



Cathy Tattersfield  
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Dear Marion

Polly Thornley and I met with Richard Browne on Wednesday 12 October to discuss the problem ATL has in representing its membership in Nottinghamshire. He suggested that I wrote to you regarding this, and that you might consider it appropriate to discuss this issue at Schools Forum meeting this week.

For some considerable time we have not had a Branch Secretary to represent members in Nottinghamshire. Nottinghamshire has been forwarding relevant papers including SJNC papers, redundancies and academy conversion information to Ralph Surman who is the 'City Secretary'. He has been unable to attend due to the lack of facilities time or payments available for him to do this.

Recently the Branch elected Polly as their new Branch Secretary. She was therefore given appropriate training by ATL to undertake this role and has gradually started to take over this responsibility by picking up case work and attending a few SJNC meetings. This was in her own time as she worked part time. She has worked with Andy Wilson to set up various systems and establish networks. She has now been offered a full time post at her academy. She will therefore not be able to continue to attend SJNC meetings and support Nottinghamshire members unless there is a mechanism to pay her academy to release her to undertake this valuable and important service.

I understand that your current regulations allow for payment from the union 'pot' if the school where the officer is employed is paying into the pot. Thus maintained schools and some academies are suitable places for union officers to work and be able to access facilities and represent members. Polly Thornley is already representing members who work in schools which contribute to this pot but she works for an academy which is geographically located in Derbyshire. Her school is happy to release her, if they are paid. I understand that a mechanism could be designed in order to do this but I am led to believe that it would need the relevant body, the Schools Forum, to approve it.

I should be grateful if you would consider the following points

1. That Nottinghamshire staff in a recognised organisation, ATL, are not currently represented

2. That schools and academies are paying into a fund in the expectation that there is representation for their staff, yet this is not the case in respect of ATL's members in Nottinghamshire
3. That there are some MATs which have schools in several local Authority areas which has created a cross border dimension to facilities payments.
4. That other schools outside Nottinghamshire, such as Bilborough College, buy into some services provided by Nottinghamshire. It could be that in the future a union officer from one of these schools is elected as Branch Secretary and would therefore need facilities money from Nottinghamshire in order to be released to undertake this important function in Nottinghamshire schools.
5. Union support and representation of members has an important role in developing and supporting smooth and harmonious working relationships in schools.
6. That anomalies such as this are likely to occur more frequently over time

I should be grateful if you would clarify the circumstances and conditions in which you are prepared to release moneys for our democratically elected officers to represent and support our members in schools in Nottinghamshire and urge you to consider releasing facilities money to Polly Thornley's school to enable her to represent and support our Nottinghamshire Branch members who work in schools in Nottinghamshire and for colleagues from schools such as Bilborough College in the future.

I look forward to hearing from you and would be happy to meet with you to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely



Cathy Tattersfield **Joint Branch Secretary and Executive Member** Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire **Association of Teachers and Lecturers**