy Mackel, NIPSA, with Gerry Murphy, INTO, as Vice Chair. It is generally attended by the President and General Secretary. It continues to be a very useful forum for all the unions in the Education sector to meet and co-ordinate action and plans are well underway to hold an Education Conference in February 2016. Avril Hall-Callaghan is to chair one of the sessions and it will be addressed by Tony Gallagher, QUB, Jon Macgabhan, TUI, and Deirbhle nic Craigh to name but a few.

Members of the ETUG, including Avril Hall–Callaghan, General Secretary, and Julie Orr, President, met with the Minister for Education, John O’Dowd, at Stormont on 4th June, 2015, to get an update on the progress being made on the establishment of the Education Authority which replaced the five ELBs on 1st April 2015. The Minister spoke about the intended timeline for appointments to EA and the possible difficulties with the Education Budget into the future.

The UTU would like to place on record its thanks to Kevin Doherty, ICTU, who very ably performs his duties as Secretary to the ETUG. The UTU would also like to place on record its best wishes to Patricia King, former Deputy General Secretary of SIPTU, who took up the post of General Secretary of ICTU in April 2015.

The excellent programme of training provided by ICTU continues, organised by Kevin Doherty, ICTU, and provided through the South Eastern Regional College. All 5 UTU Officials availed of ICTU – sponsored training during 2015. ICTU also organised a programme of very informative seminars on topics of current interest, including its annual Union Learning Fund Conference on 28th March, 2015 addressed by DEL Minister, Stephen Farry and a Work and Families Conference on 7th May, 2015, both held in the Wellington Park Hotel.

The following members of UTU represent the Union on NIC/ICTU sub-committees:

- **Women’s Committee:** Ms Julie Orr, President & Ms Jacquie Reid, DGS
- **Health & Safety Committee:** Mr Lewis Love, FO & Mr Steven Savage, CEC
- **Equality Committee:** Ms Julie Orr, President & Ms Jacquie Reid, DGS
- **Education Committee:** Ms Julie Orr, President & Ms Avril Hall-Callaghan, GS
- **LGBT Committee:** Ms Julie Orr, President & Ms Jacquie Reid, DGS
- **Ethnic Minority Committee:** Ms Sandra Brown, Ex-President & Ms Jacquie Reid, DGS
- **Disability Committee:** Ms Julie Orr, President & Ms Sally McKee
- **Global Solidarity Committee:** Ms Sandra Brown, President & Ms Julie Orr, President
- **Youth Committee:** Ms Aaron Davidoson, Fit Group & Mr Aaron Davis, CEC
- **Education & Training Committee:** Ms Sandra Brown, Ex-President & Ms Leigh Cooper, FO
- **Culture & Arts Committee:** Ms Julie Orr, President

The ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference was attended by Avril Hall–Callaghan, Julie Reid, Sandra Brown, Leigh Cooper, David Thompson and Susan Thompson. The Conference was held in the West Country Hotel in Ennis and the delegates used the opportunity to network with their colleagues from the other education unions. UTU would like to put on record its sincere thanks for the hospitality offered during the Conference by the teaching unions from the Republic of Ireland.

Some of the issues discussed at the monthly NIC/ICTU meetings during the 2014/15 year were:

- Committee Business
- Economic and Employment Matters
- Industrial Reports
- Employment Rights
- Education
- Consultation Documents
- Trades Councils
- Training and Workplace Learning
- Communications
- Public Appointments
- Health
12. Reports from CEC Sub-Committee

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES SUB-COMMITTEE
Mrs Sandra Brown, Convener

The Finance and General Purposes sub-Committee met on five occasions since Conference 2015 to oversee the financial affairs of the Union. The committee agree the overall budget and expenditure for the year and oversee the income that we receive. The committee also look closely at potential savings that can be made and ensure that the resources of the Union are used in the most efficient way possible.

During the year, the most pressing decisions that had to be made were, firstly, in relation to our complement of IT resources. Following professional advice we installed a new server – with a second coming free with the offer – upgraded laptops and had our website completely overhauled by School Web Design. A plan was set in place for a running annual replacement to officials’ laptops. Secondly, the payment structure for attendance at Conference was changed, with costs now being met centrally, rather than at Branch level. Decisions around how to effect this change were passed to the Organising and Management sub-committee. Other matters included the steps needed to meet the cost of a member’s Tribunal – although the member won, costs are paid by each side separately so the Union incurred this expense. Staff employment and job-share roles were considered and agreed.

I place on record my sincere thanks to Mr David Thompson, Honorary Treasurer, and to Mrs Heather Arrell our Financial Executive Officer. They have worked diligently throughout the year to ensure that we remain in a healthy financial position. Thanks too, to members of the sub-committee who continue to make time for this work in their own busy schedules.

CONFERENCE
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President, Convener

The Conference Sub-Committee met on 5 occasions since Conference 2015. We evaluated the success of our 2015 Conference and noted any potential changes we might make for 2016.

We considered our Branch conference resolutions, and referred these to the Central Executive Committee to be ratified. The President’s theme was decided and selections of suitable backdrop and graphics were agreed. Only the theme backdrop is needed this year. The Conference programme was decided and a guest speaker asked. The President has asked her school choir to open Conference on Thursday evening. From the new management structure of our Education Authority, an invited guest list was agreed, including the Education Minister. Mr John O’Dowd and Mr Gavin Boyd both indicated their intention to attend. Little changed in the running order of Conference, though an extra Presentation slot was added into Friday’s programme. As in previous years the Thursday evening entertainment will take the form of a quiz. We are grateful to the Slieve Donard Hotel for allowing us to return to the main bar area for this. The band for Friday evening, The Biz, was booked for after dinner entertainment.

Acknowledging that we still live in a stretched economic climate and that sponsorship and exhibiting can be difficult to secure, we are very grateful to all those who remain faithful in their support of the Union, as well as to our more recent sponsors and exhibitors. My thanks to Mrs Karen Taylor for oversight of this, as well as her undertaking of the many practical arrangements of Conference. I also thank the Conference sub-committee for their invaluable advice and support at meetings.

ORGANISATION AND MEMBERSHIP
Mrs Sandra Brown, Convener

The Organisation and Management Sub-Committee met only once since last Conference. Committee agreed the new Branch structure, with the potential only that Newtownabbey Branch may remove itself from the Mid-Antrim Branch and so align better with council boundaries.

The major consideration of the committee was to decide on an allocation formula in light of Branch bank accounts being closed and Conference being centrally funded. With the approval of our Financial Executive Officer, Mrs Heather Arrell, a 2016-17 allocation was set at 25p per member to Area Associations. This would be monitored and reviewed as necessary by Heather. Although it was originally agreed that the outlying monies in Branch accounts could transfer to Area associations, this was later amended to be forwarded to HQ, on Heather’s advice.

The Benevolent Fund will now also be centrally funded, though Branches are advised that any donations may be given through school rep., Branch or Area collection. A suggestion that a Text Donation could be set up on the Homepage of our new website is being explored.
Also in the interests of cost-cutting, it was agreed that Branch secretaries be informed that notification of meetings be done through bulk emailing from Headquarters. Branch secretaries would be responsible for informing the office of all details in advance.

**SALARIES AND CONDITIONS SUB-COMMITTEE**

*Ms Avril Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary, Convener*

A meeting took place on 28th January to consider the Management Side salary offer of 1.37%. The General Secretary had emailed all CEC members seeking their views on receipt of the offer and had included some background materials about the terms of the offer. After considerable discussion and consideration of the written opinions of CEC members a decision was made that UTU would reject this offer which was conditional on teachers losing their contractual right to automatic pay progression. This response was conveyed to a special meeting of NITC the next day, at which 4 out of the 5 recognised unions rejected the offer.

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND GLOBAL SOLIDARITY SUB-COMMITTEE**

*Miss Julie Orr, Convener*

The Central Executive Committee of UTU refers relevant items of interest and concern to the International Relations and Global Solidarity Sub-Committee. Documentation is received on a regular basis from Education International, the world’s largest federation of unions, representing thirty million education employees in about four hundred organisations throughout one hundred and seventy countries and territories, across the globe. Education International unites all teachers and education employees, promoting quality education and the interests of teachers and other education employees.

This year, the Education International 7th World Congress was held in Ottawa, Canada and was attended by the President, Julie Orr and Ex-President Sandra Brown. Held every 4 years, the EI World Congress is the supreme body of EI and determines the policies, principles of action and programmes of this organisation. This Congress provided delegates from Education Unions from across the World with the opportunity to come together and to reflect and recommit to the aims of Education International - to provide quality education for all.

The President, Julie Orr, also attended an EI event in Paris in November where the Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA) was adopted and launched at a high-level meeting, held alongside the 38th UNESCO General Conference at the Organization’s Headquarters. The FFA, the result of an unprecedented consultative process, provides guidance to countries for the implementation of the Education 2030 agenda. It aims to mobilize all stakeholders around the new global education goal and targets, and proposes ways of implementing, coordinating, financing and reviewing the 2030 education agenda—globally, regionally and nationally—to guarantee equal educational opportunity for all.

In support of ‘The Global Campaign for Education’, UTU organises an annual competition for schools. This year, the competition was launched at the UTU Annual Conference with the theme: “Schools are Super Places for Super Heroes”. There was a fantastic response from schools and pupils across Northern Ireland and the President enjoyed presenting the winners within each category with small merit prizes during school visits.

The UTU also continues to contribute each year to International Educational Charities. This year the following charities received donations.

