NASUWT THE TEACHERS' UNION

CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT

Organising effective workplace meetings

A practical toolkit for NASUWT Workplace Representatives

Every workplace meeting is an opportunity to listen, make decisions together and build a stronger union.



Your five-step guide

STEP	YOUR JOB	THE RESULT
1. PLAN	Choose one clear purpose and a time that works for members.	People know why the meeting matters.
2. INVITE	Ask colleagues personally, not just by email.	More members feel welcome and attend.
3. MEET	Listen, involve everyone and keep to time.	Members are heard and identify priorities.
4. ACT	Agree a collective next step, owners and deadlines.	The meeting leads to action.
5. FOLLOW UP	Tell members what happened and check progress.	Trust, momentum and participation increases.

REP TIP: You do not have to know every answer or do every task. Your role is to help members organise together.

What this toolkit contains

- Your legal rights
- Practical guidance
- A planning checklist
- Meeting invitation
- 30-minute agenda
- Chair's script
- Action record
- Member follow-up
- Mini-survey
- Meeting review sheet

Your Rights: Holding Workplace Union Meetings

As an NASUWT Workplace Representative, you have an important role in bringing members together to discuss workplace issues, share information and agree collective action. Trade union legislation and locally negotiated facilities agreements provide rights and arrangements to support you in organising these meetings.

What are your rights?

Under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992:

- Time off for union duties: Section 168 provides eligible representatives of recognised trade unions with reasonable paid time off for qualifying union duties. This can include meetings with members to discuss matters relating to collective bargaining or consultation.
- Time off for union activities: Section 170 provides members of recognised unions with reasonable time off to participate in trade union activities, including workplace meetings. This time off is not automatically paid.
- Facilities for meetings: The Acas Code of Practice encourages employers to provide appropriate facilities, where practical, including suitable meeting accommodation. Local facilities agreements may establish specific entitlements to meeting rooms, noticeboards, communication systems and other resources.

The Employment Rights Act 2025 also introduces strengthened rights to reasonable facilities for eligible trade union representatives, scheduled to take effect from 30 October 2026.

Putting your rights into practice

When organising an NASUWT workplace meeting:

1. Check your facilities agreement. Your school, academy trust or local authority may have agreed arrangements for holding union meetings, accessing rooms and communicating with members.
2. Choose an accessible time. Consider lunchtime, before or after school, or another agreed period that enables as many members as possible to attend.
3. Request appropriate facilities. Where necessary, arrange a suitable meeting space and access to agreed communication channels, providing reasonable notice.
4. Protect member confidentiality. Workplace union meetings should provide a space where members can discuss concerns openly, with appropriate safeguards for confidential information.
5. Seek support if difficulties arise. If your employer refuses reasonable requests for meeting facilities or time off, contact your NASUWT Local Association Secretary or relevant union official for guidance.

As a matter of good industrial relations practice and courtesy, let your headteacher or principal know in advance that you are organising an NASUWT workplace meeting. Explain when and where the meeting will take place and make any necessary arrangements for meeting space or facilities. This helps maintain a constructive working relationship and ensures that appropriate practical arrangements are in place. You do not need to seek permission to discuss internal union business or disclose confidential matters.

Remember: Holding workplace meetings is a legitimate and important part of trade union activity. You should not feel discouraged from bringing members together.

Understanding your rights and using established facilities agreements will help you organise meetings confidently and effectively.

Why hold a workplace meeting?

A meeting gives members a regular, democratic space to talk about working life and agree how to improve it. It should be more than a one-way update from the representative.

Choose your meeting purpose

Type	Use it when…	Useful outcome
Listening meeting	You want to understand what colleagues are experiencing.	A shared list of concerns and priorities.
Issue meeting	Workload, behaviour, directed time or another issue has emerged.	Evidence, a clear objective and agreed action.
Union update	There are important NASUWT or employer developments.	Members understand the implications and respond.
Decision meeting	Members need to agree a position or next step.	A recorded, collective decision (within union procedures).
Welcome meeting	New or less-active members need to connect.	More relationships and new volunteers.

