

POLITICAL BRIEFING

‘Working Overtime: Time for a Limit’ – The Workload Crisis

Introduction

Excessive and unnecessary workload has emerged as a critical issue affecting the wellbeing of teachers and school leaders. This analysis examines the escalating workload crisis – its causes, implications – and proposes measures to address it.

Analysis of the Crisis

The workload crisis is worsening, with workload cited as a top concern among teachers:

- NASUWT's Big Question survey revealed that 82% of teachers identified workload as among their top five concerns in 2023.
- Government studies indicate an increase in average weekly working hours for both teachers and school leaders, with many reporting working 60 or more hours per week.

Causes and Implications

The causes of excessive workload extend beyond classroom teaching tasks:

- Administrative duties, data recording, lesson planning, marking, and behaviour incident follow-ups contribute to workload burdens.
- Workload negatively impacts recruitment, retention, mental health and wellbeing of teachers and leaders, hindering their ability to focus on teaching and learning.

Monetary Value of Workload

Teachers work significantly beyond contracted hours, with the value of this additional time amounting to billions annually:

- On average, teachers work 17.4 hours over the standard 35-hour week, equating to approximately 660 additional hours annually.
- The pre-tax value of this extra work exceeds £9 billion per year for the entire education system in England.

Proposed Solutions

NASUWT proposes a series of measures to alleviate excessive workload:

- Conduct an independent review of the unintended impacts of inspection on teacher workload and wellbeing.
- Strengthen statutory provisions and guidance on teachers' working time rights, including breaks, work-life balance and leadership time.
- Implement recommendations from the 2016 Independent Teacher Workload Review Group reports.
- Require leaders in the education system to demonstrate best practices in workload reduction.
- Restore and update statutory guidance on planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time, leadership and management time.

- Improve contractual rights for teachers in leadership roles and introduce a 35-hour per week limit on overall working time.
- Mandate workload impact assessments for new policies introduced at school and national levels.

Conclusion

Addressing the workload crisis is imperative to ensure the wellbeing of teachers and the effectiveness of the education system. Implementing measures to reduce excessive workload will not only benefit teachers and school leaders but also contribute to the overall quality and sustainability of education delivery.

About Us

NASUWT is The Teachers' Union and is the voice of the teaching profession.

Our aim is to improve and protect the status, morale and working conditions of the teaching profession so that teachers and headteachers can provide the best education and support to children and young people.

We are committed to ensuring that teachers and headteachers are recognised and rewarded as highly skilled professionals with working conditions that enable them to focus on their core role of leading teaching and learning

Further Information

For further information please email campaigns@mail.nasuwt.org.uk