

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Joint Pledge To Safeguard Employment In Schools

This Joint Pledge is made between Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, School Governing Bodies, Head Teachers, LLAN, NAASH and the recognised trade unions for schools employees, namely ASCL, ATL, GMB, NAHT, NASUWT, NUT, UCAC and UNISON.

Aim

The principal aim of this Joint Pledge is to protect to the maximum extent possible, and for as long as possible, teachers and support staff within Neath Port Talbot's Schools from compulsory redundancies.

The Pledge

The schools sector at Neath Port Talbot faces significant financial and organisational change challenges for the foreseeable future. The parties to this Joint Pledge are, however, committed to working in partnership to seek to:

- safeguard and enhance the provision of education for the young people of Neath Port Talbot; and to
- protect schools employees to the maximum extent possible, and for as long as possible, from compulsory redundancies

The importance of stable and positive employee relations is readily acknowledged, together with the need for speedy and effective consultation and negotiation processes in relation to all proposed changes which affect the schools workforce.

It is also acknowledged that the effective redeployment of schools staff will:

- enable key skills to be retained; and
- reduce the additional financial burden associated with severance costs

It is recognised that achieving the aim of this Joint Pledge will require:

- preventative actions to be taken in terms of seeking at the outset to avoid jobs being lost on the grounds of redundancy; along with
- consequential actions such as voluntary redundancy and redeployment to seek to protect employee/s occupying jobs which unavoidably are declared to be "at risk" of redundancy.

The “Redundancy/Redeployment Policy and Procedure For All School Based Staff” (March 2011) which has been developed with an input from all parties to this Joint Pledge will be the framework within which this Joint Pledge will be progressed.

Within this framework, all parties will actively consider a range of measures to seek to safeguard the employment of persons who wish to remain in the employment of NPT’s schools, including the following:

- Availability of school reserves
- Reducing non-staffing costs
- Review of all existing staffing costs
- Workforce and succession planning, including natural turnover
- Non-filling of vacant posts
- Restrictions on external recruitment
- Reduction in the use of Agency Workers
- Greater flexibility in organisational arrangements and job roles
- Reduced working hours, flexible working and flexible retirement
- Secondments
- Voluntary redundancy
- Bumped redundancies
- Prior Consideration
- Redeployment within and between schools, together with redeployment elsewhere within the Council
- Re-training and upskilling

Safeguarding of Support Services Provided to Schools By NPT Council Employees

The parties to this Joint Pledge also recognise the importance of seeking to safeguard the employment of NPT Council employees who provide support services to Schools, particularly in the light of the unprecedented financial pressures facing schools and all other service areas within the Council.

Accordingly, the parties to this Joint Pledge are committed to seek to maintain the provision of such support services, but always having regard to the need for such services to be of the required quality and to provide value for money.

Review

The implementation and operation of these measures will be routinely monitored jointly through established consultative arrangements. The Joint Pledge will also be formally reviewed during the 2011 Autumn school term.