- **A Ray of Hope** – supporting over 50 initiatives in over 10 countries – including developing educational facilities in India.
- **Gracehill School, Muganda, Abadare Mountain Range** - This donation has ensured that Rev David Tinnion and his wife Roberta are able to purchase much needed resources to support their pupils as they follow the Kenyan Primary School curriculum in English, Swahili, Maths and Geography.
- **Disability Aid Abroad** - Disability Aid Abroad is a Northern Ireland charity established to change the lives of people with disabilities living in developing countries. This charity helps support the care and education of disabled young people and runs a wide range of projects across Africa and Asia.
- **Diane Cusick, Teaching Training, Zambia** – Donations to this charity help support Diane as she continues her worthwhile work. Although Diane has left her previous role training teachers in Mzuzu, Malawi, she is now continuing her work in Zambia and we wish her all the best with this.
- **Steve Sinnott Foundation** – a UK registered charity, named after Steve Sinnott, the late General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers UK. This charity works to provide educational opportunities for children from poor and disadvantaged communities across the world and particularly promote the Education 2030 aims.
- **Hope and a Future** – a Northern Ireland Registered Charity working to provide access to Education for some of Ethiopia’s most vulnerable children.
- **Jengana** – a Christian ministry, based in Northern Ireland, that seeks to reach out to children living in very desperate situations in the slums of Nairobi in Kenya. They are currently sponsoring the schooling of many children and are working towards building their own Primary School in Nairobi in the near future.
EDUCATION AND POLICY SUB-COMMITTEE
Mark Creelman, Convener

Consultations:
[a] Consultation on Proposals for the Future of the Youth Council and;
[b] Consultation on GCSE Grading
Date of meeting: Monday 12th October
Location: Ulster Teachers’ Union Headquarters

The committee met in order to discuss the Department’s wish to disband the YCNI due to an apparent duplication of services being provided as a result of remodelling of responsibility for supporting and leading youth work in Northern Ireland following the formation of EA. The Consultation invited responses to express support, either for the dissolution of the Youth Council, or for the dissolution of the youth council with protected youth services under the direct management of EA. The committee expressed support for the retention of the YCNI in its response.

The committee also discussed their responses to the proposed changes to GCSE grading in Northern Ireland. In short, the consultation document proposed a replacement of the current alphabetical grading (A*-G) in favour of a numerical grading system (9-1). The document went on to suggest that this may help make grades more easily compared with English examination board grades. The Education & Policy sub-committee commissioned an online survey of UTU members which was published on Survey Monkey for one week. The responses were overwhelmingly in support of retaining the current alphabetical grading system which was reflected in the committee’s final response to CCEA.

Consultations:
Response to Changes to Inspections
Date of meeting: Monday 12th October
Location: Ulster Teachers’ Union Headquarters

The committee met in order to discuss the changes to be made to Inspections. The changes included alterations to current assessment descriptors as well as changes to the Formal Intervention Process timings. ETI(NI) also wish to establish a parents’ panel and to increase the use of “Sustaining Improvement Inspections” as a method of ensuring school improvement. The committee formulated responses and also brought to the attention of the Education Committee the absence of an independent complaints procedure for ETI(NI). The committee felt that there were some suggestions that signalled some adherence to UTU’s recommendations, e.g. the support of the role of the district inspector; however, there remains a lack in any steps towards providing an inspection service that supports the improvement of teaching and learning as opposed to merely providing a very public critique of it.

Consultations:
Consultation on the Review of Travel Eligibility Criteria
Date of meeting: Monday 30th November
Location: Ulster Teachers’ Union Headquarters

The Education Authority proposed to introduce a consistent interpretation and application of the Home to School transport eligibility criteria for September 2016 onwards. The measurement of the statutory walking distance was deemed to be inconsistent across the regions of the Authority. It was recommended that a “consistent measurement of distance” based on “Gate to Gate” should be used across all regions as opposed to the “Door to door” measurement currently being used by four out of the five regions.

Consultations:
Consultation on the Addressing Bullying In Schools Bill
Date of meeting: Monday 7th December
Location: Ulster Teachers’ Union Headquarters

The legislation aims to provide a legal definition of bullying and introduce a requirement for schools to record all incidents of bullying. It will require Boards of Governors to take direct responsibility for developing and monitoring the effectiveness of Anti-Bullying policy and practice within schools. The committee took issue with the increased accountability and workload associated with monitoring bullying incidents on the school premises including those off-site. There were also a number of phraseology queries that blurred meaning and understanding. We called on the Department to look at these also and to submit amendments for further consideration.

APPOINTMENTS
Miss J Orr, President, Convener

The Appointments Committee has continued to meet this year to review the staffing arrangements within this organisation.

December 2015 saw the retirement of our esteemed Field Officer, Audrey Stewart. Audrey, a Past-President of the UTU, has been a Field Officer in our Union for the past 8 years and a UTU member for many more. Audrey has provided much help and support for UTU members throughout her time as Field Officer and she will be very much missed at the Headquarters and by our members. We wish her health and happiness in her Retirement.

In order to fill the newly vacant Field Officer post, a decision was made to appoint internally and, following a successful interview on the 11th December 2015, Leigh Cooper, (previously ‘Organising Officer’) was appointed to this post. Congratulations Leigh, we wish you well in your new position. The now vacant position of ‘Organising
Officer’ will be advertised in 2016, with the aim of completing the Selection and Appointment Process for a September 2016 start.

PROPERTY
Mrs S Brown, Vice-President, Convener
The Property Committee had set in place plans during 2014 to erect a feature in the gardens at UTU Headquarters to commemorate David Allen, General Secretary of UTU, who retired in 1997. David’s widow, Arlene, agreed that a water feature would be the most appropriate memorial to David and a ceremony of dedication was held on 29th May 2015.

The President introduced the event and welcomed Arlene and members of the family to Headquarters. The General Secretary spoke about David’s commitment to UTU and of many of his successes as general Secretary, after which Arlene responded, saying how much David would appreciate the memorial as he had spent so much of his life at 94, Malone Road,

Those gathered, including many Past Presidents and friends, as well as current CEC members, proceeded to the garden where a break in the rain allowed the fountain to be commissioned. Martin Goodfellow, UTU groundsman, had prepared a beautiful surround for the fountain on which was mounted a commemorative marble plaque.

It was unfortunate that David’s daughter, Lindsay, who had lived in Headquarters during her childhood years, was unable to be present on the day, but she has since visited the memorial with her husband and daughter, Hannah.

All members of UTU are welcome to visit Headquarters and view the water feature in memory of David Allen which sits beside the oak tree planted in memory of Ray Calvin.

RULES & CONSTITUTION
Avril Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary, Convener
A meeting of the Rules & Constitution sub-committee took place on 30th November to ascertain whether any amendments were needed to the Rules & Constitution to take into account the revised funding structure for Conference. Having considered the wording of the current document it was agreed that no changes were necessary at this time.

The only reference within the main body of the Rules & Constitution to “Education & Library Board” is in article 82 and an amendment to that article will be proposed at Annual Conference to take into account the Regional structure within the new Education Authority. All other references are to Area Associations and that is consistent with the new Branch Structure and the current regional nature of the Education Authority.

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
Lewis Love, Convener
The ICTU Health and Safety Committee met on three occasions in 2015. The main focus was on proposed amendments to matters of regulation in industry; however, mental health and work related stress matters are in the forefront of the ICTU Health and Safety agenda. The Health and Safety Award, sponsored by HSENI, was well supported by all Unions after poor support the previous year.

For the incoming year, 2016, Asbestos in Schools will be a major focus with the ICTU producing a 10 point Programme For Action. The Workers Memorial Day is scheduled for 28 April 2016.

UTU NEWS
Julie Orr President / Editor
The President, along with members of the UTU News Sub-committee once again had a successful year, publishing 2 A4 coloured magazine editions of the UTU News. These magazines are sent out to approximately 6,500 members and a link to these publications has also been put on our newly updated UTU website to allow them to be downloaded in full.

The UTU News continues to be an excellent way for our Union to share important information with our members, as well as providing an opportunity for teachers and schools to showcase some of the excellent work that is taking place in our schools across Northern Ireland. UTU members have continued to contribute interesting and thought-provoking articles for this publication along with articles of interest
provided by various organisations and companies. This year also saw the addition of a UTU Crossword competition and we extend our congratulations once again to our first winner, Patric Harris, Kilkeel.

Thankfully the printing costs of this publication continue to be met with monies from advertisers and we thank them for their continued support. Finally, the UTU would like to extend sincere thanks to Ronnie Haughey for his talent in the design, layout and printing of this publication and for his ability to combine all the articles and advertisements into an attractive and professional publication.

REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL BODIES

WOMEN’S COMMITTEE
Jacquie Reid
The ICTU Women’s Committee is an all-Ireland committee with members meeting in each jurisdiction and jointly as appropriate. The NIC/ICTU members meet on the first Wednesday of every month. The present NI Chair is Vivien Holding of CWU and the committee is serviced by Clare Moore, Equality Officer for NIC/ICTU. UTU has been represented on the committee this year by the Deputy General Secretary, Jacquie Reid, who currently holds the position of Vice-Chair.

The biennial Action Plan of the Women’s Committee seeks to carry forward policy established at the Women’s Conference and presently addresses issues such as universal childcare, violence against women and the impact of austerity and gender responsive budgeting. The Committee is also in the process of preparing the Women’s Manifesto in preparation for the upcoming elections.

