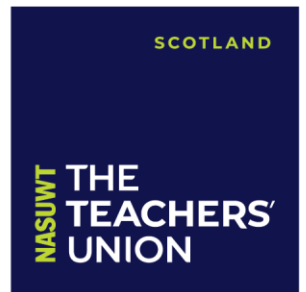


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Date: 17/06/2026



Scottish Government
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Regent Road
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MATT WRACK
GENERAL SECRETARY

Dear Scottish Government

A Scottish Skills Model

I am writing further to the 'A Skills Model for Scotland: Consultation'.

NASUWT is concerned about the process and limited engagement which has taken place prior to the publication of this consultation. It is not clear how the voice of teachers has been considered, nor whether an intersectional approach to engagement and evidence gathering has been undertaken. Statements such as "*[w]e are operating within a backdrop of a skills deficit*" are made without context or evidence. It is overall very disappointing that the sub-optimal approach at this early stage will inevitably undermine any final outputs from this consultation process.

NASUWT would note there is often a tendency for skills strategies to view school as merely a period of pre-employment preparation and indeed this seems to be the case with this specific draft strategy. The Union has always been clear that supporting future employability is an important objective of the school system but it is not the only objective that this system has.

Public education, together with other public institutions and public services, are, and should remain, the bedrock of our democratic society. NASUWT argues for a public education that provides opportunities for individuals to develop through life, whilst, at the same time, contributing to building the nation. This twin mission cannot be left to the market and the Union argues for a major role for government in securing high-quality public education for all as the basis for an inclusive, fair and democratic society.

NASUWT is clear that public education has a broad moral, social and democratic purpose which cannot be reduced to preparing young people for employment. Schools do have an important role in helping children and young people develop the knowledge, skills and qualifications needed to enter the labour market. However, we fundamentally reject a narrowly utilitarian view of education in which schooling is valued mainly, or only, for its contribution to economic productivity.

For NASUWT, public education is both a human right and a public good. It exists for the benefit of each individual learner but also for the good of society as a whole. Its purpose is therefore not simply to produce future workers but to support the full development of children and young

people as rounded human beings, active citizens and members of their communities. Education should promote personal fulfilment, social responsibility, knowledge, cultural understanding and skills for life.

High-quality public education should be rooted in values of equality, democracy, justice and solidarity. It should provide opportunity for all children and young people, regardless of background. It should contribute to a fairer and more inclusive society.

The Union also support a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which includes academic and vocational learning but also the cognitive, emotional, cultural, creative, ethical and social dimensions of education. Young people should be equipped not only with employability skills but also with the capacity to think critically, solve problems, participate in democratic life, understand global issues and continue learning throughout life.

As above, we always challenge claims that the purpose of schooling is little more than preparation for work. While the Union does not deny the importance of employment, economic development or vocational skills, they must be placed within a wider account of education's purpose. Schools should prepare young people for work but also for life, citizenship, relationships, personal growth, social contribution and democratic participation.

Yours sincerely.

Mike Corbett
National Official (Scotland)