

Say no to forced redundancies: Vote YES for Industrial Action

The ASTI is conducting a ballot of members in order to protect members from redundancy.

The ballot follows the Department of Education and Skills decision to refuse ASTI members access to the redeployment scheme. Department Circular 0010/2017 states that teachers who are signed up to the Lansdowne Road Agreement are protected against compulsory redundancy and that “all other teachers, where they are nominated as surplus, may potentially be liable for compulsory redundancy”.

At its meeting on Saturday, April 1st the ASTI Central Executive Council considered this development and voted to ballot members on industrial action, up to and including strike action, in order to protect ASTI members from being made redundant.

BALLOT QUESTION

Are you in favour of authorising ASTI Standing Committee to direct members to take industrial action, up to and including strike action, in the event of an ASTI member being made redundant due to the withdrawal of the Redeployment Scheme from ASTI members?

The Department has stated that if made redundant, ASTI members will not get the agreed improved terms of redundancy and hence will only be entitled to statutory redundancy.

School stewards are being asked to distribute and collect ballot papers to/from members between Tuesday May 9th and Tuesday May 16th.



Message from Ed Byrne, ASTI President

The Government's plan to make ASTI members redundant is yet another attempt to coerce the ASTI into signing up to the Lansdowne Road Agreement even though ASTI members have rejected the Agreement on two separate occasions. There is absolutely no reason for any teacher to be made redundant. There is an effective redeployment scheme in operation which saves the State and taxpayers money.

Withdrawal of access to the redeployment scheme is just one of a number of measures which have been taken against ASTI members. Why? Because members have ceased to do the 33 Croke Park hours – an unproductive, bureaucratic, box-ticking exercise amounting to one hour per week. This action has not closed schools or disrupted students' education. Yet the Government, as employer, responded in a most excessive and serious manner by threatening to take away the livelihoods of teachers in over quota situations. These forced redundancies will only attract the minimum redundancy payment.

Unnecessary and retributive redundancies are a redline issue for any trade union. Whether it is one ASTI member or dozens, we cannot standby as colleagues and fellow trade union members are picked off and made an example of using the ultimate sanction. We must respond with a strong and clear message. I am calling on each and every member to stand firm and united against the victimisation of ASTI members for exercising their democratic right. Vote YES for industrial action and protect yourself and fellow teachers from forced redundancy now and in the future.



Background to dispute

In October 2015, ASTI members voted to reject the Lansdowne Road Agreement by 74% to 26%.

Key reasons for rejection of the Lansdowne Road Agreement by ASTI members:

- The Agreement does not achieve equal pay for recently qualified teachers.
- Part-time teachers did not benefit from the low pay restoration (2.5% pay increase implemented in Jan 1 2016 for those on annualised salaries of less than €24,000).
- The Agreement does not provide a supplementary panel for second-level teachers.
- The partial pay and PRD (pension related deductions) restorations are inadequate.
- The Agreement extends teachers' commitment to the Croke Park hours.

Withdrawal from Croke Park hours led to redundancy threat

In April/ May 2016, ASTI members balloted on withdrawal from the Croke Park hours (upon completion of the Haddington Road Agreement) by 68% to 32%. ASTI members withdrew from the 33 Croke Park hours with effect from 11th July 2016.

Arising from the withdrawal by ASTI members from the Croke Park hours, the Department of Education and Skills issued Circular 0045/2016 which sets out the measures being applied to ASTI members and others who are outside the Lansdowne Road Agreement.

These measures include:

- The freezing of increments from July 11th 2016 until June 30th, 2018.
- Withdrawal of the alleviation of the FEMPI Act 2013 pay reductions for teachers earning in excess of €65,000 per annum from September 1, 2016.
- No payment of S&S moiety of €796 to the pay scale on September 1, 2016.
- CIDs are no longer available after two years (ASTI members currently require in excess of four years to become eligible for a CID).
- Access to the redeployment scheme has been withdrawn from members of the ASTI.
- Loss of improved redundancy payments where a teacher is made redundant.

In September/ October 2016, ASTI members voted to take industrial action, up to and including withdrawal from the supervision and substitution scheme in response to these measures. Members withdrew from supervision and substitution on Monday, November 7th. Members attended work as normal on this day, however many members were locked out of their schools. On November 8th the ASTI Standing Committee accepted an invitation from Anna Perry, Chair of the Workplace Relations Commission, to talks and a document "Outcome of Talks" emerged.

In February 2017 ASTI members voted to reject the "Outcome of Talks" proposals by 52.5% to 47.5%.

BALLOT ARRANGEMENTS

Ballot material will arrive in schools from Monday, May 8th. School stewards are being asked to distribute and collect ballot papers to/from members between Tuesday, May 9th and Tuesday, May 16th.

The closing date for receipt of ballot papers is 5.30p.m. on Thursday, May 18th.

**Protect members from compulsory redundancy –
vote YES to industrial action**

ASTI members may return completed ballot papers to their school steward or they can post them directly to ASTI Head Office in the pre-paid envelopes supplied.

Ballot papers must arrive in ASTI Head Office no later than 5.30p.m. on **Thursday, May 18th**. Post can take several days so please post as early as possible.

Who gets to vote?

All serving teachers who are members of the ASTI are entitled to vote in the ballot on industrial action in the event of an ASTI member/s being made redundant. Retired/emeritus members do not vote in ballots on industrial action.
