

BETTER DEAL CAMPAIGN BULLETIN

Class Contact Time

Whilst there was strong support for industrial action from those who voted in our NASUWT industrial action ballot (with 84% supporting strike action and 94% supporting Action Short of Strike Action), we did not have over 50% of our members physically returning ballot papers and, because of the restrictions of the Trade Union Act (2016), did not then have a legal right to take any action. Sister teacher unions who balloted had a similar outcome.

EIS is currently reballoting their members and a result is expected on 5 March. We will be ready to advise our members should the result have any impact on them.

Discussions continue at the SNCT Reduced Class Contact Time group, which NASUWT is part of. The Scottish Government seems much keener to progress matters, though COSLA continues to put barriers in the way of meaningful negotiations.

Employment Rights Act 2025

The Employment Rights Act finally became law on 18 December 2025, with some significant changes:

- any successful ballot mandate now lasts for 12 months rather than six;
- notice to employers of taking industrial action has been reduced from 14 days to ten days; and
- picket supervisors, certified letters or requirement to notify police are no longer needed.

Perhaps the most significant change, though, was the removal of the 50% participation threshold (see above) and the introduction of electronic balloting, which will come into effect in late 2026 or early 2027.

Issues with postal delays to recent ballots were reported by various STUC General Council members (including NASUWT and EIS) and the STUC General Secretary is going to write to the UK Government to complain about this infringing on democracy.

Behaviour

NASUWT remains keen to offer visits to schools/clusters where poor pupil behaviour remains a major problem by posing a barrier to effective learning and a threat to the health and safety of both pupils and staff. If you or NASUWT colleagues would like us to arrange a visit to your school/area, please advise us at Scotland@mail.nasuwt.org.uk

We have been consulted on the Behaviour in Scotland's Schools Research (BISSR) which will launch soon with selected schools across the country. The eventual report should give a clearer idea of whether any of the actions within the Joint Action Plan on Relationships and Behaviour have had a significant impact.

In other news, the publication of *Included, engaged and involved part 1: promoting and managing school attendance* is anticipated in March, while the work of the Included, Engaged and Involved (Part 2) – Exclusions Group and the Recording and Monitoring Short Life Working Group are ongoing. NASUWT continues to have significant input within these groups.

A Restraint and Seclusion Bill continues its progress through Parliament. We submitted another MSP Briefing in February, outlining our significant objections to this Bill. In the meantime, there is a review of the existing Physical Intervention Guidance underway – we would prefer this to be improved, rather than see statutory force introduced by the Restraint and Seclusion Bill.

Parliamentary

MSP Meetings

We met with Shona Robison, Deputy First Minister, on 17 December to discuss the Scottish Government budget planned for January and push for NASUWT priorities (particularly funding for teacher numbers).

When the budget was announced, there was a commitment to 'protect teacher numbers' as well as to provide some extra money for Additional Support Needs (ASN) and free breakfast clubs.

We have also had meetings with Scottish Labour MSPs, Scottish Greens MSPs and Miles Briggs, the Scottish Conservative Education Spokesperson, to push the recommendations in our NASUWT Manifesto for the Scottish Parliament elections.

The Manifesto can be found on our Better Deal for Scotland's Teachers page here: www.nasuwt.org.uk/BetterDealForScotlandTeachers

Political Roundtable

The culmination of our pressure on politicians to commit to the key 'asks' in our Manifesto was our Political Roundtable event on 27 February, as part of our NASUWT Scotland Executive Council meeting. This was attended by Jenny Gilruth, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, along with the key education leads from the Scottish Conservatives (Miles Briggs), Scottish Greens (Ross Greer) and Scottish Liberal Democrats (Willie Rennie).

They were quizzed on a variety of areas suggested by our Executive Council members (all serving teachers), including: Pupil Behaviour, Teacher Workforce Planning, the ASN crisis and Excessive Teacher Workload. A number of positive suggestions were made, though we await the publication of each party's Manifesto to establish the detail of these.

Terms and Conditions

SNCT Support Group

At the February meeting of the SNCT Support Group, SNCT Teachers' Panel Resolutions were presented (including those coming from the NASUWT Scotland Conference Resolutions from 2025) on: maximum class sizes in ASL schools; work-related stress categorisation in the SNCT Handbook; amber/red weather warnings; maternity pay; lead teachers; neonatal leave; and subject shortages.

The support group now awaits position statements from employers and the Scottish Government on miscarriage special leave, paid leave for fertility treatment and supply teachers' pay.

Policy

Qualifications Scotland Board

Qualifications Scotland officially launched at the start of February, including its new Board which, despite assurances, has no classroom teachers on it and limited diversity. NASUWT has lodged its concerns about this with the Chief Executive of Qualifications Scotland and the Scottish Government.

