

Date: 5 February 2024

Our Ref: 240205 Keegan G/PR/LB

Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP  
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Dear Gillian,

## **TEACHER WORKLOAD, WORKING HOURS, WELLBEING AND PAY**

I am writing to you setting out the concerns of members of the NASUWT regarding workload, working hours, wellbeing and pay.

The NASUWT has recently concluded new polling of teachers and headteachers across the country. The results, which we are releasing today, speak for themselves.

The NASUWT National Teacher Poll was conducted in January 2024. 7,000 teachers working in state-funded schools and academies in England were questioned.

- 72% of respondents said their workload had increased since the start of the academic year. 27% said that their workload had stayed the same during the period.
- 65% of respondents said they had raised concerns about their workload with their school. However, 72% said that no measures had been put in place by their school to help address concerns raised.
- Ofsted was rated as the biggest driver of workload by 60% of respondents. Inspection and accountability pressures are a major source of concern to teachers and headteachers and are contributing to impaired mental and physical health of our members.
- Amongst the highest rated workload drivers were: school/employer policies and procedures including marking and assessment, data management and lesson planning (50%); lack of funding (48%); specific Government policies (39%); and lack of support for pupils' behaviour and mental health (35%) were amongst the other highest rated workload drivers.
- 60.4% of respondents report that on average their working hours each week during term time was between 50 hours and 69 hours. 20.9% of respondents report weekly average hours of 60-69 hours. 4.1% reported their average working hours of between 70 hours and 79 hours per week.

- Only 10% of respondents rated their working hours as manageable.
- Examining teachers' basic contractual rights, our polling has found evidence of widespread flouting by schools of teachers' working time rights:
  - 37% of respondents said they had not been provided with a Directed time calendar. 81% said that the Directed Time calendar had not been discussed with them and that they had not been consulted on it.
  - 30% of respondents said that they were expected routinely (e.g. daily) to read and respond to emails in the evening, weekends or during holidays.
  - 71% of respondents said they did not get a guaranteed and uninterrupted lunch break. 10.8% said they never got a lunch break. 13% rarely got a lunch break. And 46% said they had to supervise pupils or undertake other work during their lunch break.
- 89% of respondents said the Government is not doing enough to address excessive workload and high working hours.

The failure of the Government to ensure appropriate national statutory guidance and regulations and to provide sufficient funding for schools is, in our view, resulting in extreme pressures being placed on our members. The context in which our members are teaching and leading and managing schools is also impacting detrimentally upon their wellbeing.

Last year, the NASUWT welcomed your decision to establish a Workload Reduction Taskforce. However, we also advised you at the time that with teachers already at breaking point due to long working hours and workload pressures, it was also necessary to see immediate action to alleviate the demands on our members.

Over the last year, we have seen little by way of action on the key concerns affecting teachers and headteachers. The recommendations of the Workload Reduction Taskforce, whilst accepted by the Government, are yet to be implemented.

I have to advise you of the mounting anger once again from our members about the lack of progress from the Government on workload, working hours, working conditions and pay. There is a mountain of evidence that excessive workload pressures and long working hours, driven by inadequate funding levels and the impact of a high-stakes inspection and accountability system, are driving teachers and headteachers to breaking point.

We believe that it is imperative that you recognise the urgency of the situation and come forward rapidly with a package of measures that will have a significant and material impact on improving teachers' working conditions.

Our members are also concerned that on matters regarding teachers' pay, your latest remit letter to the STRB confirms that you are not willing to consider the matter of pay restoration for teachers. We also remain concerned that your commitment to bringing forward the pay review body process and timetable has also not been delivered.

The Government appears to be content to stand by and allow teachers and headteachers to work longer and harder for less, and to watch as the profession is driven into the ground. This is an intolerable situation for our members.

For the avoidance of doubt, the NASUWT is in dispute with you on these matters. The NASUWT National Executive has agreed that in view of the lack of progress to date, the Union will be consulting further with its members over the coming weeks.

I hope that you will agree that a constructive and immediate programme of dialogue is now required to avoid further escalation of this dispute and, to that end, I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Roach', written in a cursive style.

Dr Patrick Roach  
**General Secretary**