The NIC/ICTU Women’s Committee participated in the Council of the Isles on the 8th and 9th October 2015. The event, which brings together women representatives from TUCs in Ireland, England, Wales and Scotland, was hosted this year in Glasgow by the Women’s Committee of the STUC. The NIC/ICTU presentation on the Childcare Consultation in NI was delivered this year by Jacque Reid, UTU, with the Chair of the ICTU Women’s Committee in the Republic of Ireland, Theresa Dwyer, giving a presentation on the situation of childcare in the south. Other areas addressed included the issues faced by older women in the workplace and the impact of the future plans for the BBC on the employment of women in that field. Debate and discussion was informative and stimulating and the women have pledged to continue to work together in solidarity on issues across jurisdictions to maximise impact and progress.

The Women’s Biennial Conference is scheduled to take place on 3/4 March 2016 in Mullingar and UTU will be represented by Jacquie Reid. The theme of the Conference this year is ‘1916-2016, Celebrating a Century of Women’s Struggle and History’, and seeks to reflect the experiences of women North and South during that time through sessions on Northern Suffrage, the First World War, the role of women in the 1916 Easter Rising and 100 years of Decent Work for women. As this is the turn of the conference this year, there will also be a range of motions brought by unions within ICTU under the headings of ‘Women in Unions’, ‘Women and Work’ and Women and Society.

On-going work uses tools such as training and lobbying, and employs the wealth of experience of the women involved to respond to consultations, decisions and research projects to address issues as they pertain to women. Lobbying of MLAs is a key feature of the work, and courses are available through the ICTU Education programme on issues such as equal pay, maternity rights and mental health issues for members who wish to be educated – or refreshed – in legislation around the areas which have a particular impact for their members. The highly successful Women and Leadership course continues to attract new participants.

This network of highly skilled and highly diverse women brings a new perspective and dynamic to my role in UTU and I would like to express my thanks, both to the women representatives for their ever-ready support, and also to Clare Moore, ICTU Equality Officer, for supporting and facilitating so capably throughout the year.

NIC ICTU DISABILITY COMMITTEE
Sally McKee
The Committee meets regularly throughout the year with the focus being on improving the knowledge of the various union representatives on Disability Legislation and promoting the issues of our members with a wide range of disabilities. The work of the Committee is supported by Clare Moore NIC ICTU Equality & Social Policy Officer.

Representatives from the Disability Committee attend the NIC ICTU Equality & Human Rights Committee, the Welfare Reform Group and the DEL Employment Strategy meetings. The Committee is also represented at the All Party Working Group on Disabilities and was supported by several MLAs in demanding updates on the progress of the implementation of the Disability Strategy.

The Committee jointly organised a North/South ICTU Disability Committees
Seminar in Waterford – “Decent Work for People with Disabilities”. Sessions included a presentation of an Analysis of the National Disability Survey and an overview of how disabled people in Britain are leading the fight against cuts to social security for disabled people. Some speakers with disabilities addressed the seminar on how, with the appropriate support, they have fulfilling employment. The final session was a rather disturbing presentation on “Disability Hate Crime.”

The Committee and the Disability Champions are supported by the Equality Commission, and by the Labour Relations Agency, with training seminars focusing on disability issues. “Disability Champions at Work” training is provided by NIC ICTU and these courses are open to any interested affiliate.

The Committee takes an active interest in Disability Aid Abroad projects. UTU continues to support a project to train assistants to work with disabled pupils in schools in Uganda.

UTU is represented on the Committee by the President, Julie Orr, and by Sally McKee, Honorary Secretary of the Disability Committee.

Further information on the work of the Committee, or anyone interested on becoming involved, please contact UTU, HQ.

LGBT

Jacquie Reid

The ICTU LGBT Committee meets on a bi-monthly basis in Carlin House. The Committee is competently chaired by Daire Toner from the NIPSA trade union and the role of Secretary has recently passed from Sean Kelly of INTO to Adam Murray of NIPSA. Clare Moore, Equality Officer with NIC/ICTU, services the committee. UTU is presently represented on the committee by Jacquie Reid.

The Sexual Orientation Strategy remains an area of concern as work is slow and, in the opinion of the Committee, the current draft strategy is weak. The restructuring of departments in the Assembly is creating issues around responsibility and accountability which is only serving to impede progress further. The Project Board is to meet with each Governmental Department to sculpt the action plan for the strategy and the Committee continues to monitor progress.

NIC/ICTU has been playing a very active role in partnership with other organisations such as Amnesty International and The Rainbow Project in forwarding the campaign for marriage equality. A rally was held in the summer which attracted thousands of people from throughout Northern Ireland and work is progressing to include all interested parties before moving forward with the work.

The Education Trade Union Group (ETUG) has tasked the Committee with creating a Toolkit for teachers and school staff around LGBT issues. The Committee are keen to involve the expertise of the NITC/LGBT group in this area and a sub-committee will be set up to take the work forward.

The representative from INTO, Sean Kelly, brought forward a survey for INTO members which was ready to go live. The survey is aimed at establishing the knowledge of staff around Sexual Orientation issues and the level of training received, whilst also gathering further quantitative and qualitative data that may inform policy moving forward. The ETUG have decided that the survey can and will be adapted to gather such information from all staff in schools, through their unions. This work is underway and will be issued to members in schools in the near future.
13. Law and tenure

The following is a list of the casework the Officials selected for report to the Central Executive Committee at each of its meetings. The Officials are closely advised by the Union Solicitors, Shean, Dickson, Merrick.

UTU Officials also take advice from officials at the various agencies, including the Labour Relations Agency and the Equality Commission, as and when required. The Union Solicitors engage the services of barristers on behalf of members, after consultation with the General Secretary. Members of the Central Executive Committee hear the facts of the cases, but the identity of members concerned are not disclosed. CEC advises the Officials, as may be required.

Legal casework is the most important and demanding aspect of the Union’s work on behalf of its members. Members who suddenly face police, social services or other investigations following allegations are very appreciative when a practised and able team take up the case on their behalf.

May 2015

CLAIM FOR DAMAGES – SPECIAL SCHOOL
The General Secretary reported that a claim for damages sustained by a member who had been attacked by a pupil was settled for the sum of £12,500. The school had failed to put in place the recommended procedures to support the teacher and despite having resisted up until the door of the court, eventually agreed to settle for the sum stated.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE - SPECIAL SCHOOL
The General Secretary stated that a teacher was informed that a Disciplinary charge was leveled against her. Allegedly a pupil in her class had swallowed 24 glass pebbles which his father had found in his faeces (he is severely disabled child). The Organising Officer accompanied her to the Preliminary Investigation and Field Officer, Audrey Stewart, accompanied her to the Disciplinary Hearing. There were three other adults (Classroom Assistants) in the room at the time of the incident and no-one observed the pupil swallow anything. The Classroom Assistants have been informed there is to be no further action taken against them but the teacher has been issued with a Final Written Warning which she intends to appeal.

VICTIMISATION CLAIM – SPECIAL SCHOOL
The teacher involved in the above cases believes that she has been victimized as a result of the claim for damages which she took against the school. The General Secretary is seeking a consultation with the Union Solicitors to establish if she might have grounds to pursue such a claim. In the meantime the teacher remains off work on sick leave.

UNFAIR DISMISSAL CLAIM – BELFAST PRIMARY SCHOOL
The General Secretary stated that a High Court consultation had taken place with the Barrister representing a temporary teacher member who had been dismissed and had taken a case against her employer to the Industrial Tribunal. A Case Management Discussion is to take place to establish the factual and legal issues under dispute.

SALARY APPEALS – PRIMARY SCHOOL
The General Secretary stated that she had accompanied two recently recruited teachers who were appealing their salary placements. There are at least three other teachers who may have claims. The General Secretary praised the Deputy General Secretary for her pursuance of justice for the teachers in this school – she is taking a claim to Independent Appeal for a member of staff who felt obliged to leave the school after her treatment by the Principal.

STAFF CONCERNS – PRIMARY SCHOOL
The Deputy General Secretary stated that she had attended a meeting with members who had ongoing issues with the building supervisor in the school. Complaints which had been brought to the Board of Governors failed to reach a conclusion and the building supervisor is presently on sick leave. Members have been advised on ways to proceed on his return.

STAFF COMPLAINTS – PRIMARY SCHOOL
The Deputy General Secretary reported that she is representing the Principal in an on-going issue with staff. A meeting has taken place with all of the union officials involved to inform staff of their contractual responsibilities and appropriate means to raise and deal with issues.

BULLYING & HARASSMENT – PRIMARY SCHOOL
The Deputy General Secretary said she had accompanied a member to an investigatory meeting following a complaint from a Classroom Assistant of bullying and harassment. The investigation did not result in disciplinary proceedings but several recommendations were made for the way forward. The teacher has since been moved from her KS1 class, resigned her post and may have issues around DDA.
REDUNDANCY PROCEDURE - POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL
The Deputy General Secretary reported that she is dealing with a member who has been selected for compulsory redundancy. The Deputy General Secretary and the member attended a meeting at the school to raise issues at the early stages and are awaiting the outcome and an indication of the way forward.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES – PRIMARY SCHOOL
The Deputy General Secretary stated that she has been dealing with three members who have taken grievances against the Principal. The members have now been interviewed by an independent investigator at the early stages of the process and one of the members has also been interviewed as part of a wide ranging complaint lodged by the Principal. The Principal has now been out of school for almost three years and the case could continue for some time yet.

