

Nearly 8,000 jobs lost last year in schools



Urgent investment needed as cuts bite on schools, says GMB Union.

GMB, the union for school support staff, has spoken out after new figures confirmed that the schools' workforce in England has shrunk for the second year in a row.

7,600 jobs were lost on a net basis across all teaching and support staff between 2018/19 and 2019/20, the new official statistics show.

The Department for Education figures, which were collected in November before the coronavirus outbreak, show that spending cuts had disproportionately fallen on some support staff roles.



Technicians were the worst affected job roles. The number of technicians in state funded schools has fallen by 20 per cent since 2011/12. The cuts have been especially acute in primary schools, where close to a quarter of technician jobs have been lost.

1,500 teaching assistant jobs were lost in primary and nursery schools last year, while 11,400 teaching assistant jobs have been lost in secondary schools since 2011/12 (a reduction of 16 per cent).

Eight thousand 'auxiliary' roles, a category that includes catering, cleaning and maintenance staff, were lost last year.

GMB said that the job losses showed that schools were still grappling with a decade of funding cuts which has impaired the education system's response to the coronavirus outbreak.

Karen Leonard, GMB National Schools Officer, said:

"These shocking figures confirm our repeated warnings that schools were on their knees even before the coronavirus outbreak hit.

"Schools couldn't function without their dedicated and highly skilled support staff. Ongoing cuts to support staff roles – from catering staff to administrators, technicians and teaching assistants – have a direct impact of the quality of children's education.

"The reality is that cuts to support staff disproportionately fall on low paid women who urgently need better protection in the workplace. SEND pupils in particular often lose irreplaceable support when teaching assistant roles are cut.

"We urgently need a significant improvement to schools' baseline funding to safely meet the challenge of coronavirus and build a more inclusive education system for the future."

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