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Nurses hold demo on town hall steps

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NURSES working with small children are being forced to accept part-time contracts and a significant drop in income, according to a public sector union.

Unison claims Waltham Forest Council is no longer willing to pay nursery nurses in the same way as teachers, as previously agreed as part of a deal on school-based workers.

Nurses are said to have been told to sign the new part-time contracts or face the sack.

A total of 111 out of 198 nursery nurses in the borough will have their pay cut under the plans, Unison claims.

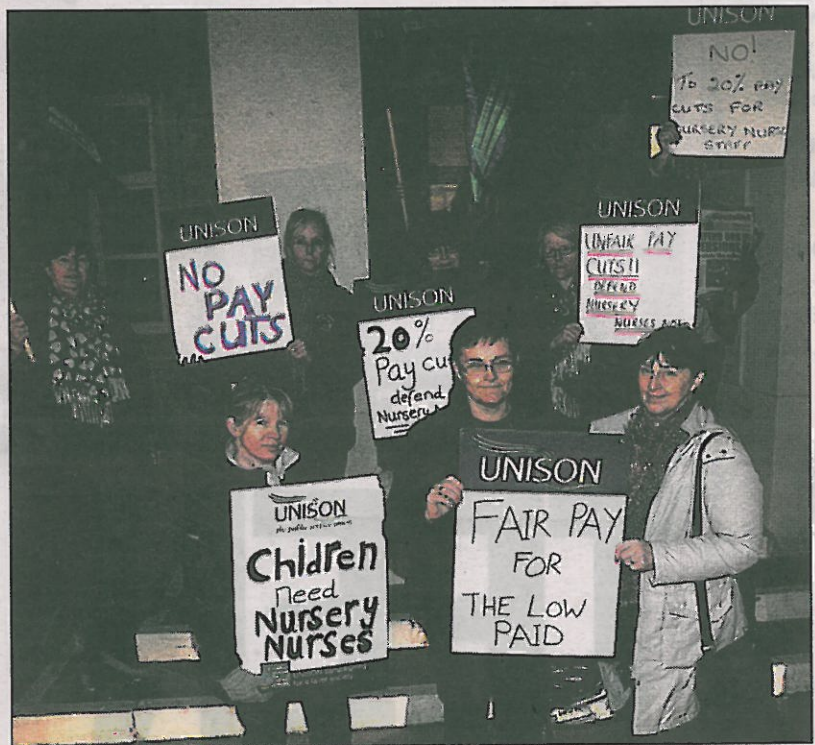
Some will see as much as 20 per cent – or around £4,000 – wiped off their annual salary, with many forced to live on around £16,000.

Nurses demonstrated outside the town hall before a meeting between officers and union officials on Tuesday (January 10).

One nurse, who did not want to be named for fear of losing her job, said: "When I heard about it I was in total shock – I cried for a week. It happened just before Christmas and I couldn't even bring myself to put any decorations up.

"I have given years of dedication to this job and I expected to do it until I retired, but I don't know what's going to happen now. We love the children and the schools but it will be a real struggle now."

Another nurse said: "Our job is very similar to teachers, we actually do teach and have the same responsibilities.



Nursery workers to hold a demo against plan to cut their wages before decisive council meeting (EL28828-4)

"We don't want it to affect the children but it will be very demoralising for those that stay."

Unison branch secretary Dave Knight said: "The impact of these wage cuts on our members working in school nurseries will be huge as they struggle to make ends meet.

"Some of our members will face serious difficulties as a result. Meanwhile the council continue to increase the pay of the senior staff.

It is an incomprehensible and utterly unfair pay policy which the trade unions will continue to resist".

The council argues that difficult decisions must be taken to deal with an unprecedented cut in government funding and senior staff have had to take on extra responsibilities.

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