

# 'Stop treating TAs as second-class citizens'

Your cover feature is right – TAs are “superheroes sold short” (24 February).

Sadly, however, Durham is not the only local authority where teaching assistants have lost out. In Derby, some TAs face losing thousands of pounds a year – and their homes – as a result of job evaluation, changes to the working week and term-time-only employment.

It is not only “the [teaching] profession” that must “decide what it wants TAs to be” – it is the government, too.

Although many TAs and other support staff work in schools under a head-teacher, their employer is technically the local authority, while others are employed directly by an academy. However, all attempts to set up a national system have been treated with contempt by national government.

The decisions to scrap the School Support Staff Negotiating Body before it had even got off the ground and not to proceed with the national standards were bitterly disappointing.

The government must stop treating TAs as second-class citizens by denying them the professional status they so richly deserve. The time has come to end their “classroom identity crisis” (Editorial, 24 February) with a nationally negotiated pay and conditions structure for all support staff. Without it, they will continue to be “sold short”.

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