TERMINATION OF CONTRACT – SPECIAL SCHOOL
The Deputy General Secretary reported that she accompanied a member to a meeting with the Welfare Officer in the BELB to facilitate the member’s termination of contract through ill-health and to discuss options for the way forward.

INVESTIGATION – PRIMARY SCHOOL
The Deputy General Secretary stated that she accompanied two members to an interview with an HR officer. A complaint has been lodged with the employing authority by a Classroom Assistant against the other three classroom assistants and the members were called as witnesses to events.

ALLEGATION OF ASSAULT – PRIMARY SCHOOL
The Deputy General Secretary reported that she is dealing with a member who has been accused of assaulting a child. The parents were unhappy with the response of the school so threatened to go to the PSNI. The member herself went to the PSNI who subsequently contacted the parents to see if they wanted to proceed. The Deputy General Secretary is awaiting the PSNI interview.

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST
The Deputy General Secretary stated that she is dealing with an Ed Psych who has on going and progressive health problems. Occupational Health has expressed the possibility of ill-health retirement and she is awaiting medical reports etc. before meeting with the College.

ALLEGATION OF ASSAULT – SPECIAL SCHOOL
A member has had her conviction for assault overturned on appeal through the courts. A date for the investigatory interview is awaited.

June 2015
BULLYING & HARASSMENT PROCEDURE - NURSERY SCHOOL
A Field Officer reported that a member, whose allegations of bullying and harassment were not substantiated, had appealed the decision. Unfortunately her health has now broken down and she has applied for ill-health retirement. She had already submitted a substantial appeal in writing and has requested that the Board of Governors progresses it without her attendance at an appeal hearing.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE - PRIMARY SCHOOL
A Field Officer stated that a member, whose dismissal was retracted to a final written warning, attended a risk assessment, which was conducted by a consultant employed by the employing authority. The member recently attended a second meeting. There was discussion round the type of training that she felt she would need in order to assist her return to school. She has now been out of school for 20 months and this whole process is impacting seriously on her health.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE - SPECIAL SCHOOL
A member, who received a final written warning after a Disciplinary Hearing is now receiving help and support from a Field Officer in preparation for the Appeal Hearing. The member, although currently on sick leave, intends to return to school after clearing her name. The union is also pursuing the possibility of a victimisation case.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE - SOUTHERN REGION PRIMARY
A principal member has had a number of grievances initiated against her by a member of staff, who is also a UTU member. The Board of Governors has carried out extensive investigations into the allegations made and has now suspended the teacher who made the allegations. The principal is finding the whole process extremely stressful and welcomes the union support.

COMPLAINT AGAINST PRINCIPAL - PRIMARY SCHOOL
A principal member has had a complaint made about her, which has gone to internal audit at the employing authority. The principal has not been told the nature of the complaint but thinks it is related to a redundancy in the school where the person selected may have made the complaint. Another union has
requested budget outturn statements from the Chair of BOG for the last 10 years. The Employing Authority has advised the Board of Governors to continue with the redundancy process without input from the principal.

PARENTAL ALLEGATION - PRIMARY SCHOOL
A principal member has sought advice regarding a parental allegation against a member of staff. The Deputy General Secretary is providing support and advice for the teacher, who is also a member of UTU.

September 2015
TRIPPING ACCIDENT – PRIMARY SCHOOL
The General Secretary reported that she had accompanied a member to a Court Hearing earlier this week regarding a fall she had over a floor cleaner. The case was settled for £3000. The accident happened over 4 years ago but the member had waited for three years before registering her claim. She had been assisted in getting to this point by both the Senior Field Officer, Mike Graves, and Field Officer, Lewis Love. Field Officer, Audrey Stewart, accompanied the Principal, a UTU member, and two teachers, also UTU members, who had been called to give evidence.

BREACH OF CONTRACT – PRIMARY SCHOOL
The General Secretary reported that a breach of contract claim had settled in the Industrial Tribunal earlier this week. The member was accompanied by the General Secretary and the member was satisfied with the outcome.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE – POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL
The General Secretary reported that she had been in contact with a member who had been notified that he had lost his appeal against dismissal and wanted to lodge an Independent Appeal with the LRA. The member has used his own legal team up to this point but had kept Field Officer, Lewis Love, apprised of developments. The General Secretary advised the UTU will provide accompaniment to the Independent Appeal Hearing. The hearing has been delayed until November having been scheduled to be heard at the end of August.

POSSIBLE GRIEVANCE/DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE – PRIMARY SCHOOL
The General Secretary reported the circumstances of a difficult situation between an Acting Principal and a member of staff, both UTU members. The General Secretary is liaising with Field Officer, Lewis Love, to attempt to reach an accommodation which is acceptable to both members.

PART-TIME CONTRACT - PRIMARY SCHOOL
The General Secretary reported the circumstances which have resulted in a breakdown in communication between a Principal and a member of staff regarding a reduction in her working week. The General Secretary is liaising with Field Officer, Audrey Stewart, to get the situation satisfactorily resolved.

TEMPORARY REDEPLOYMENT – PRIMARY LEVEL SCHOOL
The General Secretary reported on a very unusual temporary redeployment which had been permitted following a request from a member. The General Secretary had visited the school in which the teacher was employed and, following discussion with the Principal who was taking advice from the Regional HR Manager, the teacher was permitted to transfer for 1 year to a school in another region.

BULLYING & HARASSMENT PROCEDURE - NURSERY SCHOOL
Field Officer, Audrey Stewart, reported that a member, whose allegations of bullying and harassment were not substantiated, had appealed the decision. Her appeal was not upheld. There is a strong possibility that the Board of Governors will start proceedings to terminate her contract.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE - PRIMARY SCHOOL
Field Officer, Audrey Stewart, reported that a member, whose dismissal was retracted to a final written warning, attended a risk assessment, which was conducted by a consultant employed by the Employing Authority. There was discussion round the type of training that she felt she would need in order to assist her return to school. She has now been out of school for 23 months and this whole process is impacting seriously on her health. There has been no further information regarding her return to school.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE - SPECIAL SCHOOL
Field Officer, Audrey Stewart, stated that a member, who received a final written warning after a Disciplinary Hearing, has unsuccessfully appealed the decision. The union solicitor has advised the member that there is no further action that can be taken and she either returns to school or resigns. The school is referring her back to Occupational Health.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE – PRIMARY SCHOOL
Audrey Stewart, Field Officer, stated that a principal member has had a number of grievances initiated against her by a member of staff, who is also a UTU member. The Board of Governors has carried out extensive investigations into the allegations
made and has now suspended the teacher, who made the allegations. The principal is finding the whole process extremely stressful and welcomes the union support.

The Board of Governors has not upheld the teacher’s grievances and the teacher is still suspended. She has not sought the support of UTU although she is still a member.

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE - PRIMARY SCHOOL**
Field Officer, Audrey Stewart, reported that a principal member has had a complaint made about her, which has gone to internal audit. Extensive investigations have been carried out and the principal member was able to produce well documented accounts to cover every accusation. The final report with the outcome is expected soon.

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE - PRIMARY SCHOOL**
The Deputy General Secretary stated that a member took a grievance against the Principal in 2014 which was not upheld at either internal stage of the procedure. She is awaiting a date for the LRA Independent Appeal which now looks as if it may take place in November.

**DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE - PRIMARY SCHOOL**
The Deputy General Secretary reported that a member had been dismissed on the basis of Child Protection issues and was subsequently reinstated by the LRA Independent Appeal in June. There will now be a process of training and phasing back into the school in line with the recommendations of the Panel.

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES - PRIMARY SCHOOL**
The Deputy General Secretary stated that three members have taken grievances against the Principal who has subsequently been suspended on a range of issues. The investigatory stages of the grievances were completed in June and the decision of the Governors regarding the next step is awaited.

**ALLEGATION OF ASSAULT - PRIMARY SCHOOL**
The Deputy General Secretary reported that a member made contact in June following an allegation of assault made by a parent which subsequently went to the PSNI. The UTU solicitor has been made aware of the allegation and has made contact with the investigating officer. We are awaiting further developments.

**ALLEGATION OF CRIMINAL OFFENCE - PRIMARY SCHOOL**
The Deputy General Secretary stated that a member had been accused of driving whilst suspended which, due to subsequent behaviour, had implications for his career. The UTU solicitor attended the interview appointment at the PSNI station. The member, prior to the interview taking place, decided to change his plea so both the solicitor and the union withdrew.

**DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE - SPECIAL SCHOOL**
The Deputy General Secretary reported that a member has now gone through the investigatory stage of the Disciplinary Procedure and is awaiting the decision of the Governors. However, the member has lodged a grievance against the Principal against union advice and this could have an impact on how things progress.

**MEDIATION - PRIMARY SCHOOL**
The Deputy General Secretary accompanied the member to a mediation meeting facilitated by a sub-committee of the Board of Governors in an attempt to resolve a parental complaint. The decision of the Governors on how to proceed is awaited. Further complaints of a similar nature have been received which may constitute a separate process.

**ILL-HEALTH RETIREMENT - EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST**
The Deputy General Secretary reported that a College has instigated the medical retirement process and the member has applied for ill-health retirement.

**REDUNDANCY APPEAL - POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL**
The DGS represented a member at an LRA hearing. The outcome is due soon. The member continues to teach at the school on a temporary timetable.