An organising meeting should achieve at least three things:

- Members have a chance to speak, not just listen.
- People leave knowing what has been agreed and what happens next.
- At least one more member is involved in a small, practical task.

Plan your meeting

Start one to two weeks ahead where possible, or act sooner when an urgent issue arises.

- Identify the specific issue: 'Reducing duplicated data entry' is clearer than 'General update'.
- Check what members want discussed through brief one-to-one conversations.
- Choose a time and place accessible to part-time colleagues, those on different timetables and anyone with access needs. Offer an alternative way to contribute where practical.
- Check venue, room booking and workplace communication arrangements; use appropriate union channels and respect confidentiality.
- Invite a colleague to help with chairing, notes, invitations or timekeeping.
- Know what can be resolved locally and which concerns need advice from your Local Association Secretary, National Executive Member or NASUWT Regional/National Centre.

Planning checklist

- ☐ Purpose and desired outcome agreed
- ☐ Who should attend identified
- ☐ Date, time, room/link confirmed
- ☐ Access and participation needs considered
- ☐ Agenda circulated
- ☐ Personal invitations allocated
- ☐ Chair and note-taker agreed
- ☐ Relevant NASUWT advice checked
- ☐ Follow-up date pencilled in

Encourage members to attend

A short personal conversation is usually more effective than a mass email alone. Make the purpose concrete and show that colleagues' views will shape the outcome.

Four ways to increase participation:

- Ask directly: speak to colleagues across departments, phases, sites and working patterns.
- Make it relevant: name the issue and say what the group will decide.
- Remove barriers: keep it short, start on time and offer a way to submit views privately.
- Share the invitation: ask two or three members to each encourage colleagues in their teams.

Template A – Invitation email

Subject: NASUWT workplace meeting – [issue] – [date]

Hello colleagues,

We are holding a short NASUWT workplace meeting on [day, date] at [time] in [room/online].

We will be discussing [specific issue], hearing members' experiences and agreeing together what steps we would like to take next. Whether you have lots to say or would prefer to listen, your views matter.

If you cannot attend, please send me your thoughts in confidence by [date]. If you have any access requirements, please let me know.

I hope you can join us.

[Name], NASUWT Workplace Representative

Template B – Personal invitation

"We're meeting for half an hour on [day] about [issue]. I'd really value your perspective because it affects your team. Would you be able to come? If not, what would you want us to raise?"

If numbers are low

Ask why without judgement: Was the time wrong? Was the purpose unclear? Do colleagues feel it will change anything? Try a different time, a shorter session or conversations in smaller groups. Never imply that non-attendance means colleagues agree with a proposal.

Run an effective 30-minute meeting

A good Chair creates an inclusive, purposeful conversation rather than delivering a long briefing.

Time	Agenda item	Chair's approach
0-3 mins	Welcome and purpose	Explain why the meeting is happening; agree ground rules.
3-8 mins	What are we hearing?	Give a short factual outline; avoid personal cases.
8-18 mins	Members' experiences	Ask open questions; invite quieter colleagues.
18-25 mins	Agree priorities and options	Summarise themes; check agreement and feasibility.
25-30 mins	Actions and close	Confirm decision, tasks, owners and next update.

Template C – Suggested Chair's script

OPEN: "Thank you for coming. The aim is to understand what colleagues are experiencing about [issue] and agree what we want to do next. We will finish at [time]. Let's give everyone space to contribute and avoid discussing identifiable individual cases."

DISCUSS: "What is happening in practice? How widespread is it? What would an improvement look like? What have we not heard yet?"

DECIDE: "I'm hearing that our priority is [priority]. Is that an accurate summary? Our proposed next step is [step]. Is everyone content, or do we need to record different views or take a vote?"

CLOSE: "We've agreed [decision]. [Name] will [task] by [date], and we will update members on [date]. Thank you for making this a collective effort."

Keep the discussion inclusive

- Ask one question at a time; allow thinking time.
- Invite contributions without putting individuals on the spot.
- Avoid allowing one or two people to dominate.
- Distinguish shared workplace concerns from confidential personal cases.
- Capture disagreement fairly, and never promise an outcome outside your control.

