

SCOTLAND

NASUWT
THE
TEACHERS'
UNION



**FOR BETTER DEAL
FOR TEACHERS**

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ELECTION 2026 – NASUWT MANIFESTO

BETTER DEAL FOR TEACHERS

Teachers need a better deal.

Politicians must commit in their manifestos to transformative change which will support every child, young person and teacher to thrive.

Children's lives and futures are being damaged by systemic failures to support teachers, including a failure to: address excessive workload burdens such as unnecessary bureaucracy; improve teacher wellbeing support; improve workforce planning and modelling; and tackle the Additional Support Needs crisis. We need urgent investment in education in Scotland: to our schools, our colleges and our wider support services for children and families.

More teachers and headteachers are leaving the profession prematurely, whilst targets to train the next generation of teachers are being missed, holding back a generation and damaging our country's prospect.

Our children and young people deserve better.

We believe that investing in a brighter future for our children starts with investing in our teachers.

SECURING WORLD-CLASS PAY AND CONDITIONS

Teachers' working conditions are children's learning conditions.

The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers and the conditions in which they work. Yet, since 2010, teachers have endured rising levels of workload, unsustainable working hours and declining real-terms pay.

The Scottish Government needs to ensure that it is Getting It Right For Every Teacher if it wants to achieve its ambitions of Getting It Right For Every Child.

We want the next Scottish Government to deliver a Better Deal that will:

- ensure teaching can compete with other graduate professions, attracting the brightest and the best, by restoring the value of teachers' pay;
- deliver the promised reduction in class contact time;
- establish a workload taskforce to review why key recommendations from the Curriculum for Excellence Working Group on Tackling Bureaucracy (2015) were not fully implemented, with a particular focus on: Forward Planning in the Primary Sector; Assessment in the Secondary Sector; Self-Evaluation and Improvement Planning; Monitoring and Reporting;
- implement a revised and improved approach to rebuild and transform Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision so pupils and teachers receive the support they should be entitled to expect and which recognises the important role of off-site provision;
- commit to lower staffing ratios for specialist provision and support a review of staffing ratio formulas in mainstream classes, dependent upon the number of pupils with an identified ASN in each class;
- commit national resources to re-establishing programmes to support the mental health and wellbeing of teachers, establish a national entitlement to professional supervision for teachers and recognise psychological safety as a fundamental workplace right;
- prioritise suicide awareness and prevention by providing increased funding for mental health services that are accessible and available to all;
- implement a system of Day One rights to 'parental leave' (used as a broad term to include: maternity, paternity, adoption, IVF, bereavement, baby loss) which is socially, financially and morally fit for purpose, meeting the needs of all families; and

- agree a consistent and publicised national approach to supporting supply teachers across local authorities, recognising the vital contribution they make to securing high educational standards for all children and young people.

PROVIDING A HEALTHY, SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT IN EMPLOYMENT

An effective system would ensure there are an appropriate number of teachers to meet educational needs that teachers have an entitlement to secure employment, as well as a right to work in a healthy and safe environment where they are treated with respect.

We want the next Scottish Government to deliver a Better Deal that will:

- increase teacher numbers to meet head on the challenges experienced in the education sector;
- create an effective Workforce Planning Strategy, developed in conjunction with unions, which ensures: sufficient numbers of teachers are being trained; qualified teachers are able to access permanent posts; action is taken to address geographical area or subject shortages; pupils in the Senior Phase are taught by subject specialist teachers; and current inconsistent and incoherent data approaches by local authorities are resolved;
- provide a contractual right to paid sabbaticals for teachers, reinforcing the link between teacher retention and professional development;
- expand access to affordable housing for teachers, which will support rural and urban recruitment and retention challenges in Scotland;
- implement a stakeholder working group on asbestos, with a view to audit and remove asbestos from the school estate;
- commit to provide a consistent school safety and security experience for staff and pupils, where they are protected from unwanted intrusion and have access to appropriate facilities, including separate provision of staff toilets;
- secure a consistent approach across Scotland to protect teachers against violence, assault or harassment, fully embedding the recommendations of the Joint Action Plan on Relationships and Behaviour;
- monitor the reform of national agencies, particularly Education Scotland, Qualifications Scotland and HMIE, to ensure they embed the voice of teachers within their structures, communicate effectively with the profession and provide useful supports for teachers, rather than unwarranted stress and workload;
- launch campaigns to destigmatise women's health, both in the workplace and broader society, while broadening the Women's Health Plan to include more areas of women's health and to further acknowledge the links between the health and wellbeing of women and the working environment;
- acknowledge the link between clean air, attendance and attainment, prioritising action on improving ventilation in classrooms and tackling air pollution around schools; and
- negotiate agreements which secure ethical development and application of artificial intelligence and digital technologies in education.