**October 2015**

**BREACH OF CONTRACT – PRIMARY SCHOOL**
The General Secretary referred back to a case which was reported last month as having settled at the Industrial Tribunal. She reported that the legal bill had now been received and was considerable. She explained that under the terms of the settlement each side had to pick up their own bill for costs.

**CLAIM FOR DAMAGES – PRIMARY SCHOOL**
The General Secretary reported that the Union’s solicitors had been gathering evidence regarding a possible claim for damages on behalf of 2 teachers who were suspended just before Christmas 2014. Counsel’s opinion would be sought regarding the likelihood of taking a successful case on behalf of either or both of these members.
DISMISSAL - PRIMARY SCHOOL
A member, whose dismissal was retracted to a final written warning, attended a risk assessment, which was conducted by a consultant employed by the employing authority. There was discussion round the type of training that she felt she would need in order to assist her return to school. She has now been out of school for 23 months and this whole process is impacting seriously on her health. There has been no further information regarding her return to school. Human Resources has now indicated that the risk assessment report will be sent out to the member for comment.

NORTH EASTERN REGION — PERIPATETIC SERVICE
Advice from the union’s solicitor has been sought for a member who has discovered discrepancies in superannuation payments. As a result the employing authority is looking into this matter. The member appreciates the union’s intervention on this matter as previous attempts on her part had not made any progress.

NORTH EASTERN REGION — SPECIAL SCHOOL
A member, who received a final written warning after a Disciplinary Hearing has unsuccessfully appealed the decision. The union solicitor has advised the member that there is no further action that can be taken and she either returns to school or resigns. She has now attended an appointment with Occupational Health and is awaiting her copy of the report.

CYBERBULLYING – POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL
A vice-principal member’s email addresses, both school and personal, have been hacked into and extracts of emails compiled to portray different meanings and untrue scenarios. Photocopies were sent anonymously to various people. A PSNI investigation has dispelled one very serious issue and further investigations are on-going. The Union solicitor has written both to the school and the employing authority regarding this matter and as a result C2K are now also carrying out an investigation. The member is very appreciative of the union’s support.

November 2015
CLAIM OF UNFAIR TREATMENT- PRIMARY SCHOOL
The General Secretary reported that she had attended a meeting between a Principal member and the EA Joint Legal Service. The Principal and his Board of Governors are both facing claims of Religious Discrimination in an Appointments Procedure, all of which they strenuously denied, and the EA Joint Legal Service. The Principal had been advised that since the EA reserves the right not to defend him he should have his Union Representative present. After the meeting it was agreed that EA would jointly defend both he and the Board of Governors at the Fair Employment Tribunal.

CONCILIATION PROCESS - PRIMARY SCHOOL
The General Secretary said that she and Field Officer, Lewis Love, were engaged in a process of conciliation between an Acting Principal and a member of staff who had been off for a protracted period of sick leave. A meeting is to take place between the two members of staff, General Secretary, Field Officer, Chair of Governors and a representative of the Education Authority to try and resolve matters, thus avoiding possible formal action.

SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP PROCEDURE - POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL
Field Officer, Lewis Love, is supporting a Principal who has been identified by his Board of Governors as requiring support under this Procedure.

TERMINATION OF CONTRACT - SPECIAL SCHOOL
The General Secretary reported that a member who has received extensive support from UTU continues to be off on sick leave following her appeal against disciplinary action being turned down. She was accompanied by Field Officer, Audrey Stewart, to a consultation with the Union’s solicitor, who confirmed that if she was not prepared to return to work there was nothing further the UTU could do on her behalf.

CLAIM OF BREACH OF CONTRACT- PRIMARY SCHOOL
The General Secretary explained that the Union solicitors had received favourable Counsel’s opinion on proceeding with a case for damages against the EA regarding the treatment of a member who had been suspended from school following an unsubstantiated complaint. She outlined the substantial financial consequences and sought confirmation that the Union’s normal protocol of proceeding where there is a recommendation that there is a reasonable prospect of the case succeeding would apply.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE - PRIMARY SCHOOL
The General Secretary reported that the Organising Officer, Leigh Cooper, had attended an Disciplinary Hearing with a member regarding an incident at a swimming pool at the end of the summer term. The outcome is awaited but it is likely that the Board of Governors will impose a sanction in this matter.
DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE - SPECIAL SCHOOL
The General Secretary reported that the DGS had attended a consultation with the Union’s solicitor regarding a defence for a member who had taken her own legal advice in relation to police charges which had been brought against her. This led to a conviction which was over-turned on appeal. Letters to the EA and Board of Governors regarding the internal procedure have been approved.

December 2015
ALLEGATIONS – PRIMARY SCHOOL
The General Secretary reported that a former Principal member faced a number of serious charges. At the time when the charges were first made he had been advised that the Union would provide legal support but he had at that time used his own lawyers. The General Secretary read a letter from him and a discussion ensued.
Members voted not to offer legal assistance via the Union.

January 2016
APPEAL, LEGAL REPRESENTATION – PRIMARY SCHOOL
The General Secretary reported that, following the decision taken at the last CEC meeting that funding of legal representation would not be agreed for a member who had previously decided to fund his own representation, she had received a letter of appeal.

SALARY PLACEMENT – PRIMARY SCHOOL
The General Secretary stated that she was investigating a decision taken by a Human Resources Manager to deny incremental progression on the Leadership scale to a Principal member whose school had been assessed as qualifying for movement.

The General Secretary, Ms Avril Hall-Callaghan, who holds a post-graduate Diploma in Law, takes the main responsibility for day-to-day management of legal casework, with help from the Deputy General Secretary, Jacqie Reid and Field Officers, Lewis Love, Leigh Cooper and Audrey Stewart. The Union’s involvement in legal casework and hearings has increased in recent years.

14. UTU Benevolent Fund
The UTU Benevolent Fund exists to provide financial assistance to the spouse, partner or other relative of a member who dies in service. Occasionally it provides assistance to members experiencing hardship.

Since last Conference the UTU Death Grant of £1500 has been awarded to two teachers who died in service:

Mrs Tanya Kempston, Knockbreda Nursery
Mrs Heather Hegarty, Ballymoney High School

Representatives of the UTU visited the next of kin to offer condolences and to give advice, if required, on pension.

The Union would also wish to place on record their sadness at the loss of two great stalwarts of the UTU Conference, who will be very sadly missed. Past President, Wesley Beasant, passed away after a short illness in August, 2015 and Eddie Alexander, the husband of Honorary Vice President and Past President, Moira Alexander, MBE, in November 2015. A large number of UTU members and former members attended both these funerals to pay their respects to two gentlemen who had been so well-respected by all who knew them and who had contributed so much to the UTU, each in their own way. They will be sadly missed.
15. Other Matters Considered by CEC

The Central Executive Committee considered a wide range of issues other than those covered elsewhere in this Report. The following gives an indication of the type of matters discussed:

- School Development Days
- UTU Computer Support Contract
- Guidance on Induction & Transition
- Circular on Jointly Managed Schools
- ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference
- Dashboard of Measures
- Leadership Pay
- University of Cambridge International Summer School
- Pensions Regulator
- Appointments to the Board of the Education Authority
- TUPE
- Extension of GTC NI powers
- "Take Ten" Project, QUB
- Ni Certification Office
- Headspace
- Research on PRSD
- Nominations to GTC NI
- SCOTENS Conference
- RNLI Hit the Surf Programme
- Women’s Council of the Isles
- Ray of Hope
- ICTU Asbestos Campaign
- Response on Childcare
- Response on an Exit Cap
- NIC/ICTU Paper on Devolution
- Seminar on Israel/Palestine
- Friends of the Earth and UN Conference on Climate Change
- Guidance on School Starting Age
- Assembly Event on Changes to GCSE and A levels
- OECD Review Event
- Rules for Examiners and Moderators
- DE Policy on CPD
- Employment Bill
- ICTU Women’s Conference
- PIRLS
- Early Years Pathway Fund
- Appointments to CCMS
- SCOTENS Seed Funding
- NIC/ICTU Northern Conference
- Belfast Marathon – support for MENCAP
- Human Rights Consortium Seminar
- Steve Sinnott Foundation
- ETUG Education Conference
- EA Teaching Appointments Scheme
- ICTU Retired Workers Seminar
16. Teacher Unity

The UTU and INTO continued to work closely together on aspects of recruitment and training during 2014/15. The joint Board continued to meet with the Northern Committee of INTO and the UTU Central Executive Committee coming together for a joint meeting in January 2016. The two unions liaised closely in the run up to the Assembly elections with the President of UTU and the Northern Chair of INTO continuing to lobby the political parties jointly.

The partnership arrangement between the National Union of Teachers (NUT), the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) and the UTU continues to flourish. There are two Liaison meetings per year under the Partnership Agreement and during 2015 a meeting was held in the Glasgow offices of the EIS. The meeting scheduled for January 2016 in Belfast, to be hosted jointly by UTU and INTO, had to be postponed until late March due to the illness of one of the key NUT participants. The Partnership meeting in Scotland took place on 3rd June 2015 and the usual regional reports were given.

Relationships within NITC have been excellent in the past year as all unions seem to have realised that there are an increasing number of issues that we face with Management and it is essential that we present a united front. The negotiations with Management Side regarding the Pay Claim and the attempts to re-open the Jordanstown Agreement are clear examples of this.

The UCU continues to occupy the top floor offices within the UTU building and we work closely with them through BIGTU.