REP TIP: If the conversation moves towards industrial action, formal disputes, legal questions or sensitive individual cases, seek advice from your National Executive Member.

Move from discussion to collective action

Finish with a small number of specific, proportionate steps. Members should own the plan, not simply pass every problem to the rep.

Template D – Action record

Agreed priority	Action	Who will help?	By when?
[Workload concern]	[Collect anonymised examples]	[Two volunteers]	[Date]
[Next step]	[Discuss with NASUWT contact]	[Rep]	[Date]
[Member update]	[Share an update]	[Volunteer]	[Date]

From an issue to a plan

- Name the problem precisely: What is happening and who is affected?
- Agree the change members want: What practical improvement would help?
- Check the evidence: What do we know and what needs confirming?
- Choose a proportionate first step: Information gathering, consultation, a request for a meeting, or a union-supported campaign activity.
- Allocate at least two small tasks beyond the rep where possible.
- Set a date for a report-back, even if there is no immediate progress.

Example: workload

Concern: Teachers report that duplicate data entry is adding avoidable work.

Meeting decision: Gather anonymised examples for one week and ask the NASUWT rep to discuss the shared concern with the appropriate union contact before arranging a management meeting.

Shared tasks: Two members collect examples; one member drafts a short summary; the rep checks the next steps.

Follow-up: Members receive a progress update within seven days.

Keep decisions clear

Record what was agreed, any significant differences of view and the level of support. Do not describe a meeting as giving a formal mandate for action where NASUWT rules or statutory procedures require separate authorisation or ballots.

After the meeting: Provide feedback

Following the meeting, consider arranging a brief discussion with your headteacher or principal to share the key issues, concerns or suggestions raised by members, where appropriate. This provides an opportunity to open a constructive dialogue, seek solutions and agree any next steps. Ensure that any feedback reflects the collective views of members, respects confidentiality and does not disclose individual concerns without consent. Where matters require formal negotiation or escalation, seek guidance from your NASUWT Local Association Secretary or relevant union official.

Follow up and keep momentum

Members are more likely to attend again when they see that their time led to an update, a decision or progress.

Template E – Follow-up message

Subject: Update from our NASUWT workplace meeting

Thank you to everyone who attended or shared their views about [issue].

We heard three main concerns: [1], [2] and [3]. We agreed to prioritise [priority] and take these next steps: [action and owner], [action and owner].

We will provide an update by [date]. If you have additional views or would like to help with one of the actions, please get in touch.

Together, we can make sure colleagues' voices shape what happens in our workplace.

[Name], NASUWT Workplace Representative

Template F – Three-question pulse survey

1. Which workplace issue should NASUWT members prioritise? [Free text or three choices]
2. What one change would make the biggest difference? [Free text]
3. Would you be willing to help with a small task or attend a follow-up meeting? [Yes / Perhaps / Not now]

Protect confidentiality: minimise personal information; use NASUWT-approved tools and data-handling processes, particularly for sensitive concerns.

Template G – Quick meeting review

Question	Your notes
Did the meeting have a clear purpose?	
Who attended and who was missing?	
Did members have space to speak?	
Was a clear next step agreed?	
Were tasks shared beyond the rep?	
When will members next hear from us?	

Troubleshooting: common challenges

Challenge	What might help
"Nobody comes."	Ask personally; change timing; make the issue specific; offer a shorter meeting.
"People only raise individual cases."	Acknowledge privately and signpost; ask whether a broader, anonymised pattern exists.
"One person dominates."	Thank them and deliberately invite other perspectives.
"We disagree."	Clarify options, summarise differences and agree an appropriate decision process.
"I do not know the answer."	Say so; check with NASUWT and report back by a specific date.
"Everything lands with the rep."	Break work into small tasks; ask explicitly who can help.
"Nothing has changed yet."	Report what has been done, what is blocking progress and the next review date.

Where to seek support

Speak to your NASUWT Local Association Secretary, National Executive Member or relevant NASUWT Regional/National Centre when you need assistance with workplace organising, collective issues, negotiations or escalation. Confirm applicable local arrangements before discussing formal action.