TACKLING DISCRIMINATION, HATE AND INEQUALITY

Prejudice and discrimination deny people their fundamental human rights, limit opportunity for everyone and undermine the cohesion of schools, communities and wider society.

Every teacher should feel confident that they can progress and succeed in their chosen career and be supported to work free from discrimination and harassment. Racism, sexism and misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and religious hatred affect the lives of children and young people, too, and, where such behaviours go unchallenged, create a corrosive working

and learning environment which can have a devastating impact on the health and welfare of teachers and young people.

We want the next Scottish Government to deliver a Better Deal that will:

- require schools and college employers to publish clear and consistent details of their gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps, then undertake proactive approaches, in conjunction with trade unions, to close these;
- ensure Qualifications Scotland and Education Scotland include race equality and anti-racist practice and content in the development of new or adapted course specifications and relevant guidance;
- commit funding to support education in primary schools on hate speech;
- require social media companies and online platforms to tackle online abuse of teachers;
- tackle disinformation by supporting Time for Inclusive Education (TIE) and their Digital Discourse Initiative to embed critical media literacy in schools and to develop a national strategy for countering online disinformation and polarisation;
- maintain pace on the national implementation of LGBT-Inclusive Education;
- provide a consistent approach and guaranteed support for all schools to tackle gender-based violence, including a key focus on Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSH) education and appropriate Personal and Social Education (PSE) delivery and implementation;
- champion approaches to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace;
- reprioritise and commit to intensify national efforts to increase the number of minority ethnic teachers working within Scotland's schools;
- provide guaranteed long-term funding to support the highly commended Building Racial Literacy programme; and
- improve workplaces for neurodivergent teachers in Scotland and help to eradicate stigma.

SOCIOECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE

Poverty continues to decimate the lives of children and young people, affecting their ability to get to school and engage in learning, which thereafter has long-term impacts on educational attainment, wider wellbeing and future life chances. There are measures the Government can take to improve outcomes for struggling pupils and their families.

We want the next Scottish Government to deliver a Better Deal that will:

- provide universal Free School Meals and improve access to breakfast clubs;
- legislate to make the national school clothing guidance statutory;
- provide improved social security so everyone has a foundation for the future;
- introduce a wealth tax on the richest to raise billions per year for public services;
- ring-fence education funding to ensure that monies intended to fulfil national commitments (e.g. on teacher numbers or pupil equity) are used appropriately; and
- invest in digital infrastructure, to combat digital poverty.

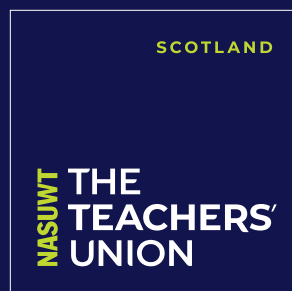
A NATIONAL COHERENCE

NASUWT's mission is to create the conditions that enable teachers to secure the best educational opportunities for all children and young people. Our mission is imprinted with key values – equality, democracy, justice and solidarity. All of these are the hallmarks of an inclusive and progressive society and the key ingredients for quality public education, which is the lifeblood of the economy and society as a whole.

Educational improvements are best supported when they sit within a wider framework of rights and entitlements and where systems and systems change are managed appropriately.

We want the next Scottish Government to deliver a Better Deal that will:

- establish a Charter of Entitlements for pupils and teachers linking teacher rights to pupil entitlements. This would underline how teacher wellbeing and student success are interdependent – teachers' rights and pupils' rights are two sides of the same coin;
- ensure better collaboration across services for children, with effective multi-agency working and joined-up government at both national and local levels. There is too much siloed working in the Government and other national agencies which, if addressed, would ease teacher workload and improve pupil outcomes at little or no cost;
- centre the voice of teachers in any system reform, including curriculum and inspection;
- commit to expedite action on climate change, sustainability, and the UN Development Goals; and
- make a clear commitment to rebuild trust and confidence in public services more widely through increased investment. This will resonate with wider voter concerns post-pandemic about government competence and fairness.



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