During 2015 the President and various UTU Officers and Officials attended the Conferences of ATL, INTO, EIS, NUT, NASUWT, SSTA, UCU, ASTI, TUI and IFUT and Avril Hall-Callaghan was invited to give the response on behalf of the guests following the dinner at the SSTA Conference. UTU wishes to place on record its thanks for the magnificent hospitality afforded to our delegates at these conferences. The time spent at such events was particularly valuable in gaining an appreciation of the policy and campaigning positions of each of the organisations, particularly in light of the UK elections in 2015.

17. UTU Marketing

The UTU retained the services of Millar-Grattan Communications, with Mandi Millar providing Press Releases on a regular basis as well as liaising with media outlets on behalf of UTU and Gary Grattan providing video clips for the UTU website and You tube. The President and Officials continue to participate in radio and television interviews, with Jacquie Reid, Deputy General Secretary taking on an increasing media profile in line with her increasing responsibilities as Acting General Secretary two days per week.

The CEC wishes to records its thanks and appreciation of the very high quality of the work done by both Mandi Millar and Gary Grattan. Mandi liaises with the General Secretary on a monthly basis to plan and execute the agreed media strategy and also responds to requests for immediate press releases to be drawn up and distributed when an issue of significance arises. The 2015/16 year was another very busy one with many opportunities to respond to breaking news and Mandi ensured that where there was an opportunity at either local or regional level to generate a public relations opportunity it was snapped up!

The joint marketing materials for UTU/INTO continue to be regularly used.
18. British and Irish Group of Teachers’ Unions (BIGTU)

A meeting of the General Secretaries and Presidents of the teacher unions in Great Britain and Ireland takes place once per year to discuss issues that affect teachers throughout the UK and ROI and to agree policy and strategy on issues at European and World level. This was particularly important this year as the World Congress, which is held every 4 years, was held in 2015 in Ottawa and attended by the President, Julie Orr, and the ex-President, Sandra Brown. It was important to ensure a full complement of BIGTU unions voting collectively to get a BIGTU union nominee onto the World Board.

The unions involved are:
- Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland (ASTI)
- Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)
- Education Institute of Scotland (EIS)
- Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT)
- Irish National Teachers’ Organisation (INTO)
- National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)
- National Union of Teachers (NUT)
- Scottish Secondary Teachers’ Association (SSTA)
- Teachers’ Union of Ireland (TUI)
- Ulster Teachers’ Union (UTU)
- University and College Union (UCU)

In addition there is a meeting of the General Secretaries once per year in advance of the main meeting to agree an agenda and discuss priorities. The General Secretaries also keep in touch through email and by telephone contact throughout the year.

Pat King, General Secretary, ASTI took over as Secretary to BIGTU in 2013 and did an excellent job in servicing the committee for the 2 years until his retirement at the end of 2015. Sheila Nunan INTO, took over from him as Secretary and has also been nominated as BIGTU nominee to the OECD Advisory Board. Christine Blower, NUT, took over as Chair in 2013 as well as taking on the Presidency of EI Europe. This ensures that BIGTU has a finger on the pulse of what is going on at European level.

The hosting of meetings is done on a rotational basis and during 2015 the meeting of General Secretaries was held on 26th January and hosted by UTU/INTO in UTU Headquarters. It prepared the agenda for the meeting of Presidents and General Secretaries which was held on 8th June in the INTO office in Belfast and was attended by UTU President, Julie Orr, and General Secretary, Avril Hall-Callaghan.

Christine Blower, Chair, opened the meeting by addressing ETUCE developments. It was noted that the next TUAC meeting was due to take place on 29th/30th June and John Macgabhan agreed to co-ordinate a meeting of BIGTU delegates in Paris. He also circulated a paper on elearning.

There was a general discussion on the possibility of a BIGTU research project with topics such as comparisons of working conditions, privatisation of education, teacher workload and assessment discussed. Seamus Searson, SSTA, volunteered to compile a BIGTU document comparing working conditions in the regions.

Patrick Roach, NASUWT, briefed the meeting on arrangements for the World Congress, referring to some of the resolutions that would be before Congress. It was noted that Patrick Roach was the BIGTU – supported candidate for an EI Open seat on the World Board. It was agreed that a meeting would take place immediately prior to the Opening Session of Congress.

It was noted that UCU and IFUT are proposing a resolution on TTIP at the World Congress.

Regional Reports were considered by the meeting. Post General Election issues in the UK were described including the negative effects of the new Education Bill. New limitations on Trade Unions are to be introduced by the Conservative Government and there will be increased privatisation of education. It was reported that in NI there will also be consequences of the Conservative election victory and teacher redundancies are expected.

Developments on Junior Cycle, Assessment and Public Sector Pay in the Republic of Ireland were explained and it was reported that legislation on the right to collective bargaining and union recognition is being introduced.

In Scotland it was noted that the Labour Party is in serious difficulty. Scottish unions are now looking to the Scottish Parliamentary elections. A 2½ % pay rise over
two years is on offer and the importance of having a Teacher Regulatory Body was emphasised.

The BIGTU Financial Statement was noted. It was agreed that Sheila Nunan would act as Secretary to BIGTU and Pat King was thanked for his work in this regard.

The next meeting of General Secretaries is to take place in NUT Headquarters on 25th/26th April 2016.
19. Central Executive Committee (CEC)

OFFICERS
Miss J Orr, President
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President
Ms A Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary

HONORARY TREASURER
Mr D Thompson

BELFAST AREA ASSOCIATION
Mrs J Gargan
Mr A Davis
Mr A Scott (from November ’15)
Ms D Dawson (until June ’15)

NORTH-EASTERN AREA ASSOCIATION
Mr N McCullough
Mr C Murdock
Mr D Kearney
Mrs L Creelman

SOUTHERN AREA ASSOCIATION
Mr S Savage
Mrs R Johnston
Mrs W Menary (until September ’15)
Mrs S Thompson
Mr G Savage (from June ’15)

WESTERN AREA ASSOCIATION
Mrs P Hurst
Mrs K Atchinson
Mrs A Steen

SOUTH-EASTERN AREA ASSOCIATION
Mrs C Cumper
Mrs S Law
Mr S Cumper

OBSERVERS
Mrs S McKee
Mrs R Barton
Mrs G Scott
20. Sub-Committees of The C.E.C.

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES
Miss J Orr, President
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President
Ms A Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary
Mr D Thompson, Honorary Treasurer
Mr C Murdock
Mr S Cumper
Mr S Savage
Mrs R Johnston

Convener: Mrs S Brown, Ex-President

EDUCATION AND POLICY SUB-COMMITTEE
Miss J Orr, President
Mr M Creelman Vice-President
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President
Mr D Thompson, Honorary Treasurer
Mrs A Philson
Mr A Davis
Mr C Murdock
Mrs W Menary
Mrs J Gargan
Mrs S Thompson
Ms J Morrow
Mrs G Dunlop
Mr A Orr
Mrs J Sturgeon

Convener: Mr M Creelman, Vice-President

SALARIES AND CONDITIONS SUB-COMMITTEE
Miss J Orr, President
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President
Ms A Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary
Ms J Reid, Deputy General Secretary

Convener: Ms A Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary

ORGANISATION AND MEMBERSHIP SUB-COMMITTEE
Mrs L Cooper, Organising Officer
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President
Mrs K Atchison
Mr A Davis
Mrs S McKee
Mrs M Holmes
Mr L Scott
Ms L Taylor
Mrs M Nutt

Convener: Mr S McCord, Ex-President

POLITICAL AND EQUALITY SUB-COMMITTEE
Ms J Reid, Deputy General Secretary
Mr D Thompson, Honorary Treasurer
Mr A Davis
Mr S Cumper
Mrs C Cumper
Mrs S Law
Mrs B Brand
Mr L Scott
Miss M Houston
Mr A Scott
Ms M McClure
Mr D Rice

Convener: Mrs J Reid, Deputy General Secretary

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE
Miss J Orr, President
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President
Mrs S Thompson
Mrs S Law
Mrs P Hurst
Mrs J Woods
Mr A Scott
Mr J Nugent
Mrs A Orr
Mr D Rice

Convener: Miss J Orr, President

CONFERENCE SUB-COMMITTEE
Miss J Orr, President
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President
Ms A Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary
Mr D Thompson, Honorary Treasurer
Ms J Reid, Deputy General Secretary
Mrs K Taylor, Executive Officer
Miss D Dawson
Mrs L Creelman
Mrs C Cumper
Mr D Kearney
Mr S Savage
Mr A Davis

Convener: Mrs S Brown, Ex-President

EDITORIAL PANEL – UTU NEWS
Miss J Orr, President/Editor
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President
Mr D Thompson, Honorary Treasurer
Mrs W Menary
Mrs S Law
Mr A Davis
Mrs S Thompson

Convener: Miss J Orr, President/Editor

PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE
Miss J Orr, President

Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President
Ms A Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary
Mr D Thompson, Honorary Treasurer
Mr L Love, Field Officer
Mrs S Law
Mrs A Steen
Mr A Davis
Mr M McClean

Convener: Miss J Orr, President

RULES AND CONSTITUTION SUB-COMMITTEE
Miss J Orr, President
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President
Ms A Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary
Mr D Thompson, Honorary Treasurer
Mr S Cumper

Convener: Ms A Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary

HEALTH AND SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE
Mr L Love, Field Officer
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President
Mr S Savage
Miss D Dawson

Convener: Mr L Love, Field Officer

APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE
Miss J Orr, President
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs S Brown Ex-President
Ms A Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary
Mr D Thompson, Honorary Treasurer
Mrs C Cumper

