



## Stars in our Schools!

Stars in Our Schools is an annual celebration of school support staff. This year's event will place on Friday 29 November 2019 – but we encourage schools to join in whenever suits them around this date! For more info contact the Suffolk County Branch or go to the national website

<http://www.starsinourschools.uk/>

### Meet your new branch casework lead for schools in Suffolk!

Kelly Weston joined us in September, though has been part of UNISON for a long time. If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to arrange for her to meet you and your colleagues, please contact at:

[Kelly.weston@suffolkunison.co.uk](mailto:Kelly.weston@suffolkunison.co.uk)

Or call

**01473 263100**

### ***Thinking about your Local Government Pension?***

- Wondering when you can retire?
- Is early retirement an option?
- How big is that lump sum?

**Would you be interested in having an advice session or attending a group meeting?**

Drop us a line and let us know? If we get enough interest, we can book some sessions across Suffolk.

**Contact us via the details overleaf**

### Teaching Assistants use their own money to fund uniforms and trips to help struggling parents!

A response of over 4500 teaching assistants to a recent UNISON survey highlighted how pressured, low-income families are turning to schools for basic support. 49% reported pupils arriving at school hungry, and 41% witnessed increasing levels of poverty.

22% of TA's had bought uniforms, 23% had brought PE kits, whilst 20% had helped pupils with lunch money.

The acts of kindness come as teaching assistants themselves are feeling the financial squeeze. More than three quarters of schools are making cutbacks, and more than half are axing school support staff jobs.

The result is high stress levels (70%) and reduced morale (68%), with more than half considering leaving their jobs.

**UNISON head of education Jon Richards** said: "This demonstrates that support workers are not just essential in the classroom. Their role now extends to acting as benefactors...despite many not earning much more than the struggling parents themselves".

<https://www.unison.org.uk/tag/teaching-assistants/>

## Guidance on lesson observations of teaching assistants in school

Historically lesson observations have been used to monitor the effectiveness of teachers in schools. Increasingly, school support staff's performance is being observed to measure the impact of their interventions on the progress of pupils.

For further guidance go online at:  
<https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2018/01/24805.pdf>

Or contact the Branch for your copy

## Suffolk Children's Centres under threat of closure

A public consultation is due to start this Autumn on plans to reduce children's centre services. Of the 38 children's centres, 16 full time family hubs will remain open; 10 would be repurposed for school space or to provide childcare places, one would become a special educational needs assessment centre; and 9 would offer reduced services on a part time basis, and 2 will close completely.

As a general principal, UNISON Suffolk County would not want to see any children's centres close as they should be available to all families in the community under current legislation and should be adequately funded by government, and inspected by Ofsted.

UNISON Branch Secretary, Neil Bland, said, "UNISON is committed to fighting the closure and reduction of Sure Start children's centres. The mantra that these services are to be reshaped to support the most vulnerable people may sound impressive. In reality, reducing preventative and universal services increases costs later on because problems are not identified and dealt with effectively in a child's early years. I urge all members to stand with us to fight these cuts, which impact on families with babies and young children."

You can help UNISON by making your voice heard at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/XSTDR9Z>

**We will use your feedback to help plan UNISON's campaigning activity.**

## How to keep in touch



[suffolkcounty@btconnect.com](mailto:suffolkcounty@btconnect.com)



**01473 263100**



[www.suffolkunison.co.uk](http://www.suffolkunison.co.uk) or



@suffolkcountyunison



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## Who's Who in Suffolk County Branch

**Branch Chair:** Gwenda Palmer

**Branch Secretary:** Neil Bland

**Health and Safety:** Dave Evans/Neil Bland

**Service Conditions:** Anita Abram

**Young Members:** Daniel Harvey

**International:** Adria Pittock

**Lifelong Learning:** David Cook

**Communications:** Anita Abram

**Affiliated Political Fund:** Cliff Waterman

**Black Members:** Gwenda Palmer

**Disabled Members:** Polly Smith

**Branch Administrator:** Lou Calver

**Branch Vice Chair:** Anita Abram

**Treasurer:** Dave Evans

**Education:** Hugh Healey

**Welfare:** Phil Wakefield

**Recruitment:** Cliff Waterman

**Membership:** Cliff Waterman

**Equalities:** Pauline Bacon

**Retired Members:** Netta Murray

**Learning Rep:** David Cook

**LGBT:** Adria Pittock

**Women's Rep:** Pauline Bacon

**Casework Organisers:** Sharon White and Kelly Weston



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for an application form