

The latest news and announcements from Derbyshire UNISON

Childcare and early education

The coalition aims to build public and political support for early education and childcare



UNISON helps found new coalition for childcare and early education

Last week saw the launch of the Early Education and Childcare Coalition, which aims to provide a strong, united voice to ensure all political parties commit to reform.

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The coalition is an independent group that unites parents, children, providers, those working in the sector and the wider business community to use their collective voice and expertise to build public and political support for early education and childcare.

As the UK's largest trade union, and representing predominantly women workers, UNISON members are on the frontline of the crisis facing

Britain's childcare sector, whether as parents, grandparents or one of the 50,000 members who work in early years and nurseries.

As such, UNISON is proud to be a founding member of the Early Education and Childcare Coalition.

The union believes that everyone's children should be able to enjoy quality provision delivered by well-paid professionals.

The cost of living is exacerbating

problems in the childcare sector, as workers struggle to make ends meet. TUC research shows that nursery costs have risen four times faster than wages, so many public service workers are having to take second or third jobs to pay for childcare.

Others - especially women - are leaving work altogether because they cannot afford nursery fees. The childcare market is broken - it needs fixing, with proper funding that ensures universal access.

UNISON members [can join the campaign to help make this a reality.](#)

The coalition is releasing new polling showing that over a third of voters (40%) support investing more taxpayers' money in early education and childcare. This figure rises to 59% for people who are hoping to become a parent.

The polling also reveals that 44% of British people think those working in childcare and early education are underpaid, and 31% believe they are undervalued. Almost half of all voters (49%) said that well-trained staff were the most important factor when it came to providing good quality early education and childcare, with over a third (36%) saying that decent pay for staff had the biggest impact.

UNISON general secretary Christina McAnea said: "Everyone's children deserve high-quality care and education delivered by well-paid professionals. But early-years staff have endured more than a decade of wage freezes and below-average pay awards.

"The cost of living crisis has devalued their income even further, causing staff to leave for better paid work. A proper wage is an investment in the workforce, leading to higher quality early-years care and learning."

UNISON is calling on the government to deliver childcare that:

- is fully funded from the point of need;
- is affordable and flexible, so parents can work if they want;
- has good pay, terms and conditions for staff;
- provides high quality education for

all children, including for disabled children and those with special educational needs.