Convener: Miss J Orr, President
21. UTU Representation on External Bodies

NORTHERN IRELAND TEACHERS’ COUNCIL
Miss J Orr, President
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs S Brown Ex-President
Ms A Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary
Ms J Reid, Deputy General Secretary

Reserves:–
Mr D Thompson, Honorary Treasurer
Mr S Cumper

UTU/INTO JOINT BOARD
Miss J Orr, President
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs S Brown Ex-President

Ms A Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary
Ms J Reid, Deputy General Secretary

Reserves:–
Mr D Thompson, Honorary Treasurer
Mr S Cumper

NORTHERN IRELAND TEACHERS’ SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE
Miss J Orr, President
Ms A Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary

Reserves:
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President
Ms J Reid, Deputy General Secretary

NORTHERN IRELAND TEACHERS’ SUPERANNUATION CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Ms A Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary
Miss J Orr, President

PRIMARY TEACHERS’ COUNCIL
Miss J Orr, President
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President
Mr D Thompson, Honorary Treasurer
Miss D Dawson
Mr C Murdock
Mrs C Cumper
Mr S Savage

Reserves:–
Mrs S Thompson
Mrs R Johnston
Mr D Kearney

STANDING CONFERENCE FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION
Miss J Orr, President
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mr D Thompson, Honorary Treasurer
Mrs R Johnson
Mr C Murdock
Mrs C Cumper
Mr S Savage
Mrs S Thompson

STANDING CONFERENCE FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION
Mrs J Gargan
Mrs S Law

Reserves:–
Mrs W Menary
Mr A Davis

TEACHERS’ PANEL – STANDING CONFERENCE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION
Miss J Orr, President
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President
Mrs P Hurst
Mrs R Johnston
Mrs C Cumper
STANDING CONFERENCE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION
Miss J Orr, President
Mrs P Hurst

WORKERS’ EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President

UTU/INTO JOINT SERVICES
Miss J Orr, President
Mr D Thompson, Honorary Treasurer
Mrs L Cooper, Organising Officer

ICTU WOMEN’S COMMITTEE
Miss J Orr, President
Ms J Reid, Deputy General Secretary

ICTU HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
Mr L Love, Field Officer
Mr S Savage

ICTU EQUALITY COMMITTEE
Mrs S Brown, President
Ms J Reid, Deputy General Secretary

ICTU EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Miss J Orr, President
Ms Avril Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary

ICTU LGBT COMMITTEE
Miss J Orr, President
Ms J Reid, Deputy General Secretary

ICTU ETHNIC MINORITY COMMITTEE
Miss J Orr, President
Ms J Reid, Deputy General Secretary

ICTU DISABILITY COMMITTEE
Miss J Orr, President
Mrs S McKee

ICTU GLOBAL SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE
Miss J Orr, President
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President

ICTU YOUTH COMMITTEE
Mr A Davis
Mr A Davidson

ICTU EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President
Mrs L Cooper, Organising Officer

ICTU CULTURE AND ARTS
Miss J Orr, President
22. Honorary Vice-Presidents and Trustees

HONORARY VICE- PRESIDENTS
Mr SI Davidson, OBE.
Mrs EH Kerr
Mrs M Alexander, MBE.
Mr J Carr
Mr R Smith
Mr A Orr

UNION BUILDING TRUSTEES
Ms H Beattie
Mr M McClean
Mrs S McKee
Mr A Orr
Mr L Love, Field Officer

PENSION TRUSTEES
Ms A Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary
Mrs R Barton
Mr L Scott
Mrs S McKee
Mr G McVeigh
Mr A Orr

UNION FUND TRUSTEES
Miss J Orr, President
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President
Mr D Thompson, Honorary Treasurer
Ms A Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary
Ms J Reid, Deputy General Secretary
Mrs H Arrell – Financial Executive Officer
23. Attendances at Central Executive Committee Meetings

POSSIBLE ATTENDANCES Nine Meetings – (unless otherwise stated in brackets)

OFFICERS
Miss J Orr, President 8
Mr M Creelman, Vice-President 6
Mrs S Brown, Ex-President 9
Ms AE Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary 9

OFFICIAL/CLERICAL STAFF – in attendance
Mrs J Reid, Deputy General Secretary 5
Mrs L Cooper 5
Mr T McCabe 9

HONORARY TREASURER
Mr D Thompson 4

NORTH-EASTERN AREA
Mr D Kearney 0
Mr C Murdock 7
Mrs L Creelman 3
Mr N McCullough 0

SOUTHERN AREA
Mr S Savage 5
Ms W Menary 2
Mrs S Thompson 8
Mrs R Johnston 8
Mr G Savage 3 (6)

WESTERN AREA
Mrs P Hurst 6
Mrs K Atchinson 6
Mrs A Steen 7

SOUTHERN EASTERN AREA
Mrs C Cumper 6
Mrs S Law 3
Mr S Cumper 5

BELFAST AREA
Mrs J Gargan 4
Mr A Davis 6
Miss D Dawson 1 (5)
Mr A Scott 3 (4)

OBSERVERS
Mrs SE McKee 2
Mrs G Scott 0
Mrs R Barton 3
Mr A Davidson 5
Mrs G Dunlop 1
24. 2015 Conference Resolutions

The policy developed at Conference 2015 was compiled into a Policy leaflet and widely distributed to members, employers, DE, and political representatives in the Assembly, the European Parliament and Westminster. Many of the issues were raised in the local press and were the subject of meetings with representatives of the local political parties.

The quest for a meaningful, workable and relevant form of Assessment is still ongoing with increasing numbers of schools prepared to continue industrial action in relation to it. A further ballot for Industrial Action took place in February 2015 and Industrial Action on Assessment remains in place at time of going to print. Negotiations with DE continue in an attempt to find a system that teachers and parents can have confidence in.

All the resolutions from Conference 2015 that required input from the Department of Education were put to the Permanent Secretary and a team of DE officials at a meeting in October 2015. UTU was represented at this meeting by President, Julie Orr, Ex-President, Sandra Brown, Treasurer, David Thompson, CEC member, Chris Murdoch and General Secretary, Avril Hall-Callaghan.

Since the Education Authority only came into being on 1st April 2015 and senior Officers are just in the process of being appointed, any resolutions for the attention of the Education Authority have been addressed by alternative means. NITC has brought a number of concerns to the attention of EA through meetings with the Interim Chief Executive, Gavin Boyd.

The difficulty in achieving the goals we had set in our 2015 Conference was partly the lack of a settled leadership within EA but also because of the lack of clarity about budgets. For much of 2015 the Assembly was in limbo waiting for agreement to be reached on Welfare Reform. Whilst that was settled through the “Fresh Start” agreement just before Christmas 2015 we are now getting adjusted to a new First Minister and changes in some of the Ministerial offices. The Education Budget for the 16/17 year will probably be set without the opportunity for consultation although through the Education Trade Union Group of ICTU we sought an urgent meeting with the Minister for Education to try and influence his decisions.

With an Assembly election due in May it will be difficult to influence except via the election process and UTU along with some of the other unions will be compiling an Election Manifesto for distribution in the lead up to May.

The Early Years motions will be pursued after the Election although the current Minister’s intention to fund further private sector nurseries seems likely in the short term.

The motion on Defibrillators in Schools picked up some interest in the press and the General Secretary carried out a radio interview based on this.

The motion from Belfast Branch on “zero tolerance” for abuse against staff continues to be pursued with individual cases being robustly challenged under requests for risk assessments and follow up action to be taken. A recent Tribunal Finding regarding a constructive dismissal case in a Special Needs setting will be very useful in identifying where the lines should be drawn.

The resolution on funding for, and provision of, CPD has been pursued vigorously through the Strategic Forum which set up a work-stream on CPD. DE simultaneously set up its own working group to consider only the needs of teachers, while the Strategic Forum looked at the wider picture to include the needs of all school staff, although they did take on board the work the Strategic Forum had done and included some of the recommendations it had made. The DE group had been told to look for cost-neutral solutions!

The Causeway Branch resolution on support for children with other additional needs formed part of the discussion during the Leadership Conference on Special Needs. A new 2nd tier Officer with responsibility for the area of Special Needs is just in the process of being appointed as this Report goes to print and UTU will be seeking an urgent meeting with the successful candidate to pursue this and other matters around Special Needs policy.

The UTU action on Inspections continued until the end of 2015 and the Causeway Branch resolution calling for changes to continue to take place was highlighted at the NITC quarterly meetings with the Senior Inspectorate. Due to a lack of further progress on some essential matters the joint meetings were discontinued in January 2015 and a meeting with the Minister has been sought. We have asked our members to return the monitoring forms available on the UTU website to let us know what issues still remain in respect of the Inspection process.
The subject of TTIP has been widely discussed throughout the past year, both inside BIGTU and within the wider trade union movement in ICTU. A resolution on TTIP was proposed at the EI World Congress and political parties locally have been lobbied.

The Belfast Branch resolution on Social Media has been raised through NITC, a working group was set up but unfortunately due to the difficulties within TNC and NITC’s refusal to accede to re-negotiating the Jordanstown Agreement, Management Side have disengaged from further work on Social Media Guidance.

The resolution on Teacher Health and Wellbeing (THAW) has unfortunately gone the same way – little progress has been made. The two things Management Side has conceded on are setting up a Health & Safety Working Group within JWP to look at the implementation of the THAW Report and carrying out a survey similar to the one done in 2001 to see what areas still need to be focussed on. Too little, too late – but nevertheless it is a step in the right direction.

