

27th June 2022

Press Release

INTO decides to ballot for industrial action

The Northern Committee of the INTO met on Friday past. The Committee unanimously decided, in response to the continued lack of progress in achieving a decent and fair pay uplift for teachers and in the face of the worsening cost of living crisis, that they had no option but to seek a mandate for industrial action from the membership.

INTO Northern Secretary, Gerry Murphy was very clear in his reaction to the Committee's decision. *"It has become increasingly obvious to INTO members that talking to the employers and Department of Education (DE) is not working when it comes to resolving the current pay dispute. INTO must listen to our members who are rightly demanding we take industrial action to force the employers and DE to get into serious negotiations with INTO and the rest of the NITC on the issue of pay.*

It is perfectly understandable that members are increasingly frustrated and angry with what they see as complete inaction by the DE and the employers, they are fed up to the teeth with being taken for granted and having their good-will exploited. Therefore, they will have the opportunity, early in the new term, to target their frustration and anger by participating in a ballot for industrial action. INTO's Northern Office will shortly be in contact with every member to make them aware of the next steps."

Gerry Murphy's comments were further endorsed by INTO Northern Committee Chairperson, Marie O'Shea who said in her communications with members that she is being personally told by many teachers that they are already at breaking point. Ms O'Shea said:

"INTO members are telling me they cannot any longer simply get by on their current salaries. I live and work in a rural community in West Fermanagh and many of our members in this area have seen their fuel costs effectively double for the necessary journeys to and from their schools. INTO members all across the north are finding it impossible to make ends meet in the face of escalating costs associated with energy and food.

Our members are deserving of a decent and fair pay rise, a pay rise which takes account of price inflation and one which truly reflects and indeed rewards their contribution in keeping the education system functioning in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic which hasn't gone away.

We will be balloting them in early September seeking support to commence a campaign of industrial action up to and including strike action, if necessary. INTO members have demonstrated over the years that they will take action when needed and I will be calling on them to vote for action so that a strong message can be sent to the employers. INTO will not be found wanting and I have faith that our members will follow such action resolutely to a conclusion. Now it is over to the employers and DE."