Strategic Board for Teacher Education

At a recent meeting, updates were provided: acknowledging vacancy data weaknesses in the education system, concerns about which were raised by NASUWT; details of a Scottish Government marketing campaign, with NASUWT again noting concerns about the messaging this would give to existing teachers currently unable to find employment; on a potential Graduate Teacher Pathway, a paper on which will be considered by the NASUWT Scotland Executive Council Policy Committee.

PVG Scheme

From 1 April 2026, Disclosure Scotland is introducing a new five-year Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme to replace the lifetime scheme. Existing scheme members will be transferred over automatically and advised by Disclosure Scotland of when this occurs. This will apparently be done in 'join' order, with those who joined the scheme in 2011 being moved first.

What is not clear is how effective or efficient systems will be and what will happen should there be errors at Disclosure Scotland or Council level. What is also unclear is if there will be any cost to teachers for renewal every five years.

NASUWT has lobbied against this previously in meetings with Disclosure Scotland and others, and will continue to highlight our concerns.

Public Health Scotland – Air Quality

NASUWT has been working with a Public Health Scotland (PHS) group to update the PHS Children and Young People Settings guidance. The group has, to date, accepted all our suggestions and amendments bar those relating to air filters, where public health professionals preferred instead to focus on other steps to prevent infection. The group has agreed that it is children and staff coming to school when unwell which is the main issue. It is hoped that the revised guidance will be published soon.

Equalities

Fair Work for Neurodivergent Teachers Event & Workshop

Our inaugural event for neurodivergent members was held in November last year and was followed up with a workshop in February. These sought to centre the voice of lived experience of those members by engaging directly with them through co-ordinated activity to provide advice, support and a campaign action pack.

Feedback from the members involved has been excellent so far and a full report, presentation and feedback on the Fair Work for Neurodivergent Teachers project will be presented to the STUC (who part-funded this activity) later in March.

Equally Safe Marketing Campaign

NASUWT has been working with the Scottish Government on its campaign to tackle misogyny and help young boys make the connection between sexist content they see online and the impact it is having on girls in real life. The campaign launched officially in February and we have supported the Scottish Government to share information with Directors of Education, both on the campaign and the supports available to schools. Schools are being encouraged, wherever possible, to consider utilising the opportunity of the campaign to provide time for staff to engage in discussion and professional learning in this area.

Falkirk for All

NASUWT attended this unity march and rally on 6 December in the town which has been the epicentre of far-right activity and hotel protests. Over 1,000 people attended and the turnout was too big to fit the designated area for speeches. The National Official was the only trade union official invited to speak at the event, joining leading politicians, anti-racist activists and faith groups in condemning racist and anti-immigrant behaviour.

In a welcome development, the leader of Save Our Futures and Our Kids' Futures – a Falkirk anti-immigration protest group that has been coordinating protests outside a hotel housing asylum seekers – has announced that he has disbanded the group, admitting that far-right groups have hijacked some of these protests to spread fear and share inappropriate messaging (such as their infamous 'Kill Em All' banner).

United Workplaces Fund (STUC)

Directly linked to the above, the first of our visits to schools in Falkirk has taken place in order to talk to staff and address the issue of disinformation. We have also been invited to participate in two Education Scotland Headteacher Anti-Racism days in March.

STUC

General Council/Congress

The STUC General Council has agreed its three key Motions for Congress in April, covering: Public Service Recovery; Industrial Strategy; and Building Trade Union Power in Communities.

NASUWT has submitted Motions on: Funding for Public Services; Additional Support Needs; and Building Inclusive and Intersectional Resistance against the Far Right.

Events/Organising

NQT/Probationer Seminar

A successful NQT/Probationer event took place in January, a central feature of which was a session on job applications and interview skills by National Executive Member Nik James. There was universally positive feedback from attendees.

Independent School Reps Event

Our inaugural event of this kind brought together reps from a variety of independent schools, where they heard presentations on issues unique to their environment (e.g. Investigating School Finances), and were offered the opportunity to share some of the challenges they are each facing in terms of pay freezes, redundancies and pensions changes. Again, feedback from the event was very positive.

Forthcoming Events

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| 11 – 12 March | NASUWT Workplace Representatives training, Glasgow |
| 3 – 4 April | NASUWT Annual Conference, Birmingham |
| 20 – 22 April | STUC Congress, Dundee |
| 8 – 9 May | NASUWT Scotland Conference, Clydebank
(*The deadline for registering delegates, submitting Motions and forwarding nominations for Scotland Vice-President/Scotland Treasurer is Friday 13 March.) |