The Causeway Branch resolution on School Budgets has once again fallen on deaf ears due to the particular difficulties with the Assembly Budget throughout 2015. When a new Minister for Education is put in place after the elections UTU will be lobbying for this to be urgently addressed.

The Minister consulted widely on the position regarding GCSEs and A level grading. While maintaining the grading system as it is in Northern Ireland he is taking steps to ensure that grades awarded in NI will be comparable to those in other jurisdictions. Academic selection has remained in place but a few more schools have opted out of using academic criteria to select pupils. Future progress will very much depend on the stance taken by the new Education Minister post-election.

The Shared Education project has started to roll out with funding provided jointly by DE and Atlantic Philanthropies. Unfortunately its progress towards the end of 2015 was hindered due to the requirement for schools signing up to provide levels at the end of the school year, despite the fact that these were part of Industrial Action by almost all the unions.

The call for more employment opportunities for recently qualified teachers brought by the FIT Group has been partially answered by the Investing in the Teaching Workforce scheme announced in late December 2015 by the Minister. At time of going to print the parameters of this scheme are not yet defined.
25. Thanks and Appreciation

The President and Central Executive Committee wish to place on record their thanks to the Conveners of Sub-Committees, the Officers of Branches, Area Associations, the FIT Group and School Representatives for their outstanding work throughout what has been a very busy school year. The industrial action and the additional pressures due to formation of the Education Authority have increased the workload for UTU activists and we thank you for your support during what has been a very busy time.

The UTU General Secretary would like to record her most sincere thanks to the President, Julie Orr, for her year as President. Julie has been one of our youngest Presidents and also had the unique position of having been installed as Vice President at the same time as her father, Alistair Orr, was installed as Honorary Vice President. Since both Julie’s parents had served as members of the UTU Central Executive Committee during their time as Principals in the Western Education and Library Board, and with her father having been a former President of UTU, she was well aware of the commitment required in taking on the role. She had also shown her interest at an early stage, being a founder member of the “Future in Teaching” (FIT) Group and she certainly fulfilled the expectations which were anticipated of her during her year in office.

Julie has brought all the enthusiasm and passion of a committed young teacher to the post of President. She has been keen to bring the views of the teacher in the classroom to the attention of those who administer the education service and she has been shocked on some occasions that those who make decisions on funding and administration do not appear to have the needs of pupils at the centre of their thinking in the way she and the vast majority of teachers do. Julie’s year has been a remarkable one. She has represented the UTU on the world stage as a delegate to the World Congress in Ottawa and attended many local events, including addressing the Education Committee of the Assembly about the Anti-Bullying legislation. Julie has been a very able advocate for UTU both within the NITC and at JWP meetings, and she attended the ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference in Ennis during the summer holidays of 2015.

Honorary Treasurer, David Thompson, was elected to the post in March 2015 and has worked closely with Heather Arrell, the Financial Executive Officer, to ensure that a sharp eye is kept on expenditure during these times of financial stringency. David has done an excellent job in getting to grips with the UTU financial practices and hopefully this experience will stand him in good stead as he moves into the role of Vice President in 2016. Our thanks and best wishes go with him.

The General Secretary would also wish to place on record her thanks to the members of the Central Executive Committee for their commitment and engagement in the work of the Union. They have had to take some important decisions in leading the UTU through Industrial Action, such as deciding to boycott Inspections for much of 2015, action that was subsequently discontinued from January 2016 after some improvements to the Inspection process had been made. Another important part of the Industrial Action centred on Assessment. As we go to print, the negotiations around Assessment continue and there is a feeling that we are slowly moving towards a system that teachers can have faith in, one that is based on the professional judgement of teachers and one that is less bureaucratic and more meaningful for parents and pupils.

The CEC have had to negotiate their way through the 2014/15 and 2015/16 pay claims and made a careful and considered judgement to reject the derisory offer of 1.37% put on the table for 2015/16 in late January 2016. This year the level of debate around the Executive table has been excellent and fully reflective of the diversity of CEC members who willingly give of their time to represent their colleagues’ views. CEC this year was made up of young teachers and more experienced teachers, male and female teachers, principals and classroom practitioners, with teachers from nursery, primary, post-primary and special sectors, all bringing with them the experience of having listened to matters of concern in staffrooms the length and breadth of Northern Ireland. When representatives of UTU engage with management and DE it is this breadth of democratic representation that they bring to the table.

The General Secretary would like to record a special word of thanks to Chris Murdoch, CEC, who unfortunately found that due to family commitments and workload issues he could no longer remain on CEC and resigned in January 2016. Chris contributed much to the meetings of CEC this year and represented the UTU at its meeting with the Permanent Secretary in autumn 2015. The General Secretary, President and members of CEC thank him for his time on CEC and hope that he will return to CEC in the future.

The CEC would also like to record its thanks to Ronnie Haughey of Province Wide Productions for his assistance in the production of the UTU News. He worked very closely with the President to ensure that the end product was produced and delivered...
on time and to a very high standard.

The CEC and Officials wish to record their thanks to the Union’s solicitors, Shean Dickson Merrick, for the first-class service they provide to UTU members. The amount of legal work has steadily increased in recent years and yet no matter what the challenge, Maura McKay and Glenn Breen, partners in the firm, and Berni McCluskey, solicitor, represent members in a thoroughly professional way. This year we have had a number of very challenging cases and are very grateful for the wealth of experience in the educational setting that Maura, Berni and Glenn bring to the job. They provide our members with sympathetic and supportive advice and where necessary Glenn accompanies them to police interviews. The UTU would also wish to record its thanks to the barristers employed through Shean Dickson Merrick from time to time, either to supply legal opinion on cases or to represent members in court.

The CEC and staff wish to thank Building Trustee, Mervin McClean for his interest in the Headquarters Building. Mervin oversaw the major refurbishment of Headquarters some 13 years ago and is a member of the Property Sub-Committee that meets regularly to ensure that the building is maintained to a high standard. Mervin liaises with Executive Officer, Karen Taylor, to ensure that all work carried out is executed to a high standard.

The UTU Computer Support was supplied for part of the year by Sean Gavin of Gibttech who oversaw the computer systems that were put in place in 2011. However during 2015 the support contract was transferred to Liam Lynch who supports a number of small businesses, including the Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre. We would like to place on record our sincere thanks to Liam for all the work he has done in bringing our IT system up to date and making it fit for purpose. A very big thank-you must go to Julie Orr, President, who oversaw the upgrading of the UTU website, now managed by School Web Design. Denise Allely and Tony McCabe have assisted in ensuring all materials were updated and transferred to the new and improved website. Denise continues to provide the day-to-day input of information and she is ably assisted by Tony McCabe, Clerical Officer, who has proved invaluable. Tony has taken on the role of preparing the first draft of the CEC Minutes and this year was also called upon to take minutes for one of the JWP meetings during 2015.

The CEC would also wish to thank Martin Goodfellow of Sunshine Landscapes for his meticulous maintenance of the grounds. Martin ensures that the area around the Headquarters building is kept free of leaves and de-iced when required as well as ensuring the various trees and shrubs are regularly trimmed back. Martin was instrumental in designing the beautiful memorial around the oak tree dedicated to former General Secretary, Ray Calvin in 2013 and he also designed the setting for the water feature to commemorate David Allen which was dedicated during 2015. There are many other suppliers with whom the staff and CEC interact on a regular basis, including Stephen Grimley of Central Source who supplies recruitment materials, Sean O’Neill of Impress who supplies the diaries, Mark Cairns of Xpress printers who do much of the Union’s printing and Nicki Scott of Purple Promotions who provides a variety of services in respect of Conference. We would like to place on record our thanks to anyone who has provided a service to the Union in the past year.

The President, CEC and Officials also wish to thank all the bodies with whom they have interacted in a positive way in the 2015/16 year, both those within the Education sector and those outside it. Particular thanks to those with whom we work closely in the Department of Education and the Employing Authorities.

The CEC would also wish to record their thanks for the work of two Stranmillis students, Holly Heaney and Richard Elliott who came to the Union on placement during January 2016. They work-shadowed Officials, helped with the administration associated with the FIT Group Conference, revised recruitment materials and assisted the staff in numerous ways during their two weeks with us. Following their work placement they have become more aware of the work unions do and both are hoping to attend the UTU Conference.

Finally, the President and General Secretary wish to record their gratitude to each and every member of the Headquarters team for their continued support in providing a first-class service to members. The UTU continues to go from strength to strength due in no small part to the huge effort made by the staff, the members, the Branch and Area activists, the members of CEC and its sub-committees and all the individuals in those support services upon whom we rely to keep the wheels turning! 2015/16 saw a “bedding in” of the new streamlined structures in line with the new District Council structure which came into effect from 1st April 2015. Particular thanks is due to Annette Morrow, Denise Allely and Lindsay Osborne who made sure that the exercise of transferring members into their new Branches was carried out efficiently and as smoothly as possible. Thanks also to Branch Chairs and Secretaries who were involved in ensuring that the amalgamation of Branches took place on the ground and that new Branch Officials – and in many cases, new Branch names – were agreed upon.
2015/16 has been a challenging year on many fronts but UTU has continued to thrive and grow, even in these times of cut backs to the Education Service and an environment of increasing hostility towards the rights of workers.

The UTU wishes to thank Purple Promotions for their input to the design of the Conference backdrop and graphics.